

THOUGHTS

Newsletter for The Word Today

By Douglas W. Schroeder

SPEAKER ON THE WORD TODAY

POLITICIZING OF FAITH IN NORTH AMERICA

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A recent Gallup poll found that there has been a 20% decline in church membership in the past 20 years! As regards statistics, that is a shocking turn! However, in regards to the “invisible church”, all those who are truly children of God through Jesus Christ, it is not surprising. With the politicization of faith, the “line has been drawn in the sand” much more clearly in North American culture. Essentially, both Christians and Christian antagonists have defined the conservative, faithful as pro-life and anti-LGBTQ, among other characteristics. Consequently, liberals are showing their true colors – they are abandoning the nominal Christianity to which they once adhered. Darwinian atheists have been cultivated in our public schools for decades now, so it should be no surprise that church membership has fallen off a cliff. Expect *much more* gruesome and wide-ranging violence, illicit sexual behaviors, collapse of societal mores, etc. It is the natural outcome of a culture idolizing science and mocking God. The one good thing is that Christian witness will be all the more obvious, even though considered by many odious.

Besides, the criterion for church membership in contemporary society has been a joke, essentially a name on a roster and showing up maybe twice a year to maintain that self-righteous, feel good status of being a Christmas and Easter Christian (“C&E Christian”). With the purging of these people the church more accurately reflects the “invisible church”, those who are truly Christian, and not only nominally Christian.

CONTRACT CHEATING

Would you like evidence of the aforementioned diseased culture in North America? Anyone who has ever worked their way through high school and college will be repulsed by the emergence of essay mills, contractual businesses that offer to produce required papers for students for a fee. For as little as \$13 per page a student can pay for a paper to be written plagiarism-free. In the article “Millions of students are buying cheap, ‘plagiarism-free’ essays,” Hayley Peterson reports that perhaps hundreds of millions of dollars are being spent on this, and at a ratio as high as one in six students!

What kind of world are we entering into where in order to combat this high power software is being implemented to detect inconsistencies between the purchased papers and the student’s original work? Soon Big Brother will be monitoring everyone’s brother – or else it will be expected that the preponderance are cheating.

Just imagine the impact on this in regards to the competency of graduates. How would you like to be served by a “professional” who paid their way to meet requirements throughout their education? Scary? Yes, it is.

(<https://www.msn.com/en-us/money/careersandeducation/millions-of-students-are-buying-cheap-plagiarism-free-essays/ar-AABbJaj?ocid=spartandhp>)

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HOW I TRY TO STAY POSITIVE

Christians attempt to let the Spirit of God have sway over them. In the face of many discouraging and depressing things, there are attitudes and activities that we hope will keep our spirit buoyant. Here are some activities and attitudes I share with you to encourage you in your battle against the sinful flesh and a materialistic culture:

- +Don't watch TV (especially after reading in the book iDisorder, by Larry D. Rosen Ph.D., that there is a direct correlation between time spent with all screens and depression, I don't need it.)
- +Don't play video games. One of the best decisions I have made in life is to dump them. I kept thinking, "I am giving my life *to a machine*." When I saw my sons getting addicted to it, I was repulsed.
- +Listen to Scripture in the car. The car is no longer a reservoir for the secular; it is an altar for the sacred. I do not have "Bible Deficit Regret" because I am disciplined daily.
- +Family finances budgeted without fail monthly. One of the most empowering, godly activities is to force one's self to be accountable with their assets. It leads to proper sacrificial giving to God, and making far wiser choices materially. It is the key to getting out of debt and building wealth. It takes about 2 hours/month, but has meant 26 years of marriage without financial or interpersonal stress.
- +Gave up alcohol. I never thought one of our sons would struggle with alcoholism. Could not have imagined... I stopped drinking alcohol as a sign of unity and support. I cannot say I miss it, and it is easier to keep unwanted weight off.
- +Work out daily. Six days a week I am at the gym or doing some physical activity. Is it an addiction? Probably, but a healthy one. My self-worth suffers if I do not make an effort to be in shape. I am grandfathered in at \$10/month. Cheapest health insurance on the planet!
- +Listen to good/godly music. I screen all lyrics and make the conscious decision to accept or reject music based on the message. To eliminate any potential for ungodliness I listen to instrumental music.
- +Read for knowledge. I see no point in reading fiction or mindless works. There needs to be a payoff in terms of growth of intellect or wisdom. As I learn, I am a better witness for Christ.
- +Practice thoughtfulness toward mom and wife. Call or give flowers "just because." It feels good not to be a turd who habitually excuses themselves from showing affection and appreciation. Saving money is not worth coming off as tight and selfish, or worse, knowing that is how you are perceived and taking delight in it.
- +Be a wise risk-taker. I try to avoid spiritual risky behavior entirely, and try to mitigate the physical risks of activities such as motorcycle riding. I attempt to put as many factors as possible in my favor that theoretically disaster is remote.
- +Say "THANK YOU," often. I try to say thanks to God as often as I would like to hear it from others.
- +Get into the sunlight. In dark winter months I use the elliptical at the east window at the health club.
- + "One day closer!" Eternal Life in Christ is our gift from God. I'm ready and looking forward to it!

Blessings!

Douglas W. Schroeder