

## **420 A God with no Name - (Faith & Topical Issues) - January 2021**

We give thanks to the Lord God for the peaceful inauguration of the new American President, for whom we pray as he gets to work. In his inaugural address President Biden emphasised the victory of democracy in the face of recent challenges, and the need for healing and unity within the nation.

This desire for unity was then expressed in the prayer of benediction spoken by a Christian pastor who addressed his prayer only to “O God ...”. He then made no reference to Almighty God as our Father, nor to Jesus Christ as our Lord and Saviour, presumably in his wish for the peoples of very different Faiths within the United States to feel included in his heartfelt prayer. This prayer uttered to “a God with no Name” clearly raises key issues about the relationship between truth, unity and peace (\*\* see end for previous Weekly Reflections of relevance).

On what was the unity of the children of Israel under Moses based? They were all of one stock, “the seed of Abraham”. They spoke the same language. They were all members of the one true Faith, as God’s unique “covenant people”, marked by circumcision and the commandments and rituals of the Law. They accepted the divinely-appointed leadership of Moses, (and whenever they didn’t, see Exodus 32 for example, their unity was quickly threatened). So their unity and peace depended ultimately on their shared beliefs about Truth regarding Almighty God our Creator, the one true God of the covenant who revealed Himself to them and faithfully guided and provided for them.

We see through the unfolding of the Old Testament how disunity and even war gradually crept in, caused by their turning-away from this divinely-given Truth into worldly alliances and blatant idolatries which were merely falsehoods masquerading as Truth. The ultimate disunity for the Jews then came with Jesus Himself: in truth, was He really the Messiah, “the Way the Truth and the Life” – or not? (John 14.6).

This brings us on to “the Church” – a group of widely-differing people, backgrounds, languages and nations, whose unity and peace are again based on one shared belief about Truth – in this case, that Jesus Christ is indeed the Son of God, Messiah, Lord and Saviour.

Jesus prayed to His Father “that they all may be one” (John 17.21a, 22b, 23a / and egs., Acts 10.34-43 / Ephesians 2 / Revelation 5.9-14), but this “one-ness” does not equal “same-ness”. In Romans 12 and I Corinthians

Chapters 12-14 for example we are shown how diverse characters, gifts and roles actually strengthen a Christian community, as long as the central Truth on which the whole thing is based, the Lordship of Christ, remains intact.

In the light of these two biblical examples of the Jews and the Church, we can now apply the crucial sequence of Truth followed by Unity and Peace to the United States (though equally applicable to other western, nominally-Christian countries).

“Peace and unity” are now under great strain in America because the overtly Christian Truths on which the nation was founded have been widely rejected. As elsewhere in the West, swathes of liberal, anti-biblical laws have been passed under the old rogue banners proclaiming Liberty, Freedom, Rights, Progress and so on. The biblical building block of any stable society, the “nuclear family”, has been gravely damaged, bringing social shambles and much misery in its wake, and the former national allegiance to the God of the Bible has been seriously weakened in practice. (For all his faults, President Trump stood up against this liberal tide, which perhaps explains why “the Left” so deeply loathes him, and why he gained 75 million votes last November).

Alongside this tide of liberalism is the presence in America of millions of people from other ethnic groups, languages, Faiths and cultures, desperate to escape poverty and corruption in their home nations and to have the chance of “a better life” for themselves and their families. These desires are wholly understandable and America to her credit has always welcomed immigration and benefitted from it. But the longed-for unity and peace, embodying some healthy diversity, still depend on the prior acceptance by the people of, in America’s case, Christian biblical Truth.

That is clearly not happening. Western governments have retreated from their Christian heritage into ill-defined “western values”, to avoid giving offence to the numerous, non-Christian people now present and to foster the much-craved, much-needed unity; hence that inauguration prayer to “a God with no Name”.

But we know that the swapping of the real Truth as revealed in the Holy Bible, the unique Word of God, for an “all Faiths are the same and of equal validity” approach, is utter folly and will never produce real unity. By God’s grace ultimate peace and unity will indeed come, when God’s ultimate Truth, centred in “Jesus Christ is Lord”, has been acknowledged

by every knee bowing and every tongue confessing (as in Philippians 2.5-11).

That is the Truth that each Christ-redeemed soul, including presidents, prime ministers and pastors, is courteously to proclaim in a lost world by word, deed and life.

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(\*\*Weekly Reflections 391, 395, 396 and 410, on these same issues, are available on the This Week page of the website)