Turning the World Upside Down

**TEXT**: **Acts 17:5-7 (ESV)** 5  But the Jews were jealous, and taking some wicked men of the rabble, they formed a mob, set the city in an uproar, and attacked the house of Jason, seeking to bring them out to the crowd. 6  And when they could not find them, they dragged Jason and some of the brothers before the city authorities, shouting, “These men who have turned the world upside down have come here also, 7  and Jason has received them, and they are all acting against the decrees of Caesar, saying that there is another king, Jesus.”

“Dominus illuminatio mea” is the Latin motto of the University of Oxford, one of the world’s oldest and most prestigious institutions of learning. Used since the 16th century, these words, taken from the opening verse of Psalm 27 proclaim, “The Lord is my light.”

Recently the campus saw a discussion which would determine whether the motto was a valid, shaping principle or mere words to line the bottom of the pet budgie’s cage.

What happened was this: the student body at Lady Margaret Hall overwhelmingly voted to forbid the conservative group, Christian Concern, from having a booth at their Freshman orientation. While Christian Concern has a reputation for being first-class hosts and guests, that didn’t stop the rumors which were being spread about them.

Christian Concern is dedicated to training and equipping students on what it means “to proclaim Christ in public life.” That philosophy, which supports marriage as being between a man and a woman and opposes abortion on-demand was demonized by the group’s opponents.

Indeed, when the motion condemning the organization was passed, it said Christian Concern was a “real threat to the physical and mental safety of students.” Paul and Silas would have understood.

When they had gone to Thessalonica the evangelists had to battle those who hated them, who spread lies and rumors about them, who created fear concerning their message. Yes, there are many similarities between Oxford and that ancient Greek city. Many similarities and one difference.

2,000 years ago Paul and Silas were smuggled out of the city. In Oxford voices of reason to defend Christian Concern came forward. Some of those voices spoke of freedom of speech. Others explained what can happen when groups are driven out by misunderstanding.

Also there were those who explained that today, as in centuries past, no government, no group, no individual has to feel threatened by those who understand and proclaim the true teachings of the Prince of Peace.

True, Christianity condemns sin, but it doesn’t do so by proclaiming a violent jihad. Yes, believers proclaim the Christ as being God’s Son and the world’s only Savior, but we make no demands or threats to force others into believing the Lord’s truth which alone can offer forgiveness of sins and a guarantee of eternal life.

Thanks be to God those voices were heard and carried the day. Student leaders said the ban was a "violation of free speech, a violation of religious freedom, and (which) sets dangerous precedents regarding the relationship between specific faiths and religious freedom.”

In short, in the future, Christian Concern will be welcomed at Oxford.

**THE PRAYER**: Dear Lord, grant that the world may see Jesus as Savior rather than a threat, as Redeemer rather than a menace. Open minds and hearts so all may believe He truly is good news of great joy Who has come for the salvation of all. In Jesus’ Name we pray. Amen.