

Whatever Became Of Sin?

Defining Deviancy Down

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The inspiration for this message came from a book I read back in 1973 titled *Whatever Became of Sin?* The author is one of Topeka's legendary citizens, the late Karl Augustus Menninger, founder of the world famous Menninger Foundation and Clinic, established in 1925 in Topeka, Kansas. That facility is now closed. Currently, a new thriving facility opened in Houston, Texas in 2003 in cooperation with the Baylor University College of Medicine and Psychiatry, with 779 patients.

In 1973, I was amazed at the clarity of insight this secular psychiatrist had on the moral decline of our culture. This past summer, as I re-read the book, I was astounded at the prophetic significance of his diagnosis of the political climate of 2008. Dr. Menninger has been deceased since 1990. He was 97 years old.

I would like to read you a poem by American author Emily Dickinson:

The Heart asks Pleasure—first —

And then—Excuse from Pain —

And then—those little Anodynes

That deaden suffering —

And then—to go to sleep —

And then—if it should be

The will of its Inquisitor

The privilege to die ?

Emily Dickinson here describes the perverse characteristic of human nature to brazenly practice self-indulgent sin and then attempt to escape the consequences. Many well-meaning federal and state government programs are designed to soften the consequences of sin, but sadly the wages are still pretty much the same. We are emphatically promised in Numbers 32:23 that our sins will find us out.

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Numbers 32:23 "But if you will not do so, behold, you have sinned against the LORD, and be sure your sin will find you out."

Back in 1973, Dr. Karl Menninger observed that when society changed the designation of sin to crime, it seemed to render church ruling or ministerial admonishment irrelevant. Converting crime to disease makes jails irrelevant.

After society metamorphasized sin into crime, society began to entertain the idea that these poor hapless offenders were the victim or product of some kind of disease or illness. If a person can receive treatment from medical science, why should we punish him? That would duplicate labor and expense. We foolishly continue to reason that since diseases are not crimes, we cannot call it a crime if it derives from a disease.

Our Elder Brother was never deceived into separating sin from disease. Realizing that sin is either the necessary cause or a contributory cause of sickness or disease, He asks in Matthew 9:5:

Matthew 9:5-6 "Which is easier to say, 'your sins are forgiven', or to say, 'Get up, and walk.' But in order that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins and remit the penalty, He then said to the paralyzed man, Get up! Pick up your sleeping pad and go to your own house.

Paradoxically, if we accept the notion of crime as a disease, a person may commit murder, slaying his friend or most hated enemy during a delirium and yet be innocent of murder. Karl Menninger sarcastically reminds us only the sane and balanced receive lethal injection.

Menninger insists that whatever we call these manifestations determines the kind of help the victim receives, whether pastoral, social, legal, or medical. Some sins (like adultery or fornication) which never before received legal proscription and designated crimes are now treated as illness.

Bill Clinton, Tiger Woods, John Edwards, and Al Gore have been absolved of adultery; instead, society has charitably designated as hapless victims of sex addiction.

Probably the most chilling displacement or camouflage for sin is described in

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Menninger's seventh chapter titled "Sin as a Collective Responsibility." Karl Menninger, almost prophesying the insidious recent focus on collective salvation, decries the displacement (or replacement) of the concept of sin, replacing it with group-think or societal blame, where individual persons become simply "the people" [perhaps a glorified mob mentality]. Menninger reasons that as people started multiplying on earth, groups and subgroups also began to multiply, placing a profound curtailment of individuality. As society becomes more complex, individual persons are swallowed up in the collective entity called "The people."

This disgusting GROUP THINK (or mob mentality) was responsible for the death of our Savior Jesus Christ.

Matthew 27:24-25 When Pilate saw that he was accomplishing nothing, but rather that a riot was starting, he took water and washed his hands in front of the crowd, saying, "I am innocent of this Man's blood; see to that yourselves." And all the people said, "His blood shall be on us and on our children!"

Pilate was wrong. The angry mob was wrong. The anti-Semitic so-called 'Christians' are wrong when they blame the Jews for killing Christ. Have they disregarded this principle back in Ezekiel 18:20?

Ezekiel 18:20 [Amplified Bible] The soul that sins, it [is the one that] shall die. The son shall not bear and be punished for the iniquity of the father, neither shall the father bear and be punished for the iniquity of the son; the righteousness of the righteous shall be upon him only, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon the wicked only.

The Jews as a group did not kill Jesus. The Romans as a group did not kill Jesus. Pontius Pilate killed Jesus Christ. We all (what's your name?) individually killed Jesus Christ. We cannot blame the crowd with which we hang out for making us sin. Some of us try—like our forebear Aaron who feebly protested, "The people made me do it."

Exodus 32:21-24 And Moses said to Aaron, "What did this people do to you that you have brought so great a sin upon them?" So Aaron said, "Do not let the anger of my lord become hot. You know the people that they are set on evil. For they said to me, 'Make us gods that shall go before us; as for this Moses, the man who brought us out of the land of Egypt, we do not know

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what has become of him.' And I said to them, 'Whoever has any gold, let them break it off.' So they gave it to me, and I cast it into the fire, and this calf came out."

King Saul also blamed the people for his own sin.

I Samuel 15:19-21 Why then did you not obey the voice of the Lord, but swooped down upon the plunder and did evil in the Lord's sight? Saul said to Samuel, Yes, I have obeyed the voice of the Lord and have gone the way which the Lord sent me, and have brought Agag king of Amalek and have utterly destroyed the Amalekites. But the people took from the spoil sheep and oxen, the chief of the things to be utterly destroyed, to sacrifice to the Lord your God in Gilgal.

Adam blamed Eve. Eve blamed the serpent. We can neither place the blame for our own individual sins on someone else, nor can we achieve salvation on somebody else's coattails. There is no such thing as collective salvation as proposed by President Obama in a baccalaureate he gave to the spring of 2010.

PRESIDENT OBAMA: And recognizing that my fate remains tied up with their fate, and that my individual salvation is not going to come about without a collective salvation for the country.

When he talks about collective salvation, he couples it with another collective concept called social justice. He learned this concept from his mentor pastor Jeremiah Wright, a man whose church he had attended for 22 years in South Chicago. Jeremiah Wright derives his theology from James Cone, architect of black liberation theology. It is necessary to make the point that James Cone is out of step with most of the legitimate Black Christian Churches in America.

Black Liberation theology is only one of many offshoots from a movement with its roots in Marxist theory and Polemic called liberation theology. According to Wikipedia, liberation theology is a movement in Christian theology which interprets the teachings of Jesus Christ in terms of liberation from unjust economic, political, or social conditions. It has been described by proponents as "an interpretation of Christian faith through the poor's suffering, their struggle and hope, and a critique of society and the Catholic faith and Christianity through the eyes of the poor."

Pope Benedict (when he still was Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger) affirmed that liberation theology represents a whole spectrum of positions from the radical Marxist political theory to relatively benign movements to attend to the poor and oppressed. He claims that liberation theology attempts to totally interpret Christian reality, believing itself to be the vehicle of liberation and the impetus to political activity, conceiving that everything has to be viewed with a political cast, unhampered by an idealistic view of reality.

Liberation Theology, taking its cue from Marxist Polemic conceives of the mission of wresting the power away from the oppressor and giving it to the downtrodden proletariat. Liberation theology is responsible for the buzzwords in current progressive political parlance: Collective Salvation, Social Justice, Reparations, and Redistribution of wealth. Pope Benedict referred to these aberrations as demonic, insisting "Wherever politics tries to be redemptive, it is promising too much. Where it wishes to do the work of God, it becomes not divine, but demonic."

If the politicians who adhere to these positions, Rahm Emanuel, David Axelrod, or Nancy Pelosi were to interpret Matthew 25, they would demand that the five wise virgins in verses 1-13 turn over half of their oil to the foolish virgins, insuring that all of their lamps would expire before the bridegroom arrived. Michael Savage has termed this concept trickle-up poverty.

The proponents of liberation theology would demand that the man who had attained the ten talents would give five of his talents to the man who had buried it in the ground, charging that the man who had gained ten talents had attained his prosperity at the expense of the poor and downtrodden. This way wealth would be distributed equally.

Obviously Jesus Christ did not endorse the secular progressive notion of collective justice or collective salvation. Nor did He endorse identity politics, as He indicates in Matthew 3:9 where He lambasts the Pharisees for clinging to Abraham's coattails. But our culture, steeped in political correctness has embraced tolerance for every deviant behavior imaginable, calling it normal and acceptable.

In 1993, Senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan, a progressive liberal from New York, was struck by an epiphany of conscience as he wrote a landmark scholarly paper titled 'Defining Deviancy Down', a paper which gives an uncanny insight into society's normalizing of sin and its deadly consequences. In this paper, he suggests that federal, state, and local agencies, whose role is maintaining control, often view their purpose as keeping deviant behavior within boundaries rather than getting rid of it completely. Moynihan observes that society is now tolerantly accepting "alternative" family structures such as same sex marriage, single parent households, and cohabiting

without marriage.

Remember that righteous Lot, because he had absorbed so much of Sodom and Gomorrah's culture, tried to persuade his neighbors to practice wholesome fornication rather than commit sodomy with his guests. Lot's daughters had absorbed so much of Sodom's culture that they regarded incest with their father as normal, or at least as a necessary evil.

Daniel Patrick Moynihan suggests that aberrant behavior has increased at such an alarming rate that the community at large no longer can recognize it, forcing society to redefine deviancy, to accept (or exempt) much conduct which previously would have been stigmatized. Moynihan is alarmed at the growing acceptance of violent crime within the community such as rape, murder, and robbery.

Moynihan, citing Cooper Union's Professor Fred Siegel, suggests that the massive release of mental patients [since the early sixties], having been freed from middle class mores, added many more sleeping on doorways and grates, bringing about a so-called "homeless problem" explained as people who could not attain affordable housing.

The perplexed liberal senator, reporting statistics from the *New York Times*, reported that thirty years before his report, only one out of every five white children was born out of wedlock; in 1979, it had increased to every fifth child, but in the black community the figure has climbed to two thirds of new births, whereas 30 years ago the figure was one out of every five. By 1969, 22.1 percent were dependent on welfare, breaking down as 15.7 percent consisting of white children, and over 73 percent consisting of black children. At that time projections indicated that for white illegitimate births, the figure would climb to 22 percent, but in the black family over 83 percent. In 1981, the *New York Times* recognized that welfare and poverty had become a startling symptom of a vast social calamity.

Moynihan cites a study by Douglas Smith and C. Roger Jarjoura, stating that neighborhoods containing high percentage of single-parent households have a much greater incidence of violent crime, adding "the relationship is so strong that controlling for family configuration erases the relationship between race and crime and between low income and crime." We cannot rely on the old nostrum that poverty is the sole determining factor in crime.

Perhaps the most devastating statistics, demonstrating the effects of trashing the fifth commandment, emanate from the black community. In their book, *Come on People*, Bill Cosby and Alvin F. Poussaint present some grim statistics. They describe how the

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destruction of the black family has dramatically increased mortality and crime statistics among young black males, corroborating the connection between honoring parents and having a long and prosperous life.

Cosby laments, "In 1950, five out of every six black children were born into a two-parent home. Today, that number is less than two out of six." Over 70% of black babies are born yearly to single mothers. He reminds his ethnic community, "In 1950, we still feared our parents and respected them."

Senator Moynihan made the prediction in 1965 that violent crime would skyrocket when single parent families would move into ascendancy, adding that from the wild Irish slums of the 19th century Eastern seaboard to the riot-torn suburbs of Los Angeles, there is one unmistakable lesson in American history: a community that allows a large number of young men to grow up in broken families, dominated by women, never acquiring any stable relationship to male authority, never acquiring any set of rational expectations about the future—that community asks for and gets chaos.

In 1998, Julie, Aaron and I had the privilege of hearing one of the leading Black economists, Dr. Walter Williams, speaking at a standing room only event at Tyler Junior College. He attacked the erosion of our personal liberties by the Federal Government. At one point he said, "The Welfare System has done irrevocable damage to the Black community, carrying out what slavery and Reconstruction couldn't do, that is to create a perpetual system of slavery and dependency.

Our federal welfare system, while perhaps well-intended, with the intention of cushioning the harmful effects of adultery and fornication has actually encouraged sin, and has seriously exacerbated the problem, pouring untold gallons of gasoline on a raging fire. Our progressive leaning courts have encouraged murder and adultery by tolerating abortion, sodomy, homosexuality, and regular garden variety fornication and adultery.

Garner Ted Armstrong used to say, "Imagine the economic effect if our society would just keep one of the ten commandments.

The devastating subprime lending collapse was directly caused by sin. In his article, "Demographics and Depression," David Goldman wrote that because conservatives lost the cultural wars, even though they controlled the House and Senate, the housing market imploded. America is rapidly changing from two parent households to a confused set of alternative arrangements, in which the traditional nuclear family (Dad/Mom/Baby) has been eclipsed by single parent dwellings.

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Goldman projects that in 2025 single-person families will overtake families with children. Consequently, the demand for large houses will decline. With this declining demand, the collapse of the housing market was no accident, but was predictable and proved the absolute dead center of our current economic crisis.

All the so called economic stimulus packages will never eradicate the ravages of sin. In addition, the toleration of murder by the progressive left around the globe, endorsing abortion on demand is a recipe for ethnic and cultural suicide.

According to Goldman, the world has grown poorer because the present generation made no plans to rear a successive generation. Everything else seems a trivial bookkeeping matter. America has grown older and less fertile, guaranteeing that we will grow poorer no matter how we tinker with the economic policies.

Brothers and sisters, our judges, lawmakers, and president are all guilty of justifying wicked and harassing the righteous as Isaiah proclaimed in Isaiah 5:20.

Isaiah 5:20 Woe to those who call evil good, and good evil; who substitute darkness for light and light for darkness; who substitute bitter for sweet and sweet for bitter!

Proverbs 17:15 He who justifies the wicked and he who condemns the righteous, both of them alike are an abomination to the LORD.

Proverbs 24:24 He who says to the wicked, "You are righteous," peoples will curse him, nations will abhor him;

In Dr. Karl Menninger's words, sin has not really disappeared; we have just given it a different name and called it normal. In the words of Pastor Jeremiah Wright, "America's chickens have come home to roost." And the answer is not in collective salvation, but in individual salvation. As the flight attendant aboard the airlines admonishes us, put on your own oxygen mask before attempting to help your children.

I wish to amend President Obama's statement about collective salvation. Not: Because our individual salvation depends on collective salvation. But: Our collective salvation depends on our individual salvation.

Romans 8:20-23 For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but

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because of Him who subjected it, in hope that the creation itself also will be set free from its slavery to corruption into the freedom of the glory of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation groans and suffers the pains of childbirth together until now. And not only this, but also we ourselves, having the first fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting eagerly for our adoption as sons, the redemption of our body.