

What Happened When a Pastor Experienced Two National Tragedies in His Own Backyard

Last week was quite a week for Pastor Rob McCoy of Calvary Chapel-Godspeak and Thousand Oaks City councilman and mayor pro tem. On Wednesday, November 7, a deranged killer murdered 12 people at Borderline Bar and Grill, and the next day raging wildfires laid waste to parts of the Thousand Oaks area.

Pastor McCoy will be sworn in as mayor of Thousand Oaks this December. After initially solely pastoring to the 500 or so churchgoers at Godspeak, Rob ran for California Assembly in 2014 and was elected as city councilman from 2015 to 2018. Starting Dec. 11, he will serve God at his church and Thousand Oaks as its mayor; that is to say, he will be serving the Thousand Oaks community inside and outside the church walls.

Following last Wednesday night's Bible Study, Pastor McCoy was informed of the Borderline Bar and Grill mass shooting just before midnight. As a former sheriff's chaplain, he hurried to Borderline to see how he could help. Thereafter, he went to the reunification site set up by the sheriff's office for families anxious for news about their loved ones. Pastor McCoy stayed all night, a harrowing 10 hours, providing solace and consolation to those in grief and distress.

Needing more hands on deck, the sheriff's officer in charge called on pastor McCoy to console bereaved families and speak to the media. In an emotional interview with ABC News, he said: "It's going to be a long, hard road, but this community will stand together. ... That's the only way to get through it."

The next afternoon, Pastor McCoy had to evacuate his home due to the fire. There is something diabolical about the Thousand Oaks mass shooting and roaring wildfires. 1 Peter 5:8 sheds

light, "Your adversary the devil walks around as a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour."

And yet, as the Christian music group MercyMe expresses in the song "Even If," "It's easy to sing/ When there's nothing to bring me down/ But what will I say, When I'm held to the flame/ Like I am right now/ I know You're able and I know You can/ Save through the fire with Your mighty hand/ But even if You don't, My hope is You alone."

"When the storms of life come, the wicked are whirled away, but the godly have a lasting foundation" (Prov. 10:25, NLT). If trust in God is "thoroughgoing and comprehensive," fearfulness is incompatible with trust in God, for "whoever relies for safety on Yahweh is safe indeed." (William McKane, Proverbs Commentary) No storm can take down the righteous.

Which brings us to California Governor-elect Gavin Newsom, elected Nov. 6 by California evangelicals who stayed home on Election Day, as the following shows: "California has more evangelical voters than any other state in the Union except Texas. According to a study conducted by the non-partisan and respected Pew Research Center, 63 percent of Californians describe themselves as Christian, and 20 percent describe themselves as evangelical Christians. Even if we modestly estimate that registration among Christians doesn't exceed that of the general populations, this amounts to over 3.7 million registered evangelicals—more voters than the whole state of Arizona." (Pythagoras Analytics, 6/22/2018, "The Potential for Evangelical Turnout in California").

To get an idea of Governor-elect Newsom's ostentatious self-importance, we merely have to call to mind how he as San Francisco mayor in February 2004 "in calculated defiance of state law" annulled the vote of 4.6 million California voters in defining "only marriage between a man and a woman [as] valid or recognized in California." (Prop. 22—61 percent-39 percent)

A single San Francisco politician thus pre-empted 4.6 million statewide California voters.

Governor-elect Newsom, a male himself, ascribes “the crisis with men and boys in this state and in this country” to “a culture of toxic masculinity.” A culture, as he has it, “where men are responsible for much of the violence in the nation.” [SFGate, Feb. 6, 2018].

California presents the perfect example of a culture that at first drifted and now is rushing headlong into apostasy. (Joseph Boot, *The Mission of God, a Manifesto of Hope for Society*). There are few people who seem to be more unfit for leadership than Governor-elect Gavin Newsom.

Newsom has touted his plan for universal health care. Aside from compounding California’s debt crisis, perhaps even more deplorable is the smug, intellectual laziness and refusal of taking into account the impact of a plan so unrealistic and foolhardy. California residents are fleeing the state in droves, “concluding that the cost of living, taxes, regulation, traffic and other problems are just too unbearable, despite the gorgeous coastlines and weather and everything else that once made the Golden State so golden.”

A diffident church culture, a Sunday-go-to-meeting churchgoing that makes no demands on one’s comfortable, self-centered life, will not be the answer for California, or any other state.

“If you long to please God, and wish to see Him pleased, not just in the church house, but also the schoolhouse, the statehouse, the courthouse, the movie house, the art house and the public square, Christians should not abandon California but press the battle on (Andrew Sandlin, foreword to *The Mission of God, a Manifesto of Hope for Society*).

Just as David did in engaging Goliath.

We need Gideon and Rahabs to stand.