November 30, 2012

A Divided America

By Lloyd Phillips

We are a divided nation to be sure. An uncivil war is being waged against what is true and just in our land. Those exact things which made America the envy of the world and allowed for more people to prosper and reach for their potential than any nation in the history of mankind are being attacked and uprooted.

We continue through a period of history described in the book of Isaiah chapter five.

Isaiah 5:20-23: "Woe to those who call evil good, and good evil; Who put darkness for light, and light for darkness; Who put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter! Woe to those who are wise in their own eyes, And prudent in their own sight! Woe to men mighty at drinking wine, Woe to men valiant for mixing intoxicating drink, who justify the wicked for a bribe, And take away justice from the righteous man!"

Honestly, I thought we might have had a respite, if only temporarily, had the election gone differently. However, we did not see a change in direction and we will therefore continue to see justice delayed and godliness mocked and attacked. As Christians we must learn to remain in God’s peace regardless of circumstances and our situation, for, as we persevere, we will actually grow into the character of Christ.

Romans 5:1-4: "Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom also we have access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God. And not only that, but we also glory in tribulations, knowing that tribulation produces perseverance; and perseverance, character; and character, hope."

As evil exercises its power at the highest levels of government, Israel will be pressed even more to make concessions for “peace” with her enemies. As the US government pressures to divide Israel, more pressure will come upon America to be divided. Currently we are very divided in opinion, but pressure to divide the land will
increase. By this I mean physically - pressure from the physical earth, as well as geo-politically.

It is no coincidence that the day after the election petitions from groups in various states began to be submitted to the Whitehouse to peacefully be allowed to leave the union and set up their own independent national government. The number of these petitions continued to increase and now there are petitions from all fifty states. To date no state legislature has petitioned to secede, but there will be increasing pressure from various places both within and without, from both the left and the right to divide the nation. But not in ways many now think.

Petitions to secede are nothing new, beginning early in the republic when New England considered secession in 1814 in opposition to the War of 1812. There is no doubt that the founders considered association in the Union voluntary and mutual, as a right of the States, freely entered into with other States and freely could leave. Daniel Webster said, “If the States were not left to leave the Union when their rights were interfered with, the government would have been National, but the Convention refused to baptize it by that name.”

More recently the Montana Legislature voted on a legal brief which was submitted to the Supreme Court of the United States concerning the District of Columbia V. Heller case. This was the landmark 2008 case which ruled on the argument over the second amendment being an individual right or a collective right. The Montana State constitution reads in part, “The right of any person to keep or bear arms in defense of his own home, person, and property, or in aid of the civil power when thereto legally summoned, shall not be called in question ...” The brief stated that when Montana was accepted into the Union of States in 1889 it was clearly understood and agreed upon that his was an individual right and should the Supreme Court rule in any other fashion the compact with Montana and the United States would automatically be broken. Any constitutional crises was averted at that time as the Court ruled that the right to keep and bear arms was an individual right.

Almost everyone is aware of the tremendous pressure placed upon the nation to divide over ideology during the time of the American Civil War. There were great forces, both within and without, pressuring the nation to divide. Much of this pressure came from Europe and the great powers there. What few people realize is the effect Russia had upon protecting the union of the United States through threatening those very forces that desired the breakup of America.

European governmental powers and princes, especially in England and France in the banking industry, saw that the increasing power of the United States in America was increasingly a roadblock to their global agenda of consolidating power under a ruling elite.

Great Britain was working to divide the nation from across the border in Canada. The French were working through Mexico and even the Vatican was seeking to exercise authority in the mostly Protestant nation through the Pope’s center in Baltimore,
Maryland, not far from the nation's capitol.

Russian Tsar Alexander II understood that the division of America and the resultant power conglomerate would be a threat to the entire world. He actually sent the Russian naval fleet to America to support the Union forces in the blockade of weapons shipments from Britain to the Confederacy.

Due to what is today known as the Trent affair, America even considered war with Britain. This actually might have made the division of the United States more likely and President Lincoln defused the situation diplomatically. However, support again came from a most unlikely direction as Tsar Alexander II threatened war with either or both England and France should either nation attempt to influence the division of the United States. Not wanting to risk war with Russia, neither country openly did more than send “observers” to the field of battle.

Since Barack Obama was elected to the Office of President in 2008 many who immigrated to the US from the former Soviet Union have been speaking out about what is happening in America. The creeping socialism and tyranny being released is particularly disturbing to them. Since the recent election even more immigrants from the former Soviet bloc are speaking out, and, I believe, this will increase as the actions of this administration become more alarming. Some of these men and women may truly become watchmen in America sounding the alarm for the rest of the population, many of whom seem to be asleep to the dangers. In fact, much is made of immigrants coming to America for perceived handouts. I believe we are going to see a powerful force made up from first and second generation immigrants who want to save the Union and pressure a return to the roots and foundations which have made America so desirable to so many for so long.

For a number of years there have been warnings from Russian diplomats that the United States will certainly be divided into a number of different nations before too long. Some of this is “sour grapes” as the policies of the United States and Britain united most certainly hastened the breakup of the Soviet Union. But the Union of Soviet Socialist States was not a union of free and independent states willingly joined into a federal system whereby there were certain well defined rights retained by the states and the people and certain well defined duties to be exercised by the federal government. The USSR was an empire of conquest and held together while they could through forced compliance.

We are a divided nation, and as our Federal government pressures to divide Israel, more pressure will come upon America to be divided. As our government continues to promote social values which are divergent from the values of major parts of society, pressure will increase upon the nation to be divided. As the Federal government increases the burden upon many in the land to redistribute private property to others it will become increasingly possible that this country will be divided. God himself divided the land of Israel (2 Chronicles 11:4) because of the heavy burden of governmental abuses and high taxes of King Rehoboam.
However, in spite of all this, I do not think the United States will be divided. Ben Franklin’s adage is applicable today, if not literally as it was in his day, “We must all hang together, or assuredly we shall all hang separately.”

While those who are signing petitions to be allowed to succeed may be venting legitimate frustration, they certainly are misguided in their efforts. First, no individual or group of individuals has authority to speak on behalf of a State. The elected representatives must do that. How powerful is the authority of a group that must ask for permission to do anything? The simple act of asking for permission shows subordinate status. The Declaration of Independence called the States “Free and Independent States.” They did not ask for permission, they simply stated to the world what they were going to do and why. They let King George and the rest of the world know that they “absolved from all allegiance to, or dependence upon, the Crown or Parliament of Great Britain.” Asking for permission only shows the dependence upon government that too many Americans have come to accept.

While it was clear that Abraham Lincoln’s paramount goal was to preserve the Union, the secession of Southern States was not the official cause of the war. It officially began when Federal troops refused to be disarmed and leave the site of Fort Sumter in Charleston Harbor. As a similar note, the American Revolutionary War began when the citizens of Lexington and Concord refused to be disarmed. Things have changed since the end of the Civil War and in 1868 the Supreme Court ruled in Texas v. White that States lacked the power to unilaterally secede from the Union. As recently as 2006 Alaska’s Supreme Court ruled that secession was illegal.

This is not to say that the question will not remain or even be discussed more openly as frustrations increase with the overbearing bureaucracy of the Federal government. It is even possible that the current round of secessionist petitions were begun, not by secessionists, but by those who want to increase the Federal government’s power. For, if those who are most concerned about the current direction of the government can be drawn away from constructive purposes into unproductive activities, then those whom they are opposing do in fact have more freedom to advance their agendas. In a worst case scenario, should such a secessionist movement get out of hand from their perspective, an overbearing government could consider the activities insurrection and declare martial law, something many have been suggesting is a distinct possibility.

Rather than engaging in talk of disuniting the States, we must unite to correct the problems currently facing the nation. The Federal government was created by the States and the States still have the power to alter, abolish or reign in the Federal Government. The U.S. Constitution 10th amendment states, “The powers not delegated to the United States by the Constitution, nor prohibited by it to the States, are reserved to the States respectively, or to the people.”

Many believe that there are no problems facing this nation today that cannot be corrected by simply returning to the checks, balances, and limitations provided for us in
the U.S. Constitution. We have gotten away from the Constitution by neglecting it and in many cases that neglect has occurred through outright hostility to it. One effective means of abuse is the so called “living constitution” interpretation. This interpretation is that the Constitution means what is agreed upon by those interpreting it with little regard to what is actually written, or what was meant by those who wrote it, understood by those who ratified it, or entered into compact with other States. Judge James Wilson, signer of the Declaration of Independence said, “The first and governing maxim in the interpretation of a statute is to discover the meaning of those who made it.” (Of the Study of Law in the United States, 1790). U.S. Supreme Court Justice Antonin Scalia said, “The constitution is not a living document it is a legal document.” (University of Montana Lecture Sept 24, 2008).

If the legal documents were treated as “living” and changeable at will, contract law would be meaningless. If our constitution is “living” and changeable at all it is because of the wisdom of our forefathers who made the Constitution changeable by amendments agreed upon by the States.

U.S. Constitution Article V. “The Congress, whenever two thirds of both Houses shall deem it necessary, shall propose Amendments to this Constitution, or, on the Application of the Legislatures of two thirds of the several States, shall call a Convention for proposing Amendments, which, in either Case, shall be valid to all Intents and Purposes, as Part of this Constitution, when ratified by the Legislatures of three fourths of the several States, or by Conventions in three fourths thereof, as the one or the other Mode of Ratification may be proposed by the Congress...”

There are different means contained here by which the Constitution may be amended. Both houses of the U.S. Congress by a two-thirds super majority vote may propose an amendment and send it to the States for ratification - three-fourths of the state legislatures must approve it, or ratifying conventions in three-fourths of the States must approve it. Amendments so approved bypass the President of the United States and do not require his signature. The other method is for two-thirds of the state legislatures to ask Congress to call a national convention to propose amendments. This is considered the “nuclear option” by many and this method has never been used.

However, the more abusive the Federal government becomes to the rights of the States and of the people the more this option is likely to be discussed. Certainly a “constitutional convention” would be a scary proposition today with all the various forces and pressures which would be brought to bear upon all participants. However, if a proposed amendment, perhaps a balanced budget amendment, a marriage amendment, or a repeal of the 16th amendment, were agreed to beforehand, two-thirds of the state legislatures could agree to this wording and the national convention could be limited only to this vote. Neither the president nor congress would have any conditional authority to protest.

While I do not suspect this will happen any time soon, the likelihood of it occurring may increase as the situations being dealt with become more grave. This would be an act
of unity and authority, not of disunity and weakness.

I do not think the danger today is one of dividing the nation as much as devaluing the rights and power of the States. I think there is more danger of a usurpation of State authority by the Federal government creating a regional government and thus usurping state government’s authority. United we have more power to stand than divided. It is very likely that there will be a clash of power between the States and the Federal government. Our battle is not one of left v. right but of tyranny v. liberty. Unfortunately, it may be the increasing threat to state authority that causes them to unite and correct the overreaching Federal government than was created by the States. But it is by the States and people uniting that this will be accomplished, not by division.

Galatians 5:1: “Stand fast therefore in the liberty by which Christ has made us free, and do not be entangled again with a yoke of bondage.”

Lloyd C. Phillips, Director
The Fellow Laborers’ International Network (FLInt Net)
P.O. Box 113 Missoula, MT 59806
Phone (406) 251-5730
impact@flintnet.org
http://www.flintnet.org
http://www.lloydphillips.org
Books & Conference Media Sets

http://www.morningstarministries.org/events/morningstar-conferences/new-years-conference-0#.UKKzV-RZX-Y

http://www.freemorningstargift.com/subscribe.html

http://www.theoakinitiative.org/catalog/oak-initiative-memberships

http://www.theoakinitiative.org/content/oak-donation