**Stars Scars & Stripes: The Nation in Perspective – Part 1**

*(Scars & Stripes of Jesus and how they play into our nation)*

* Every 4 years we raise one up, to spend the next 4 yrs trying to drag him down:

-The Piñata Effect.

* History does seem to be cyclical, repeating itself, yet also moving on towards …?
* This moment seems **more pointed** than recent political history.
* The colors of ‘Red White & Blue’ on the National Seal now illustrated on the flag:

-Red: hardiness & valor

-White: Innocence & purity

-Blue: vigilance, perseverance & justice.

* What happens out & up there (nationally) has an effect right here (locally).

-EG Supreme Ct ruling on ‘Gay’ Marriage / Common Core / Gun rights /…

**Our Key Text Scripture:**

**Acts 17:26-28a**

*And* ***He has made*** *from one blood every nation of men to dwell on all the face of the earth, and has determined* ***their preappointed times*** *and* ***the boundaries of their dwellings****, 27****so that*** *they should seek the Lord, in the hope that they might grope for Him and find Him, though He is not far from each one of us; 28for in Him we live and move and have our being…*

* Nations are differentiated, have boundaries and a purpose to be sought after.

-USA world missions giving and action has impacted the world!

**God’s Plan for a Nation … & You and I as the Church Within the nation**

* Each nation is called, and thus accountable, to seek God & find Him.

-America was founded to find God afresh, free from Govt. control.

-America seems to be under intensified attack to lose it’s way.

-Many are discovering what’s going on behind the scenes & pushing back mainly through the internet (apart from mainstream media filters).

* Jesus’ has never changed His mind about His commission to the church.

**Matthew 28:18-20** *And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, “All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. 19Go therefore and make* ***disciples of all the nations****, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, 20teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo,* ***I am with you always, even to the end of the age****.” Amen.*

* Largely anti -Christ authorities have been given latitude by a negligent church to ‘disciple the nation’: from **7** major ‘high places’ of influence.

-Religion / Family / Education / Govt. / Media / Entertainment / Economics.

-We must clearly see that the people are largely being “controlled” by people with an agenda (everyone has one).

-The church is to **actively promote righteousness** in schools, local govt. & commerce…

* The framers **first** amendment was intended to ‘protect’ the church’s free expression of it’s religion: beliefs and practice.

 -“freedom **from** national imposition” **and**

**-**“freedom **to** express belief & practice”.

* Later Thomas Jefferson wrote in 1802 to the Danbury Baptists linking the amendment to the so called “wall of separation between church & state”.
* Jefferson was describing to the Baptists that the United States Bill of Rights prevents the establishment of a national church, and in so doing they did not have to fear government interference in their right to expressions of religious conscience.

* The church is **not** to be **marginalized**, but **central** to society.

-Because Jesus lives in us, He said **we** are now the light of the world.

**Matthew 5:13-14***“****You*** *are the salt of the earth. But if the salt loses its saltiness, how can it be made salty again? It is no longer good for anything, except to be thrown out and trampled underfoot. 14“****You*** *are the light of the world.*

* As we exercise our authority in our spheres of authority, we make a difference.

**Matthew 16:18-19** *on this rock I will build My church, and the* ***gates of Hades*** *shall not prevail against it. 19And I will give* ***you*** *the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever* ***you*** *bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever* ***you*** *loose on earth will be loosed in heaven.”*

* **Historically,** Christians have made the world a better place:

-**In England**: Wilberforce & others fought a lifetime against **slavery**.

-**In Europe:** missionary agencies sent out missionaries around the world.

 (Many 3rd world hospitals set up by Christians).

-**In America:** many founders were believers who based their direction for the nation from the Bible.

(The preachers of the 18th & 19th Centuries spoke into the issues of socio-political issues of the day.)

(The 20th Century has seen the church increasingly squeezed into a minimally effective box: be private!

* **History** has been **rewritten by ‘revisionists’** pushing God to back-ground.

 -A generation has arisen that’s largely ignorant of their nation’s Christian roots.

* Yet parallel to this for God’s people things are getting ‘brighter’:

# Isaiah 60:2 *For behold, the darkness shall cover the earth,And deep darkness the people;But the Lord will arise over you,And His glory will be seen upon you.*

**Final Take Away**

*Keeping a cool head in these times*

* **Pray to get & keep God’s perspective** of what He’s doing:

-Not an optional extra.

**Ephesians 1:18-19**

*18the eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that you may know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, 19and what is the exceeding greatness of His power toward us who believe,*

* **Be comforted** no matter the result that God’s promise stands firm:

**Hebrews 13:5**

*Let your conduct be without covetousness; be content with such things as you have. For He Himself has said,* ***“I will never leave you nor forsake you.”***

* **Share** this info with others (through the website)
* **Pray** that God’s people get into office
* **Vote.**