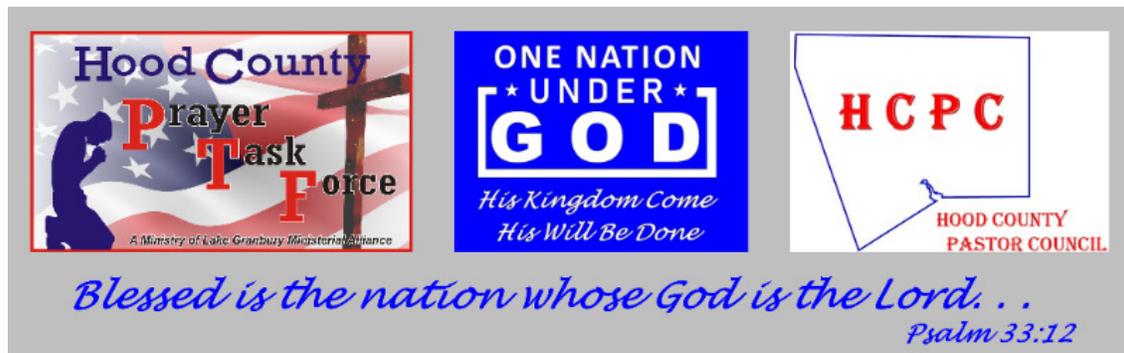


Fred Orcutt

From: Hood County Prayer Task Force <ptf@granburyministries.org>
Sent: Sunday, October 28, 2018 1:59 AM
To: fred@orcutfamily.net
Subject: ONE NATION UNDER GOD Devotional - October 28, 2018

ONE NATION UNDER GOD Devotional

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Sorrow for Things That Divide the Body of Christ

“Master,” said John, “we saw someone driving out demons in your name and we tried to stop him, because he is not one of us.”

“Do not stop him,” Jesus said, “for whoever is not against you is for you.”

Luke 9:49-50

Reflections

I’m pretty fed up, and have been for years, with the negative, attack-oriented advertising that political candidates use nowadays. It seems that people (either party) believe they cannot get elected without tearing down the other candidate. What’s more, they hardly ever say anything about what they will DO if elected. “They’re no good, so don’t elect that person! Elect me, because I won’t do that!” they say in their ads. It causes me great sorrow to think that some tear others down in order to build

Challenge

Start a conversation with a person different from yourself. While listening, practice some of the fruit of the Spirit – patience, kindness, gentleness,

themselves up.

Yet, we are no different in the church(s). We say things like, “They (meaning another group. . . of Christians no less!) don’t do right worship/music/baptism/communion (you name the practice), so don’t believe them. Come with us, because WE do it right!” It seems there is little tolerance for diversity. That saddens me more than attack-oriented political ads.

In Luke’s Gospel, just before Jesus’ last trip to Jerusalem, the disciples get into an argument as to whom is the greatest. Jesus quiets them by putting a child in their midst and says, “...he who is least among you is the one who is great.” (Luke 9:48) He goes on to tell John, who had forbade a man from casting out demons in (Jesus’) name, “Do not forbid him; for he that is not against you is for you.” (Luke 9:50)

Scholars pretty well agree that Jesus is trying to teach his disciples the concept of tolerance. What I also hear Jesus saying is, “This is actually a lot simpler that you think. Even a child can understand being my disciple.” In Luke 6 Jesus says, “...the tree is known by its fruit.” Also, Luke records the words of Jesus, “Why do you call me ‘Lord, Lord,’ and not do what I tell you?” (6:44, 46)

All three synoptic gospels record Jesus’ teaching that there are two great commandments, “Love the Lord your God. . . and love your neighbor as yourself.” That’s more than enough for me to work on in my lifetime—learning to love God and others. However, the Apostle Paul pushes the point by stating that we are to be “led by the Spirit,” (Galatians 5) meaning the Spirit of God, the same God who was in Christ Jesus. (Oh, please, let’s not get into the whole Trinity issue—a doctrine on which we disagree also!)

So, here’s the deal with me. I’m working on loving God and

etc. Simply try to listen without trying to change the other person. “Tell me more. . .” is a good line to use.

For Discussion

In order to practice tolerance, read a book with a position different from your own perspective. Try to really “hear” what the author is trying to say. You don’t have to agree, but try to understand the author’s perspective.



Rev. George Sutton is a retired United Methodist Pastor. He is married to Margaret, has three children and five grandchildren. He is currently on the Board of Directors for Forward Training Center of Hood

others, BUT I think there needs to be fruit on my tree—the fruit of the Spirit. “Love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control.” (Gal.5:22) As I read recently, “It’s not the doctrine that matters so much as what kind of Christians a church produces.” Does a church produce people who tear others down with comparisons and attacks of one kind or another? Or does a church produce people who are full of the fruit of the Spirit? I believe that is what God wants the world to see—people full of “love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control.” What a different world this would be if that was what others saw in the Body of Christ!

Since my retirement I have been involved with a local non-profit group now called Forward Training Center. We used to be Christian Women’s Job Corps. The reason for the name change was so we could take men into the program. Our vision is to give people tools for self-sustainability in life, *i.e.* to get a job (or a better job), and keep it, in order to provide for one’s family’s needs. It’s not an easy program; it takes hard work. However, anything of great worth requires work of some kind. We are here to help people, to build them up, not tear them down. We are a very Christian organization, and proud to be. There are entry requirements for the program, but one of our tenets is to accept anyone into our programs, Christian or not, and without asking them to change their personal beliefs.

Having served on the Board of Directors for several years, and having worked with individual students, I can say that we try to surround them with volunteers who have the fruit of the Spirit in their lives. Our students are surrounded by “love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control.” And guess what? It’s working! We have a very high graduation rate, and 80-90% success in placing students in new or better jobs. We believe the world, and especially our community, are better because of what we do, not what we talk

about. I find the work very rewarding. Part of the challenge it seems is to let go of some of my “stuff” and let God’s work happen.

Prayer

You, in whom we live and move and have our being, bless us with the fruit of the Spirit that the world may see you in us. Amen.

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