

The Word's Eye View

The Word's Eye View is a newspaper column written by
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Back To The Dirt (Article 21)

Being a bit of a news junky, I try to stay up with current events and then interpret them in the light of Biblical truth. Regularly I find myself reflecting on the sagging economy, massive bailouts that appear to be out of control, homosexuals protesting the obvious will of the people, solutions to our energy difficulties, the wheres and hows of potential terrorist attacks, our nation at war on two different fronts, the activities of a Congress with an incredibly low approval rating and how the new president is going to perform.

While driving to town the other day I was mulling over some of these topics, and frankly, the accumulation of these thoughts was building toward a sense of depression. Somewhere on that dirt road I encountered a vehicle, the driver waved, and I responded accordingly. It was one of those two or three finger waves where the appendages are slightly lifted off the steering wheel. It's the dirt road code of conduct, making it easy to identify city visitors because they don't know how it's done. It requires little effort but speaks volumes. The suggestion is: I'm your neighbor; I may live ten miles from you, but if you're in a ditch, I will stop and help. Or peradventure you are caught in a blizzard, we will put you up. That briefest encounter brought a Scripture verse to mind which says, "Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things." Philippians 4:8 In an attempt to obey the passage, my musing shifted to dirt. I wondered why these little indicators of civility conclude when we hit the pavement. The only wave encountered on the freeway is one of road rage.

It cannot be a coincidence that people who live and make their living on and from the soil are generally more conservative in life and values than their city cousins. Dirt is necessary—it reaches beyond the asphalt, the synthetic, the plastic and colored lights; there is something real about it. By necessity, the agriculturist learns patience as he waits for crops to grow or calves and colts to mature. He is not nearly as likely to be infected with the credit card disease that demands the immediate acquisition of all the material goods that Madison Avenue advertises. When and if he does purchase something new and shiny, it probably won't be an object of worship. We have city relatives who will not visit us for fear of dust collection on their automobiles.

Over the years I have heard of several teen boys who were sent to their uncles' farms or ranches to be re-educated concerning their behavior, but I can't recall one occasion where the country kid was sent to the city for the same. The prodigal son left his rural home in search of the high life, but when he came to his senses he returned to his roots.

The preacher stands at the head of the coffin in the cemetery and says, "From dust thou art, to dust thou shall return." In the end all of the political intrigue, maneuvering, protesting, debating and fighting will return to the dust.

There must be a higher purpose in this abbreviated journey called life than what is on the evening news.

Several years ago I was visiting a rancher friend in Texas. One fine morning we toured a portion of his ranch on horseback inspecting fences and cattle along the way. Our conversation included world events, problems and possible solutions. When we came to a gate he dismounted to open it and reached to the ground to grasp a handful of dirt. He looked at me and said, "Preacher, the problem with America is we are too many generations removed from this stuff." And with that, he allowed the dirt to slowly filter through his opened fingers. It was the testimony of the soil, and all I have is going back to it with the exception of what I gain spiritually.