

McGregor Baptist Church
Colonial Boulevard
Fort Myers, FL 33912
(239)936-1754

James O. Holbrook
Senior Pastor

7/26/98

II Timothy 4:1-8

“Pastors Farewell Address”

When George Washington stepped down from eight as years as our first president, he left a farewell address to the nation. It has proven to be prophetic. Unfortunately, a lot of it has been forgotten, and too many of the things, about which he warned us, have come to pass.

I certainly do not rank with the father of our nation, except that I have continued at my post for 22 years, longer. But I would like to leave a challenge with those, whom I have served. I would like to re-enunciate my challenge to be the salt of the earth and the light of the world. I would only hope that McGregor can continue as a “Center for Change,” in the midst of a cultural war which threatens to bring the minds and souls of our population into captivity to a godless and humanistic mid-set, which is completely opposed to those ideals, on which our nation was founded.

There is a war ranging, during the first stage, we have been losing ground. We never expected the opposing viewpoint to be so passionate and persistent.

However, I pray that the people of God have finally awakened and taken their positions, in order to stand. I hope that you are among them. And I am calling you to prayer and definite actions.

I’m sure that this message will not be appreciated by some. We have lost some members, because I insisted on awakening troops. Even other churches have branded me as being a “political” preacher. Some have stormed out of our worship services, because I dared to speak out against the moral corruption of our national leaders, much like the prophets of old had spoken to corrupt men, like Ahab and his bossy wife, Jezebel.

Some left the church, because “they could hear about politics everywhere else.” They apparently wanted a preacher, who would tell them that there was “peace, peace, where there is no peace.”

Fortunately, these were only a small minority. And the vast majority of our people have responded with prayer and participation in the democratic process. Some have been changed careers and entered the local race for leadership. I have been awed by their commitment, and my heart has been humbled.

Actually, I prefer to lift people’s spirits. I love to preach those messages which inspire greater faith and hope.

But my Bible tells me that I must also warn people of the signs of the times.

I must “reprove, rebuke, and exhort with all patience and doctrine.” (II Timothy text.)

I have spent the last few Sundays, re-running some of my most positive and faith-building sermons, in order to prepare us for an even greater future as a church. I loved repairing some of them.

However, it is now time for me to leave you some words of caution. I must make sure that your eyes are wide open to some of the challenges which are facing us as citizens of a society which is being torn up from its roots by what can be nothing less than Satanically-inspired men and women.

Judge Bork alerted us, in slouching Toward, Gomorrah that we were in a time when the good people would be more and more silent, and the forces of evil would become more passionate and vocal. And he noted the passionate and vocal usually win the day.

The forces, which would destroy our Christian heritage, are vocal and passionate. If you do not believe that, then try debating someone who is a pro-abortion, or a rabid feminist, or those who are helping to push the homosexual agenda. Believe me, they are passionate in their pursuits of their goals.

And a non-challant or careless attitude, on the part of God's people, is not going to hold-the-line, in this cultural war. And if we are so loyal to our political party line that we refuse to prayerfully discern the trends and directions which are being taken...and we just go along...then we may become part of the growing problem. And I believe that our God will hold us accountable.

This is no time for silence and apathy among the army of the Lord. This is the time to stand and be counted, before we are legislated into silence and/or eventually imprisonment. What happened to the early Christians, in the midst of a godless Roman Empire, can easily happen again. In this land where our elected leaders are trying to, little by little, seize tyrannical power.

Oh, what will it take to awaken the people of God? A quote from Don Wildman, made ten years ago, said it so well. And today are worse, not better.

“Today 4000 innocent precious lives of unborn babies were snuffed out, and 300,000 pulpits were silent.

The networks make a mockery of Christians, the faith, Christian values, with nearly ever show they air, materialism, violence, sexual immorality are standard fare. Program after program, movie after movie, contain anti-Christian episodes and propaganda. News articles condescendingly refer to Christians as ‘fundamentalist, right wing.’ And those who speak for the sacredness of life are ‘extremists.’ And 300,000 pulpits are silent.

Rock music fills the airwaves, and our children's minds are filled with music, which legitimizes rape, murder, forced sex, sado-masochism, adultery, satanic worship and much more. (Remember, this was before Rap and its more recent themes) and yet 300,000 pulpits in our land are silent.

And what important matters are we dealing in our churches? Well, one church bulletin announced that there would be a meeting to plan a church-wide supper. We are raising money to put a new floor cover in the Kitchen, because the old one doesn't match the new oven and refrigerator.

We must deal with important things first. (We can hear all about what is going wrong in our country elsewhere.)

Furthermore, the sermon last Sunday was on ‘How to Have Positive Attitude.’

And the best of all we are organizing a softball team.

Isn't the church relevant to our age?

Ouch! But how true. And the whole time, we are losing the war to even preserve our national heritage, much less to advance the cause of Christ.

And many of God's people are getting shaky, or going "belly up" and floating along with the tide of least resistance, under the attack of the liberal media and the spin doctors, in the psychological warfare which is being waged to undermine the foundations of our great nation. God help us!

May God help us to rise to Paul's inspired challenge to "stand, and having done all, stand." Might we 'pray without ceasing' for our nation and its leaders, lest us hope for a spiritual awakening which, alone, can restore the ideas which made our nation great. And may we exercise our vote, the last freedom, in order to rid our government of corruption.

A number of areas concern me. As did George Washington, I shall try to point some to them and to encourage you to use your ingenuity and your salty influence to help to correct them.

I. **MULTICULTURALISM AND DIVERSITY**

Today there is so much emphasis on diversity. But if America does not emphasize our unity. We will divide into various groups and be fighting with each other, just like the Bosnians and Serbs. And the Irish Catholics and Protestants have been doing for years.

Our strength was the melting pot ideal, where the strengths of all added to the blend. However politicians have learned that they can buy votes by catering to groups, whom they classify as "victims." And they can seize more power by pitting class against class and race against race.

It has gotten so bad' that I see little hope, except in Christ. Paul shows us how those, in Christ, there is neither Jew nor Greek, Slave or free, one nationality or another, but we are all one new man, in Christ.

Don't get sucked into the game of multiculturalism and diversity. Let us work for unity. United we stand. Divides, we end up like Bosnia.

II. **ONE WORLDISM**

When are some Christians going to wake up to the fact that our leaders are selling us out to a one world government? I wonder what they hope to gain? Greater power than they already have, here?

Now these are not the ranting of someone, who has a conspiratorial mind-set. The Word of God plainly predicts a coming one world government, in no uncertain terms.

And the International Monetary Fund, to which our leaders want to contribute so generously, is just socialism on an international scale. The IMF will play Robin Hood and steal from the bad and rich USA and give it to some third world nation, just like the federal government has used the graduated income tax system, in order to redistribute the wealth, in our own country.

Now they are proposing international laws, which will affect our morality, our family life and who knows what else. And our politicians are selling-out our precious liberties, when they fall in line.

Next we will be required to carry a national identity card, by which our every action can be monitored by Big Brother.

This all is setting the stage for Anti-Christ. It is inevitable.

But why must we hurry it along? We don't have to vote for those, who cater to such things. And we can still try to "take back America," while there is still something for us to take.

And why must we become so involved with foreign powers? Never forget the first lesson of God's Word: Men are selfish sinners. And foreign nations are selfish, too. They only are allies, when there is a common enemy.

Communist China is not really our friend, and they have historically made that clear. Our elected leaders are foolish and traitorous to equip them with the technology, which they will some day use against us.

The O.T. prophets warned Israel against making foreign alliances and about trusting in the help of Assyria or Babylon. These are the very nations which eventually turned on them and carried off their riches and enslaved their children. Let us wake up, and pray, and speak up to our representative.

Communism is not dead. Far from it. We are fast becoming communistic ourselves.

Yet it does not work. It kills initiative and leads to mediocrity and failure. But our leaders are committed communists, in their personal ideologies. And they will not be convinced of the danger, until they have led our nation to ruin.

I truly believe that only a spiritual awakening and a revival of the Christian morality and work ethic can save our nation. That is why our work is so important!

III. Beware of **CREEPING TYRANNY.**

This is no longer a government "of the people, by the people, and for the people." A group of the "elite," among the politicians, media, entertainment industry, and academia, have determined to think for us, spend our money for us, and take control of everything around us. Little by little, they are taking away most of our precious freedoms.

Our founding fathers were suspicious of big government. They had experienced enough of it, when they were in Europe. They wrote the Constitution and Bill of Rights, in order to protect the citizenry from government's inevitable lust for power.

Today, however, we are increasingly surrendering our personal liberties, in exchange for all manner of government "entitlements," or hand-outs. We are willing to place ourselves under their control, because we are not willing to take responsibility for our own lives. And many are hoping that they can take out more than they put in—or that the next generation can pick up the tab. Shame on us!

And the government leaders love it. Power becomes their game, once they lose their original idealism and are corrupted by the system. (It breaks my heart to see what happened to John Glen, one of my former heroes. When he served on the senate hearings, he stonewalled and obstructed the pursuit of justice, in order to protect his party leaders. I was so ashamed for him.)

One of the last barriers has been gun control. And they are working hard on that. They are using every shooting spree and miscarriage of justice, to convince us to give up our right to self-defense.

Don't we know that gun control only controls the honest people. Criminals will get their weapons, no matter what laws are enacted. And the rest of us will be at their mercy.

Even Hitler registered all fire arms. Then he came back and confiscated them. Then he was able to set up his dictatorship.

We seem to constantly debate the pro's and con's of what our founding fathers meant by "a well-regulated militia." But there is little question when you read their writings. They put their philosophy down on paper, quite clearly. Read the Federalist Papers, ect., and it is clear that the right to bear arms was meant to help us protect ourselves from the tyrannical take-over of our own government.

I'm not a fighter. In Jesus' name, I am a lover. I don't even own a gun and would find it hard to shoot someone. But I am not ignorant to what is going on. I see this creeping tyranny, and I am going to pray daily for the future of our nation. And I am going to balk at each new incremental removal of our liberties. And I am not afraid to speak my convictions.

IV. **TOLERANCE OF EVIL**

The only virtue which is left, to many, is "tolerance." It seems like anything goes, morally. Even abortion and homosexuality, which for 200 years were against the laws of every state in our union, are now to be tolerated by us and protected by the federal government.

But if you speak out against them, you are called a right wing extremist, or a "dangerous Christian." (Can you imagine that, in formerly Christian America?)

Next it will be euthanasia, or the killing of older people, who can become just as much of an "inconvenience" as an unwanted pregnancy. And the quicker they die, the quicker their heirs can get their inheritance money.

Right now, the Democrats are falling all over themselves to court the votes of the gay community; and the Republicans are vacillating, because they are afraid of what might happen to them, if they do not follow suit.

And those, who follow these perverted practices, are becoming more and more bold and flagrant in their promotion of their unnatural lifestyles.

Even some scientist have sold-out and tried to imply that homosexuality is a biological fact and not a choice, even though there is no body of scientific evidence for this idea. Well, our God says it is a choice, and an abominable choice, at that.

Every one of us, who is an adult male, has at one time in our lives been approached by a homosexual, who tried to enlist us into their lifestyle. That's the only way they can grow in numbers. They can't reproduce!

But if they continue to gain the power, for which they seem to be so militantly campaigning, what will our communities be like? Will it just be "live and let live?" Will they say: "Don't ask; don't tell." Or will they begin to hit-on every stranger, who comes to town, like they did with Lot's visitors, in the city of Sodom. (By the way, Sodom is the only historical example, where the gays ever got the upper hand. And look how aggressive and intolerant of others they were, when they ran the show. Will we learn from history or have to repeat it, America?)

Now I believe that we should love the sinner, even though we hate their sin. We are not "gay bashers." But we cannot be "tolerant" about what God has warned us.

And we cannot be psyched out of our Biblical position, even when the president's press secretary says that we are "backward in our thinking" and "extreme" in our beliefs and that our Biblical views are "incorrect."

Thank God, there have been a rash of ads, showing that gays can be delivered, through the power of Jesus Christ. But has this caused a furor among the gay advocates.

These people love to speak of tolerance. But they will not tolerate anyone, who has a different idea than they do!

Next they will try to legally force us to hire gays, even for our church staff. How would you like a gay youth pastor or children's worker. That is what these antidiscrimination laws might force upon us.

And that is why we must stand. We must be kind, yet firm in our convictions. Once our cities turn into Sodom, it will be too late to change things.

VI. **BELIEVING A LIE**

The Bible warns that “in the last days, men will believe a lie.” That day is almost here. We do not hear the “news” anymore. We hear “propaganda.” All we get are careful slants on the news. Others think for us and try to brainwash us with just enough of the truth to sway us. The president has a staff of spin doctors, who can twist anything into a favorable-sounding idea and who can demonize even the most noble of opponents.

And, sadly, many people buy into these lies. They are just being conditioned for Anti-Christ and the big lie.

May God help us to read our Bibles and seek the mind of Christ and pray for discernment, so that we will not get sucked-up into the satanic system.

Even public education has become an arm of the government, to fill our children with their lies. They might well be called “the government schools.” Many of them have become a laboratory for a social re-engineering of our society.

Instead of learning the basic disciplines of education, they are being brainwashed about diversity and sensitivity and self esteem and saving our environment.

That reminds me of a joke. Did you hear about the man who was in the wilderness, lost and wandering. He had not eaten for several days, when he came upon a condor, and then prepared it for supper. Just then, a game warden came, issued a summons to appear in court for killing an endangered species, then took him to the courthouse.

Standing before the judge, the man pleaded that he had been starving and had no choice but to eat the endangered bird. The judge was sympathetic to the man’s plight and dismissed the charges.

As the man was leaving the courtroom, the judge called to him. “By the way, what did the condor taste like?” The man answered, “Sort of like a cross between a bald eagle and a spotted owl!”

But it is a joke, when our kids graduate, not able to spell and not knowing anything about our great American heritage, but they know all about taking away people’s private property in order to protect some critter.

Listen, if it were not for many fine Christian teachers, who labor to give a real education in the midst of all of this federalization of our school system, I might feel that there would be no hope for our children.

That’s why our McGregor school must succeed. That’s why all Christian schools and home-schoolers must succeed. We may be turning out the only ones, who have not been “conditioned” to go along with every life, which is being foisted upon us by the liberal NEA.

VII. **SEPARATION OF CHURCH AND STATE**

This is the watchword of the hour, in order to keep Christians and people with some absolute system of values quiet.

Historically, there is no such thing. (Explain Jefferson’s original remark to the Danberry Baptist Association, and how the term never appears in any of our official documents of state.)

Check out how much of our American history involved people, who acted heroically on their religious conviction. Notice how much of our original formation of this great nation was spawned in the shadow of the church.

Listen: an outspoken church has always formed the moral conscience of the nation. That’s why government leaders want to muzzle us. Without that conscience, unscrupulous men will do unscrupulous things. So let us speak out, while we still can.

We may get fed to the lions for a while, but pagan Rome will eventually fall, if we do not recant our beliefs!

VIII. CORRUPT JUDGES

I used to marvel at how the Old Testament prophets would pronounce “woes” on corrupt judges. Now I can see why. When there is no consistent justice, there can be no stability in society.

I truly fear that our federal judges and attorney general are in the hip pocket of the president, who appoints them. Thus crime can flourish, even in the highest office of the land. And through all sorts of legal maneuvering, people of power can get by with murder—and with an impunity which rivals ancient emperors and czars.

Once a legal precedent is set, it practically becomes the law of the land. And so our constitution and bill of rights can be over-ridden, as these legal eagles scratch each others backs (cover each others back-sides) and ride roughshold over the rights of ordinary individuals.

Today people are flaunting laws of the land. More legislation has been passed by presidential “edict” than in any other administration. And never has the power of the veto been used more often to over-ride the decisions of our elected representative.

God attributed the downfall of Israel partly to a corrupt judicial system. Let us not act surprised, if our system falls apart for the same reason.

Now all of this is not meant to be “doom and gloom.” It is meant to be a challenge for Christian living.

What a day, in which to live for Jesus. In such a dark hour, what a time we have to shine.

You know, a lightning bug can shine anywhere: in the darkest night, if you imprison him in a jar, if you put him in a garbage can, or if you rub out his life with the sole of your shoes. And we can shine for Jesus, no matter what our national condition may be.

If the corruption eventually makes our society fall apart, we who stand on God’s principles might well be the only ones who can lead our nation in a better direction.

What I’m asking you to do is to shine, to stand, to save souls, to preach the Word, to pray fervently, to be instant in season and out of season...to not conform to the world, but to be transformed by the renewing of your minds...to be the salt, which preserves society from decay, and to be the light, which shines the only ray of hope in the ever-increasing darkness.

May God help me to stand and may He help you to stand, in these perilous but potential times!