

# Entitlements and Social Realities

*The Life God Blesses and its Discontents*

*--based on Jeremiah 29:11-13*

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# An Uncommon Moment

- Extra-ordinary moments in history require uncommon thinking

*How we look at a problem will determine whether or not we truly understand—from a Kingdom perspective-- its complexity in way that increases the probability that together we will discover and apply the right solution.*

# A Public Address Warning...

- Those who try to follow this teaching this morning must first choose to:
  - Free your mind!
  - If you do,
    - I promise that your **rear end** will follow

- *Fyi...got that from some graffiti in the 1970's that had been sprayed on the side of the Business School on the UC Berkeley Campus*

The range of what we think and do  
Is limited by what we fail to notice.

And because we fail to notice  
that we fail to notice  
there is little we can do to change

until we notice  
how failing to notice  
limits our ability to  
think the right thoughts and do the right things.

*Adapted from R. D. Laing*

# The *Nexus* Process

- **nex·us**
- **Function: *noun***
- **Etymology: Latin, from *nectere* to bind**
- **My Process here is to attempt to bind all of this together by the explanation of certain undeniable CAUSAL LINKS**

- Again, we are arguably at the most pivotal *Nexus* point in American history and certainly in our lifetimes.

# This Teaching...

- ...is framed and supported by two key axioms:
  - A **Golden** Principle and a Key Scripture
  - FIRST, the **Golden** Principle...

# A **Golden** Principle and the Story of good fruit and bad prophets

- **Seed, Time, and Harvest** works in the process of both *positive* and *negative* transformation.
- Jesus discussed this in the story of the good trees, bad trees, and bad prophets. This passage is found in Matthew 7:15-20.

# A Golden Principle and the Story of good fruit and bad prophets

- <sup>15</sup> "Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing but inwardly are ravenous wolves. <sup>16</sup>You will recognize them by their fruits. Are grapes gathered from thorn bushes, or figs from thistles? <sup>17</sup>So, every healthy tree bears good fruit, but the diseased tree bears bad fruit. <sup>18</sup>A healthy tree cannot bear bad fruit, nor can a diseased tree bear good fruit. <sup>19</sup>Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. <sup>20</sup>Thus you will recognize them by their fruits.

# A Golden Principle and the Story of good fruit and bad prophets

- Seeds that were planted over the past 100 years by men like John Maynard Keynes and other false prophets—culminating in the catalytic work of the 1960's-- has produced an unwanted harvest of unsustainable and un-fundable social and economic liabilities.

# The Road to Hell...

- Is paved with \_\_\_\_\_
- The Holy Grail of the American Dream culminates at the end of a multicolored and multi pronged rainbow of an idea commonly referred to as

*THE GOOD LIFE.*

# The Good Life and it's Discontents

*...or what happens when we make an Idol of the "Good Life" and leave God and the Bible out of the Economic equation*

- *This little thing called "assumptions."*
- *The enduring myth that we can somehow control most or all economic outcomes in life.*
- *The power of un-met expectations:*
  - *can you say "Roaring Twenties?"*

# The Good Life or Fatal Conceit?

- The people of the Great Depression understood something about this thing that most of the rest of us have difficulty grasping.
- The notion of the good life when characterized as material well being and corresponding security founded on a “boom or bust” economic system is a recipe for disaster.

# FDR, the New Deal and the dawning of a *new age* of entitlements

- New Deal or Raw Deal?
- Who is Amity Shlaes "Forgotten Man?"
- At some point this thing called "The New Deal" was hijacked by a newer New Deal...

# The 1960's: The American Dream in the age of Entitlement

- The **1960's** was marked by:
  - Ethnic Strife and the Civil Rights Movement
  - The escalation of the war in Vietnam
  - Violence on university campuses throughout the U.S.
  - Assassinations of a sitting president, a populist senator, and key leaders of the Civil Rights movement, most notably Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.
  - The introduction of Johnson's *Great Society* public policy boondoggle in response to mounting white **guilt** around the socio-economic condition of black Americans.
- Here is a question to ponder...
  - Where was the Church in all of this?

# The 1960's: The American Dream in the age of Entitlement

- *Aquarius revisited:*  
the spiritual response
  - How the *American Dream, as it were,* was undergirded psychically by a mixture of eastern mysticism and Greek philosophy.

# False Prophets and The American Dream in the age of Entitlement

## ■ *Aquarius revisited*

- *While in the 1960's it was popular to think that the Age of Aquarius would "dawn" and bring with it a world of peace, love, and brotherhood, the true "nature" of Aquarius doesn't quite work that way.*

*Read more at Suite101: [Aquarius: A Symbol of Our Times](http://www.suite101.com/article.cfm/universal_symbolism/27127#ixzz0gV5if9PX)  
[http://www.suite101.com/article.cfm/universal\\_symbolism/27127#ixzz0gV5if9PX](http://www.suite101.com/article.cfm/universal_symbolism/27127#ixzz0gV5if9PX)*

# The American Dream in the age of Entitlement

- *Aquarius revisited*
- *So for the past 100 years in America and specifically the last 40, a counterfeit kingdom has been growing (can you say wheat and tares?)*

# The American Dream in the age of Entitlement

- *Aquarius revisited*

- This is the story of how a culture becomes systematically nihilistic when it marginalizes the God of the Bible and the Lord of the Kingdom, and in a desperate attempt at meaning embraces a kind-of Greek Mythology the might be called the *Aquarian Dream* rather than to seek after the Lord of the Harvest.
- As David Wells has accurately pointed out, we are now living in a spiritual and socio-economic wasteland thirsty for the rain from heaven and the Bread of Life.

# Deuteronomy 8:3

- "He humbled you and let you be hungry, and fed you with manna which you did not know, nor did your fathers know, that He might make you understand that man does not live by bread alone, but man lives by everything that proceeds out of the mouth of the LORD. (NASB ©1995)

- Also see Matthew 44

# The American Dream in the age of Entitlement

- What is the result of all of this?
- *In a very real and practical sense  
America has become a  
Greek Tragedy  
and is now worshipping at the  
alter known as  
Entitlements*

# The American Dream in the age of Entitlement

- But the Aquarian Dream wasn't the only influencer:
  - The 1950's Fog of War (mama's fatigued with WWII)
  - The advent of a scheme to finance the American Dream which produced an endless cycle of consumption/credit/debt.
  - Feminism, Affirmative Action, and Johnson's Great Society (FDR's welfare system on steroids)

# *Economics and the Corruption of Truth*

- In the "Age of Entitlement," The *Seven Dwarfs* song morphed from "Hi-ho, Hi-ho, its off to work we go..."
  - to
- "I owe, I owe, so off to work I go..."
- Sadly, the Age of Entitlement requires the redistribution of material wealth in a futile effort to realize the illusive goal of economic and social justice.

# Where we are now in our endless pursuit of the *Good Life*

- The purchasing power of our U.S. dollar continues to decline in value.
- The U.S. government continues to print more money.
- We are engaged in an expensive and endless global war on terror.
- We are obsessed with an endless cycle of raising taxes, and then cutting, and raising taxes again.

# Where we are now in our endless pursuit of the *Good Life*

- We are raising government spending to all-time highs.
- We have requested little, if any, economic "sacrifice" on the part of our citizenry.
- Our trade deficit and budgetary deficits are at all-time highs.

# Where we are now in our endless pursuit of the *Good Life*

- Our national debt is at an all-time high and growing exponentially.
- We are completely dependent upon foreign nations to fund our over consumption through the sale of our debts.

# The Corruption of Truth:

## *An introduction to social realities*

- The secular world, its educational system, the medial elite—and sadly, certain elements of the local church-- are into the mass production of myths such as...

this neo-Greek **Myth** called **Entitlements**

## *The Corruption of Truth:*

### Post-Modernism and the NEW CONTEXT

- The Idols of *Relativism* and *Relevance* have become the New Absolutes—both in the local church and in almost every aspect of American society.

# The corruption of truth: An introduction to social realities

- **Political Correctness or PC** (the natural fruit of Relativism) and its Allies:
  - PC is the new law or arbiter of the “appropriate” context for carrying-out ill-defined and misguided efforts at addressing or eliminating so-called socio-economic injustice and achieving real equity on this side of heaven.
  - This context has replaced the U.S. constitution as the primary arbiter for the way we should go about self governance in a post-modern, post-capitalist European style democracy.

# The corruption of truth: An introduction to social realities

## The Functional Problem with PC:

- Each time we politicize a matter, such as race or gender, we get further and further away from a real solution that is compatible with reality and will produce equitable and lasting results.

# So who is the real author of the *Good Life* and how can it be realized?

- The Good Life is the Life that Almighty God Authorizes and Blesses
- We will continue to explore this idea when we consider the nature of prosperity and its corresponding relationship to the Kingdom dynamics of
  - a) obedience/blessing
  - b) giving/receiving

# So how should we respond to certain social realities?

- Should we feed and clothe the world?
- Why didn't Jesus feed and clothe the whole world when he could easily have done so?
- What about the Scripture that refers to caring for "the least of these...?" How does that square with the idea of doing right?

# Big ?'s

- To earnestly approach these and other important cultural, social, and economic questions, we must first deal with the idea of what is real and what isn't concerning man's inherent responsibility to his fellow man.

First, how has the American church responded to these challenges of late?

## The American Church, Cultural Relevance, The Nature of Truth and the Un-timeliness of the Prophetic

- "Never have Christians pursued relevance more strenuously; never have Christians been more irrelevant."

--Os Guinness

# Cultural Relevance, the Nature of Truth and the Un-timeliness of the Prophetic

- And in many cases the Church has become irrelevant.

## Guinness goes on to say...

"Signs are that, unless some drastic rethinking takes place soon, the corruptions in evangelicalism will worsen and show through in theology, not just in practice."

- **His conclusion:** relevance is not a thing that the church can achieve by looking to culture; it is not even a thing that can be pursued as an end in itself. Being relevant is a side-effect of clinging to Scripture, which is inherently relevant because it contains exclusive, perfect truth that speaks to eternal human needs, as well as an unchanging, all-satisfying Creator-God.

# Cultural Relevance, the Nature of Truth and the Un-timeliness of the Prophetic

- *Summarizing this critical point:*
- The nature of the prophetic oftentimes runs against the grain of cultural relevance.
- The Scripture says that: (our) God is the same today, yesterday, and forever more.
  - The issue is not about being relevant—per se—but rather it is about being aligned with Truth, repositioned and ready to receive God's Grace to deal with the immense challenges we will inevitably face in a broken world.

# The Nature of Truth and the Un-timeliness of the Prophetic

- *Furthermore:*

- To know the Truth one must first become aligned with Truth and to engage in the salvific process of being set free by that alignment to God in Christ who has reconciled the world to himself.
- The problem with the current world order is that it is neither aligned with that Truth nor subject to its transformative power.
- As we all know, absent the Grace-based process of reconciliation in Christ, it is impossible to see God and therefore to know Truth.

# What is the anti-dote to the twin Idols of Relativism and Relevance?

- This might shock you...
  - Repentance

# What would Jesus Do?

- Jesus was always involved in the business of his Father:
  - Contrary to the assertions of many well intentioned Christians today, Jesus was not preoccupied with being relevant, but in conducting the business affairs of his Father in heaven.
  - Therefore, the church should not be preoccupied with the business of necessarily making herself relevant, but rather, she needs to leverage the Prophetic, rebuild her foundation strategically from the brick and mortar of Wisdom, and *occupy* herself in the Kingdom business of Reconciliation.
    - *More about that later...*

**So, what is real Prosperity?**

# Key Scripture

- "For I know the plans I have for you," declares the LORD, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future. Then you will call upon me and come and pray to me, and I will listen to you. You will seek me and find me-- when you seek me with all your heart."

■ Jeremiah 29: 11-13

# “Bail-Out’s”

## An example of Man-made obstacles to Prosperity

- The attempt to avoid the natural consequences of bad decisions through bailouts only perpetuates the problem.
- **Example:** After giving AIG \$182 Billion in taxpayer dollars, they are now asking the government for more...even after shelling out bonuses to some of their executives during the past 18 months.

# The nature of True Wealth

- Begins with the idea that relationship with the wealthiest man in the history of the world...his name is \_\_\_\_\_

# The relationship between Truth and Prosperity (or real Wealth)

- Truth is a Person and His Name is Jesus Christ of Nazareth
  - A man born both of heaven and of the earth
    - The Perfect God/Man

# The nature of True Wealth

- Genuine relationship with Christ allows for the transformation of the individual and the formation of character through the process of discipleship such that one is able to properly steward the life resources s/he has been entrusted with.
- **True wealth**, from a biblical perspective, is therefore defined by a unique intimate relationship with the Creator God through the reconciliation that Christ has subsidized and the corresponding character building that comes as a direct product of biblical discipleship.

# The Heavenly idea of Self Government and its Detractors

- Genesis 3: Truth/Lies/Choice and Consequences
  - Following un-reality produces pain and sorrow (Gen. 3:16)
  - Hardship and calamity has become the course of life in our “democratic society.”<sup>2</sup>
  - America—the “city on a hill” as one man once called it—is in a free-fall from the well watered garden to a progressively more wretched wasteland (Gen. 3:18-19,23-24)

<sup>2</sup> In Christ work has been redeemed.

# The Heavenly idea of Self Government and its Detractors

- Contrary to the current idea of how government is supposed to “do” for the people, God approached this thing in an entirely radical way...

In Eden God...rc1

- pronounced judgment
- conducted a kind of courtroom lawsuit (cross-examination)
- sentenced the accused
- pronounced a word of real Hope

**Slide 48**

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rc1

adapted from George Grant's treatise on wealth and poverty.  
Ron Coverson, 3/15/2010

# The Heavenly idea of Self Government and its Detractors

- Opened the prophetic book and revealed the promise of a Deliverer—a Savior.
- And He gave them Good News
- He confirmed His Word with deeds.
- He killed an animal, shed its blood, and clothed them.
- He showed them mercy...he matched judgment and grace with charity. (Gen. 3:21)

# The Heavenly idea of Self Government and its Detractors

- The government of God is in the business of facilitating real Freedom (in Christ) while the government of man leads us into various and sundry forms of slavery.
- The reason why we as a people are worshipping at the idol of Entitlements is that we have not understood the solution set for fallen mankind.
- The American church has failed in its mission to disciple the nations—as it were—because in an effort to be relevant She has adopted the fallen worlds cultural values and processes—including the Marxist idea of *social justice*-- and has not discerned nor properly applied the Biblical distinctions between **rights** and **responsibilities**

# The Heavenly idea of Self Government and its Detractors

- **Empowerment** (the pushing out of responsibility): **A heavenly idea that's time has come.**
- We see and recoil from the socialism evolving in America in the name of *progressivism*, but have failed to notice the un-biblical soft tyranny of socialism that has emerged in the Church over the past 25-30 years.

# Freedom and the Tyranny of *White Guilt*

- Slavery of the African people IS America's greatest sin and we have paid an unaccountable price in blood—over and over for it.
- The gross mistreatment of the American Indian is arguably the second greatest American sin.
- However, if I as an "oppressed minority" refuse to forgive you for past sins, from a biblical and certainly socio-economic perspective, **I own you.**

## *White Guilt*

### and the relationship to entitlements and social responsibility

- *As long as "I" refuse to forgive you, it does not matter how much You bankrupt yourself in an effort pay the debt, it is impossible to ever satisfy it.*
- *America is going under for—among other things—its futile attempt to pay a debt that she will never be able to pay.*

# *White Guilt* and the relationship to entitlements and social responsibility

- All we as a nation are doing is pushing our corporate legacy of "Sin," as it were, to the next generation in the form of massive unsustainable debt and un-fundable liabilities.

So what is the **Cure** to this cycle of and sin pushing and mounting debt?

- A Kingdom perspective on the role of the Church in the midst of the welfare state:
  - First of all, the Black Church must act as a bold and uncompromising leader in outreach to the white sons and daughters of America's racial past and offer forgiveness.
- **You want to know what Jesus would do? THAT IS WHAT JESUS WOULD DO!!!!!!**

So what is the **Cure** to this cycle of and sin pushing and mounting debt?

- We need a day of **Jubilee** in the American Church before there will ever be a day of Jubilee in America.
- If the church—as it were--refuses to lead this out, who will?

## *The Cure*

### A Kingdom perspective on the role of the Church in the midst of the welfare state

- **Kingdom realities and its detractors:**
  - The church in America must stop mirroring the broken system of entitlements in America and set her people free to take responsibility for their lives in Christ.
  - Then and only then, will we be able to undertake the mission of the Kingdom in a way that will attract the unsaved to the joint work of reconciliation and the proclamation of the Kingdom of God.

## *The Cure*

A Kingdom perspective on the role of the Church in the midst of the welfare state

- How to get into the public conversation and plant your flag.
- Word and Deed evangelism:
  - Everything Adam Peacocke was talking about Friday night is essential to this major work ahead of us—taking our cities for Christ. So pick up the CD asap!

# **An opportunity for real transformation awaits**

- **Get ready to participate in real Hope and Change**

# An opportunity for real transformation awaits

## ■ A few necessary steps

- Free your mind...
- Repent of loving the world's failed ways and corresponding bad theology or wrong approaches to the problems of our day.
- Get out of the left/right political game.
- Get out of our comfort zones and learn to be uncomfortable.
- Take advantage of SCS resources—trust me, you will need them.
- Let go of the American Dream and embrace the dreams of our Father in heaven—to Evangelize the World for Jesus Christ and make disciples of every nation!

# An opportunity for real transformation awaits

- A final thought...
- Forgive your brother, your sister, your neighbor--as your heavenly Father has forgiven you. Then, and only then, will He receive your free-will offering to cooperate with the work of the Kingdom of God.