

Slouching Toward Armageddon

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August 2, 2006

I believe that history will mark September 11, 2001, as the date that America lost its spirit, but for reasons that have little to do with terrorism. That was the date that galvanized American Evangelicals to merge with the Republican Party.

My moment of final departure from the faith of either came when a prominent Christian lady in my District told me, "Shut up and get behind the President."

Things have gotten worse since then.

Up to 100,000 Iraqi civilians, including unborn babies, have lost their lives with nary a word from the Evangelical community except, "Better them than us."

Domestic spending and the international trade deficit have spiraled out of control. Nary a word.

Millions of Americans are denied decent health care, while those of us more fortunate are enjoying health care benefits that exceed the yearly incomes of many of our neighbors.

Every bill before the Congress of the United States is now screened through a process of deciding whether or not it disrupts the natural order of a "Nation under God." Who decides is the person with the loudest voice, and they are legion.

It used to be common thought that equal rights for blacks and women were destined to upset that natural order. How I remember, as well, my own prolonged angst over the Viet Nam protests and the cultural revolution of the 1960's, an attack on the natural order.

Along came the abortionists and the gays, who now threaten the natural order of marriage and family, as though that natural order has been preserved by the believing Church.

It is a culture of greed and fear, and we are on extremely dangerous ground. The cult of individualism has become the driving force behind American politics, a force completely at odds with the person and work of Jesus Christ.

National policy has become reactive, lurching from crisis to crisis, determining daily which nation and which individual is "evil," while evangelical doctrine that insists that there is enough evil to go around for everyone, including the church, is forgotten.

We Americans no longer believe the Gospel. Salvation has become an insurance policy paid in full at the altar but left there in a rush toward Armageddon, the final but "glorious" crisis. More than

half our citizens claim to be “born again,” if you can imagine.

God is no longer sovereign; He is “away,” rendering Him nearly impotent.

The Sermon on the Mount has been relegated to ancient history.

Amazing Grace is no longer a present dynamic in the individual and in the church because somewhere it stopped being amazing. It is a mere entry fee to the Jesus-club, if that.

The Kingdom of God has been relegated wholly to the future, its return to earth dependent on our efforts to make the world ready for a Second Coming.

Sin is something that others do that requires our judgment now and God’s judgment later.

The Bible has become a book of laws instead of a living epistle of Grace.

The Mid-East, according to many, is where the end will happen, and soon.

Evangelicals draw the analogy between America and ancient Rome, when they ought to recall the fate of the theocracy of First Century Israel. On the dusty road to Jerusalem, you might find the Man, Jesus, touching the lives of untouchables and personally demonstrating what it means truly to love.

For Him and for the followers of the crucified, risen Lord, Caesar ought to be nothing more than a figure on a coin. Instead, Caesar and God have combined forces so that neither is now honored.

The strength of America was never its pseudo-Christian beginnings. The strength of America has been its people living in freedom to make individual choices for good or for not-so-good, learning from and living with the results of those choices.

The strength of the Evangelical Church was its unique voice and ability to offer hope and reconciliation to those who have fallen through the moral, economic and ethical cracks of life. The reasoning was simple and straightforward:

“If love were possible without the Gospel, we would need no Gospel;
If love is not possible by the Gospel, we have no Gospel;
That love is possible by the Gospel is what the way of discipleship is all about.”

Show me the love, and I’ll show you the hope.

About the Author: Stan Moody is a Maine State Representative who serves as pastor of the North Manchester Meeting House Church in Manchester, ME...He is founder of the Christian Policy Institute, a “voice for thoughtful believers,” and author of several provocative books, including “McChurches: 300 Million Served and Still Hungry.” He may be reached at www.christianpolicyinstitute.org.