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The Rise of Secular Religion

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Don Scott, D-Portsmouth, Virginia, is a delegate in Virginia's House of Delegates (their version of the House of Representatives). Scott recently accused Virginia's governor, Governor Youngkin, of not being a Christian. He made this pronouncement based on his assertion that the governor has banned Critical Race Theory (CRT) from being taught in Virginia schools.

Now it is easy to understand people from different political parties wanting to promote different political agendas. That happens all the time. But this is, obviously, not a simple matter of a political disagreement. Scott accused Youngkin of "not being a Christian." Where in the world does he get off making that kind of accusation.

The fact is, Youngkin is a very committed Christian and demonstrates it in his daily life for everyone to see. He and his wife helped found Holy Trinity Church, where they are very active. And, he is also very active in participating in various Christian groups and functions. This does not, of course, prove he is a Christian, but the fruit of his life, along with his own testimony, does back up his claim to be a Christian.

So we need to ask again, "Why would Delegate Scott accuse him of not being a Christian?" Well, the answer is that Scott has a different definition for what makes a Christian than what the Bible teaches.

To begin understanding this phenomenon, we need to have a little bit of understanding of CRT.

CRT is Marxist concept. Critical Theory was initially taught in law schools as a legal concept that attempts to find the underlying assumptions in social life that keep people from fully understanding how the world works. Rather than looking at the text of the law to determine what should be considered legal and illegal, it looks to what it considers to be oppression in society, and automatically takes the side of the "oppressed" over the "oppressors" (and that is a relative concept defined by the people who are making the judgments).

CRT takes that concept and applies it to race. It views race as a social construct, not as a biological one. It asserts that racism, and miscellaneous racial outcomes, are the result of complex and changing social and institutional dynamics. It has nothing to do with the explicit or intentional prejudices of individuals. Thus, it is not individuals that are racist, it is society. And people who happen to be members of a particular racial group are guilty of being racist purely because they are of that race. With its Marxist roots, it is a collectivist concept that has no place for the rule of law, equal justice under the law, or individual responsibility.

At this point, you might be wondering what could possibly be the connection between this explanation of CRT and Delegate Scott's pronouncement that Youngkin is not a Christian. The connection comes in the form of a distortion of the Christian faith by certain self-identified Christians.

In spite of the fact that Marxism is atheistic, there is a segment of the population that self-identify as Christians that have adopted a theology that is built on the back of Marxism. Theological strains such as libera-

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tion theology do not take their basic tenets from the Bible, but from Marxist ideology. In fact, there are entire denominations that follow this kind of theology.

Apparently Scott is a part of one of these. He is an active member of the Episcopal Church. The Episcopal Church has traditionally been the American branch of the Church of England. In other parts of the world it is generally referred to as the Anglican Church.

The Church of England does not have a solidly established doctrinal statement. Rather, it has a set of general beliefs that have traditionally included the Apostles Creed and the Nicene Creed. But its main beliefs are outlined in its 39 Articles. In times past, it held somewhat traditional Christian beliefs, but its underlying articles really provide the opportunity for various churches to move in new directions. Thus, over the years, many of them have bought into more liberal strains of theology.

This happened with the Episcopal Church in America. In fact, the denomination became so liberal that those holding more traditional Christian beliefs began to feel they could not even stay a part of the denomination. These churches split off to form a new Anglican denomination in America. This is quite similar to the splits that have happened in several other Protestant denominations over the last few years. Scott's church is aligned with the theologically liberal branch.

In general, liberal theological beliefs include:

- Collectivism - Their focus is on promoting social causes as opposed to individual salvation. They believe that Jesus' very purpose on earth was to "help the

least of these" (Matt. 25), not to reconcile man to God.

- Economic and Political Liberation - They define salvation as freeing those who are of some oppressed class from oppression from their oppressors. They define the oppressed classes for themselves and this can change over time or from group to group. Salvation for them does not have a spiritual meaning. Rather they focus on "freeing the oppressed," and social justice. They also generally support what are commonly called liberal political policies such as abortion and the homosexual agenda.
- Moral Relativism - They believe that morality is decided by "society," not by what is taught in the Bible. The very idea of objective morality using the teachings of the Bible as a standard does not fit into their theology.
- God is not personal - Their view of God tends to be very nebulous, and they see God more as a "concept" than a person. And for them, the concept of God is that "love" and "tolerance" express the idea of God. God is not someone to enter into a relationship with, but is more of an ideal to achieve. With that belief, there is no objective person who has revealed what is in Scripture. Rather, they consider that what is taught in the Bible has to be interpreted through some lens, and they have chosen Marxist beliefs as their lens of choice. They don't recognize the Bible to be an objective revelation of God, but merely a book of moral principles that they interpret using their own definitions of God, salvation, love, justice, and so on. Additionally, with that view of God, they also don't believe in miracles.

With that as a background, it becomes easier to see where Delegate Scott gets his belief that Youngkin is not a Christian. Scott attends a church that follows liberal theology and defines Christianity using the Marxist belief foundation. For him, any beliefs out-

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side of that framework are simply not Christian – thus, he considers Youngkin to not be a Christian.

In particular, Youngkin is against such things as CRT, abortion, and gay marriage. Since Scott believes all of these represent Christian values, he feels perfectly justified in saying Youngkin is not Christian.

So this is where we are. In essence, for those who follow some form of liberal theological Christianity, the very concept of Christianity has been redefined.

As biblical Christians, we had better understand what is happening. If someone comes up and tells us that our beliefs are not Christian, we need to not only be able to understand why they are wrong, but also be able to explain to them that they are the ones who have left Christianity. They believe that because they go to a church that has traditionally been associated with the Christian faith, that they are automatically Christian. They don't know the actual doctrines that define the faith itself. They don't even realize that they follow a non-Christian belief system.

This kind of secular religion is all around us. It is around us in two different forms. One is the "non-religious" form. This consists of the people who don't self-identify as Christians. Many even call themselves Atheists or non-religious.

The other form does self-identify as Christian – this includes people like Delegate Scott. But make no mistake about it, all of these forms represent a secular religion that is anti biblical Christianity.

We can't push back against what we don't understand. But when we do recognize the non-biblical religious beliefs that are all around us, we suddenly have the ability to share a witness for Christ that goes beyond what most Christians are capable of doing.

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