

Cold War with Christ

By: Dan Nelson

Calvary Chapel of the Ojai Valley

As a pastor, I spend a lot of time studying the Scriptures. The transcendent and timeless truths of the Bible were recorded over a period of more than a thousand years. At the inspiration of God, numerous writers, at various locations, and settings, penned the words. Although the backdrop is situated in the past, the message is as relevant and powerful today as ever.

I remember being in elementary school and seeing a photo of the golden mask of the mummy of King Tut in my textbook. I was mesmerized. When it was time to learn the beginnings of California in the fourth grade, I enjoyed what some of my friends loathed. And in middle school, examining the early empires was fun for me. Years later, having the experience of walking the land of the pharaohs, perusing the relics of the Romans, and sitting on the steps where Jesus taught, causes the print and the pictures to leap from the page for me. Even now, I regularly stay up late watching documentaries on Netflix. The sort of stuff that puts others to sleep keeps me up at night.

My daughter Aubrielle is a high school junior, and is thus, studying United States History. She is actually taking Dr. Pendleton's class at Ventura College and I am enjoying every minute of participating in the adventure with her. This week we are going over the infamous "Cold War"; the post World War II era that lasted half a century. Although it had global implications, the center stage was in the relationship between the U.S. and the U.S.S.R. It was a battle of ideology and its implications toward society. One country's people pledged allegiance to the flag of "one nation, under God, indivisible, with liberty, and justice, for all." Another, to an emblem whose nation had no divine authority, nor higher law or moral code beyond that of its leader's vision, and liberty and justice for each person would be cast aside for the supposed public benefit. The showdown brought us to the brink of total annihilation, and a generation grew up in fear. Millions learned that philosophy is not innocuous; some beliefs produce actions that enable life, and other notions manifest in murder.

It is interesting to me to find these foundational ideologies represented throughout our community. One is built upon a godless humanism that forces conformity upon others under the guise of civil welfare at the expense of the individual. Another

acknowledges accountability to a Creator for our actions, values every human life as important, respects the rights of each person to make choices, and upholds a personal accountability for the outcomes of these decisions.

It seems that there is still a Cold War going on – but not among nations, or even amidst people, per se. There is a conflict between members of the human race and God. If the terminology represents a clash where the relationship is frosty and communication is frozen, then this might be a plausible descriptor of many individual's association with the Almighty. The irony is that God loves people and desires to connect with every person. He sent Jesus the Christ as an emissary to enable more than mere talks, but intimacy. If you're building an "iron curtain" that Jesus came to tear down, and assembling an arsenal to stand against a foe that wants to be your friend, consider changing sides. When the captain of the winning team is welcoming you with open arms, and offering amnesty instead of enmity, what will you do? The invitation has been sent. But unlike the decrees of the dictators, God will regard your freedom to decide. He will not force us! Our Maker will let each of us elect or reject His offer based upon what is in our hearts.

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Dan Nelson is a frequent contributor to the Ojai Valley News and currently serves the Ojai Valley Ministerial Association and community as editor of the Religion Column. Permission is freely granted to reprint the article in its entirety. Dan Nelson is pastor of Calvary Chapel Christian Church of the Ojai Valley.



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Mid-Week Study:
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