

14. Are you serious?

August 16, 2009

According to the recent survey done by Barna Group in March 6, 2009, the current research revealed that only 9% of all American adults have a biblical worldview:

- 34% of all adults believe that moral truth is absolute and unaffected by the circumstances. 46% of the born-again adults believe in absolute moral truth.
- Half of all adults firmly believe that the Bible is accurate in all the principles it teaches. 79% of born-again adults agree.
- Only 27% of adults are convinced that satan is a real force. Even 40% of born-again adults adopt that perspective.
- Only 28% of adults believe that it is impossible for someone to earn their way into Heaven through good behavior. Only 47% of all born-again Christians strongly reject the notion of earning salvation through their good works.
- 40% of American adults are persuaded that Jesus Christ lived a sinless life while He was on earth. 62% of the born-again segment strongly believes that He was sinless.
- 70% of adults say that God is the all-powerful, all-knowing Creator of the universe who still rules it today. That includes the 93% of born-again adults who hold that conviction.

The conclusion I get from this survey is that the born-again Christians in America have a rather pathetic faith in God and His Word. If all of us believe that the Word of God, the Bible has the absolute truth and the final authority in our lives, our answers to every one of these survey questions should have been 100%. In other words, we are NOT taking our faith in God seriously.

Nor did the kings and people of the kingdoms of Israel and Judah in the Book of 2 Kings take the commandments of God seriously. Consequently, they got themselves in serious troubles that ended up being conquered by a pagan nation and were exiled to foreign countries.

I firmly believe that America is walking in the exact same destructive path of Israel and Judah today. Here are the patterns we can learn from their sinful behaviors, so that we don't end up in the same predicament, because our God is merciful.

Here is the pattern:

1. Devaluing human lives
2. Asking help from the world
3. Imitating the world
4. Taken away to the world
5. Being replaced with the worldly things

A. DEVALUING HUMAN LIVES

2 Kings 16:1-4 In the seventeenth year of Pekah the son of Remaliah, Ahaz the son of Jotham, king of Judah, began to reign. 2 Ahaz was twenty years old when he became king, and he reigned sixteen years in Jerusalem; and he did not do what was right in the sight of the Lord his God, as his father David had done. 3 But he walked in the way of the kings of Israel; indeed he made his son pass through the fire, according to the abominations of the nations whom the Lord had cast out from before the children of Israel. 4 And he sacrificed and burned incense on the high places, on the hills, and under every green tree.

What does it mean that king Ahaz made his son pass through the fire? King Ahaz actively participated in the worship of a pagan god Molech by sacrificing his own infant son into a burning furnace of this idol.

The people in America say, "We don't sacrifice our children to some stupid idols." I beg you the difference completely. They may not actually throw infants into burning furnaces, but they've been burning unborn babies to death with chemicals inside of mothers' wombs since 1973. I am sure that many of you may have heard the saying, "The most dangerous place for the babies in America is the mothers' wombs."

It is so true. For the sake of convenience, over 50 million unborn babies' lives have been sacrificed since Roe vs. Wade in 1973. The majority of these babies were not the results of incests or rapes like the liberals of this country want people to believe, rather the inconvenient results of their fornications and adulteries.

Now, Obama and his extreme liberal Congress and Senate want to pass the Universal Health Care that contains the bill for abortion to anyone at the taxpayers' expense.

Let me make it very plain and clear for those ladies who have had abortions previously. I am not condemning you. If you asked the Lord to forgive you for your sin, you have been forgiven and there is no condemnation in Christ Jesus. Don't let the devil lie to you for this.

When we start to devalue the human life which was created in God's image, there is no limit what mankind would not do.

Our elder Jerry Hamby told me insightfully that the very generation – the Flower Generation from 1970s, a.k.a. hippies – which started legal abortions in this country is now facing legal euthanasia that would end their lives through this Obama's Health Care plan.

According to this bill, page 425-430 which I personally read, the government will decide – not your doctor, not your family or yourself – what level of life sustaining treatment you will receive, should you come to the point of life where you have to depend on medications or medical treatments.

In other words, a panel of a government bureaucrats will decide whether you are worthy of keeping alive or not. Of course, grant that, none of Democrat Senators and Congress Representatives or any of Obama's cabinet members will be in this health care plan. Too risky for their lives.

Each life belongs to our God. He decides how long we live on this earth, not the government, not any individual.

B. ASKING HELP FROM THE WORLD

2 Kings 16:7-9 So Ahaz sent messengers to Tiglath-Pileser king of Assyria, saying, "I am your servant and your son. Come up and save me from the hand of the king of Syria and from the hand of the king of Israel, who rise up against me." 8 And Ahaz took the silver and gold that was found in the house of the Lord, and in the treasuries of the king's house, and sent it as a present to the king of Assyria. 9 So the king of Assyria heeded him; for the king of Assyria went up against Damascus and took it, carried its people captive to Kir, and killed Rezin.

King Ahaz trusted Assyrian king Tiglath-Pileser for help instead of trusting the Lord. Yet for the sake of the promise with king David, God did not allow this disastrous

attack on Judah to prevail. He didn't allow this satanic plot against the Messianic dynasty of David to succeed.

The church of Jesus should look for help and strength from the Lord, not from the world which is under the control of Satan completely.

*Psalm 121:1-8 I will lift up my eyes to the hills-- From whence comes my help?
2 My help comes from the Lord, Who made heaven and earth. 3 He will not allow your foot to be moved; He who keeps you will not slumber. 4 Behold, He who keeps Israel Shall neither slumber nor sleep. 5 The Lord is your keeper; The Lord is your shade at your right hand. 6 The sun shall not strike you by day, Nor the moon by night. 7 The Lord shall preserve you from all evil; He shall preserve your soul. 8 The Lord shall preserve your going out and your coming in From this time forth, and even forevermore.*

Oh, how we need to remind ourselves that we turn to the Lord for help, not to the world!

C. IMITATING THE WORLD

2 Kings 16:10-18 Now King Ahaz went to Damascus to meet Tiglath-Pileser king of Assyria, and saw an altar that was at Damascus; and King Ahaz sent to Urijah the priest the design of the altar and its pattern, according to all its workmanship. 11 Then Urijah the priest built an altar according to all that King Ahaz had sent from Damascus. So Urijah the priest made it before King Ahaz came back from Damascus. 12 And when the king came back from Damascus, the king saw the altar; and the king approached the altar and made offerings on it. 13 So he burned his burnt offering and his grain offering; and he poured his drink offering and sprinkled the blood of his peace offerings on the altar. 14 He also brought the bronze altar which was before the Lord, from the front of the temple--from between the new altar and the house of the Lord--and put it on the north side of the new altar. 15 Then King Ahaz commanded Urijah the priest, saying, "On the great new altar burn the morning burnt offering, the evening grain offering, the king's burnt sacrifice, and his grain offering, with the burnt offering of all the people of the land, their grain offering, and their drink offerings; and sprinkle on it all the blood of the burnt offering and all the blood of the sacrifice. And the bronze altar shall be for me to inquire by." 16 Thus did Urijah the priest, according to all that King Ahaz commanded. 17 And King Ahaz cut off the panels of the carts, and removed the lavers from them; and he took down the Sea from the bronze oxen that were under it, and put it on a pavement of stones. 18 Also he removed the Sabbath pavilion which they had built in the temple, and he removed the king's outer entrance from the house of the Lord, on account of the king of Assyria.

To King Ahaz, the king of Assyria and Assyria's idols were the models to follow rather than following one true God. He copied the pagan Assyrian idol altar so that he could have the same one at his homeland. Keeping up with the Jones, I guess.

This kind of thing still happens in many churches of Jesus Christ. They put their trust in the tools, techniques and principles of worldly success. A good example is Christian psychology that was so popular among the American Christians in 90s. So many pastors and leaders jumped on the band wagon of the idea of self-esteem.

According to the Bible, none of us thinks low about ourselves. I am sure that some people disagree with what the Bible says which means that they are wrong since the

Bible is always true and correct. The Bible states that we don't have any problem with low self-esteem, but too much self-esteem.

Ephesians 5:29a For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it

You might say, "I have very low self-esteem about myself." Let me put it in this way: Low self-esteem is a way of pride which compares oneself to the others and is not happy with his or her own. If they really think low about themselves, they wouldn't care what the others think about them. Don't you agree?

Many people try to make Christianity as a religion to compete with other religions. Christianity is not a religion. It is the way we should live for God, period. We don't compete with other religions to make ourselves look good and feel good. Our God is one true God and there is no contender.

Instead of letting unbelievers know about Jesus as God, many churches adopt the worldly marketing strategies to bring more people into their churches. Once I received a postcard from a local church here in Sahuarita which mentioned that they have a poker night for guys at the church. What does a church of Jesus Christ have to do with poker games?

Nothing wrong with having nice church buildings and diverse ministries. But if we are taking cue from the world rather than the Word of God and the guidance of the Holy Spirit, we are going to face some serious problems from the Lord.

The religious novelties in churches today may excite and entertain the people, but they don't edify the church, nor exalt the Lord. The sanctuary becomes a theater, worship becomes entertainment, ministry becomes performance, and a congregation becomes an audience. The measure of all this is not the glory of God but the applause of the people. We are not going to have that, not here, not on my watch.

Once we allow worldliness to get into the church fellowship, it will quietly grow, pollute the fellowship and eventually take over.

D. TAKEN AWAY TO THE WORLD

2 Kings 17:5-6 Now the king of Assyria went throughout all the land, and went up to Samaria and besieged it for three years. 6 In the ninth year of Hoshea, the king of Assyria took Samaria and carried Israel away to Assyria, and placed them in Halah and by the Habor, the River of Gozan, and in the cities of the Medes.

200 years and 19 kings after the time of Solomon, Assyria led to the destruction of the northern kingdom Israel in 722 BC and the exile of its people. The kings of Israel thought they would be friends and allies with their pagan neighbors by acting like them and worshiping their idols like them. To much of their surprise, Assyria simply conquered them.

More and more churches in America embrace the influences of the world to be popular and to be accepted by the world. A good example of that is the Emergent Church by Brian McLaren, Rob Bell, Tony Jones and Barry Taylor. These people teach their followers not only to deny the deity of Jesus Christ, but also they claim that there is another way to get to heaven. To them, orthodox Christianity is absurd and too exclusive, too narrow minded. They were taken away to the world.

1 John 2:15 Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him.

If you want to learn more about the truth about the Emergent Church, go to:
www.ccos.org > Awareness > The ugly truth of the Emergent Church

The rest of this chapter is spent in vindicating the Divine providence and justice – showing the reason why God permitted such a desolation to fall on the people who had so much promises from the Lord, yet wasted away.

E. BEING REPLACED WITH THE WORLDLY THINGS

2 Kings 17:24 Then the king of Assyria brought people from Babylon, Cuthah, Ava, Hamath, and from Sepharvaim, and placed them in the cities of Samaria instead of the children of Israel; and they took possession of Samaria and dwelt in its cities.

Look at this end result of the compromising kingdom. Its people were exiled and replaced and co-mingled with foreigners. The descendants of these mixed population became and known as the Samaritans. The orthodox Jews hated them, because to them, these Samaritans were a half breed.

Once a great country, the United Kingdom, England used to send out missionaries to all over the world to evangelize multitudes to Christianity. Once the English people embraced and compromised their faith in God, now there is less than a half percent of population claim to be born-again Christians.

Once a great country, the United States of America, the founders and forefathers got on their knees and sought the will of God for this country. Now we have the President who went around the world and claimed that America is not a Christian country. As usual, he was wrong again. Christianity is still the majority in this country. But the Christianity in America is eroding fast and compromising with the worldly mindset, unless we return to the Lord and His Word.

Many people talk about turning to God, but they don't talk about turning from their sins. Our lives should be turning from 'self-governed-life' to 'completely-relying-on-God-life'.

F. QUESTIONS

So in closing, let me ask you three questions about your faith in Christ and I want answers from you:

"Are you serious about not playing religious games, but following Jesus Christ wholeheartedly?"

"Are you serious about believing the Word of God from cover to cover and obeying it?"

"Are you serious about following Jesus at any cost including giving up your life for Him?"