



LIES THAT GO UNCHALLENGED SERIES . . .

**LIES THAT GO
UNCHALLENGED™**
IN MEDIA & GOVERNMENT

CHARLES
COLSON

COMPILED BY JAMES STUART BELL

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Lies That Go Unchallenged in Media & Government

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INTRODUCTION

Christians today are caught up in a culture war that they would rather not fight. Most people in this country are drifting away from Judeo-Christian values and beliefs toward a world that disregards accountability to a higher power and glorifies self-gratification. Institutions with a Judeo-Christian worldview are disintegrating, with the loss of such benefits as healthy families and schools and a government that supports moral values for the common good. Instead of engaging in conflict, many Christians would rather show how these alternate worldviews are destroying the values we hold in common.

Unfortunately, unless we challenge these worldviews to preserve what we still have, we will all lose. This is most apparent in the realm of personal liberty. The lies that prevail outside the Christian church threaten our ability to keep God's laws, to practice our faith in the marketplace, and to preserve the freedoms that allow our families and communities to thrive.

The lies that endanger our freedoms take root primarily in the area of civil law. Many recent changes in our laws oppose the implicit laws of God that have governed us throughout American history. The legalization of abortion and attempts to remove God from government and education are but two examples.

To our Founding Fathers, who had experienced a king's authoritarian rule, the primary benefit of a representative democracy was in keeping power from becoming centralized; they believed that the nation's government should intrude as little as possible in the private affairs of its citizens. Samuel Rutherford, in his book *Lex Rex*, first published in 1644, stated that a king was not above the law, but that the law was above the king. Law and the inherent rights of the people are founded in reason, nature, and God. Our Founding Fathers also embraced these ideals.

During the late eighteenth century, a majority of citizens shared a moral consensus based on Judeo-Christian values, believing that personal virtue was essential for the survival of the republic. People's talents and opportunities were to be used for the common good—for family, community, church, and nation. Freedoms won through sacrifice had a moral basis that entailed responsibility to others.

Today, that moral basis is being turned upside down as government expands into every area of our lives. Society continues to break down as the Christian worldview is rejected and government intervention is viewed as the solution. The government has supplanted the family, church, and other voluntary structures in administering the well-being of the people.

I see this shift in our society manifesting itself in five lies—propagated in the media and the government—that endanger our freedoms as they were originally defined.

Lie #1: Judges should use their power to interpret laws to help the underdogs in society.

Lie #2: Each person has the right to make decisions about life, death, and relationships without outside interference.

Lie #3: Religion should remain in the church and the private lives of individuals.

Lie #4: Government should play a greater role in granting unrestricted freedoms.

Lie #5: Our problems stem from others who are exploiting us for their own ends.

I believe that these lies express the core motivations of liberal elites who seek to impose their view of the world on the rest of us. This worldview radically alters our views of sexuality, life, and the family, in ways that affect our human character and redefine our moral values. These five lies are disseminated by special interest groups working through the media and government in the areas of judicial

activism, life and family, religious freedom, government intrusion, and transfer of responsibility. Understanding these lies can help us as Christians to express our worldview in a compelling way that combats the true agenda, and not just the propaganda, of those who would seek to influence the direction of our culture.

The reality behind the first lie is that judges now assume kingly roles as they create legal fiction by judicial fiat to promote their social agenda. The special protection and benefits given to those who espouse abortion and homosexuality unmask the second lie regarding life and family. The third lie is driving the free expression of religious values from the public arena. The fourth lie of government “help” actually points to increased government regulation of our private lives. And the lie that we’re victims of collective manipulation allows us to penalize other people and institutions for our own negligent behavior.

Although this book may be filled with information about our government that we don’t want to hear, I hope it will begin to restore biblical values to our culture and thereby hold back God’s hand of judgment. We also need to realize that our own inactivity is part of the problem. We must actively pursue our mandate to express the gospel in effective, cogent, and relevant ways so that individuals may come to a saving knowledge of Christ and his everlasting Kingdom. Even if our earthly governments are not responsive and our freedoms are further jeopardized, God’s eternal government will eventually prevail.

HOW TO USE THIS BOOK

Lies That Go Unchallenged in Media & Government utilizes texts taken from the BreakPoint radio series. At the bottom of each essay, two sections have been added to facilitate interaction with the content. The first, called Truths to Consider, summarizes major points from each selection. In order to help readers internalize these truths and effect change, we have also provided a Group Study resource for individual and group application of these truths. If Christians are to effectively engage with the culture, spiritual transformation must begin in the life of each individual. This will happen most effectively in small group interactions that support each member and benefit from a diversity of individual insights and experiences. The group approach will enhance our common witness, strengthen our local churches, promote harmonious collaboration, and expand our cultural influence.

SECTION ONE

JUDICIAL ACTIVISM



LIE 1

Judges should use their power to interpret laws in order to help the underdogs in society.

Underlying Worldview: The judicial branch of government is more progressive and enlightened than the average American who participates in making our laws. Judges should not just interpret existing laws in light of the Constitution but help create a better society in which freedom derives from the individual rather than from a set of universal, God-given laws.

Response: We need to elect representatives who will curb the power of the judiciary and expose rulings that are not in line with the original intent of the law.

Have you ever been surprised (and confused) by the rulings of high courts, especially when they have overruled a lower court whose decision made sense? Or perhaps a higher court has reversed the bizarre judgment of a lower court. Why is there so much disagreement? Today's judges can be divided into two camps: those who strictly interpret the Constitution and those who extrapolate from it in order to make it "fit the times" and support their version of fairness and social change.

The United States Senate is to advise the president in his appointment of judges to the highest courts in the land and to confirm his choices. The Senate has instead turned this process into an ideological circus. Minority liberals force each judge to pass a "litmus test" regarding abortion and other "causes" of liberal interest groups, or they will obstruct his or her confirmation. This

is done through a misapplication of Senate rules that extends the process ad infinitum.

The purpose is to pack courts throughout the land with a judiciary willing to create special rights for those outside of traditional morality. These judges, in turn, reinterpret the Constitution to foster a new society with laws that are free of Judeo-Christian values, promoting more government intervention into traditional freedoms while decreasing individual moral responsibility. Technical legalities are now less important than pragmatic social effects. Supreme Court justice David Souter said that there was no constitutional right to physician-assisted suicide, and yet he did not strike the euthanasia ruling in Oregon, stating that he wanted to know how it would work out there first.

Judges are so obsessed with allowing personal freedoms that they will not even protect children from the worst pornography. An Ohio court refused a law to install filters on library computers because that might get in the way of an adult's easy access to pornography. This was more important than shielding children from even the most damaging perversions.

What causes do these liberal judges espouse, and what are the views that they twist the laws to fit? Justice Bruce Gaeta was presented with a case in which a forty-something female junior high school teacher had sex with a thirteen-year-old male student. Justice Gaeta dismissed it, saying that it was a way for the boy to satisfy his sexual needs and that society shouldn't be worried. No wonder laws are being reinterpreted today!

Other popular causes are euthanasia, abortion, homosexuality, and a variety of religious freedom issues in government and education. Law-abiding citizens increasingly face the dilemma of having to obey immoral laws. In reaction to a court decision favoring euthanasia, Father John Neuhaus warns, "Our public life will move from widespread alienation and protest to open insurrection." In fact, the Massachusetts court admitted that it was "reformulating" marriage with its decision to legalize same-sex marriages. The legislature that represents the people of that state had no such convictions.

How do we dispel the lie and replace it with truth? The judicial world seems

far removed from our everyday lives. People with a Christian worldview need to become aware of what judges stand for on a local, regional, and national level and support candidates who will enact a fair process according to the Constitution for confirming judicial appointments.

We also need to communicate to fellow Christians and to the culture at large the subtle lies behind the interpretations of these judges as they supposedly relate to the fuller meaning of the law.



CONGRESS AND THE COURTS

Restoring the Constitutional Balance

*Note: This commentary was delivered by Prison Fellowship
President Mark Earley.*

In late 2003, the Senate held its longest debate in nearly a decade. The subject under discussion wasn't health care, war, or education but something even more vital to the health of our democracy: the constitutional balance of power between the executive and the legislative branches.

The issue was the refusal of Senate Democrats to allow a vote on four of the president's nominees to the federal courts of appeals: Charles Pickering, Priscilla Owens, Bill Pryor, and Janice Rogers Brown.

Republican senators made the point that judicial nominations shouldn't be pigeonholed in committee or blocked by a handful of senators using archaic Senate rules. As Senate Majority Leader Bill Frist put it, "All we ask is for a vote, an up-or-down vote." Frist's position is fair, reasonable, and right.

It sounds even more reasonable when you consider the minority's reasons for blocking the vote. All of the nominees were highly qualified, so that wasn't the issue. The opposition was about ideology and politics—period. Judge Pickering's principal offense was that he suggested to a defendant that when he got to prison, he get involved in Prison Fellowship programs.

The treatment of Bill Pryor was especially egregious. He had the temerity to tell a Senate committee that he was pro-life without exceptions, which is the only position that a faithful Catholic can take in good conscience. In preventing a vote on his nomination, his opponents created a "viewpoint test" that says, in effect, "No Faithful Catholics Need Apply." This is the kind of religious test for office that the Constitution specifically prohibits.

To most people, talk about judicial nominees sounds a bit arcane and boring. Others are interested in federal judges, but never pay attention to what happens in their home state. In some jurisdictions, the people vote for judges, but few know about the candidates. It just doesn't seem to matter that much.

Shortly after this, the Supreme Judicial Court of Massachusetts declared that restricting marriage to a man and a woman is unconstitutional and abridges the civil rights of homosexuals. Same-sex "marriage" is now the law in Massachusetts—a reminder of how important the selection of judges is at every level.

The courts—not the people of Massachusetts—unleashed one

of the biggest social experiments in history. And since homosexual conduct is contrary to biblical teaching and to the way that humans were designed to function, the results will be predictably disastrous for individuals, marriages, children, communities, and the culture.

So what can be done? In Washington, President Bush should make each of the blocked nominees a recess appointment as soon as Congress leaves town. This has been done before, most recently by President Clinton.

In the place where you live, an election year is only a short time away. The president, governors, and senators that you elect or fail to elect will determine the judges you get. And Congress will vote on the Federal Marriage Amendment that affirms that marriage is only between a man and a woman.

This is no time for Christians to retreat into their shells. This is a time for all of us to pray and to act with love and dedication.

TRUTHS TO CONSIDER

Those who oppose the nomination of highly qualified judges based on sheer ideology are using archaic rules meant for a different purpose, thus obstructing the proper balance of power that should exist between the legislative and judicial branches.

Homosexual marriage is one of the greatest social experiments in history—and one that will adversely affect our culture in individual and communal ways.

Christians need to pray, act, and vote in order to have judges nominated who will stem the horrendous tide of immoral decisions that will eventually destroy our marriages, communities, and culture.

GROUP STUDY

Personal Transformation: Have you ever used rules, privilege, or position to gain an unfair advantage over someone else? How can you avoid these temptations?

Renewing the Church: The Bible tells us to pray for kings and for all those in authority. We often pray for our Congress and president, but do we pray that our judges will be properly appointed and that their decisions will uphold the Constitution?

Influencing Culture: Regardless of their political views, people need to understand how judges are circumventing laws enacted by the people and how Congress is obstructing presidential appointments. How can we effectively explain these things?



INTIMATIONS OF INSURRECTION

Accommodation or Faithfulness?

The Barmen Declaration relates to a decision by German theologians to proclaim independence from the Nazi state and from a church that had sold out to Hitler.

America is rapidly approaching the same point of moral disintegration as that faced by the German church. Today's believers face the same choice between conscience and submitting to laws that they know are evil.

Father John Neuhaus recognizes this dilemma in an issue of *First Things*. Neuhaus points out that a growing number of believers are

finding it impossible to remain faithful to our laws in the wake of court cases that are, quite simply, destroying our country's traditional moral fabric.

Neuhaus makes particular reference to the Ninth Circuit Court's decision to legalize assisted suicide and invite euthanasia. If that decision stands, Neuhaus warns, "Our public life will move from widespread alienation and protest to open insurrection."

Is Neuhaus overreacting? I don't think so. Consider what happened following President Clinton's veto of the Partial-Birth Abortion Ban Act. In an extraordinary act of witness, two Catholic cardinals joined a protest in front of the White House. The president's own envoy to the Vatican publicly sided with the Catholic Church. Even Billy Graham, who has never once spoken out publicly against abortion, criticized the veto during a private visit with the president.

Perhaps most incredible, the Vatican condemned President Clinton, calling his veto "shameful." The Holy See stated, "The fact that this presidential decision legalizes this inhuman procedure morally and ethically imperils the future of a society which condones it."

In my address before Congress on the National Day of Prayer in 1996, I agreed with the Vatican that partial-birth abortion is "more akin to infanticide than abortion." But even as I was doing that, some thirty Christian leaders had the audacity to say that President Clinton was right to veto the bill. They were convinced that "none of us can discern God's will as well as the woman herself."

It's a clear example of the difference between being faithful in a fallen world and presenting the notion of God as a "little voice" in

each of us. When a woman’s conscience advises her that it’s all right to kill a baby four-fifths delivered, God has been remade in a human image.

American Christians today are at a critical juncture that brings the parallel between America and Nazi Germany vividly to mind.

The signers of the Barmen Declaration, to their everlasting credit, parted company with the Nazis. They also parted company with many established church leaders. They asserted the truth of the gospel as the rest of the German church sold its biblical birth-right for a mess of Nazi pottage.

I hope the significance of what I’m saying is not lost upon you. Think—and pray—this crucial issue through.

Before long, American Christians—like the German church before them—will be forced to choose between conscience and accommodation.

TRUTHS TO CONSIDER

A growing number of believers are finding it difficult to obey the law because government intrudes into the moral arena to the point that taking a human life, through partial-birth abortion or euthanasia, is considered a matter of individual choice.

Committed Christians who choose to obey God before government may also have to part with others in the American church who do not take a courageous biblical stand but instead accommodate the world.

We cannot rely solely on our conscience as God’s “little voice” because our fallen nature cannot completely be trusted; God’s Word and the church provide a balance to our individual perception.

GROUP STUDY

Personal Transformation: Do you make excuses or rationalize incorrect behavior that is intended to avoid disapproval or persecution from others? How can you remain in touch with your true values?

Renewing the Church: The Catholic Church is able to make official global pronouncements on moral issues. What can your local church or denomination do to clearly communicate your stand on social and moral issues at a local or national level?

Influencing Culture: With abortion, most people don't dwell on the horrible process itself. We need to avoid euphemistic terms and talk about what it's like to kill a child four-fifths delivered, in order to expose what really goes on.



JUDGE PICKERING

The Confirmation Process

In early 2002, the Senate Judiciary Committee rejected the nomination of Judge Charles Pickering to the Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals. What a travesty! A good and decent man was maligned and the Constitution assaulted. The words *advise and consent* were used in a way that the Founders never intended. Pickering’s nomination was opposed by a coalition of liberal interest groups that invoked many of the same reasons they used in banning other conservative nominees: his views on civil rights, women’s rights, and, in this case, his alleged disregard for the separation of church and state.

As evidence of the latter, they cited Pickering's words when sentencing a young man for murder: "It is not too late for you to form a new beginning. . . . You can become involved in Chuck Colson's Prison Fellowship or some other such ministry and be a benefit to your fellow inmates and to others and to their families." It says something about how distorted the confirmation process has become that an act of compassion can disqualify a man from sitting on the Federal Court of Appeals.

Then again, neither Pickering nor the court of appeals was really the issue for these interest groups and their allies in the Senate. Their treatment of Pickering was meant as a warning to President Bush about nominating a pro-life conservative to the Supreme Court. They were saying that any nominee that they even suspected disagreed with them on abortion could expect the same treatment Pickering received. His or her record would be distorted in the Senate and in the press. None of this is what the Founders intended when they gave the Senate the "advise and consent" role in judiciary appointments. As Douglas Kmiec, dean of Catholic University School of Law, wrote, the Founders never intended that the Senate "micromanage" the confirmation process. He quoted the Federalist Papers, saying that the role of the Senate, while powerful, would generally be "silent."

According to Alexander Hamilton, the Senate was to be a check "upon the spirit of favoritism in the President." The "advise and consent" role was intended to "prevent the appointment of unfit characters from . . . family connection, personal attachment, or from a view to popularity." In other words, it's designed to guard against cronyism, nepotism, and manifestly unfit judges. None of these criteria applied to Charles Pickering, who had received the

highest American Bar Association ratings. The defeat of his nomination showed how far we've strayed from the Founders' intentions.

Christians must not remain quietly on the sidelines. According to Mariam Bell, the Wilberforce Forum's director of public policy, "If the senators don't hear from their constituents, they will be emboldened to continue this type of tactic from here on out." If we don't voice our opposition, the only judges who will ever be confirmed are those acceptable to liberal interest groups and their allies in the Senate. That's why it is vital that we flood the senators' offices with calls, e-mails, faxes, and, if possible, visits. The Senate Judiciary Committee needs to know that the war for the federal judiciary is far from over.

TRUTHS TO CONSIDER

The rejection of Judge Pickering did not fall under the categories of family connection, personal attachment, or mere popularity that are the conditions for denial.

Liberal interest groups reject high court judicial nominations blatantly and solely on the basis of partisan politics, ignoring the "advise and consent" concept of merely preventing corruption and abuse of power.

Christians must strongly voice their opposition to this flagrant abuse of law and power, or our future judges will only be those who continue to assault the Christian worldview in our society.

GROUP STUDY

Personal Transformation: Have you been denied a position because your lack of qualifications related to personal character

weaknesses? What areas can you work on that will qualify you for greater service?

Renewing the Church: Freedoms won in a representative democracy are being taken away from us in a way that violates the separation of government powers. How should the church and individual Christians respond to this crisis since we are not meant to be a theocracy or to run the state?

Influencing Culture: The time for gentle persuasion on this issue is past, but we need to be solid in our reasoning. What would help us to better understand the workings of government? How can we expose what the Senate is doing to undermine the nomination process for the purpose of social engineering?



LEAVE IT TO THE COURTS

Judicial Power and the Redefinition of Marriage

*Note: This commentary was delivered by Prison Fellowship
President Mark Earley.*

In America today, we have very nearly completed a long process I can only describe as the systematic usurpation of political power by the American judiciary.

That statement was never more true than when the rule of judges manifested itself in Massachusetts. The Supreme Judicial Court of Massachusetts, by a 4 to 3 margin, ruled that the state’s refusal to recognize so-called “marriages” between same-sex couples was an unconstitutional violation of civil rights. The court gave the Massachusetts legislature 180 days to enact laws that

would allow gay and lesbian couples to marry and to have the benefit of the same rights and privileges that male/female couples now enjoy.

While noting that “the everyday meaning of ‘marriage’ is [t]he legal union of a man and a woman as husband and wife,” the Massachusetts court freely admitted that it was reformulating marriage.

This is sheer judicial usurpation of power. Making laws—especially laws that redefine and fundamentally change the building-block institution of marriage—is the work of the legislature, not of the courts, and the legislatures have rightly been hesitant to make such changes.

In her dissent, Justice Martha Sosman wrote, “Absent consensus on the issue (which obviously does not exist), or unanimity amongst scientists studying the issue (which also does not exist), or a more prolonged period of observation of this new family structure (which has not yet been possible), it is rational for the Legislature to postpone any redefinition of marriage.” But the majority of the court had no similar qualms and gave the legislature 180 days to enact a new law.

Yet all is not lost. The reason homosexual activists have taken to the courts is that they know they will lose in the legislatures. When courts in Hawaii and Alaska—two of the most liberal states in the union—made similar decisions, their legislatures passed constitutional amendments limiting marriage to heterosexual couples.

In Massachusetts, the legislature is considering a similar amendment that has been endorsed by the Speaker of the House and the Massachusetts governor. In Washington, D.C., the Fed-

eral Marriage Amendment has been introduced into Congress, and our Wilberforce Forum is on the front lines of the effort to pass the law. The amendment will force the courts to the sidelines in the marriage debate, making sure that the Supreme Court cannot impose “same-sex marriage” on the entire nation.

President Bush, who has endorsed the historic understanding of marriage as the relationship between one man and one woman, has a great opportunity to lead in passing this amendment and has voiced his support in protecting the sanctity of the institution of marriage.

As Christians, we need to make well-informed, reasoned arguments. The Massachusetts decision was built on one court decision after another that were not wisely addressed by Christians. Now that marriage is under attack, we’ve got our work cut out for us, and we dare not fall short.

TRUTHS TO CONSIDER

Government once again overruled the will of the people by completely re-defining marriage, although, as one judge stated, this innovation precludes observation, science, or consensus.

Homosexual activists have worked hard in lobbying the courts because they know that they will lose the same-sex marriage issue among the people. Christians must go forward with a constitutional amendment that upholds exclusively heterosexual marriage.

We can’t expect that traditional marriage will remain based on old arguments. We need to sharpen our debating skills within the present cultural context.

GROUP STUDY

Personal Transformation: Why will fundamentally sound but outdated arguments for Christian values be ineffective? Have you taken certain values that are under attack for granted?

Renewing the Church: This court decision was based on previous decisions that Christians did not address wisely. How can we better educate church members and better support Christian legal advocacy groups to address future decisions more effectively before we reap the devastating consequences of same-sex marriages?

Influencing Culture: We need to speak one-to-one with the vast number of people who are undecided on this issue. Although the majority of the culture still opposes same-sex marriages, how might this change if we don't act?

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