

Revisiting the Christian Past: No Political “Progressivism” Here

Jack Kerwick

In the Western world today, particularly in America, there persists this idea among both Christians and non-Christians alike that, to be a Christian, one must endorse a specific kind of vision of how societies should be organized politically. While it is true that few, if any, contemporary Christians endorse a theocracy, and while it is true that few advocate on behalf of anything approximating a utopian politics, it is no less true that a good number, and possibly most, Western Christians are political *perfectionists*.

In political philosophy, perfectionism is an approach that assigns to the state or government the role of cultivating virtue in its citizens. Not unlike any and every theory, perfectionism admits of multiple variations. But common to all of its versions is the belief that government has a positive educative function, the belief that government is supposed to be an agent of character formation.

Communism and socialism are forms of perfectionism, certainly, but so too are the theories of Aristotle, Thomas Aquinas, and any number of other approaches that needn't have much else in common with such modern collectivist ideologies.

When Pope Francis (and legions of other Christians) demand of the governments of affluent Western societies that they admit into their countries potentially limitless numbers of immigrants and refugees from alien cultures, and they make this demand, whether explicitly or implicitly, in the name of Christ; they betray a commitment to Christian perfectionism. After all, it is only the peoples of European lands, i.e., those whose ancestors were historically Christian and who built the most affluent societies the world has ever known, at whom the Pope and his ilk aim their moral imperatives

Christianity requires, Francis would have us think, for the governments of the West—or, more precisely, the taxpayers who subsidize them—to make a range of provisions for the millions of strangers entering their lands, regardless of the costs.

When Christians, on the alleged basis of their religion, maintain that the United States government must finance and defend Israel; provide “foreign aid;” abolish capital punishment; criminalize suicide, prostitution, and recreational drug use; make the world safe for Democracy; and, comprehensively, serve the world in being a City on a Hill, they reveal their perfectionism.

Things were not always so.

Jesus Himself said simply: “Give to Caesar what belongs to Caesar, and give to God what belongs to God.”

St. Paul was clearly no perfectionist. Admittedly, after his encounter with Christ on the road to Damascus, the man formerly known as Saul was interested in nothing other than spreading the Gospel to the Gentile world. Paul was a brilliant theologian, a scholar of the Hebrew Scriptures (The Old Testament), and, most importantly, an apostle. He spent little time writing about politics. Yet from what he did say, we can abstract the bare outlines of a certain kind of vision of politics.

Paul wrote: “Let every person be subject to the governing authorities; for there is no authority except from God, and those authorities that exist have been instituted by God.” The state is “God’s servant” ordained, not to make citizens into good and pious individuals, but to instill “terror” through “the sword” in those who act criminally. None are to resist the authorities, Paul says, for the latter derive their authority from God and exist for the sake of making society a tolerable, peaceful place to live. “Do you wish to have no fear of the authority? Then do what is good, and you will receive its approval; for it is God’s servant for your good. But if you do what is wrong, you should be afraid, for the authority does not bear the sword in vain! It is the servant of God to execute wrath on the wrongdoer” (Romans 13: 1-4).

St. Augustine (354-430) is perhaps the most influential Christian thinker of all time and one of the most influential philosophers, Christian or otherwise. A bishop, prolific writer, and master rhetorician, Augustine brought his prodigious intellectual powers to bear upon the formation of a Christian *philosophy*, something that heretofore didn’t actually exist. More specifically, Augustine was the first Christian thinker to treat, philosophically, the subjects of time, history, motion, eternity, and creation. His contributions have proven to be immeasurable.

In political philosophy, Augustine pursued the direction in which Paul pointed. There are two “cities,” he said, “the earthly city” and “the city of God.” These are not literal, geographical regions but spiritual and moral conditions. Those who are of the earthly city live according to “the flesh.” Conversely, those who are of the city of God live according to “the spirit.”

Each city is distinguished from the other on account of what it loves. Those of the earthly city are driven by “the love of self, even to the contempt of God,” while the inhabitants of the city of God are motivated by “the love of God, even to the contempt of self.”

Even so, the earthly city “has its good in this world, and rejoices in it with such joy as things can afford.” The end of the earthly city is peace, “well-ordered concord of civic obedience and rule,” “the combination of men’s wills to attain the things which are helpful to this life.” Peace, even a temporal peace of the sort for the sake of which the earthly city exists, is a good.

However, this peace “is rather the solace of our misery than the positive enjoyment of felicity.” The state is supposed to essentially constrain vice, not promote virtue.

Ultimately, though, there is no true justice in this world, for true justice is to be found only “in that republic whose founder and ruler is Christ [.]” And what this in turn implies is that “kingdoms” are “but great robberies” and “robberies themselves” are “but little kingdoms.”

At this time when “progressivism” has infiltrated Christian denominations in the West, it would behoove Christians to acquaint themselves with their tradition.

Joseph Nicolosi: The Man Who Would Heal All the Wounded Boys

AUSTIN RUSE

The success of a man may be measured in this life by the love of his friends and even by the hatred of his enemies. By this measure, Dr. Joseph Nicolosi was a very successful man when he passed utterly unexpectedly a few weeks ago from complications of the flu.

His enemies danced on his grave. More than simply dance, they put their hands in the air like rappers or Lev Tevya in *Fiddler on the Roof*. It's been a celebration of his death.

Sam Ames, of the National Center for Lesbian Rights, who seems to be trying to pass herself off as a boy wrote, "For my part, I'm having trouble seeing past the sadness. Joseph Nicolosi died the way he lived: in pain. It's a pain many of us know all too well. He managed to turn his into a multi-million-dollar industry of self-hatred, from which the casualties are too many to count."

A blog called Towle Road said, "It's unclear how many people Joseph Nicolosi harmed over the course of his life."

Perhaps the nastiest gay blog, Joe.My.God. referred to Nicolosi as "NARTH Ex-Gay Torture Founder..."

Wayne Besen, considered one of the more balanced gay spokesmen, said Nicolosi was an "ideologue and propagandist who trafficked in hate and harm.... I doubt he's in a better place. I do know the earth is a better place without this noxious con artist who peddled in phony cures for homosexuality."

The "Queer Voices Deputy Editor" at the Huffington Post called Nicolosi's talk therapy "barbaric."

The vicious and gleeful attacks on the ghost of Nicolosi go on and on and on.

The belief of the sexual left is that anyone who does not want same-sex attraction or does not want any longer to participate in sodomitical sexual practices has internalized "homophobia." He is a self-hater, a self-hate caught like an infection from the gay-hatred awash in the wider society. Any proper therapy and therapist would help him do away with this internalized homophobia, to get fine with kissing other men and with the sodomy that inevitably comes with it. They are especially incensed that a young man under the age of majority would consider that sodomy is not what he wants from his life.

Nicolosi had another view. He did not so much seek to cure homosexuality but to fix the brokenness in childhood that led almost inexorably to homosexuality. Fix the brokenness and sexual health follows.

Nicolosi never argued that anyone could change against their will. No one could be forced to change. Only someone highly motivated to change could ever possibly change. Even then, Nicolosi said no more than 30 percent could completely change. Another 30 percent would still feel the pull but would be able to resist. The rest would not change at all.

Big Gay gained an upper hand in this debate when homosexuality was taken out of the diagnostic manual of the psychiatric and psychological guild. If there's nothing wrong with it, then who are you to try and help someone who doesn't want it?

But Nicolosi and other professionals like him kept going, under great pressure, working one on one with countless men who no longer wanted to live that lifestyle.

One of them is Joseph Sciambra, author of the harrowing book *Swallowed by Satan*, the story of his descent as a participant into darker and darker gay porn. Sciambra sent me his remembrances of how Nicolosi helped him.

Nicolosi came to Sciambra's attention when Nicolosi's book "*A Parent's Guide to Preventing Homosexuality*" came out in 2002. He said, "reparative therapy" was not on his mind at the time since he was "primarily fixated on remaining chaste since embracing my new-found belief in Our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ." Sciambra, however, felt "cold and dead" thinking of all the other faceless and nameless young men he had been with, many of whom died horrible deaths due to AIDS.

Even though Sciambra believed he was "born gay," his "broken and battered body" told him that homosexuality was not something God wanted for him, nothing that God even intended for him or for anyone else. The apostolate Courage was good for him but also became dangerous since it led once to a "particular friendship" ending in bed. This is why Sciambra is also a critic of the New Homophile/Spiritual Friendship group because he knows where supposedly chaste but nonetheless passionate friendships can lead.

He came to know that this would continue unless and until he faced the underlying causes of this same-sex attraction that plagued him. He remembered the Nicolosi book. Remarkably, every page spoke to him. In those pages, he saw his childhood "over and over again," he says.

Sciambra called Nicolosi. What was supposed to be 15 minutes turned into an hour, and there were more hours to come and Nicolosi didn't charge for any of them. The heart of Sciambra's problem and the heart of Nicolosi's therapy were about the hidden pain that Sciambra and other gay men carry around with them. Sciambra described it this way, "I couldn't escape the feeling that every man in my life had rejected me when I was a child. And it was that still frightened and friendless boy who needed help; except he never got it. Instead, he was told he was gay."

Sciambra said he was always the clumsy kid who wanted to be one of the boys and in homosexuality "I decisively found a group of men who accepted me." Even so, no man and no amount of men could fill the void that still existed deep inside. What he found in Gay World was darkness, dysfunction, and loneliness.

When Sciambra sought professional help in Gay World "one psychiatrist after another" ascribed his continuing difficulties with "unresolved internalized homophobia." Sciambra told them he was out and proud; he had no problem with "having sex in public, in front of other people." Then they blamed his Catholic upbringing. Sciambra said every priest he had ever discussed it with had supported his homosexual orientation. Sciambra said, "They had no answer except that I was doing gay wrong."

What Nicolosi proposed was something different and, according to Sciambra, "radical"; an exploration of Sciambra's past. He says, "All homosexuality accomplished was in multiplying my ghosts." With Nicolosi he revisited "the

annoying sissy boy of my youth, the lonely child I learned to hate who I had dragged around from one boyfriend to one bathhouse after another.”

Sciambra says Nicolosi helped him not to be ashamed of that boy, helped to heal that boy’s wounds, and “finally to embrace that boy, and then to accept the boy was me.”

So potent and effective have been the efforts to help people resist unwanted same-sex attractions and behaviors, that stopping them has become not a cottage industry but a major industrial enterprise. Consider that if there was no call for such therapy, and if such therapy was truly unsuccessful, would Big Gay work so hard to shut it down? They are trying to ban it across the country and some of them have even gone to the UN.

So potent is the theory and practice that when the Jewish referral group JONAH was sued by former patients with a multi-million-dollar assist from the anti-Christian hate group Southern Poverty Law Center, the judge did not allow Nicolosi to testify. “The theory that homosexuality is a disorder is not novel but—like the notion that the Earth is flat and the sun revolves around it—instead is outdated and refuted,” Judge Peter Bariso wrote.

There is a video of British comic actor Stephen Fry interviewing Nicolosi in his office. It is largely respectful except for a moment when the fat, slovenly, homosexual Fry goads Nicolosi with the comment that given his slim, dapper looks, he very well could be gay. A clearly dishonest edit shows Nicolosi glowering, supposedly flummoxed, unable to answer.

Fry finishes by commenting that he couldn’t find a single patient Nicolosi had ever treated. But that is a lie, too. There are thousands and thousands of them. There are probably more ex-gays than active gays. Had he found one or a dozen, Fry wouldn’t have believed them anyway. He would have mocked them, or not believed them, or told them they were just “doing gay wrong.”

Had he looked, he could have found Joseph Sciambra who these days can be seen haunting gay pride parades wearing an electric smile, along with a T-shirt that says, “Jesus Loves Gay Men.” There are amazing pictures of Sciambra standing next to many flamboyant and outrageously dressed men, he and they grinning ear to ear. He loves them and wants to save them as he has been saved, and they know it. It is a lonely apostolate helping to bring other wounded boys like he was to walk out of the darkness and into healing and wholeness of authentic manhood.

Dr. Joseph Nicolosi made such a thing possible for Sciambra and thousands of others.

Requiescat in pace.