

“Pennsylvania wasn’t fighting South Carolina.”

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“A New Confederacy”

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If you’ve read any history books, you know how the last confederacy turned out. Contrary to some opinions, that 1861-1865 calamity wasn’t the War of Northern Aggression. Fort Sumter was bombarded first by those who renounced Lincoln’s lawful election. Neither was it the War Between the States because states cannot legally secede from the Union. Can the kidney tell the head it will leave the body politic? Persons within those states chose anarchist rebellion against their country, of which they were and did remain an indivisible part. Pennsylvania wasn’t fighting South Carolina. Combat took place between those who supported the Constitution and those who insurrected against it lacking just or moral cause. States’ rights was the excuse to preserve slavery.

We’re falling into another confederacy. Certain cynical leaders in certain states, abetted by three corruptly seated activist Associate Justices of the Supreme Court who place states’ rights over Federal sovereignty when it suits their darlings, are dangerously and inconsistently maneuvering us away from a Union toward a pocked-marked confederacy. New York permits the right of choice over abortion. Texas forbids it. It’s a new confederacy

We’re the United States of America, not a voluntary club. Democratic-Republican Thomas Jefferson advocated for states’ rights, opposing Alexander Hamilton’s support for Federalism, at least until Jefferson became President and realized Hamilton’s views were useful. It’s fitting for states to exercise authority over their own jurisdictions. Mahoning Township sets its own regulations about zoning, dog poop, fireworks, burn barrels. But Mahoning Township cannot ignore rules governing Montour County. Township supervisors can challenge the county in court (checks and balances, decentralizing power), but should the court decide for the country, county must be obeyed. State sovereignty supersedes counties. Counties supersede municipalities.

Another example: Wyoming in 1869 exercised the right to grant suffrage to women decades before the 19th Amendment was ratified. When ratified in 1920 suffrage became binding on all states. No state had the right to deny a woman’s right to vote. Again: my denomination requires that all congregations with called pastors contribute to the denomination’s Board of Pension and Major Medical. Our denomination affirms the congregation’s right to call their own pastor, but also insures that pastors retain benefits should they relocate.

Federalism, as the head authority, is designed to seek moderation (often by choosing the lesser evil) and curb extremist abuses. Even as states’ rights check Federal demagoguery, Federal authority supersedes state authority. It must, because there are policies and freedoms which pertain to the public as a whole, such as interstate commerce, foreign policy, climate laws, banning slavery, or protecting the right to vote. States cannot mint their own currency. They cannot establish a state religion – Christian nationalism, Mr. Mastriano, isn’t Christian. No Ayatollahs here. The Christian Right isn’t. National freedoms mustn’t be abrogated despite agendas by leaders in particular states.

Question: how does the right to abortion and contraception, free from interference by the womb police, ethically compare to end-of-life decisions? Are these matters best controlled by political

ambitions? I contend these are personal spiritual and medical matters, matters of private conscience deserving protection versus state constraint. Once upon a merrier time the Republicans accused the Democrats of fostering a 'Nanny State.' I'll take a persuasive 'Nanny State' any day over a punitive Police State inciting state sponsored vigilantism. Coercive rule by minority signals the minority's moral failure. Don't misconstrue pro-choice as pro-abortion. It's particular and situational rather than one size fits all (or, all must fit one size). Reject Texas chainsaws when healing scalpels are required.

Question: what will a legislator in Texas, North Dakota, or Florida do when his daughter's life is threatened by a failed pregnancy requiring a medical procedure on the fetus? Or if his daughter doesn't wish to carry her rapist's child to term?

Question: if Texas bans same sex marriage and the Supreme Court allows their state decision to stand, what happens if two men who were married in New York move to Texas (why anyone would want to these days, I don't know)? Are they still married?

Was it conversion or jaded opportunism that persuaded conservative evangelicals in the late 70's to market the issue of abortion into an expedient cudgel? Most evangelical churches, up until Reagan, supported freedom of choice, defending how such decisions belonged to the woman rather than legislators. It's also proven that Planned Parenthood and its caring positive approach to health care prevented more abortions than all the anti-abortion marches or clinic harassment. Perhaps times demand a modern Underground Railroad.