

Our Identity Crisis

For the past several years, I have been asking myself, “*Who* am I?” And more importantly, “*Whose*” am I?” Like many Americans, I have been going through an “Identity Crisis”.

From the time we are born physically into this world, our identity is rooted in our worldly Kingdom. The government issues our birth certificate, then our marriage license, our driver’s license, our social security number and ultimately, our death certificate. It is our worldly government who tells us who we are.

The Bible tells us that we change our *primary* identity when we surrender and submit to God and are “born again”. Now we are “citizens” of the Kingdom of God and “aliens and strangers” in the world.

In our beloved USA we were originally peopled largely by European, Bible believing immigrants. Since we have had the privilege of self-government, our founders and those who followed, established and sustained a “soft theocracy” who saw us as “endowed by our Creator”, announcing “In God we trust” on our coins and our paper money, and repeating “under God” in our pledge of allegiance. And our laws were sprinkled with reminders of the Bible, from “punitive damages” to special condemnation for “burglary in the night time”.

For those who were born here, our Christian heritage and culture seemed the norm. In fact, it has been a phenomenon of history. A few hundred years carved out of the reality of forced compliance with the rules and orders of those few who were in control at their particular time and place.

However, with the passing of years and vast immigration from other cultures, mixed with the rapid advance of science and growth of secularism, we no longer see the USA as a sort of Kingdom of God on earth. Our country is changing. Slowly at first; but recently, with court decisions changing the traditional view of marriage to require

acceptance of same sex marriage, and elevating non-discrimination laws above the constitutional protection of religion, we are suddenly aware the Kingdom of the USA is another worldly Kingdom , and not an earthly manifestation of the Kingdom of God. I guess we are a little like Dorothy, in the *Wizard of Oz*, who says to her little dog,

“*Toto, I’ve a feeling we’re not in Kansas anymore!*”

Now we are beginning to understand that as “born again citizens” of the Kingdom of God, we are “aliens and strangers” even in our own land.

And, strange as it may seem, I actually believe that is good.

Before we had the illusion of a Christian Culture in a Worldly nation to whom we owed our *primary* allegiance and respect. Now we have come to realize that is a mirage. God seems to be making a clear distinction between His Kingdom and this visible Worldly Kingdom with some of the now disappearing aspects of His Kingdom that has had our deepest and truest devotion. Now we are being required to choose whom we will serve, at the deepest level of our being just as Peter and John were required to choose whom they would serve, as reported in the Book of Acts.

Our *primary* task is to follow Jesus and help others see and enter the Kingdom of God and live eternally with Him and all the saints—not to expend our *primary* energies and resources trying to maintain a Christian Culture in a so-called Christian nation. And when we do, to accept that we will not have all the privileges the nation has afforded to those who allow themselves and their institutions to be created by, and therefore defined and controlled by their creator—the state, i.e. Federal, State or Local governments.

The temptation is to try and live in both Kingdoms and enjoy all the rights and privileges of both. I submit, from personal history and the history of the world, it will not work.

God has given us four institutions to keep order in this world: Government, Family, Church and Work Place. Each has rules and

laws to help them function. If we use the institutions as created by God we are then named and defined and controlled by Him. If we allow these institutions to be created by the Worldly government, then they have the right and ability to name, define and control what they have created.

The government requires oaths of loyalty from its officers. When the government's laws are contrary to God's laws we must decide whom we will serve. It may mean we forgo the right to be in those offices and to give up our right and privilege to earn a living from powerful positions and lofty posts.

The government provides "free" schools, grants corporate charters with limited liability, unlimited life, and often tax breaks and subsidies for married couples, churches and other organizations. But the price is the right to control what the schools can teach and what those couples, churches and other organizations can say and do. To paraphrase an old refrain,

*"Love and marriage,
they go together like a horse and carriage.
Dad was told by Mother—
you can't have one without the other".*

If we want all the "goodies" offered by government, we must also accept its restraints and control. When the two clash, we must make our decision who we will serve.

We are to be "in" the world, but not "of" it. We are to "give to Caesar what is Caesar's and to God what is God's". We are to be loyal members of our nation, but only when it does not require us to go against God's order. When it requires ungodly conduct, we must, like Daniel, continue to honor the God whom we serve.

We cannot take oaths to follow the constitution and laws of worldly government, accept their pay and position and then refuse to carry out the function we have sworn to uphold. So we are forced out of much government service.

For years we have been told we should be like the New Testament Church. It appears we will now have that opportunity. And we aren't going to like it! No government positions, no tax relief, and no limited liability, if it means we must say only what we are told to say, hire those we are told to hire, and assist in marriage ceremonies as we are told even though it violates God's instructions to us.

It is obvious we are being called to move our *primary* allegiance from merely a Christian Culture and a Christian Nation here on earth to the King and Kingdom of God—both now and for eternity. When we do our identity crisis will be resolved.

May God grant us the strength we need, as we follow Him through whatever lies ahead!

MJM

A Note From the Writer

As a follower of Jesus and a 90 year old veteran of World War II, who practiced law for over 40 years and has a family of children, grandchildren and great grandchildren, I have a *life-long* love and respect for the United States of America. As I have walked through the years, it has become increasingly apparent that I have—and rightly should have—an *even greater eternal* love and respect for the King and Kingdom of God.

I pray these thoughts are helpful to all who may read them. If the words resonate with you, feel free to pass them along to others.

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