

# Opinions

## What matters politically about transgenderism

By Leo Chappelle

It would be interesting to hear others' perspective on this, but it seems to me that we have plenty of churches in Catahoula Parish. On the other hand, church goes not so much. I don't mention this for its religious significance but for its political importance. And it seems to me very unlikely that the two, religion and politics, can be separated.

After the publication in 1859 of Charles Darwin's *On the Origin of Species*, many Christians wanted to hide behind a "wall of separation" between not only church and state but church and science. Since then, other religionists have fired back and arguments have been developed that have appealed to many by either accommodating evolutionary theory, disputing that it eliminates all space for God, or even that Darwinism fails because, as Darwin himself admitted, evolution doesn't account for the origin of life, only describing how species change over time.

A second figure in the unholy trinity attacking faith was Karl Marx. Marx published his *Communist Manifesto* in 1848, eleven years before Darwin's *Origin of Species*. The third "trinitarian" was Sigmund Freud (1856 – 1939). While many researchers would later think that Freud's theories of the mind were a bridge too far, those theories nonetheless were relevant to putting more distance between Man and supernaturalism.

None of these theorists have gone unanswered, of course, and to the satisfaction of many, those answers since at least 1970 have

enjoyed some popularity. For a while, the so-called "New Atheists" such as the late Christopher Hitchens, Richard Dawkins, Sam Harris, Daniel Dennett, and so on, put a temporary scare into many people. But their "new" atheism turned out to be a good deal older than first thought and they have been found vulnerable to some old apologetics (defenses of faith).

More recently the attack on churches, and traditional marriage as well, has come through the attempt to normalize homosexuality and its variations, such as transgenderism. However, the Bible and its so-called "clobber scriptures" like Romans 1: 24-27, 1 Timothy 1: 10, etc., are explicit and problematic for cultural revolutionaries. [Note: if you have a King James Version of 1611, the word "homosexual" won't be in it because the term wasn't introduced into English until 1892.]

The importance politically of the acceptance of homosexuality and forms such as transgenderism is their usefulness as social and political weapons. They are being used to strike against Biblical Christianity and its emphasis on individual accountability and, subsequently, individuals' empowerment against collectivism.

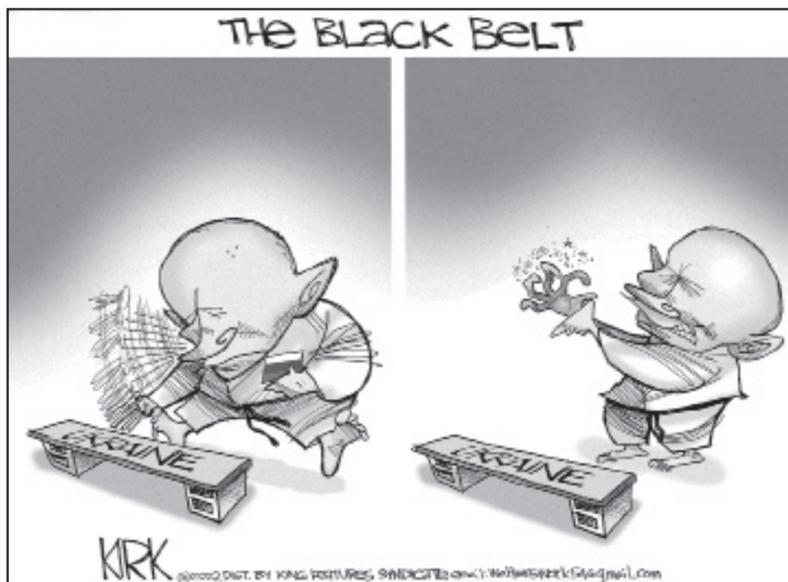
In large part our empowerment comes through participation in the biblically ordained family structure, a social unit that reduces dependence on the state. But redefining marriage as an arbitrary arrangement independent of the narrow constraints of one man and one woman eliminates the state's only legitimate reason for

privileging married people. That reason is that new citizens arise from the relationships those male-female unions are particularly apt to produce. Allowing same sex couples like Pete Buttigieg and his "husband" Chasten to adopt or use surrogacy only recreates part of the tragedy of divorce by putting children in a home with a parent of one sex missing.

Is there a balance to be struck here? And how do we decide where might that be found? Most importantly, who decides? God and the Bible or the state and the permanent bureaucracy with the assistance of popular culture? In my view, there's really not a happy medium. At best we'll be lucky to find a condition in which the sides are temporarily in a sustainable tension. To do that, we have to figure out how to stay out of each other's way.

But I don't see that happening. For anyone. This side of the eschaton when Christ returns, Christians must be prepared to endure their increasing persecution.

On an unrelated note, I made an important mistake last week: The Police Jury did NOT pass an amendment to impose a "privilege", or lien, on anyone's property for non-payment of the \$12 monthly garbage tax. On July 12th, 2021, Rodney Sones moved to table the question and Jeffrey Estes gave his second and the proposal to amend Ordinance 2975, according to Robert's Rules of Order, "died on the table" when no one brought it back up at the next meeting. I apologize for the error. Mea culpa.



## It's the Inflation, Stupid Durham's Righteous Investigation

Joe Biden is engaged in the most extensive test of whether an American president can survive elevated levels of inflation since Jimmy Carter, and it's not going well.

The latest NBC News poll has Biden at a dismal 40% approval rating that, if it doesn't change, will end the careers of Democrats up and down the ballot in November's midterm elections.

According to the poll, only a third of people approve of Biden's handling of the economy, a low that most presidents have needed a recession to hit. This number has sunk steadily -- along with Biden's overall standing -- from 52% in April of last year.

Inflation, which increased 7.9% from February 2021 to February 2022, is top of mind for voters. In the survey, 35% of people said cost of living is the first or second most important issue to the country. Climate change, in contrast, is at 17% and the pandemic at 8%. Given the choice, 68% would rather see Biden make reducing inflation and improving the economy his top priority, not the war in Ukraine.

Elevated inflation represents a trifecta of doom for incumbent presidents.

Does it impact the lives of people in a discernible way that they will notice no matter what the president says or the media covers? Yes.

Does it cut the pay of workers unless there are steep increases in wages? Yes.

Does it make the president seem powerless to control events? Yes.

It was a common question in the media a while ago why people felt badly about a good economy? Paul Krugman wrote column last year headlined, "The Making of a Feel-Bad Boom."

The question, though, was miscast. An economy where wages are effectively falling is not a good economy, at least it isn't going to be felt by most people as such.

Even though wages grew by a robust 5.1% year-over-year this February, that wasn't enough to keep up with rising prices. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, real average hourly earnings declined 2.6% from February 2021-2022. During that 12-month period, the month-to-month change in real hourly wages was only positive in two months.

This is presumably why the NBC poll found that 62% say that their family income is falling behind, 31% say that it is staying about even, and just 6% believe it is going up faster.

Biden could combine the political talents of FDR and Reagan, the oratorical skills of Lincoln and JFK, and the common touch of Jackson and Truman, and this sense of falling behind would still be eating away at the foundations of his presidency.

Biden's default has been to reassure the public that inflation is only transitory, to place it in the context of global supply chain issues beyond the control of any one person, and to blame various malefactors, whether meat companies or Vladimir Putin, for surging prices. But the buck still stops with the president, even if the dollar has less purchasing power than it did a year ago.

Biden hasn't resorted to anything as readily mockable as President Gerald Ford's "Whip Inflation Now," or WIN buttons in 1974, but is flailing around nearly as badly (inflation did, by the way, drop steeply from 1974 to 1976, but it took a recession to achieve this momentary gain).

He's mostly trying to rebrand spending initiatives he already supported as steps toward

curbing costs. Regardless, the Federal Reserve has a huge role and, so far, it, like the administration, has been slow to catch up to the new inflationary reality.

The American public has had no such luxury. For it, increased prices are a daily lived reality, and no amount of spin is going to change that. Unless conditions markedly improve soon, Biden's experiment is going to end very badly for him and his party.

Rich Lowry is editor of the *National Review*.

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