

Prophetic Insight
July 28, 2017

**When Ungodliness Gains
National Prominence**

Introduction

Dear Friends in Christ Jesus,

There's hardly anywhere the righteous in Jesus can turn today where they don't see sin being lived out as the normal way of life. It was way back in 1983 when the editor of a Christian magazine told us that *"Christianity no longer influences society, but rather society influences Christianity."* As frightening as her words were 34 years ago, we believe she would say today, **"Society controls Christianity."**

Please download a one-page sheet, ***"When Times Are Bad, Stop And Consider"***, which illustrates something we've noticed our heavenly Father doing in the lives of so many who call themselves "Christian" yet whose values and beliefs are contrary to what His Word makes clear. Please take a look at it and see if whatever may be going on in your life is a way He's trying to get your attention. You may also want to visit Psalm 73 for insight into how many Christians have been seduced into the world's values and ways. You'll also see there how we who would be true to our Lord need to put Him and His ways at the center of our lives.

We've written this e-mail to help encourage those of you who are deeply saddened about the state of our nation and wondering how our government leaders can be so boisterously bellicose and yet spinelessly impotent. During a time of prayer I (Mike) was reminded of a book I read shortly after it was first published in 1972, *The Arnheiter Affair*

by Neil Sheehan. In March 1966 off the coast of Vietnam, Lieutenant Commander Marcus Aurelius Arnheiter was relieved of command of the destroyer escort USS Vance. He'd been her captain for just ninety-nine days but managed to destroy the morale and heart of his entire crew in that short period. I read the book during my second deployment to Vietnam assigned to a helo detachment aboard a ship, and with every chapter I'd break into a cold sweat.

Prior to Sheehan's book being published, the New York Times wrote about the Arnheiter incident in an August 11, 1968 article. Here is a link to that article: http://www.ussvance.com/Vance/AAbook/ny_times_1968.HTM.

There was a reason I could so intimately identify with the crew's experiences under Arnheiter's command. (And there's a reason I'm telling you this too.) During my third deployment to Vietnam in 1973, again as part of a helo detachment aboard a ship off the coast of North Vietnam, I served under a similarly deranged commanding officer. In fact I was one of his special targets. Every one of the ship's officers had already submitted their resignations by the time I arrived. The incessant public berating of each man had reduced them into little more than human shells.

I share this because I see the same kind of deranged leadership in control of this nation. Perhaps because so many within Christendom have deluded themselves into complacent religious practice and harbor personal unconfessed sin, our Father is giving this nation deluded leadership — leaders who are openly antagonistic and helplessly ineffectual.

Since our current governing bodies are predominated by men, let's revisit a

key truth. The core sin nature of males is to blame and give excuses when confronted with wrongdoing or personal failure. We men are born with a particular sin-based personality defect: we blame others and give excuses—just like Adam did. Adam even blamed God for having given Eve to him! In other words, when things don't go right, we men refuse to take full responsibility for our actions. And all we see in government today is Adam's blame and excuse-making being displayed on a national and international screen. Shame on us!

For those of us who hold dearly to our Lord Jesus as His loving bearers of truth and hope, we need to have a spiritual view — God's perspective — of the events unfolding around us. A much larger divine plan is unfolding than just what the political tension and accusation-fraught rhetoric is indicating. The Bible clearly reveals that when sin and wickedness abound, societal and political chaos ensues. Here's an important point to be careful of as you watch various forms of media:

Be Cautious About Images & Symbols That Are Used To Influence You!

Elisabeth Elliot was a noted Christian author and speaker. Her first husband, Jim Elliot, was martyred in 1956 while trying to make missionary contact with the Auca (now called Waorani) of eastern Ecuador. Not long afterward she and her little daughter lived among the same tribe members who speared her husband. Years later she was our missions professor at seminary (1978), and certain aspects of her teaching stand out vividly to us. She was the first person who made us aware of how extremely powerful **images and symbols** are in affecting

people's minds and actions.

Images and symbols often connote far deeper meanings than appear solely on the surface. Some examples: •a wedding ring is nothing more than a metal circle — but it emotionally symbolizes much more. •A flower in a native woman's hair might symbolize that she is betrothed or married. But it still just a flower. •A political candidate speaking with a large crowd behind him or a minister addressing his congregation with a cross hanging behind him create visual images that enhance your perception of that person. •Political advisors routinely attempt to create a persona that has nothing to do with the inner character of that individual. The only thing that matters from a political perspective is how the elected officials are perceived by the public.

Marketing and advertising heavily rely on images and symbols to induce you to purchase a product. Consider this. What does a half-clad blonde know about the quality and performance rating of the vehicle she's standing next to? Nothing! What does a colorful toucan used in advertising Cocoa Puffs to your children have to do with whether it's good for their health? Nothing!

Our brain is more attuned to be emotionally influenced by images and symbols than to reality itself. In media, entertainment, politics and religion, images and symbols have huge influence. That's why they're so widely used! They create an emotional sensation in your mind, and out of that response come actions.

Our warning: More and more people in recent generations have forsaken applying the Bible to their lives and trusting our Lord Jesus as the ONLY

source of truth (and in the Greek language of the Newer Testament, truth means the ONLY reality). **That's why they've become more easily deceived by political and religious images and symbols as counterfeits of Truth.**

Those who are currently most esteemed in our society use images and symbols to gain fame and notoriety. Yet what they *symbolize* to you may not be the whole reality of who these people are. In many cases if you knew the whole truth about these individuals, you'd probably have a lesser or entirely different opinion of them. Through well-conceived images and symbols within both the present religious and political climate, fame and fortune have become the ticket to prominence. Yet the cost has been high for the people these celebrities are supposed to serve. Both the political and religious arenas have become spectacles, **"theater"** relying on images and symbols to induce an emotional commitment or loyal following from their patrons.

Throughout Scripture runs the theme that in our Lord's eyes there's always a clear distinction between those who belong to Him and those who are not His own (e.g., Matthew 25:31-46). We are not speaking here of *believers* versus *unbelievers*. Rather, we're referring to the multitudes in Christendom who evaluate their lives by the images and symbols that are esteemed in this world and by this world (see James 2:5; 4:4).

Whoever you may esteem in politics, entertainment or religion, heed God's warnings about these individuals' inner motives and purposes: *"Woe to those who are wise in their own eyes and clever in their own sight"* (Isaiah 5:21). *"The LORD detests all the proud of heart. Be sure of this: They will not go unpunished"* (Proverbs

16:5).

When you read about God's judgment in Revelation 11:18, notice that His wrath is focused on those *"who are destroying the earth."* Now think about the various people put in key positions by the Executive Branch. Many have been put in office because of their success on Wall Street that's been fueled by personal greed. They have no regard for the Earth or for the quality of life of Earth's inhabitants. We may not be able to stop their nefarious agendas, but we can pray — and God is waiting for them at the Judgment.

Each of us who seeks to live to please our Lord and be accepted by Him through His grace needs to scrutinize our lives according to how *He* views each of us. His perspective is the only one that counts! Out of loving concern for the people He called out as His own (Deuteronomy 14:2), our Lord purposed that the Book of Malachi close the entire Old Testament. It's not like the prophet is casually relating a happy ending for the Jewish people. God had issues with them. But there were a remnant who feared God with awesome regard and seriously weighed how they lived their lives from His vantage point:

*"Then those who feared the LORD talked with each other, and the LORD listened and heard. A scroll of remembrance was written in His presence concerning those **who feared the LORD and honored His name. 'They will be Mine,'** says the LORD Almighty, 'in the day when I make up My treasured possession. I will spare them, just as in compassion a man spares his son who serves him'"* (Malachi 3:16,17).

What were the issues which God used Malachi to warn the Jewish people about? First He confronts them about

their toleration for divorce, a breaking of the covenant union of marriage which He established with the first couple in Eden (see Matthew 19:4-6). *“I hate divorce,’ says the LORD God of Israel”* (Malachi 2:16). Today, so-called “Christian Conservatives” have been blindly backing a President who has been married three times. Yet Jesus was blunt about the matter: *“I tell you that anyone who divorces his wife, except for marital unfaithfulness, and marries another woman commits adultery”* (Matthew 19:9). The propaganda the Christian Conservatives voice to their followers is that they stand against the liberals — and many Christian voters were seduced by their deceit. They were duped into seeing this past election not as a call to repentance but rather as merely a choice between two candidates.

It's a question well worth asking yourself and discussing with those close to you: **“With all the involvement of Christian Conservatives in the political arena since the days of Jerry Falwell and the Moral Majority, why hasn't the holiness and power of our Lord Jesus prevailed in this land?”** The reality is this. So many of these Conservative “Christian” leaders have bathed themselves in worldly values, acclaim, and fortune that their mutually tolerated sin has kept them from calling upon Christians to follow the only way in which God will answer:

“If My people, who are called by My Name, will humble themselves and pray and seek My face and turn from their wicked ways, then will I hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and will heal their land” (2Chronicles 7:14). Notice that God isn't calling on unbelievers to change their behavior! Instead He is clearly admonishing His own then and

we in Christ now to turn from our own wicked ways. It's our responsibility as followers of Jesus to take that action and repent so that Father will do His part.

We consider ourselves spiritually and politically conservative. But we have no identification with “Christian Conservatives.” To us they in general represent people who feel they've gotten ahead by their own merit and choices. The Lordship of Jesus in their lives comes across as a token issue to them. And if you unmask both political and religious conservatism, you find this unspoken motive in many:

“I've gotten my security and comfort in life and I don't feel any responsibility to help or benefit others.”

If you analyze the underlying theology of Christian Conservatism you'll discover that their methodology in the political arena is akin to “Dominion Theology” which we wrote about in our May 11, 2017 Prophetic Insight. In its simplest form this teaching represents a belief that Christians should restore God's commands to government, even without Jesus being the Lord of people's lives. In other words, through politics they intend to establish the Kingdom now through legislation, without any dependence on Jesus or call to be born again of His Spirit!

There's serious danger when the Lordship of Jesus is not the central point of any thrust into the political or societal arena. If you look back to the proliferation of abortion in this nation since Roe vs. Wade in 1973 (over 61 million precious lives destroyed), you'll realize that whether you rely on politics or entangle yourself with religious organizations that don't place Jesus first will always end in

disaster. Our Lord didn't intervene to stop the horror of abortion, and perhaps it's because of the alliance many of the born again made with those who trusted in Mary and "saints" to prevail. From God's perspective, that's idolatry just as it was among the ancient Israelites, and He was compelled to keep His own words, *"I am the LORD; that is My Name! I will not give My glory to another or My praise to idols"* (Isaiah 42:8).

In recent decades fame, security and personal comfort have become such compelling values in this nation that success throughout politics and much of Christendom is viewed through the lens of worldly standards and goals. Many in Christianity have allowed themselves to be seduced by the symbolism of fame and fortune, and their distrusting thought patterns are like those of the Jewish people God confronted through the prophet Malachi:

"You have said, 'It is futile to serve God. What did we gain by carrying out His requirements and going about like mourners before the LORD Almighty? But now we call the arrogant blessed. Certainly the evildoers prosper, and even those who challenge God escape'" (Malachi 3:14,15).

For those of you reading this e-mail and struggling to stay true to our Lord Jesus in a decadent and debauched society, please take a warning from the psalmist's experience, *"For I envied the arrogant when I saw the prosperity of the wicked"* (Psalms 73:3). Don't let the values of this world keep you from holding true to the values that will matter for eternity.

Your servants in Christ for the sake of the heaven-bound,

Mike & Sue