

2013: God, Clergy and Congress Poll Numbers Down, Darwin's Up: Who's to Blame?

Just days after **Pope Francis** was named *Time Magazine's* Person of the Year, recent polls reveal that Americans are losing trust in their clergy and that belief in the existence of God is on the decline. CBS/DC and the Associate Press reveal that researchers at Gallup found that 53 percent of Americans have lost trust in the clergy – the worst ratings in 40 years.

When a nation loses trust in clergy compromised through scandals, the people lose faith in God and government. The nation suffers spiritually, politically and economically when its clergy are compromised. The latest Harris poll confirms this.

Susan Jones of , reporting on the Harris findings, writes, “A strong majority (74 percent) of U.S. adults say they believe in God, but that’s down from the 82 percent who expressed such a belief in earlier years. Belief in miracles, heaven and other religious teachings also declined in the latest poll, as follows:

- 68 percent believe in heaven, down from 75 percent;
- 68 percent believe that Jesus is God or the Son of God, down from 72 percent;
- 65 percent believes in the resurrection of Jesus Christ, down from 70 percent.”
- Gallup’s polling also revealed that Darwin’s theory of evolution had a resurgent of new converts – up 42 percent from 2005. When God is profaned by His priests, people turn to pseudoscience to find meaning to life. The societal fabric is not evolving but dissolving into an unfit culture in which no one can survive – fit or

unfit.

Evolution is biological relativism – the antithesis to the absolute of divine creationism, which designed natural selection to be “after its kind” (Genesis 1:24). This is the expected natural outcome when society abandons the absolutes of God’s Word, both physical and spiritual, for moral relativism. This abandonment comes in the vacuum of sound reason created by a clergy who refuse to stand in their pulpits and the public square proclaiming the immutable Law of God.

As a result, God’s numbers are backsliding, the president’s numbers are in the tank – the lowest of any since Nixon (Washington Post/ABC poll released Tuesday) – while Congress is sharing the “bottom of the honesty and ethics ratings with lobbyists and car salespeople, the only three job professions to receive a single-digit rating.” Nicki Rossoll also reports that “Americans view members of Congress as some of the least honest and ethical professionals. But there’s a bit of good news for congressional lawmakers. One profession does rank lower: lobbyists.”

Any wonder the culture is in crisis, the economy collapsing and no one seems to have any solutions? America is being fundamentally changed, but who’s really to blame? No polling necessary here.

As the clergy goes, so goes the nation. It’s not the White House, Congress or Hollywood that’s responsible for America’s mess. The fault lies squarely at the foot of her pulpits. In the past 60 years, their voices have been silenced in the public square and their influence upon public policy absent – all in exchange for 30 pieces of tax-exempt silver proffered by the unconstitutional Johnson Amendment to the 1954 Senate tax overhaul bill.

America’s clergy have abdicated their roles as God’s “grand

vindicators of the government of God.” They have perverted their prelacy to the role of executive administrator and CEO of their bi-coastal mega-churches, living in mega-mansion parsonages while feasting on the dainties of Babylon. Totally blind to the biblical worldview of their place and purpose for the nation, America’s clergy are no longer “sons of lightning and thunder,” but fair-weathered favorites on the talk-show circuit and friends to society’s darlings.

The Cross of Christ is the only hope for America. Former Speaker of the House Newt Gingrich recently said, “The only hope for America is for her clergy to start preaching the Cross of Christ again.” He is right. If America is to be fundamentally transformed, it will be through the preaching of the hope found only through the Cross of Calvary. America’s next awakening will come at the foot of the Cross.

Rev. Charles Finney, the voice of the Great Awakening, challenged America’s clergy to proclaim the Cross some 140 years ago. His message is just as relevant today. “Has the offense of the Cross ceased, or is the Cross kept out of view? Has the holy law of God, with its stringent precept and its awful penalty become popular with unconverted men and women? Or is it ignored in the pulpit, and the preacher praised for that neglect of duty?”

Finney’s answer for America is not bipartisan cooperation on the debt-ceiling crisis, but rather that “we need more sons of thunder in the pulpit. We need men that will flash forth the law of God like livid lightning and arouse the consciences of men.”

Finney described the pulpiteers of the Great Awakening as “those old, stern, grand vindicators of the government of God (who) would have thundered and lightened till they had almost demolished their pulpits if any such immoralities had shown themselves under their instructions as are common in these days.”

Finney feared neither the press nor politicians' reactions to his preaching. Political correctness, according to Finney, was biblical correctness. "Let us thunder forth the law and Gospel of God until our voices reach the capital of this nation, through our representatives in Congress. ... Let us give the reporters of the press such work to do as will make their ears and the ears of their readers tingle."

In response to today's "seeker-friendly, hyper-grace gospel," Finney's thoughts: "Away with this milk-and-water preaching of a love of Christ that has no holiness or moral discrimination in it. ... Christ crucified for the sins of the world is the Christ that the people need. Such a collapse of conscience in this land could never have existed if ... our preaching had not in great measure fallen out."

Finney summed up his message, "The Decay of Conscience," in New York, Dec. 4, 1873, to America's clergy: "Brethren, our preaching will bear its legitimate fruits. If immorality prevails in the land, the fault is ours in a great degree. If there is a decay of conscience, the pulpit is responsible for it. If the public press lacks moral discrimination, the pulpit is responsible for it. If the church is degenerate and worldly, the pulpit is responsible for it. If the world loses its interest in religion, the pulpit is responsible for it. If Satan rules in our halls of legislation, the pulpit is responsible for it. If our politics become so corrupt that the very foundations of our government are ready to fall away, the pulpit is responsible for it. Let us not ignore this fact, my dear brethren; but let us lay it to heart, and be thoroughly awake to our responsibility in respect to the morals of this nation."

If America's clergy neglect their godly role to government and society through complicity and compromise to such, we will have lost any hope for America's next awakening. The only solution would be a new order of priests like that of Zadok and Abiathar who remained faithful to David (1 Chronicles

12:1, 28) while those at Shiloh remained politically correct but spiritually compromised to Saul. Zadok's and Abiathar's son's (as opposed to Eli's uncircumcised brood) reaped the reward of faithfulness to the anointing with their appointments to "minister unto the Lord" in the holy place (Ezekiel 44:15) of Solomon's Temple. Those complicit, compromised and uncircumcised "ministers" were restricted to the outer court and needs of the people. They could not come near unto the Lord.

May America's Zadoks and Abiathars come forth, recognize and take up the mantle of their ministry and lead us to the anointing of Zion and another great awakening.

Dan Cummins is founding pastor of Bridlewood Church, Bullard, Texas, and originator of "Washington, A Man of Prayer," an historical event to be held in Statuary Hall of the U.S. Capitol on May 7, 2014, honoring the 225th inaugural anniversary of President George Washington. The website is