

Christian Action Ministry Newsletter

Involving the Christian in Community Action

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Knit Together in Love

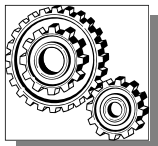
By
Lauston Stephens

Voting for Unity

Thoughts regarding society today and Christian unity

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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

What does the fossil record show about Noah's flood?

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.

Who was happier, Frodo Baggins from *The Lord of the Rings* or Luke Skywalker from *Star Wars*?

Frodo and Luke were two young fellows who left home on a noble quest: Frodo's destiny was to save Middle-earth; Luke saved a galaxy. Both paid a price: Frodo had a finger bitten off; Luke had a hand cut off. Both lost mentors, Gandalf & Obi-Wan Kenobi, who strangely returned. Both ultimately succeeded. So, are the two modern day myths essentially the same?

British psychologist John Bowlby declared, "Life is best organized as a series of daring ventures from a secure base." Hobbiton was Frodo's secure base. He had community. He had a patron, his uncle Bilbo. He had a nice, comfortable

home, even a gardener. He was known and respected in the community. After his quest, Frodo returns to Hobbiton.

Luke's home was an isolated, somewhat nuclear household on a re-



mote desert planet, Tatooine, and he was restless. After his quest, Luke moves on to other things and never returns. Do we really need a psychologist to tell us that ultimately Frodo was the happier and more complete of the two?

Okay, which story is more American? A nation of im-

migrants can be a nation of social orphans. Some of us, or our ancestors, came here as a community, most famously, the Mayflower pilgrims. Most came as individuals or nuclear families. Why are millions of Americans paying good money for DNA tests? Why is it important to know who we are? "It is not good for man to be alone." We are social beings. We need community.

An epidemic of opiate addictions and the growing crisis of mass shootings are symptoms of deeper problems. Social media are "ersatz community", addictive yet unreal. The (mostly) young and (mostly) male addicts and (mostly) white) shooters are people without healthy community and without healthy quest.



"I am a Christian and of course what I write will be from that essential viewpoint."

"It is not the strength of the body that counts, but the strength of the spirit."

J. R. R. Tolkien, author of *The Lord of the Rings* and *The Hobbit*

Now, whose story is more biblical, Frodo or Luke? Is there an ultimate quest story? To quote songwriter Dottie Rambo, "He left the splendor of heaven, knowing his destiny / Was the lonely hill of Golgotha, there to lay down his life for me." The Son left the community of the Father and the heavenly hosts, redeemed the world, and returned to the Father. "... For the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God." (Heb. 12:2b). *All passages are WEB.*

We are part of that story.

The Church is to be the prophetic, ambassadorial and redemptive community. Let's take inventory on how we are doing on that. Is the isolation that is so rife in the larger population also in the congregation?

Nibble and Sip Fellowship?

The "breaking of bread" in the first century church was a full meal. It has been reduced to a nibble and a sip;

we barely look at the back of the head of someone else. Is the "fellowship of the saints" equally shallow?

Rock Concert or WiFi Cafe Worship?

People gather at a WiFi cafe because they get a good connection there, but everyone is in their own little world. It is telling that people in church speak of the audience instead of the congregation. Is everyone in corporate worship truly incorporated one with another? Some readers may remember shape note singing or men and women's parts in songs. These are examples of practicing being congregated.

Catch and Release Fishers of Men?

How do you practice "Looking carefully lest there be any man who falls short of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble you and many be defiled by it."? (Heb. 12:15) "Watch out for the other guy, so his problems don't affect me," lay people may say, or "Yeah, he has problems, but that's the pastor's job." Pastors may say,

"I can give him counsel, but everyone is responsible for themselves." This passage is taken much more to heart in churches in other cultures with a stronger ethic of community.

There have been programs in churches for decades to provide community to youth in the congregation. Some of the older men in my church are getting involved in secular organizations. They may prove to be the difference in the lives of young people in the larger arena.

The word, community, is overused today, but the need is critical. Who in your congregation is already suited to strengthen the church in this? Immigrants from most of the world have a background with a stronger practice and perspective of community than the average American. Minorities also are more practiced in community because they have needed it more. Those that have spent time in the military or in prison have also experienced stronger bonds and acceptance. Even people who have played sports

understand subordinating personal achievement for the good of the team. A good church will welcome people from all these backgrounds. It is time to recognize how much we need them.

Brothers, even if a man is caught in some fault, you who are spiritual must restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness; looking to yourself so that you also aren't tempted. Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ. (Galatians 6:1-2)

Let us consider how to provoke one another to love and good works, not forsaking our own assembling together, as the custom of some is, but exhorting one another; and so much the more, as you see the Day approaching. (Hebrews 10:24-25)

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

"If our politics become so corrupt that the very foundations of our government are ready to fall away, the pulpit is responsible for it."

Charles Finney, Pastor and Father of Modern Revivalism, Dec. 4, 1873

Let's not let the laity off scot-free. When I was in Cuba, the pastor there asked me a very interesting question. He wanted to know if the congregation could remove a pastor if it was necessary for doctrine or conduct. He was pleased when I said, "Yes." *Lauston Stephens*

Voting for Unity – God’s View of Unity in America

By

Marion Clegg and Kay Trudell

The following well-known authors: David Barton, George Pearsons, Michele Bachmann, Keith Butler -- have contributed to a series of essays expressing their thoughts on fractured America today and how it affects voting. The following is an excerpt from a much longer 2018 article distributed by the Kenneth Copeland Ministries. This section of the longer article (*Faith for our Nation – Vote Special*) is called “Voting for Unity --- The Heart of Our Nation”.

The concepts below are concepts Christians need to think about as they look to November. The authors stated that Christians “have a responsibility given by God to vote and to let our voices be heard. Division has tried to rise up and separate us in our country. The way God views people is different from man’s view. Secular progressives demean the individual by putting everyone into groups. How does this affect elections and lack of unity?”

Here are more of their thoughts and suggestions.

I. One pastor prays for every candidate when he goes into the voting booth. He also prays for their families. He

thanks and worships God for giving him the “privilege and honor of voting”.

God has given us “His delegated authority” to vote in a righteous manner. In return God expects us to “make right decisions for this country.”

II. “Division has tried to rise up and separate us in our country. (a) Where there is division and strife, there is every evil work (James 3:16). (b) History was much different than what is now taught. . . (c) God’s Word is Truth. We need to focus on biblical principles and morality. (d) When we come to God and look at His face, it brings peace and unity.”

“The way God views people is different from man’s view. (a) In Revelation, we see all people, all races gathered around God’s throne --- all are one (Rev. 7:9). (b) There are only two ethnicities in the Bible: those who know God and those who do not. (c) God’s viewpoint is that there is neither Jew, Greek, Scythian, bond nor free, male nor female (Colossians 3:11). Anything else is a world viewpoint. (d) Secular progressives have brought in a different belief system. *Secular* means ‘against God’s word’. *Progressive* means ‘to get away from the old ways of doing things.’ Sometimes it is good to be progressive, as in the area of technology. However, right and

wrong do not need to change.”

The head of U.S. Naturalization defined what an American was in 1919 and 1941. “An American is one who is greater in his soul than in his class, creed, political party, or the section in which he lives. . . . To be an American, a man must have an American soul and believe in the spiritual realities upon which America rests and out of which America was born. . . . An American was created to light mankind with those passions which lift, and not by the passions which separate and debase. . . . Americans improve the ideals of man and make them see finer things, causing them to get rid of the things that divide and establish things that unite.”

The authors went on to state that “secular progressives demean the individual by putting everyone into groups”. We would add that they then pit these groups against each other. Is this why there is such disruption and division in America today? People are no longer seen as individuals but only in groups. The reason America is experiencing such division is that God’s standard -- the Bible -- has been removed from government and our court system. Rules are being made to allow each man to do what he deems “right in

his own eyes (Judges 17:6).” That leads to anarchy. “The standard everyone agreed upon at the beginning of our nation was the Bible. The Word of God needs to be put back into the highest place in our lives . We need to go back to teaching that all men are **created** equal. God’s way builds our hearts toward unity . . . We must elect people who believe in the Bible and have a godly view . . . the Church must become united again on the importance of God’s Word . . . (We must) study the parties’ platforms to know where the beliefs of the political parties stand. Whether they choose groups or individuals – that’s a clue to their agendas . . . study (the individual candidates) so you will know how to vote.”

The authors conclude this section of the longer essay by urging us to “make it personal. Make this declaration . . . I refuse division and hatred. My heavenly father loves all people and desires them to come to the knowledge of Jesus Christ, and I stand with Him!”

Marion Clegg is a long-time contributor to the newsletter and attends Trinity Assembly of God in Hyde Park

Kay Trudell is a Director of the Christian Action Ministry and attends Vibrant Church in South Burlington

“The fundamental basis of this nation’s law was given to Moses on the Mount ...If we don’t have a proper fundamental moral background, we will finally end up with a totalitarian government which does not believe in rights for anybody except the State.

Harry S. Truman, 33rd President of the United States



What can I do?



*Faith without
works is dead
James 2:17*

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Now that spring has finally arrived, we face the old Vermont tradition of spring cleaning. This is a good time to think about doing the same to our own minds and actions as well. Clean out and get rid of the trash that has accumulated in our lives, clean up our thoughts, shine up our motives, and paint on a thick layer of the Bible.

And while we are at it, we need to clean up our yards as well. The State of Vermont is rampant with abortion, new marijuana legalization, attacks on our Constitution, and a falling away from anything resembling Christianity. Our yard (Vermont) needs a good raking and getting rid of the debris that is everywhere. Become involved in your community and find out the stands of those who now, and those who want to, represent you. Do they stand for the same things you do? Are you registered to vote? Did you vote? Will you vote? Perhaps you might even run for office . . .

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Next Meetings

May 8, 7:00 pm
Parkinson home
Hinesburg, Vt.
June 12, 7:00 pm
Parkinson home
Hinesburg, Vt.

**Making A Difference
In
Vermont!**