

- Rev. Grant Mangold, www.RiversideChurchIowa.com

WHAT Exalts A Nation ? - part 1 of 3 -

Depending on your vantage point, we approach the 2016 election with joy, fear, anger, resolve, the whole range of human emotion. How much easier to simply make a knee-jerk choice based on a candidate's persona - which is what overtly-biased entertainment main-stream media tries to program you to do. But there's SO much more at stake. We must look past tabloid personality, and thoughtfully and prayerfully consider platforms, policies and priorities. Christians must also consider principle and purpose.

The yardstick of God's Word measures all human rhetoric. Perhaps these words will stir you to principled action: "**Righteousness exalts a nation, but sin is a reproach to any people**" Proverbs 14:34. Ah, but how to apply this principle to this election? Listen to wisdom from this "Centennial Thanksgiving Sermon" delivered by Rev. B.W. Arnett to commemorate the 100th anniversary of America in 1876. It's available in the Library of Congress. Arnett was a prominent black pastor and Ohio legislator. He writes:

"At this the close of the first hundred years of experimental government of the people, by the people, and for the people...to be a citizen of this vast country is something, and to share in its privileges and duties is more than something... Wherein lies the greatness of America? Let us see what it is that makes us so great; wherein lies our strength. What has made us one of the greatest powers of the earth, politically and intellectually? Have we come to the conclusion that it is *Righteousness that exalteth a nation?*

"Withdraw from Christendom the Bible, the Church with its sacraments and ministry, and Christian morality and hopes, and aspirations for time and eternity; repeal all the laws that are founded in the Christian Scriptures; remove the Christian humanities in the form of hospitals and asylums, and reformatories and institutions of mercy utterly unknown to unchristian countries; destroy the literature, the culture, the institutions of learning, the art, the refinement, the place of woman in her home and in society, which owe their origin and power to Christianity;

"blot out all faith in Divine Providence, love, and righteousness; turn back every believer in Christ to his former state; remove all thought or hope of the forgiveness of sins by a just but gracious God; erase the name of Christ from every register it sanctifies—in a word annihilate all the legitimate and logical effects of Christianity in Christendom—just accomplish in fact what multitudes of gifted and learned minds are wishing and trying to accomplish by their science, philosophy, and criticism, and what multitudes of the common people desire and seek, and not only would all progress toward and unto perfection cease, but not one of the shining lights of infidelity would shine much longer.

"Yes, the bitterest enemies of this holy and blessed religion, owe their ability to be enemies to its sacred revelations - to the inspiration and sublimity of that faith which reflects its glories on their hostile natures. They live in the strength of that which they would destroy. They are raised to their seats of opportunity and power by the grace of Him they would crucify afresh; and is it to be thought that they are stronger than that which gives them strength? Can it be supposed that a religion which civilizes and subdues, and elevates and blesses will succumb to the enmities it may arouse and quicken in its onward march? Are we to tremble for the ark of God when God is its upholder, and protector, and preserver?"

HOW does this speak to YOU today? Read it again carefully, pondering past its 19th century language. Then consider the 21st century verbiage which frames these timeless truths in tabloid sound bytes. Do not be deceived. Forces of wickedness at work in this election do not necessarily display posters on lawns. And in your own lifetime the steady erosion of the Founding principles of our nation have become travesties of our Founders' clear intentions. YOUR personal liberty is at stake in this election.

Politics as usual has corrupted America and downgraded Americans beyond recognition. Evil forces plan even more devious schemes. And so we are once again faced with flawed candidates, by which enemies of true freedom hope to foist yet another round of humiliating defeats against righteousness and liberty.

Two leading candidates stand in stark contrast, but only one will be elected. Will that person fight for righteousness and national greatness? Or for more personal power and greed and gain? Will YOU allow politics as usual? Their records are clear, if your due diligence takes you deeper than the nightly news. Do not be deceived. You must VOTE - against evil - with principle and wisdom.