

A Word from Woody. . .
“A Prophet for This Age”

We live in such strange times today, don't we?

Teachers are discouraged from addressing their classes with the “insensitive”, “exclusionary” greeting, “Good morning, boys and girls”. Activists want laws passed which allow gender-confused children, without parental consent, to take hormone treatments to help them transition to the opposite sex. Protest marches are often granted permission to become violent, destroy private and government property, and rule over entire blocks in a major U.S. city for weeks—unless, of course, the protest is in favor of a conservative position. For the first time since 1976 we are in danger of having the Hyde Amendment removed and thus allowing the government to use our hard-earned tax dollars to finance abortions. The idea of requiring voters in Georgia to have identification is now called by many “voter suppression”, with Major League Baseball being so offended that it pulled its All-Star Game out of Atlanta. Cancel culture threatens to destroy the livelihood of those who give even a hint of disagreement to their antics—such as the attempt to destroy a Louisiana grocery store chain merely because one of its patriarchs happened to attend a Trump rally. The idea of Western Civilization courses, which reveal the undeniable virtues of the West like democracy, is now widely condemned in universities as sexist and racist. The media, entertainment industry, academia, Big Tech, and Big Corporations—with rare exceptions-- march in lockstep to the Leftist totalitarian correctness. It is thus to no surprise that *Time* magazine recently reported that a Gallup survey released on March 29th found for the first time in 80 years the percentage of Americans who belong to a church, synagogue, or mosque dropped “below the majority” at 47% (April 12/April 19, 2021, p. 6). What is going on?

About forty years ago Francis Schaeffer could see all of this. He was Christian minister, apologist, and author. In his prescient book *A Christian Manifesto* he explained that since around 1900 the humanist worldview has threatened our nation in a piecemeal manner. Schaeffer made the helpful distinction between humanism and its cognates. “*Humanitarianism* is being kind and helpful to people, treating people humanly. The *humanities* are the studies of literature, art, music, etc.—those things which are the products of human creativity. *Humanism* is the placing of Man at the center of all things and making him the measure of all things” (p. 23). It is this people-focused humanism—in contradistinction to the Judeo-Christian worldview focused on God-- that has triumphed increasingly in American culture. Humanism can express itself in atheistic forms such as in Marxism or in liberal theology, which has tried to do the impossible-- mix humanism with the Bible. Schaeffer could see humanism's influence by

1982 in such areas as the removal of religious influences in public schools and the legalizing of abortion and euthanasia. He saw an open window in his day for Christians to influence government away from the precipice of humanism's horrors, but he noted it would not stay open forever. He stated as though a prophet for this age, "And if the window does close, if people do not get their 'economic numbers no matter how produced,' I do not think there will be a return to the old liberalism of the last fifty years. Rather, my guess is that there will be some form of elite authoritarianism. . ." (p. 79). If one were to review the previous paragraph, it would be hard to deny that the window is indeed closing, and the claws of elite authoritarianism are showing.

So what are we to do? I take away at least three lessons from Schaeffer that I believe we need to apply today. First, Christians cannot pretend to be apolitical. We as Christians embrace not humanism but a worldview that not only buttressed our Founding Fathers but also give the only hope for our fallen world (p. 133). Our Savior told His followers that they are the salt of the earth (Matthew 5:13). So we must seek out candidates who espouse our values and vote for them. And we must share and engage people with the good news of Jesus who can transform lives and worldviews. Second, we must have a bottom line, not based on pragmatism but on principle, where we are willing to disobey the government when it requires us to do things which are against God's will. Schaeffer explains, "*If there is no final place for civil disobedience, then the government has been made autonomous, and as such, it has been put in the place of the Living God*" (p. 130, emphasis his). We recall Peter and the apostles replied to the Jewish authorities who had commanded them to stop teaching in Jesus' name, "We must obey God rather than any human authority" (Acts 5:29). Hopefully, we will never reach this bottom line—but we must recognize that it exists and where it exists. And third, we must live out the new creation we are called to be, or as Schaeffer puts it, the "New Man" (2 Corinthians 5:17). "In order for Christians to show forth the New Man they must demonstrate a positive practice and exhibit a caring Christian community in the group and care beyond the Christian group" (p. 123).

And of course, in all these three lessons above, we rely on our precious Lord and the in-filling of His Holy Spirit.

Love in Christ,

Woody