"When A Christian Nation Forgets God"

Lutzer's Second Thesis: When God is removed from government, the economy usually suffers or even collapses.

In the march toward Naziism of the 1920s and 1930s, economic collapse became fuel for the rise of fascism and the spirit of antichrist. The era was marked by chaos, vandalism, violence, theft, loss of property, personal freedoms, and destruction of worship sites. The noble citizens of Germany became angry. They were angry primarily at a government that had promised them so much, but could not afford to deliver much of anything. So, they printed more money, and the money became virtually useless. Someone asked me, "What is it about gold and silver that makes it more and more valuable?" The truth is that gold does not really get more valuable, the rise in gold prices indicate that printed currency is getting less and less valuable!

There is a story set about the time of Hitler's rise. A man went into a baker's shop with a wheelbarrow full of money. When he went to fetch his "millions" to pay for his bread, he found the money scattered on the sidewalk, but the wheelbarrow had been stolen! The story is probably just a legend, but similar things did happen because the ultimate end of this type of collapse is that currency loses its value.

America caught a much milder glimpse of this manifested through the Stock Market Crash of 1929 and the unemployment and runaway inflation of the 1930s. President Roosevelt made it illegal to possess gold as a private citizen. Although Richard Nixon made gold a public commodity again during his first term, America's economy has never been quite the same.

Nazi Germany teaches us a frightening truth: people are usually willing to trade their freedoms for the gift of survival. When England broke into riots over economic distress in the 1980s, Margaret Thatcher remembered a maxim of history: "The veneer of civilization is very thin."

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Lutzer's contention is that Hitler rose to power on the back of false currency promises. Judgment had come to Germany, first in the churches, then in the banks and stock markets. "Hyperinflation is usually associated with wars, economic depressions, and political and social upheavals. It is {also} associated with governments that artificially create wealth to extend the benefits of the state to a populace in crisis. We call it 'quantitative easing.'"

Prices literally changed by the hour. A university student in the 1920s ordered a cup of coffee priced at 5,000 marks (German currency). He ordered a second cup and saw that his total bill was 14,000 Marks. When complaining that a second cup of coffee cost more than the first, he was advised by the waiter, "If you want to save money and you want two cups of coffee, you should order both of them at the same time."

Tracing Germany's path, Lutzer made other observations:

1. At the height of the inflationary cycle, the people cried out for someone to end the madness. In the 1950s, European political leader Paul Henri Spaak said, "[Give us a man who can bring peace, end war, and feed us] and be he a god or a devil, we will follow him!" Hitler would use democracy as a ladder, then crush it once he gained control.
2. By manipulating the financial system and creating fiat currency, he was able to miraculously keep Germany moving forward, but it was only a house of cards.
3. Individual responsibility was replaced by government programs. "As long as the economy was strong, people didn't care whether they had freedom of speech, freedom of travel or freedom of elections. Bread on the table was more important than a ballot in a voting booth."
4. With this new dependency on government, the people did not recoil at the stated aim of the Nazi Party to destroy the foundations of Christianity. "National Socialism and Christianity are irreconcilable."
5. "Given a choice, most people probably will choose bread and sausage above individual liberties. As always, it was the economy that became the number one concern on the minds of the disillusioned German people." And a collapsed economy would generate both fear and evil in German society. "Anything Goes!"

Remember the words of Benjamin Franklin: "Any society that would give up a little liberty to gain a little security will deserve neither and lose both."

In our next installment, we will discuss Lutzer's Third Thesis: Things long recognized as evil suddenly become acceptable and legal.

I love you,
Pastor Stephen