

Is America Approaching a 'Lazarus Moment'?

After the stoning of Stephen, "On that day a great persecution broke out against the church in Jerusalem. And they were all scattered throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria, except the apostles. ... Therefore those who were scattered went everywhere preaching the word" (Acts 8:1, 4).

As frequently occurs in Scripture, what seems to be a setback is used by God for His glory and the advancement of His kingdom.

The Bible is full of examples of God imparting or restoring life. Regarding Aaron's almond wood staff in Numbers 18:8, "When Moses went into the tent of witness the next day, the rod of Aaron, for the house of Levi, had sprouted. It brought forth buds, produced blossoms, and yielded almonds."

Another example concerns Jesus' friend Lazarus of Bethany and his sisters Martha and Mary. Mary had at one time anointed Jesus with perfume and "wiped His feet with her hair" (John 11:2, NIV). The sisters sent for the Healer when Lazarus became sick, and "had already been in the tomb four days" (v. 17) when Jesus finally arrived. Deeply moved, Jesus went to the tomb and, as we are told in John 11:43, called in a loud voice, "Lazarus, come out!" And the man who had been dead came out, still wrapped in his burial shrouds, illustrating the hold that death has had on him.

With the coronavirus bringing America into peril, modern Christendom may possibly be approaching a "Lazarus" moment; and ever do we need it. How easily we tend to forget that America's system of higher education had its roots in American Protestantism, with 106 of the 108 colleges being distinctly Christian, according to Arthur W. Hunt III in his book *The*

Vanishing Word.

With the collapse over the last 60 years of the theological and epistemological foundation of public education, having been explicitly Christian for 350 years, liberty for our children and grandchildren is no longer a certainty. The Bible makes clear that righteousness—morality, integrity, virtue and uprightness—is the main key to exalting a nation. Solomon reminds us in Proverbs 3:1 (MEV) to “not forget my teaching, but let your heart keep my commandments.”

Jewish Hebrew scholar Michael V. Fox explains why this is extremely instructive for contemporary America: “To ‘forget’ (šakah), as Hame’iri observes, usually refers not to the natural slippage of memory but to willful neglect and diversion of attention.”

The terms “willful neglect” and “diversion of attention” perfectly capture what has happened in America over the last century. Take, for example, Thomas Jefferson’s drafting of the Northwest Ordinance and its requirement for admitting new states to the Union in 1787: “Religion, morality, and knowledge, being necessary to good government and the happiness of mankind, schools and the means of education shall forever be encouraged.”

Indeed, America’s Founders required that all new, additional states entering the Union had educational systems all set for the accentuation, cultivation and instruction of Christian principles in the education of America’s youth.

Sandy Barker-Mitchell is quoted as the source of the following message about the coronavirus pandemic: “In three short months, just like He did with plagues of Egypt, God has taken away everything we worship. God said, ‘You want to worship athletes, I will shut down the stadiums. You want to worship musicians, I will shut down the Civic Centers. You want to worship actors, I will shut down theaters. You want to worship

money, I will shut down the economy and collapse the stock market. You don't want to go to church and worship Me, I will make it where you can't go to church.'"

She might have added: "'If government-run education bureaucrats want to indoctrinate America's K-6 by way of the exaltation and normalization of sin through homosexual and transgender friendly curriculum, I'll shut that down too.'"

As we dare guessing, the coronavirus pandemic looks like America is to receive mercy, instead of the judgment we deserve. The plight and predicament the virus puts us in may be moving the nation and our culture back or closer to God.

On the other hand, the machinations by government bureaucrats and secular politicians in the coronavirus pandemic are illuminating for everyday Americans who put in 50-hour workweeks, raise their families, coach Little League and teach Sunday school. Everyone is well aware of abiding by common-sense safety practices. However, are malevolent forces also at work, taking advantage of the crisis to intentionally tank the economy ahead of the November election by sowing panic? Will some use it to foist the next impeachment scheme?

As to contemporary culture: 1) All wealth is created in the private sector; government spending is just another word for private sector spending orchestrated by politicians. Margaret Thatcher's advice should be displayed in Klieg lights above Speaker Pelosi's door, "The trouble with socialism is that eventually you run out of other people's money"; and 2) That government bureaucrats dictate liquor stores as 'essentials' and churches as 'non-essentials' explains much. After all, culture is the public manifestation of religion.

Secularists have misinterpreted their victory of the last 100 years. The only reason they have commandeered the economic, political, cultural, educational, professional and recreational levers of power in America is that God is using

secularism to discipline His people. In this period of time His people have drifted away from Jesus' kingdom-ekklesia assignment in Matthew 16:18 and now seem complacently content with a Christian subculture replete with Christian radio, Christian television, Christian publishing and zero catalytic ability to affect and transform the American culture.

In his book *The Life of David*, Arthur W. Pink wrote:

"The language used by the women of Israel when celebrating the death of Goliath and the defeating of the Philistines, gave plain indication that their hearts and minds were occupied only with the human victors. 'God was not in all their thoughts' (Ps. 10:4). Alas that this is so often the case today: we are living in an age of hero worship, and Christendom itself is infected by this evil spirit. Man is eulogized and magnified on every hand, not only out in the world, but even in the so-called churches, Bible conferences, and religious periodicals – seen in the advertising of the speakers, the printing of their photos, and the toadying to them. O how little hiding behind the Cross, how little self-effacement there is today. 'Cease ye from man' (Isa. 2:22), needs to be placed in large letters over the platforms of all the big religious gatherings in this man-deifying age."

Again, the plight and predicament COVID-19 puts us in may be shifting the nation and our culture back or closer to God.

Gideons and Rahabs are beginning to stand.