



NEMA ANNOUNCES ANNUAL CHRISTMAS LUNCHEON

NEMA'S annual Christmas Network Luncheon will be held on December 6th. at Outback Steakhouse, Humble, Texas. Outback is located at 9753 Fm 1960 Bypass Rd W, Humble 281 446-4329. A time for visiting with friends will begin at 11:30 a.m. and the food will be served at 12 noon. The annual Christmas gathering has long been a favorite by the NEMA network and this year will no doubt surpass them all!

RSVP's are very important for the luncheon because Outback will need to know how many tasty servings they need to prepare for us. This year's menu will include steak and chicken, potatoes, and salad, drinks and bread. Please email dhicks2138@aol.com with your reservations a.s.a.p. The cost of the luncheon is \$10 per person.

If you know of a new ministry or church in your area, why not invite the leadership to the luncheon? This would be a wonderful opportunity for them to get to know some of the finest spiritual leaders in our community. Also, you might consider giving your staff a 'little perk' and brining them along!

[On page two, I am very concerned about the Federal Government's intrusion into the Churches' affairs!]

NEMA Newsletter, p. 2.

The Senate's Scrutiny of Ministries' Finances - A Time of Praise or Alert?

The current action of investigation into alleged misuse of church funds is praised by some but for others, it is a matter of great concern.

Excerpts taken from Christianity Today's web site. See: www.christianitytoday.com for more articles dealing with this issue.

When I read the Senate Finance Committee's letters sent to Kenneth Copeland, Creflo Dollar, Benny Hinn, Eddie Long, Joyce Meyer and Randy and Paula White, I had great concern. Senator Grassley (R) stated that the Committee is investigating these ministries because of complaints from certain individuals, etc. I am personally concerned about the intrusion of the Federal Government into the Church's business.

You should know that this is not the first time that the Committee, of which Senator Grassley is the ranking member, has been investigating churches and TV evangelists. They have been conducting these investigations for quite some time. They have also investigated a number of other tax exempt organizations which are not Christian in nature. It is my opinion that their investigations of non-Christian tax exempt organizations is a well strategized plan to provide a 'smoke screen'. While their major targets are Christian churches and ministries, they want to be seen as 'fair and balanced'!

While some may cheer the Committees' actions, we need to be concerned about the precedent being established. 'Once the fox gets his nose into the hen house, the destiny of the chickens is over'. The Committee is now sticking its nose in the hen house! I encourage you to visit the web site of Christianity Today which offers a number of opinions about this matter. One article posted there offers a warning rather than 'cheers', "James Madison would be telling us, 'Take Alarm! Take Alarm!', The web site posts other articles by a number of Christian leaders, i.e., Richard Neuhaus, editor of the journal *First Things*, is very concerned because he sees Grassley and his committee as presuming direct financial oversight of religious ministries. "There's kind of been an end-run here," contends Charles Haynes, director of the First Amendment Center. The Senate prying into church money-matters could be a slippery slope, he continued. Haynes further states, "It's legitimate for government to monitor whether or not the laws are being followed by ministries. This is an unusual approach. The danger here is that it can become a fishing expedition ...into areas where the First Amendment protects ministries—for example, their beliefs and view of the gospel. They may be controversial or unorthodox or unpopular, but that is none of the business of government."

I fear that many believers are not getting the 'full picture' of these investigations. Can we afford to maintain our 'frog in the kettle' mentality towards America's societal disintegration? History is on the side of my fears. Historically, the Church has always taken a rather 'truncated' view of major shifts that have taken place in culture. For instance, ask yourself, 'How many pastors and ministry leaders are you familiar with that continue to 'have church' as usual without realizing that a significant cultural shift has occurred in America? Do we need to remind ourselves of the current, monolithic, ever increasing attacks upon the Church? Are we, as spiritual leaders, living in denial concerning the current, unprecedented assaults against the Church by government, educational institutions, media sources of all types, and by the general culture?

Are we so naive as to think that this assault on these high-profile evangelists/churches is just an isolated occurrence? The late Dr. Francis Schaeffer was correct when he stated, 'The institutional Church is consistently sixty years behind in recognizing that an historical shift has occurred.' Are we so disconnected from reality that we are unaware that America and the West are now engaged in a titanic cultural war? On the one hand, we have the progressive secularists who have succeeded in almost destroying everything that God gave to our founding fathers, and, on the other hand, we are facing a world wide spiritual jihadist movement which will not relent until all of Western Civilization is under their satanic rule. The distinctiveness of America's greatness is almost dissipated.

What we are witnessing by the Senate Committee's present aggressiveness is a 'preview of coming attractions'. Those that hate God are 'circling their wagons'. They feel that the present cultural climate of hate for the Church is a perfect time for their attacks. Once they successfully execute their plan for these ministries, they will expand their inquiry. I am not saying that some of the ministries that the Committee is investigating haven't done things that appear to be questionable. What I am more concerned about, however, is the aggressiveness that the Congress and the courts are taking against Christian churches and organizations. I feel that the First Amendment rights of the Church are being unduly assaulted. Lines of Constitutional rights and authority are being dangerously violated. The Church is not above the law, but the underlying motives of this Senate Committee are suspect. There are other governmental agencies which are commissioned to make sure that any nonprofit ministry is in compliance with the law. Congress makes the laws but other agencies have the responsibility to enforce those laws. The actions of this Senate Committee should concern all of us. Look for a moment concerning the possible sources of the complaints that the committee received.

Senator Grassley is quoted as saying that the committee has received many complaints about these ministries they are currently investigating. Some of the complaints may be legitimate, but some of them might be less than legitimate. For instance, some complaints that the committee has received were from ex-employees of the ministries being targeted. Everyone knows that some 'whistle blowers' have a personal vendetta against the person or organization they are reporting. Another possible source of complaints might have been from a 'stealth' organization that is presently operating in the U. S.? This organization has a clear, single vision. That vision is to bring about the destruction of Western Culture as we now know it. This organization has millions of dollars at its disposal. Very few Americans know about this organization or its founder, George Soros. Mr. Soros, a multi billionaire, believes that the Church is the one institution that stands in the way of his plans to restructure Western culture. His disdain for America or the Church is no secret. The average American would be shocked if they discovered how far reaching Mr. Soros' influence is impacting American culture, via, the political process, television, newspapers, educational institutions, etc. It would be

interesting to find out if his organization is influencing the Senate Committee's current inquiry.

The fate of the Church in America is something that too many of us are not willing to entertain. Would anyone deny that we are entering into some very strategic times. The winds of adversity are taking their toll on the Church. We are constantly being embarrassed by our leaders who are caught in gross moral sins. We also continue to lose more and more of our credibility because of disgraceful infighting. For some reason, we are oblivious to the power the Church could unleash if it would embrace areas of commonality which would bring us together as a unified Church. *'Oh Father, that they could become one, as we are one'!* The inclusion of government into the Church's private, constitutional guarantees has become more and more 'in your face' brazenness. We are now facing an almost monolithic, post-Christian culture that is dead-set on destroying the Church. Oh, yes, the Church in America will survive, but are we, as pastors and ministry leaders, willing to accept the escalation of the restraints that are 'legally' being imposed upon us?

If James Madison could cry out to the Church in America today, 'Take alarm, take alarm', would we heed it? Are we willing to make the sacrifice, adjust our priorities and enter into the fray that is destroying both the Church and our Nation? If we as pastors and ministry leaders do not speak out against the tyranny we now face, then the Church as we now know it will be radically changed. We were silent when we allowed the Court 'throw God' out of our schools. We were silent when the Court legalized the killing of innocent babies. We were silent when one of our own Texas Senators wrote legislation which bans the Church from speaking into the political arena. What kind of a legacy are we leaving for our children and grandchildren? Will we stand today and be the salt that our culture desperately needs? Will we become pro-active in our intercession? Will we, the leaders in the body of Christ, lay aside our differences and come together with a unified strategy to turn back the assault upon the Church and Nation? Do we dare speak into every level of our culture and proclaim God's grace to a staggering generation, (Isaiah 59:10)? If we do not stand, who will?

With only a cursory study of our history, it is crystal clear that the only reason for the moral foundations that produced our freedoms - and our heroes - came from pulpits ' aflame with righteousness' as Alexis de Tocqueville described in 1835. The First and Second Great Awakenings are credited even by secular historians as instrumental and responsible for sowing the seeds of moral, cultural, social and political renewal that brought independence as a nation and an end to slavery (This paragraph was taken from HPAC newsletter by Dave Welch, president of Houston Area Pastors Council. To be placed on the mailing list or read the entire letter see: www.uspastorcouncil.org. NEMA is in network with HPAC).

2 Ch 7:14-15

If My people, who are called by My name, shall humble themselves, pray, seek, crave, and require of necessity My face and turn from their wicked ways, then will I hear from heaven, forgive their sin, and heal their land. Now My eyes will be open and My ears attentive to prayer offered in this place. AMP

Practical Steps of Action

1. As a pastor or ministry leader, join a local prayer group of spiritual leaders that meets regularly to ask for God's visitation to your area.
2. Deliver messages from your pulpit, on your website, and in your publications which challenges believers to live righteously in their homes and in the market place. Challenge them to become Christ's grace and light in the public arena.
3. Teach believers that it is their Christian, moral duty to be pro-active in the political process at every level, i.e., local, state and national. Teach them that *when the righteous rule, the nation rejoices*. When righteous men disengage from the political process in a democracy, evil men rule.
4. Train your people to communicate to their elected officials; this includes local, state, and national. Politicians pay attention to an informed, concerned electorate.
5. Become informed with the true stories of our heritage as a nation and challenge parents to teach these truths to their children. *The true nature of America's history has been diluted by the revisionists and our generation is one which has been denied its true roots! This is why we are so easily manipulated by the progressive humanists of our day.* Establish a personal discipline to keep yourself informed concerning the assaults upon the family, the Church, life, the Constitution, etc. Social/political isolationism by spiritual leaders leaves the population of any nation to the whims of those who hate God and desire to deny men their unalienable rights. *The Gospel requires cultural oversight on the part of 'God's watchmen on the walls'!*

End

Other Items of Interest

Wanted: NEMA received a call this past week concerning the need to purchase chairs for a new church. If you have some used chairs and would like to sell them please contact: Richard Sherrod,
713 861-7991 or email him at: lesherrod@netscape.net.

Christmas Outreach: If you are planning an outreach to our neighborhood this Christmas please contact Buddy Hicks. There have been some inquiries from pastors who want to become part of another outreach. Please email Buddy at: