



REPENT AUSTRALIA

“If My people who are called by My name will humble themselves, and pray and seek My face, and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin and heal their land.”

2 Chronicles 7:14

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MACHO OR MANLY

Prime Minister John Howard recently lamented a “coarsening” of Australian culture, exemplified by male sexual aggression and fuelled by a media-driven obsession with celebrities. He instanced the violent death of cricketer David Hookes earlier this year and episodes of road rage in our cities together with sporting clubs accused of serious allegations of sexual misconduct. And he is right. Our culture is much coarser now than it was thirty years ago. We once referred to “common courtesy” as the accepted standard of behaviour between civilised people. Today, however, courtesy is not so common. Why? There are a few reasons. One is the advent of the feminist movement, which is having a ball socially engineering society by undermining the family and blurring the traditional roles of men and women. Claiming “equality” with men to toe the line with them at the bar, often dressing like men (even to short-back-and-sides haircuts) and portrayed in the media as rough and tough macho characters with seldom a real lady in sight is it any wonder they have fallen from the high pedestal where men once placed them? Is it any wonder the relationships between men and women have become coarser?

Dignity of Womanhood

Is this the way it should be? Should not men honour women as the weaker sex, respecting their femininity, recognising their need for protection and the dignity of womanhood? Yes indeed, for this is the basis of our culture, built up over the years by our Christian heritage. Thank goodness there is still a vestige of that culture left. In the main, people still have good manners, treating others with respect, consideration and courtesy. But the general trend is continually away from such ideal behaviour. A second reason can be found in our education systems. In many of our schools respect and courtesy seem to be forgotten subjects. The manners of many students are pathetic. In fact we now have even four-year-olds being suspended for violent and abusive conduct towards teachers as parental control is undermined by threats of being charged with child abuse if they even dare smack their children. Moreover it appears that egalitarianism – the scourge of high achievement – is reducing students to the lowest common denominator and manners are seen as elitist and socially divisive. And, of course, disrespectful, bad manners lead on to vandalism, violence and broken homes. Thirdly, there is the malevolent influence of television (together with education) promoting secular humanism as a philosophy of life opposed to Christian values. As a result social interaction has degenerated; swearing, obscenities and blasphemies are accepted as normal communication; and inter-personal relationships are now rougher and coarser. Gentleness and kindness have succumbed to discourtesy and vulgarity as the role of the sexes, particularly men, has become evermore confused, and they seem powerless to help themselves without Christ.

Aggressively Masculine

That brings us to the issue of whether today’s man should be macho or manly. Should he be aggressively masculine, “all swagger and swearing and mountain climbing”? This indeed does fit the popular conception today of what makes a man a man. But does it? Hardly! Rather should he not display the virtues that truly befit someone made in the image of God: courage, intelligence, fortitude, tenderness, gentleness and consideration as well as honour and self-sacrifice? Yet to act in this way today is seen as weakness. Be that as it may, men most assured of their masculinity *are* courteous and respectful, not because they are weak but because they are strong and can afford the luxury of politeness. When a man has genuine respect for himself in his God-given powers he then has respect for others. The US columnist Sydney J. Harris put it well when he wrote, “Crassness is always a sign of weakness; the blusterer is full of fear; the sullen workman who is afraid of being imposed upon is secretly convinced of his own inferiority. It is a curious psychological fact

that the man who seems to be egotistic is not suffering from too much ego but from too little. When the ego is strong and well developed there is no nagging need to impress others – by money, by rudeness or by any other show of false strength.” Unfortunately, our society’s misguided conceptions of true manliness only reinforce the harmful notion that courtesy and kindness are not signs of strength but of weakness. Many insecure men and sexually frustrated women identify manliness not with virtues like moral and physical courage, decency, civility and thoughtfulness but rather with physical prowess, aggression, immoral conduct, violence, macho posturing and sexual conquest. In fact sex, instead of being the communion of life and love within marriage, is reduced to nothing more than base animal behaviour

The Example of Christ

In sharp contrast to today’s popular misconceptions regarding masculinity is the example of Christ, who in word and deed delicately balanced the virtues that reveal moral and spiritual purity and true manliness. When the prostitute came to Him seeking forgiveness he showed compassion. When he encountered the poor, sick and helpless He was tender and gentle. But He also manifested what Ernest Hemingway called “grace under pressure”. He was firm and tough-minded; He demonstrated this in the way He dealt with two-faced, evil-eyed religious hypocrites and corrupt government officials. He was heroic and courageous, seen by His endurance of physical and emotional pain, by His willingness to suffer unjust and unmerited persecution, ridicule, ostracism and ultimately death on the Cross. To be sure, the Christian conception of true manliness is unfashionable today, especially among those most unsure about their own sexual identity. But in word and deed Christ demonstrated what it means to be a real man. And if we are to lift ourselves above the animals we must learn from Him

Renew True Respect

Manners and courtesy must be restored. However, until we renew true respect between the sexes we shall continue to slide further into a morass of incivility, rudeness and vulgarity that can only lead to our society falling apart. We must again recognise the worth of each human being, man and woman, boy and girl, and treat one another with courtesy and respect and not allow the yob mob to drag our country down further into the gutter. Let our men be manly in the best sense spiritually and our women living testimonies of “a gentle and quiet spirit, which is very precious in the sight of God”. However unlikely this may appear to us now, it will indeed happen as we return to the Saviour, the only One capable of lifting both ourselves as individuals and as a nation out of the mire now engulfing us. Wake up, fellow Australians! We are spiritual beings made a little lower than the angels and we will never find our true selves until we allow God in Christ Jesus to take His rightful place in our hearts and society. It really is a matter of urgency.

PRAYER

Lord God Almighty, Loving Father and Author of the Living Word of God, we thank You for the grace which enables us to believe in Your Son and to give us strength to follow Him daily in the power of the Holy Spirit. Omniscient Father, we rejoice that we have been buried with Christ Jesus through baptism into His death and raised with Him to walk in the newness of a regenerated Life. Lord Jesus, thank You for the power of Your precious blood to cleanse us of our pride and to defeat Satan and his evil schemes, enabling us to live victoriously in the principles of Your coming kingdom. Lord God, Father of all fathers, give them strength to take responsibility as head of their households and, together with their wives, apply the wisdom of Your Word to guide and raise fruitful families for Your glory. Lord Jesus, our Great High Priest and Good Shepherd, through the Holy Spirit show parents the Way to eternal life through Your Word of truth. Moreover, Sovereign Lord, have compassion on them as they sincerely repent before Your throne of grace and mercy. Grant them the wisdom to lay their burdens at the cross and allow Your Spirit to work in them through faith. Omnipresent Father, in the name of Jesus Christ we pull down **all** strongholds of unbelief, anger, pride, disobedience, fear, idolatry, racial intolerance, deception, corruption, immorality, drugs, violence and lawlessness. Lord, let Your light and truth shine forth and deliver all those broken in spirit and those spiritually lost. May Your precious blood cleanse this Great Southland of the Holy Spirit, setting many free to receive Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour. And, Spirit of all Excellence, help us to realise the urgency and magnitude of our commission to preach Christ crucified, so that the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord even as the waters cover the sea. Abba Father, open our hearts and minds to the reality of heaven on earth so we can be fully committed to do Your Will and help usher in Your coming kingdom of righteousness, justice, love, joy, peace and freedom. Come, Lord Jesus; come quickly we pray, for the glory of God. Amen.

R.A: Lead by our Lord Jesus Christ through the power of the Holy Spirit to glorify God with the Brotherhood of Man and in love and faithfulness to bring glory and honour to His Holy Name. Amen

REJOICE & SHARE IN FAITH THIS MESSAGE IN PRAYER WITH OTHERS & BE BLESSED TO BE ONE IN CHRIST JESUS.