

The Sin in the Garden of Eden and Where America Is Headed

Bruce Sutchar
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Growing up Jewish, I never understood original sin. I can remember my non-religious parents equating original sin with something that Christians believed, regardless that the story is wholly contained in the Book of Genesis. For those growing up in the 1950's, the baby boomer generation continued the age-old tradition that no one ever talked about sex.

I remember in eighth grade we had a sex education class. This left me with the understanding that parents could conceive a child even though they slept in twin beds (just like all the TV parents on “Leave it to Beaver” or “Father Knows Best”).



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I remember a friend telling me that when he was 14 he had visited a 13-year-old girl in her home when her mother was not there. The mother then called his father about the matter. One day his father, while sitting in the backyard mentioned the fact to him as he was walking by. He said, “Now that you are older you have to take more responsibility.” My friend was so embarrassed that he just kept on walking. And that was the only conversation that they would ever have concerning sex.

I grew up in the era before AIDS. In my generation, gonorrhea and syphilis were the only dangers from unprotected sex. I remember in high school several boys in my class had an experience with a prostitute and were so that maybe they had contracted syphilis. I also had one friend who was frightened to death that his date might have gotten pregnant (I grew up with a group of friends who never drank even beer or smoked, so imagine the impact of the above two incidents)

As I entered college, like every one of my best friends, I was still a virgin (how does that compare to the average high school graduate today?). I remember being so disappointed because one of the elders in my fraternity, whom I really looked up to, had to move out of our fraternity house because he had gotten his girlfriend pregnant.

In 1978, I worked in a deli in Oakland, California, when I first noticed that people began to submit checks with different last names. In college, everyone knew it was illegal to cohabit, but by the end of the 1970's it had become commonplace (interestingly, statistics show that when cohabitating couples decide to tie the knot, their divorce rate is much higher than the national average).

We had all become accustomed to Hollywood stars changing spouses faster than a speeding bullet: Richard Burton and Elizabeth Taylor, Eddie Fisher and Debbie Reynolds, Dinah Shore and George Montgomery. Yet there were also the Jimmy Stewarts, Bing Crosbys and Bob Hopes who all stayed married to their wives. Today things haven't changed much for the Hollywood spouse swappers, except for that the stars often don't bother to get married. There is no longer any reason to pooh-pooh the fact

that some famous couple is not married. For this author, it started with Michael Jordan having a baby with his girlfriend before they married. Now even the President of France allowed his mistress to live with him, with public knowledge and lack of concern.

The pornographic magazines of my age, which were usually wrapped in plain brown paper to avoid the embarrassment of the often underage or married buyer, have been replaced by in-room XXX movies that businessmen can rent in the comfort and privacy of their hotel rooms. And today's typical residential cable TV systems include an abundance of adult pay-per-view channels.

When our children were growing up, my wife and I limited their choice of television shows quite strongly. No pro wrestling, no Three Stooges and various other stuff. When they got old enough to stay up until the evening news, we had to censor that as well — even to ourselves. After all, why would murder, rape, arson, and political graft be better for them than pro wrestling? Now the children are out of the house and my wife and I can stay up later. But what we see includes commercials for erectile dysfunction, lubricants and condoms.

The 1960s generation blatantly identified the corruption of the world, from the military-industrial complex to the corrupt practices in business and politics. However, the solutions they provided revolved around “free love.” They thought if people could just love one another, everything would be all right. The moral standard was: as long as both parties were consenting, then there was nothing wrong and nothing to be ashamed of. This lifestyle did not solve any of the world's problems, and I believe it only abated, if at all, with the onset of the HIV virus and AIDS.

America is known as the land of the free and home of the brave. The verses in “America the Beautiful” easily bring one to tears of joy and pride. Yet today the moral absolutes in our society are about as stable as a kite blowing in a whirlwind. The generation of Hugh Hefner and Alfred Kinsey may be winning the battle to deny there is anything immoral about sexual promiscuity as evidenced by Time magazine's recent cover story about transgenders.

Our society is now saying, “If you don't get along with your spouse, it's fine to move on. Why make the effort to try and make things right?” Our society surely, unlike the time of Hester Prynne in Hawthorne's *The Scarlet Letter*, is not going to put any value judgments on your lifestyle choices.

In graduate school, I gave a sermon entitled, “The Reality of Evil.” It was one of my most researched yet difficult sermons to deliver. The congregation would not look up at me. Reverend Moon taught us very clearly that the original sin was not the eating of a piece of fruit, but rather the premature sexual relationship between the first two human beings. Here were two critical points: people do not like to talk about the reality of Satan and do not like to talk about fornication.

In my sermon, I related well-documented stories about people who had made pacts with the devil. They had given up subjectivity over their own spirit and body for some reciprocal payback. It was a very heavy sermon and the congregation found it hard to digest.



Rembrandt's “*Belshazzar's Feast*,” painted c. 1635-38, based on *Daniel Ch. 5*

Now, as we approach the year 2020, I must ask the question, “Where is America headed?” Have we thrown the baby out with the bathwater? In the 1970’s and 1980’s, Reverend Moon sponsored a series of international science conferences, embracing the overall theme of “The Search for Absolute Values.” He raised the question as to whether there were the same absolute moral values as one would find with scientific principles. Maybe it is time to stop and return to the Book of Genesis. Whether one be Christian or Jew, Muslim or Sikh, we must, as Timothy did 2,000 years ago, stare right into the man in the mirror. We have to challenge our society to realize that our future is directly connected to our ability to take Satan and the sexual fall of man seriously and act accordingly.

Our society seems mainly concerned about the financial obligations our children are about to inherit: Social Security, Medicare and pension deficits dominate our daily news. But, what of the moral obligation? If our society continues to condone those who cohabit and have sex outside of marriage, accepts homosexual marriage as the moral equivalent of heterosexual marriage, takes bisexual and transgender lifestyles in stride, then what kind of society will our children inherit? Rome was not destroyed by the Huns from without. Many civilizations disintegrated due to the moral decadence and decay from within their societies.

Reverend Moon came as a firefighter, a first responder, to warn America, the world’s greatest and most powerful society, that if we don’t take God seriously, then our society will crumble more quickly than it has risen.

As with Daniel and the impending collapse of the Babylonian empire, the writing is clearly on the wall. If we continue to disregard the moral imperatives conveyed by God through His word, our society will surely crash and burn in record time. God gave us our own portion of responsibility and many guidebooks to lead us up the thorny, narrow path. The choice however is not dictated by the government, Hollywood, literature, our friends, or by the media — our choice for the future of our children, our descendants and our society is clearly in our own hands. It is ours to make.

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Related reading: “You Must Help Revive America,” by Rev. Sun Myung Moon, 13th Commencement Address, Unification Theological Seminary, Barrytown, NY, June 30, 1989. <http://www.tparents.org/moon-talks/sunmyungmoon89/SunMyungMoon-890630.htm>