

The Spiritual State of the Union

Every year, the president of the United States gives a report on the state of the union. While it's good to take stock of the condition of our nation, the glaring problem of the president's address is that it misses the important truth about the real issues we face and their root causes.

Political correctness and secularism have eviscerated our ability to speak the truth and address the real moral issues of our day. But with God's help, we will not succumb to those temptations today. Too much is at stake to trifle with the future of our nation, the church and the souls of man to pander and obfuscate.

America has many serious problems. Dr. D. James Kennedy outlined these problems in his "Spiritual State of the Nation" message back in 2003. He included in his list the epidemic of drugs, alcoholism, rampant abortion, sexual perversion of every kind, sexual promiscuity and STDs.

"The 'spiritual state of the union'?" he asked. "If it were a patient, it probably would have been pronounced dead on arrival—frozen in ice—no spiritual pulse at all."

Is that true?

This is what many think. Some even find reason to rejoice over it. But we must be careful to avoid two extremes. The first extreme would be to gloss over the real problems of our nation's spiritual condition. The second extreme would be to overemphasize how bad it is. Let's try to stick with just the facts.

Are There Two Americas?

Disgraced, philandering politician John Edwards loved to wax on about two Americas, and in some ways there are two. The red state/blue state divide is very apparent, especially in presidential elections being decided by very slim majorities in the Electoral College.

While there remains a majority who believe in God and who have a positive view of faith, a small but militant minority is hell-bent on destroying all vestiges of our Christian heritage. Marxists/secularists have prosecuted their 100-year cultural jihad to infiltrate the media, education and politics—especially the courts—and impose their secular fundamentalism. The election and re-election of Barack Obama is sobering proof of their formidable influence. President Obama even told a group of Muslims in Cairo that America is not a Christian nation!

Liberals hate God, capitalism, the natural family and any institution—like the church—that supports them. But after five years of the most left-leaning administration in our history, the wheels are coming off. The **Obama administration** has jerked the reins too hard.

Obamacare is a disaster. Prior to Obamacare's passage, 90 percent of people were happy with their health insurance. Rather than addressing the 10 percent, the Obama administration has blown up the whole system in an attempt to impose failed, socialistic health care on everyone.

Now scandals, incompetence and deceit have taken their toll. 2014 will bring a huge course correction to the ship of state, and the tea party movement, conservatives and "Tea-vangelicals" are poised to make significant electoral gains.

All Is Not Lost

In spite of decades of atheistic propaganda being shoved down our throats, polls show that Americans have remained mostly spiritual:

- 87 percent of Americans believe in God.
- 78 percent of Americans see religion as either *very* or *fairly* important in their life.
- 74 percent of Americans self-identify as Christians.
- 75 percent say it would be a positive thing if Americans were *more* religious.
- 79 percent believe the Bible is the literal or inspired Word of God.

This obviously doesn't mean that 79 percent of Americans are all committed, born-again Christians. Many are Chrinos—Christians in name only. But when pressed, a supermajority of Americans self-identify with what they think it means to be a Christian. This represents both a great opportunity and a great challenge.

The good news is that the majority is not hostile to what they think constitutes the Christian faith, but they may have been inoculated—exposed to just enough to make them resistant to the real thing. They do not possess what they profess: They've not been transformed by faith in Christ, they do not know for sure if they have eternal life, and they've never shared their faith because they don't have anything to share.

The good news is that over the last 40 years, the percentage of people who say they are born again or evangelical has grown from the low 20th percentile to the mid-40th percentile. But this number has not changed in the last 10 years, while the number of people who have no religious preference grew from 10 percent to 15 percent to a 50 percent increase.

America's Moral Schizophrenia

There are two issues that demonstrate the thinking of the average American is morally adrift from the truth of God's Word: the sanctity of both life and sexuality.

Sanctity of life. David writes of God's hand upon each life in Psalms 139:13-14: "You formed my inward parts; You covered me

in my mother's womb. I will praise You, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made; marvelous are Your works, and that my soul knows very well" (NKJV).

Note that the psalmist knew "very well" that he was created by God through the miracle of procreation. People intuitively know the truth about life and its origin because man bears God's image. The best and latest science agrees with God's Word that life begins at conception. Taking innocent life, no matter how small, runs contrary to our conscience and the Scriptures.

Because Americans know this deep down, they are morally conflicted. But in the end they show their true colors and act very pragmatic about abortion. This is probably due to the fact that so many abortions have occurred.

Statistically, a huge number of Americans have either participated in having an abortion or in helping or encouraging someone to get one, or they know someone who has. This renders them incapable of taking a strong, consistent stand for life. They have no moral standing, so they don't want to play the hypocrite. Nor do they or can they condemn abortion without risking rejection by someone they know.

Roe v. Wade's aftermath. In the 41 years since the legalization of abortion in 1973, more than 56 million babies have died through abortion. In 2013, there were approximately 1.2 million abortions—that's 3,300 abortions daily or 137 abortions per hour every hour or more than one abortion every 30 seconds.

The conflict over abortion is reflected in a recent poll by Gallup. Their 2013 poll showed that 48 percent of those polled identify as pro-life and 45 percent identified as pro-choice, with pro-lifers trending stronger. Another 49 percent of those polled say abortion is generally morally wrong.

A clear majority of Americans are unable to commit to ending

this atrocity. Fifty-two percent say abortion should be legal under certain circumstances, 53 percent don't want to see *Roe v. Wade* overturned, and 61 percent say abortion in the first trimester should be legal. Then 64 percent will say abortion in the second trimester should be illegal, and 80 percent say abortion in the third trimester should be illegal.

This is clearly morally and rationally indefensible. Why does the baby somehow acquire the right to life in the second and third trimester?

There is a great opportunity to bring truth to the conscience if we will have the love and courage to save babies and warn sinners.

The good news. Operation Rescue has concluded an exhaustive survey of abortion clinics in the United States. It has documented a record number of abortion clinic closures in 2013. Eighty-seven surgical abortion clinics halted abortions. This represents an impressive 12 percent net decrease in surgical abortion clinics in 2013 alone. The total number of surgical abortion clinics left in the U.S. is now 582, a 73 percent drop from a high in 1991 of 2,176.

While the rate of abortion is declining, even just *one* abortion is one too many.

Sanctity of sexuality. Hebrews 13:4 says, "Marriage should be honored by all, and the marriage bed kept pure, for God will judge the adulterer and all the sexually immoral" (NIV). God did not wear a flower in His hair and attend the "Summer of Love" in San Francisco in 1968. In fact, He wasn't invited. If He did come, it would have been to remind them that sexuality belongs in marriage between a man and a woman.

Americans are conflicted because they know that sexual immorality is wrong, but they either engage in illicit sexual activity or they know people who do so, so they don't want to stand up against it. Homosexual activists have waged a cunning

PR campaign, aided by the liberal media, using junk science, posing as victims and wrapping themselves in the civil rights movement.

So, how's the sexual revolution working for America? According to the Centers for Disease Control, 2011 saw the largest number of cases of chlamydia ever reported, a total of 1,412,791. The rate of new gonorrhea cases rose 4 percent in 2012 from the year before, while syphilis jumped 11 percent, mostly in men who have sex with men. The rate of HIV increased 22 percent among homosexuals ages 13 to 24 from 2008 to 2010.

And we still have the audacity to think we can redefine marriage and the natural family. Sixty-four percent of Americans think homosexual relationships should be legal, and 54 percent say homosexual marriage ought to be legal.

The truth is that as the family goes, so goes the nation. According to the World Bank, there is a correspondence between a nation's faith and its birth rate. Nations with the largest proportion of unbelievers had an average annual population growth rate of just 0.7 percent in the period 1975-1997. Populations of the most religious countries grew three times as fast.

If you have a high view of children as a blessing and an optimistic faith, then you are inclined to have children. Still, evangelicals are not immune to lower birth rates because many don't have a biblical worldview. They see children as burdens, not blessings; liabilities, not assets.

The fertility rate in the U.S. fell to a record low for the second year in a row in 2012. The fertility rate is only 63 births per 1,000 women of childbearing age. Forty-one percent of those babies were born to unmarried mothers.

Christians Are Engaging

But there are signs of hope—flowers peeking up though the bleak spiritual landscape. For example, in the United States government, we were told that there were five recognizable evangelical born-again Christians in the House of Representatives in 1990. By 2013, there was estimated to be well over 100 and rising.

The tea party caucus in Congress is even more evangelical than the rest of the House. Seventy-five percent are evangelical or mainline Southern Protestants. More than twice as many express their faith publicly as non-tea-party representatives. Rep. Ted Cruz is a shining example of a tea party evangelical with moral courage.

Movies and television. Hollywood is a vacuous wasteland of immorality. Sunday's Grammy's is a prime example.

Virtually all the outspoken stars and starlets of pop culture are liberal. Conservative musicians, actors and directors are either very few or are deep undercover to protect their careers. There's no need to enumerate all the crazy and wicked things they produce and the garbage they pump into our living rooms.

But there are also bright spots. The conservative Fox News channel consistently outperforms its liberal competition. The recent miniseries *The Bible* drew 27 million viewers, a record for the History Channel. Viewership of *Duck Dynasty*, with its overt Christian family values that ends each episode with a prayer, has the highest ratings in cable TV history. Even the "gay-stop" could not force the patriarch of the Robertson family, Phil Robertson, off the air when he made clear his biblical opposition to homosexuality.

More and more Christians are entering into making independent movies that are getting good responses. ABC News recently reported that Hollywood is turning to the Bible in search of hits. Box office results consistently show the most profitable

films are generally those that support Christian values.

Education. We can all agree that public schooling is on the wrong track. The *Intelligencer* reported this month that international testing has United States students performing poorly. In 2012, students from 65 countries participated in an assessment. The U.S. rankings in science, math and reading have slumped from 2009. The U.S. was 36th in math, 28th in science and 24th in reading. One of the rising stars included Vietnam, which came in at eighth in science.

The brightest spot in American education comes from home schoolers, who are largely Christians. More than 25 years of testing has shown that the average home schooler continues to be more than 30 percentage points higher than their public school counterparts.

Christian private schools, especially those in the classical education movement, are reforming the way we teach children. Other schools will have to reform or die.

Jesus warned that anything not built on His Word will fail. Public education is imploding because it is at war with Christ.

Evolution. For the last two generations, students from kindergarten through graduate school have been constantly inculcated with the atheistic, humanistic, materialistic view of evolution. This is a poisonous fountain from which flows humanism in all its anti-Christian forms—communism; fascism, relativism. But the evidence from science against evolution is mounting.

Darwin's theory that life started from simple forms and evolved into more complex forms is being refuted almost daily. The more we know, the more we see that even the simplest forms of life are irreducibly complex and filled with millions of bits of complex genetic code. Did you know the human body has approximately 60 billion bits of intricate genetic

information, at least until recently? It might be as high as 120 billion bits.

Time magazine recently reported a research team at the University of Washington has discovered a second code hidden within our DNA written on top of the other. The first code describes how proteins are made; the second language instructs the cell on how genes are to be controlled. Do you think further research will find there to be more or less complexity?

Stephen Hawking, one of the famous “new atheists,” concludes, “The odds against a universe like ours emerging out of something like the Big Bang are enormous. I think there are clearly religious implications.”

It’s a good thing the religion of evolution has been protected by the courts. If it had to stand on its own merit, it collapses like a house of cards. It has done incalculable harm, but its days are numbered as a serious scientific theory.

Encroaching Islam. Fourteen hundred years ago, Muhammed declared jihad on the world. Now we are watching his followers wage it against us, and thousands of Americans have been killed in the process.

Our politically correct elite will not even admit that we are fighting Islamic jihad. Both political parties take Saudi petrol dollars and extend an olive branch to the Muslim Brotherhood who have established mosques in all our cities. They boldly tell us jihad is their desire and dying for Allah is their dream. Our problem is we think we can reason with them.

If we are nice to them, they will be nice to us? Right. Infidel, you are a fool. The only reason they use terrorism and have not waged open violent jihad is because they can’t. At the rate they are growing, they will.

How can we know? Fourteen hundred years of history tells us they always have.

Fortunately, there are Christian soldiers who are wise to Islam and their tactics, like our good brother Alan West. We have defeated Islam in the past; should the Lord tarry, we will have to do it again. Christians, you should have lots of sons, buy them guns, and teach them the biblical doctrines of self-defense and just war along with the manly art of war.

The Christian's Hope

We could consider many other particular problems in the United States, for they are legion. But in the end, they all boil down to just one: the ancient problem of sin and unbelief.

The good news is God has provided the solution for both! We have the only real solution: the gospel of Jesus Christ and submission to His Word.

There are three patriotic things we can need to do to end the secularization of America:

First, pray! Pray for God to send a Third Great Awakening to America that will transform America back to a God-fearing nation and end abortion.

Second, act. This year, make it your goal to lead someone to Jesus Christ. They will be saved from their sin and hell, and by the Holy Spirit's work, they will grow in grace and righteousness and support a biblical worldview.

Third, make it your goal to grow in the grace and knowledge of Christ and to think God's thoughts after Him as you take every thought captive and obedient to Christ. Then join in advancing the crown rights of Jesus Christ and His dominion as the King of kings and Lord of lords.

Proverbs 14:34 says, "Righteousness exalts a nation, but sin is a reproach to any people" (NKJV).

Our hope is the patience and long-suffering of God. If God would spare wicked Sodom for the sake of ten righteous men, pray God spares America for the sake of millions that have not bowed their knee to the Baals of this world. In the meantime, the blood of the innocent cries out from the ground for justice. May God have mercy on America.

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