

RELIGION

ALTERNATIVES

"Spiritual Bankruptcy"

BY M. ISAACS

Are most American spiritually bankrupt? Based on the daily news on Television, the daily newspapers, the observed actions of people on the streets, on buses, in schools, etc., I would say yes, these people are spiritually bankrupt.

We've come a "long way, baby" from where we started; but somehow we've left behind that hope in God, which propelled our Ancestors toward freedom, dignity, and support of each other; that hope that helps us to love one another, realizing we can go nowhere without taking someone with us. As my Pastor says, "We are in this thing together".

We have many, many Churches throughout Portland and Multnomah County, indeed, throughout the nation. Many, many ministries are underway; needed and appreciated. Why, then, do we see more and more evidence of spiritual decay? There is overwhelming evidence of disrespectful children, overbearing teens, "drug-high" adults and grieving, scared, angry senior citizens. Children play and fight together, with emphasis on fighting; quick to respond to any stimuli with violence, having absorbed will the actions seen in the home, on T.V. and on the streets or their neighborhood and in their schools.

A single mother supports her child's dislike of school discipline, dislike of teachers, dislike of sharing and studying. She takes him out of school and attempts to teach him at home. I ask you, what kind of teenager and adult will this child grow into, having learned that whenever he dislikes something or someone, he can

"just leave"? What happens to this child while the mother works everyday? With whom does he communicate? What lessons does he learn while mother is away earning a living? Who supervises this child while mom is away? Children learn many lessons during all the hours they are awake. This particular "sponge" absorbs a portion of all of which he comes in contact. Thus, violence on T.V., gang contact, inappropriate telephone conversations, etc., becomes this child's daily bread. He will grow up into another non-productive, violent, illiterate and antisocial, spiritually bankrupt individual.

What has happened to "love thy neighbor", respect your elders, honor your parents"? There are alternatives to being foul-mouthed fools and violent animals. Senior Adults should not have to be afraid to go grocery shopping alone, or afraid to go to Prayer Meetings at night. Our senior parents should not feel they have to "lock-up" at sundown and stay inside until daybreak in order to preserve their lives. Bars on windows are evidence of fear, but still are not deterrents to thieves and violent people.

Church programs and ministries are fine if "People repair", and teaching godly concepts and instilling godly attributes are the focus of such programs and ministries. But, if we look closely we'll find that most programs and ministries are used to develop and enhance a feeling of pride in the Church building, and in a particular congregation and Pastor and to raise money. Most of these ministries are used to uplift the name and

inflate the ego of a particular leader, rather than the name of God. Idols arise and flourish, supported by the entire Church congregation; the sad thing being, they don't seem to realize that they are making and worshipping idols.

In our society, freedoms are exercised without restraints. Authority in the hands of spiritually bankrupt people is a very dangerous thing. It is a matter of urgency that we recognize the decay in our society and its source. We've given control of our homes, our children and ourselves over to lust, envy, money and easy pleasures, usually at the expense of our very souls.

We must start a new program, a new life by rescuing our children (and we must help each other to do this job) shaping and renewing their minds; for I fear the older ones are beyond our weak assistance, unless, through our prayers, God himself intervenes. We have no other alternative for peace, harmony and love. We must wrest power and authority from the hands of those who are spiritually bankrupt. We must do this by voting for, upholding and supporting Godly men and women in our government, in our Churches and in our homes. Parents must become concerned and informed and involved in the school system which controls their children most of the day. We must know and support the men and women who've shown by their works that they love people of all ages, races, creeds and colors. Each of us must examine our attitudes and our relationship with God. Each of us must ask ourselves, AM I SPIRITUALLY BANKRUPT?

Prayer And Country: Who Has It Right?

BY KEIJO HUNTER

Finally, it seems, the United States is getting it right.

For years, America - the country who symbolically boats "In God We Trust" - has twisted the well-known theory of church vs. state.

For most Americans, church vs. state legislation has been interpreted to mean protection of the state from the church. On June 29, the U.S. Supreme Court set a clearly different message.

A largely divided Supreme Court set what may be a precedent for greater government financial support for religious organizations.

The high court ruled 5 to 4 that the University of Virginia was con-

stitutionally required to subsidize a Christian student religious magazine on the same basis as any other student publication.

The majority of the high court rejected the university's argument that it would violate the constitutional separation of church and state to use university funds to subsidize the religious magazine.

The principle against direct government financing of religious activity is a well-established one. So does this ruling override that? Probably not.

Justice Anthony M. Kennedy emphasized that there are several aspects that make this case unique: primarily that the money

did not come directly from the state but from student activity fees and that an outside printer, not the students, would receive the allocated money directly.

Judge Sandra Day O'Connor stated that the decision was based on the facts of the case and chose to write a separate opinion that the majority on the high court.

So what does all of this mean for religious folks? Only time will tell.

With groups such as the Klu Klux Klan - who in the name of free speech also recently won a "religious" case to erect a cross in a state-owned park - it's clear that all that glitters truly is not gold.



The Portland Mass Choir gathers in celebration of its debut gospel album "It's Jesus." The choir performs an album release concert, free to the public, Saturday at 7:30 p.m. at the Mount Olivet Baptist Church, 8301 N. Chautauqua.

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Date of Birth: 6-30-95 Sex: F
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