



"The most dangerous fault in American life today is the lack of interest in truth."

—Henry Luce

04-Jan-02

A Christian Nation?

As I drove home from work the other evening, I listened to the local talk-radio station, WBT. The evening drive-time co-hosts, a liberal man and a moderate-to-conservative woman, brought up the subject of Pat Buchanan and his book, *The Death of the West*. I thought the woman might give the former presidential candidate some credence, but she—along with her gleeful leftist partner—viciously tore into him for his "America First" views.

Buchanan's latest effort seeks to prove that demographics suggest that America and Europe will fall off steeply in population and power over the next fifty years, eclipsed by Asian, Middle Eastern, African, and Hispanic peoples. He uses birth and death ratios, immigration statistics, and economic and political trends to bolster his point that the West is in decline.

He also laments the decline of the Christian religion, especially in America. In his review of what will surely be a controversial book, Internet journalist Matt Drudge writes:

In his chapter, "The De-Christianization of America," Buchanan argues that ... a new atheistic civilization is arising, and it is using

its dominance of the culture and the courts to drive Christianity out of the temples of our civilization. Secular Humanism, widely mocked and disparaged a few decades ago, is now the dominant [faith](#) of the nation's cultural elites. The moral tenets of humanism are replacing those of Christianity in our public life. Even Christian churches are rewriting their hymnals to make them acceptable to the dominant culture. Anti-Catholic films and filthy and blasphemous anti-Christian art are the deliberate insults of a triumphant pagan and secularist faith.

Buchanan's fears are justified by the "American Religious Identification Survey" (ARIS), released just before the end of 2001. ARIS is comprehensive, based on interviews with over 50,000 Americans, and it shows some disturbing trends. Those who claim to be Christian (either Protestant or Catholic) have fallen 10% over the past eleven years, while unbelievers of all stripes (atheist, agnostic, humanist, or secular) have risen 6% over the same period to a total over 14% of the U.S. population. Twenty-seven percent claim to be religious but refuse to be affiliated with a particular place of worship. Twenty-two percent of families say their members embrace two or more religions, and 13% of parents in this group will rear their children with no religion or as atheists.

And then some startling findings: Self-proclaimed Wiccans rose from 8,000 to 134,000 since 1990, a leap of 1,575%. Non-Christians now account for 3.7% of the total population, up from 3.3%, an increase of almost 2 million people since 1990. Age differences are becoming apparent as well: Christian congregations are aging, while half of Buddhists and Muslims are under age thirty.

Can America still be called a "Christian nation?" If the only qualification for the title is having a majority of professing Christians, yes, it is. Christians account for 76.5% of Americans who identify with a religion of any kind. The trend, however, is downward, and a secular approach to life, notwithstanding one's religious identification, is on the rise. Forty-four percent of Americans describe themselves in the gray area between a religious or secular outlook, while an additional ten percent say they are secular. Thus, a majority of Americans—54%—approach life from a non-religious viewpoint.

It is not difficult to see how multiculturalism and diversity have weakened America's religious underpinnings. She has come a long way since Christian seekers of religious freedom landed on her shores in the early seventeenth century—and who knows how much further she will slide? Recent events have temporarily swelled the pews of churches across the nation, but once the fear-factor recedes, those pews will empty once again.

This prophecy in [Isaiah 2:6-9](#), 12 offers a glimpse into the near future of the [nations of Israel](#):

For You have forsaken Your people, the house of Jacob, because they are filled with eastern ways; ... and they are pleased with the children of foreigners. Their land is also full of silver and gold, and there is no end to their treasures. ... Their land is also full of idols; they worship the work of their own hands. ... Therefore do not forgive them. ... For the day of the LORD of hosts shall come upon everything proud and lofty, upon everything lifted up—and it shall be brought low. ([Isaiah 2:6-9](#), 12)

Pat Buchanan sees what is written in the tea leaves, but he fails to see how it relates to the purpose of [God](#) to humble Israel and return them to Him after Christ's return. Here is another sign that the "crisis at the close" is not very far off. The question is, then, "How Christian are we?"

- Richard T. Ritenbaugh

From the Archives: Featured Sermon

[Examples of Divine Justice](#)

by John W. Ritenbaugh

Presumptuous sins carry far greater penalties than those committed out of weakness. No sacrifice can be made for sins done deliberately. A person who sins presumptuously deliberately sets his will to do what he knows is wrong. Nadab and Abihu, Ananias and Sapphira, and Uzzah, all totally aware of the

penalties for what they were contemplating, arrogantly rebelled against God's clear and unambiguous instructions. We need to realize that it is impossible for God to act unjustly, and soberly reflect on God's mercy and grace as a prod to repent.

From the Archives: Featured Article

[Trends in Global Religion](#)

by Richard T. Ritenbaugh

Ron Sellers, a religious trend watcher, sees great instability in world religion, and it is mirrored in God's church. Richard Ritenbaugh shows how this dovetails with Bible prophecy of the end time.

If you would like to subscribe to the C.G.G. Weekly newsletter, please visit our [Email Subscriptions page](#).
