

Midtown Messenger

Volume 3

February 9, 2020

Issue 6

Orwell's *1984* and "What Is Truth?"

(Jn. 18:38)

By Ron White

George Orwell attempted to prognosticate how English Socialism would look in the future. His celebrated book, *1984*, was 1st published in 1948. Orwell, a pseudonym for Eric Blair (1903-1950), was a political opponent of totalitarianism and communism, but he still considered himself a socialist. His forecast about governance occasionally "hit the bulls-eye." So, we enjoy using our English word, "Orwellian," to indicate traits he noted. He seemed especially perceptive about ever encroaching government bureaucracy, snooping Big Brother, media propaganda, redefining old words, even removing vivid and technical ones from common use to help restrict a comrade's clarity of thought. Orwell foresaw in the upcoming decades of 1950-1980 manipulators of society rewriting history slanting it to mislead perceptions of citizens.

Were you alive in those decades? Christians became alarmed. Why? Soil where gospel seed was being planted in Western societies was changing. What was happening to precious souls of fellow citizens? Orwell expected a rise of irrational thinking, even redefining "reality." Is reality actually my subjective view which clashes with objective realness? Is "my truth" sound thinking when it sustains two opposing statements at once? So in those days, brethren held debates to address irrational skeptics and "subjective" religionists. We still do. Our right thinking brotherhood declared, "truth is objective and attainable." Certain brethren even resorted to studies about logic and syllogisms to counter atheistic and superstitious feelings.

Where is this article going? Remember when Pontius Pilate made his dismissive quip to Jesus, "What is truth?" (Jn. 18:38). I was startled to read Orwell's reviewer declaring, "The basic question Orwell raises is whether there is any such thing as 'truth.' 'Reality,' so the ruling party holds, 'is not external. Reality exists in the human mind and nowhere else...whatever the Party holds to be truth is truth'" (Erich Fromm, *Signet Classic*, Penguin, Afterword, p. 320). So, Pilate's same old cynical outlook is still around!

Pilate's retort of long ago came on the heels of Jesus' declaration, "I am come into the world, that I should bear witness unto the **truth**" (Jn. 18:37). A few days earlier the Lord told his disciples, "I am the way, and the **truth** and the life..." (Jn. 14:6). Our world surely needed an intervening mediator since many humans had provoked "the wrath of God...against men, who hinder the **truth** in unrighteousness" (Ro. 1:18). Jesus so vividly revealed the Father, He shocked Philip by declaring, "he that has seen me has seen the Father" (Jn. 14:9).

How have men provoked God's wrath? Ditching **True God** and adoring creation in His place. "For the invisible things of him since the creation of the world are clearly seen, being perceived through the things that are made, even his everlasting power and divinity; that they may be without excuse because that, knowing God, they glorified him not as God, neither gave thanks; but became vain

in their reasonings, and their senseless heart was darkened. Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools and changed the glory of the incorruptible God for the likeness of an image of corruptible man...and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator..." (Ro. 1:18-25).

Cynical philosophers, pagan legends and deified Caesars left Pilate ignorant. The "light of the world" stood before him. Pilate knew Jesus' accusers envied Him (Mt. 27:18). Knowing Jesus was innocent, the governor asked the Lord's hostile accusers, "Why, what evil has he done?" (Mt. 27:23). Pilate's wife that day experienced such a scary dream about the matter she warned him not to harm Jesus (Mt. 27:19). Under political pressure to conform to hateful men, Pilate caved in, washed his hands, and then let Jesus be crucified. It appears the governor's job position was in jeopardy. He sold out cheap. What conscience hardening rationale went through Pilate's head? "Oh, that's just the cost of doing business" or what?

Some in our society seem to live in "an alternate reality" or a fantasy world. The world wishes to press you into its mold (cf. Ro. 12:2). In contrast, "We know that we are of God, and the whole world lies in the evil one" (1 Jn. 5:19). Proverbs urges readers, "Buy the truth and sell it not!" (23:23). Aged Apostle John wrote, "we know that the Son of God is come, and has given us an understanding, that we know him that is **true**, and we are in him that is **true**, even in his Son Jesus Christ. This is the **true** God, and eternal life. My little children, guard yourselves from idols" (1 Jn. 5:20-21). Amen!

Discovering & Using Your Talents

"Bezalel and Oholiab and every craftsman in whom the LORD has put skill and intelligence to know how to do any work in the construction of the sanctuary shall work in accordance with all that the LORD has commanded." Exodus 36:1

Jesus said, "Everyone to whom much is given, of him much will be required" (Luke 12:48). What does that statement mean to you and me?

It means that when God gives us a gift or talent, he expects us to use those gifts. All of us have been blessed by God with abilities (Rom 12:3; Eph 4:7). God doesn't just give us these gifts for our own purposes, serving our own personal goals and dreams. He invested these gifts in us and expects a return on the investment (Mt 25).

But what if you don't yet know what your gifts are? You can ask others to help you discover your gifts. Ask someone you respect to help you. They will help you find where you might be most useful in the Lord's body.

In the end, however, it's not all that important to know what your gifts are. What is needed is an attitude to serve wherever you are and whatever opportunities are set before you. If you're asked to do something, then do it. If you see a volunteer opportunity at church, sign up. If the church has small-group work meetings, go to them and see what needs to be done.

You may be surprised to find that you are capable of doing much more than you thought. In the end, God doesn't need our talents and resources to make the body grow. What he needs is willing hands to serve in the body.

-Selected-

PRIVILEGED TO SERVE
Week of February 9, 2020

Sunday Morning:

Announcements: Jeff Harris
Scripture Reading: Isaac Jobes

Lord's Supper & Offering

Bread: Mark FitzSimmons
Fruit of the Vine: Doug Jobes
Offering: Lupe Escojido
Assist: BJ Davis, Kirk FitzSimmons, Christian Sneeringer

Sunday Evening: Mark FitzSimmons, Doug Jobes

Prayer

A.M. Closing: Pat Gooch
P.M. Closing: Ron White

Song Leaders:

Sun. A.M.: Kevin Sheeran
Sun. P.M.: Anthony Scherffius
Wednesday: Kevin Sheeran

Usher: Allen Clifton

Wednesday Devotional: James Cammock

Open/Close Building: Will Burleson

Sound System: Trenton Jenkins

Greeters: Bryce Dolan
Doug Jobes

Prepare Communion: Jamison

SAVE THE DATE!

Spring Gospel Meeting at MidTown church of Christ

Theme: **Unity in the Body of Christ**

March 8th-11th, 2020 with Kelvin Pugh



IN NEED OF PRAYERS:

Janice FitzSimmons who will need further medical testing at MD Anderson. Paul Soliz, who is having heart complications from his liver transplant. Bob Law who is at home recovering.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Feb. 9: Jr/Sr. high devo at the Daltry's after evening worship. Boys bring chips and girls bring desserts.
Feb. 11,18,25: Men's & Ladies' Bible Class @ 10am
Feb. 16: Chili Cook-Off after evening services.
March 8-11: MidTown's Spring Gospel meeting with Kelvin Pugh.

AREA EVENTS

Feb: 27-Mar. 1: Arise and grow as a family workshop at Southwest church of Christ in Austin, TX
Mar. 26-28: "Women of Valor" Retreat. More info on the bulletin board.
June 3-7: "Wait on the Lord" Men's Development conference in College Station.

BIRTHDAYS & ANNIVERSARIES:

Happy Birthday: Freddy Scherffius (12)

Happy Anniversary: Ron & Mary Jo White (11)

KEEP IN PRAYER

MIDTOWN MEMBERS:

Jeff Cannady
Les Daltry
Dee Gilpatrick
Wayne Martin
Ann Pantel
Veronica Serenil
Clark Withers

SHUT-INS:

Faye Henderson
Sandy Malone

If you would like to add or remove a name on the "Keep in Prayer" List, please see Nina Siegel.

MIDTOWN CHURCH OF CHRIST

Minister: Ronnie Scherffius
Secretary: Nina Siegel

TIMES OF SERVICES

Sunday Bible Class: 9:00AM
Sunday Morning Worship: 10:00AM
Sunday Evening Worship: 5:00PM
Wednesday Bible Class: 7:00PM

RECORD OF ATTENDANCE

Week of February 2, 2020

Bible Class.....	110
A.M. Worship.....	142
P.M. Worship.....	76
Wednesday Bible Class.....	86

Offering \$5,390

Reading for this week:

“And when you reap the harvest of your land, you shall not reap your field right up to its edge, nor shall you gather the gleanings after your harvest. You shall leave them for the poor and for the sojourner: I am the LORD your God.”
Leviticus 23:22



SUPPORTED WORKS

India - Mani Pagidipalli
Bible Land Passages - John & Carla Moore
Southwest School of Bible Studies - William Pedigo

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