

January 2016

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## Unisex Restrooms—the New Frontier

Government assumes control of all male and female locker rooms

*"The church must confess that she has desired security and peace, quiet, possession, and honor to which she has no right. -- Dietrich Bonhoeffer*

**M**ore than a few biblio-centric church leaders think it's a waste of time for Christians to be involved in "political" matters. Not surprisingly, organizations such as Planned Parenthood, the ACLU, Americans for Separation of Church and State, and an army of LGBT activists, love that kind of thinking. Sometimes, albeit unwittingly, they even parrot another national leader who in 1934 said (parenthetically) to a gathering of national religious leaders at the Reich Chancellery, "You take care of the Church. Leave Germany to me!"<sup>1</sup>

As the 64<sup>th</sup> session of the Washington State Legislature nears day 20-of-a-60-day session, two particular topics, GUNS and RESTROOMS, are drawing larger than normal crowds to Olympia.

At least five potential game-changing gun control measures have been introduced in the House so far this session. As expected, they have drawn "fire" from groups concerned that cleverly crafted gun restrictions are probably an end-run around the Second Amendment right to keep and bear arms. For the good, or for the bad, the five most controversial gun bills introduced are:

**House Bill 1747**—criminalizes unsafe storage of a firearm. **HB 2461**—establishes extreme risk protection orders to temporarily prevent an individual from possessing, accessing, or purchasing firearms while that individual poses a significant danger of harm. **HB 2372**—allows for the destruction of forfeited firearms. **HB 2460**—Authorizes municipalities to restrict firearm possession in any parks, recreational facilities, libraries and public transportation.

**House Bill 2354**—Bans so-called "assault weapons" in Washington State. According to most Republican lawmakers, this bill tops all potentially bad gun control measures of the 2016 session. Sponsored by Rep. Jim Moeller, D-Vancouver, the bill's definition of an assault weapon also includes any semiautomatic pistol "that has the capacity to accept a detachable magazine."

Rep Matt Shea (R-Spokane) the assistant ranking member of the House Judiciary Committee, plans to aggressively question the application of each new gun-control proposal. By all appearances, law-abiding gun owners seem to be in the crosshairs rather than known felons, street gangs, drug lords, psychotics, and illegal aliens. While no Republican House member has signed onto these bills, Shea suggests our readers review these measures and provide feedback to their own representatives.

Generally speaking, however, conservative lawmakers with whom we have regular contact, are not calling for church leaders to address second amendment issues from the pulpit on Sunday—or even Monday. While always welcoming input on any issue, these solons have no problem with those who feel that if the WORD is silent on a subject, so be it (2Tim 2:4). But, on the other hand, if the Bible is arguably loud and clear on a certain topic, then the Church is obliged to speak out.

In 1934, Adolf Hitler summoned many of Germany's prominent clergy to the Reich Chancellery in Berlin, to outline his new national policy which he called *Gleichschaltung* (coordination)—a “fundamental transformation” if you will. The goal of the new policy, was to bring about adherence to a specific doctrine and way of thinking and to control as many aspects of life as possible. Hitler assured pastors that the Church should not worry—state subsidies and tax exemptions would continue.

Pastor Martin Niemueller attended that historic meeting. He was among a lonely band of Christian heroes who stood against the tide of evil in Nazi Germany. A highly decorated U-boat commander, he entered the ministry following the First World War. His congregation in a suburb of Berlin “was one of the wealthiest and most influential evangelical churches in the land—its membership made up of high government officials, generals, and so on.”<sup>1</sup> But, observing that none of his peers appeared to be alarmed at what they were hearing, he made his way to the front of the auditorium, and said, “Herr Hitler,” Our concern is not for the Church. Jesus Christ will take care of His Church. Our concern is for the soul of Germany.”

But, speaking out against wicked national policies, hastened the highly feared Gestapo to his front door. The morning after Niemueller's first arrest, a Lutheran chaplain was making his rounds in the city jail. As he entered Niemueller's cell, he was astounded to find his fellow clergyman sitting there under arrest. "My brother!" he exclaimed, "what did you do? Why are you here? Niemueller, never at a loss for words immediately reacted, 'My brother, given what is happening in our country, why aren't you here?'"

In 2016, we are expected to embrace another facet of *Gleichschaltung*. Men who are seeking joint use of public shower facilities with ladies and little girls, have been given an official go-ahead. Are you with us?

In December, the Washington State Human Rights Commission slithered into previously uncharted waters, demanding that all male and female group locker rooms and bathrooms be opened to any who “identify” with the opposite sex—no questions asked. The new ruling (WAC 162-32) makes it illegal for schools and businesses with eight or more employees to bar a man from entering a women's restroom, locker room, shower or sauna. Even questioning an individual as to his or her sexual “identity” invites stiff penalties.

Unfortunately, the YMCA of Pierce County is among the first to embrace this repugnant new ruling. Shocked little girls have recently reported to their mothers that men have entered their heretofore protected spaces. And, local moms are rising in arms.

Yesterday, hundreds of Pierce County parents traveled to Olympia to lend support to Rep. Graham Hunt's (R-Orting) proposal to temper the Human Rights Commission dictate. His **House Bill 2589**, would allow a public or private entity to limit access to private facilities segregated by gender if an individual is pre-operative or non-operative. There would be no restriction on individuals who are post-operative.

While Rep. Hunt's relatively mild adjustment has not been able to land a hearing in the Democrat-controlled House, companion bill **SB 6443** was heard yesterday in the Senate Committee on Commerce and Labor, chaired by Sen. Doug Ericksen (R-Ferndale). Supporters packed out several hearing rooms.

This audience has a clear history of responding to social issues of extreme biblical import. Exposing women and young children to the whims and wants of confused, clever, or dangerous male predators, would certainly rank right up there. **A call to the Legislative Hot Line (800-562-6000)** is a very appropriate and effective way to register your concerns with government officials, followed by a [visit with your pastor](#).

The great reformer Martin Luther once declared that the preacher who does not rebuke the sins of the rulers through God's Word spoken publically, boldly and honestly, strengthens the sins of the tyrants, and becomes a partaker in them, and bears responsibility for them. Your thoughts?

*Rick Forcier*

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<sup>1</sup> White, Laurence Dr., “The Sin of Silence,” delivered at Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, 9/6/2000