

Trends

A recent survey asked people their feelings about the federal government:

- ☛ 22% Basically content
- ☛ 59% Frustrated
- ☛ 14% Angry
- ☛ 5% Don't know

- via Pew Research Center

Proverbs 16:12: "It is an abomination for kings to commit wickedness, for a throne is established by righteousness."

Sentence Sermons

"Patriotism is supporting your country all the time, and your government when it deserves it."

—Mark Twain

Ezekiel 22:27: "Her princes in her midst are like wolves tearing the prey, to shed blood, to destroy people, and to get dishonest gain."

Isaiah 10:1: "Woe to those who make unjust laws, to those who issue oppressive decrees," (NIV)

Proverbs 29:2: "When the righteous are in authority, the people rejoice; But when a wicked man rules, the people groan."

News & Notes

Please pray for Zachary Wallace. He is not faithfully attending services as he should (Heb. 10:24-25). "The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much." (Jas. 5:16)

Please keep sister Wilma Cardwell in your prayers. She is an encouragement to all of us!

Pray for all our members who do not attend regularly. Try to encourage them!

Pray for all the lost souls, especially those in the greater Bloomington area. Pray that Westside might be an influence for good in this community.

Pray for the all of our students: elementary, secondary and college. Our young people face many trials and temptations at school.

There are many needy saints, including preachers! Can you help?! Let me know.

Anyone need prayers? Let us know so we can announce it and post it.

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Words of Life

Westside church of Christ

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

John 6:68



Our Patriotic Zeal
Andy Diestelkamp

I originally wrote this article last November for our local newspaper. At that time, I observed that once all of the hubbub regarding the 2018 mid-term elections was over, the various governments in our nation could get back to the business of doing what governments are supposed to do [eye-roll]. Of course, it was soon thereafter "politics as usual" in "a deeply-divided nation" with finger-pointing, blame-shifting, and political spin and posturing happened at every opportunity.

Fundamentally, this continually happens because there are major philosophical differences about what the business of government actually is. Despite this lack of national consensus, I am happy to live in a land where these philosophies can be freely debated and voted on every two to four years in relative peace. However, we are very sadly mistaken if we think that civil government, democratic or otherwise, is the solution to our problems. As the political voices get louder in anticipation of next year's 2020 presidential election, now is an appropriate time to remind Christians of where our focus and emphasis should be.

All of mankind's real problems are rooted in sin. Liberals, moderates, and conservatives all sin (Rom. 3:23). To one degree or another, they all want the freedom to continue in sinful ways while simultaneously wanting the freedom from the consequences of those sins, and this is impossible. "Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, that he will also reap. For he who sows to his flesh will of the flesh reap corruption [i.e. real problems], but he who sows to the Spirit will of the Spirit reap everlasting life [the overcoming of real problems]" (Gal. 6:7,8).

It is the inclination of people to imagine that the solutions to our deepest problems are within the grasp of human ingenuity, but they are not. Indeed, this is the message of Scripture. If mankind could solve its most pressing problems without God, then there would have been no need for God to reveal His will to us. There would have been no need for His grace. There would have been no need for the cross of Christ.

While our currency says, "In God We Trust," it is becoming increasingly evident that this simply is not true. This is an archaic statement which possibly reflected the genuine faith of some influential forefathers, but it does not reflect the majority of Americans anymore (and likely never did). How do I know this? Because if this nation truly trusted in God, we would be approaching our problems in fundamentally different ways. We would be trusting in God's ways as revealed in His Word. Instead, both "evangelical conservatives" and "compassionate liberals" are hitching their hopes to politicians and their government solutions to solve our societal problems which, at their core, are actually spiritual problems.

"It is better to trust in the LORD than to put confidence in man. It is better to trust in the LORD than to put confidence in princes" (Psa. 118:8,9). If we think this has no application to our presidents or senators or congressional representatives or judges, we are woefully deceived and are a part of the problem rather than the solution. Certainly, it is right that we pray for *"all who are in authority, that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and reverence"* (1 Tim. 2:2). It is right that we give due honor to those in authority over us (cf. Rom. 13:7; 1 Pet. 2:13-17). Yet, *"When you sit down to eat with a ruler, consider carefully what is before you; and put a knife to your throat if you are a man given to appetite. Do not desire his delicacies, for they are deceptive food"* (Prov. 23:1-3). Our present rulers are not exceptions to this warning.

It has been observed that politics makes strange bedfellows. Fellow saints, we will not solve our problems by "getting in bed" with politicians. We will solve our problems by being faithful to our God. Corruption is contagious! *"If a ruler pays attention to lies, all his servants become wicked"* (Prov. 29:12). It is not loyalty to a party or government officials which exalts a nation. *"Righteousness exalts a nation, but sin is a reproach to any people"* (Prov. 14:34). Remember, we *"desire a better, that is, a heavenly country."* Whether you believe the United States of America was once great and can be great again or you believe that it remains great or has never been great, let us remember that our true citizenship is in Heaven (Phil. 3:20). Therefore, our patriotic zeal should be directed toward Heaven. So, as the next election cycle heats up, let us rise above the fray with faith and unashamedly identify ourselves with Jesus Christ as the One Who alone can solve our problems.

Think On These Things, July-Aug.-Sept. 2019

Premarital Wall Papering

Robert Hines

We live in an age preoccupied with sex. It is used in ads to sell books, cars, vacations and toothpaste. And so, it is no wonder young people think that they need to try out marriage by "living together." We are told that the physical relationship is such an important part of marriage that the man and woman involved need to have this experience to see if the marriage will be good.

I have an alternative: let the man and woman wallpaper a room together. Let them slop paste around, spill water, get in each other's way, look at each other's work, and learn of each other's patience, or the lack of it. There's the way to see what it is going to be like!

Young people: don't be fooled by what the devil preaches in books, on television, and from the mouths of his disciples. Marriage is not primarily a physical relationship. It is a life-long commitment by two people who care about each other. Love and sex are not the same thing.

Learn about each other. Spend time together. Plan as much for your marriage as you do for your wedding. Papering a room together is not as much of a joke as you think! How two people get along together and whether they have common ideas and goals make for the best of situations.

Jesus called living together "sin," fornication. He placed the highest values on marriage, using it as the figure to describe his relationship with the church (Eph. 5). He wants you to have all the joy God gives -- including that of the physical relationship in marriage. But, carefully consider that He shows a basis for marriage far beyond that of the world. In fact, it is in Him!

Wake Up!

Marvin A. Noble

I have never tried it, but I am told that if you drop a frog into hot water, he will jump out. However, if you were to place a frog in a kettle of cool water and gradually heat the water, the frog would stay put and perish in a boiling death. Perhaps you wonder how even a frog could be so stupid as to be unaware of his gradually changing surroundings. Are we any wiser?

When I was growing up, most Christian parents were terribly concerned about the immoral influence of Hollywood films. Those are the old movies that today are shown on TV and judged innocent and harmless -- "family pictures." Now TV news, commercials and entertainment are saturated with lust and violence. Ten years ago, people were saying, "If it gets any worse, I'm going to toss my TV set out." Has it gotten worse? Are we a bunch of slowly cooking frogs?

The lulled frog syndrome can also be witnessed in many churches. A few years ago, many members were expressing concern about churches being diverted from their work. If what is now sponsored, from church ball teams to video game rooms, from secular education to homes for unwed mothers, if churches had introduced anything like this fifty years ago, members would have jumped clear into the next county. But these changes have been introduced gradually and with little awareness; and the people of God have been lulled to sleep. How grave is their danger!

"Awake you who sleep. Arise from the dead, and Christ will give you light. See then that you walk circumspectly, not as fools but as wise, redeeming the time, because the days are evil. Therefore do not be unwise, but understand what the will of the Lord is." (Ephesians 5:14-17).