

Tuesday, July 28. 2009

DEFINING JUSTICE

What does God expect of any and all nations? What are the God-given functions of all Nations and of their Rulers and Citizens? That is the measure of America and all other Nations. Amos 7:7-8 This is what he showed me: the Lord was standing beside a wall built with a plumb-line, with a plumb-line in his hand. And the Lord said to me, 'Amos, what do you see?' And I said, 'A plumb-line.' Then the Lord said, 'See, I am setting a plumb-line in the midst of my people Israel; Isaiah 28:17 I will make justice the measuring line and righteousness the plumb line. God judges a nation, as a nation, by its record and practice of Justice. The issue is not whether a Country is Christian. That is the wrong issue. The right issue is, simply, whether or not a Country is Just. That is the issue in choosing, by vote or appointment, all Leaders: Is the candidate (for any position) just? Is a proposed Program, Policy, Budget or Bill just? Having said that, it is imperative that we define Justice Biblically!

What is Justice? The following is the Biblical definition:

- I.) Justice is God providing and securing those rights that He has decreed for people, the environment and animals--
- II.) Justice is God punishing those who deny or deprive people, the Land or animals the rights and responsibilities He has given them

God secures Justice through Civil Government.

ROM 13:1 Everyone must submit himself to the governing authorities, for there is no authority except that which God has established. The authorities that exist have been established by God. 3 ...rulers hold no terror for those who do right, but for those who do wrong. Do you want to be free from fear of the one in authority? Then do what is right and he will commend you. 4 For he is God's servant to do you good. But if you do wrong, be afraid, for he does not bear the sword for nothing. He is God's servant, an agent of wrath to bring punishment on the wrongdoer.

Rom 13:6 This is why you pay taxes, for the authorities are God's servants, who give their full time to governing. 7 Give everyone what you owe him: If you owe taxes, pay taxes; if revenue, then revenue; if respect, then respect; if honor, then honor.

[Note: Government, too, has rights- a right to respect and obedience from its citizens & a right to collect taxes]

The primary function of any and all civil governments is to be the instrument of God for Justice:

1. Secure and protect freedom for its citizens to exercise their rights and responsibilities
2. Prevent and punish all attempts to deny such freedom

Rights are whatever God says they are. Rights are defined by His Law. Rights are not something to be given or taken by Society or Government. Neither are "rights" simply something with which all people are born. Responsibilities are the converse of Rights.

There are man-made civil rights, legal rights, employees rights, consumer rights, etc., but Biblical Rights and Responsibilities take precedence over them all. All such "rights" are to be evaluated, accepted or rejected, in light of God given, and truly inalienable, rights. According to the Bible, these are God-given Rights:

All human beings have

the right to live.

the right to Worship and offer God allegiance and obedience.

the right to work and workers have a right to fair wages and to periodic rest from their work

Parents have the right to honor and respect and obedience from their children

Husbands and wives have a right to the fidelity of their spouses

Women have a right not to be abused and raped

Widows and orphans have a right to be cared for by family and community

Owners have the right to their possessions or property

The accused have a right to a fair and honest trial

Neighbors have a right to their privacy

Land has a right to be cultivated and not to be destroyed- Deut 10:14, 11:12, 20:19f; Lev 25:2-7, 23 Domestic Animals

have a right to be cared for - Exodus 20:10; Deut 22:6f,10, 25:4 Human Beings have these God-given Responsibilities (the converse of Rights)

respect the life of others.
practice Religion
both to work and to rest periodically
honor, respect and obey parents
respect all marriage vows
respect the property of others (never steal)
be honest with others and never slander
stay out of other people's business
cultivate and care for the Land (the environment)
care for and protect domestic animals and wildlife

All of this gives us criteria by which we must judge our Government and its Administration, all our elected and appointed Leaders, all domestic and foreign policies and programs, all budgets and legislation. When Government itself fails to protect or even denies its citizens' freedom to pursue their rights and responsibilities, it has become evil in those instances and Christians do not have to obey it. Our Rights and Responsibilities have to do with the topics of Life, Religion, Marriage, Family, Work, Property, Privacy, Safety, Legal Process, the Environment (Natural Resources) and Care of Animals and Wildlife, as well as Personal Morality. It is the business of Government to protect, with laws and their enforcement, through appropriate agencies, the freedom of people to exercise these Rights and Responsibilities. Conversely, Government is not to restrict or prohibit such freedom. The "devil is in the details" or "the devil is in the definitions". All the topics listed above must be unpacked for their exact definitions and specific application. Christians, as Christians, should be getting together to study all these issues and what the Bible says about them.

Posted by Cal in Bible Topics at 14:02

ALL OF LIFE REDEEMED

The content of the Articles on my website is very different than what many of my family and friends are used to. Most Evangelicals do not read much about Epistemology or the Philosophy of Mathematics. They appreciate mainstream evangelical teaching, but are not familiar or comfortable with "Neocalvinism" or "Kuyperism". (Made popular by certain Dutch Theologians. This is where the name of this Blog comes from.) I realize most are not even comfortable with "Calvinism" and all this "Reformed" stuff and certainly not with "Re/formational" stuff (another name for neocalvinism and where the name of my Website comes from). They were not brought up with any of this, do not hear about it at their Churches, and to them it all may sound strange, even unscriptural. Perhaps one of the first things that sounds unfamiliar and suspect to Evangelicals (besides "Five Point" Calvinism) is the Neocalvinist motto: "All Life Redeemed". As a child, I learned the Hymn, "This is my Father's World." Later, in a Fundamental Baptist Church, I learned the chorus, "This world is not my home, I'm just a passin through..." What changed? The "Plan of Salvation" I learned early on followed the "Roman Road" (it uses select verses from Paul's letter to the Romans) and began with "All have sinned and fallen short..." and "the wages of sin is death". It began with the Problem of Sin and proceeded to God's Solution to that Problem. That solution was "Nothing but the Blood of Jesus" ("dying for me") and the forgiveness of my sins and the gift of Eternal Life, if I would only "accept" Jesus as my personal Savior. In recent years, I have come to understand the "Plan of Salvation" (if you will) begins with the Book of Genesis and "In the beginning, God created..." and all that He made "is good". That includes all human beings, whom God created to be His Image bearers, like Him in many ways, representing Him on the earth He had created to cultivate and care for it to His glory and for the good of all. I never heard of this Cultural Mandate in my Baptist days. Then comes the Fall, Curse and Antithesis. And finally, Redemption in Christ. Redemption in Christ of an Elect, Covenant People who would seek to fulfill the original Cultural Mandate. They would, by Grace and in the power of the Spirit, seek to extend the Sovereignty of Christ and His Word over all spheres of life. They would seek to see all life redeemed to the Glory of God. The work of Christ makes all of this possible- His life, death, resurrection and ascension to the Throne from which He actively reigns as King, Sovereign of all. This, too sounds strange to Evangelicals who focus on the Atonement for sins and personal, spiritual redemption. The Kingdom of Christ, they say, short of the Rapture or Second Coming, is purely spiritual and within Believers. A key concept here in this vision of all of life redeemed, is that what is good in Creation is the structure of it. Everything created is good as created, including human beings. Our faculties for rationality, creativity, morality, communality and spirituality are "Good". These are the five characteristics by which we image God. Every human being has them [in varying degrees] and the Fall did not change that. This is what we all have in common. This is "common grace". God not only sees to it that the rain and sun bless everyone (the common understanding of "common grace"), He also gifts everyone with these innate faculties. We share them. We share the Image and the responsibility to use these faculties fulfilling the Cultural Mandate. Of course, the Fall fractured the Image and makes true fulfillment of the Mandate

impossible. In fact, because of the animosity within us, as fallen creatures, toward our Creator, we refuse to fulfill the Mandate and work against it. Our fallen (“unregenerate”) nature makes us take the good Creation, into directions not intended by God for it, e.g. sexuality. The world is still His, but we are literally hell-bent on destroying it. This includes misuse and abuse of our rationality, creativity, morality, communality and spirituality. Nothing is exempt for the effects of the fall. This is Radical Corruption. Redemption in Christ involves regeneration (a new “heart”, indwelt by the Holy Spirit, which now wants to love and serve our Creator) and that leads to the redirection, by the Elect, of our still essentially good faculties as human beings and the effort to redirect our Father’s world (at the very least, our place in it), in keeping with the Norms He established for it at Creation. Those creational Norms are included in the Law of God, the Torah, e.g. the “Institution” of Marriage being a covenant between a man and a woman. They are as much part of the Word of God as the Decalogue and the synoptic Gospels and the letters of Paul. Redirection, also known as Re/formation, involves the sanctification (the development and use, for the glory of God) of our rationality, creativity, morality, communality and spirituality. It means seeking to sanctify every sphere of our daily lives, particularly our marriages and families, our education and scholarship, our work and recreation, and our involvement in the world (not only civitas, but civilization itself) around us, cultivating and enjoying Creation. Redemption means being all we can be as human beings for the glory of God!

Posted by Cal at 13:53

WHY BEING PRO-LIFE MUST REMAIN THE TOP MORAL PRIORITY

"Ever since C. Everett Koop and Francis Schaeffer pricked our consciences, abortion has been on the front burner for socially minded evangelicals. Thirty-five years since Roe v. Wade, it's time to ask whether it should remain the sine qua non of Christian social engagement. Claiming to represent the new center, an increasingly self-confident wing of sincere evangelicals thinks not. "The evangelical social agenda is now much broader and deeper," asserts Jim Wallis in his new book, *The Great Awakening*, "engaging issues such as poverty and economic justice, global warming, HIV/aids, sex trafficking, genocide in Darfur, and the ethics of the war in Iraq." [Many Evangelicals] seem to be saying that fighting legalized abortion—the deliberate, state- sanctioned taking of 50 million unborn human lives from their mothers' wombs since 1973 (and the accompanying national guilt)—should simply be one item among many on an ever-expanding evangelical to-do list."

Read the entire Article here. It actually is encouraging
<http://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/2008/may/28.66.html>

Should abortion be the top moral priority of our time? It should not. Being pro-life should be. The first God-given universal Human Right is the Right to live. Life is the highest priority. If we accept the definition that human life begins at the moment of conception, then eliminating voluntary abortion (the intentional taking of that human life) should remain a top priority among moral issues in our Society. Conception is the fertilization of an egg by a sperm. This is the beginning of an embryo, a human being. Some birth control methods prevent sperm from reaching the egg and thus fertilization. The fertilized egg, called a zygote, undergoes rapid cell division and growth. This cell mass, now called the blastocyst, is implanted into the inner wall of the mother’s uterus, where it will remain for the duration of prenatal development. The embryo is called a fetus after eight weeks. Some birth control methods prevent the blastocyst from being implanted in the uterus. Since there is normally a continuum from conception to birth, it can be said that the zygote, blastocyst, fetus and the embryo are a human being at different developmental stages. Every human child and adult began his or her life at conception. The adult is a zygote fully developed. To destroy a zygote (or a blastocyst, fetus and the embryo) is to destroy a specific human being. Every human being becomes a Person. A Person is a composite of all those attributes or faculties that Human Beings possess because they are created and conceived to be the Image of God. That is the essential argument against Abortion on demand. To me, the most compelling argument for insisting that an embryo is a human being is that being a “person” involves having a body. This is what makes the resurrection of the physical body so essential and important. Persons can not exist as disembodied spirits. A Person is not a dualism: body and soul; but rather a person is a unity: one. Body is integral to being a Person. Inasmuch as the body begins with conception, therefore, so does personhood. Soul or Nepesh [naw fahsh] is used 700 times in the Bible. It never means “soul” as that word is commonly understood today. The root meaning of Nepesh is “breath”. It is used in that basic sense. (Genesis 1:30, 2:7, 7:21) Nepesh comes to mean anything with breath. This includes all beings, animals- “living creatures” (Genesis 1:20,21,24 also 2:19, 7:21, 9:9-16) Nepesh comes to mean a human being, i.e.- Man is a soul. (Genesis 12:5,13;14:21; 17:14) Finally, Nepesh also can mean the emotional center of human beings (cf English “heart”) Note: Hebrew for “heart” is LEB and that normally means the intellectual and volitional center---these are not technical, precise terms] Psalm 6:3 My soul is in anguish. Psalm 107:9 God satisfies the thirsty soul and fills the hungry soul with good things. Psalm 119:20 My soul is consumed with longing... Psalm 35:9 my soul will rejoice in the LORD. Deuteronomy 6:5 Love the LORD your God with all your heart [LAY VAHV= MIND] and with all your soul. Thus, conception could be said to be the beginning of a “soul” and abortion the death of a soul. And that happens about 1 million times each year in America! All of these issues are wrapped up in the one subject of Abortion and are reasons

why it must remain a top priority, and not just one of many social concerns. The meaning and value of being "human", a "person", is extremely important and is under serious assault in many quarters today and the practice of abortion is a part of that. Many other subjects are related to Abortion, including Sexuality, Gender Roles (a "woman's rights") and Marriage and Family. All these follow immediately after Abortion on that list, but being Pro-Life is at the very top of the list for good reason. It must not be dismissed as a Fundamentalist obsession. The solution to such problems such as World Poverty and Aids actually requires that we address first the issues involved with Abortion. The latter is not an add-on or only one of many priorities. When the world is truly Pro-Life, Pro-Human first, followed by Pro-Marriage and Family, then it will have the platform from which to address seriously all the other Social and Economic and Political Issues.

The above is a revision of a Post on this Blog from last Summer. It needed to be said again!

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 12:03

Thursday, July 23. 2009

TIRED OF OBAMA

OK, I must confess- I am absolutely sick and very tired of Barak Obama and his Policies and his arrogant and reckless push to make sweeping change in our Country, just because he says we must. All our lives, my wife and I and our children, with God's help, have worked for what we have (which is not much, but we are content). We believe that is the way to achieve anything. If you want a good job or career, you do what it takes to be qualified. That means you go to school and excel. Not going was not an option. We are talking family values here! If you want to buy a car or a house, you work for it. If we could not afford something, we went without until we could afford it. Simple! We knew we had to have insurance for the car as well as life insurance and then renters and finally home owners insurance, so we worked to buy them. The same applied to medical insurance. Absolutely none of these things were ever considered our "Right" to have. They are all privileges, including the license to drive the car we paid for. We never have believed that the world or our government owed us any of these things. We believe strongly in private property and private enterprise. These are Biblical Principles we grew up with and have lived by all our lives. That means I have no patience or sympathy with those who do not work or earn them and instead expect or want the government to provide any of these things. I believe they are wrong in this and I do not want our hard earned money to be involuntarily taken from us to be distributed by the Government to provide the things we have worked for on our own to such people. This is very simple. The Bible says, if you don't work you don't eat. Again, very simple. As Christians we are not materialists nor are we addicted to buying things we do not truly need. We are not consumed with being consumers. Almost everything we see advertised we have no need for or interest in purchasing. We pay off our debts and seek to owe no money. We do not believe in handouts or bailouts. We balance our personal budget and live within our means. I expect our Government to do the same. I find it incredible and unconscionable that so many citizens have no problem with our Government grandiosely spending huge sums it does not have and then having the gall to take money from our pockets to pay the bill for something we did not want to spend it on in the first place. This is extremely poor and foolish money management, as well as theft on a grand scale. It is indenturing our children's children and will produce citizens who are dependent on the Government from cradle to grave. I am outraged that multitudes of our fellow citizens, including millions of Christians who should know better, applaud this. I don't!

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 20:03

Wednesday, July 22, 2009

DISCRIMINATION AGAINST ELDER DRIVERS

The story making the headlines in this area's papers today is the confrontation between a man and the police at his home. He had been out of the country and arrived home to find himself locked out. A neighbor reported seeing two men breaking and entering his house. Police came and found the man and his driver in the house and they were questioned. The police did not know the man was the owner until this point. He and his friend had indeed broken in, but it was his house and he objected to the treatment he thought he was getting from the police. To me it sounds like they were just doing their job. But to him, it was racial profiling at work, inasmuch as he is a Black man. He has charged the police with racism. Because the man is famous around the world, the incident and his charges are headline news. The police have since dropped charges made because of his behavior toward the Officers and they have apologized, but he is persisting in his complaint against them, irrate over what he perceived as racial discrimination. Racial discrimination is a bad thing. I agree that discrimination against an entire group of people across the board because of their "Race" or skin color is wrong. To discriminate against a single person simply because of his or her membership in that group is wrong. But discrimination between individuals is not wrong. It is absolutely necessary and we all need to practice it every day everywhere. Certainly the police must do that as part of their job. It is the reasons for the discrimination that are important, they must be justified. This brings me to the point of this post. I believe the discrimination against an entire group of people across the board because of their age is as wrong as racial discrimination. The drumbeat in the media against elder drivers is incessant these days and so is my annoyance about that. In point of fact, drivers over 65 are involved in a small percentage of accidents and that is declining compared to all other age groups.

<http://well.blogs.nytimes.com/2009/01/12/declining-car-risk-for-older-drivers/>

Here is a list of the 6 major causes of accidents. Notice that age as such is not included. Anyone of any age could engage in the behavior described. It is those individuals who do that should be discriminated against, whether they be 80 or 18

See [most_common_causes_of_automobile_crashes](#)

I could have written this article about discrimination (and slander) in the media against State Employee Pensioners as well. I am one of those, too

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 09:51

Tuesday, July 21. 2009

WHY AM I AN EPISCOPALIAN?

There is truth in the saying, "Biography explains Theology". I have told much of the story that follows before, but this retelling is a new attempt to help explain to myself and others where I am at today, Summer 2009, and especially why I am a member of a Church whose Leaders blatantly hold views I consider to be very heretical and unbiblical, now more than ever. I am concerned that I might be discrediting my Testimony among my long time conservative and orthodox friends and confusing them and my former parishioners. This is my Apologia. I was ordained to be a Baptist Pastor and I enjoyed my ministry among the Baptists and still have good friends and memories from those days. But I became interested in the quest for the ideal New Testament Church, and succumbed to the goal of seeking to find one and worship as the first century Christians did. It is a tempting goal, that many have found irresistible through the years- almost like the music of the Sirens that tempted Odysseus on his mythic travels. I learned the futility (and danger) of the search after having gone to a Seminary that was a leader in the Movement to restore the early church and having ministering among them for a few years. We still have friends and good memories from those years, too. Christians in that Movement (once known as Campbellites) are not Reformed Calvinists (although the Campbells, father and son, were ordained Presbyterian Pastors from Scotland. The members of the Restoration Movement prefer to be known simply as non-denominational "Christians"). I did not make an issue of that, but simply preached a core evangelical Gospel. They practiced a mix of Elder rule and congregationalism. In doctrine, they were Arminian, but my concern was primarily with Ecclesiology. We observed the Lord's Supper every week in our corporate worship, as Believers did in the NT Church, and connected it and Baptism with Salvation more directly than Baptists do. That emphasis has stayed with me over the years and, in retrospect, prepared me to eventually join the Anglican/Episcopal Church with its emphasis on Eucharistic Worship and Sacraments. (This development would boggle the mind of my old friends in the Restoration Movement and absolutely confound my Seminary professors). Our local church at that time was in a college town. I came to realize that local churches of any kind are not reaching the minds and hearts of college students. In fact, churches of any kind were not doing much of anything to engage Culture for Christ or the people who would become change makers in it. Churches were, in effect, ineffectual as agents of the Kingdom. Increasingly, that was the work I was drawn into. We began an effort to minister to students at DePauw University with a bookstore we started with that purpose. Within a couple of years, the Lord very clearly led us to move from Indiana to have a Ministry of evangelism, apologetics and counseling with college students in Amherst, MA. I reaffirmed my Reformed Calvinist Faith and Worldview and my wife and I had an effective 1:1 ministry among students and some faculty of the famous 5 Colleges in the Amherst-Northampton area through the two bookstores we owned and managed there. That remains a "mountain top time" in our lives and we still have good friends from that period which is now some 35 years ago. I missed preaching and my wife took on the management of our stores and I went back into the Pastorate, this time in a local old mainline Congregational Church which had had a serious split. A member who was a friend recommended me. The appeal of this move was another old idea- instead of planting a new church, we would work to change an established one from within. I again preached a core evangelical message and many came to faith (and most of them moved on to a local evangelical church) Eventually the longtime liberal members had enough of me. I resigned, very much discouraged and broken. I decided I would never attempt to change a liberal church from within again. We were befriended by two Episcopal Priests (one was to become a Bishop) in the days after I resigned and for a while we worshiped in the local Episcopal Church. God used the 1928 Book of Common Prayer, those friendships and liturgical Worship to heal and renew me. This is a major reason why I am Episcopalian today. Our evangelical friends seemed to have deserted us completely, although the Elders of our former church in Indiana called to ask if I would consider returning there. I declined and we moved back to Amherst and began a short-lived "Community" with students in a house we rented just off campus. I studied and wrote and taught classes. The owner eventually sold the house and we had to move. While there we held Sunday morning Worship Services using various Anglican/Episcopal resources. (The Episcopal Church or TEC is one of 38 National Churches or Provinces which have an historical and spiritual connection with the Church of England and its Archbishop of Canterbury, hence they are "Anglican". They share a common Heritage including the liturgical way they Worship, which is governed by a Book of Common Prayer. Until 1979, they all shared the same Doctrinal Standards. Together they form an association called the Anglican Communion and it is the third largest body of Christians in the world.) The best place we could find to live next was in an old tough neighborhood of Springfield, MA. I had begun working for the State Department of Retardation while in Amherst and we became very active in an Episcopal parish a few blocks from our new home. We visited evangelical churches but found a home in none of them. We settled in as Anglican/Episcopalians. I had renewed my Reformed Calvinist Faith. We knew the Episcopal Church had the reputation for being a dying liberal mainline denomination, but that 1928 Prayer Book and the History and Heritage of Anglicanism which it shared was rooted in the Reformed Calvinist Faith. Some of the writers most influential in my studies have been Reformed Anglicans such as J.I. Packer and Leon Morris. I was accepted by some of the area Priests as a colleague, and began preaching and teaching and having workshops in several parishes;

but when I applied to enter the track toward Priesthood, I was flat out rejected by the Commission on Ministry under the influence of the Chairperson who had distain for evangelicals). My wife and I continued to be active as laypeople and actually had a good ministry among Episcopalians, but when an opportunity came to be the Pastor of a rural community church whose former Pastor, I was told, was an evangelical, I went for it. Again, a friend who was a member recommended me. Again I preached the core evangelical Gospel and many came to faith. Again, the long time members became unhappy and literally fired me (the Chairman of the Board called to inform me of that the day after my father passed away). That was 10 years after I had resigned from the Congregational church. We continued with a home Bible study and within a few months tried to begin a new church in the same town at the request of the folks in the Study. We lasted there about a year, leaving again over a personality (?) conflict with the key family. They hired someone else. I became the supply Preacher for an Evangelical Free Church in CT. That went well for a few months, but I was unable to find a permanent or full-time Pastorate anywhere. It was on my heart to preach. I heard of another EFC in Vermont that was looking for a Pastor. A friend who was a member there recommended me and we were accepted and moved there for what was a 5 year Pastorate. I set aside my Anglicanism and Calvinism because EFC churches are neither. I preached the same core Gospel as I always had before and people came to faith and there was growth and a new building; but again, long time members became unhappy with me and a stalemate ended with my resignation. That was 6 years ago. I interviewed at other EFC churches but that process reaffirmed that I was not to be a Pastor in a typical evangelical church again. We returned to Springfield and to a local Episcopal Church in a nearby town which we knew was evangelical, even though the Diocese and national Church are not. I do not and never have bought into the Liberalism of TEC and I strongly disagree with the national Church, the Denomination, on many important subjects. But there have always been many Clergy (including one of our sons) and lay members who know and faithful serve Christ and His Word within the national Church in Dicoeses and Parishes around the Nation. They are simply not in power and the unorthodox have captured the Leadership of the Church, now in 2009, more than ever and I realize many of the current memebrship are not evangelical Chrsitians. The situation is very dire. Is it hopeless? Probably, although as long as there is "local option", freedom for local clergy to faithfully follow Christ and preach His Word there is reason to remain for the immediate future. Will that freedom disappear under the pressure of the current authorities to make everyone conform to their views? Most probably, over time, but I am 71. Many of the orthodox Clergy have been leaving the Church, now that alternative Anglican Churches have begun to emerge on the American scene. There are none in this area. The current Priest-Pastor in the parish where we have worshiped over the years is evangelical, but most of the evangelical members have left. Should we join the exodus? Shoud we stay and support him? The appeal, as always, has been the Eucharistic and Liturgical Worship and we can not find that and an evangelical Pastor anywhere else in this area. I absolutely do not want to return to contemporary or emergent evangelical church worship. I definitely prefer the formal, orderly and theologically sound Anglican/Episcopal worship. As to the Reformed Faith, my knowledge of it has deepened and become more clear and strong over the years, I appreciate it, and see the the need for its promotion, more than ever. I certainly do not want to fosake the Reformed Calvinist Faith again for the "core evangelical Gospel". Actually, the latter is morphing into something that is nothing like the Gospel I preached over the years. It is becoming the Gospel of love, relationships and social action. If the Episcopal Church has its heresies, so do the evangelical churches. They are on a very slippery slope into serious error and away from the Truth once and for all delivered to the Saints. So where does this leave us? As a sheaf of wheat among tares, as a light in darkness, as a voice in a wilderness? Well that is a bit I over dramatic, but something like that. At least I can minister in some ways within our local Parish for the time being, but I do not know for how long. I have no hope or expectations of changing the Episcopal Church as such. I will not try. The Rubicon has been crossed. The Radical Liberals have come and have conquered and are committed to complete conquest. It is a tragedy. To me it is a lost cause. However, Anglicanism and the world-wide Anglican Communion is growing and doing very well without TEC and shall continue to do so. I look forward to seeing some Anglican Parishes established in this area some day. Meanwhile, the old need to reach college age young people and students with Truth is more urgent than ever. What to do? Promote the Reformed Faith (and its worldview, known as Neocalvinism) and continue enjoying Eucharistic, liturgical worship. And Preach and teach as opportunities come, but remain "retired" from Pastoral Ministry. By the grace of God and hopefully- to His Glory!

Posted by Cal in Personal Journal at 17:55

WHAT IS UBUNTU AND WHY DOES IT MATTER?

Like many others, I was greatly disturbed by the remarks made last week by the Presiding Bishop of the Episcopal Church at the General Convention last, including repudiation of what she called, "the great Western heresy: that we can be saved as individuals, that any of us alone can be in right relationship with God." She continued, "That heresy is one reason for the theme of this Convention. Ubuntu. That word doesn't have any 'I' in it." Many outraged evangelicals were quick to denounce the PB and her remarks. But I think there is more involved here than meets the eye. She continued, "That heresy is one reason for the theme of this Convention. Ubuntu. That word doesn't have any 'I' in it." Her critics have not taken "Ubuntu" seriously enough. "Ubuntu" is the key to what she said and to much else happening in many churches today, including Evangelical ones and it is the "true" Heresy.

READ MY FULL ESSAY ABOUT UBUNTU HERE

Posted by Cal in Church at 15:08

WHAT IS A "GOOD DEATH"?

A friend wrote and asked me a good and important question: "What does it mean to 'die well' ?" Here is my answer to him-

To die well (or have a good death) does not refer to the manner in which one dies (quietly or horribly). It is about being well prepared for the eventuality. For Christians it means to be ready to meet God and that should include having peace about it, no guilt or fear. Of course, if there is time, a Christian might actually look forward to it with prayers and hymns; but many of us do not have that opportunity. Being ready includes expressing desires for the Funeral itself and what may follow. For everyone, Believer and non-Believer, dying well means without unfinished business but with everything that needs to be done in life actually done. Since that often is not possible, dying well includes being realistic and coming to terms with, accepting, what actually is. Probably the most common emotion, both while dying and at a Funeral, is regret and people kicking themselves with "If only I..." Dying well is having our all affairs in order, including a will and insurance- seeing to it that everything possible has been taken care of for those being left behind. A good death is possible when accounts have been settled, not only financially, but with others- Confessions made, things that never were said, but should have been, being said at last (and listened to at last, as well.) No guilt or burdens (including debts) should be laid on those we are leaving and no impossible promises extracted from them, either. Dying prepared is dying well. Hope this is helpful and I pray we will both have a good death, dear Brother.

Posted by Cal in Christian Living at 14:53

Thursday, July 16, 2009

VIEWS ON AGING by George Carlin (?)

Do you realize that the only time in our lives when we like to get old is when we're kids? If you're less than 10 years old, you're so excited about aging that you think in fractions. 'How old are you?' 'I'm four and a half!' You're never thirty-six and a half. You're four and a half, going on five! That's the key!! You get into your teens, now they can't hold you back. You jump to the next number, or even a few ahead. "How old are you?" 'I'm gonna be 16!' You could be 13, but hey, you're gonna be 16! And then the greatest day of your life . . . you BECOME 21. Even the words sound like a ceremony. YOU BECOME 21. YESSSS!!! But then you turn 30. Oooohh, what happened there? Makes you sound like bad milk! He TURNED; we had to throw him out. There's no fun now, you're just a sour-dumpling. What's wrong? What's changed? You BECOME 21, you TURN 30, then you're PUSHING 40. Whoa! Put on the brakes, it's all slipping away. Before you know it, you REACH 50 and your dreams are gone. But wait!!! You MAKE IT to 60. You didn't think you would! So you BECOME 21, TURN 30, PUSH 40, REACH 50 and MAKE IT to 60. You've built up so much speed that you HIT 70! After that it's a day-by-day thing; you HIT Wednesday! You get into your 80s and every day is a complete cycle; you HIT lunch; you TURN 4:30 ; you REACH bedtime and it doesn't end there. Into the 90s, you start going backwards; 'I was JUST 92.' Then a strange thing happens. If you make it over 100, you become a little kid again. 'I'm 100 and a half!'

Posted by Cal in Personal Journal at 19:05

Friday, July 3, 2009

THE BIBLICAL FOUNDATIONS OF OUR GOVERNMENT

Many Christian writers on the subject of civil government focus on Freedom and Human Rights. They rightly teach that the Declaration of Independence, our Federal and State Constitutions and various Bills of Rights were all shaped by Biblical, more exactly, Reformed and Calvinist principles and values. These writers do not spend much time on Biblical Principles of Government; rather, they derive most of their Teaching about government from Systematic Theology. For example, the foundation of all freedoms is the freedom of the individual. It is Christianity that teaches the value of the individual and its corollary, the equality of all individuals, by its doctrine of personal salvation (Christ died for all.) But here are the Biblical Principles- just in time to help us appreciate our Christian Heritage as Americans. To evaluate where our Country is on its Birthday, it is important to know the Foundations upon which our Government was established. It is more important for us as Christians to know what our Nation should be now and what it is we should value and work to see happen in the future. Rom 13:1 Let every person be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and those that exist have been instituted by God. By God's design, this is a hierarchical world throughout, not anarchic or egalitarian. Authority is intrinsic to Creation, not an anomaly or evil. This means that force and coercion is essential to maintaining the Creation. It is not valid to arbitrarily equate force and coercion with violence or oppression, nor is Authority to be equated with Authoritarianism. There must be, there always will be, Authority. What is crucial is who exercises Authority and how, why and when. 1. God is the Highest Authority- The Kingdom, Power and Glory is His alone! He is Sovereign over all. ("He" is the Triune God of the Bible) Without God, authority will be either the individual or the State. Libertarianism is the ultimate sovereignty of the individual. Conservatism is the sovereignty of Traditions or Institutions- of the Elite. This, ironically, leads to the sovereignty of the State (or one of its Branches), which conservatives avow they do not want. 2. Kings [all governors] are to rule for God, as His representative and minister. This is true, even of pagan Rulers. 3. All people who hold authority are subject to God and His Law. 4. If the Rulers do not "keep the Law", eventually God's judgment [Justice] would come upon their Nation. By extension, this applies to the people of a Nation, especially Nations which consider the ultimate authority to reside in them ("All power to the People!") The motto: "No one is above the Law" is a half-truth. The Law today may well be "made" by Congress or the Legislature (or the People by vote or referenda) or by the Supreme Court (if not the Law itself, the interpretation and application of it). The Biblical principle is that no one (or no Law) is above the Law of God. When individuals or an aggregate of individuals (or a special interest group) are sovereign, as in Libertarianism, all values are relative- they are individual values. Those perceived needs may be satisfied for a time, but the freedom of individuals (the philosophy of laissez-faire) is not a Scriptural or Christian Ideal or Value. On the other hand, when the State is sovereign there may be social stability and the appearance of security, but that, too, is not a Scriptural or Christian value. In fact, true freedom and social stability are possible only when individuals and the State are under the authority of God and His Law. 5. Does all of this apply to all Nations, including ours, today? YES The pagan rulers mentioned in the Old Testament did not know the Mosaic Law. However, they were still held accountable by God for their actions according to the most basic moral principles of His Law. See the stories of Sennacherib (2 Kings 19:22f+27f+7), Belshazzar (Dan 5), king of Tyre (Ezek 28) and Nebuchadnezzar (Jer 25:9,11f) The Apostle Paul tells us that God is just in His judgment of pagan rulers (and peoples), because "what may be known about God is plain to them, because God has made it plain to them. For since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities--his eternal power and divine nature--have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that [Rulers] are without excuse. ...they know God's righteous decree... (See Romans 1:18-32) Pagans, whether Rulers or simply citizens, have "written on their hearts" a basic sense of moral "oughtness". Yes, they have a "fallen nature" and they are "dead in sin"; but, they are still human beings and this inner witness of conscience is still present, as are all the other qualities of human beings, such as rationality and creativity. As Rom 2:15 says, they may well have great inner conflict over what is right and wrong and a sense of moral guilt, even if "hard-hearted"; but they still have an inner witness that some acts are morally horrific, while others are noble. This gives Believers "common ground" for discussion with their non-believing friends. This common ground is "General Revelation". It requires Special Revelation via the Scripture to know the Gospel; nevertheless this "Natural Law" exists and it is the basis God has for holding pagan Nations accountable for their actions. Of course, America is accountable to God for its actions, not simply on the basis of Natural Law, but on the basis of Scripture. This is a deep part of our heritage and culture. We, as a Nation, can not plead ignorance of the Ten Commandments. 6. Though instituted by God and accountable to Him, Rulers and their subjects are bound to each other, and to one another, by Covenant. Specific Rulers, whether Kings or Presidents, legitimately rule only with the consent of the ruled. There are mutual obligations on both parties. There are also mutual responsibilities for all citizens in living together as a community of People (See Exodus 19, The entire Book of Deuteronomy, Nehemiah 8-10) 7. Civic authority is under a Constitution- Not only is there Law, but there is to be order- a system based on that Law for a particular time and place (again, see Exodus 19, Deuteronomy, Nehemiah). Generally speaking, the civil government under the Law, even a Monarchy, will be a decentralized hierarchy (Exodus 18:13-26) SUMMARY These Basic Biblical

Principles of Civil Government were enlarged upon by the Protestant Reformers and their followers and eventually became the basis for the government of the United States of America; in particular, Covenant became Contract and the decentralized hierarchy developed into three branches: Executive, Legislative and Judicial. Our Founders believed Government required restraint, checks and balances. The theological reason for the latter was the sinful nature of Man. The political and historical reason was fear of Tyranny (King George). Those two basic reasons are valid today. While Government is instituted by God and meant to serve Him, it can become demonized or evil and therefore must always be approached cautiously. And as Bible believing Christians and stake-holders in the Nation, accountable to God for what it is and does in our time, we should renew our commitment to see that it fulfill its destiny to be a Nation that glorifies God by following these Principles and, as such, to be a Light and example to all other Nations This Essay comes from my Website [HERE](#) where you will find the Scriptural references that go with it.

Posted by Cal in Bible Topics at 18:45

Thursday, July 2, 2009

SPIRITUAL DISCIPLINES

The Spiritual Formation Movement is growing as is interest in the Spiritual Disciplines and the books by Dallas Willard. I have just posted my review of his book, "The Spirit of The Disciplines" on my website. [HERE](#)
I encourage you to read it if you want to know more about these topics. There are other new Essays as well.

Posted by Cal in Christian Living at 16:59

Wednesday, July 1, 2009

DISCRIMINATION

I was going to post an article here about Discrimination in response to the case of the Firefighters in New Haven CT decided on this week by the Supreme Court and the on-going debate in the media about Elderly Drivers. However, I realize that I have already written about Discrimination several times on this Blog. Therefore, I recommend you read those articles. You can find them by using the Quick Search box in the column to your right. Thanks

Posted by Cal in Social Issues at 09:32

GLOBAL WARMING- NO DEBATE?

President Obama has declared, "There is no longer a debate about whether carbon pollution is placing our planet in jeopardy. It's happening." "No debate? The debate over global warming is more robust than it has been in years, and not only in America. "In April, the Polish Academy of Sciences published a document challenging man-made global warming," Kimberly Strassel noted in The Wall Street Journal the other day. "In France, President Nicolas Sarkozy wants to tap Claude Allegre to lead the country's new ministry of industry and innovation. Twenty years ago Allegre was among the first to trill about man-made global warming, but the geochemist has since recanted . . . Norway's Ivar Giaever, Nobel Prize winner for physics, decries it as the 'new religion.' "Fortune magazine recently profiled veteran climatologist John Christy, a lead author of the 2001 Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change report. With his green credentials, Fortune observed, Christy is the warm-mongers' "worst nightmare - an accomplished climate scientist with no ties to Big Oil who has produced reams and reams of data that undermine arguments that the earth's atmosphere is warming at an unusual rate and question whether the remedies being talked about in Congress will actually do any good."

No one who cares about the environment or the nation's economic well-being should take it on faith that climate change is a crisis, or that drastic changes to the economy are essential to "save the planet." Hundreds of scientists reject the alarmist narrative. For non-experts, a steadily-widening shelf of excellent books surveys the data in laymen's terms and exposes the weaknesses in the doomsday scenario - among others, "Climate Confusion" by Roy W. Spencer, "Climate of Fear" by Thomas Gale Moore, "Taken by Storm" by Christopher Essex and Ross McKittrick, and "Unstoppable Global Warming: Every 1,500 Years" by S. Fred Singer and Dennis Avery. The above excerpts are from this excellent article. Follow the links in it- [HERE](#) There was much reason to be fearful of and to reject "cap and trade" legislation. There is much reason to seriously question and reject much of what we hear about so-called "Climate Change" and its alleged human causation (the burning of carbon based fuels)

Posted by Cal in Current Events at 08:47