

CRIBB<S> NOTE - JUNE 13, 2010

There is something terribly wrong with the notion of corporations receiving the same rights and protection as human beings. Yet, that is happening right now in the United States and around the world. Big businesses often operate with antipersonnel policies while existing under the protective cover of 'personhood'. Real people are hurt by companies that place a higher priority on profit than on human life. It is legal but wrong-headed.

Idolatry and injustice share the same values. They are acts against God and neighbor. They place the 'corporate bottom line' above the welfare of workers and the living conditions of citizens and residents. As a result, all of us are witnessing the erosion of civil discourse and the corruption of commerce.

Evidence of practices that disregard the sanctity of life and the environment is found in the Gulf of Mexico where oil gushes from the sea floor. We have seen it along New York's Love Canal, the Mississippi River coursing through Louisiana, and Ohio's Cuyahoga River. Toxic waste and the dumping of carcinogenic materials clogged those waterways and poisoned marine and human life.

We need not look across the country for the harm committed by corporate injustice and society's indulgence with idolatry. Right here in Southern California, we have experienced the blight raging through communities as homes and small businesses are closing in the wake of financial shenanigans and inappropriate sub-prime lending practices.

Families have been routed into the streets and workers have been rendered jobless in an economy teetering on the brink of collapse. Amid the suffering remains a cadre of corporate executives whose compensation packages exceed the payrolls of their employees. It is shameful, wrong, and sinful. It is idolatrous and unjust. It is happening right in front of our eyes.

This is a moment that requires a true assessment of our beliefs. It really doesn't matter what we say about our faith. Our actions speak loudly enough. Silent acquiescence is sufficient assent to godless and inhumane conduct. Once we are aware of the negative impact caused by corporate and societal tolerance of evil, we are required to decide where we stand. There is no middle ground; compromise is not an option. We are either on the side of God, neighborly love, and justice, or we are saddled with the forces of false gods and death-inducing activities.

If this analysis seems harsh, consider the consequences of allowing injustice to continue without challenge. Nobody is exempt from the reach of unabated vulgarities. Our very souls are at risk because of the perpetual assaults against Creation. Our communities are fractured by the insensitive mistreatment of people residing among us. We cannot escape the inevitable effect bad behaviors will have on our lives and relationships.

The Biblical prophet Micah provides wise instruction, "God has told you, human, what is good; and what does God require of you but to do justice, love kindness, and walk humbly." (Micah 6:8)

Therein lies the answer to what we must do to correct the direction things are going. We can ill afford to wait and see how these matters will turn out. Our failure to change course will descend us into a pitiful state of regret and remorse. Then, however, it will be too late.

Now is the time to turn toward God with contrite hearts and a clear resolve to do justice and act with loving kindness, if humanity is to be saved and Creation restored.

-Pastor Art Cribbs