



# Christian Citizenship

**“You are the salt of the earth . . . You are the light of the world” (Mt. 5:13-16). One way to be salty and let our light shine is by being good citizens on earth. Our vocation as citizens of both the secular kingdom and God’s kingdom gives us the responsibility to proclaim God’s Word and care for our neighbors. We are called to engage the “public square” with our message of Christ’s mercy for all. Please pray for God’s will to be done... in Jesus’ name.**

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## **Transgender Ideology & Child Abuse**

Michelle Cretella is a mother of four, a pediatrician with focus in child behavioral health, and the current president of the American College of Pediatricians. In her 2016 peer reviewed article, “Gender Dysphoria in Children and Suppression of Debate,” she exposed the fact that “professionals who dare to question the unscientific party line of supporting gender transition therapy will find themselves maligned and out of a job.”

Across the nation, there are 40 or more pediatric “gender clinics” where children who are “distressed by their biological sex” are affirmed. This distress, once labeled gender identity disorder, was renamed “gender dysphoria” in 2013. Conveniently ignored, says Dr. Cretella, is “the fact that in normal life and in psychiatry, anyone who ‘consistently and persistently insists’ on anything else contrary to physical reality is considered either confused or delusional.”

Dr. Cretella explains that “the transition-affirming protocol tells parents to treat their children as the gender they desire, and to place them on puberty blockers around age 11 or 12 if they are gender dysphoric. If by age 16, the children still insist that they are trapped in the wrong body, they are placed on cross-sex hormones, and biological girls may obtain a double mastectomy. So-called ‘bottom surgeries,’ or genital reassignment surgeries, are not recommended before age 18, though some surgeons have recently argued against this restriction.”

Here are some facts offered by Dr. Cretella: 1) “*Twin studies prove no one is born ‘trapped in the*

*body of the wrong sex’” ... [T]he “belief in ‘innate gender identity’—the idea that ‘feminized’ or ‘masculinized’ brains can be trapped in the wrong body from before birth—is a myth that has no basis in science; 2) “*Gender identity is malleable, especially in young children*” ... “[P]rior to the widespread promotion of transition affirmation, 75 to 95 percent of pre-pubertal children who were distressed by their biological sex eventually outgrew that distress. The vast majority came to accept their biological sex by late adolescence after passing naturally through puberty. But with transition affirmation now increasing in Western society, the number of children claiming distress over their gender ... has dramatically increased” (i.e. the Gender Identity Development Service in the United Kingdom alone has seen a 2,000 percent increase in referrals since 2009); 3) “puberty blockers for gender dysphoria have not been proven safe;” 4) “Cross-sex hormones are associated with dangerous health risks;” 5) Neuroscience reveals the “serious ethical problem in allowing irreversible, life-changing procedures to be performed on minors who are too young themselves to give valid consent;” and, 6) “There is no proof that affirmation prevents suicide in children.”*

Here is the bottom line for Dr. Cretella and others who are bold enough to speak out: “Transition-affirming protocol is child abuse.” It is “uncontrolled” and “unconsented experimentation on children who have a psychological condition that would otherwise resolve after puberty in the vast majority of cases.” (Source: *The Daily Signal*, “I’m a Pediatrician. How Transgender Ideology Has Infiltrated My Field and Produced Large-Scale Child Abuse,” 7-3-17.)

**What can we do?** Be informed. Resources include the American College of Pediatricians, Alliance for Therapeutic Choice, Christian Medical & Dental Associations, and the Catholic Medical Association. Write letters to the editor asking for sound ethics and an end to promoting gender ideology via school curricula and legislative policies.

**Please pray** for the medical community, nation's leaders, and Church to speak up on behalf of children and adolescents ... in Jesus' name.

### **Language Shapes the Way We Think**

The annual Associated Press (AP) guide called the *Stylebook*, explains Tammy Bruce, is intended to "help journalists with issues concerning basic things like punctuation, grammar and, yes, which words to use." She continues, noting that there are those who understand "that he who controls definition controls the issues."

For example, Bruce notes, "in the 2017 AP *Stylebook*, CNS News reports, 'journalists [are asked to] refrain from using terms like 'pro-life,' 'migrant,' 'refugee,' 'Islamist' and 'terrorist' in their writing."

Rachel Alexander, in her column for *The Hill*, notes various political changes over the years in the *Stylebook*: "Use of 'anti-abortion' instead of 'pro-life' to describe those who are opposed to abortion. Rejection of 'Islamist' as a synonym for Islamic fighters or extremists, on the basis that not all who view the Koran as a political model support violence. Referring to 'illegal immigration,' but not saying 'illegal immigrants' or 'undocumented.' Describing those who dismiss the climate science consensus as 'climate change doubters.'"

Alexander explains, "A pro-life author who submits a piece taking a position against abortion will see the words 'pro-life' changed to 'anti-abortion,' because the AP *Stylebook* instructs, 'Use anti-abortion instead of pro-life and pro-abortion rights instead of pro-abortion or pro-choice.' It goes on, 'Avoid abortionists,' saying the term 'connotes a person who performs clandestine abortions.'" (Source: *The Washington Times*, 7-24-17.)

**What can we do?** As Christians readers and listeners, we must ask ourselves and others: Is the biblical worldview, or some other, being represented? Does a bias exist? For example, the AP tells reporters not to use the term 'pro-life,' which is how Christian pro-lifers refer to themselves. Yet, when reporting anything from the LGBTQ community, the AP's guidance encourages journalists to use the term that people prefer to use to describe themselves. We can kindly remind

people that words, context, and definitions matter. Truth matters. We must be discerning listeners who ask: What is the "stylebook" being used?

**Please pray** for discerning eyes and ears that seek truth ... in Jesus' name.

### **COEXIST**

You've probably seen the bumper sticker that uses symbols of various world religions to spell out the word *coexist*. We would hope that the message simply advocates that all people act respectfully toward one another. The intellectual dishonesty of COEXIST, however, is that all religions are equal. The truth is that we do not all worship "the same God," nor are we all "on the same road to heaven."

There are only two religions: the religion of man's making—which is a religion of works and the Law, and the religion of God's own self-revelation through His Son, Jesus Christ. Jesus says, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me. If you had known Me, you would have known My Father also" (Jn. 14:6-7).

Actually, the word *religion* falls short of explaining Christianity. The early Christians called it The Way. The Way of life! The key to understanding Christianity is to understand that it is all about Jesus who is the "way, and the truth, and the life." Far more than a system of morals, principles, and guidance for self-help, Christianity is God reaching out to claim us as His own dear children all because of Jesus.

**What can we do?** If we are going to explain the difference between Christianity and all other beliefs and religions, we need to be grounded in God's Word. Make time for Bible study and devotions. There are many resources for the Lutheran Christian who wants to be equipped to defend the faith. They include: *Luther's Small Catechism*, the *Lutheranism 101* series (All About Jesus, Holy Baptism, The Lord's Supper, etc.), *God At Work* (Gene Veith), and *How Christianity Changed the World* (Alvin Schmidt).

**Please pray** that we be different because we follow Jesus Who is The Way, The Truth, and The Life.

