

HUE AND CRY: Why We Do What We Do!

by Mark Huey posted 24 December, 2005 www.outreachisrael.net

The end of the calendar year is a good time to review the concluding year, while making plans for the coming year. Recently, this annual assessment and goal-setting exercise was interrupted by some horrific realizations that led me to some logical assumptions about what our world may look like in 2010, 2015, and 2020 (see below). While my projections might not be absolutely correct, the trends in our societal failure were alarming to foresee. As I pondered these realities and forecast my thoughts into the future, **our resolve to continue reaching out to Messianic Believers** was fortified by a prophecy given centuries ago by Amos, as he was called to make proclamations to the Northern Kingdom of Israel just prior to its demise:

“Hate evil, love good, and establish justice in the gate! Perhaps the LORD God of hosts may be gracious to the remnant of Joseph” (Amos 5:15).

As I reflected on this verse, I realized that much of what Amos declared had to do with standing for the truth and the required righteous behavior of God’s people. In some regards, what Amos was called to do in his day is one of the primary reasons **why we do what we do in our day**, albeit through a different medium (the Internet). We echo his statements—and pray that the Almighty will perhaps have mercy upon us as well!

Our world as we know it is largely in a freefall, both spiritually and morally. In a “post-Christian” America, the next step of secularists is to totally eliminate God from the context of intellectual discourse. Whether it is the silly debate over “Merry Christmas” salutations, blatant repudiation of intelligent design versus evolution, or the attempt to remove any reference to God from our currency, the fact remains that “anti-God” forces are scoring victories in the influential marketplace of ideas. By controlling major media outlets that influence public opinion, the forces of evil are gaining a constituency that will legislate, through democratic processes, the eventual downfall of our society. While this assessment might sound somewhat pessimistic—whether we want to believe it or not—the fall of a “God-fearing America” will eventually lead to a worldwide collapse of civilization.

I derive this potential prospect from analyzing some of the current trends that dominate a culture hell-bent on destroying the family unit. The unimpeded advance of the homosexual agenda, the wink toward pornographic acceptance morphing into pedophilic and bestial fantasies, sexual promiscuity among the youth justified by the oral sex scandal of the previous president—all under the guise of individual freedom—are far too rapidly gaining tolerance, if not approval from many in positions of influence. The somewhat antiquated problem of divorce, now plaguing more than half of the population after decades of societal approval, is not even considered a concern by most. Instead, it has lamentably become an expectation in more than fifty percent of the “normal” marriages consummated.

The consequences of these few deviations from the Biblical roots of our society are having a debilitating impact on our individual lives and the corporate culture where we reside. **Pretending they do not exist is delusional.** Time does not allow me the luxury of commenting on the proliferation of gambling, the illicit drug epidemic, the lack of integrity in business and government, cloning of humans, AIDS and other illnesses, and a plethora of other maladies that I believe make the curses of Deuteronomy chs. 28-29 a reality in modern-day America. I will let your own thoughts and reflections allow you to draw your own conclusions.

Realistically, the demographic profile of America is changing dramatically as untold millions flock to our country to embrace the “freedoms” we enjoy. For the first 150 years of our republic, religious freedoms attracted the bulk of the immigrants. But since the middle of the Twentieth Century, the possibility of gaining economic freedom has increasingly become the motivation for the great majority of émigrés fleeing various persecutions, in order to attain the “American dream” of financial independence. With the God of the Bible less of an influence in their lives, we have witnessed a catastrophic shift in our collective priorities.

A recent statistic indicates that today some 18% of Americans are foreign born, with many of them bringing their form of religion and culture into our land. Many do not want to assimilate into our “antiquated” mores, as the “Christian” values of former times are ridiculed by the icons of Hollywood, and to a certain extent, the leaders in government. The provisions of separation of church and state in our constitution have been aggressively exploited by many—who I believe only worship themselves.

Today's headlines denigrate the majority who claim to believe in God, yet are shackled by self-imposed constraints to share or even declare their beliefs for fear of subtle or flagrant persecution.

If life as we know it is difficult, as the "Baby Boomer" generation enters its sixth decade of existence, consider just what life will be like in 5, 10, or 15 years. In a matter of time, the media labeled "Greatest Generation," who endured the Great Depression and defeated the Axis powers in World War II, will largely be gone. Many, if not the great majority of these aging Americans, were raised in a country where Biblical values and principles were revered and significantly respected. They were the descendants of the generations that founded and preserved our union during its first hundred years. No doubt, the inherited blessings upon them are visible, but rapidly fading.

As their departure occurs, just what kind of society will emerge? Certainly, the secular humanist influence, initiated in the 1930s, has reached maturity and dominance. Three to four generations of reinforced anti-God assertions have gained incredible momentum. Remember that in a democratic society it only requires fifty percent plus one to determine or **legislate what is good and what is evil**. This is a sobering reality of our governmental system, and perhaps, its Achilles' heel.

To complicate matters, in an anti-God culture, where leaders who profess faith in a Creator are scorned unmercifully or mocked for their convictions from multiple venues, the messages to impressionable hearers are confusing. Imagine how the fatherless offspring of divorce and promiscuity are going to react as those who might replace a father figure are ridiculed. What about recent arrivals to our country who have no sense of the previous American values and Christian history of our union?

When given an **equal voting choice** to let the "big brother" of government meet their needs, or let relativistic morality be justified—"as long as it does not infringe on one's personal freedom to do his or her own thing"—just how would you expect them to vote?

Quite frankly, short of a miraculous revival in America, I personally believe that the handwriting is on the proverbial wall. I do not believe that it takes a rocket scientist to extrapolate where we are headed, or for that matter, where we already are! **The simple deduction that those seeking righteousness will be substantially outnumbered and outvoted is not brilliant.**

A democratic society, that is ruled by laws, legislated by elected officials who are constantly pursuing reelection, influenced by manipulated opinion polls of major media outlets, is on a collision course with the acceptance of alternative lifestyles and a relegation of God to the ash heap of ancient myths. **The only unknown is the time it will take for the effects of a disappearing electorate to be outnumbered by the media influenced Baby Boomers, their children and grandchildren, and the influx of others from diametrically opposed cultures.**

However, this does not eliminate our responsibilities to proclaim the Kingdom of God and His righteousness to all who have the ears to hear. **In fact, it is conclusions like these that spur us to do what we do!**

Suffice it to say, the challenges Messianics face, as a sanctified people who believe in the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, are enormous. As a remnant people, living in a wicked and perverted generation, counteracting this societal declension requires great discipline and a commitment to the truths of the Bible we revere. Nevertheless, some additional questions come naturally to mind:

Are true Believers going to cower to the demands of our devolving culture?

What should we be doing while our society legislates that evil is good and good is evil?

Certainly, the Prophet Isaiah had to contend with a similar culture in Ancient Judah. Through him, the Holy One declared that some serious punishment was going to be meted out against them:

"Woe to those who call evil good, and good evil; who substitute darkness for light and light for darkness; who substitute bitter for sweet and sweet for bitter! Woe to those who are wise in their own eyes and clever in their own sight! Woe to those who are heroes in drinking wine and valiant men in mixing strong drink, who justify the wicked for a bribe, and take away the rights of the ones who are in the right! **Therefore, as a tongue of fire consumes stubble and dry grass collapses into the flame, so their root will become like rot and their blossom blow away as dust; for they have rejected the law of the LORD of hosts and despised the word of the Holy One of Israel**" (Isaiah 5:20-24).

Clearly, we do not want to be counted among those who call evil good and good evil!

While these conclusions are not necessarily optimistic, my faith in the God of Isaiah—who will deal with these transgressors in His inimical ways—requires me to press on with the tasks at hand. By

studying the Holy Scriptures, I know that a remnant of true Believers not only exists, but also will persevere to the end. This understanding gives me hope that our collective work for the Kingdom of God will not be in vain!

Technology has been and will continue to be a double-edged sword, being used for both good and for evil. Many will exploit it to pursue their nefarious objectives. But on the other hand, the advent of the Internet has been, to date, a tool for our efforts at OIM and TNN Online to have a profound impact on the thousands who receive our e-mail teachings and materials. Just simple comments, like the following quote from an e-mail I received recently, encourage us to persevere in the field we have been commissioned to encourage and instruct:

“First of all I want to thank you for your ministry. You have been an anchor in a stormy sea of a very ‘messy’, Messianic movement of late” (G.M.).

In spite of the dire warnings that, when added together, bombard us daily as we monitor the spiritual and moral decline of our nation, leading to the eventual collapse of civilization, we have faith in the Almighty, who is ultimately allowing the world—for His purposes—to freefall into a precipice of despair.

We understand that it is critical for people to be encouraged and taught in the Messianic perspective of faith. Since we began our journey in the Messianic movement in 1995, we have had our challenges. Family and friends have ostracized us. They were perplexed and could not understand why we wanted to become “Jewish.” Since most do not have the spiritual eyes to understand what or why we are doing what we do, we tried to respond to them with love and compassion. Where many might agree that our society and world are in turmoil, they do not comprehend that our instruction manual from the Creator is the *only* resource we have that is a reliable tool for conducting our lives. The concept of relying upon the sacrificial work of our Savior Yeshua to atone for our sin might be accepted, but the fact that we promote Torah observance is often foreign to their beliefs.

While this presents many challenges to others, and us, it does not deter us from a walk that we pray pleases our Heavenly Father. This coming year, more than any time in our Messianic walk, we have determined that we will emphasize the foundational building blocks of our faith. We believe it is critical to encourage the Messianic community to grow in the faith of the Apostles, as the Messiah taught them how to conduct their lives.

Messianic Discipleship will be our major theme for the coming year. We will be concentrating, along with basic teachings on what the Messianic movement and Torah observant life are all about, on character formation, discipleship, and a sound study of the Scriptures. Planned endeavors include:

1. Weekly TorahScope teachings in written and audio formats
2. Weekly audio Bible Studies on a wide variety of critical topics germane to the Messianic community
3. Our monthly OIM News newsletter to subscribers and supporters
4. The publication of a number of materials that present a scholastic approach to Biblical interpretation
5. Publication of Frequently Asked Questions to address Messianic issues
6. Virtual Chanukah teachings via e-mail
7. Virtual Passover teachings via e-mail
8. Counting the Omer reflections via e-mail
9. Virtual Sukkot teachings via e-mail
10. The annual Shavuot celebration in Orlando

Regrettably this past year, we have witnessed far too many Messianic Believers being beguiled by the wiles of the Devil. The enemy has found willing vessels to teach error and blasphemy to the undiscerning, further confusing and discouraging the brethren. This has grieved us like never before. Many unsuspecting souls have been quick to have their ears tickled by superfluous teachings that do not focus on the weightier things of the Torah.

Yeshua warned His listeners about the need to *do* the weightier things of the Law, including justice, mercy, and faithfulness, which we believe is our responsibility to teach:

“Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you tithe mint and dill and cummin, and have neglected the weightier provisions of the law: **justice and mercy and faithfulness; but these are the things you should have done without neglecting the others**” (Matthew 23:23).

In some cases, various teachings and the search for so-called deeper meanings in Scripture have led some of the naïve into eventually denying the Divinity and Messiahship of Yeshua. This is an especially distressful thing to witness, as we know according to the Epistle to the Hebrews that when someone partakes of the Holy Spirit and then knowingly tramples on the blood of the Messiah, he or she suffers eternally:

“For in the case of those who have once been enlightened and have tasted of the heavenly gift and have been made partakers of the Holy Spirit, and have tasted the good word of God and the powers of the age to come, and *then* have fallen away, **it is impossible to renew them again to repentance, since they again crucify to themselves the Son of God and put Him to open shame.** For ground that drinks the rain which often falls on it and brings forth vegetation useful to those for whose sake it is also tilled, receives a blessing from God; but if it yields thorns and thistles, it is worthless and close to being cursed, and it ends up being burned” (Hebrews 6:4-8).

“Anyone who has set aside the Law of Moses dies without mercy on *the testimony of two or three witnesses.* **How much severer punishment do you think he will deserve who has trampled under foot the Son of God, and has regarded as unclean the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified, and has insulted the Spirit of grace?**” (Hebrews 10:28-29).

These are serious consequences, brothers and sisters.

Instead of just despairing and “giving up,” as some others probably would, we will continue to disciple many through the various outreaches the Father has given us. Eventually, we know that in the end-times, there will be those chosen to shine brightly and lead many to righteousness, just as Daniel foresaw in his vision of the Tribulation saints:

“Now at that time Michael, the great prince who stands *guard* over the sons of your people, will arise. And there will be a time of distress such as never occurred since there was a nation until that time; and at that time your people, everyone who is found written in the book, will be rescued. Many of those who sleep in the dust of the ground will awake, these to everlasting life, but the others to disgrace *and* everlasting contempt. **Those who have insight will shine brightly like the brightness of the expanse of heaven, and those who lead the many to righteousness, like the stars forever and ever**” (Daniel 12:1-3).

We believe that these are the saints who have a testimony of Yeshua and who obey His commandments (Revelation 12:17; 14:12).

Of course, we do not know when the end will come, and refuse to profess any “end-time” scenario or prognostications that some in ministry have used to create fear in their adherents *for financial support.*

Personal righteousness does, however, come at a cost. Receiving the blessings of the Holy One comes from obedience to His Word. We will endeavor to keep you informed from a balanced, loving, and scholarly perspective on what the Father would have us all become: **disciples of our Messiah Yeshua.** After all, being conformed to His image is not an immediate result of our salvation experience. Instead, it is a life-long objective that comes through prayer, perseverance, study, and obedience.

As most of you already know, our ministry to you these past three years has been primarily given freely over the Internet. Just like the admonition given by Yeshua to His Disciples when He sent them out, the understanding that one is to freely give has been a mainstay of our efforts:

“These twelve Yeshua sent out after instructing them: ‘Do not go in *the way of the Gentiles,* and do not enter *any city of the Samaritans;* but rather go to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. And as you go, preach, saying, “The kingdom of heaven is at hand.” Heal *the sick,* raise *the dead,* cleanse *the lepers,* cast out demons. **Freely you received, freely give.** Do not acquire gold, or silver, or copper for your money belts, or a bag for *your journey,* or even two coats, or sandals, or a staff; for the worker is worthy of his support” (Matthew 10:5-10).

As a result of following this example, our family has learned to live and walk by faith as we rely upon the tithes, freewill offerings, and prayers of those who are blessed, encouraged, and instructed by our labors. Watching the variety of ways that the Father has supported us has been a quite an experience!

For those of you who have helped us send out our ministry teachings with your financial gifts, you have our sincerest gratitude. **We could not stay in ministry if you did not help!**

Over the years, we have had the opportunity to minister to many over the phone, in person, or via e-mail correspondence. We appreciate those times when we can be used by the Holy One to answer many of the questions and concerns that arise in the pursuit of a Messianic lifestyle. Please be reminded that, if and when you have a need for counsel or prayer, we are available through whatever medium you deem appropriate. Many of you have become more than mere acquaintances, but people we consider our friends, as we walk this walk together.

We are anticipating a wonderful new year as we all celebrate the appointed times of our God with increasing understanding and joy. Please join us later this month with our Virtual Chanukah series as we all focus in on the Light of the World, our blessed Redeemer Yeshua!

My prayer is that after you read this article, you might better understand, **why we are compelled and inspired to do what we do!**

Chag Samaech!

Mark Huey (B.A., Vanderbilt University in History and Graduate Studies at Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University) is the Director of Outreach Israel Ministries (www.outreachisrael.net). He is the author of several books, including: *TorahScope, Volumes I & II*, and *Counting the Omer: A Daily Devotional Toward Shavuot*. He is also co-author of *Hebraic Roots: An Introductory Study*.

Unless otherwise noted, Scripture quotations are from the *New American Standard, Updated Edition* (NASU), © 1995, published by The Lockman Foundation.

edited for spelling/grammar; minor theological fine tuning
25 August, 2007