

Trends

In 2015, 26.9 percent of people ages 18 or older reported that they engaged in binge drinking in the past month; 7.0 percent reported that they engaged in heavy alcohol use in the past month. ...According to the 2015 NSDUH, an estimated 623,000 adolescents ages 12–17 had alcohol use disorder.

-via National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism

Proverbs 23:29-30: "Who has woe? Who has sorrow? Who has contentions? Who has complaints? Who has wounds without cause? Who has redness of eyes? 30 Those who linger long at the wine, those who go in search of mixed wine."

Sentence Sermons

"I have better use for my brain than to poison it with alcohol. To put alcohol in the human brain is like putting sand in the bearings of an engine."
—Thomas Edison

Proverbs 20:1: "Wine is a mocker, strong drink is a brawler, and whoever is led astray by it is not wise."

News & Notes

Please pray for those mentioned in the announcements after services and others listed on the bulletin board in the foyer of the church building.

Pray that much fruit will come from the seed planted during our gospel meeting last week with Jesse Flowers. If you would like to contact Jesse his e-mail address is: jafopie@hotmail.com.

Please pray for Susan Ferrell and her family as she continues to recover from a brain tumor. Her chemo treatment is completed and so far everything is clear! Please continue pray for her and her family.

Please pray for Alan Jones. He underwent deep brain stimulation to hopefully relieve severe facial pain. Alan held a gospel meeting for us in October 2014. He's been unable to preach for several months due to his affliction. Pray for him and his family.

Please keep sisters Virginia Brown and Wilma Cardwell in your prayers. Their faithfulness sets such a good example and gives encouragement to all! Ditto for Al (our Barnabas!).

Pray for Larry Hafley; his heart valve replacement surgery was a success!

Pray for the all of our students: elementary, secondary and college. Our young people face many temptations in today's school environment.

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Please direct questions and comments to the editor.

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"Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life."

John 6:68

No Social Stigma Attached

Larry Ray Hafley



Scripture says that righteousness exalts a nation (Prov. 14:34). A nation's power is not in its military might, its munitions and missiles, but in its righteous character (Prov. 16:12). No country should fear when principles of truth and righteousness light its way in the world. No matter how great the threat, no nation will be overturned if it rests upon the rule of merciful justice and moral judgment (cf. Gen. 19; Jonah 3:5-10; Isa. 5:7, 24, 25; Jer. 6:16, 17).

Wickedness is a moth to the fabric of a nation's principles. Injustice and iniquity are termites to the inner structure of a country's character. Neither nuclear bombs flown and flung from afar nor horrific mass murder from within will destroy a nation. While those items may be the final, external cause, they alone do not destroy a nation.

I fear for our country. Why? Because, like Israel in Jeremiah's day, our nation has very little "social stigma" left. It used to be that many were restrained from gross immorality and from heinous sin by the taint and stain of society's indignant reaction against such actions. Now, though, many dark deeds, which once brought certain community condemnation, are now approved and applauded. The approval and glorification of sexual sins—homosexuality, fornication (unwed couples living together), adultery, leaving one's mate for another and expecting and receiving the acceptance of one's community of friends—these were once unthinkable choices. Yes, they occurred, but those who committed such sins suffered the social stigma that went with such decisions. No longer.

"Were they ashamed when they had committed abomination? nay, they were not at all ashamed, neither could they blush: therefore they shall fall among them that fall: at the time that I visit them they shall be cast down, saith the Lord" (Jer. 6:15).

Today, our society will not punish brazen and brazen whoredom. Rather,

it rewards and praises those “Whose end is destruction, whose God is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame, who mind earthly things” (Phil. 3:19). From Rock Hudson to Elizabeth Taylor; from Elton John to Michael Jackson, from Ellen DeGeneres to Rosie O’Donnell, the filth and off scouring of the world are honored as they delight in their debauchery.

A “virgin” is a taunting word of shame, hurled at junior high girls and boys with contempt. Immodest, indecent, alluring dress, designed to be sexually attractive, is regarded as “fashion,” not as a contributing factor to sins of passion. Toleration and “respect” for the “rights” of others to indulge their sins is to be granted without protest. We must allow “gay rights” advocates to state their case in school auditoriums and education classes, but we must not permit anyone to say that such behavior is perverse, nor permit a posting of the ten commandments. We may pass out condoms to students and show them how to use them in sex education courses, but we must not tell them that sexual relations before marriage is wrong and sinful.

Smoking today is suffering “social stigma.” It is no longer “cool” or “mature and adult” to be posed as a smoker. The same used to be true of many actions. Fewer and fewer sinful things cause one to suffer the shame of societal rejection. One hundred years ago, Oscar Wilde, an English writer, was stigmatized when it was discovered that he was homosexual. For the next fifty years, very few English boys were named, “Oscar.” Such was the effect, the social stigma attached to such sin. Sadly, this is not the case today.

We cannot rely on the power of social disapproval. At times, we are socially marked and stigmatized for standing for righteous principles. This is not a new thing. The apostles suffered it (1 Cor. 4:9-13). They warned that by living godly lives and rebuking ungodliness that we would be seen as “strange” (1 Pet. 4:4).

Ultimately, however, the stigma of heaven will be pronounced upon all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men in eternal judgment and destruction. At that same time, those who were seen as “weird” in their righteousness will “be found unto praise and honor and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ” (1 Pet. 1:7).

Enemy Disables 50,000 Soldiers

Larry Ray Hafley

Suppose a nation knew who the enemy was that disabled and disarmed 50,000 soldiers. Further, imagine what would be done if another nation were to use chemical weapons and germ warfare to render 50,000 servicemen unfit for duty! Well, it happened during this nation’s civil war. “George B. McClellan charged...that ‘no one evil so much obstructs this army as the degrading vice of drunkenness.’ Could he but keep the liquor out of his bivouac, ‘it would be worth 50,000 men to the armies of the United States.’ His more sober officers would

have agreed, for drink caused more insubordination than all other influences combined” (Davis, *The Civil War*, 442).

Each year, business and industry lose billions of dollars to the scourge of drinking. The losses are staggering. Its effects are sobering. The use of alcohol, though much worse, is like an employee who shoplifts, for the drinker steals time, productivity, energy, and resources, while adding to health costs.

What should be done to an enemy that so undermines the utility of goods and destroys the souls of men (Gal. 5:19-21)? What can we do to help men to see that only fools are deceived by the rage of strong drink (Prov. 20:1; 23:29-35)? What legislation may we enact to end the liquor industry’s powerful grip on our citizens? General McClellan said that the removal of alcohol and its effects would have provided him with 50,000 more men with which to fight. Again, what could have been done to help overcome such a drain upon the army of the Potomac?

Well, I guess he could have done what we have done—ban smoking!

“Do not look on the wine when it is red, when it sparkles in the cup, when it swirls around smoothly; 32 At the last it bites like a serpent, and stings like a viper.”

Proverbs 23:31-32

No Reason To Believe The Atheists . . .

C.S. Lewis

If the solar system was brought about by an accidental collision, then the appearance of organic life on this planet was also an accident, and the whole evolution of man was an accident too.

If so, then all our present thoughts are mere accidents—the accidental by-product of the movement of atoms. And this holds for the thoughts of the materialists and astronomers as well as for anyone else’s.

But if their thoughts—i.e., of Materialism and Astronomy—are merely accidental by-products, why should we believe them to be true? I see no reason for believing that one accident should be able to give me a correct account of all the other accidents.

It’s like expecting that the accidental shape taken by the splash when you upset a milk-jug should give you a correct account of how the jug was made and why it was upset.

“If anyone speaks, let him speak as the oracles of God.”

1 Peter 4:11