

The Word's Eye View

The Word's Eye View is a newspaper column written by
Dr. James Modlish

"The Good Old Days" (Article 24)

For decades, if not centuries, the major media has maximized gloom and doom while minimizing good news. Perhaps they have simply capitalized upon a human instinct that gravitates to the grim more than the cheery. We have in recent days been inundated with a constant barrage of evil tidings concerning the economy, wars, terrorism, and job losses. I, for one, would like to see all these negatives disappear because of my personal indulgences in creature comforts. But peradventure events continue to run on a downhill slide at train wreck speed, we must for sanity's sake seek the silver lining in the clouds of despair. Please tolerate my miscellaneous ramblings as I consider some possible positives.

Growing up in the late forties and fifties, my generation was subjected to a long string of stories concerning the Great Depression of which my parents were survivors. The difficult times and learning to make do with little or nothing was frequently emphasized. The creativity that was often utilized simply in an effort to put food on the table was under appreciated by my peers and me. As I grew older I began to recognize that this reminiscing encased a rough cut diamond that demanded a regular re-visiting by the participants of that economic devastation. It has often been said that necessity is the mother of invention. Neighbors would get together on summer evenings to make homemade ice cream. Poverty dictated that one batch was the result of many contributors; one family provided the sugar, one the cream, etc. Family, friends and neighbors would collaborate to gather wood and coal for the winter stoves, cooperate in large summer gardens and share the fruit and labor in canning fruits, vegetables, and jellies. Sauerkraut, meats and sausages were preserved in almost communal efforts. By my teen years prosperity had returned to America, but it seemed to me that my elders clung to a distant longing for the old days. To be sure, it wasn't for the hardships, but rather for the human bonds and relationships that were forged on the anvil of travail.

Would it be the worst of tragedies if society would once again be forced to invest itself in others instead of things. A recent list of desires submitted by children to Santa appeared in the Pueblo Chieftain. I submit a sampling: pixos, Ds games, purple iPod, webkinz, Rock Band 2 for the Wii, Batman toys, lazar battle set by Havic Hell, Bakugun starter kit, Nintendo D.S., xBox 360 Halo. To Be honest, I have no idea what most of these things are, but what I did notice is that there was not one ball glove, basketball or pig skin on the list. Those items create a necessity for other human involvement or, God forbid, an activity outside. Is our culture really moving in the right direction?

Most people in our locale wear an inexpensive article of clothing merely referred to as blue jeans. These would not be available in abundance were it not for Eli Whitney who perceived that cotton must be separated from its seed in a mass production fashion. The difficulty of doing it by hand was too tedious and time consuming. In 1793 at the age of twenty-seven he took ten days to design and build a machine (the cotton gin) to overcome the obstacle. The gin revolutionized the economy of the South as farmers began to grow cotton in large amounts. If politicians and intrusive government regulations would move aside, the American genius would actually overcome

our energy dependency on foreign oil. We can hope that sufficient difficulties will foster a climate for real change!

American history indicates that only a world war or massive economic depression instigates a genuine desire for spiritual revival. Church attendance always plummets in times of prosperity. There are a few of us “twisted” Christians that actually believe that an economic collapse would be worth the anguish if this nation would seek God. Evangelism, fine as it is, is not revival. After a significantly successful meeting, Billy Graham was asked, “Is this revival?” Graham replied, “No. When revival comes, I expect to see two things which we have not seen yet. First, a new sense of the holiness of God on the part of Christians, and second, a new sense of the sinfulness of sin on the part of Christians.” We might add a third and closely related indication of revival: a new working of the Holy Spirit in the local church. Why? For two big reasons, among others. First, because the Word of God calls for it, and second, because the world challenge calls for it.

It has been said that everyone is entitled to his opinion. This is God’s:

“If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways: then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land.” II Chronicles 7:14