Divine Directives for America's Dilemma

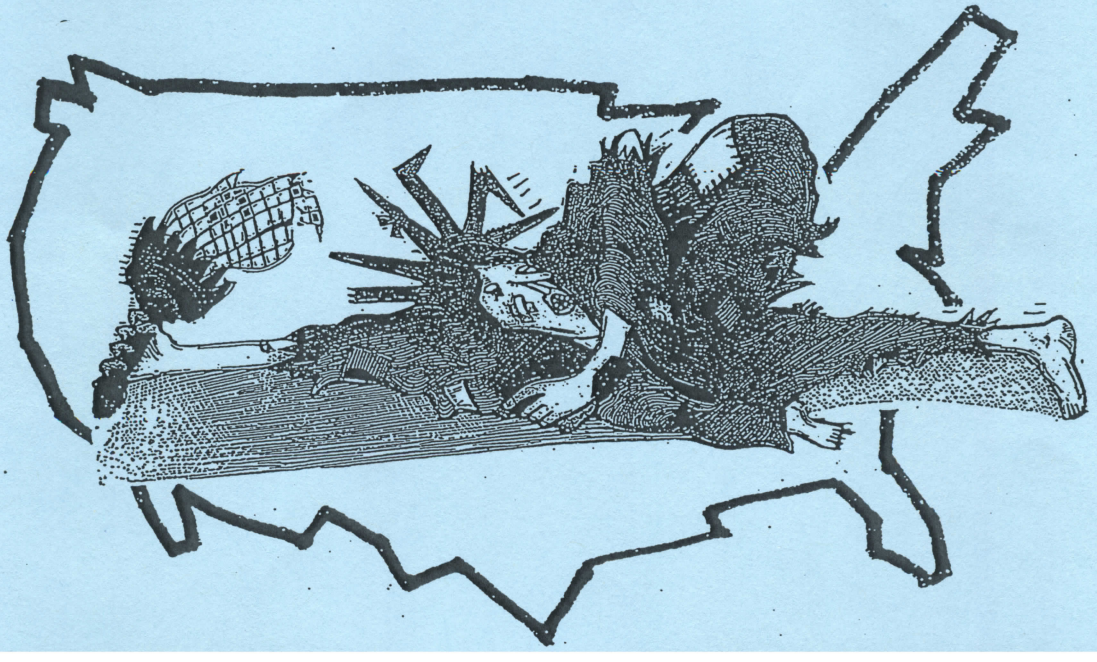
OR



How Can We Help America?

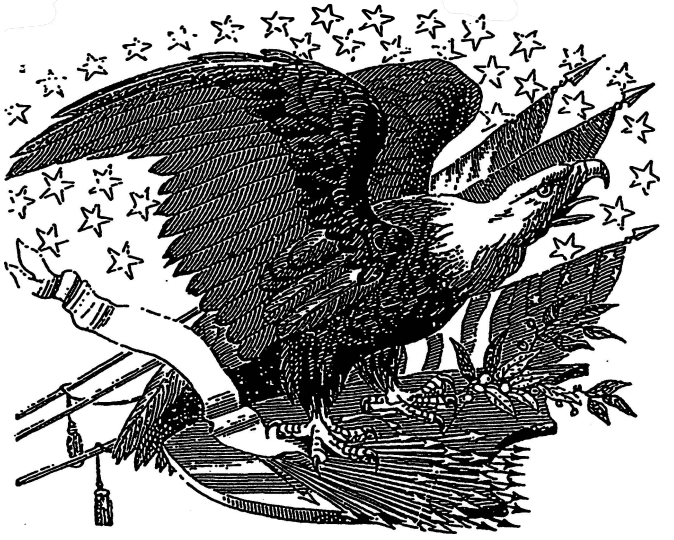
by being...

1. Informed Individuals
2. Discerning Disciples
3. Praying Patriots
4. Committed Citizens
5. Spiritual Saints



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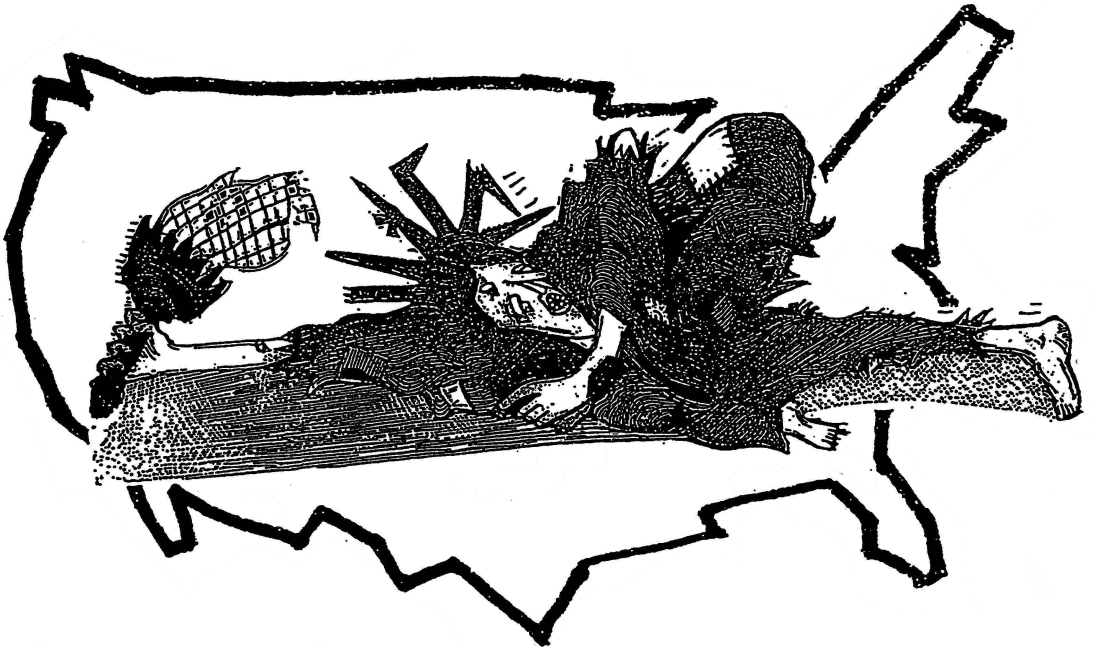
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How Can We Help America?

by being...

1. Informed Individuals
2. Discerning Disciples
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1A. **INFORMED INDIVIDUALS:**

1 Chronicles 12:22,32:
"For at that time day by day there came to David to help him, until it was a great host, like the host of God.
And of the Children of Issachar, which were men that had understanding of the times, to know what Israel ought to do; the heads of them were two hundred; and all their brethren were at their commandment."

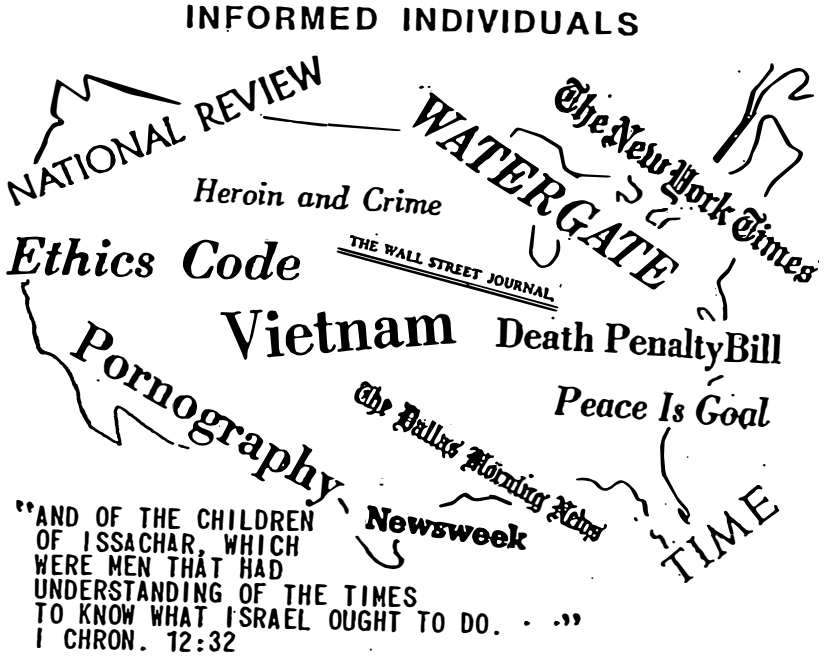
1b. A Comprehension of the Condition:

God has reserved forever a place of honor in His Word for the men of Issachar, who were ideal citizens. They understood the religious and political situation of their nation. They were not so heavenly minded to be any earthly good. Saul, the first king of Israel, had forfeited his rule and David had been anointed by Samuel to be his successor. The leaders of Issachar understood the issues involved and risked their lives to change their allegiance from Saul to David. Their vote was not with at the ballot box but with their feet.

The believer is a citizen of two kingdoms, the Kingdom of God and the Kingdom of Caesar, with responsibilities to both (Matt. 12:21; Mark 12:17, Luke 20:25).

2b. The Courage of One's Convictions:

These 200 leaders were men who knew the conditions of Israel and were willing to side with David, a more spiritual and suitable leader than Saul, though it might cost them dearly. The believer is called upon to align himself with leaders who will best further the cause of righteousness (Rom. 13:7). We in the USA have the privilege of electing our leaders. Only an informed person can make an intelligent choice. Reading a variety of newspapers and magazines and analyzing the issues facing America is not carnal as some have suggested. It enables American believers to make informed choices, whether it is the protection of the life of unborn children or the liberation of nations enslaved by tyrants (Gen. 14:20).



2A. DISCERNING DISCIPLES:

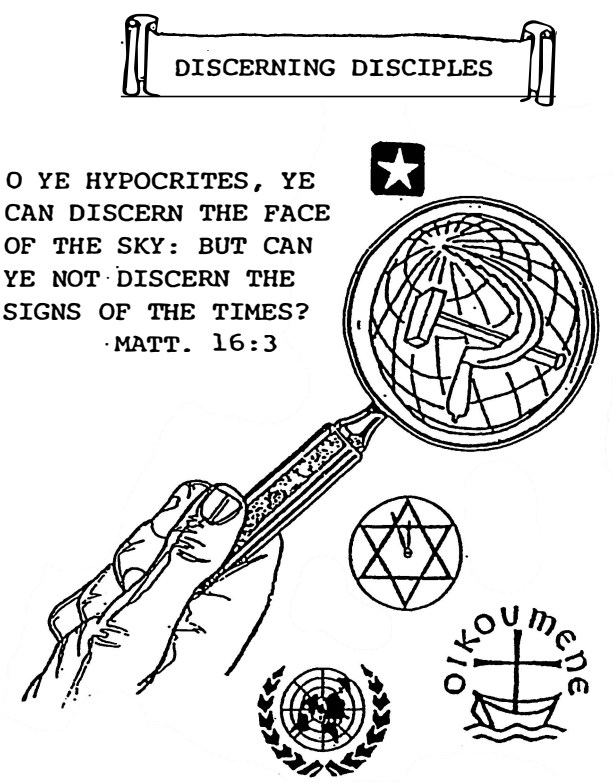
Matthew 16:1-4
"The Pharisees also with the Sadducees came, and tempting desired him that he would show them a sign from heaven.
He answered and said unto them, When it is evening, ye say, It will be fair weather: for the sky is red.
And in the morning, It will be foul weather to day: for the sky is red and lowering.
O ye hypocrites, ye can discern the face of the sky: but can ye not discern the signs of the times?
A wicked and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign; and there shall no sign be given unto it, but the sign of the prophet Jonas. And he left them and departed."

1b. An Alertness to the Signs:

Christ criticized the religious leaders of His day, and indirectly His disciples, for their tragic inability to discern the signs of the times. They should have inferred from them that the fullness of time had come (Gal. 4:4), that the long-promised Messiah was in their midst. The Old Testament predictions were specific enough concerning the first advent of the Son of God. He would be of the human race (Gen. 3:15), of the nation of Israel (Gen. 22:18), of the Tribe of Judah (Gen. 49:!0), of the family of David (2 Sam. 7:12ff) of which only one person would qualify, a virgin (Isaiah 7:14), who would give birth to the Messiah in Bethlehem (Micah 5:2) sometime before A.D. 32, the date predicted as the time of Christ's death (Daniel 9:26).

2b. An Anticipation of the Savior:

The believer today sometimes reacts with fear rather than with faith at the portentous events shaping up in the world. Signs of the times abound that the coming of the Lord may be near. Among the more prominent signs which could be listed are: (1) the establishment of the nation of Israel, (2) the existence of the European Union, (3) the emergence of the ecumenical movement, with an effort toward the union of all churches, (4) the efforts of Russia as expressed to once again become a world power, (5) the exertion of China which aims to become the military superpower on earth, and (6) the endeavors of the UNO to become a one-world government. These developments will find their culmination in the Tribulation, after the Rapture. The fact that we see the commencement of these events before the Rapture, though they will not climax until after the Rapture, leads a discerning disciple to the conclusion that the Lord's coming may be very close. Rather than being terrified by Russia, China or world events, we should be fortified in our faith. Not the end of the world but the coming of the Lord is next on God's prophetic program.



3A. PRAYING PATRIOTS

I Timothy 2:1,2:
"I exhort therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men:
For kings, and for all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty."

1b. Prayer for America:

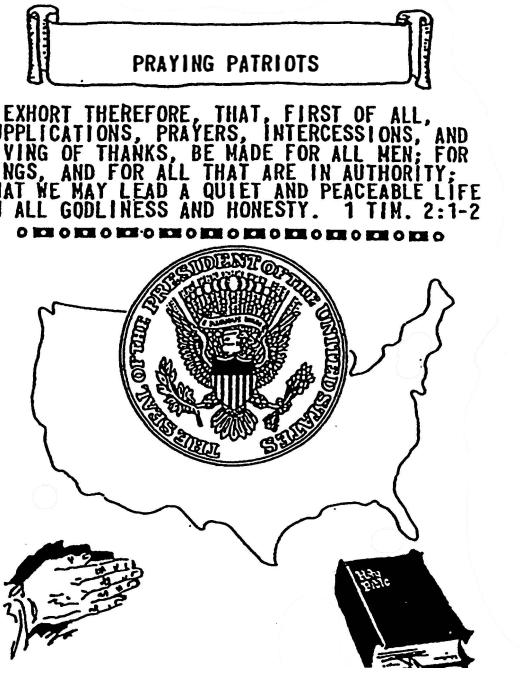
Paul instructs his son in the faith, Timothy, about priorities and prayer life. Whatever the content of one's prayer life is, "first of all," that is first matters of importance, general prayers and specific requests should be made for national, state-wide, and local officials. Each Christian citizen, as we saw, should be an informed individual and each informed individual must be an involved intercessor. No one is truly patriotic unless he prays for his leaders. And if God expects us to pray, we can expect Him to answer our prayer. He promised Israel that if His people would call on His name, He would hear (2 Chron. 7:14). Similarly, He asks Christians to pray and we may expect His gracious answer. This patriotic praying is indeed a part of holding the faith and having a good conscience before God (1 Tim. 1:19).

An example of the efficacy of prayer is the dramatic demise of Communism. As in 1989, hundreds of thousands of individuals in Leipzig and throughout East Germany prayed every night for a change of the dictatorial government. Most dramatically, on November 9 of that year the Iron Curtain fell without a shot being fired. After 40 years of prayers by believers around the world and by concerted prayer efforts of East Germans, overnight the situation changed and the entire Iron Curtain began to unravel. If God can free much of Europe and Asia overnight, He certainly is able to reverse the dreadful deleterious trends in our nation.

2b. Praise for America:

A good citizen is not just a praying patriot, but also a praising patriot. If Timothy can be expected to give thanks to God for a human monster like Nero, we can certainly be expected to thank God for our appointed leaders with all their mistakes and shortcomings. We may be critical citizens, but not until we have been praying and praising patriots. We may not like the decisions, for example, rendered by the nine individuals on the Supreme Court, but a single prayer by any of us could change the entire course of our nation. James reminds us that the "effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much" (James 5:16). Sir Alfred Lord Tennyson said it extremely well: "More things are wrought by prayer than this world dreams of."

All is not lost with America. Our prayer can change the situation in our nation overnight. Let us be faithful and fervent in our prayers for all who are in authority over us and when God's time has come, He will answer our prayers.



4A. COMMITTED CITIZENS:

1 Peter 2:17:
"Honor all men. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honor the king."

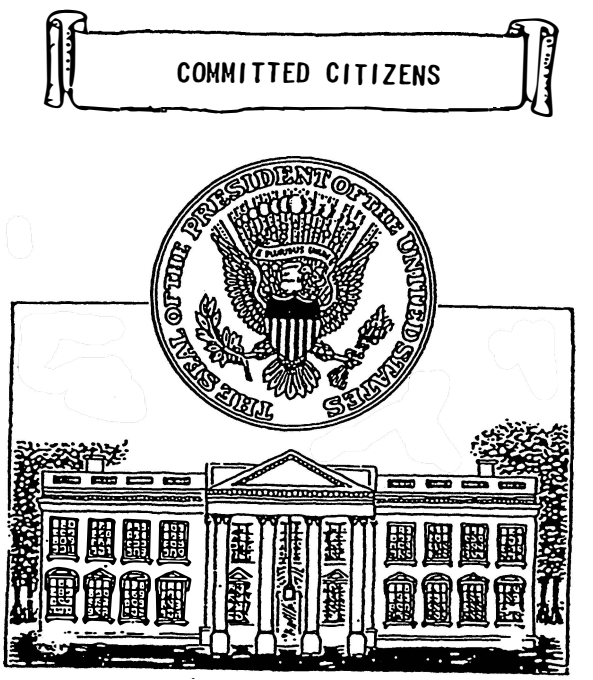
1b. Respect for Authority:

Honoring the king involves the respecting of the highest ruler of the land, because he represents law and order. Honoring the ruler does not imply that we necessarily approve of his personal decorum or agree with his political decisions. However, it does involve respect for his authority. He represents the law of the land. Honor is due him because he is God's appointment, for "The powers that be are ordained of God." (Rom. 13:1).

When Paul wrote to them to pray for those in authority and Peter encouraged the believers to respect those in authority, the Caesars in Rome were anything but paragons of piety. Nero was a human monster who impaled Christians on posts, besmeared them with tar, so that as human torches they could give light to his debauched garden parties. If in the first century believers could be expected to pray for and respect their leaders, certainly you can intercede for and respect our divinely appointed President (Rom. 13:1).

2b. Repudiation of Anarchy:

A committed citizen respects not only the authority of the ruler but repudiates all forms of anarchy. Disobedience to government is actually disobedience to God (Rom. 13:2). As long as a ruler functions in his God-ordained sphere of punishing the evildoer (1 Pet. 2:13-14), protecting the good (Rom. 13:4) and preserving order (1 Tim. 2:2) his law must be obeyed. There is no law in the USA that the believer may disregard and disobey with impunity. A believer is committed to law and order. Resistance to authority and opposition to our ruler representing that authority is in actuality rebellion to God.



5A. SPIRITUAL SAINTS:

Proverbs 14:34:
"Righteousness exalteth a nation: but sin is a reproach to any people."

1b. People of Righteousness:

The Scriptures know nothing of corporate or national righteousness but speak only of personal righteousness. It is impossible to speak of one nation as righteous and another nation as unrighteous. Only individuals are righteous or unrighteous, not nations. Personal righteousness comes through a right relationship to the Savior (Romans 5:17-19). When a person comes in faith to Christ his sins are removed and on the merits of Christ's death God declares the sinner righteous. The believer needs to translate that positional righteousness into practical righteousness. It is that practical personal righteousness of which Solomon speaks. And that personal righteousness causes God to exalt a nation.

2b. Proclaimers of Reconciliation:

If unrighteousness exalts a nation but sin is a reproach to it, then the more righteous individuals live in a nation the greater God's blessing on that nation will be. Spiritual saints bring God's blessings on a nation. The greater their number, the more bountiful is God's blessing. Do we want God to exalt America? Then let us be men and women of righteousness ourselves. Let us also be messengers of reconciliation. As others respond to the Gospel, they too will belong to the host of righteous individuals for whose sake God will exalt nations and in a most marvelous way has especially exalted our nation, the United States of America.

