

## Two Different Perspectives

The Political Effect and the Religious Effect

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Given 16-May-09; Sermon #938c

In the past two weeks, I have had two articles pass through my computer, offering very widely differing perspectives on the state of religion in America today and how their authors believe this is going to affect those claiming to be Christian.

The much longer and more detailed article came from *Newsweek* magazine. It was provocatively titled, "The End of Christian America." It was authored by a man by the name of John Meacham, and it generally perceived that what is happening in the United States is good for the nation. He did not say it was good for Christians, he said it was good for the nation. He looked at the ongoing disintegration of the religion called Christianity from a political point of view, and the article focused on his perception of the impact it's disintegration is having on the way that those calling themselves Christian conduct themselves politically. So, he actually had a fairly narrow focus.

Conversely, though, he accurately showed the Bible's political perspective. Now I am going to quote him directly as he quoted Pope Pius XII. I think you'll find this interesting. Pope Pius said,

Jesus Christ has not given it [meaning, "the church"] any mandate or fixed any end of the cultural order. The goal which Christ assigns to it is strictly religious ... The Church can never lose sight of the strictly religious, supernatural goal.

In simple terms, the Pope said that if one is going to follow the Bible and Jesus Christ and the apostles' example, as well as their words, it is not the church's responsibility to change the world, nor even be involved in its political activities. That is a truth.

What the article did clearly give was an accounting of what is happening with the number of people claiming to be Christian in the United States—that it is dropping significantly, and at the same time, those still claiming to be Christian are becoming more tolerance of other's beliefs and less certain about what they believe.

Fewer people are claiming to be religious, but at the same time there is an ever growing number of people claiming to be spiritual. They make a difference. That's the latest buzzword. In other words, they are dropping denominational and doctrinal loyalties, but

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still claim to be worshiping God. They're becoming convinced that a specific body of teachings is not necessary, and only that one have his own self-devised relationship with one they call "God." In other words, this is an outright admission that they believe that God is unconcerned about what one believes; that God is not really attempting to accomplish any specific purpose. This is very clear evidence right from the group that still claims to be Christian, that a very large number of them are doing what is right in their own eyes, in the manner of Judges 21:25, the last verse in the book of Judges, where every man did that which was right in his own eyes.

The same article said that religious commentator Harold Bloom, in 1992, authored "The American Religion: The Emergence of the Post-Christian Nation." He foresaw a long time ago what was happening. In it, Bloom quoted William James' definition of religion [in "The Varieties of Religious Experience"]:

Religion ... shall mean for us the feelings, acts, and experiences of individual men in their solitude, so far as they apprehend themselves to stand in relation to whatever they consider the divine.

Those of you who are a bit older may recall that in the 1960s we endured a wave of the "God is dead" movement. But what is happening now is a growth of "spirituality" without the binding authority of God Almighty. What's happening now is not about the death of God, but the birth of many gods.

At the very same time as this is happening in the Christian churches, perhaps part of the cause of what's happening is that the number of practicing secularists is rising dramatically. The effect is that culturally, America is being converted into just another European-type state. It's becoming politically dominated by socialism, whose principles are diametrically opposed to God's way of citizenship. At the same time, godly ethics, morality and spirituality is weakened to the place where it has very little influence politically, economically and culturally. This has so weakened the political influence and power of the Christian churches that many conservative Christians believe that they have already lost the battles over issues such as abortion, school prayer, acknowledging the Commandments publicly and same-sex marriage.

Increasingly, the political figures in this nation are reflecting the general population that they are drawn from. That's a natural reaction. Rather than guiding the citizens back to our constitutional roots, which reflect the nation's biblical beliefs, the politicians are expanding upon *present* day spirituality. This makes it very evident that we cannot expect any help whatever from Washington, D.C. Looking at this from a national

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perspective, this nation's citizens "have met the enemy, and they is us."

The second article, titled "Hard Times Ahead," by Paul Proctor, begins with this statement:

It's time to prepare for hard times, my friends. If you are a Bible-believing, Christ-following Christian, I believe the coming years will be particularly troublesome. I say "Bible-believing, Christ-following Christian," because our degenerating culture has all but stripped the biblical definition of the word "Christian" from today's collective conscience, so that it has lost much of a scriptural meaning, even among many of today's church-attending members.

That fits hand-in-glove with what the other article said. I have no idea how long it's going to take for truly harsh anti-Christian legislation to be passed and become effectively used. But judging by the secularization that has already occurred, I believe that the handwriting is clearly on the wall.

We need to be willing to prepare now, because Christians are once again going to be called upon to publicly choose whom they will serve. That, in turn, will intensify the problems when it is done. But the preparation, if we do it, we will help empower us to be faithful to God as the world makes war against Him. It's not really against us, brethren; it's against Him and His Son.