

THE UPWARD CALL

*Brethren, I do not regard myself as having laid hold of it yet;
but one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and reaching forward to what lies ahead,
**I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God
IN CHRIST JESUS.***

(Philippians 3:13-14 NASB)

#03-09152

Seated in the Chair of Moses #2

August 22, 2009

(1) Then Jesus spoke to the crowds and to His disciples, (2) saying: “The scribes and the Pharisees have seated themselves in the chair of Moses; (3) therefore all that they tell you, do and observe, but do not do according to their deeds; for they say things and do not do them. (4) They tie up heavy burdens and lay them on men’s shoulders, but they themselves are unwilling to move them with so much as a finger. (5) But they do all their deeds to be noticed by men; for they broaden their phylacteries and lengthen the tassels of their garments. (6) They love the place of honor at banquets and the chief seats in the synagogues, (7) and respectful greetings in the market places, and being called Rabbi by men. (8) But do not be called Rabbi; for One is your Teacher, and you are all brothers. (9) Do not call anyone on earth your father; for One is your Father, He who is in heaven. (10) Do not be called leaders; for One is your Leader, that is, Christ. (11) But the greatest among you shall be your servant. (12) Whoever exalts himself shall be humbled; and whoever humbles himself shall be exalted. (Matthew 23:1-12 NASB)

As stated in the first issue of this series, while recently reading the above verses, I was struck by how similar the political leaders of our day are to the scribes and Pharisees of Jesus’ day when He walked this earth 2,000 years ago. I will explain why (in the next issue), but before I do, I have a few more points to make.

I must emphasize that the moral condition of the present political system is a reflection of that of the general population, and the moral condition of the general population is a reflection of that of the so-called church, and the moral condition of the organized church-at-large is a reflection of that of its leadership, especially of those who have usurped the Headship of Christ.

Please see issue #03-0936, March 4, 2009, *The Ecclesia Within the Church*, for an explanation of the terms “church-at-large,” “organized church,” and “so-called church,” as well as issues #02-0864 through #02-0866, November 2008, *Do Not Be Called*; and #02-0867, November 25, 2008, *Head Over All, To the Ecclesia*.

Simply, if we believe that we, as the Lord’s people, are to be the salt of the earth and the light of the world (Matthew 5:13-14), then we must assume some responsibility for the moral condition of our government and its leaders. This responsibility is particularly acute when we consider that at least 70% of Americans claim to be Christians. Given such a high percentage, we should be the moral compass for our country. If we are not the moral compass, then the government will drift toward tyranny or anarchy. Or, if our compass goes in the wrong direction, then the government of our country will go in the wrong direction, whatever that might be, which, most likely, will lead to either tyranny or anarchy as well.

The term *moral compass*, in the positive sense, refers to **moral excellence** or **virtue**.

Please see issue #03-09128, June 3, 2009, *Moral Excellence and Intelligence*; along with issues #03-0902, January 5, 2009, *Babylonian Leaders Are Smart*; and #03-09116, April 24, 2009, *The Meek Inherit the Earth*.

The Founding Fathers of the United States of America believed that, without virtue, the republic that they formed could not survive. Benjamin Franklin wrote: “Only a virtuous people are capable of freedom. As nations become corrupt and vicious, they have more need of masters.”

This should be an eye-opener to us Americans as we consider that our president has appointed, without Congressional oversight, over 40 czars (his term) to oversee certain areas of American life. How many

masters do we have trying to intrude into our God-given unalienable rights of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness?

Later, George Washington, in his praise of the US Constitution, stated that its survival depended on “virtue in the body of the people.”

I would sum up the Founding Fathers’ concept of virtue to be akin to laying down our lives for one another.

We know love by this, that He laid down His life for us; and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren. (1 John 3:16 NASB)

They did not directly inject Jesus into their idea of virtue, but they saw the individual sacrificing his private interest for the good of the community, which is called *public virtue*. This is akin to Jesus’ second commandment.

And the second is like it: “You shall love your neighbor as yourself.” Lev. 19:18 (Matthew 22:39 LITV)

Some might ask: Isn’t this some form of socialism? Definitely not!

Public virtue is only one component of our truly unique government that was designed as a republic and formalized by a constitution in 1787-1788. In fact, without using the term *socialism*, Samuel Adams believed that they had developed a way that was anything but socialism, and, if such a system were implemented, it would be unconstitutional.

Contrary to revisionists of history, some of the Founding Fathers also believed that morality and religion were indispensable supports of the political system. George Washington believed that morality is not possible without religion, and that national morality cannot prevail if religious principles are excluded.

Consider this wisdom in light of the politically correct wisdom of our courts that began to throw God out of the schools and public life back in the 1960’s, all in the name of a faulty interpretation of the US Constitution called “separation of church and state.”

John Adams stated: “Our Constitution was made only for a moral and religious people.”

Well, this discussion could go on for quite some time, but I must leave it, or I will never get to my point. If you are interested in an easy-to-read historical exposition of these issues, I highly recommend the book *A Miracle That Changed the World: The 5000 Year Leap*, by W. Cleon Skousen, National Center for Constitutional Studies, 1981. It is not a revision of history; it is a look at a miracle of history. [All of the above quotes were taken from this book.]

I offer a quote from page 49 of this book.

“Modern Americans have long since forgotten the heated and sometimes violent debates which took place in the thirteen colonies between 1775 and 1776 over the issue of morality. For many thousands of Americans the big question of independence hung precariously on the single, slender thread of whether or not the people were sufficiently “virtuous and moral” to govern themselves. Self-government was generally referred to as “republicanism,” and it was universally acknowledged that a corrupt and selfish people could never make the principles of republicanism operate successfully.”

There is no doubt in my mind that the formation of the United States was guided by the hand of the Creator of the Universe, a fact that some of the founders readily acknowledged.

We Americans need to seek the Lord for His assessment of our condition as a nation and respond to His answer, just as Habakkuk stationed himself on the rampart to keep watch to see what the Lord would speak to him and how he would reply when reproved (Habakkuk 2:1-3).