

## Trinity Te Deum

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### Role Confusion

Posted on August 1, 2016 by Rev. Paul R. Harris

Higher Things much to the disservice of adolescents everywhere last year published an apologetic of sorts by an LCMS clergyman for his lifelong desire to be a woman which they later apologized for. Higher Things didn't endorse the man's lust – that is what it is – for what God had not given him. They struck more a note of sympathy. I am mildly surprised that they didn't go for the “higher” ground C. S. Lewis established when he said that he wouldn't write against homosexuality because “I will not indulge in futile philippics against enemies I never met in battle” (*Surprised by Joy*, 101).

This muddy-headed thinking is not new to me. You see it in the guy who argues this way, “Since I don't know what I would do if my daughter turned up pregnant by rape, I can't oppose abortion without being a hypocrite.” Likewise, since I don't know what it is to have an uncontrollable desire to be a woman, I can't speak to that issue without being hypocritical.

First of all, we all have lusts; we all desire things God has not given us. A woman can lust after the ministry; a teen can lust after the authority his parents have. Heterosexual lusts are no less powerful than homo-

sexual ones. An adult male's lust to be a woman is no more powerful than an adolescent male's lust to be 6 feet tall or the high school quarterback. The problem is that all things homosexual have been psychobabbled to the point that you are only allowed to speak of them in psychological terms not Scriptural.

Second, we don't live by our wisdom or experience; we don't go by what may or may not happen in the future; we go by the Word of God. The Word of God clearly says that abortion is sinful. Therefore, we will not abort the unborn or aid those who do. The Word of God clearly says that He knit everyone us together in the womb and that He made us male or female.

I can speak to the lust for being a woman or the lust for the same sex with the same authority I can speak against abortion. The Word of God gives me that authority. I am to reject homosexuality with the same certainty that I am to reject bestiality. I am to identify a man wanting to be a woman or a woman to be a man as a lust with the same certainty that I know any desire contrary to the Word of God is a lust.

More painful than the role confusion evidenced by that pastor's panegyric was that of Higher Things. To the group that is at the height of insecurity in regard to their sexuality, Higher Things thought it would

be a good idea to have a middle-aged pastor vent his spleen about his lifelong struggle with his lust to be something God had not made him, to have something God had not given him. But they didn't even make it clear that this was what was happening. No, they thanked him for sharing his struggle meanwhile planting in the heads of more than a few kids the thought: Maybe there is a God-given reason that I am not attracted to the other sex or that I like cars or musicals, etc, etc.

Had Higher Things dealt with this subject as adults 1) They wouldn't have put it on the internet for all to read. 2) They would have shown the flaws in the pastor's assumptions. As it stands (And it still does, see the Higher Things article of October 23, 2015 “Sex, Gender, and identity”), psychology has carried the day and many a poor child is left with far more questions about this ungodly lust than he started the day with.

I'm confused; I thought Higher Things role was to help kids.

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### Americans say science is why they've given up religion

*Technically Incorrect: A new Pew survey finds that those who say they have no religion tend to cite science as one of the main reasons.*

If you believe in science, does this mean you can't believe in God?

Or is it that science makes it difficult to believe in religion?

Stephen Hawking has already assured us that there is no God at all. He hasn't, though, managed to convince everyone.

Still, many Americans seem to be trending toward the godless quadrant. But why?

A new Pew survey offers some believable pointers.

Pew's latest study is an offshoot of its 2014 Religious Landscape Survey, in which it found that 78 percent of those with no religion were raised with one, but have since shed their religious identity.

Pew re-contacted 5,000 of the 35,071 surveyed to ask why they left their affiliation behind. Almost half of those who were brought up in the religious firmament explained that whatever belief they had had simply disappeared.

One reason cited by many? Science.

Pew offered one quote that will surely move some, including Neil DeGrasse Tyson: "I'm a scientist now, and I don't believe in miracles."

Other reasons offered might also excite rationalists. For example: "Learning about evolution when I went away to college." It took that long?

This one, too, has a certain simplicity: "Too many Christians doing un-Christian things."

Some might wish to vigorously debate another: "Lack of

any sort of scientific or specific evidence of a creator." Haven't these people ever heard of the Turin Shroud?

It isn't as if all religions think science is some sort of enemy.

Pope Francis, for one, has always been clear that he believes in evolution. He's also on the scientists' side when it comes to global warming. However, he thinks that at the very, very beginning of everything there was a God who set it all in motion.

<http://www.cnet.com/news>

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## "Being Lutheran" is Not Lutheran

A Critical Review of *Being Lutheran* by A. Trevor Sutton (CPH, 2016)

By: Reverend Phil Hale

The worst theological errors are not technical or merely a manner of false speaking, but a thinking which obscures Christ and makes His Gospel less universal, comforting, and complete than it really is. Therefore, saying that a book has passed doctrinal review or contains no doctrinal error is not actually helpful. Doctrinal error is categorized in old, dogmatic terms, while new errors usually pervert the truth in a new, slightly different way. An a-doctrinal approach is not easily rejected with traditional Christian terms.

One cannot simply be Lutheran. That actually goes against Lutheran theology and doctrine. What people are or identify as is not the issue. Rather it is the substance of what

is believed and confessed that should be the focus of our attention. One cannot have Lutheran hair, Lutheran eyes, or Lutheran toes. "Lutheran" medical care, banking, and insurance is impossible. Lutheranism cannot course through the veins of a person and act like magic pixie dust on all their actions, even if one's family was raised in the Lutheran church for generations and possesses a really Germanic or Scandinavian name. Neither can a publishing house or human institution simply be Lutheran for all time. The label of "Lutheran" applies most accurately to particular words and teachings that tell the saving truth of God. Lutheran is not a static category, like good or bad, rich or poor, black or white. To embrace the Lutheran doctrine is to continually fight to hold and maintain the pure truth.

While the book *Being Lutheran* may technically be right on some aspects of Lutheran teaching and describing life as a Christian, its basic framework is un-Lutheran and actually quite dangerous. It describes Lutheranism from a human point of view and implicitly takes the Gospel for granted in how it fails to emphasize confessing doctrine, which can never passively exist and be stored in unvarying form on a shelf. The focus inherently shifts to people and institutions, who embody Lutheranism in what they do—not what Christ Himself does in justifying sinners, who remain sinners according to their flesh. Our inheritance is in heaven, not in our bodies right now. We are not good or Christ-like, but

we are, in Christ, called holy. So our identity cannot be in ourselves, our actions, or what sinners do.

It is said that “Being is where thinking and being collide”; it is “thinking *and* acting” (xvii). But our actions never live up to God's standard. The Law is not merely a scarecrow. It is God's holy will. The emphasis on “being” leads to a focus on one's identity, how the sinner sees himself—not how God sees us according to the holy law and holy Gospel. For example, Sutton writes: “Lutherans act on their convictions.” To include things we should want to do as defining us is to confuse what we do with what Christ did to save us. To believe the Lutheran teaching does not make one excited and motivated to confess Jesus at all times. The Gospel does not “get us more hyped than ten cups of coffee” or “put a thump in our bones.” Neither do we always “love to share the Gospel” (20). The evidence is abundant. C.F.W. Walther said in contrast: “You are not rightly distinguishing Law and Gospel in the Word of God if you describe believers in a way that is not always realistic—both with regard to the strength of their faith and to the feeling and fruitfulness of their faith” (*Law and Gospel*, Thesis XVII). No one can live up to this damning law: “Being Lutheran is resisting lazy and embracing work” (92).

As a phenomenon, Lutheranism is not cool or hip. True doctrine will cause disgust, offense, and division. Not because Lutheran teaching is

wrong, quite the contrary. The pure doctrine will be hated and persecuted by the world, including many fleshly, so-called Lutherans. Many people who claim to speak for Christ and profess to love Him, do not. To proclaim the entire truth and to believe it is not within our power. All people hate the truth, according to their sinful nature, no matter how much Christian living is dressed up with Christian language. The sinful part of man rebels against Christ and His simple truth. Christ calls the Gospel the savor or aroma of death (2 Cor. 2:16). It gives life, but has an awful stench to the dying who cannot tolerate it. Why? It takes the glory away from selfish idolaters (all of us) and gives it solely to Jesus, who died for the helpless and weak. But we cannot be repentant and dependent on our own—it is a continual battle. Or else we who have the inheritance of Lutheran doctrine assume we can tread on the basis of our heritage and tradition—what formerly was believed. This is always the danger: “I know that you are [Luther's] descendants, but you seek to crucify My word, because My word has no place in you.” (Jn. 8) For every generation this process of killing the old Adam and proclaiming the pure Gospel begins anew. There is no progression beyond calling sinners to repentance and making the dead alive by the Gospel. And if this does not happen, we are no better than the Jews who trusted in their identity of **being** Abraham's descendants. Calling oneself by the name “Lutheran” is not a confession of Christ or an indi-

cation of what Scripture actually teaches.

To simply *be* something implies that the battle is won, so the focus can move away from Christ's teaching to ourselves, who hate Him and His Law, according to our old Adam. What is it to be Christian? To acknowledge that we cannot be one, but believe God's promise of life through the Holy Spirit. Christ Himself must do everything for us. We can only resist. *For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh) nothing good dwells; for to will is present with me, but how to perform what is good I do not find. For the good that I will to do, I do not do; but the evil I will not to do, that I practice.* (Rom. 7:18-19) To confess Christ as Luther did is not to think lofty thoughts or merely mouth historical statements, but to die to our own flesh continually and resist its impulses. We live in Christ by His Word, not in ourselves.

The problem is not that we close and open the Gospel. A “closed Gospel” is not the Gospel at all (9). Sutton continually makes the subtle claim that we are the ones who open the Gospel by our actions and lives. But pastors merely have to preach Christ purely and He does all the work of saving. The Gospel delivers the fruit of Christ's death. It can never be inert, dead, or “closed.” False doctrine, misrepresenting Christ, is the greatest danger. The truth cannot be institutionalized. The name “LCMS” does not ward off Satan. It could actually be his tool, if people care more about the name than the words of Christ

and the doctrine through which Christ rules us. We beg the question when we make people to be good, faithful Lutherans, without testing all their teaching against the actual words of Christ. We must judge what is said by Christ's Word, to see if it measures up. Not everything that is labeled Lutheran or Christian actually is. It is a Lutheran activity to reject every false teaching which endangers the Gospel—to care about Christ and His Word of Scripture more than people, reputations, and the traditions of men. It is easy to rely on a past confession of Christ and think we are “Lutheran” by mere deeds, instead of actively relying on Christ's teaching. But this takes Christ for granted. “Therefore whoever confesses Me before men, him I will also confess before My Father who is in heaven” (Mt. 10:32).

Early Lutherans did not “write theology books just for fun,” they were risking their lives and families to follow Christ in all that He taught (14). It was and is a bold and audacious thing to go against Satan and his subjects who resist the freedom we have in Christ. Though we are wretched sinners who do not follow Christ well and continually act against Him in our lives and words, all guilt is put away, having been nailed to the cross. This salvation is dependent on the death of Christ, not our hype or fleshly excitement. Dying to sin and crucifying the flesh is not fun or exciting. Yet we endure suffering in the hope of being with Christ.

What is distinct about Lutheranism? We claim and proclaim the pure doctrine, which is the Lutheran, that is, scriptural doctrine. A Lutheran proclamation speaks the full truth of Jesus. All other churches mix in human opinion and error, even if most do retain enough of Christ's Word to sustain saving faith. This is a recurring action, involving a continual repentance. No institutional slogan or enshrined historical document can replace actually knowing and speaking the truth in its fullness. A church body is a collection of sinners that must continue to confess and believe the truth in order to be in Christ. Every day they must die to the Old Adam which wants their focus to be on their works and feelings, not Christ—and rise to new life by the promise of eternal life. The Reformation is not a once every 2000 years event—it happens every time Christ is rightly proclaimed.

Take heart if you do not feel Christian or embody the confidence of Lutheran teaching. Your inheritance is “*incorruptible and undefiled*” and “*does not fade away.*” It is “*reserved in heaven for you.*” “*In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while, if need be, you have been grieved by various trials, that the genuineness of your faith, being much more precious than gold that perishes, though it is tested by fire, may be found to praise, honor, and glory at the revelation of Jesus Christ*” (1 Pet. 1). There must be testing, suffering, and death in sincerely following Jesus into life.

Being Lutheran in doctrine is not merely repeating a trite phrase about “being all about Jesus and following Him.” It is to confess a particular confession of Jesus—the one He gives purely in Scripture and which is also found in the man-made Book of Concord. The ordination rite of our church demands a confession: “Do you promise that you will perform the duties of your office in accordance with these [ecumenical creeds and Lutheran] Confessions, and that all your preaching and teaching and your administration of the Sacraments will be in conformity with the Holy Scripture and with these confessions?” No one can do this without the help of God, but to the extent this is done and Christ's Word is faithfully proclaimed, that activity can be called Lutheran. The pastors doing so will not be holy or always eager to preach and teach (look at Jonah before and after he preached to Nineveh), but Christ is always eager to save and receive sinners for whom He died. Every Christian is to know Christ's Word and judge on the basis of His teaching, not human reputations, stale traditions or nondescript names, like “Lutheran.” Where Christ's Word is proclaimed, there His kingdom is and faith is generated and people are made new before God. This will go on until our Lord returns. Amen.

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## Revenue of faith-based enterprises over \$387B a year

By Julie Zauzmer, *The Washington Post*

Religion is big business. Just how big? A new study, published Wednesday by a father-daughter researcher team, says religion is bigger than Facebook, Google and Apple — combined.

The article in the *Interdisciplinary Journal of Research on Religion* said that the annual revenues of faith-based enterprises — not just churches but hospitals, schools, charities and even gospel musicians and halal food makers — is more than \$378 billion a year. And that's not counting the annual shopping bonanza motivated by Christmas.

Georgetown University's Brian Grim and the Newseum's Melissa Grim — in a study sponsored by an organization called Faith Counts, which promotes the value of religion — produced a 31-page breakdown of all the ways religion contributes to the U.S. economy.

The largest chunk of that \$378 billion tally comes from faith-based health-care systems. Religious groups run many of the hospitals in the United States; Catholic health systems alone reportedly account for 1 in 6 hospital beds in the country.

Then there are churches and congregations themselves. Based on prior censuses of U.S. bodies of worship, the Grims looked at 344,894 congregations, from 236 different religious denominations (217 of them Christian, and others ranging from Shinto to Tao to Zoroastrian). Collectively, those congregations count about half

the American population as members. The average annual income for a congregation, the study said, is \$242,910.

Most of that income comes from members' donations and dues, meaning Americans give \$74.5 billion to their congregations per year, the study said.

Religious charities also contribute to the economy. By far the largest faith-based charity, according to the study, is Lutheran Services of America, with an annual operating revenue of about \$21 billion. The study counted 17 more faith-based charities, all among Forbes's 50 biggest charities in America, with revenues ranging from \$300 million (Cross International) to \$6.6 billion (YMCA USA).

Almost all the charities are Christian, except for the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee, with an annual operating revenue of \$400 million.

The study suggested ways one could count the contribution of religion to the U.S. economy — the revenues of faith-linked businesses such as Hobby Lobby and Chick-fil-a, the box office profits of religious movies, even the household income of millions of Americans who run their financial lives guided by faith.

But sticking just to the direct profits of faith, religion comes out as highly lucrative — a larger chunk of the country's \$16 trillion GDP, the Grims pointed out, than many giant corporations.

Allan Carlson —  
SEPTEMBER 08, 2016

***Business Insider* recently reported** “a mind-blowing demographic shift” that is about to occur. Considering the globe's whole human population, the number of adults age 65 and older will in a few years be greater than the number of children under the age of 5. This unprecedented change should then accelerate: By 2050, old people are expected to make up 16 percent of humanity (25 percent in Europe); small children, only 7 percent and falling (with the European number approaching 4 percent). Our “globalized” civilization can now see its resting point. The probable human future, it appears, resembles the dystopia found in P.D. James's prophetic novel *The Children of Men*: a vast geriatric ward, filled with the detritus of a material civilization, absent the voices of children, everyone waiting for the end.

How did humanity—our planet's seemingly most successful biological species—turn on itself and create conditions pointing toward its extinction? The answer is actually quite simple: It is the result of the Stork Theory of human reproduction found at the core of liberalism.

Now, by *liberalism* I do not mean the cartoon definition centered on Franklin D. Roosevelt's “New Deal,” still employed and denounced by most conservatives. (Indeed, it actually appears that the social policies of the New Deal helped to bring on the famous Baby Boom of the mid-20th century.)

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## The Stork Theory

ry— subject for another essay.) Nor do I use the more sunny, libertarian alternative: free markets and free minds. Rather, I mean the ideology now dominant in “the West” (and being aggressively exported to other lands as well), which holds each human being to be a wholly independent, self-defining actor. From that simple premise (offered in basic form by Thomas Hobbes and developed more fully by Friedrich Nietzsche), the liberal project grew finally into a system that eats its own young. The process occurred primarily in three phases and in three parallel arenas of human life: in economics, in the relation of man to woman, and in sex.

Industrial capitalism is the economic fruit of the liberal idea. It has famously produced a vast trove of material goods. And, to be fair, in the early decades of its operation, it appears to have spurred some population growth—not by raising the birthrate but by indirectly contributing to a reduction in the infant mortality rate. Yet, in the long run, these gains came at a great, albeit infrequently acknowledged, social price. To begin with, the liberal economy severed the place of work from the place of residence. Until that economy emerged, it had been normal—even natural—for home and work to coexist in unity. This had the effect of underscoring the economic foundation of marital and family relations. Each home was a productive, as well as a consuming, place, filled with an array of tasks involving and necessitating husband and wife,

parents and children. Indeed, on the small farm or in the craftsman’s shop, offspring become economic assets at an early age and are welcomed as such. The favored factory system severed these bonds. Viewed from a somewhat different angle, the liberal economy grew as it consumed the home economy. The industrial process grows and increases profits as it takes tasks once done by families or small communities and reorganizes them according to a mechanical model. In the beginning, these transferred functions were spinning and cloth-making. And, in truth, while some resisted the change, the majority found it congenial: It seemed to make life a little easier. However, the nervous energy of capitalism can leave nothing untouched. In our day, industrialized tasks include infant care, “fast food,” and—with the advent of virtual reality—existence itself. Along the way, governments have joined in, mimicking the factory model to industrialize education and child welfare. Almost the whole of the home economy has now disappeared. Some religiously motivated couples still produce larger families, but they are proving to be a wasting asset in the liberal order. Suppressing whatever natural instincts remain, the liberal economy has turned children into liabilities. Accordingly, it has become rare for more than one or two to appear in today’s households.

The liberal idea also undermines the unique ties of man to woman. With the home economy destroyed, the many tasks

that had filled women’s lives with meaning and value have simply vanished. (While the same development happened among men, their movement for a time into the “breadwinner” role provided some psychic compensation.) It should cause no surprise that deskilled women left in largely functionless households felt bored and unappreciated and found hope in the feminist cry “Flee to the factories!”

Such a result was inevitable, for the liberal “person”—the independent, self-defining actor—has by definition no immutable biological nature. Certainly, the musculature and the plumbing vary somewhat, but the industrial process provides devices and procedures (including those found in the modern abortuary) that compensate for these differences. Categories such as male and female imply a natural order to human affairs, a recognition of differences and responsibilities that are expressed in terms of teleology—the unique purposes of man and woman. Chief among them is the procreation and nurture of children. The liberal mindset cannot tolerate this. Thus, it demands the most extreme version of feminism. Gender theory becomes the apex of liberal thought: As we have recently learned, even the U.S. military must submit to it. Experience shows that, as feminism is embraced, still fewer children emerge.

Liberalism also directly engages sex, with especially sterile results. For the last hundred years, the cry for sexual liberty has been a central part of the

liberal project: free access to state-subsidized birth control, “free love” (an end to laws and cultural restraints against fornication and adultery), free access to abortion, no-fault divorce, legally recognized cohabitation, free access to pornography, “gay marriage,” and LGBTQ rights.

**What ties this agenda together?** Back in 1896, Adolf Brand founded *Der Eigene*, the world’s first openly homosexual journal, in Germany. The title was key: In English it means “The Self-Owners.” Brand and his colleagues were actually pederasts (along with being openly racist and antisemitic), yearning “for a revival of Greek times and Hellenic standards of beauty after centuries of Christian barbarism.” Yet such matters are secondary. “Self-ownership” is the gnostic belief that undergirds the liberal view of sex. This belief allows no room for “they two shall be one flesh” or “be fruitful and multiply”—archaic incantations that imply limits to eroticism and arbitrary responsibilities toward others that crimp and distort. To be a sexual Self-Owner means the freedom to achieve orgasm whenever and however you want, presumably without compulsion (although Brand apparently held to some exceptions on that), and most preferably without the possibility of conception.

On one level, economic liberalism and sexual liberalism seem to complement each other. Consider the divorce industry, which drives up the GNP by creating two households and all the appliances and other bric-a-

brac that go with them. Or the drug industry, where great profits come from selling sexual aids (Viagra, Cialis) and chemical band-aids for gonorrhea, AIDS, and other “love” diseases. Or consider the enthusiastic embrace of the LGBTQ agenda by Target, Facebook, Google—indeed, by virtually the whole of Wall Street.

There is, however, a flaw in all of this, a contradiction in the mindset of the globalized liberal order. In order to have future generations of taxpaying, government-funding consumers, the globalized liberal order needs children. From where will these children come?

For some decades now in the United States, the answer has been unwed teenage mothers. About 40 percent of American children are currently born out of wedlock (a wonderful, antediluvian term), the vast majority drawing their financial support from the patriarchal state. (This is the sole form of patriarchy favored by the liberal feminist.) While it is arguable that some children have successfully adapted to this new order (a young Barack Obama comes to mind), most of them have made or will make for poor participants in the liberal capitalist side of the system. Still, they are human flesh and blood.

Regardless, the supply is running out. The incessant liberal antagonism toward all forms of fertility, manifest in the development of Norplant and other advanced forms of contraception, has driven down the teenage birthrate quite

sharply: It is down 42 percent since 2007.

It does no good to point out these contradictions to liberal capitalists, who are seemingly oblivious to the notion that their very liberalism is consuming future consumers. The contradiction itself is their core belief, like the Marxist’s historical dialectic. Indeed, the only answer to the question “From where will children come?” that liberalism ultimately provides is the stork. That is, despite every effort made by liberals to create a system that suppresses procreative marriage and human fertility, their ideology assumes that children will somehow still appear: The stork will bring them!

**The Stork Theory** can be seen, between the lines, in *Shall the Religious Inherit the Earth?*, Eric Kaufmann’s fascinating 2012 book. A self-declared secular liberal, Kaufmann nonetheless sees religion as a still-powerful force, arguing that “religious fundamentalists are on course to take over the world through demography.” He adapts here the term *fundamentalist* to include Christians, Jews, and Muslims worldwide who still adhere to the divine admonition “Be fruitful and multiply.” Kaufmann specifically includes American Mormons, the Old Order Amish and the Hutterites, Ultra-Orthodox Haredi Jews, Salafi Islamists, “Quiverfull” Evangelicals, and Laestadian Lutherans from the north woods of Finland. (He might have added Traditionalist or Latin Mass Catholics to the mix.) As human fertility otherwise falls around the earth, these religious

bodies—whose women still bear an average of four to nine children—are already expanding their relative share of national populations. Compounded over several future generations, the transition becomes staggering.

Kaufmann concludes with a warning to his fellow liberals: It will be a century or more before the world completes its demographic transition. There is still too much smoke in the air for us to pick out the peaks and valleys of the emerging social order. This much seems certain: without a new [secular liberal] ideology to inspire social cohesion, fundamentalism cannot be stopped. The religious shall inherit the earth. On the surface, this would appear to be good news for the philoprogenitive religious conservatives. However, Kaufmann fails to see that the “new” liberal ideology he seeks may already be in place—a strategy that is as much about coercion as it is inspiration. Simply put, the children of the traditionalists can be taken away, with their minds and their morals reprogrammed to be in harmony with the liberal idea. This process can already be seen in the sex-education programs and bathroom policies of the state schools, which now mostly embody the gender theory and the consequent antifertility biases of liberalism. The next phase will predictably involve shutting down “homophobic” religious and private schools; the first step is to take away their tax-exempt status.

The final phase (which is already being discussed, I am

told) follows from the same understanding of children’s rights. It would use the state’s child-welfare apparatus to remove children from “homophobic” and “heteronormative” parents, for transfer by adoption to reliably liberal households. Here, the children can learn the path to and practices of Self-Ownership. In these favored places, each child can exercise its right to explore and discover which of the multitude of possible sexual orientations it prefers. Homeschooling families would probably be the first targets. Yet others, such as the Old Order Amish, should quickly follow. These folks will find few friends in the existing American legal system, where the dominant practitioners now worship at the shrines of Self-Ownership and gender theory.

This is the Stork Theory at work, now backed by the police power of your government. Were the liberals able to achieve this full-scale suppression of fecundity, their contradiction would be fully realized. The only option that would remain for them would be to create some variation of *Brave New World*, hatcheries that surrender the human future to mechanical storks. What would happen to Self-Ownership under such a system is unclear, but the prospects are not promising. However, as noted before, contradictions may not be acknowledged.

**Back in 1916**, over 4,000 American cities and towns and millions of young mothers took part in National Baby Week. Orators celebrated motherhood as a vocation and a vital ele-

ment of national welfare. There were baby-care seminars and “Best Mother” contests that tested mothers’ knowledge and devotion. And there were grand parades. As one historian writes, “Like military heroes, mothers with infants in arms paraded down Main Street to the applause of flag waving townspeople.”

Today, exactly one hundred years later, the only equivalent events are the “pride” parades held in every major American city—orgies in motion. The objects of attention and praise are no longer mothers and babies. In their place rises alone the sterile phallus, a fitting symbol and the final product of the liberal idea.

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*“Religion must either modernize or face obsolescence” is the title of an article written by a feminist and published in an Australian newspaper. You need to read such arguments from the world, so that you can spot them when they appear in the church (and they inevitably will). The response to her title is the church that marries herself to the spirit of the times soon finds herself a widow since in the words of Dylan “The times they are a changin’” (Pastor Harris).*

### **Religion must either modernise or face obsolescence**

Dina Brawer

Published: August 13, 2016 - 12:05AM

In the United States the Democratic Party recently nominated Hillary Clinton as its presidential candidate. If the results of the latest polls hold true at election time, America will swear in its first female president in January. The previous week, across the pond, British Prime Minister Theresa



May was negotiating the terms of Britain's exit from Europe with Germany's Chancellor Angela Merkel.

Women living in Western society have been raised to believe they can be competent and successful in any professional role through education, ambition and hard work. And young girls today can point at several living role models operating at the highest levels of leadership. So is the long and hard battle for women's equality finally over?

Well, not entirely. In the religious sphere women's leadership remains a contentious issue. Last week Pope Francis announced a new commission to consider whether women should be made deacons in the Catholic Church. The Anglican Church consecrated Libby Lane as its first female bishop in January 2015, but this was only after a failed attempt in 2012.

While the Jewish Reform movement has been ordaining female rabbis since the early 1970s, and the Conservative movement since the early 1980s, in Orthodox Judaism the notion of female rabbis is still hotly contested. In November 2015, the Orthodox Rabbinical Council of America – in its third attempt to stem the growing tide of support for Orthodox women's rabbinical ordination – published a stern proclamation declaring the illegitimacy of female rabbis. Not without irony, as Hillary Clinton wrapped up the democratic presidential nomination a group of leading American Orthodox rabbis

opposed to women's ordination launched a series of "hearings" on this disputed subject.

Why is there such disparity between the secular realm and the sacred? Orthodox Judaism, like most religions, seeks stability in what it considers enduring traditional values. This finds expression in resisting the pressure to conform to a changing society. Those who oppose women's ordination do so on the basis that it is not "traditional". But the obsession with maintaining tradition in this way is not without a cost. And the cost of such single-mindedness can paradoxically be the undermining of tradition itself by depriving the traditional community of the oxygen it needs to remain vibrant.

In *The Guns of August*, a military history of the First World War, Barbara Tuchman highlights the danger of prioritising tradition in what has become known as the "tragedy of the red trousers". In the lead up to WWI, as warfare shifted from fighting at close quarters to heavier artillery fired from greater distance, it became advantageous to conceal soldiers for as long as possible. The British and German armies reacted to this change by exchanging their bright coloured uniforms for drab greys and browns. The French soldiers, however, still wore the same red caps and trousers, marking them out as easy targets. The suggestion of the French war minister Adolphe Messimy that his armies do likewise was met with ridicule and resistance. The red trousers

represented army pride and prestige and military traditionalists were not prepared to give it up. At a parliamentary hearing, a former war minister, Eugene Etienne, spoke for France. "Eliminate the red trousers?" he cried. "Never! Le pantalon rouge, c'est la France!"

"That blind and imbecile attachment to the most visible of all colours," wrote Messimy afterwards, "was to have cruel consequences."

Faith leaders grappling with women's inclusion in religious leadership roles are in danger of the same pitfall. By focusing exclusively on "what is traditional" for their religion rather than asking the crucial question: "What change is necessary for religion to thrive?" they risk alienating 50 per cent of their flock. They also deprive the entire community of the talent, skills and enthusiasm that women would otherwise contribute. Insisting that men continue to wear the trousers when it comes to religion might be traditional, but, as the *pantaloon rouge debacle* illustrates, it may not be worth the price.

**Dina Brawer is founder of JOFA, the Jewish Orthodox Feminist Alliance, in the UK and an Orthodox rabbinical student at Yeshivat Maharat in New York.**

*This story was found at: <http://www.smh.com.au/comment/religion-must-either-modernise-or-face-obsolescence-20160811-gqq8hp.html> Sydney Morning Herald*

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SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THURS	FRI	SAT
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
			6:15 PM Choir Advent Ves- pers 7:30 PM			
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
Bus Caroling & Chili Dinner 1 PM			6:15 PM Choir Advent Ves- pers 7:30 PM			
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
Children's Christmas Pageant 5 PM			6:15 PM Choir			Christmas Eve 7:30 PM
25	26	27	28	29	30	31
Christmas Day 10:00 AM			<b>PASTOR</b>	<b>ON</b>	<b>VACATION</b>	

January 2017

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THURS	FRI	SAT
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Divine Service 10:30			6:15 PM Choir			
<b>NO Sunday School</b>						
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
Epiphany Dinner 5:15-ish		Voters Meeting 6:30 PM	6:15 PM Choir 7:15 Romans			
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
	Pastor at	LCA Conference	6:15 PM Choir 7:15 Romans			
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
		Elders Meeting 6:30 PM	6:15 PM Choir 7:15 Romans			
29	30	31				