

Christian Action Ministry Newsletter

Involving the Christian in Community Action

January—February, 2011 ☆ Vol. 21, Number 01

Inside

The Influence the Church Has on Politics

by
Marion Clegg

Does the Bible Teach the Truth?

Thoughts on the dependability of the Bible

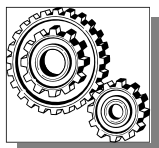
Page 2

Is Our House on Fire?

What can we learn from the Apostle Paul?

Page 3

If you would like to be added to our mailing list, please call 655-0280, email, or contact our website (see back page)



In the Works

2010 Legislative issues

Are you interested in becoming involved? CAM is looking for interested and active people to act as liaisons to their church, helping to keep the Christian community informed. Contact CAM at 372-6442.

I sometimes wonder if pastors and their congregations realize the influence they have on politics. Since this is a Christian nation, founded on Godly principles, we must be made to understand how important our influence is on the world.

When our country was first founded many of our Founding Fathers were ministers of the Gospel and, after spending the week writing portions of our Constitution, they would go back to their home towns and preach many times on issues they were dealing with during the week. The Bible and prayer was their guide to writing the documents that later became the laws of our land. That same Bible is the guide that tells us that God had a plan and purpose for each one of our lives. By not reading the Bible, we miss much of what God gave us as Christians; and it is the same with our national and state constitutions. If we are not familiar with the laws that guide us, we miss out on much of what we have been given.

Issues of the time need to be

addressed from the pulpit. We need to know what the Bible says about issues like abortion, homosexuality, or God's definition of what makes a marriage. Too many people sit in pews on Sunday and listen to what the pastor says, but never read their Bible for them-



selves; so it is vital that these issues are taught from the pulpit. Current statistics tell us that less than half of the people that call themselves born-again believers ever go to the polls and vote. I have even seen this with our Town Meetings. Not too many get involved in town government, let alone state and national government. Yet, there are pastors that believe the Church should not get in-

involved in politics and use "separation of Church and State" as their reference, which isn't even in our Constitution.

Many pastors are afraid to discuss any of these issues for fear they will lose their tax exemption status, but that is not totally true. There are guidelines that they can follow and be well within their right as pastors to discuss these issues with their congregation. The only thing that cannot be done is endorsement of political parties and candidates by a church. Pastors actually have wide latitude in terms of their involvement. Pastors are free to talk about key issues of the day, urge people to vote with a biblical worldview, and may encourage them to get involved in the political process. It is also very important that when you do get involved, you should know how the candidates stand on the moral issues; because those that become our law makers will present their values when voting on or composing laws. That is why we have so many laws against Christian morality today.



"There can be no compromise on basic principles. There can be no compromise on moral issues. There can be no compromise on matters of knowledge, of truth ..." *Ayn Rand*

We have elected men and women that do not represent our biblical standards. Whether we vote them in ourselves, or by not voting at all, we are allowing immoral bills to be made law. That is why we have laws that legalize abortion, and laws that give favor to homosexuals and have made civil union “marriages” legal. Parental rights are being ignored as well.

Born-again believers should be getting involved within their communities as members of groups, such as school boards, select boards, or political parties — and run for office. This

is how we reach out with our Christian values to others. If we don't get involved or don't go to meetings and express our concerns on issues, or don't even write letters to the newspapers and to those who are representing us, we are turning over our God given rights to the world. As David Barton of *Wallbuilders* states in Changing a Nation, “...whenever the godly depart from any arena, their godly values depart with them. A person in office always legislates to his personal beliefs and convictions, and herein is the wisdom of Proverbs 29:2 made evident: When the righteous are in authority,

the people rejoice; but when the wicked man rules, the people groan. Christians, through bad doctrine, political inactivity and apathy, handed over the reins of the nation to leaders who gave lifelong appointments to justices eager to uproot Christian values that had been the heart of this nation for centuries.”

This is what we need to realize: when we don't get involved in what is going on around us, we leave our nation wide open to what is happening today. We are like our soldiers fighting overseas to defend our freedoms. We should be defending

them on the home front by standing up and doing what God wants us to do to defend the freedoms we have. Because we have been lax in being God's arm, we have opened the door wide for the enemy to come in and destroy it.

God gave us this "garden" to tend. What will you say when the day comes and He asks you why you did not tend His garden?

Marian Clegg attends Hunger Mountain Christian Assembly in Waterbury

Does the Bible Teach the Truth?

By Sue Carlsen

How can our President say that the United States is no longer a Christian nation? I looked at our churches and realized the membership in some of them is shrinking. National polls say that as well. Why? I believe that Christians have the most logical religion in the world. People want to rely on the truth. We have the Bible --- both the Jewish Scriptures and the Christian Scriptures. It contains the whole Truth. But do we Christians really believe the Bible? Its contents are sometimes called Bible stories. Are they merely fables we read as children, or is there something more? Can we depend on the truth of the Bible?

I remember that I had trouble with this when I first started to read the Bible as a child. When I asked my parents, they gave me some answers that would explain away the miracles. I accepted this when I was younger, trusting God to show me the truth. When I became a Christian, I realized that I needed to search out the truth for myself and settle the issue. When a study of Genesis came along, I jumped at it. Here would be the answers to some of my questions about life. I knew that the answers I found would either validate or destroy my beliefs. I wonder if this is why some people leave church? Is church merely a good place to send your kids to Sunday School and learn morals? Many adults ignore the Bible, because they “feel” they know the difference between stories and truth. Truth is not “feelings”.

I started with the existence of God. When I looked in Genesis, I saw that it does not defend God's existence. It just says, “In the beginning God created . . .” No explanation, no defense. It just says “God created”. The Bible doesn't treat us like children. It speaks the truth boldly. The evidence of God's existence is all around us. It's like finding a watch on the beach. You don't assume it came into existence by accident. You know that someone must have made it. You know that someone must have lost it.

In the same way, when you look at the existence of the world, you know that someone must have created it. We have the Laws of Thermodynamics. These are observed laws of nature, like the law of gravity, which explains why everything is drawn to the earth. These laws have governed existence since before the world was created. One of these laws says that everything moves from an ordered state to one of disorder. Was that law suspended until everything else was created? That doesn't seem logical to me. It must have always existed. God knows that we can look see His handiwork for ourselves.

The modern secular culture teaches that everything is relative. There are no moral absolutes. There are some religions where children may attend services or rituals without ever fully realizing that they are responsible to their Creator just as much as they are responsible to their parents. This must not happen in Christianity. When young people are not taught Biblical truth, they drop out of Sunday School and may soon resist coming to church as youth. This happens too often today. They figure if you can't trust what the Bible has to say about history, how can you trust anything else it has to say? Churches must teach solid Biblical truth without apology. We should never attempt to explain Biblical truth away. The Bible is the Word of God.

One area where truth is a real stumbling block is the age of the earth. What is the true age of the earth? There are theories that teach that the earth is millions of years old. Many Christians believe that it is that old by calling their theories a “Gap Theory”, a “Day-age Theory”, a “Theistic Evolution Theory”, etc. I think that this is an important question because, in my opinion, to say that the earth is millions of years old undermines other teachings found elsewhere in the Bible. It implies that death came before sin, contradicting the truth about the Fall of mankind. I think that the earth was created in seven days. That is what I believe. Our belief in the Bible must include the whole Bible --- including Genesis. We cannot leave Genesis out.

Sue Carlsen is a Director of the Christian Action Ministry and attends North Avenue Alliance Church in Burlington

Is Our House On Fire?

by
Lauston Stephens

I know a pastor who is a member of his community's volunteer fire department. He is able-bodied and generally available. His own home is of wood construction. It is a good fit, but what if he checked on the theology of a home owner before deciding whether or not to respond to a fire alarm? What if he refused to work together with other members of the fire department because of religious differences? Would that work for you?

This past August, a number of Christian leaders joined a "Black Robe Brigade" at a rally* on the Washington mall. There were also non-Christian religious leaders there. Is there a slippery slope here that leads to confusion or betrayal of non-negotiables? Some will warn that we should have nothing to do with things like this. Maybe they live in a fire-proof house.

In organizations such as CAM, we are Christians from different denominations working together with common concerns and interests. When we in CAM pray together, we are all praying to the same God, in the name of the same Jesus. We must keep in mind that it is not so with this modern-day "Black Robe Brigade." If they want to pray together, according to their own doctrines, they will not all really be praying to the same God, nor all in the name of the same Jesus. Some of them will most definitely not pray in the name of Jesus at all. They all agree that Moses brought law down from a mountain, but differences quickly arise over what's to be done when we don't abide by the law.

We need to remember that the event on the Washington mall was not a prayer meeting and it was not organized by theologians. Those who attended were there as Americans with love and concern for our country. That concern includes the honor, ethics and morals in evidence in our country today. It also includes economic troubles and other perils. Are there general guidelines or principles for Christians working together with non-Christians in facing common problems?

In the 27th chapter of Acts, the apostle Paul finds himself on board a ship, mostly with non-Christians. A major storm is their common problem. He is not the captain of the ship. He is not even seen as the chief passenger. In fact, he is there as a prisoner. Initially, his advice is ignored. By the end of the storm, everyone is listening to him. How did that change come about?

"The next day, we touched at Sidon. Julius treated Paul kindly, and gave him permission to go to his friends and refresh himself." (Acts 27:3 World English Bible)

When Paul was put into the custody of Julius, the centurion would have determined what kind of a prisoner he had. He would have learned that Paul was a Roman citizen on his way to appeal his case to Caesar. Perhaps he learned of the conclusion in King Agrippa's court: "This man does nothing worthy of death or of bonds. ... This man might have been set free if he had not appealed to Caesar." Paul's conduct and circumstances set him apart

from other prisoners. Our conduct must commend us to others before any common problems arise.

"When much time had passed and the voyage was now dangerous, because the Fast had now already gone by, Paul admonished them, and said to them, 'Sirs, I perceive that the voyage will be with injury and much loss, not only of the cargo and the ship, but also of our lives.'" (Acts 27:9-10)

If anyone had a reason to get to Rome in a hurry, it was Paul. Other prisoners may have been going to their death. It was just another trip to the ship's crew. Julius and his soldiers may have had family in Rome that they had not seen in years, but Paul was going to preach the Gospel before Caesar. If anyone could say, "It is important that we get to Rome as quickly as possible," it was Paul, yet he advises against risking travel in the wrong time of year. Regardless of what task God may have given us, we are not to be driven by it. Cattle are driven, sheep are led. Our Lord is the Great Shepherd, not the Great Cowboy. When the time comes, we must lead others, not drive them against their wills.

"Because the haven was not suitable to winter in, the majority advised going to sea from there..." (Acts 27:12)

Democracy in action: sometimes the vote goes against our advice. God is still in control.

"When neither sun nor stars shone on us for many days, and no small tempest pressed on us, all hope that we would be saved was now

taken away. When they had been long without food, Paul stood up in the middle of them, and said, ..." (Acts 27:20-21)

God always speaks at just the right time. So should we.

"Now I exhort you to cheer up, for there will be no loss of life among you, but only of the ship. For there stood by me this night an angel, belonging to the God whose I am and whom I serve, saying, 'Don't be afraid, Paul. You must stand before Caesar. Behold, God has granted you all those who sail with you.'" (Acts 27:22-24)

Sea-faring men were superstitious. No doubt, the men Paul spoke to had religions of their own. Paul speaks out of his relationship with "the God whose I am and whom I serve." In good times or bad, our relationship with our Savior is always the source of our strength for ourselves and for others. Paul had not been praying just for himself, but for his shipmates and God spared their lives in answer to his prayer. Paul would be an asset to any volunteer fire department.

What will hit America first, an economic tsunami or a terrorist fire-storm? In any event, walk with your Lord and work together with your neighbor. Then you will be in place to say what has been granted by "the God whose I am and whom I serve."

Lauston Stephens is a Director of the Christian Action Ministry and attends Roadside Assembly of God in Rutland

* Restoring Honor Rally 8/28/10

"I contend that for a nation to try to tax itself into prosperity is like a man standing in a bucket and trying to lift himself up by the handle."

Winston Churchill

What can I do?



Faith without works is dead James 2:17

e-mail : camnet@surfglobal.net

www.christianactionministry.com

According to polls released in 2009 and 2010 by Gallup and SurveyUSA, Vermont ranks last in support of pro-life issues, is the least religious state in the nation, and is tied with Connecticut as the second most liberal state.

Governor-elect Peter Shumlin has stated that one of his first priorities will be to attempt to pass a physician-assisted suicide (PAS) law. This, coupled with the push toward State controlled healthcare in Vermont, will require that the upcoming session of the Vermont legislature is one that Christians must watch closely. Become involved. Let your legislators know where you stand on these issues.

The **Christian Action Ministry Network, Inc.** is an educational nonprofit public charity supported entirely by volunteers and contributions from the public. Personal, church and business donations are encouraged and are tax-deductible under the IRS Code 501(C)3. The information provided herein does not necessarily reflect the views of any particular church or individual associated with the Christian Action Ministry Network.

✉ CAM Network, Inc.
PO Box 1067
Williston, VT 05495
☎ (802) 372-6442



Next Meetings
January 11, 7:00 pm
Maranatha Christian Church
Williston, Vt.
February 15, 7:00 pm
Parkinson home
Hinesburg, Vt.

Making A Difference in Vermont!



NON PROFIT ORG
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
BURLINGTON, VT
PERMIT NO.165