



Written by [Selwyn Duke](#) on July 2, 2022

ADF President: “Imperialism of Woke Culture” Imperils Religious Liberty Worldwide

“There is freedom of speech,” said late Ugandan dictator Idi Amin — “but I cannot guarantee freedom after speech.” This spirit is man’s default and lives on worldwide, even in most Western countries, with their “hate speech” laws. The dominant cultural force animating our pseudo-elite’s tongue suppression is currently called “wokeness,” and now a civil rights activist also calls it something else: the greatest threat to religious freedom worldwide.

Michael Farris, president of Alliance Defending Freedom, thus told the Christian Post in a recent interview conducted prior to his participation Thursday in the second annual International Religious Freedom Summit in Washington, D.C.

As the Post [reports](#):

Explaining that many people, especially Christians, find themselves on “the receiving end of efforts to silence them, to cause them to lose their careers” and “not have the ability to even get their opinions out in public society,” Farris said “the dominance of woke culture that thinks it’s OK to silence people who disagree is very dangerous in many respects for freedom of speech and freedom of religion” in the U.S.

Farris told CP that “in some sectors of the world,” the greatest threat to religious freedom is “the same as [in] the United States,” specifically, “the imperialism of woke culture.” He maintained that the “totalitarian mood” behind woke culture extends to the dominant orthodoxies in other countries as well: “In India, for example, Hindu nationalism operates on a very, very egregious basis and tries to close down people that are differing.”

...“There’s [pressure] to adhere to whatever the prevailing viewpoint is in a particular country, whether that’s Hindu nationalism or left-wing cultural wokeism,” [Farris stated].

So-called wokeness, an intensification of long-existing political correctness, is much and rightfully lamented by many Americans; they want “freedom of speech.” In response, some leftists will say that what’s being called “wokeness” is just “manners.”

“Having freedom of speech doesn’t mean there are no consequences for speech,” they may aver. This sounds much like what Idi Amin stated, only some (not all) of these leftists are talking about *social* consequences, not legal ones. In reality, though, neither side really gets at the issue’s heart.

The leftists are wrong in the errant speech standard they apply, but they’re not wrong in the



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aforementioned principle. After all, has there ever been a civilization, anywhere, in which you could say whatever you pleased without any consequence?

In the 1950s, espousing free-market or Christian sentiments in the USSR could bring punishment while advocating Marxism in the U.S. would mean social ostracism and career damage. At one time in the West, and today in much of Africa, homosexual behavior was/is punishable under law and also could/can bring ostracism; now criticizing it in America can mean “cancellation.” Medieval Europe had its heresy laws and, likewise, ancient Greek philosopher Socrates was executed for corrupting the young and “mocking the gods.” This raises a question:

Should our goal be to remedy what could be a historically present mistake, and is this what earlier America accomplished?

Or are speech restrictions, either social and/or legal, unavoidable?

As to early America, it was no libertarian paradise. Why, espousing certain beliefs could get you “warned out of town.” Sure, our Constitution essentially created a “hands off” federal government, but states and localities had a very different role — a more restrictive one. Yet, again, is this avoidable?

The Laws of Man

What if someone told you we could have a society without laws? Even a small-government adherent would warn this is impossible, that it means anarchy, which is never a permanent state of affairs. Okay, but is it any different with the implication that we could have a society with no *social* laws?

People are beings who believe *things*. Some of those things are good and some bad, but they all have something in common: When embraced widely and passionately enough, they become those social obligations we call social laws (and may even be legislated). At one time, for example, unabashedly using vulgarity in public could bring ostracism; today using racial epithets can.

So social speech restrictions never do and never can disappear; it’s only the standard applied that changes. Despite this, conservatives argue with a contrary implication, simply combating woke norms with the complaint that they do what, in essence, all social codes do: limit what you may say without negative consequence. But architect Buckminster Fuller’s observation about the futility of fighting merely an “existing reality” comes to mind. Changing something, he said, requires building “a new model that makes the old model obsolete.”

The Stuff of Laws

So how should our “social laws” model be devised? Relevant to this is something philosopher G.K. Chesterton [wrote](#) in his 1905 book *Heretics*:

We are fond of talking about “liberty”; but the way we end up actually talking of it is an attempt to avoid discussing what is “good.” We are fond of talking about “progress”; that is a dodge to avoid discussing what is good. We are fond of talking about “education”; that is a dodge to avoid discussing what is good.

The modern man says, “Let us leave all these arbitrary standards and embrace unadulterated liberty.” This is, logically rendered, “Let us not decide what is good, but let it be considered good not to decide it.”

In other words and applying it directly to the topic here, we’re *going* to have social speech codes;



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they're a constant. What matters is whether, and the degree to which, they *stigmatize lies or the Truth*. And this means:

We can't know what these social laws should be unless we know Truth.

Now may be heard that common and stale refrain, "Whose truth?!" To echo Chesterton, this is often another dodge, and for certain it diverts us from the necessary task. Know, too, that the people who historically shouted it most loudly, claiming all is relative, are now most absolutist in their dictates as they make everything relative to themselves and absolutely non-negotiable.

Conservatives are complicit in this as well. For they're also often disconnected from Truth and thus, not knowing the roots and tree, are left to discuss the leaves (i.e., discuss secondary matters without settling foundational principles).

A mature society asks neither "Whose truth?!" nor "What is Truth?" as Pontius Pilate did of Jesus. It recognizes Truth's existence and seeks it in all things. And anyone still finding this a dubious prospect should remember: Something *will* be effectuated in your society — and there's only one alternative to it being the Truth.

The process of elimination will tell you what that is.



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