

## AWASH IN IMMORALITY

by Tom Wacaster

My daily morning routine between about 6:30 and 8:00 includes a walk on the treadmill, precious time in reading God's word, and a quick glance at the Dallas Morning News [at least when I stick with my routine, and not necessarily in that order]. Those three activities provide strength for the physical man, strength for the spiritual man, and mental stimulation for making an occasional comment to our subscribers regarding various challenges we face each day. Occasionally I will tune in to FOX news to get that "fair and balanced" report of the news, or run up the internet and check Yahoo news for what has happened in the world while I was sleeping. I have learned from experience that it is indeed true that "there is nothing new under the sun," and today's news is a rehash of yesterday's news as well as a glimpse at what might very well happen tomorrow. In fact, you can take just about any item that makes the newspaper headlines, evening TV news, or the "world wide web" of news, change the names and places, and predict what will be in the next day's paper or television news report. It has been six years since we moved away from Harris county [home of Houston, Humble, Baytown, Sugarland, et al]. Each year, somewhere around January, Harris county would report the number of homicides for the previous year. In 1997, give or take a year [the memory is not what it used to be], Harris county issued a nine month report on homicides for the simple reason that killings for that year had exceeded all previous year totals for twelve months. By late September homicides had exceeded 750, and it was predicted that before year's end they would surpass 900 [if I remember correctly, the year closed out with a record number of homicides, the number exceeding the 900 count]. That means Harris county averaged more than two homicides PER DAY [or seventeen per week, and seventy five per month].

Having moved to beautiful East Texas the "local" news is not necessarily what might be happening in Talco, or Mt. Pleasant, or even Clarksville or Paris. Cable news stations carry at least one Dallas News station, and one Shreveport, Louisiana station. The local newspaper stands carry the small local papers, containing 90% advertisements, and a few items of news that might be of interest to those who have lived most of their life in these small town communities. Beside the local newspaper vendors one can pick up a copy of the Dallas Morning News. Here are some of the headlines from the front page of that paper [or inside section "A" - that is the section that contains world news, Dallas community news, and some national news]: "Song blamed for shootings"; "DISD credit card theft"; "Doctors accused of intentionally killing Katrina victims"; "Lottery firm under suspicion"; "Dallas Cowboy injured in freeway shooting." Now, what does all that have to do with

God, man, salvation, the church, or life in general? It is this - a nation cannot long endure when its citizenry has become so immoral that the nation is characterized by that immorality rather than moral uprightness. The inspired writer put it this way: "Righteousness exalteth a nation; but sin is a reproach to any people" (Pro. 14:34). When this nation was founded it was the intention of our forefathers that this grand Republic maintain allegiance to God first and foremost. They did not envision a "secular" state where God is excluded from the laws and thinking of society. James Madison is credited with these words: "We have staked the future of all of our political institutions upon the capacity of mankind for selfgovernment; upon the capacity of each and all of us to govern ourselves, to control ourselves, to sustain ourselves according to the Ten Commandments of God." The fact is, dear reader, that our nation is literally awash in immorality. This past week the headlines in the Dallas Morning News brought those "major stories" to our attention. But what of the hundreds, yea even thousands of "stories" that go untold. They are reflected in statistics regarding child abuse, broken homes, petty theft and embezzlement, dishonesty in the work place, cheating in the classroom, gang initiations, and white collar crime. And what more shall we say, for the time will fail us if we speak of Hollywood, TV programs, pornography, gambling, homosexuality, and political powers that want to remove God from every vestige of our daily life. Oh yes, our nation is awash in immorality. Tragically, we have become too blind to realize this undeniable truth.

It has been more than half a dozen decades since McGuffey's Reader was a regular textbook in our public school system. William McGuffey was not just an educator; he was a man of integrity and moral uprightness. But he was a man of great wisdom. He once penned these words:

"If you can induce a community to doubt the genuineness and authenticity of the Scriptures, to question the reality and obligations of religion; to hesitate, undeciding, whether there be any such thing as virtue or vice; whether there be an eternal state of retribution beyond the grave; or whether there be any such being as God; you have broken down the barriers of moral virtue, and hoisted the flood gates of immorality and crime. I need not say that when a people have once done this, they can no longer exist as a tranquil and happy people...Avarice, perjury, ambition, and revenge would walk through the land, and render it more like the dwelling of savage beasts than the tranquil abode of civilized and Christianized men" (William McGuffey, quoted in Power Lectures, The Parables of Jesus, page 320).

I fear that we are rapidly becoming this "dwelling of savage beasts." Only history will tell. But the fact is, history is not on our side. General Douglas McArthur wrote:

"History fails to record a single precedent in which nations subject to moral decay have not passed into political and economic decline. There has been either a spiritual awakening to overcome the moral lapse, or a progressive deterioration leading to ultimate national disaster." We stand at a cross roads in this decade. Shall we turn the tide, or shall we remain awash in immorality? Only time will tell.