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(this ought to go viral)
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Publisher: Church of God, Bismarck, Darwin & Laura Lee, **Editor:** Laura Lee, **Assistant Editor:** Darwin Lee We do not necessarily agree with all contributors or their works submitted and printed in this newsletter. It is up to you to get out your Bible and see whether these things are true. Iron sharpens Iron

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Articles

Are You a Christian Nationalist?

by Eddie Hyatt (Tulsa, Oklahoma)



Charisma News reported on a letter, signed by 500 evangelical leaders, that condemned "Christian nationalism" and tied it to the Capital riots of January 6. I agree with the authors of the letter that all Christians need to speak out against all violence and hate and the detestable acts that took place in Washington D.C. on January 6.

However, while every evangelical I know condemns the acts of January 6, the authors of the letter seem to be using January 6 as a broad brush to paint every supporter of Donald Trump as an insurrectionist and supporter of white supremacy.

This, perhaps, should not be surprising since the authors of the letter actively campaigned against Trump and sought to turn evangelicals from him to Joe Biden in the 2020 presidential election. So, whatever their moral and theological concerns may be, they obviously have a political agenda as well.

The term "Christian nationalism" is relatively new and is generally defined as "the attempt to merge Christian and American identities and thereby distorting both the Christian faith and America's constitutional democracy." I have been accused of being a "Christian nationalist" because of my book, "1726", that documents the profound Christian influence on America's founding.

A Christian Republic Is Not a Theocracy

Most Americans do not know the difference between a theocracy and a Constitutional Republic founded on Christian principles. America's founders had a clear understanding of the difference and they rejected the former and created the latter.

Theocratic rulers claim a Divine right to rule over their subjects. Iran's ayatollahs claim a Divine right from God to rule the citizens of that land. The "Divine Right of Kings" and the "Divine Right of the Episcopacy" were widely held beliefs in medieval Europe where monarchs and popes claimed to rule their subjects with God's blessing and favor.

America's founders held no such grandiose view of themselves or any human being. Influenced by the "dissenting Protestants," they rejected the claims of popes and monarchs and created a society that is free and open but requiring a moral vision and expectation because of the flawed condition of human nature.

The Founders Believed in Original Sin

America's founders held the traditional Christian view that the human condition is flawed by sin and cannot be trusted with power. They would agree with Sir John Acton who wrote, "Power corrupts; absolute power corrupts absolutely."

This belief is clearly borne out in both their writings and their actions. "Take mankind in general," said Alexander Hamilton, "they are vicious." James Madison added, "If men were angels no government would be necessary."

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This same mindset is why George Washington prayed for forgiveness. In a prayer journal he kept in his twenties, Washington wrote,

Wash away my sins in the immaculate blood of the Lamb and purge my heart by Thy Holy Spirit . . . daily frame me more and more in the likeness of Thy Son Jesus Christ (Hyatt, 1726: *The Year that Defined America*, 132).

Historian, Benjamin Hart, is correct in saying, “A central assumption of America’s founders was original sin, meaning the corruption of man’s character.” That is why they divided the powers of government and instituted checks and balances to keep any one person or group from obtaining absolute power.

A National Morality

Freedom from theocratic rulers and government tyranny was an ideal that pervaded the thinking of America’s founders. However, because they held to the traditional Christian view of original sin, they knew that the populace, if not ruled from without, must be governed from within by moral and virtuous values.

William Penn, the founder of Pennsylvania, had said, “Those who will not be governed by God, must be ruled by tyrants.” The founders unanimously believed that only Christianity provided the moral values that would guard liberty and keep it from becoming a license for anarchy and sin.

That is why Christian chaplains were instituted in all the armed forces. It is why a chaplain was appointed to Congress and each session opened with prayer. It is why George Washington insisted on taking the oath of office with his hand on a Bible.

It is why John Dickinson, founding father and chairman of the committee that produced the Articles of Confederation, warned that “when states lose their liberty, this calamity is generally owing to a decay of virtue.” And commenting on this fact, the Catholic scholar, William Novak, has said,

Far from having a hostility toward religion, the Founders counted on religion [Christianity] for the underlying philosophy of the republic, its supporting ethic, and its reliable source of rejuvenation (Hyatt, 1726: *The Year that Defined America*, 171).

The First Amendment Protected Faith and Freedom

By establishing the First Amendment that “Congress shall make no law concerning the establishment of religion or hindering the free exercise thereof,” the founders were making sure America would never have a theocratic state as in Islamic nations and as had been the case in Europe since the time of Constantine who corrupted the church by making it dependent on the state.

They were also removing the “civil power” from having any control over the expression of one’s faith. They all agreed with Thomas Jefferson who earlier had opposed the persecution of Baptist preachers in Virginia where the Anglican Church had been established as the official church while still a colony.

Jefferson proposed a bill removing the state’s sanction of Anglicanism and giving equal access and liberty to all sects and denominations. He wrote,

Almighty God hath created the mind free; and all attempts to influence it by temporal punishments or burdens, or by civil incapacitations, tend only to beget habits of hypocrisy and meanness, and are a departure from the plan of the Holy Author of our religion (Hyatt, 1726: *The Year that Defined America*, 148).

Supreme Court Affirms America’s Christian Roots

The profound influence of Christianity on America’s founding and history was understood as late as 1892 as expressed in the Supreme Court ruling of “Church of the Holy Trinity vs The United States.” After reviewing thousands of historical documents, the nation’s highest Court declared,

From the discovery of this continent to the present hour, there is a single voice making this affirmation, this is a religious people. There is a universal language pervading them all, having one meaning. They affirm and reaffirm

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that this is a religious nation . . . The churches and church organizations which abound in every city, town, and hamlet; the multitude of charitable organizations existing everywhere under Christian auspices; the gigantic missionary associations, with general support, and aiming to establish Christian missions in every quarter of the globe. These, and many other matters which might be noticed, add a volume of unofficial declarations to the mass of organic utterances that this is a Christian nation. (Hyatt, 1726: *The Year that Defined America*, 170)

America's Founders Merged Christian Values with the Nation

America's founders did not institute a theocracy, but neither did they create a secular state. They rejected the idea of a state or national church like the nations of Europe, but they embraced the teachings of Jesus and the New Testament as the only source of morality that would lead to a stable and peaceful society.

This was the thinking behind the statement of John Adams to his cousin, Zabdiel, who was a minister of the gospel. In a letter, written two weeks before the signing of the Declaration of Independence, Adams said to him,

Statesmen, my dear Sir, may plan and speculate for Liberty, but it is Religion and Morality alone, which can establish the Principles upon which Freedom can securely stand. The only foundation of a free Constitution is pure Virtue. You cannot therefore be more pleasantly or usefully employed than in the Way of your Profession, pulling down the Strongholds of Satan (Hyatt, 1726: *The Year that Defined American*, 164).

They Believed in the Power of Truth

We, therefore, should not be intimidated by the accusation of being a "Christian nationalist." Like America's founders, we reject all expressions of violence and force. We also, like America's founders, are tolerant of diverse expressions of faith because we believe that on an open and even playing field, truth will always prevail.

Because America's founders believed in the power of truth, they had no thought of a "cancel culture." They agreed with John Milton who said,

Let truth and falsehood grapple. Who ever knew truth put to the worse in free and open encounter? She needs no policies, nor stratagems, nor licensing to make her victorious. Give her but room.

The Conclusion of It All

So, am I a Christian nationalist? It depends on how the phrase is defined. If it is defined as desiring a theocratic Christian state where officials claim to exercise authority directly from God, then I am definitely not a Christian nationalist.

However, I do know that Christianity and America were merged at its founding into a Constitutional Republic founded on Judeo-Christian values and principles. I also know that only another Great Awakening, that will restore the values of Jesus and the founding generation to our culture, is the only thing that will save America from the destructive path she is on.

The Good Leaven
by William P. Goff (Myrtle Beach, South Carolina)

I believe that the parable of the leaven (Mathew 13:33) pertains to the most essential part of our calling. It applies to the very core of our conversion and our entrance into the Kingdom of God. Without the leaven, which is symbolized in this parable, we will never, ever, be able to inherit God's Kingdom.

Now the "churches" (the members in general) have been repeatedly led astray on this crucial subject concerning this "leaven." They are taught that all leaven in the Bible is bad, but that teaching is wrong, there is a good leaven spoken of in the Bible, and I think we can prove this from the Holy Scriptures today.

Now the majority (or actually I could say "all" the pulpits in the "churches" of God that I have been associated with) all teach and preach (even to this day) that the leaven in the parable of the leaven (Mathew 13:33) and the leaven in the baked wave loaves of Leviticus 23 as well, represents sin.

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Brethren, nothing could be further from the truth! On the contrary, the leaven spoken of here represents a good leaven; it represents the very Spirit of God Himself.

In Mathew 13:33 we read "*The Kingdom of Heaven is like unto leaven*" Brethren, you cannot say "The Kingdom of Heaven is like unto sin", the Kingdom of Heaven has no sin, the Kingdom of God has no sin and never will! God never has, and never will, dwell with sin.

As we dissect this parable, we will see how it is talking about the church being given a portion of God's Spirit, and how that Spirit is to grow and amalgamate or bring the entire body of believers into unity with each other and into unity or oneness with God.

Let us look at some of the Greek words used in this parable. Pertaining to the leaven in that verse, it says that a woman took this leaven. (Woman here represents the church) and that Greek word translated "took" is the same Greek word used by Peter on the day of Pentecost when the Holy Spirit was given. After Peter addressed the crowd, and after they realized they had crucified the Messiah, their hearts were pricked, and they asked, "what shall we do?" Peter's reply was repent, be baptized, and you shall "receive" the gift of the Holy Spirit. That Word "receive" there in Acts 2:38 is the same Greek word translated "took" in Mathew 13:33. In both places it is referring to God's Holy Spirit.

The Kingdom of Heaven is like unto leaven (God's Spirit) which a woman (the church) took or received, and "hid" in three measures of meal. That word hid in the Greek means "incorporate" meaning to "coalesce" or to grow together into one body. until the whole was leavened. The "whole" being referred to here, again is the church.

God gives each of us "individually" His Holy Spirit and laying on of hands at baptism. But that Spirit is to grow in us and to unite us (incorporate us all together with the Father and with Christ, till the whole is leavened.) We are to become one with them. Sin does just the opposite, sin separates us from God.

Now further proof that the leaven used here in this parable represents God's Holy Spirit is found in Leviticus 23 concerning the "wave loaves. The leavening agent demonstrated in the making and baking of the wave loaves, will prove beyond any doubt that this leaven here cannot represent sin, but nothing other than God's Powerful Holy Spirit.

God gives us the physical (which we humans understand quite well) to help us to better understand the spiritual (which we humans do not always understand that well.) so I want to look at the physical side of the making of bread and compare it to the spiritual side. And let us not forget, Mathew 13:33 is a parable, and parables are there to reveal the "*mysteries of the Kingdom of Heaven*" (and not to everyone, but to His "disciples".)

When one makes bread, they put in the ingredients (the flour, the water, maybe salt, whatever the recipe calls for.) Now not all bread recipes call for leavening, but leaven is required in the wave loaves, and for a very important or better put "essential" reason. (And it's not sin – let's look at this :)

After the ingredients are added, the dough has to be worked, it has to be "kneaded" which involves pressing and stretching and even beating. Yes, the dough actually gets beat up a bit as it is put through this process, and it takes time to accomplish.

Christ's disciples were aware of this process; James even mentions this "kneading" in James 1:2 where he says: "*count it all joy when you face fiery trials.*" Paul and Barnabas described the kneading process while visiting Antioch when they said: "*we must through much tribulation enter into the Kingdom of God.*"

Now as this process of kneading and beating continues, a peculiar thing begins to happen, the dough begins to rise. And even after the baker beats the dough back now, it continues to rise back up.

Now we need to ask two important questions here, one is what is making the dough rise? Well, we all know it is the leavening agent. But (most importantly) let us ask this question, what is the leavening agent doing to the dough that is causing it to rise up? The leavening agent is "**changing the nature of the dough**". That is what leaven does, it's an element that produces an altering or transforming influence, it's called fermentation. And it produces what is called "conversion". And in this case, we are speaking about "spiritual" conversion, changing from sinfulness to righteousness.

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Brethren, that cannot be accomplished if the leaven introduced in Mathew 33:13 and in the wave, loaves is sin. God is not trying to convert righteousness to sinfulness. On the contrary, we are born with sinful natures, sinful natures that need to be changed.

Let us go a little further with this. We are told these wave loaves are "baked" with this leaven. Now "baking" brings another factor into the equation that we need to consider concerning this leaven. When the dough is being worked, kneaded, stretched, and pulled, as it rises, it is beaten back down, and again it rises back up, and again it's beaten back down. This process continues until the baker gets the dough just the way he wants it. Then the loaf is placed into the oven and baked. Once baked, it becomes a finished product, and its nature can no longer be changed, it is permanent!

If we were to be baked with sin (like all the pulpits in the Church of God teach and preach, saying the leaven in the wave loaves represent sin because the brethren in the church are sinful) we would possess sinful natures forever.

God will not bake "anyone" who retains sin in their nature. This is echoed throughout the Bible: "*Transgressors shall not inherit the Kingdom of God*" - "*The soul that sinneth, it shall die.*" The Scriptures are quite clear that we have to completely change from our old sinful ways and be upright, pure, unblemished, and unspotted before any baking takes place.

This is also specified in Leviticus 23. Verse 15 which says that seven Sabbaths (7 weeks) (7 churches to be more specific, remember this is the feast of weeks, the feast of first fruits, that is us the church) shall be "complete". And verse 16 says: even unto the morrow after the seven Sabbaths (weeks) shall you number 50 days.

Brethren being "complete" comes first, before day 50, before the day of Pentecost, and that word "Complete" is very significant, very enlightening. Most overlook the significance of that word by thinking it just means that 7 weeks need to be completed or finished. But that word "complete" means a whole lot more.

That Hebrew word translated complete in this verse is normally used exclusively to address Christ Himself. It means unspotted, unblemished. It is the same word used in Exodus 12:5 where they were to pick a lamb "*without blemish*". It is used twice in numbers 19:2 speaking of a red heifer "*without spot*" and "*unblemished*".

Yes, normally that word is referring to Christ. But here in Lev 23:15 it is referring to "us" the members of God's church. (It is not talking about an unblemished week of seven days.) We have to be unspotted, and unblemished, complete (just like Christ our Chief corner stone.) and we have to be complete before day 50, before we are baked. This "completeness", this "perfection" if you will, is also seen in 1st Kings 6:7 where it says that the house of God (the church) is "*made ready*" before it is brought tither, or to the other side, before it is baked.

If you investigate how the Temple was built, the stones were all cut at the quarry. And not only cut but buffed to perfection. Once completed, then brought to the "*other side*" and put into their place. They fit so perfectly, that there was no need for any mortar between the stones. And let us remember who is building this Temple, Christ Himself, and He (and the Father both) are perfectionists. When they tell us "be ye holy" and "be ye perfect" it is not a loose slip of the tongue, it's a requirement.

I am just about finished, but we need to go just a little bit further concerning this crucial subject, because the proper understanding of this leaven involves another very important issue that needs to be understood. It involves a very bad "spirit" that has been lurking in the churches of God and has all but permeated the entire church in these later days. It is the "spirit of antichrist."

The Apostle John tells us that the spirit of antichrist can be recognized quite simply, just by trying (or testing) the spirits, whether they are of God, or not of God, or antichrist. (Very few in God's church understand the simplicity here.) John tells us in 1st John 4:2 that IF the spirit confesseth (acknowledges) that Christ came in the flesh, that that spirit is of God. But if the spirit confesseth "not" that Christ has come in the flesh, that spirit is "not" of God, and is the spirit of antichrist. (Well, was Christ flesh like us, or not?)

Now all these "church" leaders will tell you yes, Christ came in the flesh, but they do not really believe it. They do not really believe that Christ was as flesh as you and I. They believe that Christ could walk this earth sinless, but that it is impossible for us (mere human beings) to follow suit.

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In John 1:14 we read: “*And the Word was made flesh*”. That word flesh used there for Christ is the same exact Greek word used in the Scriptures when referring to us and the rest of mankind. Strong’s defines the flesh that applies to us and Christ when He walked this earth, like this: “Human nature, with its frailties (physically or morally) and passions), or (specially) a human being, carnal.

Christ was tempted in all points like as we are, yet without sin. And we are to follow in His footsteps. If you ask a member of God’s church “what is a disciple? Most will answer: “a pupil, or learner.” And that is kind of correct, but not fully, not totally. There is a Greek word that means exactly that, a pupil or learner, but that Greek word is nowhere found in the Bible. If you investigate the meaning of the Greek word that is used in the Scriptures for “disciple” it actually means a whole lot more. It means one who not only knows what his master teaches but walks in the same exact way as his master. A true disciple of Christ walks “upright.”

Pertaining to sin, a well-known Church of God minister with many followers told his congregation that they need not worry about their everyday sins, because we will all be committing those sins right up to our change. Another large Church of God organization has the same belief, they have a booklet out that will make you feel really good concerning your conversion process, stating that if you find yourself falling back into your old sinful ways, it’s no problem, that everyone does it from time to time. They say repeating your old sins is nothing to get that worried about, because the Father has placed you into Christ’s hands, and He says He will lose none. They do not mention any Scriptures like: “*Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling*” or anything along that line.

It is a bad spirit that all the “churches” of God seem to possess. A spirit of antichrist, believing that Christ’s fleshly existence was very much different than ours, that He was able to walk this earth upright, but no one else can. Those churches have many false beliefs, many false teachings, that is why we had to separate ourselves from them in the first place, so we wouldn’t be condoning them.

Brethren, we are living at the time when the majority of the brethren in the church (as the Scriptures foretold) want to hear smooth things. We are living at the time when good is called bad and bad is called good, a time when the way of Truth IS evil spoken. Let us not get deceived into thinking that the leaven in the parable of Mathew 13:33, or the leaven in the wave loaves represents sin, because it does not.

My admonition is for us at this crucial time, as the day of the Lord rapidly approaches, is to not hold back our tongues, but let us boldly speak as a witness to our God. We need to let others know that our sins do matter, and that the committing of them can be stopped, and must be stopped, and that it’s crucial to our salvation to do so, and it’s accomplished by the power of His Spirit, the powerful leavening agent that He has given to us

Scriptures from the KJV

Other Items

Two Men

by Brenda Branson (Hanson, Kentucky) Copyright © 2000

Two men died that day.
Both were guilty.

One had the heart of a fool
He was never wrong—always had the last word.
He trusted in his own heart,
And took pride in doing things "his" way.

He blamed others for his misfortunes . . .
If they had just treated him better,
He wouldn't be in this situation.
It wasn't his fault!

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He would rather die than admit he needed help.

The other man had a teachable heart.
He knew he had made wrong choices,
And was ashamed of the person he had become.

He wanted to change,
But lacked the power to change himself.

He knew he deserved to die,
But first, he desired forgiveness
And a Savior.

When Jesus offered him hope,
He let go of his pursuit of pleasure
And grabbed hold of paradise.

Two men died that day . . .
One, a fool
The other, forgiven!

Which of these two men represents you?

George Washington walks into a bar
(this ought to go viral)
(Copyright) by Curtis Dahlgren (Stephenson, Michigan)

AFTER A HARD DAY'S WRITING, I stopped at the C-store for a cup of coffee. "Do you have gas?" the clerk asked.

"No, just a little heart burn and writer's block," I said, on the way out the door. On the way home, I stopped at the Backwoods pub and grub to grab a bite to eat. A March Madness game was on TV. I'd just taken a seat at the bar when the door opened. Everyone in the place, including the bartender, turned to look. You could have heard a feather drop. I glanced at the bartender. She didn't say a word, but the look on her face said a lot. I tried not to stare, but a chill went down my back. The furnace kicked on. The flat screen went snowy for a moment like an old black and white. The guy was quite tall and had the posture of an officer and a cattleman. It wasn't just his clothes. I've seen that face before – on Mt. Rushmore, several times in fact. There was only one face like that. They broke the mold. But he seemed younger than I remember. To my amazement, the stranger sat down beside me, to my left, and said "Howdy." Here I am, to the right of George Washington, but I just acted nonchalant and said:

"Howdy! Are you from around here?"

"No," he says. "But I like it around here."

So, I say, "Where are you from?"

"Virginia," he says.

So, I say, "What do you do?"

"I'm a farmer," he says. "Or at least I used to be."

"What do mean?" I asked, and the conversation went something like this, as I recall it:

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"WELL, I've been out of the country for a few years, further north, and I thought I'd take a little trip to the Northwest Territory to survey some of the country I never got to see."

So, you've never been to Michigan's Upper Peninsula before, eh? Have you seen our big bridge yet?"

"YES! Rode across it the other day; almost didn't make it across the channel. These great big horseless wagons with foghorns kept spooking my horse."

I know the feeling. So, what do you think of this part of the North Woods?

"WELL, it's sure a long way between the inns and pubs on Highway 2, and those little hotels seem to have all gone out of business. I stopped the first night at an Indian casino. A lady in white gave me a coin and told me to put it in a machine, and out came enough money for my supper and lodging and then some. The same thing happened at the next casino. I don't know how that worked, but the Indians always said I was lucky."

I know. Another miracle. Anyway, other than that, how's your trip going?

"WELL, I worry about the mood of the people. They seem to be a bit surly. And who was this guy called Brock?"

Oh, you mean Barack Hussein Obama. He was the President for a few years.

"Oh really. Was he a federalist or a republican like Tom Jefferson?"

The guy on the other side of George almost choked on his green beer. The bartender came over and said, "Now Curt – you know our policy on talking politics in here." So, I said:

"Oh sorry, but can't we make an exception today? Get us a couple of Two-Hearted Ales; we'll like that better than the green stuff. This is George – " She interrupted me and says: "Do you have any I.D., sir?"

"About *what*?" I said. I laughed and told George that's an old redneck joke.

"What's a redneck? And what's an I.D.?"

Tell you later, I told him, as I handed the bartender my debit card. "I can vouch that George is way over 21." The conversation continued like this, approximately:

"Interesting."

Whut?

Your currency.

Oh that! That's one Yankee ingenuity innovation that's sort of a mixed blessing. Times have changed.

"That's what I keep hearing. So, what's new?"

The bartender opened the two ales, and I just stared at my bottle until she was a safe distance away. "What's new?" I said. "Not much – except sex change operations, and the government could throw me in jail for not buying health insurance or for refusing to help pay for sex change operations. Then we have anti-fascist Fascists and, of course, there's same-sex marriage."

"Those cotton-picking guns have finally gotten to my ears, I guess; I thought you said 'same-sex marriage'!"

"I did! You got something against gay marriage?" I said with a wink and a nod. By the look on his face, I'd say he was confused.

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"What do you mean? Martha and I had a fairly gay marriage. She was gayer than I was though. Some people thought I was too religious."

"Well, you had to be – given the odds of winning the war for Independence – but I'm talking homosexual weddings here. Literal weddings."

"Really? Who would officiate at such a ceremony?"

"Some of them even happen in church, and if the pastor won't do one, he might be jailed or fined for discrimination!" George just stared at his ale and then took a sip. Then he turns to me and says:

"You wouldn't lie to me, would you?"

"Scout's honor. I cannot tell a lie. To *you*, anyway."

"Those snakes! Haven't they ever heard of Freedom of Religion? The rights of conscience should trump man-made secular rules. And besides that, in my day, *discriminating* was a good word."

"I know. Words change, and a lot of them are being changed *on purpose – with a Plan in mind – tyranny.*"

"What else is new?"

"I hate to tell you, but we have a national debt over 20 trillion dollars, about 100 trillion in unfunded liabilities, a terrible foreign trade deficit, and some public schools have changed their name from 'Washington' to 'Malcolm X.' And these days you wouldn't be allowed to speak on the campus of Washington University." The bartender walked by, so I tried to change the subject: "Say George, what did the termite say when he walked into the bar?"

"Is the bar *tender* here?" he said with a smile, and then a big belly laugh. "That's an *old* one. But why wouldn't I be allowed to speak at a Washington University, wherever that is?"

"It's in St. Louis, but It's a long story; there's this fad called political correctness that's very incorrect. That's the reason."

"But WHY?"

"Because you owned slaves."

"That? But I inherited the slaves. I wasn't a slave trader."

"Just wondering, but couldn't you have sold them?" The couple around the corner of the bar waited nervously for the response.

"It was a Catch-22 situation. We knew that in the long run, slavery, as you call it, was going to be abolished someday; that's why we put the amendment process into the Constitution. But no, I couldn't risk selling my slaves. They might have gone to plantations where they'd get whipped or separated. No way."

He lowered his voice and asked me about more issues. When I mentioned the border with Mexico and that we don't know how many illegal aliens are coming across every day, he almost bellowed it out:

"WHAT? Don't tell me Spain is invading!"

"That's your final warning, Curt," said the bartender as she wiped off the bar around the corner where the couple had just left.

"Sorry," I said. "But come on. It's St. Patty's Day." I suggested that we could move to a booth in the corner if she'd get us a couple more ales.

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"Okay," she said. "But keep it down." As we sat down next to the corner window, George looked me right in the eye and says:

"Man, did I make a wrong turn and end up in French Canada?"

"That's another story," I said. "But Americans are slowly but surely losing the freedom to speak what's in our hearts. Freedom of conscience on the college campus is now verboten."

"I know that word," he says. "The Hessians used it."

Then George just stared out the window as we watched a mid-March snowfall begin to blow. "I have a barn you can put your horse in tonight," I offered. "Or what were you thinking?" Without taking his eyes off the flying snow, he smiled a half-way smile and says:

"This reminds me of Valley Forge and the words of Tom Paine that we read to our ragged troops as we were about to cross the Delaware River on Christmas Eve."

"And that was all about Liberty, right?" I said. He just nodded. I said, "Do you want to see my river? It's right on the state line too. I moved up here to get away from Wisconsin's property taxes." He says:

"Property taxes? The next thing you'll be telling me is that you have to pay taxes on your *income too!*"

"Sometimes four or five times," I said. "Federal taxes, state taxes, school taxes, corporation taxes, capital gains, inheritance taxes, sales taxes and everything." George put his hands to the side of his head and said:

"I'm not sure I want to be the Father of this Country anymore."

The couple in the next booth got up, left a tip, and quickly left. The bartender handed me the bill for the last two ales and told us we had better leave too.

"That's okay," I said. **"I think I left my engine running.** And George says:

"Hi-yo Silver!" And he disappeared.

That's when I woke up.

P.S. Let's all wake up and make this go viral. We already have enough March madness.

PPS: Some of you may realize, this is an adaptation of my annual Ides of March classic.

A Blast from the Past

WOE...

by Tawanda Ray (Hamilton, Alabama)

Woe unto you scribes and Pharisees
Who say but do not do.
Who bind heavy burdens upon God's sheep
Though you do not follow through.

These heavy burdens you will not bear
Not one finger you will apply.
The list is long of what you demand
While you yourselves live a lie.

The "New" Church of God Messenger
A Newsletter for the People of God
May 8, 2021 --- Issue No. 14

The deeds you do are to be seen of men
In the guise of doing God's works.
You claim the right to live so high
Through salaries, tithes and perks.

The uppermost rooms and chief seats you claim,
By rights of being God's "priests".
Yet, Jesus has said if you want to be great,
Consider yourselves to be least.

The title of "master" no man can claim
Yet, "mister" you insist to be named.
In exalting yourselves to this title of Christ
The sheep have often been shamed.

Through widow's mites, your way has been paved
To live lives of which we can't dream.
In giving three tithes and offerings galore
Our own lives were bare and lean.

The outside of the cup and platter looks nice
But inside are extortion and excess.
You strain at the gnat but the camel you gulp
While trivial things you stress.

Jesus said, clean up your own insides
Before trying to clean up the sheep.
Make your own paths straight and right
And loosen the burdens you heap.

Woe unto you hypocrites and Pharisees
Good examples you have not set.
By devouring houses of widows and the poor
You have racked up quite a large debt.
(based on Matthew 23)

(This poem has been updated and re-printed from "The Church of God Messenger" July/August 2001—Issue No. 4.)

Iron Sharpening Iron

Marriage, Divorce and Remarriage

by James Steinle (Swanville, Minnesota)

A friend sent me your newsletter of April 3, 2021 and it looks interesting. I read through your study Laura on Marriage, Divorce and Remarriage and found it well thought out and validated. Good job. Besides myself, my wife would also like to receive your newsletter.

Response to: Marriage, Divorce and Remarriage by Laura Lee

Holy Days 2021

Pentecost - May 17, 2021

Trumpets - September 7, 2021

Atonement - September 16, 2021

Tabernacles - September 21 to 27, 2021

Last Great Day - September 28, 2021