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The Fabric of a Nation

by Tal Davis

18 For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men who suppress the truth in unrighteousness, 19 because that which is known about God is evident within them; for God made it evident to them. 20 For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen, being understood through what has been made, so that they are without excuse. 21 For even though they knew God, they did not honor Him as God or give thanks, but they became futile in their speculations, and their foolish heart was darkened. 22 Professing to be wise, they became fools, 23 and exchanged the glory of the incorruptible God for an image in the form of corruptible man and of birds and four-footed animals and crawling creatures.

24 Therefore God gave them over in the lusts of their hearts to impurity, so that their bodies would be dishonored among them. 25 For they exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever. Amen.

26 For this reason God gave them over to degrading passions; for their women exchanged the natural function for that which is unnatural, 27 and in the same way also the men abandoned the natural function of the woman and burned in their desire toward one another, men with men committing indecent acts and receiving in their own persons the due penalty of their error. Romans 1:18-27 (NASB)

“Many Euro-Atlantic countries have moved away from their roots, including Christian values. Policies are being pursued that place on the same level a multi-child family and a same-sex partnership, a faith in God and a belief in Satan. This is the path to degradation.”

Can you guess who was reported to have made that statement? Billy Graham? Maybe, but no. The Pope? Might have, but also no. Rick Warren? I think he would agree, but not him either. Mitt Romney? As a Mormon, possibly he might have said it, but did not. Barack Obama? Not in a thousand years. Nope, none of them. Believe it or not, it is a quote from Russian President Vladimir Putin! He said it in his State of the Nation Address last December. The sad thing is that he is absolutely correct!

Now I am not commending or endorsing Vladimir Putin, especially in light of recent events in the Ukraine. But what irony that a former Communist KGB officer is now lecturing the West and defending godly values while American leaders, courts, and mainstream media ignore, contradict, and disparage them.

This all leads to key questions. What is it that makes a nation great and keeps it that way? When does a country cease to be great?

To answer those questions, let's start with an analogy. What factors do you look for when you shop for clothes? Color? Size? Price? Style? How your spouse says you look in it? All of the above? Years ago I worked in the menswear section of a department Store. It had a reputation for selling quality merchandise. I learned some things about the clothing business in the short time I was there. For instance, I

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learned you never call a tie “a tie.” It is “Neck wear.” Pajamas are “Sleep wear.”

In every case, one ingredient is most important: the garment’s fabric. The fabric is the stuff the item is made of and how it is woven together. I was shown how different brands often looked much the same but the quality of their fabrics was often not equal.

A nation also is comprised of a fabric. Its fabric is what it is made of and how it is woven together. Just like an item of clothing, it may look good on the outside but its quality may not be what it should be.

In this article we will examine two key items that the Bible indicates are essential for the fabric of a nation. These principles apply to any nation or people group. However, we are most concerned for the United States of America in this context.

We will look at the first chapter of Paul’s letter to the Romans as our reference point. Paul was writing in negative terms to the Christians in Rome. He told about pagan civilizations and how they had deteriorated historically from the knowledge of God to their then current states of moral and spiritual decay. That being understood, I will try to couch the pertinent principles as much as possible in positive terms.

First of all, the fabric of a nation is established and determined by its loyalty to the True God.

In Romans 1:18-22 Paul says that the wrath of God is against all unrighteousness, no matter whom or what nation may be guilty of it (Jew or Gentile). In the case of the pagans, he says they knew the truth but turned from it. He asserts that all peoples at one time knew of God and His Law even if they had not had it revealed to them through the

prophets and Scriptures as did the Jews. He makes the audacious theological contention that the existence of God and His moral precepts are made shown to all people in nature and through their consciences. He declares that they have no excuse.

But, Paul says, they rejected the truth that was made known to them and became fools. So, since God would not change His law to suit them, they simply changed their gods. Because they did not want to know the truth they turned to idols and polytheism. By the way, Paul’s perspective flies in the face of modern theories that religion evolved from many gods to one God. Paul says, as the Old Testament teaches, the process went the other way.

Historically, this pattern of devolution repeats itself. Nations decline when they reject God. Nations do evil when they reject God’s truth in law and culture. Perhaps the most notorious example in the 20th century was in Germany. Germany was the home of the Protestant Reformation and, for several hundred years, championed Christian civilization. However, in the 19th century, German theologians went down the path of theological liberalism creating a spiritual vacuum in that country. As a result, pre-Christian Paganism (myths about Norse gods and the occult) set the stage for the rise of Nazism. We all know the legacy of that movement.

Another prime example was early 20th century Russia. Russia turned from an Orthodox Christian culture to embrace Atheism. This left it wide open to Marxism and Leninism. Consequently, Russia and its neighbors suffered war, religious oppression, and severe economic deprivation under Communism for more than seventy years.

Nonetheless, I still hear Americans say, “It can’t happen here!” Well, it is already happening. America slid into

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Naturalism, Secularism, and Post-modernism in the 20th century. However, that worldview created a spiritual vacuum in people's lives and in the culture. So now an increasing number of Americans, having abandoned Christianity, are adopting pagan beliefs to try and fill the void. Adherents of Animism and Far Eastern Thought are increasing nationwide. Hinduism, Buddhism, Wicca, Kabbalah, Occultism, the New Age Movement, and numerous pseudo-Christian cults continue to flourish.

If America is to be spared the fate of other pagan nations, it must return to the honor and worship of the True God. But there is more that is required.

The Fabric of a Nation is also determined by upholding the highest standards of morality and justice.

Paul went on in Romans 1:24-27 to explain the consequences for the pagan peoples of abandoning faith in the True God. He says that, tragically, "God gave them over..." and allowed them to follow their basest instincts. They were, therefore, given over to their passions. In other words, they became narcissists who worshiped themselves and their pleasures. We might say they had a "sexual revolution," sort of like the "Playboy Philosophy" of the 1960s.

When a person or people reject God and His authority it inevitably leads to moral corruption. In verses 26 and 27, Paul implies that the final straw for a culture is the normalization and acceptance of homosexuality. This spiraling of moral decay, he says, inevitably brings its own judgment. As C. S. Lewis once wrote, "One of the functions of marriage is to express the nature of the union between Christ and the Church. We have no authority to take the living and semitive figures which God has painted on the canvas of our nature

and shift them about as if they were mere geometrical figures."

On August, 24th, A.D. 79, the Mount Vesuvius volcano suddenly erupted in Italy near where now is located the city of Naples. Ash and lava covered the resort city of Pompeii (it was sort of Rome's version of Las Vegas). The buried city of 20,000 inhabitants was virtually frozen in time and preserved like a time capsule. When the city was uncovered 1700 years later, the excavators made a shocking discovery. Many of the buildings, even homes, were with filled with perverse pornographic sculptures and paintings.

During that period Rome was a violent and decadent society. It was not only sexually immoral, but also practiced infanticide. Bloody gladiator fights were its favorite form of entertainment. Later, Rome experienced a Christian transformation that radically affected western civilization for hundreds of years.

The point is that a righteous nation must uphold high levels of morality. In Romans 1:28-32 Paul traces the regressive consequences for civilization if it does not do so.

28 And just as they did not see fit to acknowledge God any longer, God gave them over to a depraved mind, to do those things which are not proper, 29 being filled with all unrighteousness, wickedness, greed, evil; full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, malice; they are gossips, 30 slanderers, haters of God, insolent, arrogant, boastful, inventors of evil, disobedient to parents, 31 without understanding, untrustworthy, unloving, unmerciful; 32 and although they know the ordinance of God, that those who practice such things are worthy of death, they not only do the same, but also give hearty approval to those who practice them. (NASB)

Since the end of World War II, the United States has had the most powerful military in the world. Thousands of brave men and women in the armed services have sacrificed their lives for our freedom. But as Paul warned and we need to heed, most great civilizations are not destroyed from the outside. Rather, they decay from the inside. Their fabric becomes frayed and worn from a lack of proper attention to spiritual and moral values.

Can it happen here? You better believe it can! Maybe sooner than we think. We are not exceptions to the divine rule. Is there hope? Yes, but it must start with each one of us rededicating our lives to Christ and His eternal purposes. Only by people's hearts turning back to the True God of the Bible can our culture regain the Christian consensus that made our nation the greatest in the world.

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