

All Earth's Families

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At Bethel, God blessed Jacob, Abraham's exiled grandson, with the "Ladder Vision" of Messianic hope. "In thee and in thy seed shall *all the families of the earth* be blessed" (Genesis 28:14). Jesus, the Messiah, prophesied "That many shall come from the east and west, and shall sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven" (Matthew 8:11). In Judah, outcast publicans and sinners came, like Zacchaeus, whom Jesus blessed for his repentant, promised restitution to taxpayers he had gouged. "This day is salvation come to this house, forso much as he also is a son of Abraham" (Luke 19: 9).

Peter later welcomed the Gentile household of Cornelius . He declares, "I perceive that God is no respecter of persons: But in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him. The word which God sent unto the children of Israel, preaching peace by Jesus Christ: (he is Lord of all:)" (Acts 10:34-36). The Holy Spirit so blessed Paul's ministry to Gentiles that persecuting Jews testified to his effective preaching. "These ... have turned the world upside down ... contrary to the decrees of Caesar, saying that there is another king, one Jesus" (Acts 17:6-7).

Sadly, like the Ephesians, God's confused people have "left [our] first love" (Revelation 2:4). Our sectarian strife has concretized into rigid, denominational bureaucracies. We often tend to lose the winsome, salty witness of early Christians, often poor slaves, who ushered heathen neighbors into the light of Christ (Matthew 5:13-16; John 12:46). These saints heeded James, who urged tithe-empowered good deeds as a test of faith. "If a brother or sister be naked, and destitute of daily food, and one of you say unto them, Depart in peace, be ye warmed and filled; notwithstanding ye give them not those things which are needful to the body; what doth it profit? Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone ... Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin" (James 2:15-17; 4:17).

In contrast, America's families are besieged. Their micro-economies are attacked by ruinous taxes, costly Health Care and insidious inflation. Inflation is a virtual abortifacient that drives mothers, desperate to *make ends meet*, to death dealing doctors. The CDC "Abortion Surveillance Summary" (2002) reports over 27 percent of mothers who abort their babies have already given birth to at least one child. *Over 18 percent are in fact already married.* What a horror for children, when they learn Mommy aborted a baby brother or sister to balance the budget! Inflation and abortion are family-deadly, twin spin offs of America's obsession with Sex and the *Almighty Dollar*, our modern god of power.

Like Israelites after Moses, American fathers have failed to keep their families focused on family-friendly statutes of God's Law. "Only take heed to thyself, ... lest thou forget ... but teach them thy sons, and thy sons' sons" (Deuteronomy 4:9). The parental teaching nexus has been largely replaced by peer groups and teachers who impose secular social agendas mandated by the State. Thus, children are routinely alienated from embattled families and churches, sacrificed to boring bureaucratic routine of our failed experiment in government schools. Public schools are perforce funded by taxes, not free-will offerings and parent-paid tuition. Further, truancy laws to enforce attendance tend to transform schools into daytime detention centers. These schools frequently become magnets for drug dealers and abortionists.

Bureaucratized church ministries, in age-graded emulations of government schools, do little to stem the exit from Church of some two thirds of young adults. In fact, they exacerbate this "*Pilgrims' Regress.*" In their "survey of 1,000 20-somethings who regularly attended church as children and teens" Ham and Beemer reluctantly report discovery of a "Sunday School Syndrome." Compared to 39 percent, who *only attended* church, research shows students who *regularly attended* Sunday School (now in their twenties) were "more likely to doubt the Bible", "defend premarital sex", and "to accept that gay marriage and abortion should be legal."¹ The authors are also shocked at these findings.

Parents' neglect of God's Law has loosed His inexorable curses in America (Deuteronomy 27:15-26). His wandering sheep are in dire need of fiery preaching like that of John the Baptist. John called wicked Jews back to their heritage as children of Abraham. He denounced both orthodox and secular Jews as a "generation of vipers," without excuse, under God's command to "Bring forth therefore fruits meet for repentance" (Matthew 3:7-9). Like John's hearers, we also must repent of our worship of Sex and Power. God's straying sheep, indeed *all earth's families*, are still warned of Christ's looming fiery judgment. "Whose fan is in his hand, and he will thoroughly purge his floor, and will gather the wheat into his garner; but the chaff he will burn with fire unquenchable" (Luke 3:17). Let us repent now! Amen.

1. Ken Ham and Britt Beemer, "Already Gone: Why Your Kids Will Quit Church," Master Books, 2009, pp 37- 40.