

A World Gone Mad

1 Corinthians 1:18

As we move through this troubled economic time, I hear a particular theory being proposed. It is that the demise of our economic system began when the US was taken off the gold standard in 1933. The theory is that this has allowed the Federal government to print large amounts of paper money unsecured by any real assets.

I'm not an economist, but I understand the concept of standards. I wear a so-called atomic watch – so named not because it is atomic but because several times a day it receives a signal from the atomic clock that is the standard for time-keeping in the United States. It is a very, very accurate watch – but I still manage to be late.

Standards are important, some would say vital, to the functioning of society. Without a standard system of measuring goods, commerce is almost impossible. Imagine trying to purchase gas for your car if no one agreed how much gas was in a gallon. Or electricity to power your lights, furnace, and appliances, if no one agreed on what a watt was. Without a standard monetary system, we would be reduced to bartering for everything we need.

It is probably not an exaggeration to say that agreed-upon standards are largely responsible for the highly sophisticated and complex society in which we live today.

Ken Ham, a widely known proponent of creationism over evolutionary theory tells about getting into a discussion with someone at one of his seminars. The person was an evolutionist and wanted to know what proof Mr. Ham had for his belief in creationism. Mr. Ham responded by asking him what proof the person was willing to accept. He was asking, in effect, what that person's standard of proof was. In simply asking that question, Mr. Ham showed a profound understanding of much of what is wrong with the world today.

In the past approximately 40 years we have witnessed in America a profound philosophical shift. Until the 1960's, this was a primarily Judeo-Christian society. Not that all Americans were either Jewish or Christian, but rather, that the Judeo-Christian standard of right and wrong was accepted in America by almost everyone. That is simply another way of saying that, whether a person was Jewish, Christian, Hindu, Muslim, or even agnostic or atheist, the Bible was the moral and ethical standard by which behavior was judged, and upon which the judicial system was based.

That is no longer true. There is a new standard in town. The new standard is whatever an individual thinks is right is right for

them. This, of course, is the same as saying there is no standard at all.

It is what accounts for the widespread tacit acceptance of convenience abortions in America. Yesterday was the 38th anniversary of Roe v. Wade decision that abortion was a fundamental right granted under the Constitution of the United States guarantee of personal privacy. The resulting holocaust has resulted in the deaths of 45 million children, the vast majority of whom had their lives ended because they were deemed “inconvenient” to their parent or parents.

Another area of profound social change is the acceptance of unwed motherhood. The percentage of children born to unmarried women is steadily rising. In the United States overall 40.6% of children in 2008 were born to unmarried women. In 2007, 35.2% of children born in Virginia were born to unwed mothers.

Spend some time in any of our public schools across the US today and see if it bears much resemblance to the school you attended. Teachers are accorded little of the respect that was once considered their due. Administrators are either powerless to deal with misbehaving children with any sort of personal judgment or they are required to enact mandatory draconian sentences without any weight given to circumstances or proportionality. One person said it well:

The teachers are afraid of the principals;
The principals are afraid of the parents;
The parents are afraid of the children;
And the children aren't afraid of anyone.

Add to the mix that self-esteem is considered more important than achievement and you have a formula guaranteed to produce failure and chaos.

Most of the problems of our society can be traced to one source: lack of a workable standard of morality and behavior.

As the economic problems of today may perhaps be traceable back to the abdication of the gold standard for our monetary system, so the moral and ethical problems of our society are certainly traceable to the abdication of God's Word as the gold standard of behavior and morality.

As Paul wrote to the Corinthians in the Epistle lesson for this morning "...the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God." A similar reality is expressed in 1 Corinthians 2:14 where Paul writes:

"The person without the Spirit does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God but considers them foolishness, and

cannot understand them because they are discerned only through the Spirit.”

There have always been those who have considered God’s Word foolish or antiquated and outdated or having no practical application to today’s world, but in America they were in the minority. Sadly, things have slowly but radically changed here so that now I fear that they are now in the majority, and the popular wisdom is in direct conflict with Biblical truth.

And that, my friends, is why America is in the sorry state it is in today, why we are falling behind the other first world nations in education, why schools have metal detectors, why parents rights to raise their children are being slowly eroded, why people cannot express an opinion or a religious thought without the fear of being branded “intolerant, and why political correctness has become the de facto law of the land.

Some years ago there was a comedy in the theaters called “It’s a Mad, Mad, Mad, Mad World.” I fear that has become a description of the world in which we live.

Paul said in Romans chapter 1, speaking of the results of the entry of sin into God’s world, “...their thinking became futile and their foolish hearts were darkened.” He is describing the very real effect of sin on the human mind. We simply don’t think as clearly or as well as were designed to because of the existence of this spiritual sickness caused sin.

Solomon gave voice to a similar truth in Proverbs chapter 14: “There is a way that seems right to a man, but in the end it leads to death.” Proverbs 14:12

When we as a nation abandoned God’s Word as the standard for life, for morality, for ethics, and for behavior, we started down a dark road that was destined to end badly.

The sad reality of what Paul wrote by inspiration of the Holy Spirit is that without the indwelling and guidance of the Holy Spirit, people CAN’T understand God’s Word. They see it as foolishness, as old words meant for a time different for ours and therefore not applicable to our time and our situation.

That has more effects and more important effects than merely upon our national political and ethical structure.

If people will not hear God’s Word, they will not know what God has done for them, especially through Jesus. They will not know that the coming, the death, and the resurrection of Jesus was for them, to secure their forgiveness and eternal life. They will not know and therefore will not believe that they can have the priceless gifts of forgiveness and eternal life through faith in Jesus as a free gift. And that is the greatest tragedy of all.

As always, however, with God there is promise and there is hope. God said to Israel in a time when it was ignoring Him and His love for them, much as America is today, these words through His prophet: 2 Chronicles 7:14

“If my people, who are called by my name, will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and I will forgive their sin and will heal their land.”

Since the rest of America is ignoring God and His will, that must start with us, those who know and trust His love and mercy. This idiocy, this fuzzy-brained thinking started with people, a minority of people. If it is to be changed, that change must start with people, the people of God, those who, I fear, are a minority today, the people of God’s Holy Christian Church on earth, all who trust His Word as inspired and inerrant, all who trust in Jesus as their Savior, all who have not abandoned the Bible as the only reliable standard for truth, ethics, morality, and behavior.

Pray that God will have mercy on our nation and the world.

Pray that people will open their hearts and minds to the truth of His Word.

Pray for the opportunity to share your trust in God and His Word in a winsome and caring way with the people you know, not

in a spirit of self-righteousness, but out of a sincere concern for them and their eternal welfare.

Pray for the chance to share Your Savior with someone who has never met the Savior that you know.

Study God's Word so you can demonstrate to others the truth contained within.

Confront the foolish thinking that surrounds us with God's truth whenever you have opportunity, without apology, but also without rancor or a spirit of competitiveness. It's not about winning; it's about winning over the hearts and minds of people who are being deceived by the Great Deceiver.

Give the Spirit an opportunity to work in the hearts and minds of the people you care about.

Help to get us back to the Gold Standard, the Word of God.

1 Corinthians 3:19

For the wisdom of this world is foolishness in God's sight

