

## Authority or Human Opinion?

By William MacDonald, published in Counsel, Nov. 1993

When a public figure was lecturing on the need to restore values to our culture, a college student asked him, "On what do you build your values?" The speaker was flustered. He looked down and said, "I don't know".

That's just the trouble. He had no authority. Modern man desperately needs what this man lacked – a firm foundation on which to base his judgments. He needs an infallible standard to guide him in all matters of faith and morals.

God has provided such an infallible authority in His Word, the Bible. This wonderful book provides the basis for sound judgments and wise decisions. The Bible is absolute truth. Jesus said, "Thy Word is truth". There is no risk in following its teachings, no fear it will change from day to day.

The alternative to divine authority is human opinion. "The Bible says...." is replaced by "I think...." Fact gives way to feeling. There are no more absolutes; everything is relative.

We know too well that there is no uniformity to human opinion. There is an endless variety of viewpoints, each clamoring to be heard. The result is confusion and chaos. When human opinion rules, there is no way of deciding whose opinion is right. One person's opinion is no better (or worse) than another's.

If God's Word is rejected and opinion takes its place, the natural tendency is for man's word to conflict with God's. This explains the downward moral drift we witness today. God has given various authoritative laws to govern human behavior. Here are some basic ones:

God is to be loved with all the heart, soul, mind, and strength; He is to be acknowledged as the Creator; human life is sacred, the marriage relationship is sacred, and the family unit is sacred; man is given the place of headship in the human chain of command; immorality is forbidden; children are to respect their parents; human governments are to be obeyed.

Man refuses to bow to these divine principles. What happens when a society abandons the authority of God, whether found in the Sacred Scriptures or written in the hearts of all mankind? What happens when human opinion takes over?

People give themselves over to forms of immorality. Marriage is scorned in favor of a live-in relationship, formerly called fornication or adultery. Sodomites are accepted as respectable members of the race, and the homosexual lifestyle is legalized. Even homosexual marriages are recognized by the state. Residual laws against incest are unenforced. Without absolute standards, any form of sexual disorder is approved, even glamorized. After all, isn't it popular opinion that counts?

The family unit largely disappears as a stabilizing influence in the community. Public sentiment favors divorce for any reason. Latch-key kids are raised by single parents. Respect for parents disappears, in fact, disrespect is dramatized on T.V. Children can get a divorce from their parents.

Man's headship in the home ends. He no longer stops with him. Radical feminism demands equal authority and gets it.

Violence becomes so widespread that the government is unable to cope. Thefts, rapes, terrorism, tortures, and murders hardly make it into the newspapers. The average citizen is shocked by the brutality in the daily news, so much so that he is afraid to open his door. Politicians promise peace and security but fail to deliver. People come to despise their rulers and speak evil of them. The breakdown of law and order causes the populace to look for a dictator, a superman to solve the problems by inaugurating a new world order.

Materialism is the nature of the game in business. Men are lovers of money, and success is gauged by the extent of their possessions. Greed rules out any semblance of ethics. In a cutthroat society, honesty becomes a synonym for bankruptcy. He who dies with the most toys wins.

The names of God and Christ are banned from government, school, and all public life. Secular humanism becomes the prevailing religion. Man trumpets his own achievements. What can he not do? He is invincible. The bookstores feature an endless variety of titles on self-love. William Henley's blasphemous poem, *Invictus*, becomes the national anthem.

Out of the night that covers me  
Black as the pit from pole to pole.  
I thank whatever gods may be,  
For my unconquerable soul.

In the fell clutch of circumstance,  
I have not winced nor cried aloud.  
Under the bludgeoning of chance,  
My head is bloody but unbowed.

Beyond this place of wrath and tears,  
Looms but the horror of the shade;  
And yet the menace of the years,  
Finds and shall find me unafraid.

It matters not how strait the gate,  
How charged with punishment the scroll,  
I am the master of my fate,  
I am the captain of my soul.

Christians, however, are singing different words. They have the national anthem of another kingdom.

Out of the light that dazzles me,  
Bright as the sun from pole to pole,  
I thank the God I know to be,  
For Christ the conqueror of my soul.

Since His the sway of circumstance,  
I would not wince nor cry aloud.  
Under that rule which men call chance,  
My head with joy is humbly bowed.

Beyond this place of sin and tears,  
That life with Him! and His the aid  
That, spite the menace of the years,  
Keeps and shall keep me unafraid.

I have no fear though strait the gate,  
He cleared from punishment the scroll;  
Christ is the Master of my fate,  
Christ is the Captain of my soul.  
--My Captain by Dorothy Day

As a result of this failure to conform to the world, there is increasing hostility toward Christ and His followers. Because men are despisers of good, they vent their rage against Christianity. This opposition includes insults, reviling, blasphemies, legal restraints, physical attacks, and eye-martyrdoms. The anti-Christian spirit finds its culmination in an antichrist.

People turn to the occult, to eastern mysticism, to New Age philosophies, and to the freedom these religions offer them. They have a multiplicity of cults to choose from. False prophets promise prosperity in an age of apostasy. Some claim to be the Messiah and people are duped.

The disintegration of society sees a population without natural affection, a people given over to selfish pleasure. Men are unloving, unfaithful, and unthankful. Life is cheap; abortuaries murder millions of the unborn - an unprecedented holocaust, yet quietly accepted by most. In some places old folks are put to sleep and "doctors" assist suicides.

No wonder the Bible says, "Where there is no revelation, the people cast off restraint (Prov. 29:18, NKJV). This means that when God and His Word are not recognized and obeyed, men abandon themselves to unbridled evil. Civilization returns to jungle life. Everyone does what is right in his own eyes. We see it all around us today. Even people without any particular love for the Bible are alarmed. They can see that our culture is on a toboggan slide. They have no infallible authority, and without it they are rushing pell-mell to chaos, to tribulation, and to God's judgment on a society that has supplanted His Word with human opinion.