

AND THE “NONES” HAVE IT!

By Roelf L. Ruffner

“And also all that generation were gathered unto their fathers: and there arose another generation after them, which knew not the LORD, nor yet the works which he had done for Israel” (Judges 2:10).

A recent religious survey from the liberal Pew Research Center shows that since 2008 the number of people who claim they are non-religious or “nones” has grown significantly in the United States. They do not claim to be atheists; though the number of atheists has also grown significantly. These are folk that do not identify with any religion.

America once prided herself on the religious nature of her people. “Freedom of religion” has always been touted as one of the main draws for immigrants to our land. But we are now in a “post-Christian” era. Like Europe our society is becoming increasingly secularized and religion is no longer a factor. Why is this? Here are my thoughts.

The Triumph of Selfishness

Many in our materialistic, self-centered nation think they no longer need God. Many depend on the government and science to satisfy and supply their needs. Man is now the center of all things. Our forefathers understood that what they needed and consumed for daily existence ultimately came from the providential hand of God. To depend totally on God rather than self is to know true liberty. “And when the tempter came to him, he said, If thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread. But he answered and said, It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God” (Mat. 4:3-4).

The Religion of Religious Pluralism

For many years the media and even the American educational system has taught the false doctrine of religious pluralism. It is the idea that there are many ways to God, so all religions are equal. The only “sin” in this religion is to believe that there are absolutes in the realms of religion, ethics and morality. Of course this flies in the face of authentic New Testament Christianity. “Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me” (John 14:6). The

“none” will take such an approach because it is intellectually and spiritually easy. For them if they accept absolutes then there is the reality of personal accountability and the prospect of eternal punishment. “And as he reasoned of righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come, Felix trembled, and answered, Go thy way for this time; when I have a convenient season, I will call for thee” (Paul before Governor Felix and his wife Drusilla - Acts 24:25).

The Tyranny of Religious Liberalism

For over two generations religious liberalism has ruled the roost in our society. Liberals in word and deed deny the verbal, plenary inspiration of the Bible and corresponding authority and replace them with a syrupy subjectivism or “feel-goodism.” Pulpits no longer condemn sin and extol virtue by strong Bible preaching and teaching. They are mostly silent about sin, even in the body of Christ – the church of Christ. The soul-saving Gospel necessity of the repentance of sin has been exchanged for agnosticism and handholding. The end result is a generation which does not know God and does not care to know Him – the “nones.”

The Answer is the Truth

Experts claim that “nones” cannot be reached with Bible based preaching/teaching. It turns them off. Rather they must be cajoled by entertainment and a salesman’s pitch. There is a good ole word for this approach – BALDERDASH! The 2,000 year old Jerusalem Gospel may not pack the pews anymore but it can save a soul from Hell (Acts 17:30,31; Rom.1:16). When the righteous Judean King Hezekiah tried to restore his northern “none” cousins to God here was the reaction to his plea: “So the posts passed from city to city through the country of Ephraim and Manasseh even unto Zebulun: but they laughed them to scorn, and mocked them. Nevertheless divers of Asher and Manasseh and of Zebulun humbled themselves, and came to Jerusalem.” (2 Chron. 30:10). Likewise today the 21st Century Christian must reject the temptation to pander to nones and “gird up the loins of thy mind, be sober...” (1 Pet.1:13). The way to save souls is not to compromise and retreat but to “fight the good fight of faith” (1 Tim. 6:12).

For the last 2,000 years whenever the Gospel is preached in it fullness the reaction is the same. Let us take courage and be like Paul. After a whole day of teaching the Truth and pleading from the Scriptures to a crowd of his stubborn

kinsmen Luke records, “And some believed the things which were spoken, and some believed not” (Acts 28:24).

<http://www.religionnews.com/2015/05/12/christians-lose-ground-nones-soar-new-portrait-u-s-religion/> as of May 14, 2012.