



Broadcast Transcript

Broadcast: The Evidence of America's Christian Origins: A Conversation with Jerry Newcombe – Part 2

Guest(s): Dr. Jerry Newcombe

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Dr. James Dobson: You're listening to Family Talk, the radio broadcasting division of the James Dobson Family Institute. I am that James Dobson, and I'm so pleased that you've joined us today.

Roger Marsh: Hello, and welcome back to Family Talk. I'm Roger Marsh and Family Talk, of course, is the broadcast division of the Dr. James Dobson Family Institute. Thanks to generous listeners just like you, we can reach more and more listeners with practical help and encouragement. To learn how to support Family Talk and the Dr. James Dobson Family Institute, visit drjamesdobson.org.

Now on yesterday's program, you heard the first half of Dr. Dobson's conversation with Dr. Jerry Newcombe, talking about Jerry's book called *The Unstoppable Jesus Christ*. They also talked about the legacy that both of their fathers had left for them. If you didn't hear yesterday's program, be sure to visit drjamesdobson.org/familytalk, and you'll find the audio archived right there.

Dr. Jerry Newcombe is the executive director of the Providence Forum. He also serves as the senior producer, on air host and a columnist for D. James Kennedy Ministries, and is the author or co-author of 33 books. Jerry earned his bachelor's degree in history, a master's degree in communication and a doctorate in ministry.

Now, what you're about to hear was recorded in 2018. Today, Dr. Dobson and Dr. Newcombe will be talking about some very important policy matters that were taking place during that year, specifically about the Supreme court nominations by President Donald Trump. Many would argue that these nominations led to the reversal of *Roe v. Wade*, which was a historic victory for the pro-life movement, to be sure. Let's join Dr. Dobson's classic conversation with Dr. Jerry Newcombe right now, on Family Talk.

Dr. James Dobson: Dr. Newcombe, it is a pleasure to have you back with us today. I thoroughly enjoyed our conversation yesterday and so much of what you write and teach through your television programs and the other things that you do focus on the culture. I've called it the culture war, but it's more appropriate to call it a spiritual warfare. Every Christian who's really trying to serve the Lord has felt it and seen it. Some have been persecuted by it.

I would like to devote our program to that topic today, because it is a subject that you have been so articulate about. Let me begin with an off the wall question. At the time that we are recording this, we have just recently heard that Justice Anthony Kennedy has resigned, and that is going to give Donald Trump an opportunity apparently to make another choice, would have to be confirmed of course, to the Supreme Court, which would give a five to four majority, if in fact it works out like it could. Tell me how you felt when you heard of that resignation and what it means for the country.

Dr. Jerry Newcombe: Well, I think it's potentially a great development, because Anthony Kennedy obviously was clearly not a consistent conservative. It's funny that they would often categorize him as a conservative. He was appointed by Ronald Reagan and he used to give lectures even before he was appointed as Supreme Court associate justice. I understand that he used to give lectures about James Madison and the importance of the Constitution.

One would've easily thought he was an originalist, but going back as early as 1992 in the *Casey* decision, a key abortion related decision, which could have truly undone a lot of the damage of *Roe v Wade*, 1973, so 19 years before. Unfortunately, Anthony Kennedy went with the liberals, creating a majority to still uphold *Roe v. Wade*. Then there were some other decisions related to homosexuality and so forth that Anthony Kennedy ruled or even wrote the opinion. In some ways he could be viewed as perhaps the most influential, powerful human being in the United States of America, when he was the swing vote, which was true up until just a couple days ago, the days ago of this recording.

In other words, he would decide whether a vote would go this way or would go that way. After all, Anthony Kennedy is the one in 2015, who wrote the *Obergefell* decision, which is a horrible decision.

Dr. James Dobson: Yes. Yes.

Dr. Jerry Newcombe: Saying that we five justices on the Supreme Court, a majority, are deciding that we know better than God as to what marriage is. They had the hubris to try and basically redefine what marriage is and Kennedy wrote that decision. Kennedy by no means has been a consistently conservative justice, but he's also not consistently liberal either in some cases.

This gives President Trump an opportunity to get somebody like Neil Gorsuch or somebody in the mold of Clarence Thomas, or Scalia or Alito who is a consistent conservative. I think this could portend really, really well for the country and perhaps the meltdown of some of the radical people in our country to the new news about Kennedy's stepping down. Maybe that should give us a tip off that maybe things are looking up.

Dr. James Dobson: Well, I find it very encouraging and I have been extremely concerned or irritated by some of Justice Kennedy's decisions, especially the two you mentioned. I think he's done the irreparable damage to this nation by the decisions in regard to family and sexuality. He was instrumental, as you said, in redefining marriage. That still takes my breath away. When you think about the relationship between men and women has been defined in marriage from the days of the Garden of Eden.

When you think about what Paul wrote about marriage, saying that marriage is a metaphor for the relationship between Christ and the church, how dare this one man, take this country away from traditional understandings of male and female relationships. Then of course, what he has written about homosexuality, he almost always voted wrong on those two issues.

There were things that he was more conservative about, but I once called him the most dangerous man in America, because he was sitting in the catbird seat. He was the swing vote, and I don't want to do violence to his memory or as a justice on the Supreme court. Many people revere him for that. But I wish that Robert Bork had not been borked, when Ronald Reagan appointed him to that position, as I recall.

Dr. Jerry Newcombe: Yeah. Yes, I once interviewed Ed Meese a few years after that incident. He said Robert Bork was so well qualified. Here was a former professor at Yale, Yale Law School. He was just extremely well credentialed to sit in that office, in that capacity. Then the left put out, they pulled out all the stops and he said, "Frankly, we in the Reagan administration were caught flatfooted."

It was like, this guy is so qualified. How could you possibly besmirch him? But then you remember Ted Kennedy with a famous speech, "In Robert Bork's America, the luncheon counters will be segregated once again. What? He just went on and on and on. The left just pulled out all the stops to, as you say, "bork Mr. Bork." Unfortunately he went down in flames and was not able to do that. Thankfully, he did write some important books about the whole process, but our founding fathers never intended the Supreme Court to have the kind of power that they've taken unto themselves.

Dr. James Dobson: In fact, Jefferson considered it to be the most dangerous of the branches of government, because it is essentially uncontrolled. I mean, they've given lifetime appointments and there is no accountability whatsoever. One of the books that you bleakly made reference to a minute ago, was Robert Bork's *Slouching toward Gomorrah*. He's talking about the evil and the wickedness that was beginning to take hold throughout the country. If he had been on that court, he would have been able to lessen it at least, if not made a huge difference in who we are today.

Dr. Jerry Newcombe: Mm-hmm. Boy, that's so true. It was a terrible injustice that they did to him. I interviewed him about five years or so before he died, we were working on one of these programs for the ministry, D, James Kennedy Ministries. We were

talking specifically about *Roe v. Wade*. He said, "You know, there's not an ounce of legal reasoning in that decision." He said, "They basically you have this meandering historical lesson about abortion practice in different ancient pagan times or whatever. Then it says, well, the Supreme court has said in previous decisions that there's a right to privacy and boom, that means we should have the right to abortion." There's no constitutional hook to it. There's no provision. In fact, I remember reading *Roe v. Wade* and I was looking, what are they quoting in the Constitution to justify this?

Dr. James Dobson: There was none.

Dr. Jerry Newcombe: The answer is... Yeah, there were none, but they did refer to the ninth amendment and they referred to the 14th amendment. But neither of which in any way, spell out even the right to privacy. It doesn't say that. They were clearly just making things up as they wanted to. It's as if they had a foregone conclusion and they just used the Constitution to try to get to that foregone conclusion.

60 million or so unborn babies aborted since *Roe v. Wade*, same sex marriage is the law of the land, supposedly, or perceived to be. If you disagree with it, you might be punished. You might lose your livelihood. Thank God that Jack Phillips prevailed, but some have said, "Well, that decision didn't fully say everybody can disagree with this. They just kind of said, 'Well, if Colorado had been nicer in their telling him that he had to bake the cake, then maybe they would've ruled in favor of him having to bake that cake.'" Anyway, what a mess and it's been a mess, really you can lay at the feet of the Supreme Court.

Dr. James Dobson: One of the most encouraging things that has happened since the confirmation and the seating of Justice Neil Gorsuch, who has taken a position that religious liberty has to be preserved. I think he is bringing about dramatic changes in the way the culture looks at people like us, and giving us the right to speak and the right to be heard. The aspects of the Constitution, which give us religious liberty. I'm encouraged about that. Now, with the possibility of a majority on the Supreme Court, do you think this country has a chance of changing around?

Dr. Jerry Newcombe: Well, I think at least we have a reprieve. I think that what is greatly needed is more and more of we the people, the people themselves to have a godly perspective. Righteousness exalts a nation, but sin is a reproach to any people. There needs to be real heart change, I think among millions and millions of Americans.

But in the meantime, I think it's of definitely an encouraging development. Quite frankly, if you look at the history of the country, the people that settled and founded this country for the most part, certainly in the settlement era, starting from Jamestown 1607, until let's say the founding era 1774, most of those colonies were started by Christians who were being persecuted because they wanted to come here and just practice their faith. In fact, they wrote down

their constitutions, their covenants before God. They really, in many ways, they paved the way to the creation of the U.S. Constitution.

The freedoms that we enjoy as Americans were all bought and paid for by the blood, sweat, toil, and tears of all these Christians who sacrificed everything, so they could come here. To be denied in modern America, for Christians to be denied our liberties in a nation that basically our fore fathers founded for religious liberty, which we then by the way, have extended to everybody, including the atheist, it's a strange and sad turn of events. I think the fact of the matter is the facts of history are on our side and so also is the rule of law.

Dr. James Dobson: Jerry you've written quite extensively about Thomas Jefferson and who he really was. There'd been a lot of commentary and I think some erroneous views of his faith. He's remembered in some circles as the man who gave us the separation of church and state, but that's been wildly misunderstood too, hasn't it?

Dr. Jerry Newcombe: Oh yeah. In fact, there's a book I co-wrote with a pastor based in Charlottesville, Virginia, Mark Beliles, and the book is called *Doubting Thomas* and it's on the religious life and legacy of Thomas Jefferson. There's really two main points that we make in the book. One, Jefferson was not a lifelong skeptic and that in fact, in the earliest period of his life, when he was most contributing to the United States of America, was his most believing period. There's no reason to even doubt that he had a Christian world in life view at that time.

For example, when he wrote the Declaration of Independence, or at least the first draft of it, he was a practicing church member, a Bible reader. A year later, 1777 as a layman, he was the co-founder of an evangelical church in Charlottesville. It was called the Calvinistic Reform Church of Charlottesville. They called the Reverend Charles Clay, who was an evangelical, who had been ordained as an Anglican and Reverend Charles Clay, by the way, preached gospel sermons.

In fact, when Jefferson wrote up the agreement for the establishment of that church in 1777, he said, "We, being desirous of gospel knowledge, we are establishing this church and calling the Reverend Charles Clay," and the church meetings took place at these Charlottesville courthouse. All of this stuff is established history. Now, later in life, Jefferson had some serious doubts on a private level towards a core Christian doctrine.

I would not want to put Jefferson in the category if he was always a Christian and stayed faithful to the end, only God will judge his heart. But the most interesting part is when he was writing the Declaration of Independence, when he was writing the Virginia Statute for religious Liberty, which in effect says that our rights come from Jesus Christ, that Jesus is the author of our religious liberty. If you try to impose any kind of religion by state, by the force of the state, you are departing from the plan of the holy author of our religion, who being Lord, both of body and mind, chose reason to propagate belief in Him, but not force, as was in His almighty power to do.

In other words, “Jesus” says the Virginia Statute for religious liberty, which Jefferson wrote, “Jesus is saying, we can have the choice to accept Him or reject Him. It's not up to the state to enforce that.” Well, that was very revolutionary and very important. Now, as I say, Jefferson did privately entertain some serious doubts later in his life. But the most significant thing is when he was really important to the cause, he definitely from all outward appearances and from what he wrote would seem that he was a believer in Jesus Christ.

The second point we make in the book, is that Jefferson, even in his most skeptical days, never embraced what we have today with this separation of God and state. Jefferson, for example, as president refused, he declined to set aside a day of proclamation of a day of Thanksgiving and of prayer. He felt that that was something that was okay for the states to do. When he was the governor of Virginia and he was asked the same thing, he said, "Sure." He wrote up a proclamation of prayer and Thanksgiving as governor, but he did not do that at the federal level. He felt that that was the federal government going too far and stepping on state authority.

The book goes into all these kinds of details. Surely Jefferson never intended this kind of anti-Christian crusade, that's been carried out, frankly, in his name. The very letter he wrote, that's been used to say that the first amendment should mean that there's a strict separation of church and state, that letter by their own criterion violates the separation of church and state. That letter-

Dr. James Dobson: That was the letter to the Danbury Baptist, was it not?

Dr. Jerry Newcombe: Exactly. That letter at the end of it, he says, "I ask you to pray to God for me, and I'll pray to God for you." Wait a minute, you praying to God? It's absurd. It's almost like this creation by the ACLU. “Well, Thomas Jefferson was a lifelong skeptic and he certainly believed in this strict wall of separation of church and state” Oh, by the way, Jefferson wasn't even there when they wrote the constitution, he was in France. He wasn't there participating as a member of the House of Representatives or the Senate while they wrote the First Amendment.

It's wrong to even use him as an arbiter of what they meant. What the founders meant, when they gave us the First Amendment, was that there'd be no Church of America. Just like you have the Church of England, there would be no such thing. Instead, people were free to practice religion as they saw fit. Several of the states, even at the time of the adoption of the Constitution, had state churches that was never declared unconstitutional.

There's been a total misreading these days. We've gotten to the point where Christians are losing their religious freedom in a land created by Christians, for religious freedom, which we've extended to others. Now we're losing it. It's a sad turn of events.

Dr. James Dobson: Well, one thing is certain, never did he say or hold, that the government should be protected from the church. It was the other way around. Wasn't it?

Dr. Jerry Newcombe: Exactly. I think that's a great point. I think what's happening today, is people don't even want godly influence to bear in the public square. If you just look, even at our history, even relatively recent history, I mean the Reverend Martin Luther King Jr., much of what he said is actually sermons. It's based on biblical teachings, even the "I Have a Dream" speech, one of the first statements he makes is a quotation from Isaiah, the book of Isaiah, Isaiah chapter 40. Our nation is replete with this godly heritage, which so many have been trying to whitewash a long time.

Dr. James Dobson: Yeah. Well, Jerry, our time is gone. Before you go, tell us if you're optimistic about the faith in the Christian faith, particularly in this country. If so, why? If not, why?

Dr. Jerry Newcombe: Okay. That's an excellent question. I'm optimistic to the extent that we, as Christians, are faithful in our little sphere that the Lord has given us. I'm pessimistic in a sense that there are many pulpits where I just wish they would just connect the dots a little bit more. I don't mean to preach politics, but what I mean is to be faithful to Jesus Christ.

Dr. James Dobson: That's it.

Dr. Jerry Newcombe: In the big picture, I am optimistic and that's because God is ultimately at work. One of my favorite quotes comes from our sixth president, John Quincy Adams, who fought by the way, so hard against slavery and did not see the kind of successful results that would come about 30 years or so after his death at a great price to the country, of course, a price of judgment if you will. But John Quincy Adams said, "Duty is ours. Results are God's." I feel like we can be optimistic, if we just keep focusing on Jesus and focusing on Him, and proclaim Him, and let Him be known by more and more people.

Dr. James Dobson: Well, that's the ultimate optimism. Jerry, I have really appreciated talking to you. What I love about the things you say and write, is that Jesus is preeminent in your thought process in what you teach and what you say and who you are as a man, a man of God. We've been talking to Dr. Jerry Newcombe, doctorate of ministry, the author of many, many books, 29 and counting, and radio and television programs through the years. God bless you, friend, keep up the good work. It's a pleasure to stand shoulder to shoulder with you.

Dr. Jerry Newcombe: Thank you very much. The privilege is all mine. It's been a joy to be with you, Dr. Dobson.

Dr. James Dobson: Let's do it again.

Roger Marsh:

Well, I hope you've enjoyed listening to these past few days of programming here on Family Talk, featuring our host, Dr. James Dobson and his conversation with Dr. Jerry Newcombe. This dialogue was originally recorded in 2018. By the way, you can learn more about Dr. Newcombe, his role at D. James Kennedy Ministries, his books and ministry, and more when you visit drjamesdobson.org/familytalk.

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Announcer:

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