

St. Stephen's News

St. Stephen's Church, Timonium, Maryland
A parish in the classical Anglican tradition

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Edited by Anne Hawkins

November 16th, 2010

FROM THE RECTOR

An American problem that's 3,400 years old

THREE thousand four hundred years ago or so – when the Children of Israel entered Canaan to possess the land that God had promised to them – they were united not only in a common bond of faith and in universally accepted laws (God's Laws), but in a communal commonality of purpose.

To be sure, their common social vision was not of their own conceiving -- it had been given to them by God -- but it was, nevertheless, held by all of them in common esteem.

Yet when we read the Book of Judges, the Book of Ruth, and the First Book of Samuel, the history we encounter is a story of what can best be described as abject failure. Scarcely a generation after they entered the Promised Land that common social vision had evaporated. Society was unraveling. As the Book of Judges quaintly puts it, time and time again: "The Children of Israel again did evil in the sight of the Lord."

The history of the Children of Israel in the Promised Land has always exerted a deep fascination on American Christians. This should not be entirely surprising – for the United States was founded upon a similar social vision to that of ancient Israel. It was to be a nation united under God; a nation indivisible because of its common consecration to its creator.

The reason for this, of course, was a substantial majority of the people who settled America had been driven to seek a new life in far from their homeland because of fervent religious convictions. They felt a shared experience with the Children of Israel. They even spoke of America in Biblical terms – the New Jerusalem; the Land of Milk and Honey or, as President Ronald Reagan put it, "a shining city on a hill."

But if they were resolved to establish their new nation on the same footing as the ancient Children of Israel's Promised Land, America's founding fathers were equally determined not to repeat the Israelites mistakes. What's more, they were reasonably confident that they would not do so. After all, they had the Children of Israel's experience to draw upon.. That's what the Scriptures are all about.

Today, however, a mere 200 years after the founding of the republic, it is gradually dawning on us that we have reason to be less than confident about our superiority to those ancient Israelites. American society has been utterly transformed in the space of little more than a single generation. Not only have the foundations for close personal relationships been radically recast, our social and corporate relationships have been altered just as drastically.

Little over a generation ago, for example, folks who disagreed over political issues still regarded each other as honorable people. They shared the same basic goals and aspirations and acknowledged that it was perfectly legitimate for people of good will to have different ideas about the way in which the goals should be achieved.

In short, they had a common understanding that it was quite normal for generally like-minded people to disagree on some individual issues or even a wide range of issues. But, almost overnight, things have changed. Civil discourse has suddenly become difficult in both the social and political arenas. People who disagree politically and socially no longer view their adversaries as decent but fundamentally wrong-headed. These days they are more likely to denounce them as traitors, villains, frauds, cheats, rogues and moral degenerates.

The explanation for this isn't simply that standards of politeness and civility have declined beyond all recognition in the past 30 years. Standards have certainly plummeted. But it's not solely the alacrity with which people behave so abominably rudely to each other that makes civilized discussion of their differences so difficult. Society, it seems, no longer shares the same basic common values.

In the space of less than half a century, society has fragmented, splintered, into a spectrum of competing interest groups, each one with its own individual goals and aspirations, none entirely compatible with anybody else's and many wholly incompatible with almost all of the rest of society.

Yet this is exactly the situation in which the Israelites found themselves a generation after their arrival in the Promised Land. When we read Judges, Ruth and Samuel, it is plain to see that morality has completely broken down – and in the much same way that it has broken down in America. Our newspapers, radio and television provide ample evidence daily that the sort of shenanigans that took place in ancient Israel are taking place in America today.

It doesn't take a particularly close examination of the histories of Israel to discover the primary evil that the Children of Israel committed "in the sight of God" was worshipping the local pagan deities – Baal and the goddess Ashteroth.

This is not myth. It's historic fact. Archaeologists have unearthed pagan images in Israelite homes, just as described in the Bible. And it's worth considering the consequences that they suffered from flouting God's law.

It matters not that they didn't deliberately set out to flout his will – that they slithered in trouble without realizing what they were getting themselves into. God had warned them against striking any deals or compromises with the local pagan population. But, people being what they are, striking compromises and negotiating treaties seemed an awful lot better than fighting. What was the point of fighting?

But the problem was that these compromises created pockets of paganism all over the land God had declared holy. And, people being what they are, neighbors befriended neighbors. Sons married daughters. And, next thing you know, they knew celebrating diversity seemed a pretty good thing. Nobody believed in silly superstitions and pretty soon they consigned their faith the Lord God of Hosts, the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob into the realm of silly superstition.

The tension caused by the presence of a large and resentful group of Canaanites and Philistines their midst remained a constant source of friction, mayhem, and slaughter. The Israelites' lack of commonality of vision made civil discourse difficult in both social and political arenas.

People who had remained friends, while disagreeing socially and politically, ceased to regard those who disagreed with them as decent but wrong-headed. Instead, they perceived them as traitors, villains, cheats, rogues and moral degenerates. The consequence: The fragmentation of society.

Commonality of purpose, you see, is not a product of a struggle to impose on one's adversaries a competing vision of society. Rather, it is the product of reasoned debate about the best way in which to reach a common goal. **GUY HAWTIN**

FROM THE TREASURER

The Endowment Fund Drive reaches \$98,000

THE ENDOWMENT Fund Drive received a major boost with a \$70,000 bequest from the late D'Arcy Young. This brings the total of gifts to \$98,000 -- almost half way towards an initial goal of \$200,000. The Endowment Fund is intended to provide the parish with the financial stability to sustain its growth. The income will be primarily devoted to reducing the mortgage.

The Endowment Fund Drive team welcomes contributions large and small. If you would like to donate to the fund, please send your check to the Treasurer, made out to *St. Stephen's Traditional Episcopal Church* and marked on the memo line "Endowment Fund."

If you wish to make an donation in memory, or in honor of a loved one or friend, please give us the information in a separate note. Also let us know if you would like to be named in the newsletter as a donor. **BILL HAWKINS**

**THE SCRIPTURE READINGS FOR THE
TWENTY FIFTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY**
being Sunday, November 21st, 2010

8.00 AM & 9.15 AM
HOLY COMMUNION

The Epistle: Romans 13:1-7
The Gospel: St. Matthew 8:1-13

11.15 AM MORNING PRAYER
The Psalter: Psalm 21

The First Lesson: Joel 3:9-17
The Second Lesson: St. Matthew 8:36-52

FROM THE COOKIE WALK KOOKS

More scrumptious recipes

HERE ARE are two more great Cookie Recipes for you to prepare now and freeze ready for our big day.

CARDAMON COOKIES

*1 cup unsalted butter; 1 cup granulated sugar; 2 large eggs;
4 cups flour; 1 teaspoon ground cardamon;
Finely grated rind of one lemon*

Cream butter and sugar. Add eggs. Add other ingredients and combine well. Form into ball and turn out on floured board. Roll very thin (1/8 inch). Cut into different shapes with small cutters. Bake in a preheated 400 F. oven for 10 to 12 minutes until delicate brown.

CHINESE CHEWS

3/4 cup cake flour; 3/4 cup baking soda; 1 cup granulated sugar; 1/4 teaspoon salt; 1 cup finely chopped dates; 1 cup finely chopped walnuts; 2 large eggs

Sift together the dry ingredients. Add dates and nuts. Add eggs and beat thoroughly. Place mix in a shallow greased 9x12 inch pan and spread as thin as possible. Bake in a 350 oven for 30 minutes. Cut into 1 inch squares as soon as the pan is removed from the oven. Roll each square a ball, roll in sugar and cool.

**✠ St. Stephen's Traditional ✠
Episcopal Church**

11856 Mays Chapel Road, Timonium, MD 21093
Tel.: Office (410) 560-6776; Rectory (410) 665-1278
Web Address: <http://www.ststephens-md.org>

RECTOR: The Venerable Guy P. Hawtin
ASSOCIATE RECTOR:
The Rev. Rhae E. Kelley

ORGANIST & CHOIRMASTER: Adric
DIRECTOR OF PASTORAL CARE: Anne Hawkins (410-308-2771)
WEDDING CO-ORDINATOR: Anne Hawkins (410-308-2771)

SUNDAY SERVICES

8.00am -- Holy Communion
9.15am -- Holy Communion (Nursery & Church School)
11.15am -- Morning Prayer (Nursery)
(1st. Sun. of the month: Holy Communion at 11.15am)

WEEKDAY SERVICES

Wednesday: 6.00pm Evening Prayer
Friday: Noon: Healing Eucharist
Saturday: 5.00PM Family Eucharist.

✠ PARISH PRAYER LIST ✠

OUR Prayer Chain offers prayer daily for people on the Prayer List and guests of the Joseph Richey Hospice. To add a name to the list, or to the visiting list, or to join the Prayer Chain, call the office at 410 560 6776.

RECOVERY: Diane, Don, Lynn, Helen, Georgetta, Katherine, Hindra, Sara, Ravi, Elizabeth, Brian, Tracey, Linda, Robert, Nancy, Sharp, Edithann, Doris, Jay, Perry, Amelia, Shirley, Adrian, Kimberly, Dean, Barb, Tanya, Jane, Brook, Val, Helen, Joseph, Joshua, Rachel, Carl, Cal, Catherine, Sam, Ruth, Kristi, Paul, Sue, James, Patty, Antonio, Lauren-Michelle, McKayla, Randy, Jack, Grace, Bob, Fran, Carolyn, Ken, Serina, Wyatt, Bobby, Alexander, Erline, Kathleen, Earle, Judy, William, Betty, Trisha, Peggy, Linda, Millie, Walt, Bruce, Cienna, Tracy, Tom. Lelillah, Jennifer, Miriam, Karen, George, Eliza, Mel, John, Randy, James, Sarah, Linda, Suzanne, Marian, Steven, Jeanne, Tammy; Ellen, Jim, Patricia, Bonnie, Mary Ann, Robert, Christine, Dee, Brian, Barbara, Gillian, Eileen, Matthew, George, Bryan, Jason, Jane, Joan, Frances, Pat, Michael, Ray, Leslie, Brandon, May, Scott, Stephen, Robert, Danny, Billy, Betty-Ann, Mildred, D'Metrius, Laura, Stacey, Frank, Alma, Christine, John, Henry, Naomi, Pam, John, Ben, Kevin, Gwen, Elizabeth, Gloria, Lee Emily, Elsie, Bruce, Regina, Lewis, Madolin, Linda, Carol, Bernie, Charlene, Josephine, Margaret, Jody, Sheila, Jo Anne, John, Geradine, Thomas, Jeanne, Sister Catherine-Grace, Maxine, Ann Sharon, Dennis, Mae, Anita, Marilyn, Lawrence, Rebecca, Dorothy, Joanne, ✠ Albion, Martha, Jackie, Charles, Tony, Edward, Kim, Vivian and Carol.

LIGHT, STRENGTH & GUIDANCE: June, Anna, Jean, Garrett, Ned, & Stephen, Rachel, Robert & Renee, Lydia; Richard, Melba, Debbie, Phyllis, Georgetta, Carolyn, Suzanne, Tony, Erik, Doris, Drake, The Norris family; Gillian, Beverley, Adrienn, Jhana, Marla, Matthew, Joan, David, Laurie, Ellen, Lynn, Mildred, Sarah Lee, Tom, Susan, Kathy, Owen, Douglas, Amy, Jo Anne, Mary, Gregory, Isabel, Bobby, Dorothy, Darren, Scott, Rebecca, William, Charles, Joyce, Asfa, Eleanor, Kathy, Linda, James, Barry, Ann, Evelyn, Jeanette, Elizabeth, Virginia, Mildred, Chris, Micki, Stephen, Carol, Sandra, Elsie, John, Mary, Michael and David

ON ACTIVE SERVICE: LTC. R. J. Lytle, PFC Charles E. Heintz, IV, U.S. Army, Alex Bursi, US. Navy; Capt. Charles Bursi & LTC Harry Hughes, U.S. Air Force.

**COLLECTS FOR SUNDAY, TRINITY XXIV
AND ST HILDA OF WHITBY**

O LORD, we beseech thee, absolve thy people from their offences; that through thy bountiful goodness we may all be delivered from the bands of those sins, which by our frailty we have committed. Grant this, O heavenly Father, for the sake of Jesus Christ, our blessed Lord and Saviour. *AMEN.*

Book of Common Prayer, Page 223

O MERCIFUL Saviour, who from the early days didst enlist and consecrate the devotion of women; and through whose grace Saint Hilda in her convent became a nursing mother to the Church of the North: Prosper the seed that she sowed out and the leaven that she hid within the souls of her household, and bring still to good effect among us what mercy began; through Christ our Lord. *AMEN.*

Return Service Requested

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St. Stephen's Traditional

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