

A MISCARRIAGE OF LIBERTY?

A CRY TO CHANGE AMERICA'S CONSTITUTION!

America's emancipation from traditional Judeo-Christian values has become a cultural revolution. It is deeply eroding the moral legacy of this nation. The seeds for this change have come through secularization of its institutions, resulting in growing hostility towards religion, ambivalence towards the past, erecting barriers against the noble lessons of history, resulting in redefining the function of this country's whole legal infrastructure.

Our foundations were laid with strength, embodying checks and balances with a well understood code of spiritual values. Daniel Webster, in an address to the New York Historical Society said: If we and our posterity shall be true to the Christian religion; if we and they shall live always in the fear of God, and shall respect His commandments; if we and they shall maintain just moral sentiments and such conscientious convictions of duty as shall control the heart and life, we may have the highest hopes of the future fortunes of our country; and if we maintain those institutions of government and that political union, exceeding all praise as much as it exceeds all former examples of political associations, we may be sure of one thing that while our country furnishes materials for a thousand masters of the historic art, it will be no topic for a Gibbon, it will have no decline or fall. It will go on prospering and to prosper. But if we or our posterity reject religious instruction and authority, violate rules of eternal justice, trifle with the injunctions of morality, and recklessly destroy the political constitution which holds us together, no man can tell how sudden a catastrophe may overwhelm us that shall bury our glory in profound obscurity.

"While history informs us of the organic nature of the state, it at the same time gives us to understand that the state does not stand in the same rank with the lower vegetable and animal organism, but is of a higher order. History represents the state as a moral-spiritual organism, as a great body that is capable of taking into itself the feelings and thoughts of the people, expressing them as law, and realizing them as deed. It acquaints us with the moral qualities, with the character of single states. It ascribes to the state a personality which has endowed its own will with spirit and body, and made it known."^[1]

"The deeper moral ground for the state, even as for the right itself, lies in the divine authority. Human society is a moral kingdom ... and governs its common affairs in the manner of a personality, as one will and understanding, as one acting subject. For this purpose it is ordered and ordained as an institution of government, and this institution is the state.... According to its contents and meaning, it [the state] is a moral empire.... It is not the moral calling of individual men, but the moral calling of human society as one whole, on which the state is founded."^[2]

The United States is undergoing a personality change. The encroachment of liberal thinking into its cultural heritage is causing large segments of its moral fabric to disappear. Sadly, a similar demise is occurring within Protestant churches. Alternative modes of thinking about *community* is changing individual beliefs and conduct toward business, attitudes toward enemies, the environment, how we make laws, the way we worship and even the value of life itself.

Resistance to these changes is beginning to mount. It is occurring through some churches, grassroots secular organizations and numerous conservative media outlets. The weapons of this war are not yet overt on the stage of political debate nor through violence. Both threaten a debut, however. A call is being made to restore moral integrity into the public forum, return to America's religious foundation and restore dignity back to man.

This is not only coming through public appeal within churches, but through crescendoing negotiations with and pressures on legislators, even directly to President George Bush. The marshalling cry is now growing to

enact laws to legislate moral issues that were once the domain of religious institutions. This counter-resistance effort should alarm every Christian.

The Bible says that when Protestant America, however pure the intent, uses the government to further its goals, the image of the beast will have been set up. That has been the mode of operation of the beast to use civil power to further its ends.

"By this first beast [Revelation 13] is represented the Roman Church, an ecclesiastical body clothed with civil power, having authority to punish all dissenters. The image to the beast represents another religious body clothed with similar powers. The formation of this image is the work of that beast whose peaceful rise and mild professions render it so striking a symbol of the United States. Here is to be found an image of the Papacy. When the churches of our land, uniting upon such points of faith as are held by them in common, shall influence the State to enforce their decrees and sustain their institutions, then will Protestant America have formed an image of the Roman hierarchy. Then the true church will be assailed by persecution, as were Gods ancient people."^[3]

What is happening to America? Is it going to mirror the tactics of Rome? Are plans to revitalize its religious roots by force going to succeed?

How the Republic Began

In the second Federalist papers John Jay said:

"Providence has been pleased to give this one connected country, to one united people, a people descended from the same ancestors, speaking the same language, professing the same religion, attached to the same principles of government, very similar in their manners and customs....

"This country and this people seem to have, been made for each other, and it appears as if it was the design of Providence, that an inheritance so proper and convenient for a band of brethren, united to each other by the strongest ties, should never be split into a number of unsocial, jealous and alien sovereignties."^[4]

This nation was founded by English speaking Protestant people who unitedly wanted self-government under the auspices of the *Articles of Confederation*.

In 1834 writer Alex de Tocqueville noted that liberty cannot govern without faith. Religion was in dispensable to the maintenance of republican institutions.^[5]

During the 1800s ideologies were introduced that began to fracture the foundations of this country. Charles Darwin introduced evolution, which challenged the God of Creation. Sigmund Freud assailed religion in all forms and labeled them as a neurosis. Karl Marx felt religion was only for the working class and promoted a godless socialism. Finally, the curious concepts of dispensationalism made their inroads in England and would come to America after the turn of the century. Out of that came the Scofield Bible. This whole new system of thinking redefined Protestantism, salvation, the antichrist and prophecy. Technology began to make amazing advances with the automobile, airplane and telephone bringing on an era of affluence.

Little by little the unique positions of Protestantism were surrendered. By 1920, after World War I, it was noted that though many identified with religion, they didnt actually personally adopt it.^[6]

People were less willing to worship authority, let alone a demanding God.

After World War II, Franklin D. Roosevelts social and welfare policies began a new era for America. Federal programs were introduced that began an ever burgeoning change in how the people were governed. The government by the people slowly began to change to where the people became subservient to the

government. Instead of the people being lord over, they became servants to the system totally at variance from the framework of our founders.

The Republic Hits an Iceberg

Like an unexpected bitter wind, a dramatic change came into America's culture that started a regressive march. Much debate and commentary has attempted to define why such terrible changes came into the fabric of this Protestant country. Though many a liberal thinker has blamed Vietnam on what occurred, there were fundamental shifts in moral values independent of that war. It was only a scapegoat to deny root issues.

These are a few of those events. Essentially, they all started or became an issue in the 1960's. To a serious Bible student, it will be clear that many of these mark the onset of end-time issues that are prophetically relevant to Christ's return.

1. Vatican II convened between 1962 and 1965 which changed Protestant views of Catholicism. They were asked to participate in many deliberations. Many Protestant leaders became sympathetic to Rome after that invitation. This country metamorphosed to Protestant-Catholic, English-speaking America. Ecumenism was launched.
2. The birth control pill brought in the sexual revolution. No longer was there the pregnancy fear as before. Though that did continue, those "in the know" became liberated. Hedonism became a cultural trend. Self steps up onto a pedestal.
3. The automobile was soon available to high school and college students. This brought another form of liberation, distancing children from parents. At an age when hormone-driven youth needed guidance during their "identity" years, they were driven away from needed restraints.
4. By now two cultural-changing, world war-stimulated happenings became part of America forever. Two working parents per household was increasingly common. This brought additional time restraints to parental guidance. Values were redefined. The family became a "working institution" with growing affluence to middle America. Unrestrained pleasure and personal rights became eulogized.
5. Children had more time on their hands. Boredom led to creative mischievousness.
6. The era of recreational drugs entered the scene. Influential professors like Timothy Leary eulogized hallucinogens. This era brought in "trip-seeking," "mind-altering" experiences as a cultural trend. Self-actualization has never since left.
7. Youth-oriented entertainment came on the scene that pandered to the liberation thinking of the youth. Suggestive songs helped to define the power and nature of this cultural change. Elvis Presley was an early force.
8. Stealthily, a terrible weakness came to America's leadership. Congress and Democratic presidents did not have the resolve to bring the Vietnam conflict to a close. America suddenly lost sight of the valuable lessons from the French, who also had had military challenges with the Vietnamese. A prolonged war was underway, and young men, the age of many at home embedded in the cultural revolution, saw friends and relatives die. The questions were never answered as to why that war was fought and why so many died. Confidence in political will was dashed to pieces.

The saturation point was reached. Rebellious actions began to turn toward political reactions. Radical students now were openly calling for America's defeat. Its leaders had let them down. The 1968 Democratic convention was marred by riots. Kent State saw its youth shot by National Guardsmen. The rhetoric of revolution gave birth to many organizations vigorously against the establishment. Violence, pornography and zealotry had come to America through its youth.

Music changed from sentimental love songs to the beat of rock and roll. Portable radios created another identity issue for the youth. Fascinating studies soon showed a direct link between rock and roll and subversive attitudes towards authority.

The Students for a Democratic Society (SDS) was born in Port Huron. This organization and many of its daughters (some illegal violent agencies) became a powerful political expression for students who activated other students on college campuses. America was rejected. Religion did not resolve social needs. Everything that this country was founded upon was hated. The *politics of meaning* was born.

Why is this history so important? Not only have these issues characterized the battles now developing within, they define the *players* of this moral revolution rapidly taking center stage. The cultural trends noted have set a stage for the second phase of outrage that has now begun. The youth birthed from the 1960s are the country's leaders today. The great division of values that characterized these individuals then is seen today in the leadership of America. For the first time, hate and militancy against the Constitution is being exhibited by leaders who took oaths to uphold it. Antiestablishment, anti-Christian rhetoric is rampant. The result? A counter-cultural backlash is beginning to mount. And that is very important to Christians and Seventh-day Adventists. Biblically, we know it will become a coercive revolution.

Christianity Has Also Been Influenced by the Sixties

The term that we use, as do many lawyers, judges and sociologists, for the leaders of today who came out of the sixties is *liberal*.

In the 1900's the keynote of religion was self-control. Today it has become self-expression.[7]

The reason for the change is intriguing. There has been a cultural decay of the meaning of religion by its leaders. Adding to this tragic change is a growing hostility towards Christianity by political liberals. It is being marginalized by them and referred to politically as the "right wing." Thus, on two counts religious life that was foundational to early America is being undermined: One, by religious leaders; two, by left-wing politics.

Thus, the values that religion contributed to thought and society have been sent to the periphery. Personal standards such as civility, industry and self-restraint are being usurped by political hate wars, growing dependency on the social structure of churches and government, and the "rights" of individuals.

Thus, the boundaries of sex and the definition of marriage and the family are being widened. Self-restraint is being torn from our youth by encouraging premarital sex through "safe sex" training. The gay agenda is shattering the very basis of social mores that has brought stability to this country, with some denominations now ordaining perverted ministers.

Despite church attendance, statistics show that church is not taken seriously beyond being a social institution (even from those who pray at least once per day). How can it? when the National Council of Churches, representing most mainstream Protestants, has a history of pro-Communism and anti-Americanism! Political liberation seems more important than soul salvation.

The World Council of Churches, during the cold war, was anti-United States. They took specific positions, siding with Russia, Afghanistan and the Sandinistas in Nicaragua.

When President Clinton was in office, leaders of the Presbyterian Church laid hands on him "in prayer" and asked God that Clinton would have strength to resist the Republican Congress (Republicans have been historically conservative and religious). The United Methodist Church in 1995 in their fall meeting asked President Clinton to release fourteen Puerto Rican "political prisoners" who had killed five people and bombed five cities, causing 3.5 million in damages. They defended affirmative action (which is now turning out to segregate the races). The issues are protean.[8]

Perhaps the most profound spin-off of the sixties is the religious leaders who denigrate their distinctiveness of beliefs and are pushing for unity. In turn, the worship experience has become spiritually superficial, more sensory oriented and draws on secular techniques to create interest.

Separation of Church and State

The first Amendment was designed to protect religion from the state, not the state from religion. It was never designed to ban religious people influencing the government nor the government from listening to them.

The establishment clause has been transformed from being a guardian of religious liberty to a guarantor of public secularism. Thus, Judeo-Christian symbols have been banned from schools and courts, prayer at public events has become a "constitutional" issue and, now, "under God" in the pledge to the flag and America is being challenged.

A natural outcome has been an ever more intrusive government into private life, exercising more power over individuals and increasingly redefining this country in secular instead of spiritual terms.

"For most of our history, in cultural and social matters, government acted mostly by staying out of the way. When it did act, it acted in a way that fostered decency and responsibility. The laws protected marriage. Religion was honored throughout public life. Today, by contrast, the U.S. government professes neutrality on questions of morality while actively undermining the prevailing moral standards. While it is not for government to prescribe morality, a government without a moral base fosters a citizenry without responsibility and a nation devoid of civility. It is no wonder that under our governments current mindset (prohibiting us from questioning any alternative lifestyle; financing single women bearing children out of wedlock and the resultant idleness of their boyfriends; proscribing public reference to God; and imposing tax penalties for married couples), individual responsibility is disappearing....

"[O]ver one generation, government has doubled the amount of money it takes from us, has increasingly deprived us of control over our own lives, has turned our public spaces over to criminals and our public schools into factories of ignorance. It has driven us apart on the basis of race and even of sex and, in the name of tolerance, has made us intolerant."^[9]

Liberalism has changed our way of communicating through "political correctness." The emphasis on individual "rights" is fracturing America into miniature cultural groups and segregating what once was so transparent. A conservative activist Paul Weyrich noted in 1999: "I think we are caught up in a culture collapse of historic proportions, a collapse so great that it simply overwhelms politics."^[10]

As secularization deepens, fragmentation of decency has occurred. Civility has become a museum piece.

"Consider, too, where the United States ranks in comparison with the rest of the industrialized world. We are at, or near, the top in rates of abortions, divorces and unwed births. We lead the industrialized world in murder, rape, and violent crime. And in elementary and secondary education, we are at, or near, the bottom in achievement scores.

"These facts alone are evidence of substantial social regression. But there are other signs of decay, one's that do not so easily lend themselves to quantitative analyses. What I am talking about is the moral, spiritual, and aesthetic character and habits of a society what the ancient Greeks referred to as its *ethos*. And here, too, we are facing serious problems. For there is a coarseness, a callousness, a cynicism, a banality, and a vulgarity to our time. There are just too many signs of de-civilization that is, civilization gone rotten."^[11]

The Courts Have Become Agents for Liberalism

On many cultural and legislative fronts, liberals those activists of the sixties are gaining ground. In the political and judicial arena new tactics to control and exercise power have arisen. The Democratic filibuster of court judicial nominees by the Senate for two years is a first in U.S. history. Activism of hate has reached an all-time high (low) by the liberals against the Executive Office.

Perhaps the most disturbing trend is a new twist in the U.S. government with judicial activism. The American judiciary, especially the Supreme Court, has become the single most powerful force shaping our culture.[12]

There are scores of decisions coming out of the courts that create laws and bypass the legislative and executive branches of government. Instead of decisions based on constitutional merit, they are concluded on liberal cultural norms at variance with the religious underpinning of this country. Criminals are given rights without addressing responsibilities. Moral positions based on public attitude become legal premise for judicial decisions.

Freedom of speech has gone from protection of ideas to guarantees of self-expression, personal autonomy and individual gratification. Public cursing, nudity, sexual perversions and even violence are now being protected as self-expression and art under "free speech" all supposedly constitutional matters.

Abortion rights, though often outright murder, is given the status of dignity and autonomy. Children are in the public schools to protect their self-images first for education secondarily. In numerous areas, nine people sitting on the bench have usurped the power of the people to elect representation.

Many decisions have massaged the meaning of the Constitution. Assisted suicide is accepted within marginal bounds. The union of a man and woman alone as marriage is unconstitutional (Massachusetts Supreme Court). Because of hostility by liberals towards religion and its mores, it is being forced out of the public sector.

In Robert Bork's new book, *The Permanent Revolution*, he has made these observations:

"Courts ... [are] breaking down the traditional legal barriers societies have erected against degeneracy and by offering moral lessons based on the emancipatory spirit." [13]

"One moral vision is predicated upon the assurance that the achievements and traditions of the past should serve as the foundation of communal life and guide us *in* negotiating today's and tomorrow's challenges. Though often tinged with nostalgia, this vision is misunderstood by those who label it as reactionary. *In fact*, this vision is neither regressive nor static, but rather is both syncretic and dynamic." [14]

"Against this traditionalism is a moral vision that is ambivalent about the legacy of the past, it regards the past in part as a curiosity, in part, an irrelevance, in part, a useful point of reference, and in part a source of oppression.... Its aim is the further emancipation of the human spirit....

"This takeover is not a minor matter of judicial philosophy, of interest only to the theoretically inclined. At stake are personal freedoms. The fundamental freedom recognized in democracies is the right of the people to govern themselves. Specified constitutional rights are meant to be exceptions, not the rule. When, in the name of a right, a court strikes down the desire of the majority, expressed through laws, freedom is transferred from a larger to a smaller group, from a majority to a minority." [15]

Recently, President George Bush signed into law a bill banning late-term abortions which is infanticide. Within hours federal judges in Nebraska, New York and California blocked this law because it wasn't constitutional. These men are bending the meaning of the Constitution. This is a perfect example of how the courts are moving against the majority will of the people.

The Final Solution

"Only [old-fashioned] religion can accomplish for a modern society what tradition, reason, and empirical observation cannot. Christianity and Judaism provide the major premises of moral reasoning by revelation and by the stories in the Bible. There is no need to attempt the impossible task of reasoning your way to first principles. Those principles are accepted as given by God.

"For most people, only revealed religion can supply the premises from which the prescriptions of morality can be deduced. Religion tells us what the end of man should be, and that information supplies the premises for moral reasoning and hence a basis for moral conduct. Philosophers cannot agree on the proper end of man and hence cannot supply the necessary premises. Religion is by its nature authoritative and final as to first principles. It must be so or it would be valueless. Those principles are given on a stone tablet, either literally or figuratively, and, so long as you believe the religion, there is simply no possibility of arguing with what is on the tablet."[16]

Bork has stated flatly that there is little hope for our current moral and legal dilemma: Gomorrah is our probable destination. Unless ... and he outlined several strong recommendations:

1. Religion recaptures America – namely religious conservatism.
2. The country undergoes a religious revival.
3. Moral sanctions are legislated.
4. Censorship begins to control society.
5. A constitutional amendment comes to reign in the courts.

For decades it has been the opinion of legal minds that an amendment to the Constitution would bring chaos to this country. Yet, thinkers who are seeing cultural chaos in these liberal trends are now calling for just that.

Numerous requests to amend the Constitution are being made from the Catholic Church, Protestants and politicians. There is also a swelling cry to merge church and state.[17]

There has already been a call by Pope John Paul II to the church leaders that civil government needs to be used to preserve Sunday worship and its sacredness.

"In this matter, my predecessor Pope Leo XIII in his Encyclical Rerum Novarum spoke of Sunday rest as a worker's right which the State must guarantee. (110)

"In our own historical context there remains the obligation to ensure that everyone can enjoy the freedom, rest and relaxation which human dignity requires, together with the associated religious, family, cultural and interpersonal needs which are difficult to meet if there is no guarantee of at least one day of the week on which people can both rest and celebrate. Naturally, this right of workers to rest presupposes their right to work and, as we reflect on the question of the Christian understanding of Sunday, we cannot but recall with a deep sense of solidarity the hardship of countless men and women who, because of the lack of jobs, are forced to remain inactive on workdays as well....

"Therefore, also in the particular circumstances of our own time, Christians will naturally strive to ensure that civil legislation respects their duty to keep Sunday holy. In any case, they are obliged in conscience to arrange their Sunday rest in a way which allows them to take part in the Eucharist, refraining from work and activities which are incompatible with the sanctification of the Lord's Day, with its characteristic joy and necessary rest for spirit and body. (112)[18]

Repressive laws only wait the opportunity to be made.

"It has been shown to me that Satan has been working earnestly to carry out his designs to restrict religious liberty. Plans of serious import to the people of God are advancing in an underhand manner among the clergymen of various denominations, and the object of this secret maneuvering is to win popular favor for the

enforcement of Sunday sacredness. If the people can be led to favor a Sunday law, then the clergy intend to exert their united influence to obtain a religious amendment to the Constitution, and compel the nation to keep Sunday."^[19]

"A great crisis awaits the world. The most momentous struggle of all the ages is before us. Events which for more than half a century we have, upon the authority of the prophetic Word, declared to be impending, are now taking place before our eyes. An amendment to the Constitution restricting liberty of conscience, has long been urged upon the legislators of the nation; and the question of enforcing Sunday observance has become one of national importance. Are we ready for the issue involved in the Sunday movement?"^[20]

Our culture and country has gone through a major evolution from Christianity to secularism. There is a vocal minority that is calling for a change. That premise lies in a renewed interest to see religious values legislated. For many reasons that minority will soon become a majority. Then we will see a national devolution. The pendulum will swing too far; then what was hoped to be avoided will occur America will fall.

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