

Smoky Mountain Reflections

May 2013 "sixers #2"

I would love to wax eloquent on the wonders of spring or reflect on the busy nature of the summer that lies ahead of us all. However, a crucial decision is being made by the Boy Scouts of America on the 23rd of this month that has far reaching ramifications for our way of life here in America. I am not talking just about the Boy Scouts. As you may know, I wrote an open letter to the organization which I published widely. Sadly, I just read the proposed resolution and if it passes, we will no longer be able to charter a troop here at Saint Paul Lutheran Church in Sevierville TN.

The reason I feel the need to reflect on this is because it is just one more place where a battle between two different world views is playing out. If we do not stand with God's truth and speak the truth in love about what a biblical worldview is, we may soon find ourselves treated as second class citizens. You may call me Chicken Little, but I am not saying the sky is falling. I am saying that if our society continues on its current course, it will go the way of all past civilizations that stopped making good bricks to build their society. By good bricks, I mean protecting the weak and innocent and fostering a strong natural family. If we continue to build with faulty bricks that dispose of the weak and innocent as costly, and sacrifice the natural family on the altar of self gratification, we will go the way of every failed civilization that has preceded us because faulty bricks build weak walls that eventually crumble.

The American Family Association (AFA) is an organization that often does a very good job of speaking to these issues. You may know them as the organization that produces those Christmas and Easter buttons we all love to wear so much. They also produce a number of other good resources for citizens to live out their Christian faith in a world that is growing more and more hostile towards the Gospel. They also produce a monthly Journal that highlighted the BSA issue. The main article in the April issue by Ed Vitagliano made a number of good points and provided a good summary of this worldview conflict:

"It is Christianity versus secularism. Forget all pleasantries and appeals to fairness and tolerance and inclusivity, this is a war of ideologies – two mutually exclusive worldviews locked in a titanic struggle for supremacy.

For the tolerance gurus there is a secular morality that is just as absolute as that preached by any Bible-thumper behind a pulpit. It is a pagan sexual ethic rooted in moral relativism with the taproot deeply embedded in Darwinian evolution. Its teachers have their own unbending laws cut into stone and pronounced from on high. Their prophets hurl jeremiads at the unrepentant, who are relegated to a this-worldly hell consisting of the drying up of corporate funding, the disdain and downright persecution of the civil state, banishment to the fringes on university campuses, and the sneering mockery of Hollywood.....

First the humanists succeeded in routing religion out of the government sphere. Now they are attempting to drive it from the private sphere – by targeting an institution like BSA."

We as Lutherans believe and teach a doctrine of two kingdoms where the church is in the business of loving and serving God and neighbor, and the government is in the business of keeping the peace and maintaining public property. However social engineers are trying to give a little too much authority to the government right now. We as citizens of both kingdoms must do our best to be good citizens in each place. Being *in* but not *of* the world is not an easy calling, but it is our calling. So we must be active in our vocation as citizens to make informed votes and speak out against injustice and champion the weak, the sick, the unborn and the natural family at every turn. We need to do this in our work place, in our neighborhoods, in our families and in our churches. The church should remain silent on political issues that are matters of preference and opinion. But when the topic is morality and issues on which God's Word is clear, we must speak the truth in love. "Being *in* but not *of* the world" means being ready to take it on the chin when you speak this truth. It means publically standing by those who seek to reflect the last two words of the Scout Oath: "Morally Straight". Lord willing, the decision from the 1400 delegates will be a God-pleasing one. Either way, He is in control of everything and works for the good of those who love Him. So be a good citizen of both kingdoms, do not worry, and have a blessed summer.

In Christ, Pastor Portier

Note: since this article "Scouting BSA" now allows for LGBT members and leaders and male and female scouts of all ages. They are being sued by the Girls Scouts and have lost over 1/3rd of their membership. They are in bankruptcy both morally and financially. This is what happens when you abandon the principals upon which your organization is built. This one time Eagle Scout is saddened by this state of affairs.