

## A Famine Of The Word (Part Two)

**Social Media Double Standards**

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Long before the Internet, Christian bias and censorship toward Christians has existed. In looking briefly at the last 600 years, we find it in various places.

Once the invention of the printing press by Johannes Gutenberg around 1440<sup>AD</sup> changed the nature of book publishing, as of the 16th century, in most European countries, both the church and governments attempted to regulate and control printing. Governments established controls over printers across Europe, requiring them to have official licenses to trade and produce books.

In 1557, the British Crown aimed to stem the flow of dissent by chartering the Stationers' Company. The right to print was restricted to two universities and to the 21 existing printers in the city of London.

In France, the 1551 Edict of Châteaubriant included provisions for unpacking and inspecting all books brought into France. The 1557 Edict of Compiègne applied the death penalty to heretics and resulted in the burning of a noblewoman at the stake.

A first version of the *Index Librorum Prohibitorum* ("List of Prohibited Books") was promulgated by Pope Paul IV in 1559, and multiple revisions were made to it over the years. The final (20th) edition appeared in 1948, and it was formally abolished on 14 June 1966 by Pope Paul VI. Books were being prohibited right up until that time by the Catholic Church itself.

Today, religious broadcasters say Internet service providers are censoring traditional moral views at the behest especially of homosexual rights' advocates and others of a non-Christian worldview.

Colby May, director of the office of governmental affairs at the American Center for Law and Justice, teamed up with Craig Parshall, general counsel for the National Religious Broadcasters and other groups, to examine the new media platforms' censorship for the last year-and-a-half.

"There is a kind of viewpoint censorship that's going on. And we need to go ahead and stand up and say, 'Stop. Not here. Don't do it. Wrong way. Turn around now,'" May explained.

"What's getting censored?" CBN News asked Parshall.

"Right now, it's on the issue of the gay rights agenda," he responded.

Apple's Apps store stopped the distribution of two applications that were from Christian groups opposing the gay rights agenda.

"And you have to ask yourself, 'Why just these two viewpoints of the hundreds of thousands that you have?' And when you get the explanation, it's, 'Well, some people were ruffled. They felt they were offended by it,'" May said.

Parshall complained that the companies behind these platforms give them "the authority to strip content off whenever other users, for any reason, decide they don't like the opinions of other users."

[So, it is people being pitted against one another.]

"Then you're thinking, 'Wait just a minute. We've crossed over into this netherworld where offense is now the justification upon which the rights we have as Americans to fully engage in the culture and to debate all issues is going to be decided?'" May asked.

Back in November 2015, Jillian C. York co-founded [Online Censorship](#), a user-generated platform to document content takedowns on six social media platforms (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Flickr, Google+ and YouTube), to address how these sites moderate user-generated content and how free expression is affected online.

Online Censorship's [first report, released in March 2016](#), stated:

In the United States (where all of the companies covered in this report are headquartered), social media companies generally reserve the right to determine what content they will host, and they do not consider their policies to constitute censorship. We challenge this assertion, and examine how their policies (and the enforcement thereof) may have a chilling effect on freedom of expression.

Facebook has 1.5 billion users, so small teams of poorly-paid content moderators simply cannot give appropriate consideration to all flagged content against the secretive terms and conditions laid out by social media companies. The result is arbitrary and knee-jerk censorship.

Facebook, Google (which owns YouTube and Google+), Twitter, LinkedIn, and Yahoo (which owns Tumblr) are the biggest players in social media. Collectively, their platforms are used by billions of people around the world, and these organizations have a combined market value of hundreds of billions of dollars. There are also the up-and-comers like Pinterest and Snapchat.

Social media is very much a business, and its primary goal is the accumulation of wealth. That is its bottom line, and secondarily, to promote their own agendas. Over the past year, social media has seen an increase in hateful speech and total bipartisanship.

Censorship has been around for millennia, and philosophers have been discussing the ethics of it for centuries. Nevertheless, it is not always just censorship which causes a loss of God's word, but a refusal to hear it is an even greater cause.

As Christians teach God's Word and speak out against society's sins, such as pedophilia, homosexuality, and gay marriage, we are increasingly censored on social media sites. The world cannot bear to hear of God's way of life and His coming judgment upon these blatant sinners.

Sin is an evil and a bitter thing. It is evil in its nature, and bitter in its consequences. It is evil with regard to God, and bitter with regard to us. Numberless are the miseries to which sin has reduced individuals, families, nations, and the whole human race.

Among these one of the most dreadful is famine. Yet there is a famine infinitely more dreadful than the famine of food: it is 'a famine of hearing the words of the Lord'.

**Amos 8:11-12** "Behold, the days are coming," says the Lord God, "That I will send a famine on the land, not a famine of bread, nor a thirst for water, but of hearing the words of the Lord. They shall wander from sea to sea, and from north to east; they shall run to and fro, seeking the word of the Lord, but shall not find it.

The world cannot bear to hear God's Word taught, but a time is coming when people will not even be able to find it if they want to. Similar to what is coming, ancient Israel degenerated to this depth and punishment. Israel had rejected the words of the Lord from Amos and so they would go into exile, where there would be no word from the Lord at all. In its absence, they found that the revelation from God had been their most precious possession. But at that point, when they went into captivity, they could no longer find it.

People who have repeatedly rejected God's words will suddenly be unable to find God's words. It won't just be that it is not able to be heard over the Internet or other media sources. It may end up totally that way, but I don't know. It may still be able to get out by shortwave and that type of thing. But for the most part, it will be hard to come by.

In Amos 7:17, severe judgment came to a priest for rejecting God's words, but in Amos 8:11, severe judgment came upon the people as a whole for the same sin.

What may provoke God to inflict such a calamity upon a people or a church? Let me give you six short reasons:

1. Neglect of and indifference to the precious Word of God.

2. Making the Word of God into an idol. The Bible itself may come between a person and the God it reveals. Some people won't even write notes in their Bible because of a superstitious view of it.

3. Disregard of and forsaking the faithful care of the truth, or we could say, neglecting to guard the truth.

4. We may make too much of people and too little of Christ's teaching; too much of human wisdom and too little of God's revelation.

5. The supplementing and adding to God's Word, as if it were insufficient; or darkening or perverting it, as though man's interpretation were essential.

6. The methods of teaching God's truth may be exalted to the point where it depreciates the value of the message of the Word of God. God's ceremonies do not act as magical charms; God teaches the called through His Spirit as a rational and responsible influence. I have seen sermons over the years where they were more entertaining than they were informative or a teaching tool.

A famine of hearing the words of the Lord is a famine infinitely more dreadful than a famine of food, water, or anything else. Let's appreciate everything we have now and really guard the truth in every way that we can.