

The Essential Church Versus Malevolent Government

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Host: David Wheaton 00:08

The Essential Church Versus Malevolent Government. That is the topic we'll discuss today right here on The Christian Worldview Radio Program, where the mission is to sharpen the biblical worldview of Christians and to proclaim the good news of Jesus Christ. I'm David Wheaton, the host.

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The church is the body of true believers across the world that Christ redeemed for eternity through the shedding of His own blood in order to represent and proclaim the excellencies of Christ to our rebellious world. The Church and its message of salvation through faith in Christ is the only hope for sinners. This is why the church is essential. Referring to Himself, Christ told the apostle Peter, *"upon this rock, I will build My church; and the gates of Hades will not overpower it."* That's from Matthew chapter 16. Christ promises to build his church, to grow his body of believers, and that the powers of death and darkness, that is Satan, will not overpower it. The Bible says that Satan is the god of this world and he is active in deceiving nations, governing authorities and peoples. The church is the primary obstacle for his deceit, which is why he incites governing authorities to persecute the church and introduces "tares." In other words, false Christians to lead it to compromise.

This weekend on The Christian Worldview, Pastor Travis Allen of Grace Church in Greeley Colorado, joins us to discuss the just released documentary film, The Essential Church, which chronicles how three churches - Grace Community Church in Los Angeles and two churches in Canada - defied government mandates during the COVID pandemic, continuing to gather to worship because they understood that government does not have the God given authority to dictate how a church worships. We will play audio clips from the film, and then discuss some current events, including how a young believer was arrested in Wisconsin without warning for preaching on the street at a "drag queen" event, while other Evangelical churches this summer are dressing themselves up in Star Wars, Barbie, or Toy Story themes for, "At the Movies" sermon series.

First, let's get to the interview with Pastor Travis Allen. Travis, thank you for coming on The Christian Worldview Radio Program today. I know you recently watched the release of this new documentary called, The Essential Church, which chronicles what took place at many churches around the country, but specifically for the sake of this film at Grace Community Church where John MacArthur pastors in

California, and also follows the two pastors in Canada, both James Coates and Tim Stevens, who were both arrested and put in jail for not complying with the lockdown mandates by their government. I want to start out with playing a soundbite from Mike Riccardi in the film, who was one of the pastors at Grace Community Church as that church was wrestling with what to do when the state of California and LA County, were putting all these very strict mandates on them for not being able to meet, and if they did meet, they had to do all this and that. Here's what Mike Riccardi said about how the pastors and elders tried to understand what they were to do with these mandates, in light of Romans chapter 13.

Audio Sound Bite: Mike Riccardi 04:02

You're bound by passages like Romans 13 and I Peter 2, to comply with those orders because every person is to be in subjection to the governing authorities. There is no authority except which is of God, and those who resist authority are going to be found to be resisting God.

Those commands weighed heavy on all of our consciences. Is it sin to obey this order, this mandate? I have a friend from seminary who serves as a pastor, and he would message me and say, "There are a lot of people who are looking to Grace Church to chart their course in response to this." He began pressing me on whether it's lawful to disobey these orders. I would say, "Well, this is the order from the government. It's not sin to not meet for this defined period of time, so we're not being asked to do what is sinful, at least that's our conviction. It is not sinful. If they asked us, it would be sin, because it would be in violation of Romans 13 and I Peter 2, to go against those orders. He was saying, "I don't think that's what those texts say," and I'm saying, "why not? Show me where my error is. It seems fairly plain to me." He would make his case and I remained unconvinced. He says, "You've got to read Martin Lloyd Jones commentary on Romans 13."

I had the set, began reading and started to go, Okay, I see why this is compelling for them. I don't necessarily agree yet, but what I was finding out as I was reading Martin Lloyd Jones, was that I had a functionally "Erastian" view of the relationship between the church and state, without having ever heard of this guy named Erastus, or the movement. He said there are these institutions that God has instituted, the church and the state, and where papism said, There's God, and then the church who rules the state. Erastus said, No, there's God who has ordained the state, and they rule over the church.

That became known as what is called Erastianism. I'm finding these to be convincing. There is the civil sphere, that which belongs to Caesar, and then there is the spiritual ecclesiastical sphere, those things that belong to God. Jesus says, give the one to the one, and the others to the other.

So it's not God-church-state. It's not God-state-church. It is that God has instituted the state and the church to be co-ordinate institutions with respect to one another. Of course, each subordinate to God. What then happens is, we think that one of these two coordinate institutions has to subordinate the

one to the other, and that's where problems all throughout history have ensued. Martin Lloyd Jones was helping me see, we need to be neither Papists, nor Erastians, but we need to see that the church and the state are coordinate. I and some others began to speak up and say, Hey, I think that there's a better argument for why we don't have to pay attention to any of this, and that is. . . The government really doesn't have any authority to tell the church how we can worship.

Host: David Wheaton 07:22

So again, that was Mike Riccardi, one of the pastors at Grace Community Church, and Phil Johnson, the director of Grace to You at the very end of that soundbite. Travis, could you explain this a bit more? Mike Riccardi was saying, It's not God at the top and then the state over the church. It's not God at the top with the church over the state, but it's God at the top with two coordinates. In other words, equal institutions or agencies, the church and state, who govern different realms.

Guest: Pastor Travis Allen 07:55

Yes David. I'll try to take a stab at that.

First of all, let me thank you again for bringing me on to The Christian Worldview. It's always a pleasure to be talking with you in this form and I appreciate your ministry very much. I also appreciate the ministry of John MacArthur, Mike Riccardi, and others at Grace Community Church.

We at our church were able to screen, *The Essential Church*. They were gracious enough to allow us to do that without charge. I so much appreciated that, because it was a real benefit to all the people who showed up at our church to be able to screen that movie. I do recommend everybody everywhere to go and take a look at *The Essential Church*. It's a fantastic survey of what happens through the pandemic and what John MacArthur Grace Community Church went through, and also James Coates and his Church, and Tim Stevens and their church, what they went through. It's a fantastic story and really will strengthen the confidence of Christians.

We as a church had to struggle through this as well, in thinking through where the responsibility of the government and the responsibility of the church were intersecting, and how there was an encroachment of the government into the church's realm of authority and responsibility. This is a way over simplified, but I'll make this oversimplification just for the point of how we explained it to our folks.

You could say that the state is overseeing matters relating to people's physical bodies or their physical life. The church is overseeing things that pertain to the immaterial part of man, people's spirit. For us to be human souls means that we are composed of both body and spirit. So we have a material part of us and an immaterial part of us, and those two together are what it is to have a human nature. It's to be a spirit that is joined together to a body. So the government oversees things that pertain to the material self, the material body. What the government was doing is with one track in their thinking, is that we need to protect physical life no matter what. I'm thinking the best of the

government here, but they were wanting to make sure we protect and preserve physical life and well being. They have no concern about the immaterial part of man. The government doesn't care at all. Many of them don't even believe in the immaterial part of man, but they were disregarding the church's role in ministering to the immaterial part of man.

That is where the church needs to step up and say, You know what, actually, you're stepping into, when you're telling us, we need to mask up, and we need to not sing in church, and we need to maintain this strict distance between people, that's not how the ministry of the local church is conducted. So the elders of each church need to say, well before God, we need to make sure we're singing because that's commanded, we need to make sure we're doing the one another's, we need to make sure we're communicating with one another ,encouraging one another. In order to encourage one another, we have to see each other's faces, because so much is communicated not just in voice or tone of voice, but by facial expression, by body language. We have to be together, minister together. Preaching needs to be done in person, live, that's the environment, that's the format and we are commanded to do that. To minister to the immaterial part of man, to educate, to inform the spirit, in order that we can be obedient and righteous before the Lord. That's what the ministry of the local church is. I do agree that there is the state and the church. There's a coordinate plane there, but they must respect one another's realms and spheres of authority.

Host: David Wheaton 11:47

Pastor Travis Allen with us today on The Christian Worldview. Travis, was this a bit of a pivot for Grace Community Church's interpretation or understanding of Romans chapter 13, and the Christians responsibility to government?

Guest: Pastor Travis Allen 12:02

It did sound a little bit from, *The Essential Church* movie, that Grace Church may have changed its positions on Romans 13. I don't think that there was a change in interpretation of Romans 13. I think John MacArthur and many at Grace Community Church and the elders there understood the interpretation of Romans 13, but what we have all had to adjust to is there has been a government that's been fairly hands off with regard to the local church. Over the past number of decades, we got used to a fairly passive approach from the government, fairly innocuous laws and policies and those kinds of things, but as COVID revealed, it really was the great Revealer.

2020 was definitely giving us a clear vision of what the government was up to, and that many in the government wanted to shut down churches. They saw an opportunity for greater government authority and reaching out and overreaching government authority. Once the government takes authority, they don't give it back. I think that there are many in government that like the intrusion of the government into all aspects of human life. The churches have had to adjust to that, and seeing the implications of Romans 13 and Acts 5:29, where Peter says, *We must obey God rather than men*. Very clearly, the religious leaders were telling them, You cannot teach any more in this name.

If our government said to us, you can't teach any more in this name, the name of Jesus Christ, we would clearly respond by saying, We must obey God rather than men. What the government did is say, oh yes, you can teach in that name. You just can't do it in person. You can't sing about that. You have to keep your distance. If you're going to come back, you have to do outdoor services. There was a greater and greater encroachment. Certainly Mike Riccardi and the folks at Grace Community Church unpacked the onerous laws and policies and restrictions that LA county and the city started to put in place that effectively they were saying, you can no longer teach in this name.

So I think every church needs to determine before God and their conscience before Him, they're going to give an account. Hebrews 13:17 says *they're going to give an account for the souls that they have to oversee, to God and to the Lord*. They have to determine in their conscience, are we obeying God rather than men? Or are we going to obey men in this case, and stop teaching because they tell us to? It's understanding the implications of Romans 13, Acts 5, and other passages as well. Understanding how to apply it in this changing climate of government overreach and intrusion. I think that that's what Grace Community Church had to adjust to.

Host: David Wheaton 14:50

They also bring out in the film, Travis, the duplicity or the hypocrisy of these mandates in that while they were telling the church that you can't meet, liquor stores were open, casinos, big box stores and so forth.

Guest: Pastor Travis Allen 15:04

Black Lives Matter riots were going on.

Host: David Wheaton 15:09

They began to understand what's going on here. This isn't equally mandated across the field. That was part of their understanding that this was more than, we're trying to protect your health. Now as a contrast, Andy Stanley, the well known pastor in Atlanta, during the pandemic, went on CNN for an interview and said that the gathering of believers on Sunday at church is not essential. We'll get to that soundbite next. You are listening to The Christian Worldview. I'm David Wheaton.

New Resource: Speaker Series Audio with Alex Newman 15:41

There is a war ongoing. There are two sides in this war. There are those who are with Christ and there are those who are against Christ. Sometimes it's not always easy to see the difference. But as we go through this information about The Great Reset, I think you'll find out very quickly what side these great resetters are on. Their own words condemn them. Know that this has implications for everything. For education, for health care, for your job, for business, for government, for law, for property rights. The social contract as Klaus Schwab will explain.

That was journalist Alex Newman speaking at our recent Christian Worldview Speaker Series event on being informed and prepared for The Great Reset. Alex's presentation is full of sound bites from those who are seeking to transform the world into a godless dystopia. You can download the audio of the event, or order a USB thumb drive by going to our website, TheChristianWorldview.org or calling toll free 1-888-646-2233.

Upcoming Event: TCW Golf Event 2022 16:41

David Wheaton here inviting you to The Christian Worldview golf event on Monday, September 18th at Woodhill Country Club in Wayzata, Minnesota. This is a rare opportunity to experience a classic course in immaculate condition with challenging greens in a beautiful setting, all in support of The Christian Worldview Radio Program. Golfer Registration includes lunch on the lawn, practice range, player gift, and 18 holes with cart followed by appetizers and awards.

Bring a foursome or we can fit you into a group. Also, contact us about sponsor opportunities, whether or not you are attending or local to Minnesota. We hope to see you Monday, September 18th. Registration deadline is Labor Day. To find out more and to register, visit TheChristianWorldview.org or call 1-888-646-2233. That's 1-888-646-2233 or [The ChristianWorldview.org](http://TheChristianWorldview.org).

Host: David Wheaton 17:48

Welcome back to The Christian Worldview. I'm David Wheaton. Be sure to visit our website, TheChristianWorldview.org where you can subscribe to our free weekly email and annual print letter, order resources for adults and children and support the ministry. Our topic today is, The Essential Church Versus Malevolent Government. Pastor Travis Allen is our guest.

Andy Stanley, who's a very well known pastor in Atlanta, North Point church, a multisite church, had a completely different response to these government mandates to lock down churches and so forth. Here's what he said in a CNN interview around this time.

Audio Sound Bite: CNN News Anchor 18:31

One of the largest mega churches in the country, North Point Ministries, has just said that it is suspending all in person worship for the rest of the year. This is a church with seven locations in and around Atlanta, ministering to more than 30,000 people every Sunday. It does not go unnoticed when a pastor with your reach says that he can't keep his congregation safe. What are you seeing that led you to this decision?

Audio Sound Bite: Andy Stanley 18:58

The context of our decision was, we want to love our neighbors, we want to be a good neighbor, we want to love our neighborhoods and we're for our communities. We don't want to accidentally do something to our communities. You understand this, your viewers understand this. We have to go to

the grocery store, we have to go to the drugstore, we have to go to work. We don't have to go to church. We have chosen to bring church to the people in our community, actually people all over the world and this is a temporary shutdown. But the church isn't shut down. It's just our Sunday morning services. So this really was about the health of our congregation, but not just our congregation, this was about the health of our entire community.

Audio Sound Bite: CNN News Anchor 19:33

I have heard other faith leaders early on in the pandemic especially, saying that churches are essential services, you must have Sunday worship. Your doors must stay open. What do you say to those faith leaders?

Audio Sound Bite: Andy Stanley 19:48

A church is an essential service but a one hour worship service with hundreds of people or in our case 1000s of people all crammed into a room is not an essential service. That's one of the things people need understand. Our church and our staff are actually busier maybe than we've ever been, because we've reallocated assets, personnel, to serving in the community. So we're not closed, but a one hour worship service, hey, we can do that at home and as everybody listening understands, we can worship wherever we choose to worship. The worship service is one facet of a healthy church and we've decided to suspend that one facet of our local churches.

Host: David Wheaton 20:24

Again, that was Andy Stanley in an interview with CNN about why they chose early on to close their church for the remaining part of the year. It was about loving their neighbors, loving other communities. It's not essential that they meet in person as a church. Travis, could you explain this contrasting doctrinal worldview, where Andy Stanley doesn't see the church as essential to meet in person.

Guest: Pastor Travis Allen 20:52

I think he's got an aberrant view of the local church. That is one of the great problems in our time. One of the great challenges in our time is how many people say that they're Christians, and have no idea that they have been fed, and they have swallowed a sub Christian Gospel, with a sub Christian understanding of the church itself.

Jesus said, He basically came to to die for the church. He came to set up this institution called the church that He loved from before the foundation of the world, that the Father gave Him from before the foundation of the world. All these names that are written in the Lamb's book of life, He died for their sins, He died to make them His own, and then to organize them into a church in Ecclesia called out of the world.

There are metaphors in Scripture, they're called God's building, God's temple, but also the body, the body of Christ with Christ Himself as the head. Each person, each blood bought Christian that's a part of a local church is a member of a local church body. Each member of that church, regenerate, transformed by the Spirit, transformed by God, united to Christ by faith, united by the baptism of the Spirit into the church itself, each one of those people are essential to that local church.

Each one of them has a gift that's to be ministered to others in that church. A biblical ecclesiology means you have a high view of this local church, the gatherings, the body. Ephesians 4 talks about how important the leadership is to the church to equip the saints for the work of the ministry. There are so many one another commands in the New Testament. One of them is from Hebrews 10:24. *Let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works.*

He doesn't make provision for doing that just through online chat groups. He says in verse 25, let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, not neglecting to meet together as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another and all the more as you see the day drawing near. There is such a low view in our time of local church gatherings. I think it's because there's a sub Christian Gospel many people have swallowed, there's a sub Christian, sub Biblical understanding, an aberrant view of what the local church is. People do not understand the biblical doctrine of the local church. For many of these churches, mega churches, Andy Stanley has basically come out on record and said, Hey, our meetings aren't essential. I just have to, in that sense, agree with him. Meeting at his church is probably not essential, because it's really not a church.

There are many churches that are following the Andy Stanley route. They are basically disqualifying themselves as a church. They would be one of those in Revelation 2 and 3, where Christ says, I'm going to remove my candlestick, my witness, you're no longer. You may put whatever you want to up on the sign out front on your property, you may have some kind of online presence, and many people may be "attending" by clicking in and joining some live service sitting in their living room, but whatever you say about yourself, it doesn't matter because I never knew you. Depart from me you workers of iniquity, you are no longer one of my churches.

Host: David Wheaton 24:22

Travis Allen is our guest today here on The Christian Worldview as we talk about the essential church. He's the pastor of Grace Church in Greeley, Colorado. We have links to his church at our website, TheChristianWorldview.org. I want to play a couple more sound bites from this documentary film, The Essential Church Travis, because there's some very, very powerful moments in this film that are particularly important for us to understand in the day and age in which we live in.

This next soundbite from the film comes from one of those pastors in Canada, James Coates, who was arrested by the Canadian government for continuing to meet as a church,. He was in jail for 35

days for holding church services. Then Voddie Baucham, who is a well known preacher, commented on this. Listen to this soundbite and then I'll follow up with a question.

Audio Sound Bite: Pastor James Coates 25:11

I think Christians need to realize that governments aren't neutral, that governments aren't even necessarily good. God has ordained them, and they serve a good purpose, and to the extent that they're faithful to that purpose, they are good. But we have to be cognizant of the reality that we should see the spirit of antichrist at work in the government. So when the government goes to war with the church, over a matter like COVID-19, we need to understand that that's not a neutral thing, that the spiritual battle is taking place at that level as well.

Audio Sound Bite: Voddie Baucham 25:46

Many Christians don't see Marxism as an issue of spiritual warfare, because we don't really understand what Marxism is. They don't really understand that to the Marxist, Christianity is the enemy. Unless you understand that, you don't get the significance of the spiritual warfare that we're dealing with. Marxism is a statist ideology. For the Marxist, the state has to be the vehicle through which all things and people are controlled. When people think about Marxism, they think about classical Marxism. So they think about, Karl Marx, economics, the bourgeoisie and the proletariat. What they don't tend to think about is Neo Marxism being more of a cultural revolution, changing a culture from within. The idea that the world is divided between oppressors and oppressed groups.

Host: David Wheaton 26:42

Then the film goes on to show how this Marxism is communicated by the governing authorities, with the health commissioner in Los Angeles, saying this.

Audio Sound Bite: Health Commissioner of Los Angeles 26:53

Within the challenges that define our healthcare system today, are enormous opportunities to fundamentally shift our focus from disease care models to prevention and building health equity, from primarily fixing people to also fixing systems.

Audio Sound Bite: Voddie Baucham 27:11

If you are going to take over cultures and take over power structures, you can't have a formidable ideological opponent, and religion in general and Christianity in particular, represents a formidable ideological opponent.

Host: David Wheaton 27:35

Again, that was James Coates, the pastor who was arrested and jailed in Canada, followed by Pastor Voddie Baucham talking about how governments are often very oppositional to the church because of this Marxist worldview. Travis, what are your thoughts on that particular soundbite from the film?

Guest: Pastor Travis Allen 27:55

What both those men are pointing out, and I think it's a very true point, is that we can't look at Romans 13, seeing that God has given government to us as a gift, seeing that the role of government is to be a minister of God for righteousness.

We can't leave it there. It is true that God has given government as a gift. The government is on the shoulders of Jesus Christ. He, Himself is the head of that millennial government, the millennial kingdom, He will rule and reign throughout eternity as well. Government is a good gift from God. Yes, we realize that we are in this fallen world. In this time, at the end of the age, we have human governments that are made up of humans, and they are made up of fallen human beings. As Ephesians 2 says, *they are under the influence of the spirit of power of the age, the spirit that's working in the sons of disobedience.*

Those people who are occupying positions of government are going to eat, sleep, breathe, drink, all of the spirit of this age and the spirit that's blowing through the age. Those are doctrines of demons. Those are antichrist spirit. Governments can be on a sliding scale of more righteous to less righteous. We're living in a time right now that is a less righteous time and I think it is heading into an even lesser righteousness time.

Christians need to be braced for impact on all this. I think we're learning that. We need to realize as Paul says in Ephesians 6:12, *we don't wrestle against flesh and blood, we wrestle against the rulers, the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places.* I think it's a sweet instinct of every true Christian that we have a desire to submit to the governing authorities. We see them as Gods ministers, ministers of righteousness. We have a love of law enforcement, a love of the military, a love of even government bureaucracies and how they help and aid everything from water rights to property rights. We understand the good that government brings and we have an instinct to want to submit a desire to obey the governing authorities.

At the same time, we cannot turn off our brains. We need to realize weapons of our warfare, as Paul says in II Corinthians 10. They're not carnal, they're mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds, and we need to cast down imaginations, and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God and bring into captivity, every single thought to the obedience of Jesus Christ. That's our own thoughts, certainly. But it's also the thoughts of ideologies of the world around us. Certainly those in governments have thoughts and ideologies that are contrary to God and contrary to Christ, contrary to the church. So we need to be thoughtful, aware Christians that navigate through this world, informed by the scripture, certainly informed by a sound biblical ministry, deep theological Ministry of our local churches, and navigate through this world with wisdom, pursuing righteousness.

Host: David Wheaton 31:03

We're very grateful that you do that at Grace Church in Greeley Colorado, Travis, where he is the pastor. You can find out more at Gracegreeley.org. It's linked in our website, TheChristianWorldview.org.

I would like to play one more audio clip from the film, *The Essential Church*. Again, we encourage listeners to watch this film. It's in theaters right now. You can go to our website, TheChristianWorldview.org to click on the link to the film to find out if and where it's showing in your area. We need to pause briefly for some ministry announcements. But coming up, one of the more powerful moments in the film that leads to a question of self examination. Am I willing to die to follow Christ when government intrudes?

You are listening to The Christian Worldview. I'm David Wheaton.

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Featured Resource: Dangerous Affirmation

It's critical for Christians to understand the moral depravity that has taken captive our nation. The LGBTQ movement is loud and proud on our main streets. But even more troubling, has pushed into evangelical churches under what's called, "Gay Christianity." M.D. Perkins book, *Dangerous Affirmation The Threat of "Gay Christianity"* explains, "The way Gay Christian activists are rethinking theology, biblical interpretation, and the nature and purpose of the church in order to infiltrate conservative evangelicalism. The only antidote is to know and stand firm on the truth of God's Word."

Dangerous Affirmation is 239 pages, softcover, and retails for \$24.99. For a limited time, you can order it for a donation of any amount to The Christian Worldview. Just go to TheChristianWorldview.org or call toll free 1-888-646-2233 or write to Box 401 Excelsior, Minnesota 55331.

Welcome back to The Christian Worldview. I'm David Wheaton. Be sure to visit our website, TheChristianWorldview.org where you can subscribe to our free weekly email and annual print letter, order resources for adults and children and support the ministry. Our topic today is, The Essential Church Versus Malevolent Government. Pastor Travis Allen is our guest.

One particularly powerful and poignant part of the film is when Ian Hamilton, who I believe is from Scotland, but pastors in England, talked about the period of Scottish history when the Covenanters, who were against the Kings intrusion into the church, suffered some terrible persecution.

Audio Sound Bite: Ian Hamilton 34:45

The issue at heart in conflict with the state is almost always that issue, Who has the right to govern my conscience? Who has the right to tell me how to live out my faith?

Host: David Wheaton 35:11

You can hear the water there rolling up on the shore and you didn't know what was coming next. He goes into the true story of this family, and specifically, two women, a mother and a daughter, both with the name of Margaret, who wouldn't recant joining this group called the Covenanters who resisted, defied the fact that the king had the right to rule over their churches.

They took two Margaret's and they put them in a tidal estuary strapped to a post. As the tide rose, they put the mother in front, I believe, and then the daughter 50 feet or so behind her. So as the tide rose, they were going to drown. They were waiting for them to recant. This was an incredibly powerful part of the film, putting yourself in that situation, what would I do? All they had to do was say, "No, the king has the right to rule in our churches", but they didn't. Both of them ended up dying a horrific death in that tidal estuary. Travis, explain how believers can have this kind of conviction that they would rather die than give into an unjust intrusion from the state into the realm of the church.

Guest: Pastor Travis Allen 36:28

It's what the Scripture teaches. It's having a sound understanding, a deep understanding of the Bible. Anybody even reading the Bible can see there is a hope beyond this life. There's a belief in the things that are unseen, because the things that are seen are just temporary, transient, but the things that are unseen are eternal truths that are bedrock solid, they are not going anywhere.

God Himself is the unseen God. He by nature is Spirit. And yet, God is unchanging, immutable, always constant, always faithful. It is no mistake, to put our faith in the unseen God, and turn our eyes away from what is seen, what is temporary, what is transitory, even in this physical life that we live in. How are the two Margaret's or any other Christian going to have that kind of confidence and conviction that they will put their life on the line? It's by the ministry of a local church, it's by the teaching and the preaching of God's Word, it's by them being obedient to the commands of Scripture, and following the faith of their fathers, the faith that was once for all delivered to the saints. When we

put those things into practice in the church, what we find is our minds are renewed by the Holy Spirit through scripture. Our minds are renewed, our lives are transformed, and they turn us. There is a power of the gospel that is undeniable. To take somebody who was once a sinner, very far from God, very far from the grace of God, lives filled with sins, and destructive relationships, and all kinds of baggage that people enter into the church with, they get saved.

The Scripture washes over their minds because there's sound preaching from the pulpit. They're obedient to the commands of Scripture, especially the one another of Scripture, giving themselves up to others in the church to disciple them and see them grow in the knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ, and as they give themselves to one another, they find collectively and individually they grow, they're transformed. That's an undeniable power. When you see the power of the Holy Spirit at work in the lives of the members of the local church, it gives you great great confidence and assures you that your faith is real, sound, and true. This is meaningful, this is worth dying for. That's why the local church is so essential in strengthening, solidifying, and deepening the conviction of Christians.

Host: David Wheaton 39:03

Travis Allen is our guest today here on The Christian Worldview. We're talking about, the essential church and the conviction of those two Margaret's over in Scotland who were willing to give their lives to it. There are Christians today who are on the front lines as well. We just saw recently in Wisconsin, at a so called drag show event where you have men dressed as women dancing erotically in front of children, that some Christians went to the sidewalk and were actually reading from the Bible. Here's what that sounded like before they were arrested.

Audio Sound Bite: Wisconsin Drag Show Event 39:36

Serve one another. Love your neighbor as yourself. But if you bite and devour one another, beware lest you be consumed by one another. Hey, what are you doing? (Police officer: What is the problem here?) He didn't give any warning. He just grabbed the mic. You're taking away my property. He has every right to be out here engaging in speech.

I'll stop the soundbite there, but basically what happened is that the police walked up, took his microphone away, put his arms behind his back, handcuffed him, and hauled him off to the police station, and arrested him. There didn't seem to be any warning. Listeners can actually watch the video of this incident if you go to our website, TheChristianWorldview.org.

The question is, Travis, as you talked about our society being more unrighteous than ever, and you could look at abortion, the transgender movement now, homosexuality, and who knows what's next. Probably adult child sexual encounters and so forth. Should Christians be more activist now, with the aggressive nature of our society against biblical truth? I mean, is there more call now than ever, that we need to be out in the streets doing what these young men were doing? Not in violent ways,

not saying that, but being out there with the truth of God's Word, pushing back against a society that's bent completely on rejection of God.

Guest: Pastor Travis Allen 41:20

I don't know that I want to make a statement for all Christians, each one of us has our gift from God by the Spirit, each Christian truly, truly a Christian, united to Christ, baptized, immersed in the spirit into Christ, each one of us has a gift from the Holy Spirit. We use that to minister to one another and minister the Gospel. Certainly this young man, he's 19 years old, Marcus. I don't know if I'm pronouncing his name correctly, but it's either Schroeder or Schrader. He's actually a student in Tom Ascol's Institute of Public Theology, Founders Ministries, and this young man is a student there. Dr. Tom Ascol knows him and actually has been interacting with him and his father.

Tom told me, he said that the police didn't give Marcus or anybody he was with any warning. They didn't ask him to lower his amplification. They said they came up, grabbed him, handcuffed him, arrested him completely without warning. We saw this, didn't we, when we looked north of our US border and saw what happened in Canada as James Coates was hauled off to prison, Tim Stevens hauled off to prison, there were other pastors as well hauled off to prison. Canada is a country that's under the crown of England, and the crown is actually tied to the Church of England.

So you would think that Christians preaching the gospel, I mean, what Marcus was preaching was, Love your neighbor as yourself, and he's being arrested for that? He's being arrested because it's offensive to the drag queen people and the sexual morality. It's bringing conviction to the conscience. They have somehow manipulated the weaponization of the police force for their immoral agenda. That's what we're facing. What we saw in Canada during the COVID pandemic, it's all coming down south across our border, it's happening around the country here as well, and I think it's only going to get worse.

So does that mean Christians should be more militant and more activist? I would certainly say that becoming more serious and sober minded is the call today. We need to wake up to the kind of world that we're in. I would just like to see Christians be distinctively Christian, as they speak to the public, as they speak privately. Whether they're speaking with friends, neighbors, co workers, whether they're out on the streets, or whether they're more private, I want to see Christians be and speak distinctively Christianly.

I don't want to see them cower and turn away. This world, it really is a paper tiger. It may seem scary, but it really can be blown over with a wind of doctrine and the wind of the gospel. I just want to applaud what Marcus is doing out there in Wisconsin. I want to applaud what others are standing up to, and being bold to go to these events and give testimony to the gospel. Is every Christian call to do exactly that? No, I don't think so. But I definitely think we need to stand with men like Marcus who are going to stand up for the faith, stand up for the truth.

Host: David Wheaton 44:26

Very well said, Travis. There seems to be some sort of trend. I don't know when it started, but churches across the country are doing what they call an at the movies series, where they take a popular movie like Star Wars or the Barbie series, or let me play an audio clip of what took place just recently at Saddleback Church. This is the Church founded by Rick Warren who's no longer the pastor there. Now it's a husband, wife, pastor team, Andy and Stacy Wood, who came out on stage in these costumes from the movie Toy Story as part of their summer at the movie series. Let me play that for listeners to let them have an idea of what that sounded like.

Audio Sound Bite: Andy and Stacy Wood Saddleback Church 45:15

Andy: "Well, Hi, Bo Peep."

Stacy: "Hey Woody. Good to see you."

Andy: "Good to see you, too. Are you at church?"

Stacy: "Yes, we are."

Andy: "Welcome to Saddleback everybody. As you guys are being seated, tell your partner beside ya, do you vote for Team Woody? Or team Buzz? And I better hear a lot of team Woody out there." "Go ahead and grab a seat, y'all."

Stacy: "So yes, we are so thankful that you're here. And if you're wondering what in the world is happening right now and what have I stepped into, maybe you're a first time guest with us, we want to say welcome. You have shown up for a very special weekend here at Saddleback Church. We are in the middle of a series this summer, a four part series called, At the Movies. This weekend, we're going to be looking a little bit deeper at the story of Toy Story. And so that is why you get to see Andy and I dressed up like Woody and Bo Peep."

Andy: "Yes. So if you do happen to be a first time guests with us, it is such an honor to have you with us. We want to honor you during this series. We're doing something very special for our first time guests, which is, we want to give you a free movie ticket as our way of saying thanks for coming."

Host: David Wheaton 46:36

Okay, I'm going to stop it there. You don't even (Pastor Travis Allen-Thank you for stopping it there) know where to begin. It's not funny. It's borderline blasphemous on what a church should be. The pastor and of course, a wife as a co pastor, so unbiblical, just to start with. After all we've gone through in this country with the pandemic and everything else that's going on, you think, this is the approach that Saddleback and other churches are taking to do these, At the Movies Series. They go into great detail with Star Wars or things hanging from the lobby of the church and spaceships. It's hard to even understand the mindset here, how irreverent this is, and the attempts to be so culturally relevant. Could you try to bring some clarity as to how we ended up like this in the evangelical church in America?

Guest: Pastor Travis Allen 47:31

Yes David. I think it goes back to some things we were talking about before, where many people who call themselves Christians have embraced a sub Christian gospel that basically says, Jesus died for your sins. That's it. So Jesus died for your sins, doesn't confront your sin, doesn't call you to repentance. It doesn't tell you that you are no longer your own, but you're bought with a price, therefore glorify God with your body. It doesn't say anything about what the church is, what you've been joined to, that you need to be in submission to the local church.

I think about Paul telling Timothy, saying in I Timothy 4:13, *Until I come devote yourself to the public reading of Scripture, to exhortation and to teaching.* He tells Timothy to *command and teach these things. Don't neglect the gift that you have, which was given to you by prophecy. Practice these things, immerse yourself in them so that all may see your progress. Keep a close watch on yourself and on the teaching. Persist in this for by so doing you will save both yourself and your hearers.*

If that's what we're to be immersed in as pastors, you have to wonder what this husband and wife are immersed in. Are they immersed in movies? Immersed in Toy Story? One to exegete movies for their congregants? Their minds, their heads are in completely the wrong thing, and I think that makes sense because places like that, no matter what they call them, are no longer actual churches. They have departed from what the New Testament definition of a church is.

They don't actually practice these things, as Paul told Timothy. So I think we need to look at those examples in the culture and say, okay, they've walked away, they have apostatized. Now it's time to turn our attention to what does the scripture tell us a church is? What are we to be? We find very clear instruction on that in the pastoral epistles, 1 and 2 Timothy, Titus, Ephesians. The New Testament is replete with telling us how to conduct ourselves in the church and the household of God.

Host: David Wheaton 49:46

Travis, we always appreciate your coming on the program. But even more we appreciate your conviction, your commitment to God and His Word, the proclamation of the gospel, the reverence and the respect with which you approach your pastoral call. Thank you for coming on The Christian Worldview. All of God's best and grace to you, your family and Grace Church in Greeley, Colorado.

Guest: Pastor Travis Allen 50:12

Thank you, David. Once again, it's been my joy and privilege to be able to be with you again and have this conversation.

Host: David Wheaton 50:18

I so appreciate pastor Travis Allen. If you'd like to connect with his preaching ministry at his church in Colorado, or find out about the conference they are holding in September, go to our website, TheChristianWorldview.org and click on the link which goes over to Grace Church in Greeley,

Colorado. Just to conclude today, there is such a powerful testimony to Jesus Christ in Paul's letter to the Colossians. In chapter one where he writes, *He (Christ) is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation. For by him (Christ) all things were created: both in the heavens and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities; all things have been created through him and for Him,.He is before all things, and in Him, all things hold together. He is also head of the body, the church; and he is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, so that he himself will come to have first place and everything.*

This Christ in this passage, the head of the body of believers, the church, he demands our complete reverence and obedience. We must obey Him over any government mandate that seeks to undermine Him, or His called out one's. The gathered body of believers, the church. So let's prepare our hearts and minds and spirits for action, as governing authority seek to eliminate the only true opposition to their God rejecting plans, those plans that will ultimately be defeated by Christ Himself. We must obey God rather than men. To obey, you must have the indwelling Holy Spirit to empower you. Jesus commanded, repent and believe in the gospel. The gospel is the good news that you can be forgiven and reconciled to God for eternity when you trust fully in Christ's atoning work on the cross for your sin, and follow Him as Lord. As scripture says, when you do so, you won't be disappointed, or be put to shame.

Thank you for joining us today on The Christian Worldview. In just a moment, there will be information on how you can hear a replay of today's program, order transcripts and resources and support this nonprofit radio ministry. Let's remember that Jesus Christ is head of the church, and he is the same yesterday, and today and forever. So until next time, Think biblically, live accordingly, and stand firm!

The mission of The Christian Worldview is to sharpen the biblical worldview of Christians and to proclaim the good news of Jesus Christ. We hope today's broadcast encouraged you toward that end. To hear a replay of today's program, order a transcript or find out, "What must I do to be saved?" Go to TheChristianWorldview.org or call toll free 1-888-646-2233. The Christian Worldview is a listener supported nonprofit radio ministry furnished by the Overcomer Foundation. To make a donation, become a Christian Worldview Partner, order resources, subscribe to our free newsletter, or contact us, visit TheChristianWorldview.org, call 1-888-646-2233, or write to Box 401 Excelsior, Minnesota 55331. That's Box 401 Excelsior, Minnesota 55331. Thanks for listening to The Christian Worldview.