

Psm. 11:3

Baptists For Liberty

Prov. 29:2

“Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage.” Gal. 5:1

NEWS LETTER

Issue #7

April 2013

Monthly verse: *“Render therefore to all their dues: tribute to whom tribute is due; custom to whom custom; fear to whom fear; honour to whom honour.” – Romans 13:7*

Men Or God?

by Bro. Steve McCool

Galatians 1:10 *“For do I now persuade men or God? Or do I seek to please men? For if I yet pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ.”*

Do we serve men or God? Are we preaching from the word of men or the word of God? Are we living to please men or God? Are our churches pleasing men or God? All questions most ministers need to be asking themselves today.

Sadly in most cases the answer would be “men”. We live in a Godless society today that is so focused on what man thinks that it has crept into the churches. The seminaries and schools on religious thought have left the word of the Lord behind and are teaching false doctrines of men. Men who seek self-glorification and teach their students how to achieve the same.

Most of the bible versions out there are nothing more than man’s commentary on the scripture. The vast majority of the versions that have come out since the King James Version have sought to simplify the meaning of the scripture so that men could understand the word easier. Most have left out numerous sections of scripture and have watered down many of the very doctrines that Jesus told us to uphold. Yet they claim to be making the scripture more “user friendly”. All the while destroying the truths our forefathers died defending.

Many pastors today will read from the works of men rather than quote scripture. Some are even more learned in the “classic” works of literature than the word of God. Now I will agree that there are some writings of good godly men out there and we can learn a great deal from these men but the Holy Bible should be our first love as far as books go. Another thing to watch for here is that we make sure the men we are studying from are sound doctrinally. If a writers doctrine is false we should not waste the Lord’s time studying it. (Cont. page 3)

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“Romans I–The Righteousness and Wrath of God Revealed”



by Bro. Michael Farmer

I. The Righteousness of God Revealed (vs. 17)

A. It is revealed in the gospel of Christ (I Cor. 15:3-8). Notice the word “therein” in verse 17.

1. The gospel is the power of God in salvation. *The power is not in our new ideas, gimmicks, or methods. There is no need to try and improve upon the pure gospel message—just preach it!*

2. We are not to be ashamed of the gospel. *It is easy to become ashamed when handling such power (dunamis-dynamite). You’ll stand out when using such power.*

3. One must believe in order to be saved. *Don’t wait for some special event or feeling. If you realize your sinful, hopeless estate, repent and believe on Jesus Christ now!*

B. How is God’s righteousness revealed in the gospel?

1. In order to be saved, you must put your faith in the fact that only the righteousness of Christ in your stead will save you (II Cor. 5:21, Phil. 3:9).

2. Old Testament faith versus New Testament faith

a. The Old Testament verse quoted (Hab. 2:4) actually says, “The just shall live by his faith.” *In the Old Testament, “faith” (only mentioned twice in the O.T.) is a man’s personal faith to do what God told him to do.*

b. In the New Testament, faith is a gift of God (Rom. 3:3, 3:22; Eph. 2:8-9). *Faith is given to believe by God in this dispensation, that is why the word “his” was dropped by the Holy Spirit.*

1) Faith is given by hearing (Rom. 10:8, 17).

2) We are to preach the gospel (Rom. 10:14), God gives the hearer faith to believe, and it is the sinner’s responsibility to believe.

Note: In the New Testament (through the gospel, salvation, and faith) we see God’s righteousness revealed.

II. The Wrath of God Revealed (vs. 18)

A. Holding the truth in unrighteousness

1. God reveals Himself to man (vss. 19-20). *Man is given a witness by creation (Psa. 19:1-5), his conscience (Rom. 2:15), and of course scripture. Every element in our 3 dimensional world points to the Godhead*

(Trinity). Length, width, and height are all separate entities, and yet you cannot remove any of them for a 3 dimensional object to still exist.

2. Man, in spite of these revelations, doesn’t glorify God (vs. 21), but rather he glorifies in himself and his created idols (vs. 23). *This applies to educated and uneducated pagans alike. One man worships a carved image of an animal, and the other worships at the altar of the Theory of Evolution.*

3. Man, in spite of these revelations, is unthankful (vs. 21). Man, naturally, has no regard for God.

4. Man changes the truth into a lie (vs. 25). *Man always likes to create his own “truth.”*

B. The form of God’s wrath.

1. God gave them up to uncleanness (vs. 24).

2. God gave them up to vile affections (vs. 26).

It seems that the sin of Sodomy discussed in these verses (“men with men”, etc.) is not necessarily the sin being punished, but is rather the natural, vile depths of the flesh. It is the result of God letting someone alone to live as their wicked flesh desires without any spiritual restraint. If you want to see how “righteous” your flesh really is, view the goings on at a San Francisco “Gay Pride” parade.

3. God gave them over to a reprobate mind (vs. 28). *God does this after man gives himself over to his sinful desires and rejects God.*

Note: One of the worst judgments God can pronounce upon an individual, institution, or country is to leave them alone to let them do as they please in their wicked imaginations.

Labour In Love II

Bro. Adrian McKinney: I’m married 52 years in May to Lou Catherine, we have one son, John Micah, who also lives in Irvine with his wife Christy Marie and my grandson Levi Jordan who will be 3 months old on the 9th of April.

I work for the Irvine Police department in Estle county, serving as both a captain and chaplain, and I pastor Fellowship Baptist Church of Richmond, Ky. Our web site is <http://fbcrichmond.angelfire.com/>

How long have you been a police officer?

April 24th 15 year Irvine, 6 months part time before that, and Deputy for 1.5 years in Estle County. Total of 17 years.

How did you become a police officer?

I always wanted to be a police officer, though it took me 36 years. I was working in emergency services before as an EMT on an Ambulance for 5 years when a friend told me of an opening in the sheriff office for a deputy.

Why do you think the Lord called you to this position?

I was placed here as His servant, same way He called me to preach. All vocations are calls from the Lord.

Opportunity to intervene in peoples lives to help them, and to save their lives. To witness to people. People I've arrested have cursed at me and told me I'm not really a preacher.

Every once in a while they ask me to pray with them.

Has any one you arrested come to your church services?
Yes have some people arrested attended church.

How do you reconcile being a police officer and a preacher?

There's no conflict. Romans 13:3-5. God has placed authority to protect people and serve justice not to be a terror.

What are some of the governmental obstacles you've faced?

Mayor and city council are behind me, no government obstacles. They like the fact they have Christian officers. The Mayor and most of the council are Christians.

Any Social politics you had to deal with because of your occupation?

Had some in the past. Officers in the past who were not on the up and up. More family now than anything else.

How large is your department, are you unionized?

Not unionized, not going to change if it depends on me. I couldn't vote if it came up though because of my rank. I'm only a captain but work as assistant chief. Our department is allotted 6 officers but we're currently running with 5 because someone quit. We work 8 hour shifts 5 days a week.

What kind of impact does it have on your ministry?

I have to use physical force when someone resists arrest but I'm not a brawler.

I was asked before being sworn in if I could shoot someone, I said yes. There is a biblical difference between "kill" and "murder".

I don't want to, haven't had to yet, almost had to three times in seventeen years. I have tazed and pepper-sprayed though.

Your opinion on gun control?

"Use both hands, you have better control that way."

We should keep guns out of the mentally ill and felon's hands, yes. Military grade is 34 machine gun have to have permit for it anyway.

They're not assault rifles, military is self-defense in combat. Pack not to kill, but defend.

2nd amendment have stand, we need to enforce current laws not make new ones. Look at Chicago with their gun band yet they have the highest violent crime rates.

Opinion and experience regarding mentally ill?

Common occurrence. Often have people who want to kill themselves, they often think they are god or Satan. Have to be careful so they don't harm you or themselves. Most of the time with medication- female-male-guns

You have tragic things, funny things and things you don't know what to think about and the things you have nightmares about.

What have been some of the blessing you've received through your work?

The Lord has allowed me to intervene where people are alive today. Help witness for Him where I wouldn't have other wise been able to.

Anything you would have liked to known before becoming a law officer?

Would have liked to have known, so I could have been on guard, how this job can consume you. You're two people, always on guard hyper vigilant.

What advice or warnings would you give to other believers praying about the LORD calling them to go into police work?

To follow the Lord's calling. It can consume you and become an idol and who you are, not what you do. 90% of the public will not thank you. It's not a decision to be made lightly, it effects your family. Your wife and kids don't know if you'll come home.

There are people who don't believe you should ever question law officers because they are authority figures.

Others go to the opposite extreme and don't trust police because of some of the un-benevolent wearing badges.

What would you say to people of these two extremes?

No matter what happens you are human. It is a position of authority, but it is a position of responsibility. There is a soul the Lord maybe dealing with. You can effect people's lives for the better or the worse.

Any comments on the subject of the law & grace?

Our laws are based on God's laws. We should try to administer the law and uphold it in such away that shows God's grace through us.

"Men Or God"



by Bro. Steve McCool, (continued from the front cover.)

In our personal lives we have become a nation of people who are out to please the crowd. No concern for what God thinks of us. Our sports heroes, and our favorite entertainers, even those who claim to be christian, seek the fame and the glory that their fans will give them. Many will say they "are in it for the glory of God" but watch the transformation they go through when the crowd roars.

Watch them cry when their money is cut. The sports world and the entertainment world have more effect on Christians and their service to God than any other thing in our lives. See how many people will miss church for a sports event or how many will miss for a concert or a chance to see their favorite movie star. Can you quote more movie lines or words to secular songs than you can quote from God's word?

As for our churches, are they serving men or God? How many churches in your town are more focused on building a new building to draw in a larger crowd than preaching the gospel to the lost? How many churches are more concerned with providing their youth with a place to play sports or games rather than teaching the youth to be model Christians for their community? How many churches have left out the preaching of the Doctrines of Grace because the people will not listen? Have you noticed that everyone wants to preach end times prophecy but they don't mention the great falling away from the truth that will come during the last days? II Thessalonians 2:3 "Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition." No one wants to preach about the false teachers and preachers that will lead the people astray in those days.

How about you and the church you attend? Do you seek to please men or God?

Titus 1:16 *"They profess that they know God; but in works they deny him, being abominable, and disobedient, and unto every good work reprobate."*

News

Taxes:

The Constitution Party published their stand on the "Fair Tax," it is actually the same statement they published April 2011.

The Fair Tax is a direct tax upon the people, not authorized by the US Constitution or under the 16th Amendment. It does not guarantee a lower overall level of taxation but could result in a higher level of taxation than is currently being paid by Americans.

The Fair Tax continues and expands the welfare state by establishing a "Family Consumption Allowance" (FCA) provided to every registered household, regardless of income, which, if implemented, would constitute the single largest entitlement program in American history. The Fair Tax also expands the size of government by replacing the Internal Revenue Service with two new federal agencies, the Excise Tax Bureau and Sales Tax Bureau, as well as state-level agencies, where the primary collecting of revenues would take place. It makes the states the primary federal tax collection agency, and requires state taxing authorities to annually register every household and household member in the state, accelerating the current trend towards treating states as

mere administrative and political subdivisions of the federal government, thus putting the Constitutional principle of state sovereignty (under the 10th Amendment) in even greater peril.

The Fair Tax is a new method of funding extra-Constitutional activities outside the enumerated powers of the General Welfare clause, ignoring the clear intent of the Article I, Section 8 powers of Congress. Only the electing of individuals with a good understanding of America's founding principles and a firm commitment to frugality and fiscal accountability can fix what the Fair Tax pretends to address.

The Constitution Party sees no constitutional authority whatsoever to support the case for the Fair Tax, therefore the Constitution Party does not endorse the Fair Tax. The Constitution Party does support constitutionally-correct state-based apportioned tax system.

Boston:

Here is a published statement on the after math of the bombing of the Boston Marathon this month, this statement was made April 28th by former congressman Ron Paul; *Liberty Was Also Attacked in Boston*

Forced lockdown of a city. Militarized police riding tanks in the streets. Door-to-door armed searches without warrant. Families thrown out of their homes at gunpoint to be searched without probable cause. Businesses forced to close. Transport shut down.

These were not the scenes from a military coup in a far off banana republic, but rather the scenes just over a week ago in Boston as the United States got a taste of martial law. The ostensible reason for the military-style takeover of parts of Boston was that the accused perpetrator of a horrific crime was on the loose. The Boston bombing provided the opportunity for the government to turn what should have been a police investigation into a military-style occupation of an American city. This unprecedented move should frighten us as much or more than the attack itself.

What has been sadly forgotten in all the celebration of the capture of one suspect and the killing of his older brother is that the police state tactics in Boston did absolutely nothing to catch them. While the media crowed that the apprehension of the suspects was a triumph of the new surveillance state – and, predictably, many talking heads and Members of Congress called for even more government cameras pointed at the rest of us – the fact is none of this caught the suspect. Actually, it very nearly gave the suspect a chance to make a getaway.

The "shelter in place" command imposed by the governor of Massachusetts was lifted before the suspect was caught. Only after this police state move was ended did the owner of the boat go outside to check on his property, and in so doing discover the suspect.

No, the suspect was not discovered by the paramilitary troops terrorizing the public. He was discovered by a private citizen, who then placed a call to the police. And he was identified not by government surveillance cameras, but by private citizens who willingly shared their photographs with the police.

As journalist Tim Carney wrote last week:

“Law enforcement in Boston used cameras to ID the bombing suspects, but not police cameras. Instead, authorities asked the public to submit all photos and videos of the finish-line area to the FBI, just in case any of them had relevant images. The surveillance videos the FBI posted online of the suspects came from private businesses that use surveillance to punish and deter crime on their property.”

Sadly, we have been conditioned to believe that the job of the government is to keep us safe, but in reality the job of the government is to protect our liberties. Once the government decides that its role is to keep us safe, whether economically or physically, they can only do so by taking away our liberties. That is what happened in Boston.

Three people were killed in Boston and that is tragic. But what of the fact that over 40 persons are killed in the United States each day, and sometimes ten persons can be killed in one city on any given weekend? These cities are not locked-down by paramilitary police riding in tanks and pointing automatic weapons at innocent citizens.

This is unprecedented and is very dangerous. We must educate ourselves and others about our precious civil liberties to ensure that we never accept demands that we give up our Constitution so that the government can pretend to protect us.

2nd amendment: Apr 23, 2013 Congressman Walter Jones (NC-3) joined 50 of his colleagues in urging the House Appropriations Committee to prohibit U.S. taxpayer funding from being used for the United Nations Arms Trade Treaty. In a letter to the House State and Foreign Operations Appropriations Subcommittee Chairman Kay Granger (TX-12) and Ranking Member Nita Lowey (NY-17), Jones and his colleagues expressed deep concern with the proposed treaty and its implications for both domestic and foreign policy.

“The Arms Trade Treaty would infringe not only on the freedoms of individual citizens, but on America’s sovereignty and national security,” said Jones. “Using taxpayer funds to implement this treaty would set a dangerous precedent for the future of our country.” Jones and his colleagues are concerned the treaty does not provide adequate protection for the fundamental right of law abiding Americans to keep and bear arms. Protecting the Second Amendment and the national security interests of the United States formed the basis of the letter, which asked that the Fiscal Year 2014 State, Foreign Operations Appropriations bill include language to specifically prohibit funding for the Arms Trade Treaty.

Letter here:

<http://jones.house.gov/sites/jones.house.gov/files/Kelly%20Member%20Letter%20UN%20Arms%20Trade%20Treaty%20FY14%20State%20and%20Foreign%20Ops%20Apr%202013%20SIGNED.pdf>

Other issues:

On April 11th Mr. [Jim DeMint](#) published this statement-My statement on the Kermit Gosnell trial:

The murder trial of Kermit Gosnell has touched all Americans who have heard about it and brought home to them the unspeakable cruelties that have happened at abortion clinics in our own nation. The trial is now nearing its first solid month of deliberation, holding the 72-year old abortionist accountable for the unspeakable procedures committed to countless women and children in his abortion facility. Nobody who has read the testimony or seen the pictures can come away unshaken.

Alas, not enough people have heard of it, because the major media have practiced what can only be called a blackout on this story. Thankfully the mainstream media are not the only source of news anymore, and citizens can take to social media to raise awareness with their neighbors, family, and friends. After almost a month of relentless goading from surprised Americans, shocked by the extensive media blackout on a case riddled with death and exploitation, Gosnell and his trial are finally trending on Twitter.

But it is time major media outlets start covering this atrocity and stop being silent. No wonder Americans say again and again that they don’t trust the media.

How is it that a trial involving a man who has allegedly taken the lives of numerous innocent children—many of whom had been born into good health, and all of whom are entitled to the same blessings of this life as you and I—is being seen as a “local news story” at best?

The media’s willful indifference to the trial of Kermit Gosnell is wrong. It’s time for us to take action. I urge you to take to social media—take to whatever outlet at your disposal—to call attention to these horrific crimes and stand up for those who couldn’t defend themselves.

Congressman Tim Huelskamp covered multiple issues in his monthly online news letter (his congressional website is: <http://huelskamp.house.gov/>)

[Visiting with Kansas Veterans in Washington](#) I was honored to meet with the Kansas Honor Flight veterans when they toured the Marine Corps’ War Memorial.

The mission of Honor Flights is to transport our brave veterans to Washington, D.C. to visit the memorials at no cost to the veterans. Many World War II, Korean War, and Vietnam veterans are retirees on a fixed income who cannot otherwise afford to make the trip. The Honor

Flight program provides many of these veterans with their first and only opportunity to visit the memorials that are dedicated to them and those with whom they served.

Speaking Out on Infanticide Atrocities at Abortion Clinics
I and other leaders of the House Pro-Life Caucus delivered floor speeches concerning the serial infanticide committed by Dr. Kermit Gosnell, the defendant in an ongoing capital murder trial. I pointed out that similar conditions and practices have been reported at the Aid for Women abortion clinic in Kansas City.

If you haven't heard about Dr. Gosnell's murder trial before now, that's because the liberal media haven't covered it. Two weeks ago, I signed a letter addressed to the Presidents of ABC, CBS, and NBC demanding they do so. On Sunday, May 5th at 8:00 p.m. CT, the Fox News Channel will air a one-hour special entitled: "See No Evil – The Kermit Gosnell Murders."

Discussing China with Human Rights Activist Chen Guangcheng
I was privileged to sit down with Chen Guangcheng. If his name is familiar, it's probably because he has been in the news last year. Blind from an early age and a self-taught lawyer, Chen has received international recognition for his courageous work as a civil rights advocate exposing China's radical anti-life, forced abortion policies. In April 2012, Chen escaped his house arrest and fled to the U.S. Embassy in Beijing. After negotiations, the Chinese government allowed him to leave the embassy for medical treatment and travel to the United States. However, much of his family remain in grave danger as the Chinese government continues to persecute and imprison them for his fight for freedom. We discussed the Communist Chinese regime's one child policy and its ongoing persecution of both political dissidents and people of faith. Chen told me: "If I give up my principles, I would live well in China. But I will not compromise." I told Chen the House Republican majority would encourage the Obama Administration to employ all of our country's leverage to foster civil rights within China and bring the Chinese government's human rights violations to an end.

April 26th Congressman Justin Amash facebooking on his congressional votes posted;
"I voted no on the motion to recommit (return to committee) with instructions H R 624. The motion instructs the Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence to amend the bill to clarify that nothing in the bill allows employers to require employees to disclose their passwords to social networking sites. CISPA is terrible legislation, but this motion, which is identical to the one Democrats offered last year, has little to do with the bill. Contrary to some reports, this motion is not an amendment to protect your online privacy. It is a partisan procedural motion for political purposes, not a true amendment. It failed 189-224.

I voted no on H R 624, Cyber Intelligence Sharing and Protection Act (CISPA). This year's version includes marginal improvements over last year's bill, which I also

opposed, but these changes don't go far enough to protect people's private data, and many of the bill's most significant problems remain unaddressed. Like last year, the bill overrides federal and state privacy laws and contracts. It exempts private entities from all federal and state liability when they share "cyber threat information" with the federal government—a term broadly defined to mean any information "directly pertaining to . . . [a] threat to [] a system or network," which could include your personally identifiable information, such as e-mails.

Under CISPA, companies are actually *prohibited* from making legally binding commitments to protect users' personal data and e-mail. Without facing liability, companies have no means of assuring customers or employees that they will follow through on their privacy agreements, which means companies cannot easily compete in the area of user privacy. House leadership killed my bipartisan amendment to fix this problem, denying it a full vote on the House floor. My simple, quarter-page amendment merely asserted that CISPA's liability exemption did not give companies authority "to breach a contract with another party." It certainly would have passed unanimously or almost unanimously. By rejecting this amendment, the Committee on Rules voted to void private contracts and undermine the Rule of Law.

The bill also inappropriately allows the government to use the information it receives from private entities for purposes other than cybersecurity, such as protecting individuals generally "from the danger of death or serious bodily harm," investigating and prosecuting certain crimes, and protecting minors. And the government may search through the information it receives to find specific information pertaining to these items, trampling on our Fourth Amendment right to be secure against unreasonable searches and seizures. Rep. Jared Polis offered an amendment, which I cosponsored, that would have ensured the government could use information shared with it under CISPA *only* to prevent imminent cyber attacks, but again, the Committee on Rules rejected this important change.

Cybersecurity is a real concern for the federal government and many public and private entities. But CISPA goes far beyond what is necessary to ensure the government and the private sector have the information and tools needed to protect against cyber threats. Just a few simple changes (many of which were offered as amendments but rejected by the Committee on Rules) would have made CISPA more protective of your privacy and civil liberties while still reducing legal barriers to timely sharing of actual cyber threat intelligence. House leadership rejected these changes without even permitting a vote on the amendments. The bill passed 288-127."

April 26th, Congressman Raul Labrado sent out this statement regarding the **FAA & sequester**;

Dear friends,

While Congress today passed last-minute legislation to avert the air-traffic controller furloughs, it appears common sense about budgeting and saving at the Federal

Aviation Administration (FAA) was also furloughed. I voted for this legislation because the FAA needs to get its spending priorities in order. Still, I find it hard to believe the FAA could not have found savings beforehand. The sequester required the FAA to cut its budget by \$637 million in a more than \$15 billion budget.

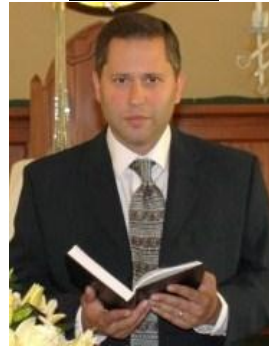
It is astounding that a 5% savings at the FAA was responsible for up to 40% of flight delays this week. Surely, the FAA could have reprioritized some funding without bringing our national aviation system to its knees in the first place. Just look at this chart to see how their budget has increased over the last few years as the number of daily domestic flights has declined.

In a press briefing on Tuesday, White House Spokesman Jay Carney responded to the nationwide flight delays: "Now, if Congress has another idea about how to alleviate the challenges that sequester has caused for the FAA and for American travelers, we are open to looking at that." A good place this administration could start for an "idea" would be questioning the FAA's history of cost overruns and then looking to trim the millions it has spent on other things.

Consider this: The FAA will have more money to spend in 2013 than what the president requested in his budget. In the last 7 years, the FAA has spent millions on conferences for its employees. Infrastructure upgrades have had cost overruns of roughly \$4 billion combined. A March letter from the Senate Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation Ranking Member John Thune and House Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure Chairman Bill Shuster to Transportation Secretary Ray LaHood pointed out \$2.7 billion in non-personnel operations costs. Quite a number of possible areas ripe for belt-tightening at the FAA.

Realizing budget cuts were on the horizon since November 2011, this administration had ample time to examine the FAA for duplication, waste and excess and then cut the low priority items. Families and businesses in this economy have had to increase their thrift and frugality. Washington, D.C. must also exercise the common sense to practice its own.

"Stand"



by Bro. John Fry

Remember the story of the Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah? No? Maybe you remember them by the names given to them by their Babylonian captors Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. Their story is a Sunday school favorite among children, but don't miss how powerful their story is.

You remember how Nebuchadnezzar created the large image for everyone to worship. He hoped to unify his empire through religion. Forced religion if necessary. The image was placed up and the musicians were called in and every public official of the empire was called. When the music sounded they were to bow down to the image. Our three heroes of the story though would not bow. They learned as children that God said that we are not to bow down before any graven images. They feared the Lord more than they feared the law of the king. Now again you know the story of how they were brought before the king who commanded their worship of the image and if not they would be thrown into the fiery furnace. To this they made their famous reply, *"Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, answered and said to the king, O Nebuchadnezzar, we are not careful to answer thee in this matter. If it be so, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and he will deliver us out of thine hand, O king. But if not, be it known unto thee, O king, that we will not serve thy gods, nor worship the golden image which thou hast set up."*

Dan 3:16-18

Nebuchadnezzar was did not back down and heated the furnace up hotter than it was ever intended and had the young men cast into the furnace. These men would rather die than to follow the order of the king to disobey God. Thankfully God saved them from that fiery furnace though.

These men though remain an example to us today to stand for God no matter what the cost. Recently my wife was signed up to take a Sociology class called Deviant Behavior. With a title like that I knew there would probably be some uncomfortable assignments, but I never imagined what the first assignment would be. Simply put the professor told them they were to make a public

profession that they were an atheist over the next two weeks. They were to tell no one of the assignment. One young man stood up immediately and said I cannot do this assignment. It violates all that I believe in. Several others then spoke up too. They were standing for what they believed in. The professor replied he didn't care about his beliefs and he must do the assignment or take a zero. My wife came home floored over the request. How could she even pretend to deny her Savior? Her only choice was to drop the class.

I'm not sure what the other kids will do, but I am sure thankful for those young men and women who stood for Christ that day and made their voices known just like Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. I know that standing then may have repercussions on their schedules, maybe even delay a graduation for those that chose to drop. However, there is one thing I do know and that is the blessings of God for standing will far outweigh anything ever lost on this earth.

Historical Marker: Analysis of Havel's "We Live In A Contaminated Moral Environment" speech

by Sis. Elizabeth Works

On New Year's Day 1990, having only been president of the newly independent nation of Czechoslovakia for three days, President Vaclav Havel used the occasion to address his countrymen, and the rest of the world that was watching the historic events as they unfolded. 1989 was the year of revolutions for Eastern Europe, Poland and Romania were still recovering from the bloodshed of breaking free from Soviet Russia's control. President Havel, a playwright known for his plays that had to be acted on stages outside of his own country, did not waste time in letting the world know what to expect from this unexpected choice in president. The purpose of Havel's speech was to stir his fellow citizens to take responsibility for their country's past failures, return to moral uprightness, and prepare for future elections and changes he, as president, was planning on making. Havel's New Years Day Address became known as the "We Live In a Contaminated Moral Environment" (1990) speech, the title taken from the fourth paragraph of the speech where Havel, in stirring firm words, states his thesis.

President Havel's honest straightforward appeal to self-accountability and return to morals can be applied to our government and lives, despite the great difference between American and Czech histories and cultures.

Vaclav Havel was born in 1936 in Czechoslovakia to a wealthy family who had their fortunes, and most of their property, nationalized under the communist government that came to power in 1948. Havel himself was labeled "bourgeois" and was denied college, jobs, permission to leave the country, and was spied on by the secret police.

(Vaclav Havel Crushed 2011) But this did not keep Havel from writing clever plays that criticized Czech Communists government for the Theatre on the Balustrade. (Speeches That Changed the World 2005) Havel was arrested in the 70s, but became a national hero in the Velvet Revolution in December 1989, when Czechoslovakia became free from the Soviet bloc.

Havel's speech interweaves ethos, his ideals on returning to moral behavior, with logos, the facts of Czechoslovakia's then recent events and economic situation with grandiose pathos, admiration for the accomplishments already achieved and encouragement in future endeavors in a poetic style that was well written to lead his listeners logically from each point through to his conclusion.

As the strongest and most consistent of Havel's appeals, we shall look at the ethos, the moral decline of the whole country.

"We learned not to believe in anything, to ignore one another, to care only about ourselves. Concepts such as love, friendship, compassion, humility or forgiveness lost their depth and dimension, and for many of us they represented only psychological peculiarities, or they resembled gone-astray greetings from ancient times, a little ridiculous in the era of computers and spaceships." (Havel, 1990)

The changes in technology in the twenty-three years since 1990 when Havel's audience did not have a computer in every home and social websites were not yet up changing the cultural psyche, his words are still true and striking in 2013. Today Americans are perhaps the most cynical we have ever been. Scientific studies acting as reminders, that while connected twenty-four hours a day to thousands of face book friends and twitter alerts, we have never been more disconnected from true emotional connections, and the moral respect for each other that go with them. A friend may change their relationship status for all to see a dozen times in one week, or perhaps through the course of one day. Someone has exciting news, just hit "like" to their status update. What happened to real face-to-face conversations and hugs that don't include an electronic device as a medium? Good manners in public have been replaced by virtual pokes.

Yet American society for all of its many problems with the decline in basic manners and concern for fellow human beings is a far cry from Czechoslovakia.

In 1990 Czechoslovakia, Havel was talking to a nation where for generations neighbors and family members spied on one another and had learned it was better to betray someone else, rather than become betrayed. After declaring the whole nation as being a corrupt moral environment the very first moral Havel pointed to was love, all actions Havel seemed to deem good and right point back to love. Havel spoke on how citizens should treat each other and as a nation in the world theater of life he wanted his country to become an example. Towards the end of his speech President Havel made clear his intention

of a “relatively extensive amnesty.” Pleading to prisoners to be patient for the time and hard work it would take to straighten out the courts and review cases. Followed by a plea to citizens “to help them, in the Christian spirit, after their return among us-“ Havel also strove to persuade his country to show love on an international level. “Our country, if that is what we want, can now permanently radiate love, understanding, the power of the spirit of ideas. It is precisely this glow that we can offer as our specific contribution to international politics.” (Havel 1990)

Havel’s style at such grandiose phrases have strong emotional appeal, but may be easily scuffed out by cynics who clamor that he is living in fantasy world alone to want government to “radiate love.” Yet he says it sincerely and with conviction, consistent through out his speech on his desire for moral return to former ideals of former Czech philosophers Chelik and Komensk and a president Havel admired enough to repeat a direct quote “Jesus, not Caesar.” Havel was not the least bit squeamish in openly sharing his religious views in a national speech. Havel’s logical show of comprehending the dire economical situation, educational, judicial, health problems, and abuse of minorities, and his refusal to give himself and any of his fellow citizen’s the leeway to shirk responsibility created a credibility and trust for his solutions to the problems.

“When I talk about the contaminated moral atmosphere, - I am talking about all of us. We had all become used to the totalitarian system and accepted it as an unchangeable fact and thus helped to perpetuate it.” (Havel 1990)

Havel’s style is inclusive, always using words such as us, we, and ourselves. He never attempts to separate himself from those he is speaking to or put blame on someone else with words such as they, them, and you. It reinforces his points that;

“None of us is just its victim. We are all also its co-creators.” “We have to accept this legacy as a sin we committed against ourselves. If we accept it as such, we will understand that it is up to us all, and up to us alone to do something about it.” (Havel 1990)

Yet there is a subtle humility in his pleas as well. Havel had taken part in the Prague Spring 1968 demonstration and the 77 Manifesto, resulting in his being arrested and spending many years in prison. (Vaclav Havel Crushed 2011) When Havel used pathos to inspire gratitude towards those who were languishing in prison still that had fought hard for their freedoms and privilege to live in a moral society, Havel did not include himself or sing his own praises. Such genuine humility is severely lacking in most politics.

By simply using the inclusive wording when talking about failures as a society and the work that must be done to change the country, but remaining silent on his own accomplishments and suffering for his country, Havel gave a living example of humility and putting his message above his own ego or political career.

“Let us teach ourselves and others that politics should be an expression of a desire to contribute to the happiness of the community rather than of the need to cheat or rape the community. Let us teach ourselves and others that politics can be not simply the art of the possible, especially if this means the art of speculation, calculation, intrigue, secret deals and pragmatic maneuvering, but that it can also be the art of the impossible, that is, the art of improving ourselves and the world.” (Havel 1990)

“A Christian Attitude Toward Government”



by Bro. Todd Bryant

“Let every soul be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and the authorities that exist are appointed by God. Therefore whoever resists the authority resists the ordinance of God, and those who resist will bring judgment on themselves. For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to evil. Do you want to be unafraid of the authority? Do what is good, and you will have praise from the same. For he is God’s minister to you for good. But if you do evil, be afraid; for he does not bear the sword in vain; for he is God’s minister, an avenger to execute wrath on him who practices evil. Therefore you must be subject, not only because of wrath but also for conscience’ sake. For because of this you also pay taxes, for they are God’s ministers attending continually to this very thing. Render therefore to all their due: taxes to whom taxes are due, customs to whom customs, fear to whom fear, honor to whom honor” –Romans 13:1-7

Government was established by God. He uses it to keep some semblance of order throughout the world. As much as “limited government” minded folks hate to admit it, anarchy would result in mass pandemonium. We need somebody in charge. This is true in homes, at places of employment and in government.

It is certainly true that “when the righteous are in authority, the people rejoice; but when a wicked man rules, the people groan” (Proverbs 29:2). Yet, we know the righteous aren’t always ruling. In fact, many believers in America today are quite frustrated by the happenings in Washington D. C. And, that frustration is certainly

justified. However, lest we forget our history, Paul penned the words above under the Roman Empire which was unusually cruel and corrupt.

During the time of the early churches, Rome was spending tax money to hunt down and murder Christians. Many tax "dollars" were used to fund pagan festivities. Caesar himself claimed to be a god and many of the citizens believed he was. It's no wonder that the Pharisees so hated the taxes imposed on them by the Roman Empire. Yet Paul, a former Pharisee, says that believers are to be subject to the governing authorities. He directed these Christian citizens of Rome to respect the very government which would eventually have him beheaded.

As a minister of the Gospel, I continue to be saddened at the venom I often see spewing out the mouth of believers. The political climate in America has caused many believers to forget that we are to properly represent our Lord, even in politics. We certainly should care. We certainly should vote. However, even those things should be done in a Christ-like manner...in love.

Let us follow the inspired words of Scripture... "Therefore I exhort first of all that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks be made for all men, for kings and all who are in authority, that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and reverence. For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior" (1 Timothy 2:1-3).

Lord, help us to focus on the work You left us with!

The Forum

Once a month we will ask one or more men of God to answer a question(s) related to the theme of the issue. This month we're looking at what are the biblical limits of government and submission.

"What is Nationalism, Patriotism & Americanism"

We asked two preachers who are not American a set of four questions, we hope and pray their answers will be a blessing and food for thought. The questions are:

1. *What is nationalism?*
2. *What is patriotism?*
3. *What does Americanism mean?*
- And 4. *Are any of these concepts biblical?*

Bro. Aurel Miclea jr. (Bosca, Romania) Patriotism (for the short response, dictionary type) is love for your own country. Love can have many nuances and can be understood very differently from person to person. As believers we are called to obey the laws of the country in which we live as long as they do not go against the laws of the Kingdom of Heaven, whose citizens we are. In times of oppression and persecution, I believe that we are called to loyalty to the heavenly kingdom. Romania has gone through this kind of times (under the communist regime), true believers chose to disobey state law, in this way respecting the laws of God.

Nationalism is an ideology that creates and sustains a nation as a concept and commonly identifies a group of people.

It is different from patriotism and political ideology: nationalism refers to the ancestral right of defining historical and linguistic communities ("nations") and tends to constitute ethnic-based states, while patriotism refers to the earthly right and defines nations through membership of the same territory and tends to define states on territorial basis. As an example, the Nazi system was born from nationalistic ideology, so to us, it may carry a negative connotation.

"Nationalism is an infantile disease. Is the measles of mankind " Albert Einstein

Americanism can mean several things. In the Romanian context, can mean the tendency to imitate American behavior (American words and expressions, gestures and customs from U.S.A.), or a pro-American policy. In former communist countries, the general attitude is pro-American and probably will remain such for a while. I think that Americanization is part of a broader system, in my opinion, with a negative connotation. A good example in terms of Americanization in the religious area is given by the "invitational system", born in U.S.A. and perfected by Billy Graham (invitation, lifting hand, came forward, sinner's prayer, receiving salvation), and applied all over the world, from Russia to South America and from the Orient to Australia. There are so many good things about America, but, unfortunately, people tend to imitate the not so good things about it.

Last question is a little vague ... If we talk about the Old Testament and the chosen nation, we can talk about aspects of Biblical nationalism. But if we talk about the principles of the New Testament / Covenant, we are talking about the belonging to a Heavenly Kingdom (which is not of this world) which transcends national borders and brings all sorts of people together to make up a "nation" by the blood of Lord Christ, born by God, and united by the Spirit and the Truth.

I believe that we are not called upon to be involved in politics or in the carnal battles of this earth. We are called with a much higher call; to a higher fight and to a spiritual Kingdom, to a perfect, incorruptible inheritance!

These questions are pretty "risky" for a foreigner, because there is always a danger of being misunderstood.

I do love my country, I believe in being subject to higher authorities, as the Scripture says. I have great respect for the true American values and a great love for the Lord's churches and for my brethren across the Ocean.

Bro. Nilo del Mundo (from Tanza, Cavite Philippines missionary to Riyadh, Saudi Arabia): 1. Nationalism is the idea and the actions that put one nation's interests as paramount and of higher priority than the interests of other nations

2. Patriotism is the idea and the actions, that ones life and resources may be given for the good of the whole country.
3. Before, Americanism means the pursuit of the American way, the American dream, and the zealous protection of such way of life. It was promoted all over the world as the best kind of system.

When OBAMA came, they said, they were ashamed of America before and only now they are proud. They are reshaping Americanism as the protection of gays, killing of the unborn, food stamps, debt ridden economy, printing of dollars without value, bowing to the enemies of America.

4. Blessed is the nation whose God is the LORD
There are eras and epochs when a nation's God is the Lord, and after a certain period, their god is Baal or everyone did that which was right in their own eyes.

When as a country, the majority pursues the interests of the One and Only true God, then it is godliness for all the children of God within that country to do all in their might to be nationalistic and patriotic. It is in their best interest to glorify God as a whole nation.

But when a country's ruler, majority of its citizens, support evil policies, ungodly laws, then it is the duty of the children of God to oppose it, and obey God rather than men

“Whose authority?”

We asked Bro. Pugh, American born preacher who has served over seas as a missionary for many years, a different question about authority:

“Whose authority should Christians submit to when laws or policy conflict (of course God's law is above all) local government, state, national, U.N. or other?”

Bro. Curtis Pugh (Oklahoma, USA):

To obey God we must always obey the instructions of the Bible regardless of the consequences. The parenthetical expression in the question above recognizes that. Leaving out the parenthesis, the question under discussion resolves itself to this: *To whose authority should Christians submit when laws or policy conflict - local government, state, national, U.N. or other?* We should not govern our actions because of possible consequences, but we should count the cost and determine to do right regardless of the consequences. That is true character, bravery, and patriotism...

The Bible says, *“Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake: whether it be to the king, as supreme; Or unto governors, as unto them that are sent by him for the punishment of evildoers, and for the praise of them that do well”* (1 Peter 2:13, 14 - Emphasis added). Some maintain that Christians are to meekly submit to every law and every bureaucratic rule of government regardless of what a government does through her representatives. Pacifists, such as Mennonites of all sorts, hold to nearly such a view.

However, I have emphasized two prepositional phrases in the above text for a reason. It seems to me that Peter is not commanding blind obedience to any and all governments regardless of what they do or what they may demand from their citizens. Had we been alive in Nazi Germany, such an understanding would have required us to turn in to the authorities any hidden Jews we might

know about. Of course had we done such a thing, it could have - indeed probably would have - resulted in their deaths. Would we not have then been responsible for murder(s) had we acted in such a way?

Governments exist for the benefit of the people. It is for the safety of both life and property that governments ought to be formed. If and when a government becomes tyrannical and no longer punishes evildoers (keeps order) and no longer praises well-doing (promotes good) our Scripture text does not, in my understanding, require submission and obedience to it.

Let me cite a brief example. The Union Baptists in Romania (government recognized ones - not our kind) are nearly all pacifists. That is, they thought it wrong to kill even in wartime. However, I think most of them would have fought to the death had some individual attempted to harm their families. However, under the cruel and oppressive communist regime, Baptists (and other repenters) did not think it wrong to hold church meetings even when they were prohibited. They did not think it wrong to smuggle Bibles and other religious literature into the country. They did not think it wrong to hide Bibles and religious literature from the authorities. They did not think it wrong to listen on their radios to the Voice of America and Radio Free Europe broadcasts even though they could be arrested and punished for doing these things. That all seems clear enough. The communist government was interfering with Christian practice and those things recognized as the rights of free men.

But what about other matters - not relating to the practice of Christianity? Under the communist dictator Ceausescu it was illegal for ordinary Romanians of any religion to kill beef. They could keep and eat all kinds of fowl, sheep, goats and pigs, etc., but not beef. Beef cattle were for export only. I knew a deacon who, under those communist-era prohibitions, disobeyed the law in this way. A cow belonging to him had twins. He registered one of the calves with the local authorities as required. The other he kept hidden in a sort-of cellar, fed it until it grew to butchering size, killed it and he and his family (and probably others) ate it. The Bible does not enjoin such behavior, but I do not think that it forbids it either. The law was unfair and repressive. The deacon had no legal recourse. The calf was his, it was born to his cow, he raised it and cared for it and he killed it, butchered it and ate it. Such a communist rule under which he lived was not for the punishment of evildoers and the promotion of good. I do not think he was obligated to obey it.

All that having been said, we must not think that the Bible endorses each person being a law unto themselves and deciding arbitrarily which laws and bureaucratic rules they will obey and which they will not. Christians are certainly obligated to obey laws that are right; whether it be speed limits, no left turns, or matters of more significance to society.

There are some things that fall within the matter of personal conviction and political views, I suppose. My

Confederate States of America ancestors were defeated in a war that was all about states rights (not as the revisionists claim, about slavery). Prior to that war, Southerners, at least, felt their loyalty belonged first and foremost to their home state. That was not the view of the Federals and the Federals won and enforced their view upon the whole. Prior to that war men said "these United States are" after that war we say "this United States is" so, as someone said, in a sense that war was fought over a verb. As a result of that war neither local governments nor state governments have the option of leaving the union called the United States nor do they have the right to defy the federal government in matters allocated to her jurisdiction. Unless someone wants to fight the "civil war" all over again, we are forced to live with and under the views of the Federals who won. That means, constitutionally, that all those powers not specifically granted to the U.S. government belong to the individual states. So it would seem that under this system, our first loyalty, submission and obedience must be to the U.S. government and not to any state or local government except in those powers not specifically reserved by the constitution to the federal government.

However, the U.S. government was set up to be a government by consent - a democratic republic - where people are elected to office to look after the interests of the masses; "a government of the people, by the people and for the people." If it ever ceases to be a government by consent and becomes a tyranny it has ceased being the kind of government that our forefathers founded. Our Baptist forefathers, during the oppressive days of British rule, first sought redress of grievances through whatever channels that then existed; petitions, etc. We all know that when the British refused to consider the welfare of the colonists (ceased to "praise" or promote well doing) our Baptists forefathers joined with others in a rebellion against that tyrannical regime.

My personal feeling regarding obedience to the United Nations is this: I did not vote to either join that organization or to submit U.S. law to "international law." I did not vote for any politician who ran on a ticket obligating our country's submission to the U.N.

In these days in which we live when we see the very real possibility - perhaps likelihood - of a storm arising within our country's borders, these issues need to be carefully thought through. I hope I have contributed something to this discussion and not just cast dust in the faces of those who see.

"God Can Save"

by Bro. Todd Bryant

"Behold, the Lord's hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; nor His ear heavy, that it cannot hear" –Isaiah 59:1

There is not a person so dire that God cannot save them. Saul (that is, the Apostle Paul) was still "breathing threats and murder against the disciples of the Lord" when God stopped him in his tracks on the road to Damascus (Acts 9:1-8). I'm not sure a man ever hated the people of God more than Paul did in his natural condition. And yet, God opened his heart to the Gospel of Christ and then sent him out to preach it! It was no more difficult for God to save Saul than anybody else.

Every reader of this article knows somebody in an unregenerate state who needs Jesus. Humanly speaking, some of these cases seem impossible to us. From the human standpoint, there are some who simply could never come to Christ. They are too wicked! They are too hardened! But, that's the human viewpoint – not the Scriptural teaching. The truth is, no one person is more separated from God by nature than another. Every one of us is totally depraved when we are born. All of us were born in the same state – "dead in trespasses and sins" (Ephesians 2:1). The same power that resurrected you from the dead is able to raise up your neighbor. Nobody is deader than somebody else. It's difficult for us sometimes to remember how disinterested we were in the things of God prior to the new birth. Many of us have been saved for decades. However, until the Spirit of God stirred our dead souls, our hearts and minds did not comprehend the things of God (1 Corinthians 2:14).

It certainly is not my intent to make a theology lesson out of this article. But, sometimes it does us good to be reminded that we were just as lost as the person we look at as a hopeless case. Certainly, man left to himself is without "hope and without God in the world" (Ephesians 2:12). However, "the Lord's hand is not shortened, that it cannot save". Just as Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead, so the Holy Spirit of God can raise a dead sinner to life in Christ with no problems at all.

Just as the farmer plants seeds and hopes for a harvest, so we should be planting the seed that God has sent us out to plant. Romans 1:16 tells us plainly that the Gospel of Christ "is the power of God to salvation". It is our duty to plant that seed. However, just as the farmer waits on God to raise a seed out of the ground, so we do the same. Paul said, "I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the increase" (1 Corinthians 3:6). This must be our motivation to tell even the most criminal among us of God's provision for saving sinners.

Child of God, be encouraged. God is still saving sinners. Every time a person comes to faith in Christ, God has worked. Every time a person believes the Gospel, the Holy Spirit has raised them from among the spiritually dead. This is not hard for Him. Our duty is to simply share the message He has sent us out with and rely on Him to empower His Word (1 Thessalonians 1:4-5).