

The Perils of Being

A Society, Adrift

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Mr. Gary S. Dykes

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A “society adrift”, a phrase which can describe America here in the 21st century. In this paper I shall attempt to illuminate this fact, and to illustrate the consequences of such a state. A solution to the dilemma does not manifest itself to my mind, yet stating the nature of the case and clarifying it may contribute to an improvement. It is thus understood, that I see great danger in a society which is adrift, a society which has lost its moorings, which is floating about on the oceans without an anchor. Those passengers—legitimate residents upon this craft (this society)—often appear oblivious to the fact that they are simply adrift, they may even consider such a state as a luxury cruise. I do not.

In the history of America, indeed in much of western Europe, we had moorings, we did utilize anchors. We have lost these. What were these “things” which served as anchors in our society, “things” which serve as anchors in any stable society? A bit of reflection gives rise to answers. A successful society must possess numerous qualities, factors which make and keep it strong, resilient and enduring. Factors which must or should be employed by most of its citizens. Briefly some of these factors would be:

- (1) an enforced code of accepted laws and regulations
- (2) a system of educating its youth
- (3) a strong military
- (4) a reliable system of goods and food production
- (5) care and respect for all of its citizens
- (6) strong family units
- (7) a clear and strong religious faith
- (8) a standard and central language

Certainly other factors can be envisioned; such as international trade agreements, distributions of responsibilities amongst the governing bodies (states and federal), checks and balances within the governments, economic issues, communications, energy and water issues *et cetera*. But the above eight factors are a must, are necessities for any successful society to exist and persist. Each of these factors serve as moorings, to stabilize and define a particular culture or society. When any of the factors are “missing” the society is in peril. It will change, self-destruct, be conquered or cease to exist. It will be replaced by a society which has each of the eight factors in place. These basic observations are self evident to any who read, observe or study the history of man.

Most societies are also heavily influenced by their geographic environments. Folks living in Borneo have little need for heaters, ice-fishing techniques; they are especially attune to the forest and surrounding waters. In America we are not mindful of tigers roaming our pine forests, we are mindful of the reality that we possess excellent soils, fine mountain ranges, numerous rivers, and abundant power resources (natural gas, coal *et cetera*). Many Americans are aware that we as a nation are very blessed indeed.

Within the above named eight factors lie numerous sub-factors. For example, under laws and regulations, one might place a court system, and various forms of punishments for wrong doers. Some of the sub-factors can heavily influence their primary class. In this paper I shall focus upon the factor number seven - “a clear and strong religious faith”. Though “faith” is singular it can include a variety of different faiths, yet they must all exist and co-exist as strong entities.

Intrinsically embedded within each of the factors is a common denominator. "Standardization", there must not only exist these eight factors, but each must accord to an accepted standard form. Without a standard form, chaos would ensue. This sounds simple and seems benign, yet it is this very aspect which can provide the whole system with a weak point, a crack. This weakness, a lack of standardization, is not often recognized as a weakness until obvious damage results. Let us observe the importance of this element - standardization, or simply put, a standard.

Note this expression:

```
C:  
CD\DATA\TAXES  
FORMAT A: /Q  
COPY *.* A:
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It is a very simple command for a computer, it is written in DOS. The computer will execute the commands exactly as programmed. In the above, we indicate the directory of a file(s), we indicate the named file, and we copy it to another named disk. The syntax must be exact, note the space after various elements, after FORMAT; notice the direction of the slanted dividers. If any of the above elements are incorrect the program will produce an error, copy the wrong files to the wrong location or simply not work. If the file is critically important, serious consequences could result! DOS, the computer language is standardized. Deviations are not tolerated. It must be standardized so that all computers which use DOS can communicate.

You cannot go to a tire store and buy tires which are marked 8.00 x 15, and install them if they are actually 7.25 x 15. The tire manufacturer must conform to some sort of a prior established standard. Businesses would collapse if we ignored standards. A red stop sign means just that, cities cannot change the signs to a bright green and have written on them "ALTO". Traffic signs must conform to a standard, or traveling can become very dangerous. It is not hard to imagine other scenarios occurring wherein some standard is ignored. Our society must have in place standards. There is no debate herein, a .309 caliber rifle round will not chamber in a .308 caliber firearm. A subject of a sentence must exist or be understood, or else we are not communicating with sentences. Grunts and moans communicate, but as in the animal world the communications are very basic, no algebraic notations can be expressed by a cry! Humans are not savages—at least most humans—our language must be able to express accurately our thoughts, and must be able to share accurately these thoughts. A society cannot exist without its citizens communicating with each other.

Numerous faiths co-exist in America. One faith, which insists that all other faiths must be converted or eliminated (Muslim) is currently under much scrutiny. However, most get along side-by-side quite well. Perhaps the largest group of religious faiths, would be the Christians. In fact it is Christianity which provided most of the foundations of our legal system, of our understandings of what is right and what is wrong. The Christian religion defines what a family unit is, it gives guidelines for the raising of children for the rights of women, wives, widows; it gives guidelines for tolerance and just what or who is to be tolerated. The Christian religion provides insights for

the future, and is based upon a single book. The Christian religion has in many ways affected the establishment of America, and has provided a foundation for our society to exist, that is, it gives us a reason WHY we are, why we exist. These reasons why, form the nucleus of our faith, the Christian faith. We exist (America) because our early forefathers sought religious freedom, and other freedoms. We exist because brave men and women dared to leave the known and to forge a new world in a foreign land. We exist because we promoted the God of the Christian faith. We served as a light to the rest of the world, supplementing that of the British and other Europeans who fell into dire straits during World Wars one and two. We exist because we publish and share the source of Christianity (the Bible) in many languages. We exist to lead others to a knowledge of the Creator, and of the one God, Jesus Christ. These were the reasons, these were the ideals. These were our marching orders, at least for those who embraced this faith. Of course others will not agree to these simplified observations: Mormons for example, would object to the historical origins of our country, and they are welcome to do so. They do so in a peaceful manner. Though their faith differs, it is still a strong faith an ingredient needed for a strong society. Yet the Christian faith has certain advantages. Most importantly, the Christian faith is old, well documented, and powerful, divinely powerful! Though I wish it were the only faith in America, it nevertheless, survives and continues to extract blessings from the God of the Bible, blessings which keep this land and country safe and free, for the moment. But this is changing. There is a being who wishes to de-standardize Christianity. To deconstruct it, to remove its unified integrity. When accomplished, the society which depends upon this Christianity will suffer.

So under the factor: **a clear and strong religious faith**, will be found **Christian faith**, and under it we would have **the Bible**. The scheme looks like this:

(7) a clear and strong religious faith

(a) the Christian faith

(I) the Bible

The sub-factors serve as a foundation for those resting upon them. The Christian faith rests upon, the Bible. The Bible itself, rests upon its supporting and preserved manuscripts, in Hebrew, Aramaic and Greek. But there is another sub-factor under the Bible, and that is translation. Translation from these ancient languages into our primary language, English. Several factors now enter in which affect the stability of the Christian faith, and of our understanding of the Bible. Working up from the bottom, how the Bible is understood affects the Christian faith, and the strength of the Christian faith is one (if not *the* most important) of the important faiths which helps keep America strong and stable. Corrupting the Bible, can ruin America. I hope the connection is plain, if the Bible as a standard of faith is corrupted, then our society is in great peril, as *our* society is so dependent upon the Christian faith. Again this particular faith was a fundamental driving force behind our laws, family organization, education and of our interpretation of and execution of various freedoms. It affects many more aspects of each of our daily lives.

Consider the American Bible Society, in 1952, it distributed and printed 16,001,945 copies of the Bible. Between its founding in 1816 and 1952, it published a total of 422,423,955 volumes of Scripture.¹ It published in 149 languages, and still aspires to publish in every language on earth (currently over 6,900²), and to place a Bible in the home of every human, wealthy as well as destitute. It is supported by over 80 Protestant denominations. Just over 422.4 million Bibles were printed from 1816 to 1952, a staggering amount, yet from 1952 to 2012, a 60 year period the number increased by 5.5 **billion!** This does not include the 500+ million Bibles printed in America by publishers other than the American Bible Society. Currently, about 20 million new Bibles are printed in America each year.

85% of American households own a Bible, with the number of Bibles per household at 4.3. Yet these statistics do not reveal that only 50% of Americans can name any one of the four gospels! 50% of polled Americans think that Sodom and Gomorrah were married. 60% of the polled Americans cannot name five of the 10 commandments! Only about one in four Americans (about 25%) know that the New Testament was originally written in Greek. 21% of Americans think that the Bible is a book of fables. In 2001 42% of polled Americans attended a church service, down from 49% in 1991. In 2001 41% of polled Americans claimed to be “born again Christian”, up from 35% of 1991. Amazingly less than 50% of polled Americans can name the first book of the Bible. 12% of polled Americans think that Noah's wife was Joan of Arc. In the 1980s, 73% of polled Americans read the Bible occasionally, this figure drops to 59% in 2000. (sources: www.Barna.org and the American Bible Society).

The above statistics reveal a trend, one which is almost universally downward as to the appreciation of the Bible in America. Many Bibles are printed, but the percentage of those actually being used is rather low! This decline is especially clear when one looks all the way back to the founding of America. Note this quote from an Election Sermon delivered in 1799:

“If the foundations be destroyed, what can the righteous do”? (Psalm 11:3). Our dangers are of two kinds, those which affect our religion, and those which affect our government. They are, however, so closely allied that they cannot, with propriety, be separated. The foundations which support the interests of Christianity, are also necessary to support a free and equal government like our own. In all those countries where there is little or no religion, or a very gross and corrupt one, as in Mahmetan and Pagan countries, there you will find, with scarcely a single exception, arbitrary and tyrannical governments, gross ignorance and wickedness, and deplorable wretchedness among the people. To the kindly influence of Christianity we owe that degree of civil freedom, and political and social happiness which mankind now enjoy. In proportion as the genuine effects of Christianity are diminished in any nation, either through unbelief, or the corruption of its doctrines, or the neglect of its institutions; in the same proportion will the people of the nation recede from the blessings of genuine freedom, and approximate the miseries of complete despotism...all efforts made to destroy the foundations of our holy religion, ultimately tend to the subversion also of our political freedom and happiness. Whenever the pillars of Christianity shall be overthrown, our present republican forms of government, and all the blessings which flow from them, must fall with them.³

Note “the pillars of Christianity”, which certainly must include the Bible. The above sentiments were the typical views and beliefs of the average citizen in 1799 America.

I personally recall visiting many old preserved classrooms (one room, log cabins - such as at the Klamath Falls Museum in Oregon) and noting that always amongst the maps and reading materials and assignments, the Bible held sway. The Bible was in every classroom.

Certainly before 1881, that Bible which America possessed was the 1611 King James Version (though the Geneva Bible was popular amongst the Pilgrims). For all intents and purposes the text was this standardized edition, that being the 1769 edition of the King James Bible. Across America nearly all sermons sprang from the standard text of the KJV. Bible study was concerned with knowing the Bible, its chronology, its personalities, its main events, its spiritual truths applied to the hearts of the readers. Rarely was time given to some variant reading or deviation. Focus was instead, where it belonged, on what the Bible said. Hence, the result was much spiritual growth, many readers became skilled laymen, knowing well their Scriptures. This knowledge fueled all areas of life in America, and consequently we can see a strong nation, with a vibrant faith. Handshakes sealed agreements, trust and truth were respected values. Marriage and child-rearing were serious endeavors, relations of all sorts were lubricated with the soothing truths elicited from the Scriptures. Our nation glowed. Entire libraries cannot hold all the descriptions of the countless blessings poured down upon these states from God Himself, from agricultural blessings to a land rarely attacked by any outsiders. Peace and freedom, though fought for, was a part of the heritage of being an American. Millions of immigrants from numerous nations strove to begin new lives in the blessed land of opportunity and freedom. Such was the case.

THE CORRUPTION BEGINS

In 1826, three gentlemen, led by Alexander Campbell, produced a new English Bible. Their New Testament text was based upon the Greek text of J. J. Griesbach of 1809/10. The new version was called: *The Sacred Writings of the Apostles and Evangelists of Jesus Christ, Commonly Styled the New Testament*. It remained in print (revised several times) for over a century. It was also the standard version preferred by the Disciples of Christ (or, the Churches of Christ). Its impact was slight, it was practically ignored outside the new, small denomination. Below are a few samples of this new version:

All scripture, given by divine inspiration, is indeed profitable for teaching, for confutation, for correction, for instruction in righteousness. II Timothy 3:16 [what about that/those not given by inspiration?]

For Christ has not sent me to immerse, but to declare the glad tidings: I Corinthians 1:17a

"Death is swallowed up for ever." I Corinthians 15:54b. [one wonders how Campbell came up with this "translation"?]

But the Pharisee was surprised to observe that he used no washing before dinner. Luke 11:38 [this is not that "one baptism" of Ephesians 4:4!]

in which you also are builded together with the Gentiles, for a habitation of God by the Spirit. Ephesians 2:22 [from whence comes "Gentiles"?]

Note the subtle change in II Timothy; "gospel" translated as "glad tidings" in I Corinthians, and "baptize" is "immerse" or "washing". Each term underlined in the quotes from the 1828 edition. Are there

Scriptures not given by divine inspiration? One is left to wonder. In this effort Campbell can be seen projecting his interpretations into his actual translation. In most cases, no notes warn the readers of the subtle and numerous changes.

A small crack. Later in 1881, the crack became noticeable, and was authorized! In 1901, the American Revision Committee produced their carefully revised text. In both the 1881 and 1901 revisions, not only were archaic terms replaced with modern equivalents, but the underlying Greek base was altered. Both efforts were well done, and both present excellent renditions of the texts of Westcott and Hort, as well as Tischendorf. The editors felt justified in claiming that the Greek text of Stephanus of 1550, was inferior, and apparently (to them) a later recension. All in all, the changes were not great! Mark 16 was the most notable, but the standard had been challenged. The standard had been altered, carefully and with all human authority.

Is it merely coincidence that beginning with the cries for revision (which became rather loud in the 1870s+) America herself was entering into a new era? The early 20th century saw innovation after innovation, change after change. In 1914, the gold standard was removed, just after the creation of the Federal Reserve Act of 1913. Work was viewed as an eight hour day with longer hours receiving "overtime" pay, in 1916. Women were allowed to vote, circa 1920. Newspapers and magazines gain prominence and affected wide audiences, as well as touching upon many civil and legal issues (such as conditions in packing houses - which led to the "Pure Food and Drugs Act" of circa 1905. Education expanded, and in 1900 about 89% of the population in America could read and write, by 1930 the number increased to 96%.⁴

Prohibition, establishment of Federal lands, the radio becoming a vast public tool of communication, entrance into a league of nations, money and vast finance reforms all sprouted and took root in America in the early 20th century. Change was in the air. Social security, the Civilian Conservations Corps, veterans benefits, the explosion of labor unions followed with the roaring of the 20s, all saw vast changes while at the same time the national debt was greatly increased and new deals were the talk of the day.

In the background, the standard of Biblical truth was being contorted, was being violated by numerous entrepreneurs. The Bible too needed to match the prestige of America's new momentum. Such a wonderful glorious object as America surely must have a Bible to keep pace with its national grandeur, its imminence amongst the nations of this earth. After the door was opened in 1901, many new translations were produced by all sorts of folks, often by individuals or small groups—often without any type of national consensus, or official oversight.

Some standards must change. The legal use and restrictions of various radio frequencies, for example, has seen numerous changes as a result of emerging technologies and security purposes. Speed limits in various states saw increases as a pace of 50 mph was just too slow. Building codes and electrical codes see careful changes; via Unicode the standard keyboard for character input has been greatly expanded. Yet there are also a multitude of standards which should not change. For example MOHS hardness scale cannot change. The speed of light cannot change, the color spectrum and its naming scheme can grow but the primary attributes cannot change.

When one examines our society, one may look for absolutes, those features which define us as a people. Our faith is always one of the main characteristics, as it is with any society. The degree, depth and devotion to a faith, impact almost every other aspect of our society. As demonstrated above, our faith is foundational to our society, it is one of our pillars. In America that faith is largely Bible based (though that is diminishing). As mentioned, changes to this standard of faith can have tremendous side effects - affecting politics, education, medicine, families, work, the legal system, the military, recreation, music, and even technology. Every area of life in which humans must think and interact with others. Therein, in some degree or other, lies faith.

PROTECTING THE STANDARD (or, LIFE WITHOUT STANDARDS)

Yes, the 1611 Biblical text is full of archaic terms, obsolete terms and awkward constructions. In the case of Greek verb tenses, errors are even observed. Yet this glorious standard has been a standard for over 400 years. To some folks it remains the standard. However as noted, in the 1800s cries for revision were becoming loud. And in 1901 the floodgates were opened in America. Unregulated change, careless efforts commingled with serious endeavors. America was filled with English versions. Gone was the standard, or at least the fact of a single existing standard. In place of the standard, uncertainty stood. A slow

chronic depression began to inundate America. Slowly, we begin to see anxiety in every community, dread, anticipation of some fearful judgment, an expectation of some vast catastrophe. Confidence melted, families fractured, education became a vain endeavor to achieve something but the goals were lost in misty and vague futures. Banks, lending institutions, large corporations all saw despair on the horizon, each put on a face, a facade to cover the fear, the anxiety. The feeling of security was disemboweled.

The Bible as a standard should not have been altered. It should have not changed, it could have been improved but in a completely different manner than what has happened at the slaughterhouse of rationalism. But, it was changed. Many of the side effects just mentioned are a result, in my mind of this unfortunate change. Others may put forth other notions as to why this country has fallen to its present level, other reasons why this country has become a land void of conviction, void of assurance. Ambiguity does not serve well as a stable footing. Fluctuation and relativism are not solid bases of strength. The once infallible has fallen, along with our national countenance.

Biblical textual critics, those behind-the-scenes manipulators, have all sorts of reasons as to why the standard was changed. One of their most common excuses is that we now possess older Greek manuscripts from Egypt, and the Egyptian manuscripts present a better text, in their minds. Never mind that Egypt was then full of magicians and sorcerers of every stripe, never mind that only a handful of ancient manuscripts support their proposed deviations, Never mind the reality that Christendom has rejected these Egyptian aberrations for centuries. Instead, lets create an industry! Let us make

hundreds of competing versions. Let us experiment with language and see what we can do to this once revered standard. Lets make money while we are at it! And thus, fueled by the carnal appetites of the naive, the changes proliferated. That vague, eclectic Egyptian text generated version after version, always looking down at the standard of 1611.

We could have kept the standard pure, we could have put proposed changes in margins or footnotes (and indeed this has been done in some very respectable publications). Thus protecting our sanity, our standard. But no, humanism had to assert itself, it shouldered its way into the text, like a bear chasing a mouse in a greenhouse, chaos erupted.

The New KJV (NKJV) has introduced some objectionable changes (for example the “in/of” alteration in Galatians 2:16), and thus it is too vacillating too inconsistent, to serve as the standard.

In closing, I trust that readers realize that I am not advocating the 1611 KJV as the best of all English translations. It has lots of room for improvement. It does reflect fairly well that Greek text-type which Erasmus demonstrated, which was the text for Stephanus of 1550 (the \aleph). This same Greek text of the \aleph was that which served the church from A.D. 600 unto the text of Griesbach in the 1800s. The Egyptian Greek text which was created in Egypt, is well represented by the 1901 ASV, the 1952 RSV, the 1971 NASB and the 2001 ESV. In essence we have two competing text-types, generating basically two streams of English versions. One being the \aleph based translations (the KJV, NKJV, and the *Orthodox Study Bible*); and the other being that minority text of Egypt which stands behind the above named versions (ASV, RSV,

NASB, ESV). Though I advocate we would be best served if we had one—that is, one primary standard—being, of course, not the stream emanating from the Egyptian creation, but rather that single text from the 38. Because of the position of the KJV over the last 400 years, in America, (and indeed in all of the English speaking nations) and because it has already served so well as a master standard, (recall the IGNTP of Luke!) the 1611 KJV version receives my vote, it should remain the single standard. We are not served with two competing standards. Again, the 1611 KJV should serve as the master template, it should serve as that single standard. Let other texts *compare* to it, but do not alter it, it should have remained that unalterable lemma. In this arena of faith, ambiguity produces instability. It is this instability which has devastated the foundation of our faith, it has generated the widespread uncertainty, the doubts, the confusion as to what our Bible says. The PERCEPTION of stability is gone, even if it was/is just a perception, it possessed great stabilizing properties. No more. It appears too late for our once standard Biblical text to remain as such. The battle has been compromised. The standard has been polluted, irreversibly. And we in America are reaping the fruits, we are sailing without an anchor or rudder. The only direction which we have been convinced is correct, hovers around the ridiculous shout of “Change”, we must have change. Indeed. Already many Americans realize that we lack leadership, we are losing our standards. Without the staid authority, without leadership, leadership in all areas of our lives, we Americans are easy prey for a coming world ruler, the man with the answers, or so we think. The stage is set, “O great leader, wherefore art thou”?

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