

St Stephen's News

ST STEPHEN'S ANGLICAN CHURCH · TIMONIUM, MARYLAND

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FROM THE RECTOR

The incalculable cost of marginalizing Christianity

*Things fall apart; the center cannot hold;
Mere anarchy is loosed upon the world,
The blood-dimmed tide is loosed, and everywhere
The ceremony of innocence is drowned . . .*

W. B. Yeats, "The Second Coming"

The surprising thing about the myriad of governmental and corporate scandals currently rocking what was once known as "the Free World" is that we seem surprised by them. Evidence of an inexorable moral decline in public, private and corporate life has been accumulating for more than half a century.

Indeed, the writing was plainly on the wall in the early 1960s when a U.S. President was sharing a mistress with an organized crime chieftain, while a British Minister of Defense was doing the same with the Soviet military attaché.

The "Moving Finger" continued writing in 1998 when an underlying root of the problem was graphically exposed in a casual aside by the chief of one of America's leading electronics companies..

Asked if a company should show loyalty to its employees, he reportedly replied: "If you want loyalty, buy a dog."

Such a sentiment runs utterly contrary to the moral ideals upon which this nation and its allies in the West were founded – ideals engendered by 2,000 years of applied Christianity.

But what makes the statement so uniquely shocking is the man apparently felt no shame in blurting it out in public. In times past, people who harbored such contempt for normal virtues would have kept their ideas entirely to themselves for fear of the consequences of speaking them out loud.

The second most shocking thing about the episode is that nobody seemed shocked by it. The response was a resounding: "So what?" Indeed, some actually seemed to imagine that folks who espoused such ideas are admirably qualified for leadership both public and private spheres.

Christians have no alternative but to reject in the strongest possible terms the notion that the loyalty can be excluded from any human relationship – whether it be that of husband and wife, employer and employee, vendor and customer, or governor and governed.

The notion that loyalty is simply an option to be exercised when convenient and ignored when inconvenient or unprofitable runs entirely contrary to Jesus Christ's most important command – to love our neighbors as we love ourselves.

Moreover, non-believers, whether they realize it or not, are no less threatened than Christians by the notion that loyalty is of no account.

It is dangerous not simply because it is ugly, immoral, antisocial and anti-Christian, but because it is a positively suicidal philosophy for any society to embrace.

A society that rejects the concept of loyalty as a virtue is doomed to destruction. Countries that fail to command the loyalty of their citizens do not long remain independent. Political leaders who do not inspire the loyalty of their followers become ex-political leaders in short order.

And that which applies to nations and political parties also holds true in the world of commerce.

Since prehistoric times, traders have depended for their prosperity upon the loyalty of their suppliers, their customers and those who work for them. And it shouldn't take a rocket scientist to figure out why.

An amazing aspect of the "buy a dog" episode is that the company's shareholders didn't demand the executive's head on a platter. After all, if folks like him feel no loyalty to the people who work for them, how much loyalty can their shareholders, customers and suppliers expect from them?

Answers to such questions lie in the extravagant remuneration corporate bosses award themselves; in the way employees cheat on employers; in the deceptive trading practices of many corporations; and in widespread corruption in the public sphere. There's no need for me to name names. They are on display daily in our media.

This sad situation has not come about by chance. It has marched in lock step with the marginalization of the faith upon which Western culture is based. It was evident when the European Union deliberately refused to so much as acknowledge its debt to Christianity in its constitution. It was evident in the muted reaction to our president's declaration that the United States is no longer a Christian country.

Moral vacuums are no different from physical vacuums. Alternative moralities arise to fill them. This should be a terrifying prospect for a culture locked in mortal combat with fundamentalist Islam. GPH✘

Parish Prayer List

Our Prayer Chain offers prayer daily for people on the Prayer List as well as the guests of the Joseph Richey Hospice. To add a name to the prayer list, or to the visiting list, or to join the Prayer Chain, ring the parish office on 410 560 6776.

FOR RECOVERY: Hilarie, Edie, Bill, Alan, Terry, Helen, Jim, Adele, Linda, John, Judy, Neal, Aida, Nathan, Hobie, Betty, Helen, Eunice, Tom, Robert, David, Jan, Susie, Sophia, Bobby, Lee, Pam, Cary, Courtney, Marie, Joanna, Finnie, Kim, Kendall & John.

FOR LIGHT, STRENGTH & GUIDANCE: Stephen, Melba, Scott, Vinnie, Doug, Ian, Lisa, Carey, Ned, Cindy, Jacob, Casey & Beth

IN MEMORIAM: Bob

FOR THOSE WHO MOURN: Delyth & Family

ON ACTIVE SERVICE: Lt Alex Bursi, Capt. Charles Bursi, Lt Nicholas Clouse, USN; Lt Col. Harry Hughes; Lt Cdr Emma Hawkins, RN

When government help is actually a hindrance

Love or loathe him, it's hard to contest President Ronald Reagan's claim that the most terrifying words in the English language are: "We're from the government, and we're here to help." Proof of this particular pudding is on constant display in the form of the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act or HIPAA – the acronym by which it is commonly invoked.

If your child's college health department declines to inform you that he or she is suffering from Rocky Mountain Spotted Fever, HIPAA is to blame. If a neighbor is rushed to one of the local hospitals and the ambulance company refuses to tell you which one it is, HIPAA is to blame.

HIPAA prevents doctors from warning people that their spouses are suffering from deadly infections such as HIV –

even after the spouse has died. It also explains why the clergy of your parish church fail to visit you when you are dangerously ill in the hospital. HIPAA prevents the hospital staff from notifying them.

The restraints HIPAA imposes on medical personnel, social workers and caregivers are backed up by draconian penalties, including fines of up to \$10,000 and more.

Yet paradoxically, while HIPAA imposes what amounts to a vow of silence on caregivers, it gives government bureaucrats *carte blanche* to sift through every American's most intimate health records.

The restraints HIPAA imposes on medical personnel, social workers and caregivers explains why it took St. Stephen's pastoral care team four months to discover that our long time parishioner and friend, Steve Jones had passed away.

We started looking for Steve, a regular twice-weekly churchgoer, in May when he missed his regular services for two weeks. All we could learn from the management of his apartment building is that he had been taken to a local health care institution.

A couple of years earlier he had similarly been taken ill and, after month of searching, we tracked him to one of the many nearby nursing homes. This time, however, we drew a blank. Finally, by dint of continual pestering, we discovered Steve had passed away in a local hospice five days after he had been taken ill.

A Requiem Eucharist for Steve will be celebrated at St. Stephen's at 10.00 AM on Monday, September 26th. Other than the parish, Steve was quite alone in the world, but we do hope that as many of his fellow parishioners as possible will join us to bid him farewell. GPH✘

FROM THE SUNDAY SCHOOL

We need help badly

The Sunday School is in desperate need of people to assist with the nursery during the 9:15 AM service. Current mothers, experienced mothers, stepmothers, mothers to be, foster mothers and men who mother, many hands make light work. Please consider stepping forward and signing up for the rotation. Look for the sign up form in the Church lobby. DIANE NOVICKI

St Stephen's Anglican Church

11856 Mays Chapel Road, Timonium, MD 21093

Office: 410 560 6776 · **Rectory:** 410 665 1278

Pastoral Care: 410 252 8674

www.ststeve.com

The Ven. Canon Guy P Hawtin, *Rector*

The Ven. Michael Kerouac, *Vicar* · The Rev. Michael Belt,
The Rev. John Novicki, The Rev. Robert Ludwig, *Associate Rectors*

The Rev. M Wiley Hawks, *Pastoral Care Chaplain*
Mrs Happy Riley, *Director of Pastoral Care & Wedding Coordinator*

SUNDAY SERVICES

8 am: Said Eucharist

9.15 am: Choral Eucharist (with Nursery & Church School)

11 am: Choral Mattins (1st Sunday: Sung Eucharist)

6 pm: Choral Evensong (as announced) –
evensong.ststeve.com

WEEKDAY SERVICES

Wednesday, 6 pm: Evening Prayer

Friday, 12 noon: Healing Eucharist

Saturday, 5 pm: Family Eucharist

Calendar of Events

WEEKLY

Monday, 6.30 pm: Bridge Club

Tuesday, 7 am: Fellowship Breakfast (Nautilus Diner)

Thursday, 10 am: Knitting Circle

Friday, 10.30 am: Bible Study

MONTHLY & SPECIAL

The Parish Picnic

Saturday September 24th 6.00 PM

The Diocesan Synod

October 4th to October 7th

Parish Life Committee

Tuesday, October 10th, 7.00 PM

Trafalgar Day Tea

Sunday, October 30th, 2.00-4.00 PM

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

St Stephen's Anglican Church
11856 Mays Chapel Road
Timonium, MD 21093

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