

Summer 2024

GOD'S CALL TO AMERICA

GOD'S ANSWERS

The United States has been the battle scene for decades over 'Cultural Wars!' It may have started as intellectual disagreements but it has grown to an attack on basic Bible taught morality. Along the way, it has been publicized, gendercized and generationalcized. It is seldom discussed as morality, but usually as arguments about 'rights' or 'basic freedoms' or 'political causes'. We will examine Scripture over these nine lessons to see the 'Call of God to America' in these issues

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HOPE LOOKS UP MINISTRIES

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LESSON #1: “WHERE HAS FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION TAKEN OUR NATION”

Welcome to the 2024 Summer Teaching Series of Hope Looks Up Ministries. In this Study, Dr. Haney will look at a timely subject, the cultural wars of the United States and give his thoughts on what God is calling America to do and what Bible passages apply to this call of God.

The United States has been the battle scene for decades over ‘cultural wars.’ It may have started more as an intellectual series of disagreements, but it has grown to an attack on basic Bible-taught morality. Along the way, it has been politicized, Gendercized, weaponized, and Generationcized. It is seldom discussed as morality, but usually as an argument about ‘rights’ or ‘basic freedoms’ and has often been seen as a ‘political cause.’ We will look at the first overall question of the study: “Where has freedom of expression taken our nation?”

There are many areas where these cultural wars are being waged. I will not attempt to discuss every one of them, but I do want to discuss those that I feel have influenced people away from following the Word of God and have created a need for review and often retraction.

Cultural Wars in the Media, Motion Picture and Television Industries

Commented [CE1]:

I will begin this class with a look at the entertainment Media and primarily the motion picture and television industry. The Motion Picture Association of American took an introspective look at the tone of the nation and the government and in 1968 appointed a Movie Ratings Board to prevent what was shaping up as potential censorship by the states and/or the government of the United States. They published a 50-year report in 2018 that spoke about what they had done over those 50 years. Just a cursory look at the movie and television industry for these 50 years would lead most of us to say that the rating board did not decrease the amount of gratuitous violence, gratuitous sexual scenes, profanity, macabre scenes of depravity and horror, or even more movies about healthy and successful relationships and families.

The details of this 5-year-old report shows that the Movie Ratings Board since it started in 1968 has reviewed 29,791 films and has categorized the majority, 17,202 as ‘R’ rated, meaning that an underage child must be accompanied by an adult to view the film. This means that almost 58% of all films made and reviewed by the Movie Ratings Board have been given an ‘R’ rating. The other ratings have been:

1. R Films 17,202 or 58%
2. PG Films 5,578 or almost 19%
3. PG 13 Films 4,913 or slightly over 16%
4. G Films 1,574 or barely over 5%
5. X/NC 17 Film 527 or less than 2%

Fine you might say, but at least they are being categorized and parents can make a choice of what movies they give their children permission to see. As true as that statement is, it does not define the cultural war that is hidden in the ratings system.

First, the R rated films are not the most prosperous films for Hollywood to make. It is not just a matter of saying that violence, sexual situations and even profanity are not a part of our society; but when they are the content of most of the films and because those films are not the most profitable films made or released you have to believe that it is one more salvo fired in the cultural war to bombard our society into accepting that all of the scenes are what happens to most people and these standards should be fine with our educated and intelligent culture. Another part of the cultural wars, the elite and educated are for culture change and only the uneducated, and lower socioeconomic classes want to keep culture as it is. So, this obsession with sleaze and gore hurts rather than helps the pursuit of profit for the movie industry.

This contention has received powerful confirmation from the first Paul Kagan Associates, Inc. report to now. The findings have not changed. The percentages continue to increase in non-profitable R rated movies and decrease for PG and G movies which have been more profitable. Kagan wrote in that initial study, “There is an underexploited segment in the motion picture industry that could be costing the studios millions of dollars at the bottom line; family comedies and dramas that are rated ‘PG’ by the MPAA. Based on an analysis of the first 25 years of the rating system, that counted movies that played on at least one hundred fifty screens found the most successful were ‘PG’. . .Ironically, while R’-rated films are less likely to score big at the box office and are less profitable than films with other ratings. The percentage of ‘R’ rated films continues to increase and has moved to over 56% of all films. (Went above 60% last year) At the same time the percentage of ‘PG’ and ‘G’ films has decreased. The statistics seem to support what tens of millions of moviegoers have reached on their own conclusions; the entertainment media is out of touch with major portions of its potential audience. An industry that steadily increases the percentage of ‘R’ rated films-despite their consistently weaker prospects at the box office which may not be malicious, but it is most certainly intentional and dysfunctional. It is a cultural war, not a matter of turning a profit.

This was heightened for me when I began to search for the latest studies in the areas of seeing where movies and TV shows stand in relationship with making a profit and the increase of R rated shows, but I found the comparison studies being done the last five years, now are primarily focused on gender, racial, and transgender inclusion in films for leads, directors, producers, and participants. I did not find a study over the past five years that traces the continued rise of ‘R’ rated films and the lack of revenue they produce compared to ‘PG’ and ‘G’ rated films which are decreasing in frequency even though they make more money!

TV companies, long ago sent a letter to Senator Paul Simon, in the 1990’s promising that they would limit the depiction of violence in entertainment programs and outlined broad standards to avoid glamorizing excessive gore and suffering. The cable companies quickly followed suit, and included this statement, *“We believe that the gratuitous use of violence depicted as an easy and convenient solution to human problems is harmful to our industry and society. We therefore discourage and will*

strive to reduce the frequency of such exploitative uses of violence.” Speaking at the same industry gathering, Jack Valenti, longtime president of the Motion Picture Association of America, conceded, *“We have to increase the theater audience; we just have to do it.”* He acknowledged the best way to achieve that purpose would be to *“start having pictures with less violence, less sensuality, and less raunchy language.”* It took a turn for the better during the early 1990’s but no one looking at television today among the major networks and the many cable companies would honestly say gratuitous violence, gratuitous sex and raunchy language are on the decrease. Even the family shows of today do not reflect the values and morals of “The Waltons” or “Highway to Heaven” of an earlier age.

Once again you have to consider this a cultural war in the United States. The three major television networks lost over a third of their audience from 1975-2000 and have lost another third since that time, 2000-2024. They have all had years where they actually lost money on their TV revenue. Business analysts advance many theories for this disastrous falloff, but even television insiders consider that much of the public’s disenchantment relates directly to the quality of the programs. Gene DeWitt, head of the prestigious New York media once said, *“The networks have lost audiences because they have lost touch with the American viewer; they haven’t delivered programs that viewers want to watch.”* The cultural war cry has sounded, we want to focus on these areas of violence, sexual stimulation, coarse language and macabre scenes and we will do it even if we go broke.

Interestingly, in the last few years, much of television has turned to paid sports programming and clients from large betting institutions to buttress the declining revenues. This has affected the way college athletes are handled and has turned most major sport venues into miniature ‘Vegas style casinos. One more front in our ever-increasing and spreading culture wars.

What is God’s call to America about the continuation of gratuitous violence, gratuitous sex, and vulgar and coarse language?

Return To Your First Love

I feel God is calling America back to the values and morals that are being changed by the cultural wars. The Apostle John wrote the Book of Revelation, and it was the last book written that is in the Bible. It was written 45 years after Paul had established the Church in Ephesus; a key city New Testament city located in modern day Turkey. The Church in Ephesus had an immediate impact on the city. It created enough concern that the city artisans, who made the images and statues of their pagan goddess caused a riot, seized the athletic arena, and protested for hours to try and force the Church to close and leave their town.

Only 45 years later, John would write them a letter recorded in **Revelations 2:1-7**, that they had left their first love. He wrote:

Revelations 2:1-7

“I know your deeds, your hard work, and your perseverance. I know that you cannot tolerate wicked people, that you have tested those who claim to be apostles but are not and have found them false. You have preserved and have endured hardships for my name and have not grown

weary. Yet I have this against you. You have forsaken the love you had at first. Consider how far you have fallen! Repent, and do the things you did at first. If you do not repent, I will come to you and remove your lampstand from its place.

They had left their first love; they still did some things right but their initial love of Christ and a desire to serve Him was gone. John says, they have fallen, and they need to turn around, repent, and do what God would have them do.

America claims to still be well over 50% Christian. But the zeal by which our nation follows God has fallen off along with the fervency and frequency of worship and letting their faith influence all of their decisions. To that majority group of America, I feel God is saying, “Return to your first love of me.”

Cultural Wars in Rock & Roll Music

Before we leave this area of cultural wars in the entertainment industry it is interesting to note that “Rock & Roll” music was considered recession proof in the 1900’s but when a switch of formats and more gory and street-smart lyrics left the Billboard’s Top listing no longer relevant, other music genres began to lead the sales. Country music continued to climb, and rock & rock continued to decline. The key many analysts said was, country music made an unpretentious attempt to connect with the everyday concerns of Middle America. Music industry analyst Bob Lefsetz, publisher of The Lefsetz Letter said, *“Country music, unlike the rest of popular music, is talking about real lives. About real people. These artists are telling you what they feel. They’re making honest records, and that’s why their music is connecting with the public.”* We have seen a revival of popular music the last few years led by Taylor Swift, Jennifer Lopez and others who frequently write about themselves and what has happened in their life and how they have handled it. Just telling their story and connecting with people and not engaging in a cultural war to change the habits and behavior of the listener has restored popular music to a high plain of sales, concert sell-outs, and a genuine identification with the artists. The larger the disconnect with the people the larger the decrease in the popularity of the artist.

To illustrate how far this cultural war had taken people from reality, I want to quote Jeffrey Katzenberg, former production chief of Walt Disney Studios who said, *“We’re in the hands of the movie gods”*: he told the Los Angeles Times, *“who will either shine down and give us good fortune or not. . .That’s part of what keeps people going in this business—the magical and mysterious nature of it.”* Rather whimsical, and he was replaced in 1994 after a not so whimsical war with Michael Eisner. Earlier he had said criticizing the ‘holy mantra’ of the media entertainment industry, *“When our critics charge that we show violence that is too graphic, depict sex that is too gratuitous or feature lyrics that are too inflammatory, we’re all too quick to offer the defense that it’s only a movie, or piously invoke the First Amendment. The sad result is that more and more movies get made that are uninspiring or formulate movies that are seemingly driven to offer nothing more than the cheap thrill. We should not be distracted by talk of censorship, the First Amendment, or the cultural elite. We all have the opportunity to assume individual responsibility to create films that educate rather than denigrate, that sheds light rather than dwell in darkness.”*

However, most entertainment media is heavily involved in the American cultural war and often want to impress their ideas and agenda upon the entire nation. They no longer reflect, or even respect, the values of most American families. On many of the important issues in contemporary life, popular media entertainment seems to go out of its way to challenge conventional notions of decency. For example:

- Many of our fellow citizens cherish the institution of marriage and consider religion an important priority in life; but the entertainment industry promotes every form of sexual adventurism and regularly ridicules religious believers as crooks or crazies.
- In our private lives most of us deplore violence and feel little sympathy for the criminals who perpetrate it, but the entire entertainment industry seems to revel in graphic brutality, glorifying vicious and sadistic characters who treat killing as a joke.
- Americans are passionately patriotic, and consider themselves enormously lucky to live here, but the entertainment industry conveys a view of the nation’s history, future, and major institutions that is dark, cynical, and often nightmarish.
- Nearly all parents want to convey to their children the importance of self-discipline, hard work, and decent manners; but the entertainment media celebrate vulgar behavior, contempt for all authority and obscene language—which is inserted even in “family fare productions” where it is least wanted or truly needed. According to Michael Medved this assault on traditional values has gone on since the mid 70’s with no sign of let up.

Call to America – Make a Difference in Our Nation

What is the call of God to America? First, I feel God has a special call to American Christians and faith groups. *“Make a difference in our nation.”*

When Jesus gave His first major sermon in the Bible, called the Sermon on the Mount, he outlined the major areas of importance and priorities for His believers. After He listed the Beatitudes, which start the sermon, Jesus spoke about the role of believers in the Church and in the world and said they were to be:

1. **Salt** - They were to flavor and preserve good in their world and the only way they could guarantee that would happen; is they were never to lose their saltiness. Most of the salt in the time of Jesus was harvested from the Dead Sea and it was full of impurities. To be effective and taste good, the salt had to be renewed, restocked, and used or it would lose the qualities that made it salt and it would be useless.
2. **Light** - Although Jesus Himself, fulfilled the mission of the Lord’s Servant to be a light for the Gentiles, **Luke 2:32**; He expects His followers to carry on the same task. In the time of Jesus, people used small clay lamps that burned olive oil drawn by a wick, No one lights a lamp and places it under a bowl, a clay dish that would hold several bushels of flour or grain. God’s deeds are not to be done in a way that honors you but gives all the glory to God.

What is the call of God to America? It is a call for restoration.

Jeremiah 31:10

“The Lord appeared to us in the past saying: I have loved you with an everlasting love; I have drawn you with unfailing kindness. I will build you up again.”

May God restore what we have lost through decades of freedom of expression. May we all return to our first love and lead the nation forward.

LESSON #2: “VERY FEW ARE SHOCKED ANYMORE!”

This Lesson continues our study of the American culture wars and give thoughts on how this war has neutralized the shock-value of many if not most of the people in America. We live in a nation that allows extremism on all sides and acts like it is normal. God has a call upon the nation to change that and He has given answers to tell us how it can be done.

The very nature of the cultural battle before us is really a war against the previous standards of our nation. It is a war against any level of judgment. In fact, those waging the war to change the culture of America insist that the worst insult you can offer someone today is to suggest that he or she is judgmental.

Culture Battle to Change the Standards of America

Let us look at what Jesus was saying and the meaning behind his statements about judging.

Matthew 7:1-2 says,

“Do not judge, or you will be judged. For in the same way you judge others, you will be judged, and with the measure that you use, it will be measured to you.”

Jesus went ahead with the thought that it is hypocritical judgment, marked by self-righteousness that is the problem, a speck in a brother’s eye that you speak against when you have a log coming out of your eye that you apparently do not see. So, He is asking His believers to not do any hypocritical or self-righteous judgment. I say this, because Jesus ends this teaching about judgment by warning His believers,

Matthew 7:6

“Do not give dogs what is sacred, do not throw your pearls to pigs. If you do, they will trample them under their feet and turn and tear you to pieces.”

To obey Christ’s commands in this passage, we must first evaluate a person’s character, are they a dog? In the time of Christ, the unclean dogs of the street were held in low esteem. “A dog” here is simply someone incapable of seeing and understanding spiritual teachings. They will not understand spiritual truths and in fact will try to use those truths to incriminate the believer into believing that they are doing something wrong. A closer look at Scripture shows that the Christian believer is to choose between good and bad people and things sexually immoral.

I Corinthians 5:9-11a

“I write to you in my letter not to associate with sexually immoral people, not at all meaning the people of this world who are immoral, or the greedy and swindlers, or idolaters. In that case, you would have to leave this world. But now I am writing to you that you must not associate with anyone who claims to be a brother or sister but is a hypocrite.”

The believer is to judge those who Masquerade as:

- **Angels of Light, II Corinthians 11:14**
- **Dogs again, Philippians 3:2**
- **False Prophets, I John 4:11**

In fact, the Bible teaches that a Christian is to ‘test them all.’

I Thess.5:19-22

“Do not quench the Spirit. Do not treat prophecies with contempt, but test them all, hold on to what is good, reject every kind of evil.

Those who would change culture have perverted the teaching of Jesus to say “since you have sin in your life, you should never consider anyone else a sinner.” If you do that, you are a hypocrite. The Bible instructs Christians over and over to make judgements in their life about people, but never do it hypocritically.

One of the symptoms of the corruption and collapse of our ‘politically correct’ culture is the insistence that we examine only the surface of any action, statement, court judgment, artwork, entertainment, or even most activities. The ‘politically correct’ have the notion that we should never dig deeper, to consider whether something is true, good or even spiritually nourishing. We should not try and evaluate its impact on society at large, for in so doing, we will thwart the freedom and authenticity of the action or item. We routinely focus on superficial skill and slick salesmanship, while ignoring the more important issues of soul and substance. In the process, we have often been asked to abandon traditional measures of beauty and worth, accepting as greater value other’s ability to exercise their freedoms. It should not be shocking but liberating, we are told. This new freedom will move our nation forward we are told, and we can abandon the old-fashioned concepts of traditional values because they no longer bring inspiration.

Pardon me for a moment, I think I have heard this argument throughout history when people no longer want to follow the current rules and laws, when they have wanted to establish their own new rules or wanted the general populace to accept as just fine whatever they wanted to do.

The cultural war is real, and it has many divisive elements that continue to tear at the fabric of our nation. Our ability to address the cultural questions has disappeared along with all consensus on the purposes and boundaries of culture. The only area in which today’s cultural combatants seem able to agree is to acknowledge the severity and significance of this current conflict.

This is how many feel. Michael Hudson, executive vice president of People for the American Way said, “The extremist right-wing political movement no longer has the evil of communism to fight. So, they look to other fields, including putting on economic pressure to force people to do what they want.” Jack Valenti, longtime president of the Motion Picture Association of America, similarly characterized criticism of all of media, entertainment, as well as news media, as a dire threat to our most precious liberties. He went on to say, “What we cannot do is allow zealots or self-anointed special groups who claim divine vision to intimidate us or coerce us or frighten us.

His climatic statement was, “Too many brave young men have died on battlefields, and are dying now, to protect, defend and reserve our right of choice.” In other words, the takeover of college campuses by first the ‘woke academicians’ that led to the present massive Moslem radical protests against Israel that closed campuses, ruined graduations, and generally confused a populace that has seen our support of Israel diminish through this cultural war; was really purchased by the blood of heroes who have kept our nation free for them to do that! He was saying they died to preserve the right to publish pornography, regardless of the price of pornography addiction; to produce trashy and sleazy art, movies and TV; and to allow people of all persuasions to voice their distrust and hatred of our country, our flag and our history.

Mary Schmidt Campbell, who retired as the President of Spellman University in 2022, when she was still the New York City’s Commissioner of cultural affairs said about the cultural war:

“This is no longer a fight about obscenity. This is about the very principles of democracy and the fundamental values of this country.”

The other side of the political spectrum struggles over cultural issues with similarly ferocious intensity. Conservative congressman, Henry Hyde said, “America is already, involved in a war between cultures and a war about the naming of culture.” A conservative candidate for the senate recently said, “The arts crowd, speaking about all of entertainment media is engaged in a cultural struggle to root out the old America of family, faith, and flag and re-create society in a pagan image.”

Dr. James Dobson once said, “Nothing short of a great Civil War of Values rages today throughout North America. Two sides with vastly different and incompatible worldviews are locked in a bitter conflict that permeates every level of society. Bloody battles are being fought on a thousand fronts, both inside and outside of government.” These apocalyptic pronouncements force us to analyze what is being said and from what perspective. We need to see from the start this battle has not been and still is not coming from the same foundation.

One side indeed claims to represent a coherent worldview, which has grown from at least four millennia of Judeo-Christian civilization, while the other insists that it is fighting only for “freedom of expression” with no other ideological agenda. In these terms the cultural struggle is not so much a fight between two competing sets of values, as it is a dispute over whether it is appropriate to impose values at all on the creation or even to evaluate what others say or do.

So, using the idea that freedom of expression and doing what you desire to do without anyone saying it is wrong has led to a strong focus on form over content. So, the beat of a song is more important than the content of the words. So, the newest slant on the evils of America as a country is more important than what historians have written since America became a nation. So, the academic community needs to find ways to change and maneuver the system instead of trying to preserve anything good that was in the system.

The end result of this is a cultural war that has one side trying to preserve what they believe are Judeo-Christian virtues and values that will preserve our nation, while the other side seeks to find ways to belittle or eliminate most of those Judeo-Christian virtues and values and replace them with new freedoms and expressions of freedom.

Let me cite some examples: The National Endowment of the Arts provide some illustrations of the practical pursuit of changing culture as their priority. Several years ago, they denied the New York Academy of Arts any money to provide young painters with basic skills in representational drawing. In the words of Susan Lebowksi, at that time the director of the NEA Visual Arts Programs, “teaching students to draw the human figure is revisionist and stifles creativity.” Less than a year later, the Endowment paid \$70,000 of government funds for a gallery show that featured Shawn Eichman’s ‘Alchemy Cabinet.’ A jar with the fetal remains from her own abortion.

They also found government funds to pay for performances of artist John Fleck, whose performances included urination on a picture of Christ, and other artists like Annie Sprinkle, who primarily preformed acts of masturbation as her performance.

I could site many other examples that have occurred in arts, media, University sponsored programs and even in the fields of edited media news. The bias for the bizarre has proven so strong and so continuous that it supports the argument that the NEA and the rest of the art community care nothing about the underlying values of the work they honor. When groups like the National Endowment of the Arts elect to fund public displays that are pornographic, while denying support of classical sculpture or realistic painting, it is making a powerful value judgment. That judgment reflects the conviction that only work that could be described as ‘daring,’ ‘unorthodox,’ or ‘experimental’ is worthy of official sponsorship, while projects that fall within the traditional mainstream are inherently less valuable to our American society. Very few are shocked in our culture now because of all the brazen and bizarre things they have seen, heard, or know have been done.

Much of the agenda of those intent on changing the system is to numb the nation of any shock or reaction to the most bizarre and upsetting of actions, words, entertainment and even governance. Most projects, speeches, and actions are designed to reach a mass audience though even these commercial items are marred by the shocking or propagandistic elements that are used to sell the ideas.

The fact that few are shocked anymore shows more than ever that the message matters. Messages do matter---cultural and political attitudes, even if subtly expressed, even if unconsciously absorbed, can contribute powerfully to a sense of distance or discomfort on the part of those listening. If the general public feels the message resonates with their most heartfelt convictions, that creates a warm and supportive response; but when it assaults traditional values that often arouses feelings of resentment that cause more confusion and animosity.

It is clear that God felt messages matter. He carefully inspired and crafted the Bible to bring the messages to us that would lead us to live a life that is best for us and our happiness. I think in the area of acknowledging that ‘Few are Shocked Anymore’, God would call America to consider what He asked Israel to do when they were directly under His leadership.

God’s Call to the People of America

1. First, for All Who are Believers: **DO NOT LEAN ON ANYTHING ELSE BUT GOD!**

God is majestic like no other and that translates into the goodness of God for all His believers. Such a God can deliver and restore His distressed people if they will wait in faith for Him to act. They are to trust in Him and draw strength from him, the Bible says it this way.

Isaiah 40: 28-31

“Do you not know, have you not heard? The Lord is the everlasting God, the Creator of the ends of the earth. He will not grow tired or weary, and his understanding no one can fathom. He gives strength to the weary and increases the power of the weak. Even youths grow tired and weary, and young men stumble and fall; but those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength. They will soar on wings with eagles; they will run and not grow weary; they will walk and not be faint.”

We need to be less concerned with what we will say and more concerned about who we will follow. When God has a message, He wants His people to give, He gives them the message. The greatest strength a believer has in our present cultural wars is the power of God to change hearts and influence minds. We need to tap into that.

2. Second, to the Rest of the Nation: **REALIZE WHERE THIS PATH IS LEADING!**

If a majority of the nation is saying they do not feel America is heading in the right direction, then look at history and don’t repeat the mistakes of previous nations and previous cultures. When the core values of a nation are gone, then the fabric and core of what holds the nation together is also gone. I think God would say to our nation, “I warn you that it is not as easy to stop a slide into oblivion as one might think. There is a point of no return where things cannot be put back together again, and then the nation will collapse.

Since we do not know when that time is or at what point we have gone too far as a Nation to sustain ourselves, the call of God is to accept His cleansing and His transformation. David was a man of God and a man after God’s own heart but many of his relationships seem very worldly and not Godly. None were worse than when he stayed home from battle for a season, saw Bathsheba bathing, called her to his palace and then covered up her pregnancy with the murder of her husband. But even then, God did not give up on David, but sent a prophet, Nathan to call David back to the Lord by cleansing him and transforming him. David’s prayer is a great place to start that will allow God to move in America the way God needs to move, David wrote:

Psalms 51:10-13

“Create in me a pure heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me. Do not cast me from your presence or take your Holy Spirit from me. Restore to me the joy of your salvation and grant me a willing spirit, to sustain me. Then I will teach transgressors your ways, so that sinners will turn back to you.”

I think that is God Calling Our Nation, where almost nothing shocks people:

**“GOD’S CALL TO AMERICA – GOD’S ANSWERS”
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“TO NOT GIVE UP DOING GOOD-BECAUSE GOD WILL NOT GIVE UP ON YOU”

LESSON #3: “THE ATTACK ON THE FAMILY”

Continuing the Hope Looks Up study on “God’s Call to America and God’s Answers”. The cultural wars are quite real and, in this lesson, we look at the four-pronged cultural attack on the family in America.

Cultural Attack on Family in America

Public opinion polls of the last 25 years show an interesting inconsistency in American attitudes about the family. Most people in this country in survey after survey believe that the family as an institution is in serious trouble; but at the same time, they are certain that their own family is doing fine.

A survey by Massachusetts Mutual Life Insurance Company produced this typical contradictory result. When asked to assess the strength of ‘Family Values’ in the society at large, survey respondents painted a gloomy portrait: 65% felt that those values were ‘Declining’ with heavy majorities agreeing with the statement “It’s harder to be a parent than it used to be.” While the same people radiated optimism and satisfaction in their personal families. In this study 67% described themselves as ‘very’ or ‘extremely satisfied’ with their own family life, identical percentages rated relationships with their children as ‘Good’ or ‘Excellent’. A recent Gallup poll found 93% consider family life ‘very important’ with a similarly hefty percentage saying that spending time with family members, 91% provided them with the greatest sense of fulfillment in their lives.

Why do these conflicting concepts coexist? How can the overall conditions of the American family possibly be so bad when a majority of the citizens of America feel so richly satisfied in their relationships? One columnist said this perplexing attitude that prevails is: “I’m ok, but you’re not, syndrome.” Hundreds of millions of Americans apparently believe that their pleasant domestic relationships represent a blessed exception, a rare island of sanity in an ocean of insecurity and unhappiness. Why should so many assume the family is falling apart when my own firsthand knowledge tells me all is going well?

The answer I believe involves the influence of the popular culture and the impact it has on the family values. Whether we talk about entertainment media, written media, accepted normal lifestyles or even the general discussion of many people; we immediately see that popular culture clearly demonstrates an uncompromising contempt for conventional family values. The music industry shamelessly promotes promiscuity: motion pictures focus relentlessly on family dysfunction and divorce; and television programs broadcast the deadly message that kids know better than their doltish and irrelevant parents.

So, the contrast between private contentment and public pessimism allows this huge chasm of their own worldview and the worldview of popular culture. These popular culture views have become so deeply ingrained in our national consciousness that few Americans even dismiss them as the destructive distortions that they really are.

Leading the way in the promotion of destructive family values by popular cultural ideas in the last 25 years has been the proliferation of sexual adventurism and the focus on physical pleasure as an end to itself in the words of popular music and the focus on the power of lust. This willingness to not only embrace promiscuity but present it as the only option has been destructive. I will not quote any of the songs that glorify promiscuity over the last 25 years but suffice it to say, they are way beyond, “raunchy lyrics” or “obscene material.” They openly support date rape, obscene use of females, sadomasochism, including genital injuries, death, and injury of the female partner.

Professor Alan Bloom has written extensively about the rock-in-roll industry and concludes that the business “has all the moral dignity of drug trafficking.” In the closing chapter of his book, “The Closing of the American Mind.” He paints this unforgettable picture.

“Picture a 13-year-old boy sitting in the living room of his family home doing his math assignment while wearing his headphones. He enjoys the liberties that have been won over the centuries by the alliance of philosophic truths and political heroism, consecrated by the blood of martyrs, he is provided with comfort and leisure living in the most productive economy every known to mankind, science has penetrated the secrets of nature in order to provide him with the marvelous life-like electronic sound and image reproductions that he is enjoying. And in what does all this progress culminate. A pubescent child whose body throbs with orgasmic rhythms, whose feelings are articulated in hymns about the joys of onanism or the killing of parents, whose ambition is to win fame and wealth by imitating the drag queen who makes the music. In short, life is made into a nonstop commercially prepackaged sexual fantasy of promiscuity and violence.”

The erotic references on network television are neither as intense nor as omnipresent as those in popular music. But to a surprising extent they convey the same underlying message. That promiscuous sex should be viewed as an end to itself, a glorious form of recreation that has nothing to do with responsibility or commitment. In fact, television treatments of romantic relationships strongly suggest that sensuality is most satisfying when it is shared outside of marriage, and that long-term relationships serve to diminish the pleasure of the partners.

Anyone who doubts that commercial TV regularly and powerfully encourages casual promiscuous sex is someone who hasn’t been watching commercial TV. Whether it is daytime TV with the potpourri of tangled love affairs or nighttime TV where perfect strangers are having intimate relations the day they meet or even sit-coms where promiscuity is the accepted behavior of all children and parents, the message is overwhelming. This is something that you should do.

What is God’s Call to America Concerning Temptation & Promiscuity?

What does God say is the answer to the temptation of promiscuity? First, God is very clear in the 10 commandments speaking of the sin of adultery and the sin of coveting. The idea of indiscriminate sexual relationships is forbidden in many ways in the Bible. The Bible speaks very clearly to men

Proverbs 5:15-20 specifically says,

“May your fountain be blessed, and may you rejoice in the wife of your youth... Why, my son, be intoxicated with another man’s wife? Why embrace the bosom of the wayward woman?”

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The Bible says that a promiscuous person is one who is living only in their earthly nature, **Colossians 3:5** and lists many things that are in this earthly nature that are to be put away: they include, sexual immorality, impurity, evil desire, they are all idolatry. The teaching of **Hebrews 13:4** sums up the teachings God has about sexual promiscuity in our lives:

Hebrews 13:4

“Marriage should be honored by all, and the marriage bed kept pure; for God will judge the adulterer and all the sexually immoral.”

Promiscuity has often been the attraction to idolatrous beliefs, and historically it is the basis of most idolatry. It is opposed to the teaching of God; God never promotes promiscuity because of the effect it leaves in a life.

The second cultural attack against the family has been the maligning of marriage. The motion picture industry has presented men as cruel and domineering husbands that need to be killed to escape them. They have had series of movies, Stepfather I, II and III to show that when a family falls short of what a man wants, he might just kill them all. The handsome husband has also often been the lead and although he is impeccably handsome and presents himself well to the outside world, he is shown as cold-hearted and often a bloody beast under the surface.

This is a theme that surfaces in film after film showing couples who enjoy superficially sound relationships, but in the world of today’s feature films, marital bliss is most often a trap and a deception in which your spouse may become your deadly enemy virtually overnight. Husbands are most often characterized as the betraying and dangerous partners, but wives also do their share of homicidal double-dealing. Many other films highlight the emptiness and cruelty of married life. We have moved to the point in films where these same events often happen between people, but no marriage is involved. It is just the unwinding of a bad relationship homosexual or heterosexual with the idea that without marriage it is easier to get away from this awful person.

Why would the entertainment media have such a bias towards happy and successful marriages?

This is part of the subtlety of the cultural war against marriage. The industry has decided that “happy marriages do not sell!” The most striking aspect of this is the avalanche of major movies that portray troubled and nightmarish marriages or even the absence of marriage is that their impact is seldom counteracted by pictures that portray relationships between husband and wife in more positive terms.

No sane observer would ever suggest that the entertainment industry make only films that glorify marriage as an uninterrupted panorama of sweetness and light. The problems that real people encounter in intimate relations are too dramatic and too absorbing to be ignored by the industry. Nevertheless, the current fascination with the most disastrous, bizarre, and destructive family situations goes well beyond the normal tendency to focus on the dramatic, real-life difficulties, and amounts to an attack against the very institutions of marriage, especially marriage between a man and a woman. It also shows in the percentage of shows, movies and TV where the lead characters are single, widowed or divorced. Although almost 2/3 of the United States is married or has been married, the percentage of lead roles where the person is happily married is almost non-existent.

Innocence and decency were the early marks of television as they wanted to be invited into the homes of Americans; but those traits were soon replaced by deeply troubled families, marriages, and relationships that highlighted the problems that were shown and belittled the fact that any happiness was present.

What is God’s answer to the present cultural war about marriage between a woman and a man?

First, God instituted marriage and created a woman so that man would have a valid and complete partner. When God had asked Adam, the first man, to name the animals-he did. But he also said to God, *“there is no one in this group for me.”* So, God miraculously took a large piece of Adam’s side and used it as the raw material to make Adam a partner. God put them together and pronounced the relationship good. God has always been one who supports marriage unless it takes away the faith of a believer by marrying an unbeliever.

Once again, the summation of God’s thinking about marriage is found in:

Hebrews 13:4,

“Marriage should be honored by all, and the marriage bed kept pure, for God will judge the adulterer and the sexually immoral.”

The Bible also tells us the answer of God as to when we should get married.

I Corinthians 7:36

“If anyone is worried that he might not be acting honorably toward the woman he is engaged to, and if his passions are too strong and he feels he ought to marry, he should. They should get married.”

The third cultural attack on the values of the traditional family has been the encouragement of illegitimacy. The move towards the promotion of out-of-wedlock births has exploded in the cultural trend-setters in our nation. It is widespread in actors, in singers, in sports, in professors, and in influencers. What was once a society that concealed the more obvious of moral peccadillos and was often hypocritical in doing it, has really changed. To a surprising extent that has almost reversed today. A conventional marriage might cause more embarrassment to an aspiring sex symbol than casually conceiving a baby with a boyfriend. These challenges play a strong role in the private life of these cultural trend setters. Surprisingly, television has played an even more prominent role than feature films in promoting childbearing outside of marriage. Caryn James said it well when she said, *“Obviously the boom in single parenthood means that pregnancy has replaced weddings as that special event used to perk up ratings.”*

The consequences have been severe. The National Center for Children in Poverty, the American Enterprise Institute and the National Center for Criminal Justice combined reports to show some of the devastating handicaps faced by the offspring of unwed mothers. These children are more than twice as likely to repeat a grade in school, 33% to 13%; than children living with both parents, more than three times more likely, 17% to 5% to be suspended or expelled from school and more than four times more likely to be assigned to a juvenile correctional facility. Amazingly enough, children raised

by never-married mothers were nearly three times more likely, 39% to 14% to spend more than ten years on welfare than children raised by divorced women.

What would God say to America about the encouragement of illegitimacy and what would be His answers?

When God ruled a people as their God and their leader, the Hebrew nation, He gave several laws that would apply to this question. He said that those who have sexual relations, even in the worst of circumstances if they were not married or pledged to be married, were to be married. He dealt with all the circumstances that could produce a child and asked that the people marry and raise the child together. God loves the illegitimate child but when He was in charge of a nation, He gave laws that would keep the number as low as possible.

The last great cultural attack on the family has been the undermining of the relationships between parents and children. No idea has been more aggressively and completely promoted in films, popular music, and television than the idea that children know best and that parents are corrupt, hypocritical clowns who must learn decency and integrity from their enlightened offspring.

In addition to the common comical roles as bumbling and bozos, Mom and Dad are also frequently portrayed in a far darker, more disturbing light. The emphasis on the common statement, that “Whatever a child says is true, they have not learned to lie” has forced the school system, bus drivers, and public transport people to all mount cameras to verify what really happened when a child and an authority disagree on the facts.

Ultimately the idea that children will teach their parents, that adolescents will show the way for all the rest of us, is unfair to those on both sides of the generation gap. Young people, however, are its chief victims, since the very idea that kids know best forces them to accept an intolerable burden. They are expected to reinvent the wheel for a weary humanity and denied the chance to benefit from the experience of all those who have gone before. In the past, the process of growing up has been considered difficult enough, in its own right, without taking on the additional responsibility of saving unfortunate adults.

Those who are trying to shape culture by completely changing culture are adding a significant contribution to the ongoing confusion about marriage in America. Their antifamily messages-promoting promiscuity, maligning marriage, encouraging illegitimacy, and undermining parental authority, may not make it impossible to maintain a solid marriage or to raise decent kids, but they certainly make it harder than it has to be.

What does God have to say about putting “kids in charge” or the family? First, over 20 times in the Old Testament and 7 times in the New Testament, God commands the parents to teach their children. It is an obvious desire of God that all parents teach their children and never once does God command children to teach their parents. In a passage that explains what God really wants with children and parents, Solomon writes to his sons.

Proverbs 17:6

“Children’s children are a crown to the aged, and parents are the pride of their children.”

God has the prophet Malichi write about the birth and life of His Son Jesus Christ.

Malichi 3:20-21.

“See, I will send the prophet Elijah to you before that great and dreadful day of the Lord comes. He will turn the hearts of the parents to the children and the hearts of the children to their parents; or else I will come and strike the land with total destruction.”

The destruction of the family will be the destruction of any nation. Perhaps the intention of God is best summed up by these words from:

Colossians 3:20-21

“Children, obey your parents in everything, for this pleases the Lord. Fathers do not embitter your children, or they will become discouraged.”

LESSON #4: “BEHAVING BADLY”

Hope Looks Up Ministries continues to look at God’s Call to America and God’s Scriptural Answers. It may seem that cultural wars have no beginning, but our present cultural war had a clear line drawn in the sand when the entertainment industry and those wanting a vast change in American culture declared war on the Church, Christianity and the values that are taught in the Bible. It may not have seemed that important at the time, just another crazy idea for the movies and for entertainment; but the way it was staged and the lack of response to an overwhelming backlash from Christian America made it evident that those who wanted a cultural change were declaring war on Christ and Christian values.

Those Wanting Change in American Culture, Declared War on The Church

It occurred in 1988 when the movie industry announced that they were going to produce and release a blockbuster film called “The Last Temptation of Christ.” It should have been called; The last things Jesus would never do. It was blasphemous, a devilish spoof of Jesus that pictured him as having an affair with Mary Magdalene, using his powers to hurt people, seeking revenge on people, speaking in a way Jesus would never speak, and basically being more of an Anti-Christ than The Christ. It was to be directed by Martin Scorsese, a leading director in Hollywood at the time and was a direct affront to the Church.

The Church rallied to oppose the movie and on August 11, 1988, more than 25,000 people gathered at Universal City, California, in the largest protest ever mounted against the release of a motion picture. They were dismissed by the industry and their speakers as a part of the lunatic fringe of religious fanatics and right-wing extremists. Mike Duffy of the Detroit Free Press wrote about the group that criticized the film, he said they were “a sour, fun-loathing people,” and went on to write, “they are the American ignoramus faction that is perpetually geeked up on self-righteous bile. . .” And concluded, “They looked for Reds under every bed with Joe McCarty.” “They cheered the police dogs in Selma. . .And now, the know nothing wacky pack has latched onto Martin Scorsese and ‘Last Temptation of Christ.’

Let me share some of those wacky pack that protested: The National Council of Catholic Bishops; the National Catholic Conference; the Southern Baptist Convention; the Eastern Orthodox Church of America; the Archbishop of Canterbury; the Archbishop of Paris; 20 U.S. House of Representatives; the Christian Democratic Party of Italy; and Mother Teresa.

One of Hollywood’s own, Ken Wales, former vice president at Disney Studios and veteran producer of more than 25 films, spoke at the rally to the protestors and said, “As a member of this industry I wish that there were hundreds of stars and writers and directors standing here with me. Wales spoke from his heart and said, “I suppose they are out protesting toxic waste! Let me tell you, there is toxic waste in other areas besides our rivers. That is what happens in the pollution of our minds, our souls, and our spirit.!”

The executives at Universal remained remarkably insensitive to the concern of Christians. They began to involve the First Amendment and acted as though it was their duty to offer a movie that millions of the potential patrons found offensive and ungodly. They had passed on filming the book, ‘The Satanic Verses’ by Salman Rushdie, a book about a revisionists view of Mohammed but intended to still release this attack on Jesus Christ! All the other studios gave their formal support and endorsed Universal’s position on the film. Jack Valenti, president of the Motion Picture Association of America issued a statement and declared, “The key issue, the only issue, is whether or not self-appointed groups can prevent a film from being exhibited to the public. The major companies of MFAA support MCA/Universal in its absolute fight to offer to the people whatever movie it chooses.” This was after the movie industry had changed a line in a Disney film ‘White Fang’ written by Jack London because it was ‘anti-wolf.’ They changed the script in a lesbian film ‘Red Sneakers’ to please the lesbian audience so that the star of the film did not leave an older female lover to go with a man, but instead left an older woman who had become a mother figure to her for a man. The movie industry also reacted to the religious leaders of a Hopi Indian village who thought a scene in ‘Dark Wind’ by Robert Redford was a criticism of how their village worshipped and changed the movie to make it less sacrilegious. People from animal rights, lesbian rights, and Native American Rights had all been consulted about movies that involved them; but Scorsese and his backers never consulted a single Christian about the film, “The Last Temptation of Christ.”

Martin Scorsese was nominated as Best Director for this film at the Oscars, and this was the first and only time that a movie director has been nominated as the best director for a film that lost well over Ten Million Dollars.

Veteran star Mickey Rooney, one of the few established Hollywood figures to speak up against this unchristian show said, “The Last Temptation of Christ” provides a good example of the film establishment rallying around a bad film to protect its own selfish interest. . . That film, no matter what its defenders say, was a slap in the face to Christians everywhere, but Hollywood cradled the picture as if were a remake of “Citizen Kane.” This key event finalized the split between the Entertainment Media, much of the news media and those who wanted to change American culture. The Church and especially Christianity were now the uneducated, tradition loving, suspended anchor on America that was stifling the nation and preventing our nation from having the best life possible. We will take two more looks at the scope of this battle with Christianity within the cultural battle to see how the faithful, the clergy, the Church leaders, and those who believe the Bible as the Word of God have been further maligned in this cultural war.

In the ongoing war on traditional values, the assault on organized faith represents the front to which the entertainment industry has most closely committed itself. On no other issue do the perspectives of the show business elite and those of the public at large differ more dramatically. Time and again, the producers and leaders who shape our movies, television, and popular music have gone out of their way to affront the religious sensibilities of ordinary Americans.

To maintain a sense of perspective, it is important to remember that this represents a relatively recent development in entertainment history. For the first fifty years of its existence, the movie capital produced numerous entertainment movies that celebrated or at least respected the major religious

traditions. Blockbuster hits like: Samson and Delilah; David and Bathsheba; Quo Vadis; The Robe, The Ten Commandments; and Ben Hur were specifically designed to appeal to the Christian/Jewish community, and each of these films became the nation’s top box office hit the year they were released.

The apparent eagerness of some of the entertainment personalities to belittle religious believers is a puzzling dilemma, for people whose professional survival depends entirely on pleasing the people. It stems from a fundamental failure to recognize the heartfelt commitment to the Christian faith that characterizes a significant percentage of the American population. 65 percent of Americans say they pray every week and the attendance at places of worship each weekend is still six times greater than the weekend attendance at the movie theaters. But the cultural war continues, and it continues to intensify.

Once this war was in full bloom, the entertainment industry especially movies and popular music began to insult the faithful believers in the audience with much of the entertainment it produced. The popular music industry followed suit and often sang lyrics about the most repulsive and non-Christian aspects of society in our nation.

This is where ‘Behaving Badly’ has become the goal and often the norm for those who would like to change traditional American culture. Of all the themes immediately featured after the war was declared with the failed release of “The Last Temptation of Christ,” none were more glamorized and featured than cannibalism. From the “Silence of the Lambs” to all the movies that followed about cannibalism it was intense. Formerly, the sure sign of the least civilized of all people groups and a sign of total cultural depravity was cannibalism and here it was shown in various forms including the movie portrayal of the eating of human flesh. It can be seen as nothing more than another shot at believers who respect the human body as made by God.

The general public rejected almost every one of these movies that followed “The Silence of the Lambs” and the baleful box office performance of the bulk of these pictures indicates that there is hardly an overwhelming popular demand for movies about the consumption of corpses. The entertainment industries’ compulsion to produce such shows is an ongoing and idiotic effort to shock the audience and to obliterate all remaining taboos, rather than a commercially motivated attempt to exploit some hot new trend.

Shortly after the rash of movies that involved cannibalism came a series of movies intended to offend, and again obliterate all taboos, and it focused on incest. Cannibalism and incestuous relationships became common enough in contemporary motion pictures that they began to lose their ability to startle jaded moviegoers, forcing producers to search for new taboos to shatter. They tried some far-out anti-Christian themes: bestiality in “Deliverance” and a few other copy-cat films; demon possession, usually showing the demons/devil as more powerful than anything or anyone else; and many forms of spewing body fluids being prominently shown in a show, especially, vomiting and urination.

These all became major themes of movies and popular music and to a lesser degree television. The culture war had turned from an attack on ideas and values to an all-out attack on believers by taking

the things the Bible supports the least and almost always categorizes them as sin and glorifying these very acts in the entertainment that was shown or preformed.

What Is the Call of God to America in The Area of Behaving Badly?

He says we are to treat Christian brothers and sisters with the type of behavior that will make them want to return to serving God with purity and holiness. He also says, we are to allow the non-Christians in our life to be handled by God.

What does that mean when we see believers 'Behaving Badly'? In the Book of *I Corinthians*, God clearly tells us how we are to treat fellow believers in Christ.

I Corinthians 5:1-8

“It is actually reported that there is sexual immorality among you, and of a kind that even pagans do not tolerate. A man is sleeping with his father’s wife. And you are proud. Shouldn’t you rather have gone into mourning and have put him out of your fellowship, the man who has been doing this? For my part, even though I am not physically present, I am with you in Spirit. As one who is present with you in this way, I have already passed judgment in the name of the Lord Jesus on the one who has been doing this. So, when you have assembled, and I am with you in spirit, and the power of the Lord Jesus is present, hand this man over to Satan for the destruction of the flesh, so that his spirit may be saved on the day of the Lord. Your boasting is not good. Don’t you know that a little yeast leavens the whole batch of dough? Get rid of the old yeast, so that you may be a new unleavened batch—as you really are. For Christ our Passover lamb, has been sacrificed. Therefore, let us keep the festival, not with the old bread leavened with malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.”

The background of the teaching was that a man was living in an incestuous relationship with his stepmother. It was common knowledge in the church and in the community and the Church actually prided themselves in how open minded and accepting they were to have this man and woman in their congregation and allow them all the benefits of being a part of the church. God had a different concept of what they were doing. He did not call it open-minded but instead a point where they need to repent, and they need to put the man out of active membership in the Church.

In fact, the Bible goes ahead in this passage and says that the church should not embrace this man in any way because he will take that as an acceptance of what he is doing and will never change his ways. They are to tell the man and his mistress that they are living like the world, and so they need to live in the world. That continuing to give fellowship from the Church as though the Church was accepting their behavior will not bless them, the Church, the community, or God. In fact, it will diminish the view of the church and Jesus Christ to every non-believer in the community. God says that the man without the shelter of the Church and facing all that Satan will throw at him will be closer to conversion and change than if the church continues to act like what he and his mistress are doing is just fine. The church must stay above the world. We are not allowed by God to “behave badly” and still expect God’s blessings, His protection, or prosperity from Him. The call of God is clear, let the Church be the Church. We need to follow the Word of God and not decide what is the Word of

God. We need to live above the morals of the entertainment industry in every part of our life and lead a life that brings glory to God.

If the Call of God to America is to let Him handle those who are not Believers and are ‘Behaving Badly’; what does that mean?

In that same passage in *1 Corinthians 5:9-10, 12-13a*

“I wrote to you in my letter not to associate with sexually immoral people—not at all meaning the people of this world who are immoral, or the greedy and swindlers, or idolators. In that case you would have to leave the world. . .What business is it of mine to judge those outside the church? Are you not to judge those inside? God will judge those outside.”

Paul had written to the Church in Corinth and touched on the issue about this man and his mistress, but the church had misinterpreted the letter and decided that they were not to associate with anyone who might be immoral. They stopped contact with the world but continued to have fellowship with an immoral man and his mistress in the Church. God intends His people to be a witness to the rest of the world about how God wants them to live. They are to change their world one act at a time by their Christian behavior. Now, we realize that means we are not to live in the same immorality that the world or the counterculture people are promoting; but it also means not to use their same tactics, the same rude and belittling behavior, the same arrogant and condescending tone and most of all the same intent to destroy the person to make your point. The minute you act like them in one way, you have negated your ability to influence them for good.

Those on the outside who are behaving badly are to be under the authority of the rulers put in place to judge them, **Romans 13:1-5** and if that is not a deterrent to their out-of-control ‘Bad Behavior’ then God Himself will be their judge. He is the ultimate Judge, and the Bible says that nations rise and fall based on the Will of God. He puts kings on thrones and removes those who rule based on what is best for the eternal picture.

No where does it say it more clearly than when God wrote in the bible,

Romans 1:28-32

“Furthermore, just as they did not think it worthwhile to retain the knowledge of God, so God gave them over to a depraved mind, so that they do what ought not be done. They have become filled with every kind of wickedness, evil, greed and depravity. They are full of envy, murder, strife, deceit and malice. They are gossips, slanderers, God-haters, insolent, arrogant, and boastful; they invent ways of doing evil; they disobey their parents, they have no understanding, no fidelity, no love, no mercy. Although they knew God’s righteous decree that those who do such things deserve death, they not only continue to do these very things but also approve of those who practice them.”

The Bible is clear for those who will not let God direct any part of their life, who “Behave Badly.” God has clearly written His plan for how He will interact with their life. He will allow them to stay separated from Him. He will not seek them or come after them, but they will be like abandoned people, living on their own and reaping the results of all the decisions they make. He will remove all restraints and that will allow their sin to run its inevitable course of reaping what you sow. It is a

judicial term, 'hand them over', like handing a prisoner over to his sentence. Then the result of this life ruined by 'Bad Behavior' will reap an eternal reward of judgment and punishment. The end of a person "Behaving Badly" and incapable of repenting to God for their lifestyle will be they reap the destruction eternally that they sowed in their life.

LESSON #5: “DEMEANING THE FAITHFUL & THE FATHERLAND”

In the ongoing battle to change the values and morals of America, the counterculture has set a target on the Christian faith of America and has produced, written, and spoken many directives about the failure of American faith and the fact that it serves a very limited unintelligent and backwards minority of the nation.

This is surprising when surveys as recent as three years ago showed that a majority of Americans believe: there is a personal God; their prayers do get answered and that faith/religion is fairly important to their life. Less than 10 % of Americans answered yes that describes me when surveyors asked: “Would you describe yourself as totally non-religious, not belonging to a church, not attending a church, and not having religious affiliation.”

This is in stark contrast to the surveys done about the entertainment media; the news media; University Officials; and other leaders of the counter-culture movement. They show that over 60% of the people in these categories claim no religious affiliation at all; this number increases by 15 % for all those in these categories that are under 40 years of age. The most interesting item in these surveys was the difference on whether there is too little religious influence in America; 51% of the regular Americans said yes compared to only 2% of the counterculture leaders who said there was too little religious influence.

Perhaps the most telling question of the survey was, “What was their greatest objective in life and over 50% checked, ‘have a closer relationship to God,’ as their top priority. In the light of such figures, the persistent hostility to religious values by those of the counterculture movement are not just peculiar, they are positively insane for those trying to make money.

Rather than readjusting their view of reality, to come to terms with the religious feeling in America, most of those in the counterculture movement simply choose to ignore what the surveys tell them. They retreat ever deeper into their precious and sealed off world in the academia ivory towers, their beach houses in Malibu or the high rises of New York and Washington D.C. They continue to write off religious believers as so many slope-browed bumpkins who get their clothes from Kmart and their ideas from Fox News. A few of the best-informed counterculture leaders may be vaguely aware of this research, but even those who know the studies stubbornly refuse to believe them. They often cite the fact that they know no one who regularly goes to Church, and so assume that no one does. The answer of course is that their range of acquaintance is radically unrepresentative of the American population. The only committed Christians they ever see are the evangelists that occasionally appear on television.

Popular Culture Has Personally Rejected Institutions of Organized Faith

The blind spot toward religion also reflects the fact that so many of the people who shape our popular culture have personally rejected the established institutions of organized faith. The previously cited

survey of key television executives indicates that even though 93% said they received a ‘religious upbringing,’ only 7% currently describe themselves as ‘regular’ participants in church or synagogue services. If they have ‘outgrown’ the religious conventions of their own childhood, they naturally expect that the rest of the country will follow their admirable example. In terms of its religious dimension, as in so many others, the vision of reality that appears in our entertainment, our news media and our university teaching is a world is one that they have created in their own image. The reports are in and many in these counterculture positions have regularly said they believe only about 5% of Americans go to Church or synagogue on a weekend. They do not feel that is a large enough percentage to worry about or listen to.

Movies and TV shows have long had productions that insist on erasing even the most rudimentary religious feelings from the characters they create. In one season, Hollywood released three big-budget medical melodramas— ‘Dying Young’ starring Julia Roberts; ‘The Doctor’ starring William Hurt and ‘Regarding Henry’ starring Harrison Ford. In all three films, the stars faced dire illnesses and long hospitalization in the throes of life-or-death health battles. At no point in these films did the main characters or any of their friends or family members turn for even one moment to the power of prayer, ask to see a member of the clergy or the hospital chaplain, or in any way invoke the name of God into their life and death struggle. We know that the number of atheists go down not only in foxholes but also on the operating table, yet the movies refused to show religious reflection on the part of any of these vulnerable people in these films. It was fundamentally unrealistic. It was no longer a film retelling life; it was propaganda for the counterculture movement.

Even the sweet and folksy film, ‘Doc Holiday’, set in an idyllic little town in South Carolina that so woos him with their charm that he decides to give up his dreams of glitz and glory in Los Angeles and settle in this new town and be there doctor had an interesting caveat. In many ways it could be any small town in South Carolina with one big exception. There is no Church in town in the movie and no one ever goes to Church. Can you name any town in South Carolina with a shopping area, library, an empty Doctors office and city officers that would not have at least one Church?

Even the films and television shows that reflect religion in a more positive light usually put them in a setting that does not relate to the ordinary urban life of today. It may be England of the 1920’s, Chariots of Fire; or Tender Mercies set in a small dusty town in Texas that seemed more like 1930 than 1990; or even Horton Foote about the life of a Godly woman, Geraldine Page, which was set in rural Texas in the 1950’s. In these nostalgic affirmations of that ‘old-time religion,’ the church is sufficiently distant from the daily life that most of us lead that it represents no threat to the militant secularism that the movie industry embraces so enthusiastically: religion always remains reassuringly irrelevant.

We are all familiar with popular music’s fascination with Satanic themes, pentagrams, severed goat heads, and other Satanic symbols that adored their recordings both in picture and in word. Even if they were doing this for publicity and to sell their music, the frequent emphasis on the dark side and its symbols; no matter how shallow and self-serving bears witness to the estrangement of the mainstream music business from conventional religious values.

God’s influence is all but invisible on American television. A TV screenwriter, Lloyd Billingsley observed in Christianity Today, “I cannot remember any episode of any show in which a character was

religiously motivated to do or not to do some important act. In the unwritten constitution of television, the separation of church and screen is strictly adhered to, even in family programs. God is effectively written out of existence (except the constant phrases like, “Oh, my God,”) and Judeo-Christian values on such things as adultery and divorce that are disregarded and ignored.

In a 1992 study by Northwestern University, Dayton University and Duke University Medical Center evaluated more than 400 productions of the four major networks for religious content and images. They concluded that only 5.4 % of the characters had an identifiable religious affiliation, although 80% of Americans claim some affiliation with an organized faith. In summing up their report, the researchers concluded, “Television’s treatment of religion tends to be best characterized as abuse through neglect.”

The distortions and insults about faith and organized religion will continue unabated as long as the counterculture movement continues its overall campaign against judgment and values. A war against standards leads logically and inevitably to hostility to faith and religion because it is this Christian faith or religious faith that provides the ultimate basis for all standards.

The God of the Bible is not a moral relativist, and He is most definitely judgmental. The very nature of the Judeo-Christian God is a Lord who makes distinctions. In the book of Genesis, God creates the world by dividing the light from the darkness, dividing the water above from the water beneath, dividing the water from the dry land, and so on. In a traditional Jewish home, they say farewell to the Sabbath every Saturday night, and divide the holy day just passed from the more ordinary week ahead, reciting a blessing that praises God for distinctions. To the extent that we as human beings feel that we are created in God’s image, and that we are fundamentally different from all animals, we make distinctions, too, and we have standards.

This is the position that is honored by millions upon millions of our fellow citizens but it is regularly ridiculed in the mass media and academic circles. It is a strong part of the countercultural war on the values and traditions of America.

Call of God to America About the Demeaning of Faith and the Faithful?

I feel the call of God to America, Christians stand with your faith and defend the truths of the Bible. Popular or not, they are right and the way God intended people to live. To those who would seek to remove all Judeo/Christian influences in America. I think God is saying, you cannot escape the results of the choices you make.

Jesus was very clear in **John 15** where He spoke about the animosity that would always be present between those who believe and those who do not.

John 15:15-20

“If the world hates you, keep in mind that it hated me first. If you belonged to the world, it would love you as its own. As it is, you do not belong to the world, but I have chosen you out of the world. That is why the world hates you. Remember what I have told you, A servant is not greater than his master. If they persecuted me, they will persecute you also. If they obey my teaching, they will obey yours also. “

Jesus clearly taught that the animosity between believers and those who live without faith, here called the world, have animosity because they do not believe the same things. If they would have listened to God then they would listen to you; but since they are unwilling to listen to God, they will not listen to you. You cannot compromise your beliefs to span the gulf between you and the non-believer. In fact,

Titus 1:9 tells us.

“We must hold firmly to the trustworthy message as it has been taught, so that he can encourage others by sound doctrine and refute those who oppose it.”

But Jesus also had in this passage, some clear teaching for those who would not accept the teaching that He offered. He said,

John 15:21-23

“They will treat you this way because of my name, for they do not know the one who sent me. If I had not come and spoken to them, they would not be guilty of sin; but now they have no excuse for their sin. Whoever hates me hates my Father.”

There are some areas of conflict that are so key to the future that God must and will handle them. Whether it means God quits trying to guide them.

Romans 1:28 *“God gives them over to their own mind,”*

This will ultimately mean destruction or that God can guide them back to a point of belief; the battle ultimately is between them and God. The reason they oppose Christianity and the values and teachings of the Christian faith is that they oppose God. It is not a conflict with individual Christians although it often seems that way, it is a battle with God over whether He exists. The choices they make will determine their future and the future of all the areas they control; and this could be continued life and prosperity or it could mean destruction and elimination.

The counterculture movement has also directed much of its message to change the culture of America to a more diversified and encompassing culture by attacking the present American culture as a by-product of an Imperialist Nation. So, they have often taken the description Ronald Reagan used to describe the Soviet Union and have applied it to America. Let me quote Chalmers Johnson, professor emeritus of political science at the University of California, San Diego. He wrote in his book, ‘The Last Days of the American Republic’, “When Ronald Reagan coined the phrase, ‘evil empire,’ he was referring to the Soviet Union, and I basically agreed with him that the USSR needed to be contained and checkmated. But today it is the U. S. that is widely perceived as an evil empire and world forces are gathering to stop us.”

Many American counterculture promoters, including tenured professors, proudly volunteer to join that international anti-American effort. Viewing America as a threat to World Peace and a menace to the security and prosperity of other nations, they reject traditional notions of patriotism. Robert Jensen, a professor since 1992 in journalism at the University of Texas said in his book, ‘Citizens of the Empire: The Struggle to Claim our Humanity,’ boldly asserted, “It is time to scrap patriotism. More

specifically, it is crucial to scrap patriotism in today’s empire, the United States, where patriotism is not only a bad idea but literally a threat to the survival of the planet.”

The strongest most direct evidence against the indictment of America as a destructive imperial power comes from the consideration of the progress of those nations most closely involved with the United States after losing wars to the United States. But that has not stopped the counter culturists from declaring what an awful nation we are and that our heroes are not heroes but usually were the villains in all the conflicts.

Oliver Stone, the two-time Oscar-winner in accepting the “Torch of Liberty Award,” from the American Civil Liberties Union in 1987 said, “Our own country has become a military-industrial monolith dedicated to the Cold War, in many ways as rigid and as corrupt at the top as our rivals the Soviets. We have become the enemy, with a security state now second to none. Today we have come to live in total hatred, fear, and the desire to destroy. Bravo, fear and conformity have triumphed.”

The members of the military by no means stand alone as targets of contempt for those who embrace counterculture ideas. This extends to demeaning the faithful as we have seen and the American businessperson. The counterculture has often linked capitalism with criminality, and pictured the American businessperson, the backbone of our nation as the vilest and most corrupt of all people. We will not even have to prove the way they have maligned policemen and shown their only police heroes are those who operate outside the system, are disrespectful of their bosses, refuse to accept authority, and are anti-system heroes.

The counterculture view of our religious, military, business and law-enforcement institutions coincide with their overall vision of America as a society that is cruel, corrupt, and hopelessly unjust.

The Call to America – Be Thankful

The Call to American I feel is to be thankful for all that America has provided and the opportunities it has given to you. God has promised that he will establish nations and remove them. He will place kings and rulers on their thrones and take them off their thrones. He will allow some to have a long posterity but others will disappear and be gone forever.

Romans 13:1-4 The Bible says

“Let everyone be subject to the governing authorities, for there is no authority except that which God has established. The authorities that exist have been established by God. Consequently, whoever rebels against the authority is rebelling against what God has instituted, and those who do so will bring judgment on themselves. The 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 you will be commended. For the one in authority is God’s servant for your good. But if you are wrong be afraid, for rulers do not bear the sword for no reason.”

It is clear that God has a providential outlook that is broader and more enlightened than our view of the future. So, to bridge the gap between what we know and what God knows, God has set up many rules and commands. One of those rules is that we are to honor the ones who are in control of our nation. We do not have the right to disagree with them, unless it is over a moral issue that would

violate the Bible’s teachings. Because disagreement often leads to disobedience. The end result is the land is in chaos and all are hurt and affected by it. I feel that God would be saying, work with the nation that feeds you and clothes you and help in all ways that you can to make it the very best nation that it can be. That includes support for the institutions that hold it together. When these disappear or are removed there is nothing that will hold the nation together.

LESSON #6: “ELEVATING UGLY TRAITS”

The culture war in America has led to the elevation of some very ugly traits. What once was considered too crude for enlightened culture has been replaced by crude and profane talk and even in the most supposed-sophisticated audiences the behavior borders on a mirror of the crude, rude, and most disgusting speaking traits found in our society.

Ugly Traits - Foul Language and Violence

Foul Language Crude & Profane Talk

Another place the counterculture influence has been felt is in the infatuation with foul language. Whether it is the movies, TV, news casts, reports and even docudramas; if one profane word is good then 10-12 in the same article or scene is even better. It is interesting that the American population spoke out often and loud about how little they liked the increase of profanity in all areas of public exposure, but since they were not listened to but demeaned for such narrow-minded thinking, they have also increased their use of profanity.

Why would counterculture people ignore the public’s concern with the overuse of ‘street language’ in films, TV programs, reports, news articles, and other common public discussions? There is no pressure from any outside group asking them to use more F-words; S-words; or A-words. Richard Pine, a noted literary agent said, “No one ever walked out of a movie and said, “Gee,” that was a great picture, but the only problem was they didn’t say F---enough. Who thinks like that?”

Who indeed”? who dictates the idiotic overrepresentation of a few crude Angol-Saxonisms in today’s entertainment and news media? This is especially true in the absence of any discernible audience demand for the inclusion of such words. Part of this stems from those who want to change culture by thumbing their noses at all conventional values. When society limited even the use of ‘hell’ or ‘damn’ in most public settings, the current opportunity to pepper their presentations with literally hundreds of far harsher words represents a recently won and deeply cherished freedom. They often seem determined to use that freedom simply to demonstrate they can do it.

How does that live itself out? Let me itemize one way; parents that seem very welcome to the idea of bringing their 4–7-year-olds to films that are PG might be surprised. Over 56% of all PG films used the A-word and 40% used the S-word. Insisting on this sort of language in so many films for kids is not only unnecessary, it is offensive. So, barrier after barrier falls and one year the phrase is used ‘Son-of-a-B, on a TV program for adults, later at night; but quite honestly the same phrase will show up in another year or two on a program designed for children. Many terms that were once considered profanity are now spoken regularly and without restraint in entertainment, news and cultural entertainment. The worst effect is it is not that difficult to hear youngsters use the same phrases and words in their conversations with each other.

The infatuation with foul language is so prevalent that it is almost impossible to get people to recognize just how prevalent it is. The fascination with foul language may be the most obvious example of ugly traits in popular culture, I call it counterculture, but it is far from the only one.

Violence, Brutality, and Murder

The exalting of violence, brutality, and even murder has caused far more serious sorts of antisocial behavior with devastating consequences for our American society and even our civilization.

A wealth of scientific studies in recent years have removed most of the remaining doubts about the link between make believe brutality and real-world aggression. One glorification of an ugly trait is violence, and it is pushed much more by the entire entertainment industry: film, TV, popular music; and the news media as it glorifies and makes heroes out of mass murderers, shooters involved in the myriads of shooting incidents, and trials about murder or mass violence than other groups of people. But the facts are in and such experts as, Daniel Linz, Professor of Psychology at the University of California, Santa Barbara, and George Comstock, Professor of Communications at Syracuse University reached identical conclusions by going back over 40 years and took the most valuable research projects that attempted to gauge the impact of television violence on children and young adults. Summarizing his conclusions, Comstock said, “There is a very solid relationship between viewing antisocial portrayals or violent episodes and behaving antisocially. It holds up regardless of the sex of the child watching.”

Perhaps the most telling was a landmark study by two psychologists at the University of Illinois, Dr. L. Rowell Huesman and Dr. Leonard Eron who found that those kids who watched significant amounts of TV violence at ages eight to ten, were consistently more likely to commit more violent crimes or to engage in child or spouse abuse by age thirty. When publishing their findings, they wrote, “We believe that heavy exposure to televised violence is one of the causes of aggressive behavior, crime and violence in our society. Television violence affects youngsters of all ages, of both genders, at all socioeconomic levels and all levels of intelligence. . . It cannot be denied or explained away.”

The body counts in films is incredible with over 260 in each of the last three “Die Hard” movies. What was once considered excessive, 7-8 deaths shown in the film or show, is now surpassed often in the first scene of the film or TV show. Let me illustrate, when Jimmy Cagney filmed “Public Enemy” moviegoers were appalled at the dark story of the rise and fall of a minor gangster. It was called by a reviewer of the New York Times, a picture of sensational and sometimes sensationally incoherent murders” ending in “general slaughter.” In fact, this “general slaughter” amounted to a grand total of eight deaths in the course of the entire picture, and each one of those killings took place off of the screen. No graphic deaths were shown.

The statements of those fighting the culture wars and elevating ugly traits admit they are often in a race to raise the bar on violence, blow-up scenes and other acts of violence that top whatever has been filmed before. Now, isn’t that a noble cause? But Tim Appelo reported in Entertainment Weekly, “Big budget picture now feature the kind of nonstop gore that used to play only at midnight shows.” Comparing the vivid violence in one of today’s splatter extravaganzas with even the darkest of gangster movies in the 1930-1940 era show that we are talking about two different forms of entertainment. The other side of this ugly trait of violence is that it has elevated another ugly trait and that is brutality.

Industry wide, Hollywood is on an industry-wide epidemic that has infected an appalling percentage of contemporary motion pictures, as well as prime time television, popular music, and assorted brutal imagery in every corner of popular culture.

Violent messages are no longer limited to a few feature films per year: they assault the average American child, age 8-21, who watches an average thirty-six hours of television and listens to an average of twenty hours of music each week, to see or hear hundreds of violent films, shows, and music releases each week. Can anyone doubt that this sort of steady exposure exerts a more professional influence on the mass audience than those isolated instances of brutal and controversial films that have turned up from time to time in the past years of entertainment? Evidence already abounds as to the results of that influence. For one thing, the public has been dramatically desensitized by the over-whelming accumulation of violent images. It is far more difficult to frighten or disgust an audience than it has ever been before.

But the industry still tries to justify these excesses by pointing to long-ago releases that once shocked moviegoers or television audiences. The fact that movies and television shows formerly viewed as horrifying are now considered almost laughably tame, in no way demonstrates the inconsequential impact of violence on film; if anything, it argues for the opposite conclusion proving that decades of violent entertainment has succeeded in altering the public’s perceptions and values when it comes to viewing violence.

Only the most jaded nihilist could take comfort from a situation in which bloody scenes deemed unbearably disturbing by past generations are now accepted as an integral element of the entertainment for this generation. The higher level of tolerance for media and news violence may even promote acceptance of the blood-curdling cruelty we experience with increasing frequency in our own neighborhoods and cities. It is hardly a positive development for a society when it loses its ability to feel shocked. Even worse, to promote those shocking scenes as a part of what life really is. It has elevated and often legitimized brutality and violence to a point of endangerment. The Gilbert Goons should be a key sign to us that culture is duplicating what is shown on news and on the screen and those images of bullying can have a very negative long-term effect on much of our American culture.

This violence and brutality are by design. Alan L. J. Pakula said, “Movie violence is like eating salt. The more you eat, the more you need to eat to taste it at all. People are becoming immune to its effects: the death counts have quadrupled, the blast power is increasing by the megaton, and they are becoming deaf to it. They have developed an insatiability for raw sensation. Rob Bottin, who designed the special effects for the Total Recall and Robocop series said, “Anything I make must be something moviegoers haven’t seen before. That means new tricks, which means more money, which means the audience is getting there—what is it now? — eighteen bucks worth. That’s the thinking behind bigger and bigger and bigger. The question we always ask is, “How do we top ourselves? That is the kind of logic that will never show a decrease in violence or brutality on the screens, theaters, and popular music of our culture.

We say that doesn’t affect us in our culture, but that is not true. Vincent Camby of The New York Times did a survey several years ago that showed that among all films released that year, including PG and G called “family films”—62% featured violent fight scenes and 30 % showed “graphic deaths.”

Speaking of elevating the ugly, the movie industry and to some extent television has also added sadistic humor to these on-film grotesque and horrible scenes of brutality, destroyed bodies, and graphic death, After the killing and death, the lead character says some sadistic quip. Many action stars have used that attempt to milk laughs from lacerations. So, we see it creep into culture and where someone used to say, “Oh, shake it off,” now even great injuries are greeted with, “Oh, just laugh it off.”

The effect of this evil trait was summarized by Producer David Putnam shortly after his resignation as president of Columbia Pictures. He said to Bill Moyers in an interview on PBS, “What we think of now as the excess of the Roman circuses where in the end hundreds of thousands of people died, didn’t start that way. They started as legitimate circuses, extremely mild entertainment. But the audience demand for more and more resulted over a period of several hundred years in that form of entertainment becoming more and more bloody, more and more grotesque. Until almost nothing was exempt from being seen at the Roman circuses. The audience’s desire for that increasing level of violence goes way back, deep into the history of humankind. Someone has to say, “Enough” because this is disaster. We are destroying ourselves. Successive societies have destroyed themselves by the failure of their leadership to say, “I know in many respects that’s what you’d like to see, but you know what? It’s bad for us, we’re damaging ourselves. We are untying the fabric of our society.”

AMEN!!

Other Ugly Traits

We have seen other ugly traits elevated by those who would change culture and produce a more open and taboo free culture.

1. **Hostility Towards Heroes** - Great hostility is shown toward heroes. The treatment of past political heroes; athletic heroes; scholarly heroes; scientific heroes; and a host of other cultural icons is now examined through the lens of, do we like what they thought or said; did they have flaws, let’s exaggerate the flaws and dismiss the accomplishments; and the worst to me is the desire to dethrone them as heroes of our culture and replace them with creeps, punks, mass murderers, and those who lived their entire life on the slimy side of the street. So, counterculture has produced heroes like Bill & Ted or Wayne & Garth or a dozen other anti-hero zeroes who imitate life with such foolishness that their popularity seems to come from their stupidity. Dr. George Roche, former president of Hillsdale College wrote: The antihero has nothing to worship but himself and his art, and is inescapably tugged down to the temporal, the mundane and the dark.” By contrast, “The hero seeks not happiness but goodness, and his fulfillment lies in achieving it. . . His example tells us that we fail, not by aiming too high in life, but by aiming far too low.” In the same way the entertainment and news media fail with its emphasis on ugliness. Not by aiming too high, but by aiming far too low.
2. **Bashing America** - Bashing America has become one of the main tenets of the counterculture movement and an overwhelming majority of American citizens would disagree with what they say about our nation. Most Americans with all of its faults and unfinished business still see our nation as a place that stirs passionate patriotic and deeply

felt senses of gratitude for the many blessings from the land they love. This is especially true at moments of international crisis when those underlying emotions are so evident and unmistakable. Irving Kristol warned our nation, “A world power, if it is to maintain its position, needs to generate respect for its culture, not only for its military prowess. . . .American popular culture today is less an ornament of American democracy than a threat to this democracy.”

What is God’s Call to America Concerning Ugly Traits?

This is clear, God always calls a people and a Nation to the highest principles possible, not the lowest and makes it clear that He will bless those who try and achieve these principles.

Philippians 4:8-9 is a clear call to this higher plane:

“Finally, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things. Whatever you have learned or received or heard from me or seen in me—put into practice. And the God of peace will be with you.”

The desire of God is that people achieve the highest of all cultures and that they take for themselves examples of the highest and most pure way to live. It is the very basis on which God says He will reward people.

Isaiah 35:8

“And a highway, will be there, it will be called the Way of Holiness. It will be for those who walk on that Way. The unclean will not journey on it; wicked fools will not go about on it.”

God calls our release from living with evil traits a freedom from sin and elaborates on how that will bless people.

Romans 3:22-23

“But now that you have been set free from sin and have become slaves of God; the benefit you reap leads to holiness, and the result is eternal life. For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

God’s Call to America in The Exaltation of Evil Traits

Quit what you are doing before you destroy yourself and your nation! The Bible does not spend a lot of time speaking about evil traits because it calls that type of behavior “wicked”. It is something that God condemns throughout the Bible. Solomon warns his sons over a dozen times in the Book of Proverbs to avoid wicked people, avoid their ways, and do not get pulled into the same disastrous end they will have. David fills his Songs of Psalms with dozens of references to not follow the wicked and paints a clear picture of what will happen to the wicked.

In one of many Old Testament warnings about the demise of the wicked, God says about kingdoms,

Isaiah 13:11

“I will punish the world for its evil, the wicked for their sins. I will put an end to the arrogance of the haughty and will humble the pride of the ruthless.”

This was spoken about the ancient kingdom of Babylon, the first world power. It is now modern-day Iraq and it has been humbled.

It was true for his own people in the nation of Israel when it was led by the wicked. He spoke.

Jeremiah 35: 15-16

“Again and again, I sent my servants the prophets to you. They said, ‘Each one of you must turn from your wicked ways and reform your actions, do not follow other gods to serve them. Then you will live in the land,’ but you have not paid attention or listened to me.”

The timeline of God is unknown and the patience of God does have an expiration date but no one knows that date. What we do know from Scripture is that when a Nation is no longer capable of turning back to God and eliminating the wickedness in the land, then God will not keep that Nation viable. It will fall. Evil cannot continue to multiply in a land without recourse from God and that is especially true when a Nation has had the advantage of knowing His faith, having His teaching, and seeing His prophets speaking to the people.

God will not tolerate unrepented wickedness forever; but for those who will change and leave their wicked ways, God has a great blessing for them.

Ezekiel 35: 19

“And if a wicked person turns away from their wickedness and does what is just and right, they will live by doing so.”

LESSON 7: “BELITTLING FAITHFUL & NATIONAL HEROS”

This Lesson explores the culture war in America and notes how it has totally affected the way American history is taught and explained. What was once accepted teaching in our schools and public universities, that America was founded as a Christian Nation on Christian principles; has been totally scrapped by the counter-culture progressives who say, America was established by our Founders, who intended this to be a secular nation and not a “Christian Nation.” This has become so prevalent that history and civics books have been rewritten to teach this new ‘Secular America’ and often American history and civics have been eliminated as subjects and are not taught in elementary and secondary schools.

America – Christian Nation or Secular Nation?

At the University level, American history is primarily taught as the foundation of a secular state. This took a tremendous turn and became an active campaign arm of the counter-culture progressives after 9/11. A book written right after the reelection of George W. Bush in 2004 states the supposed problem. This book was written by Chris Hedges for the New York Times and was titled, “American Fascists: The Christian Right and the War on America.” It was one of dozens of books written to arouse the nation’s slumbering conscience to confront the perils of “The American Taliban.” Hedges wrote:

“All it will take is one more national crisis on the order of September 11 for the Christian Right to make a concerted drive to destroy American democracy. . .The movement will not stop until we are ruled by Biblical Law, an authoritarian church intrudes in every aspect of our life, women stay at home and bear children, gays agree to be cured, abortion is considered murder, the press and the schools promote ‘positive’ Christian values, the federal government is gutted, war becomes our primary form of communication with the rest of the world and recalcitrant non-believers see their flesh eviscerated at the sound of the Messiah’s voice.”

Hedges went on to say that it makes no sense to try to reason with the “Christian Fascists,” he says, “all debates with the Christian Right are useless because they ‘hate the liberal enlightened world formed by the Constitution.”

There you have the progressive counterculture argument in a nutshell, giving their answer to the question, did American founders intend a Christian or a Secular nation. The attacks center not on what the Founder’s said or did but with the disdain that counterculture leaders have towards the Church and the religious right of today, they make it sound as though the Church and the religious right have subverted the constitution.

Some worried counterculture authors have expected Christian conservatives to remake America like Iran or Nazi Germany, while others suggest that they would follow the genocidal path of Communist China. In reviewing the Oscar- nominated documentary, ‘Jesus Camp’, Stephen Holden of the New York Times solemnly declared: “It wasn’t so long ago that another puritanical youth army, Mao

Zedong’s Red Guards, turned the world’s most populous country inside out. Nowadays the possibility of a right-wing Christian American version of what happened in China no longer seems entirely far-fetched.”

To show the far-fetched line of reasoning and prove that America was founded as a secular nation not a Christian one, Paul Krugman, working for the New York Times argued that theocrats would seize power through quiet subversion: “The infiltration of the federal government by large numbers of people seeking to impose a religious agenda, which is very different from being people of faith, is one of the most important stories of the last six years. It’s also a story that tends to go unreported, perhaps because journalists are afraid of sounding like conspiracy theorists. But this conspiracy is no theory.”

Krugman then provided a series of purportedly chilling examples, even asking his no doubt nervous readers: “Did you know that Rachel Paulose the U. S. Attorney in Minnesota, three of whose deputies have recently stepped down, reportedly in protest over her management style, according to a local news report, in the habit of quoting Bible verses in the office.

Of course, another midwestern attorney, Abraham Lincoln, famously indulged the same habit in every office he ever occupied (very much including the White House.) He prominently featured scriptural citations “A house divided against itself cannot stand” in many of his most celebrated public speeches.

Though Lincoln’s contemporaries found plenty of reasons to criticize or dismiss the cagey politico from Illinois, none of them attacked him for inappropriately inserting religious sentiments into public speeches. Americans of the 1860’s understood and accepted the Christian values and vision that had shaped the Republic in the “four score and seven years” of its initial existence.

Contemporary hysterics who try to terrify the public about the Religious Right’s war against America, base their scare stories on the widely touted lie that our Founders meant to establish a secular nation, not a Christian one. In keeping with the widely embraced notions about the religious essence of the United State, a September 2007 poll by the non-partisan First Amendment Center showed that fully 55 percent of respondents agreed with the statement that “The constitution established a Christian nation. When asked about that survey in an interview with Belief Net, presidential contender then, John McCain responded, ‘I would probably have to say yes, that the Constitution established the United States of America as a Christian Nation. But I say that in the broadest sense.’ The lady that holds her lamp beside the golden door doesn’t say, ‘I only welcome Christians.’ We welcome the poor, the tired, the huddled masses. But when they come here, they know that they are in a nation founded on Christian principles.”

Despite the qualified and cautious tone of McCain’s remarks, enraged partisans leaped at the chance to attack the candidate. The executive director of the national Jewish Democratic Council, an advocacy group for the Democratic Party, called the senator’s statements ‘repugnant,’ while the general counsel of the mainstream American Jewish Committee declared that ‘to argue that America is a Christian nation. . .puts the very character of the country at stake.”

Charles Haynes, senior scholar at the Freedom Forum’s First Amendment Center, made the most sweeping and professionally misleading comments. Regarding the poll that provided the McCain

dustup in the first place. Hayes noted that the results suggest that a great many people have deeply misunderstood the Constitution. The framers clearly wanted to establish a secular nation.”

This contention isn’t just confused and unfocused. It is appallingly demonstrably, and inarguably wrong. Militant separationists of the past fifty years embrace the fanciful notion that they alone can discern the true intentions of the Founding generation, intentions that remained miraculously hidden to all scholars, jurists, and politicians in the first century and a half of our nation’s history, and not least to the Founders themselves.

The whole chain of twisted reasoning regarding our allegedly “secular” heritage depends on a series of ludicrous myths and distortions that must give way to a few fundamental but (to religion haters) uncomfortable truths.

FUNDAMENTAL TRUTHS

1. The earliest settlers, came to establish, not to escape devoutly Christian societies.
2. The Founders worried about government’s interference with religion far more than they did about religious influences in government; in fact, they viewed fervent faith as an indispensable component of a healthy society.
3. Separationist extremists, not Christian conservatives, seek the radical transformation of the nation and its institutions, overturing the long-established constitutional balance in the process.

FIRST TRUTH:

Let’s look at the first truth vs. the myth: ‘The Earliest settlers came to establish not escape devoutly Christian societies. This is the truth.

The myth of America as a secular haven from the faith-based fanaticism of Europe rests on the widespread and erroneous misconception that the first colonists fled to the New World to escape “religious persecution”. Schoolchildren who celebrate the traditional Thanksgiving holiday learn that the Pilgrims boarded the Mayflower in pursuit of the “freedom to practice their faith”—a politically correct spin that obscures some of the essential elements of the crucial story of the Plymouth Colony. The Pilgrims escaped from the England in 1608 and then found complete freedom in Holland, twelve years before they set sail for their destiny in Massachusetts. They left the Netherlands not because that nation imposed too many religious restrictions but because the Dutch honored too few. The pluralism and tolerance they found in Amsterdam and Leyden horrified the Pilgrims, separatists who preferred an isolated situation in the wilderness that facilitated the building of a unified, disciplined, strictly devout religious utopia, not some wide-open haven for believers of every stripe. The Pilgrims earn our admiration (and even our love) for their courage and idealism, but their religious outlook hardly qualifies as broad-minded. Like the other stalwart believers who followed, they came to the new world seeking purity, not freedom.

All of the other New England colonies except Rhode Island carved homes out of the wilderness on the same basis. They aimed to establish a model religious community that would be more rigorous and restrictive, not more open and accepting, than the corrupt and politicized Church of England.

Massachusetts, Connecticut, New Hampshire, and later Vermont and Maine strictly enforced Sabbath rules, mandated attendance at worship services, and used tax money to support religious seminaries (prominently including Harvard and Yale)—all benefitting “

SECOND TRUTH

Those who maintain that our Founding Fathers fought their Revolution in part to ensure “Separation of Church and State” must somehow explain the favorite marching song of the Continental Army. The much better-known “Yankee Doodle” became widely popular after the war, but in the midst of the fighting George Washington’s own men commonly sang, “Chester,” an unforgettably stirring 1770 hymn by Boston composer William Billings. The lyrics (apparently written by Billings himself) placed the bloody conflict in a very religious perspective.

“Let tyrants shake their iron rod, and slavery clank her galling chains. We fear them not, we trust in God, New England’s God forever reigns.”

“What grateful Off’ring shall we bring? What shall we Render to the Lord? Loud Hallelujahs let us Sing and praise his name on every Chord.”

The American Revolutionaries saw their battlefield and political opponents not only as enemies of liberty but as enemies of God Himself and they emphasized religious revival as an essential component of potential victory. Political leaders of the Revolutionary conflict never expressed a desire to disentangle government or the military from religious associations, if anything, they sought a more fervently, sincerely Christian society, a nation of “undefiled religion” in contrast to the corrupt ways of the mother country.

THIRD TRUTH:

The Founding Fathers took great pains to encourage unity and not secularism. The crowning jewel in this idea of hands-off secularism by our Founding Fathers has been the tie to the First Amendment. But a proper understanding of the First Amendment reflects the importance of religion to the new republic. The Freedom from Religion foundation characterizes the First Amendment’s Establishment Clause as “exclusionary,” but the clause truly protected established churches in the states. At the time of the Constitution the governments of six of the thirteen states endorsed specific denominations and provided public money for Church construction and maintenance.

Congressional leaders who debated the First Amendment expressed no intention of interfering with the states that openly promoted and funded religious institutions, in fact, they struggled to find language that would prohibit “Congress from legislating a national religion or to disestablish state religion.” Even Harvard’s Laurence Tribe, the most esteemed liberal legal scholar of his generation, said, “A growing body of evidence suggests that the Framers principally intended the Establishment of Religion Clause to perform two functions: to protect state religious establishments from national displacement, and to prevent the national government from aiding some but not all religions.

In fact, less than twenty-four hours after Congress approved the First Amendment, they clearly indicated the way they understood its language by passing the following resolution:

“Resolved, that a joint committee of both Houses be directed to wait upon the President of the United States to request that he would recommend to the people of the United States a day of public thanksgiving and prayer, to be observed by acknowledging, with grateful hearts, the many signal favors of Almighty God, especially by affording them an opportunity peaceably to establish a Constitution for their safety and happiness.” In the proclamation duly announcing the “day of public thanksgiving and prayer” that congress had requested, President Washington declared November 26 “to be devoted by the People of these States to the service of that great and glorious Being, who is the beneficent Author of all the good that was, that is, or that will be.”

It never occurred to this First congress that their call for public prayer would conflict with the amendment they had adopted a day earlier prohibiting “an establishment of religion.” One final thought about the debate of whether the Founders wanted a Secular or Christian nation would be the final verse of the Star-Spangled Banner, adopted as our national anthem:

*“Blest with vict’ry and peace, may the heaven-rescued land
Praise the Power that hath made and preserved us a nation.
Then conquer we must when our cause it is just.
And this be our motto: “In God is our trust.”*

What is God’s Call to America the Arena of Secular vs. Christian?

What is God’s Call to America in this arena of Secular vs. Christian as far as the Foundation and Direction of America and the ensuing belittling of faithful and national heroes who do not fit the present model of the counterculture progressives?

God warns over and over that we are not to forget Him for two reasons; He will never forget us and our forgetting God means we can no longer let Him guide our life, but we lapse into more sin.

God’s answer seems clear. He will not continue to bless those who will not allow Him into their life and their country. He made it clear with the Hebrews right before they entered the new Promised Land.

Deuteronomy 6:12 “Be careful that you do not forget the Lord. Who brought you out.”

But God said the same thing to all the Nations of all time.

Psalms 9:15-17 David wrote:

“The nations have fallen into the pit they have dug; their feet are caught in the net they have hidden. The Lord is known by His acts of justice.; the wicked are ensnared by the work of their hands. The wicked go down to the realms of the dead, all the nations that forgot God.”

It seems in this attempt to secularize God and put Him in some sort of confinement, many of the counterculture progressives have assumed that the judgments of God will only apply to those who call themselves Christians. They somehow do not see any of the judgments happening to them because they do not believe in that type of deity. Their attempt to scour all the Founder’s records to try and find some evidence to support the idea of a secular country begins with the assumption that God did not have a hand in the forming of America and that the Founders were determined to not let

any type of religion be prominently connected to our government. A simple look at history, the documents, the use of Bible and religious expressions, the desire to support the existing state churches and help support and grow the Churches, and the fact that our Founders believed that everyone should have a viable faith means, those who support a secular America are the ones who have forgotten where we came from and the allegiance our Founders gave to God and His providence over America.

David in an address that he says is from God about forgetting the Lord says.

***Psalms 50: 22** “Consider this, you who forget God, or I will tear you to pieces, with no one to rescue you.”*

A desire to not read or follow the Bible does not mean the Bible does not apply to your life. Those who would create a secular America with no Christian values, rules, or morals are just opening a cesspool that will lead to the destruction of our nation. A nation that credited God with its survival, its prosperity, and its freedoms cannot reject God in all those areas and still be blessed by God. Forgetting God is a dangerous action with no positive consequences.

The Bible lays it out clearly.

II Peter 3:8-10

“But do not forget this one thing, dear friends, With the Lord a day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years are like a day. The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. Instead, he is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance. But the day of the Lord will come like a thief. The heavens will disappear with a roar, the elements will be destroyed by fire, and the earth and everything done it in will be laid bare.”

Secular solutions have severe consequences because they eliminate the loving intervention of God to bring victories.

LESSON #8: “SWALLOWING THE LIE, ‘PEOPLE LIVE DIFFERENTLY NOW’”

This Lesson looks at something that has been said in many generations of civilization and really applies to the cultural wars of America. In defense of the actions of those who would change the culture of America, they say, “You just do not understand that people live differently now!” The things that have changed in what we do and say have done so because the people have changed. They are not being influenced by the progressive counter-culture people, the counterculture or progressive people are just saying what the majority think and how the majority want to live.

The thrust of their argument was summed up by Jack Valenti, the president of the Motion Picture Industry. When asked about the influence of entertainment media on society and criticized for the violence and brutality that was shown on the screen, on TV and in popular music said, “I have examined the archives of people who write on sociological things in this country, and I’ve found that social scientists are like psychiatrists in a murder trial. The prosecution has one and the defense has one. . .But I haven’t found anybody who has said that entertainment causes anybody to do anything.”

A quote from R.J. Teller, magician in the duo, “Penn and Teller” is taken from his op-ed piece for the New York Times, “Zealots have long tried to prove that ‘evil’ fiction causes wickedness in the real world. But the facts fail to cooperate. . .Those who want us to give up our freedom have missed the point. They claim people are not smart enough to tell make-believe from reality. Give us a break! When one pays money to go in the theater to see a motion picture moving on a wall, one does not have to be a mental giant to realize you are watching a movie. It makes you wonder how they explain the millions of people who saw Psycho without stealing bankrolls or bumping off blonds.”

There you have it, a rhetorical sleight of hand, imputing to his ideological opponents’ statements that they do not believe and demolishing positions that they had never advanced. I have never heard of a person who is asking that the values and morals of present American culture return to a moral base and defending the former culture suggest that “if the entertainment industry stops showing rapes that people will start omitting them in real life.” Nor has anyone defending traditional moral values ever suggested that ‘people are not smart enough to tell make-believe from reality.

Instead of confronting the substantive concerns of those who question the effects of the excesses of the entertainment industry and the news media; what the spokespeople seem to be doing is setting up straw men that do not exist and have a self-contained debate with them. Surprisingly, the ones who support counterculture always seem to win this argument.

What seems to be the underlying concern is the idea that those who would like to have culture return to a more moral base believe that the excesses and beliefs of those who are counterculture have moved the American public towards accepting new values. While those who are counterculture say they are simply following the wishes and directions of the American people because the people as a nation are moving towards a less moral and less traditional value system.

People Move Towards a Less Moral and Less Traditional Value System

The counter culturists have responded to those concerns with some very dishonest answers. Barbara Dixon, a spokesperson for the Motion Picture Association of American, told the Los Angeles Times, “We have dealt with this issue for a long time and have looked at a number of studies. According to the First Amendment lawyers who have handled the issue for us, none of the studies say that motion picture violence affects the behavior of people.” This was said shortly after the release of the combined effects of 30 years of research that confirm the connection between a steady diet of violent entertainment and news leading to aggressive and antisocial behavior.

As far back as 1982, a comprehensive report of five volumes led the Surgeon General of the United States to declare, “there is a clear consensus among most researchers that television violence leads to aggressive behavior.” As far back as 1991 The American Psychological Association declared, “the conclusion of this comprehensive study drawn on twenty-five years of research . . . is that viewing televised violence may lead to increases in aggressive attitudes, values, and behavior particularly in children.” Scientific and academic support for this conclusion has increased year after year with official statements linking media messages and antisocial conduct. Statements confirming this were released by the American Academy of Pediatrics, the American Medical Association, the National Institute of Mental Health, the National Commission on the Causes and Prevention of Mental Health, the National Commission on the Causes and Prevention of Violence, the U.S. Public Health Service, the National Parent-Teacher Association, the U.S. Attorney General’s Task Force on Family violence and the National Education Association. Professor Aletha Huston of the University of Kansas declared after reading the findings of these national groups, “Virtually all independent scholars agree. We keep pumping children with the message that violence is the way to solve their problems—and some of it takes hold.”

How prophetic one of these studies in the early 1990’s was. In November 1990, twenty-five leading academics and media researchers gathered in Pittsburg for a conference on “The Impact of the Media on Children and the Family.” Participants included distinguished faculty members from universities ranging from Yale to Northwestern, from Duke to Michigan State, from Rutgers to the University of Wisconsin, and they presented more than thirty papers and workshops in the course of the three-day program. Barbara Hattemer, one of the organizers of the conference reported, “Given the diversity of the participants, they reached a surprising consensus that values in much of the mass media, especially in violent and sexually explicit materials are on a collision course with traditional family values and the protection of children.

As a follow-up to the discussions in Pittsburg, Hattemer undertook a systematic review of all the available literature on the impact of the most brutal and graphic elements in the media and news. “This review found harmful effects in 86% of the studies and ends the debate about whether or not there is harm.”

It is amazing the reaction from the corporate world of the entertainment and news media. In a shining display of corporate arrogance, the major entertainment and news media conglomerates disregard the conclusions of all the leading researchers and continue to insist that their work has not

had any harmful impact on society. With almost ritualized regularity, their official representatives repeat the claim that scientific investigations show “mixed” results on the question of media influence. “There are so many yesses and no’s in the literature that it is confusing, declared the CBS former vice-president David Blank in one typical statement. Then added, “I’m not sure anyone will ever solve the problem.” Entertainment media and to a lesser extent news media have spent excessive money doing their own studies which usually shows—surprise—that media has no influence on anyone. These studies are as useless as the many research reports commissioned by the tobacco industry to prove that the Surgeon General was wrong and that cigarette smoking is actually good for you.

In the height of hypocrisy, the television industry continues to say that television has no negative effects on the behavior of anyone. In a report as early as 1982, ABC released a commissioned study in which the hired-gun experts declared that “the research does not support the conclusion that television significantly cultivates viewer attitudes and perceptions of social reality”. If the executives at ABC sincerely believe this nonsense and agree that their broadcast fails to “cultivate viewer attitudes,” then the network should prepare to refund all the billions of dollars of advertising revenue that it has collected under false pretenses.

The mighty mechanism of commercial television is based entirely on the pre-mindset that broadcast advertising can alter the buying behavior of a significant segment of the huge viewing audience. That is why hardheaded corporations will gladly invest millions of dollars in thirty-second commercials, secure in the knowledge that this sort of fleeting exposure can make an important difference in the public’s point of view.

The counterculture progressives have worked hard to redefine normal. The transmission of that message isn’t magical or mysterious. The power of the entertainment media, the news media, the Academic community and others who are promoting the counterculture movement have great power to influence our actions. It flows freely from its ability to redefine what constitutes moral behavior in this society.

The popular culture now consumes such a large proportion of our time and attention that it has assumed a dominant role in establishing social norms. The fantasy figures who entertain us on our TV and movie screen or who sing/rap to us constantly from our radios and CD players or lead our news and news commentary discussions take the lead in determining what is considered hip, and what will be viewed as hopelessly weird. In every society, ordinary people have been able to cultivate a sense of style by aping the airs of the aristocracy, and in this stubbornly democratic culture, the only aristocracy that counts for anything is the world of ‘celebrities’ who appear in the news and in the tabloids.

Young people in particular take these role models seriously, and a pop culture personality with enough clout can singlehandedly, initiate a national trend. Imagine what might have happened had some suburban fourteen-year-old independently decided that she could start wearing lingerie as outerwear: she surely would have been ridiculed by her peers for such embarrassing behavior and perhaps sent by her worried parents to consult a therapist. The fact that it was Madonna who launched this fashion folly made all the difference. The practice of wearing a black studded bustier in

place of a blouse achieved instant legitimacy across much of our nation. Parents and school authorities may have been less than thrilled with this new trend, but for the most part they grudgingly accepted it as one more inevitable and unstoppable expression of an always rebellious popular culture. Through the transforming power of the mass media, a bizarre and illogical idiosyncrasy suddenly became normal—and for many young people, the thing to do.

The point is there is no refuge today from the ubiquitous presence of the popular culture. Even those who make a personal decision not to partake in its products will find its influence inescapable. You can put your TV in the closet, shut off the newscast, avoid movies altogether, and use earplugs to spare your ears from the sounds of rap or heavy metal, but these forms of media news and entertainment will still change our life through their influence on everyone else in this society. Though you may struggle to protect your own kids from material that encourages violence or irresponsible sex, you can’t possibly protect them from all the other kids in your community who have received full exposure. In short, popular culture is now as unavoidable as any airborne pollutant. To say that if you don’t like it you should just tune it out makes as much sense as saying that if you don’t like the pollutants in our air, stop breathing. As the great Joe Louis said, ‘you can run, but you can’t hide’.

That is why the perspectives of the American popular culture are an appropriate issue for all of us, not just the members of the entertainment media, the news media, the academia circles, the influencers, and the woke progressives. We must help take the lead in what influences our nation and our culture.

What Is God’s Call to America Concerning Morals & Values

What is the Call of God to America concerning the idea that our American people are pushing the progressives to mirror their life and not that counterculture progressives are attempting to influence the culture of America.

First, we need to realize that the call of God is always to return to what He has taught us and has recorded in His book, the Bible. Never has God told His people to go after other gods, explore and learn a new morality, or tear up the old rules and write some new ones that are exactly what you want.

God frequently removed people because they did not return to what He had originally taught them and they were living as though the rules had changed. God had prophet after prophet plead with the people to return to Him, return to His Word, and return to following God.

Jeremiah 24:7,

“I will give them a heart to know me, that I am the Lord. They will be my people, and I will be their God, for they will return to me with all their heart.”

Hosea was given the job of calling his people to return to God,

Hosea 6:1

“Come, let us return to the Lord, He has torn us to pieces but he will restore us.”

Hosea 14:2,

“Take words with you and return to the Lord. Say to Him, “Forgive all our sins and receive us graciously, that we may offer the fruit of our lips.”

Joel teaches the same in **Joel 2:13**

“Rend your heart and not your garments, return to the Lord your God, for He is gracious and compassionate, slow to anger and abounding in love, and he relents from sending calamity.”

Zechariah also writes in **Zechariah 1:3**

“Therefore, tell the people: This is what the Lord Almighty says: ‘Return to me, declares the Lord Almighty, and I will return to you, says the Lord Almighty.’”

Again and again in the Old Testament and the New Testament, the prophets, the priests, Jesus, and the Apostles taught the people to ‘turn from sin and return to God.’ It is crystal clear that the Bible tells us to follow what God has taught and let that be your guide for morals and values. Anything else is actually, a deviation away from what God can bless and what He can prosper. God spelled out this concept of not adjusting the morality and values of a culture to fit the wants of the people when He wrote.

Nehemiah 1:8-10

“Remember the instructions You gave Your servant Moses, saying, ‘If you are unfaithful, I will scatter you among the nations, but if you return to me and obey my commands, then even if your exiled people are at the farthest horizon, I will gather them from there and bring them to a place I have chosen as a dwelling for my Name.’”

God wants all people to follow the directions that He has given us for living and that especially those who follow Him must do that to receive the blessings they want. I feel God would tell America, “*You have been following false gods.*” You have listened to the entertainment media, the news media, the academic leaders, the influencers, and the progressives and made their rules your rules, their morals your morals, and their values your values. You have to return to me if you want the nation to continue in a direction I can bless and prosper.

We must directly speak out about what is causing our nation to shift away from traditional values and morals and call them back to a direction that pleases God, so He can bless us.

LESSON #9: “MOTIVATION FOR MORAL MADNESS”

Our last Lesson continues teaching on the timely subject of the cultural wars of American and given my thoughts on what God is calling America to do and what Bible passages apply to this call of God.

It is not hard to hear many conservative Christian leaders and prophecy writers speak of the imminent collapse of America. It may happen but it is good for us to look at the motivation for the moral madness of our nation. It has been somewhat of a roller coaster for the last twenty-five years. Many negative moral issues of the early 1990’s seemed to be changing course by the start of the 21st Century, but it is very difficult to believe that the change in course has not shifted back very sharply towards the counterculture progressives’ viewpoints. Let’s put a little historical direction to the present.

Historical Perspective of Morality in America

It is impossible to evaluate if this is the end of a moral America or not without placing the debate in its proper historical perspective. As it turns out, worried moralists have railed against corruption, sinfulness, and the end of American civilization since the very beginning of American civilization, the earliest days of colonial settlements.

We think of William Bradford, the longtime leader of the Plymouth colony, as a courageous man of faith who calmly overcame every obstacle to establish the Pilgrims’ settlement in the Massachusetts wilderness. But twenty-five years after taking shore at Plymouth Rock, Bradford became the first major American commentator to see evidence of deadly moral decay and a betrayal of his society’s heroic past.

He was followed by Johnathan Edwards, Billy Sunday and a host of more modern evangelists who called America back to a more moral life. It has happened several times. America has gone through a host of loose moral times followed by “Awakening Movements” where large populations in America would convert to Christianity and change the lifestyle of the nation. But our present motivation for madness goes way beyond the moral lapse periods followed by moral purity. It is quite intentional and seems to not have a clear motivation when you know the motive is not money. Let’s look at this more closely.

Motivation for Moral Madness

Looking at the motive for the entertainment media, the news media, the Academia Circles, and other progressive counterculture ideas, you cannot see a correlation to this counterculture movement and money. An honest account of this leadership trying to move America towards a more secular nation should shatter once and for all, one of the most enduring myths about these areas, especially Hollywood and the News Media. The idea that we demand more violence, more sleaze and more brutality and that is why the news and entertainment media deliver it, is just false.

Recent history shows conclusively that whatever motivations pushed these two industries to these current obsessions, financial self-interest was not among them. How could two industries that radically changed their focus and so permanently sacrificed nearly two-thirds of its audience be described in any serious sense as “following the money?” In presenting the bleak and bloody visions that bother so many of our present citizens, they are not responding to some blood lust of the American people. It is, rather following its own warped conceptions of artistic integrity, driven by some dark compulsion that is not simple greed.

This idea is so revolutionary, so disturbing, so counterintuitive, that most analysts refuse to take it seriously, despite an overwhelming accumulation of evidence. I have brought up some of this evidence before, but I want to summarize it as we wrap up the call to America by seriously looking at what is motivating this counterculture movement.

- 1. Fact Number One:** The Media Industry continues to grind out more R rated films than all others, yet the profit margin on these R rated shows is less than PG-13, PG, and even G films. Let me give you some recent totals: In a two-year period, G films grossed 17.3 million dollars per release; PG films had an average gross of 10.1 million dollars per release; PG 13 grossed 9.3 million dollars per release; and R films grossed 8.3 million dollars per release. This formula has been repeated for over 25 years with movies.
- 2. Fact Number Two:** Television continues its unreasonable plan and drops popular TV shows that focus on family values to give the population new shows that often reach less than half of the audience they had with the show that was dropped.
- 3. Fact Number Three:** News Media promises to not glorify mass shooters, crooks, gangsters, while collar ‘Ponzi scheme’ investors, rapists, murderers, and others who are seeking attention and almost always produce some copy-cat criminals. This is such an empty pledge; these are their focus news items. Invariably, the most popular and touching stories are the human-interest stories that are regulated to the end of some news caps, almost like a tidbit to the general population.

When these findings were presented to a gathering of entertainment and news executives and journalists, one of the most respected leaders took passionate exception to the conclusions; said, “Do you really think we are nincompoops?”

This director of one of the major studios went on to say, “Your numbers are interesting, but they only deal with box office home runs. When you are running a studio, you’re looking for solid singles most of the time, and you’re always worried about striking out. Maybe you’re right that PG pictures stand a better chance of hitting it big than R pictures, but I’m sure they also have a much better chance of turning into big flops.”

But when this idea is pursued, it is proved false and for over 30 years family films have been the safest bet and the surest way to make money. I dare say the same criteria would show the same trends in TV, the more family orientated the show, the more likely that it could last as a long-running television hit. One more interesting point in this discussion is this

proved to be true in independent studios as well as major studio releases, and in major TV networks, as well as the streaming TV sites available now.

- 4. Fact Number Four:** The last fact I want to share is that for a long time, the American people have been trying to and the message to the Entertainment Industry and the News Media Industry that they want more wholesome entertainment. Whenever they are asked their opinion by pollsters, overwhelming majorities indicate that they want less violence in movies, less sexual content, and less foul language. Their recent box office behavior indicates that when they express such opinions, the members of the mass audience might actually mean what they say.

War on Traditional Values

Hollywood, News Media, Academia, and Progressives are at War on Traditional Values. So, the biggest question of this dilemma is if it is not simple greed that motivates this strong move to counterculture progressivism, what is it? There is simply no way that the single-minded pursuit of profit can account for Hollywood, News Media, Academia Circles, and Progressives pushing their ongoing war on traditional values, especially the never-ending stream of film and television indictments of organized religion. The News media treats organized religion as a non-viable news item and almost never reports anything about Christianity, and the Academia Circles often embrace other world religions as more “Christian than Christianity.”

There is also a stream of anti-marriage movies, TV shows, pop music, and even news media programs as well as the constant barrage by the progressives against the value or need of any traditional marriages, any place. There is also a continual attack on American’s past and present place in the world. These concepts put on film, TV or even news stations have met with box office failures, but the idea of committing vast resources to similar projects is still in the works. When it comes to material that challenges some of the public’s most cherished ideals and institutions, the counterculture populists display unexpected and irrational recklessness while stubbornly repeating their own mistakes. In a sense, this surprising tendency to take chances on unpopular messages demonstrates that the counterculture people are actually less greedy and more idealistic than its critics, or even its supporters-are ready to admit.

The Entertainment and News Media community wants respect even more than it wants riches. Its members crave acceptance and recognition as serious artists. Money is not the main motivation for their current madness. The people who lead popular culture are often insecure and uncertain like all creative personalities. They are driven by a deep-seated need to reassure themselves as to the significance of their own work. Contempt for “mere” commercial considerations is frequently expressed by them as they long to view themselves as something more than entertainment, news, academia, and progressives.

Counterculture People Promote Their Own Vision of a Good Society

The problem with this stated desire is that invariably it involves a rejection of the established order and the need to reshape American society and all its moral institutions. The counterculture people seek to move the rest of society to their own vision of a good society.

With that vision in mind, the progressives take particular pride in those instances when it can defy convention and present its own perspectives to the American people. They often say the characters they film, the people they interview, and the stories they write often coincide with their own personal views. So, they use their position to propagate their view to the public. I like the way it was summed up in the book, “Watching America” by Lichter, Lichter, and Rothman, that said, “Far from always following in the wake of popular tastes, the fictional world of prime time can be sharply at odds with public opinion and sentiment. More often, it tries to guide Middle-American tastes in the direction of intellectual trends emanating from New York and Los Angeles.”

This is where it is truly a war. Many of these trends originate with a leadership elite of shockingly small size and they are very insular. “In the television industry, it is only about 150 people. These are primarily Los Angeles based writer-producers who year after year create the lion’s share of successful prime-time programs. They act as the industry’s permanent bureaucracy, remaining in place while studio chiefs and network honchos come and go.” Time reporter Jordan Bonfante.

These small groups that control these groups of ‘influencers’ see certain classes as their enemies from long ago. They have a real place of dominance, so they no longer must cater to any group but feel they can control these classes, the businessperson class, the military class, the small-town gentry and with anyone who fights with them for the leadership role in society.

This disregard for Middle-American visions stems from both ignorance and arrogance. Ignorance, because the members of this elite group lead complex and often chaotic lives that leave them thoroughly isolated from the daily concerns and circumstances faced by most members of their mass audiences. Arrogance, because they never question, the viewpoints of the pampered and tightly sealed little world in which they live, even when confronted with survey data and other indicators demonstrating that those values are rejected by overwhelming majorities of their fellow citizens. It makes little impact when you prove to princes of the popular culture that more than 40 percent of the nation at large attends church or synagogue every week. In response to such figures, they will merely smile and shake their heads, unshakably certain that their own rejection of religion merely proves that they are more enlightened than their backward and superstitious neighbors.

This line of reasoning can make for frustrating dialogue. As one progression recently said, “Maybe we are a little bit ahead of the curve, on this one, but sometimes that is what you’ve got to do. You have got to take special risks to help people evolve to the next level of consciousness.”

That sense of mission has become a powerful force in the counterculture movement. They feel free to defy the values of the public at large, but at the same time they are powerfully influenced by the attitudes and ideologies of one another. The more they are estranged from realities of ordinary Americans, the more they are subject to the pressures and priorities of their own self-enclosed community

Let me close the thought of what motivates this madness with a quote from the world renown historian Paul Johnson, who wrote in his fascinating book, “Intellectuals” this, “Intellectuals far from being highly individualistic and nonconformist people, follow certain patterns of behavior. Taken as a group, they are often ultra-conforming within the circles formed by those whose approval they seek and value. That is what makes them, ‘in masse’, so dangerous, for it enables them to create climates of opinion and prevailing orthodoxies, which themselves often generate irrational and destructive courses of action.”

What Is God’s Call to America Related to this Motivation to Moral Madness

What Is God’s Call to America related to this Motivation to Moral Madness by The Counterculture Movement? God would have us to teach the truth and to battle this motivational moral madness by standing on the truth. We need to see that the counterculture progressives have many wide areas of influence. They control the entertainment media and as we have seen that influence is strong in films, TV, popular music, and even much popular writing. They control the news media and we see the choices of news reporting and the style of reporting slants heavily towards the counterculture progressive thoughts. Academia on the University level exerts tremendous pressure on what is proper to believe, and we saw the results of that as three presidents of major universities were asked to resign because the influence of their peers had helped create an Anti-Semitic attitude that was embraced in their areas of Academia, but highly offensive and seen as bigotry in the populace in general.

The Bible instructed two young preachers how to lead their congregation in three books of the New Testament. In the first book, *I Timothy*, God instructs Timothy how to handle many social issues of the time and they were not without controversy: the life of a younger widow, the life of an older widow, the work of a Church lay leader, the role of a slave and master in the church, and false teachers and the love of money. All those subjects would still be a part of our cultural wars today, except maybe using religion to make money. The Bible says:

I Timothy 6:2b-5

“These are the things you are to teach and insist on. If anyone teaches otherwise and does not agree to the sound instruction of our Lord Jesus Christ and to Godly teaching, they are conceited and understand nothing. They have an unhealthy interest in controversies and quarrels about words that result in envy, strife, malicious talk, evil suspicions, and constant friction between people of corrupt mind, who have been robbed of the truth and who think that godliness is a means to financial gain.”

This passage has many things that God is telling us about our present cultural war.

1. **Real Truth from Jesus** - The only real truth is what Jesus Christ taught in person and in the Bible, since He is the Word of God.
2. **Moral Value Quarrels** - Those who quarrel with the moral values taught in the Scripture and seek to invalidate them are really conceited, they think they know more than God and should determine what others should and should not do. They are also lacking in understanding and believe what they say is the truth, so they do not look at all the

evidence that has been compiled to show that what they are saying does not produce the results we need or want.

3. **Love of Controversy** - They love to argue over words, they love quarrels and controversies, since they feel that gives them a good opportunity to teach their ‘new truths’. We need to remember, there are not any new sins, just new names for the same old sin.
4. **Robbed of Truth** - They have been robbed of the truth, do not believe it anymore and therefore, it is out of their thinking. So, they take their new brand of truth and set that up as the standard against which to argue or decide. They do not even argue over the Bible anymore or the things taught in the Bible, they just argue over the fine points and trivial difference of their new teaching.

There is no new truth, and the Bible makes this clear as well.

II Timothy 2:2

“And the things you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses entrust to reliable people who will also be qualified to teach others.”

The teaching that is to continue from generation to generation and from parent to child is the truth that God has given. He has instructed us to always teach our children, when walking, going to bed, eating, and other parts of their life the truths of God. He is asking us to resist false teaching and to take up the truths of God and follow them.

Finally, to young Titus, the challenge is given to teach older men, older women, young women, young men, slaves, owners, and all believers to follow God and not any other teaching. This charge to teach all these people correctly ends with this challenge.

Titus 2:15

“These, then, are the things, you should teach. Encourage and rebuke with all authority. Do not let anyone despise you.”

In a war you have winners and losers and we should never give way in this war with the counterculture progressives. We must:

- **Stand for the Truth, however unpopular.**
- **Teach the Truth, no matter how it is ridiculed.**
- **Live the Truth, no matter how backward and ignorant we are branded.**

The truth of God will prevail and that is the ground on which we stand. Much of the culture war is a war against Jesus Christ and Christianity and the rules and morals that He has taught us. Jesus must be defended, promoted and taught.