

Essay- 2020

We did a similar year end article back in 2016 (I know we have 3 months left) and it hardly seems like it's been 4 years already. It definitely seems the older you get the quicker time flies. This year certainly has done that. I used to have a retirement countdown clock on my desk I'd stare at every day that ticked off the days, hours, minutes and seconds to retirement. Well that was almost five years ago now.

The term 20/20 is a visual acuity measurement used in eye exams, which equates to *normal* vision. It is doubtful that anyone envisioned the year 2020 to be wrought with turmoil and civil unrest and it can hardly be considered normal by any reasonable standard. Certainly, there have been national crises in the past, wars, the Great Depression, etc. But this year has seen an upheaval in civil conflict and government overreach like never before. The very fibers of our Republic are being tested and stretched. Moral decay is at an all-time high. Today's previous topics caused a flashback to the essay from 2016 and what follows will be revisions to the original theme.

Today marked the 19th anniversary of the terrorist attacks on the US by operatives from Al Qaeda. I remember that day and the occurrences as they happened on the news (I was working overtime in the Communications Center). Just like I remember the day President Kennedy was assassinated (I was in 2nd grade then). Looking back at the aftermath of September 11th, 2001, the nation came together in unity and solidarity. National pride was taken to new levels. American flags were all over the news and everywhere. Fast forward to today, most American flags you see on the news are being burned by those who hate our nation and our way of life.

We've seen a great deal of "national discord" since the election of 2016 and all of the protests and those crying over their candidate's loss. The hatred for the incumbent President has gone beyond fabricating lies and rhetoric. Violent attacks on supporters by the opposition is a daily occurrence. Riots over police shootings have brought violence to new levels. Now they're burning and looting, tearing down statues and destroying anything that does not fit their program. Calling it peaceful protests is laughable. And it isn't over yet. Satan is paying overtime. There are plans in place for full scale revolt if the current President wins re-election in November. But we have assurances from Our Lord not to be afraid (**John 14:27**). Stay the course, stay anchored to The Rock (**Heb. 6:17-18**).

The essay that sparked the original I wrote back in 2016 was titled “Our Historical Myopia.” Quite fitting as most people definitely lack the foresight for what lies ahead and they fail to grasp truth or flat out refuse to listen to it. We are witnessing an all-out attack on our nation and our values which is tantamount to the systematic dismantling of our country. Truth has been under attack since the Garden of Eden (**Gen. 3:4-5**) and we know who is responsible for all the attacks (**John 8:44, Rev. 12:9**). As a nation and as people in general, we have taken our focus off of God (**Psalms 14:2, 53:2**). We are too busy looking at our own circumstances whining about our own storms. We have all had our storms this past year. Some more than others but we have all experienced trials (**1 Peter 4:12-19**). I think it would be a safe statement that none of us has had a murder to contend with, no earthquakes, tsunamis, typhoons, floods, we *do* dodge an occasional hurricane, and so on (None of us have endured a scourging and crucifixion either).

True history has been watered down in our schools for so long there is no rhyme, reason or substantial basis for why the violence against our history is taking place, other than the total destruction of our form of government. Blinded by emotion and a head full of lies, protesters are out of control, supported by corrupt politicians (**Matt. 15:14**). There is no concept of what a hard time some of our citizens have had to endure. It is unimaginable to think that 618,000 people died in our own Civil War (1861-1865)! Most young people are clueless of this war and even who fought in it. Now we have a cancel culture who are bent on re-writing our history or simply deleting it without consequence to fit their agenda. Instead of 19-year old’s storming the beaches of Normandy, nowadays they need a “safe space” to handle their anxieties over election results.

Back in the 1960’s, 1962 specifically, prayer was removed from public schools in *Engel v Vitale*. The US Supreme Court Ruled that prayer in public school was a violation of the Establishment Clause. The Establishment Clause was enacted to prevent any government endorsement of any particular religion. The common misconception is that Madalyn Murray O’Hair was responsible for having prayer removed from schools. The primary case was *Abington School District v. Schempp*, but consolidated along with it was another case, *Murray v. Curlett*. It was this latter case which involved O’Hair, at that time she was simply Madalyn Murray. So, indirectly her case was somewhat a contributing factor. However, she did not denounce the blame. Can you imagine? Being proud of denouncing God in schools (**Psa. 31:18, 119:21, Prov. 16:5**)? She was also president of the American

Atheist Society. She was murdered, along with her son and granddaughter in 1995 (**Isa. 13:11**).

Also, back in the 60's, society decided it would be prudent to develop kids and their self-esteem. It started in the classroom with a revision in the grading system and in sports. It began with the practice of issuing of participation trophies. Not just trophies but other awards, certificates and items for "achievement" for basically showing up. While trying to motivate some, it diminished the efforts of those that actually trained and worked hard to win. The concept itself is actually contrary to God's way (**Prov. 13:11**). Education shifted to indoctrination. Generation X, Y and "why me" and "me, me, me" soon followed. The blame does not belong to one generation alone. We've all stood by idly while the decay took place (**Ecc. 10:18**). We have become self-centered and out for "number one" (**Prov. 13:10, 1 John 2:16**). *We've long since forgotten God and His Word (Psalm 53:1)*.

I used to spend a week annually in Orlando at Swat Round-up International, a 4-day international Swat competition. Teams from all over the US and several international teams would make the annual trip to compete in head to head tactical competition for a cache of prizes that has grown to more than a quarter of a million dollars for the first-place team. The event surpassed the original intent focusing on training and became more of a vendor-oriented showcase and emphasis on cashing in on the monetary gain of equipment. Granted there are still a few (very few) old school "war dogs" out there who remember what the original intent was and still live by the code but it is fading with the replacement by the millennial generation of cops.

There was a notable decline in camaraderie among those in attendance. This topic was discussed during the week among several of the judges who had been around awhile. The level of "whining" and complaining on mistakes or grievances on procedural violations and penalties during the competition was unbelievable. A lot of these young folks (certainly not all) have a hard time accepting responsibility or holding themselves accountable for their own actions (**Romans 14:12**). In 2019, I was not invited back to judge after 28 years of volunteering. Not even a phone call or an email. A newer, younger group had taken over the committee and decided most of the old school "war dogs" were no longer needed. Typical of the generation... No respect.

Decaying attitudes isn't limited to Swat Round-up, it has poisoned the professional sports world as well. Kneeling instead of standing for the national anthem, protesting and a political agenda for inequality. I'm not a mathematician, but maybe someone can explain someone making \$50 million dollars a year for kicking or throwing a ball is inequality (**2 Thess. 2:11, Rev. 21:8**). Lying and believing lies is a nationwide pandemic worse than Covid-19.

There have been 911,282 deaths attributed to Covid-19 year to date, if you can believe those that keep the statistics. That is roughly 0.0001139103 of 1% of the Earth's population. In researching stats on line, looking at death tolls from wars and natural disasters, you'd be shocked at how many people died this past year. Worldwide, snakebites kill an estimated 81,000 to 138,000 people per year, mostly in rural and impoverished areas, according to the WHO. Okay, so we lucked out on wars, storms and snakebites but what about our personal strife?

Do we bring the storms upon ourselves or are we too busy saying "woe is me" to notice their approach (**Isa. 30:1, Romans 6:16**)? Do we learn from past mistakes or do we try and jog with one foot nailed to the floor (**Jer. 45:3, Hebrews 5:8, 1 Peter 1:1-7**)? It can be difficult to see the road ahead when we constantly look at our feet. Are we walking the "the walk" with God as we should or are, we still *playing church* (**1 Kings 8:61, 2 Chron. 6:14**)? Do we learn from our mistakes or keep repeating them (**Proverbs 26:11, 2 Peter 2:22**)? We can also learn from the mistakes of others as it has been said "learn from the mistakes of others as you'll never live long enough to make them all yourself." I've made every mistake twice just to make sure I did it wrong the first time...

In our walk with God, He has given us an example in His Son Jesus Christ (**1 Peter 2:21**). He has given us His Word in His Holy Bible. One is a Living role model and the other is the instructions on how we can become like His Son (**1 Peter 4:1**). This of course is not easy. Ironing the wrinkles out of a shirt takes a hot iron. Changing ourselves or circumstances can be trying at the least and downright difficult for the most part. Remember, we are being prepared for what lies ahead. We live in a fast food society; everyone wants the change "right now!" Well, change, worthwhile change, doesn't occur overnight. Unfortunately, we do not have this type of patience these days (**Romans 5:2-5, Heb. 10:36, James 1:3**). Dealing with an issue that may have taken years to develop won't go away overnight.

We are on a journey. We will not reach the destination on our own, Christ is bringing the destination with Him when He returns (**Matt. 25:34**). That destination is only open to the obedient who follow the instructions in His Book (**1 Cor. 6:9, 1 Thes. 2:12, 2 Peter 1:10-11, Rev. 14:12**). Citizenship in His Kingdom requires *work* (**Ezek. 20:19, John 14:15**). No one will do it for you (**Eph. 4:20-24**). We need to actively seek God and read His Word and *do what He says* that we may achieve change and gain insight into His truth (**John 16:13**). The clarity of direction and peace that comes with being obedient to God's Commandments will become apparent and we may even avoid some of the storms we so frequently face (**Psalm 25:10, Psalm 34:19-20, Psalm 91:11, Prov. 8:32, Isa. 26:3**).

While 2020 may not be a banner year, as baptized children of God, we must look onward to fulfilling our Creator's purpose for our lives. We cannot stay anchored to yesterday with hopes of making tomorrow better. Storms and trials are part of life. Most are God's way of getting through to us to teach us a lesson (**Isa. 48:17-18**). Guess what? If we fail to learn from them, He will bring them back around. God doesn't grade on a curve. He loves us that much. As we approach the fall Holy Days, we need to remember the storms of 2020 and learn from them and stand fast to face the ones that lie ahead (**1 Cor.16:13, Gal. 5:1, 1 Thess. 3:8**). "But the God of peace will bruise Satan under your feet shortly. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you. Amen."-**Romans 16:20**

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