

Good Friday afternoon, New South Family. Welcome to the 34th edition of the Weekly Word – this for the week ending February 21, 2020.

-----The Critical-----

Announcements

- 1) Change of Venue for Annual Conference** Due to several factors, primarily the fact that your Interim Superintendent doesn't yet really know what he's doing, we are choosing to have Annual Conference at Wilmore instead of at Oakdale Christian Academy.
- 2) Memorials at Annual Conference** ...please forward to Timothy Thomas newsouthconference@gmail.com the names of members of your church who have passed on to Glory since last year's Annual Conference, so they might be remembered at Annual Conference 2020.
- 3) Ministerial Education and Guidance Interviews** are scheduled for March 21 in Wilmore and invitations to those who I know need interviewed have been sent via e-mail. If you did not receive one, and you want, or feel you need, to be interviewed, [please contact me ASAP.](#)
- 4) Women's Retreat** Pastor Buffy Cole (Forrest Chapel) is investigating the possibility and interest in re-starting a conference women's retreat, about which you will find a survey below.

Pastor Buffy writes, *"Please distribute surveys to any ladies interested in each congregation whether they have attended a retreat or not, then send completed surveys to me at sblaw10210@gmail.com or 23 North Street, Scottsville, KY 42164. I'll be at the upcoming youth retreat if anyone wants to hand deliver them. I'd like the survey back by the second weekend in March so we can begin developing a planning team for this event."*

Church of the Week: Breckenridge Chapel (Louisville, KY) with Pastors John and Will Slider.

Conference / Superintendent's Calendar (all times eastern)

February 25:	MEG Zoom, 7:00p
March 12:	DL Zoom, 9:30a
March 14:	FMH&P – Gallatin #1 of 2
March 20:	District Leaders – Wilmore, 2:00 – 5:00 p
March 20:	BOA – Wilmore, 6:00 – 10:00 p
March 21:	MEG/MAC – Wilmore, 8:00 a - noon
March 31-April 2:	Global Overseers Team (GOT) - Indianapolis
April 9:	DL Zoom, 9:30a
April 18:	FMH&P – Gallatin #2 of 2
April 26-28:	ABS - Tampa
May 14:	DL Zoom, 9:30a
May 29-30:	New South Annual Conference, Wilmore FMC
June 7-9:	ABS - Indianapolis
June 15-20:	NSC Teen Camp
June 11-14:	NSC Family Camp
June 22-26:	NSC Kids' Camp
August 9-11:	ABS – Baltimore
August 25-28:	Starting Strong for new pastors - Indianapolis
September 23-25:	New Room Conference, Nashville, TN

And now...

-----**The Important**-----

Resources, Articles and Attachments

- 1) **The Latest Edition of the FM History Update** – [can be found by clicking here.](#)
- 2) **Hymnals?** If you have 20-40 or so that you're no longer using, the Bowen FMC would love them. Shoot me a note [by clicking here](#) and I'll make the connections happen.
- 3) **Attention FM People in Wilmore/Nicholasville/Lexington Area:** The next FM Fellowship lunch will be held on Wednesday, March 4th, from 12pm to 1pm in the back of the Asbury Seminary cafeteria- in the Cordelia B Room. This is a simple time of connection and conversation open to any FM people or anyone interested in the FMC.
- 4) **The Latest FM Men's Ministry International** update / newsletter is below. Check out what MMI is up to these days.
- 4) **An Article I Found Helpful, "Homesick for Heaven,"** is also attached.

Job Openings

At this point, we have a pastor or interim pastor in every NSC church, although those interim situations are, well, interim.

However, [if you click here](#), you will find job opening listings at the FMC Human Resources web site.

February Birthdays (*that we know of)

Dean Cook – 24 – Elder, Retired, Wilmore, KY

Annette Diddle – 29 (my wife 😊)

*I would love to know the birthdays of all those related to the NSC who receive this communique – pastors, elders, delegates, special friends, etc. Please send month and day to Timothy at newsouthconference@gmail.com

This Week's Passage, Quote and Joke

Passage: I am finishing a series on love, specifically, agape love, this Sunday, speaking from Mark 12:28-34.

Quote: *In all of my years of service to my Lord, I have discovered a truth that has never failed and has never been compromised. That truth is that it is beyond the realm of possibilities that one has the ability to out give God. Even if I give the whole of my worth to Him, He will find a way to give back to me much more than I gave.* ~ Charles Spurgeon

Joke: As my five-year-old son and I were heading to McDonald's one day, we passed a car accident. Usually when we see something terrible like that, we say a prayer for whoever might be hurt, so I pointed and said to my son, "We should pray."

From the back seat I heard his earnest voice: "Dear God, please don't let those cars block the entrance to McDonald's."

Blessings on your weekend and day of worship.

D-

Survey of interest and input for NSC Ladies Retreat

If you attended a conference women's retreat in the past, what did you experience that was the most meaningful for you?

What aspects of the conference women's retreat you feel need improvement?

Of the list below, what four aspects are the most important to you when attending a women's ministry event? Please circle

Table talks Food Location/Accommodations Structure
Music/Worship Individual/Group Prayer Relevant Topics Service/Missions Project
Breaks/leisure time Sharing Testimonies hands on resources
Teaching/Sessions Group enrichment activities Prayer partners

What topics and issues would you like to hear about at a conference women's retreat?

If a conference women's retreat was planned, would you be interested in serving? YES or NO

If yes, what areas are you lead to service?

Planning Registration Greeting/Hospitality Decorating Advertising/Inviting Others
Scripture/Prayer Leader Table/Discussion Leader Audio/Visual/Media Speaking
Prayer(before/during/after) Leading Worship Food/Beverage

Men's Ministries muscle

Finally, be strong in the Lord and in His Mighty power.

Ephesians 6:10

NO REGRETS CONFERENCE - February 1, 2020

EVERY FMC church has the opportunity to live stream the NO REGRETS Men's Conference from Brookfield, Wisconsin. Check it out here: <https://www.noregretsconference.org/>. No requirement on church size or number of attendees! You can have a small group of guys gather and take part in this event! Simply sign up with Jan Ellis at jan.ellis@fmcusa.org and receive the \$25.00 off promo code. Jan will also register your Men's group with MMI so that you will receive our quarterly newsletters, special pricing on MMI gear, and the \$25.00 savings on the NO REGRETS Men's Conference.

UKRAINE WORK



Our MMI 2 Timothy 2:2 guys from Ukraine wearing MMI shirts. To learn more about what they are doing, visit their webpages:

Valera Pedchenko

<https://www.facebook.com/people/Валерій-Педченко/100001017885014>

Misha Petrochenko

<https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100008663315290>

MECH MEN

MECH MEN are thankful for the donation of a bus from the New Hope Worship Center FMC in Charleston IL. Through their generosity, a private financial donor and the Solid Rock FMC in Pontoon Beach IL and the Ministerio Apostolico Plantio Del Senor FMC in St, Louis MO, a Central African FMC church in Kansas City will receive a bus to aid in church growth!



Pastor Eric Harmon, his grandson and MMI Director Ben Tolly



MEN'S MINISTRY LEADERSHIP RETREAT

Ten MMI Board members, and volunteers will travel to Puerto Rico to complete a work project, train Puerto Rican men for evangelism, and affiliate a new FM church. If you would be interested in attending a leadership trip in the future please let us know by emailing Jan Ellis at jan.ellis@fmcusa.org. These trips are designed to serve, train and celebrate with the FMC Men in areas of need around the globe.



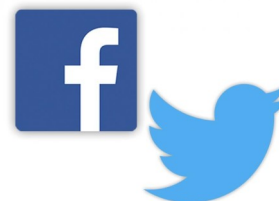
NEED SUPPORT



Tired of spending your money on Netflix movies that disappoint? Stop it! Decide to create a meaningful TRUE STORY movie of your own by supporting MMI. We are in need of financial contributors to support our catalyst efforts with fledgling new ministries around the world. Join us on the great adventure! Go to mmifm.org and donate now!

SOCIAL MEDIA

Have you checked out our MMI webpage? We try to keep it updated with current events and updates. Check it often. Also, make sure to “Like” us on Facebook. We can be found as Men’s Ministries International. And lastly, follow us on our new Twitter Account—MensMinistriesFMC “@FmcMens”. Keep up to date with all that’s going on by following us on all of these platforms.



THE PURPOSE OF MMI

Why Men’s Ministries International? In a current world where men are confused regarding what role to fulfill in their career, church, community and family, MMI exists to guide men toward a renewed purpose. MMI serves Christ and His church by discipling men for evangelism and service. Men are mobilized to evangelize and serve in their homes, churches and neighborhoods. In addition to resourcing men in their local and conference roles, MMI sponsors international ministries. We help men mobilize to make a Christ-filled impact wherever they are. We do this through discipling men for evangelism and service for God’s Kingdom through fellowship and service projects.

MMI GEAR

We now have Men’s Ministries International shirts, hats, beanies, and t-shirts. If you would like to place an order, please contact Jan Ellis at jan.ellis@fmcusa.org. We also have a Men’s Ministry starter kit available to jumpstart your Men’s Ministry. Look on the webpage (mmifm.org) for more information.

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FIRST THINGS

HOMESICK FOR ETERNITY

by
Matthew Schmitz
February 2020

In 2018, Barack Obama urged his Facebook followers to read *Why Liberalism Failed* by Patrick Deneen. We live, Obama said, in a time of “increasing disillusionment with the liberal democratic order.” He traced this disillusionment to a trend that liberal democracies ignore at their own peril: the “loss of meaning and community.”

Obama was right to notice a turn away from liberalism. Drawing on the World Values Survey, Roberto Foa and Yascha Mounk have found that whereas 72 percent of Americans born before World War II believe it is “essential” to live in a democracy, only 30 percent of millennials agree. As the authors note, “Disaffection with the democratic form of government is accompanied by a wider skepticism toward liberal institutions. Citizens are growing more disaffected with established political parties, representative institutions, and minority rights.” A similar pattern holds across the developed democracies.

Obama was also correct to attribute the disillusionment to a loss of meaning and community. In 2018, Demos, a think tank in Britain, conducted a series of surveys and focus groups in Britain, France, and Germany. They found that though each nation possessed “in historical terms, momentous levels of prosperity, standards of living, and global influence, a substantial minority—or even majority—of citizens are gripped by a kind of malaise, a sense that something is fundamentally rotten at the heart of their societies.” The researchers described “an omnipresent, menacing feeling of decline,” a belief “that the very best of their culture and communities has been irreversibly lost, that the nation’s best days have passed.”

In order to understand our moment, it is helpful to read Arnold Toynbee, British historian and theorist of civilizational change. Toynbee argued that periods of civilizational growth are marked by a broad consensus capable of inspiring the allegiance even of those on the economic and cultural margins. In periods of decline, by contrast, society falls into schism. It becomes divided into “a dominant minority, which rules with increasing oppressiveness but no longer leads, and a proletariat . . . which responds to this challenge by becoming conscious that it has a soul of its own.”

Toynbee’s idea of the proletariat was broader than Marx’s. Instead of defining it in material terms, as the unpropertied urban industrial underclass, Toynbee saw the proletariat in terms of shared attitude. “The true hall-mark of the proletarian,” he wrote, “is neither poverty nor humble birth but a consciousness—and the resentment that this consciousness inspires—of being disinherited from [one’s] ancestral place in society.” Though proletarianization might be accompanied by economic pauperization, it was, in essence, “a state of feeling rather than a matter of outward circumstance.” A proletarian might be an urban laborer displaced from the agricultural life he had once known, or a ci-devant aristocrat deprived of title and property, or even a slave transported from Africa to a nation that denied his humanity. What these otherwise different men shared was the experience of being uprooted, of inheritance denied.

How does liberalism bring about this feeling? There are as many definitions of liberalism as there are people who have discussed it, but as a practical matter, there exist two forms of liberalism, tied to two political movements. Left liberalism seeks to deliver man from prejudice, discrimination, and inequality through a reordering of society. Its adherents instinctively mistrust religion, nation, and family. Right liberalism, or classical liberalism, shares with left liberalism a concern for the autonomy of the individual, but it tends to stress economic rather than cultural freedom. It is less suspicious of religion and family than of the state.

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Since the end of the Second World War, left and right liberals have dominated the politics of the developed democracies. To an extent once unimaginable, capital has been freed from political control, and men have been freed from moral limits. The aptly named “liberal order” now overspreads the globe. It stresses free movement over rootedness, cosmopolitanism over loyalty, and the present over the past. It has led to what Toynbee would describe as a world of proletarians, men who may be prosperous but feel they lack a home and history.

One of the revolutionary slogans of 1968 was, “I want to be an orphan.” Today, people across the globe are demanding a patrimony. A variety of movements attempt to answer this need. The most prominent are the various populist and nationalist movements—stretching from Budapest and Warsaw to Washington, D.C.—that promise to revive and defend national identity. For all their differences, these movements offer their adherents a stake in a larger community, a connection to a purportedly heroic past.

In the face of these movements, Christians have offered a confused response. Some have seemed to embrace racial idolatry, while others have denounced any defense of the nation as suspect, if not simply fascist. Christians, along with their fellow citizens, need a more rigorous response. Without denying the importance of political and national loyalties, Christians must firmly reject all forms of racial hatred and idolatry.

Over the last two centuries, the leaders of the Catholic Church have developed a rich tradition of social thought, which seeks to address man’s need for community. They have insisted that men are unhappy unless they participate in the “three necessary societies”: the family, the political community, and the Church. Right liberals have sometimes doubted the necessity of the political society, whereas left liberals and socialists have sometimes doubted the necessity of Church and family. Catholic thought insists on the necessity of all three.

One need not be Catholic to see the logic of this theory. It recognizes that every human is part of a family. It understands that men are by nature political animals, and that if they are deprived of real political life—if they live under benevolent but remote technocratic governance or a totalitarian state—they will grow restive. Above all, it acknowledges that men have desires that cannot be satisfied in this world. Even those who deny the soul’s immortality feel immortal longings.

In 1939, at the outbreak of World War II, Pope Pius XII drew on this tradition to condemn racial hatred. He traced the rise of Nazism to two related errors: “forgetfulness of the law of universal charity” and denial of a higher spiritual realm, to which politics must answer. Christians preach that all men have immortal souls, and share a common origin and calling. Nazis, by contrast, claimed there are quasi-metaphysical qualities separating different nationalities, with some ranked higher than others. Pius XII warned that this sort of racism “elevates the State or group into the last end of life, the supreme criterion of the moral and juridical order.” Race became a kind of divinity.

Pius XII was no callow anti-nationalist. The Church, he said, “does not think of deprecating or disdain the particular characteristics which each people, with jealous and intelligible pride, cherishes and retains as a precious heritage.” He likewise defended the family. But he believed that nation and family could become idols unless they were part of “a supernatural union in all-embracing love,” a solidarity that unites all mankind. Pius XI had made the same point in *Mit Brennender Sorge*, his 1937 letter condemning Nazism. “He who sings hymns of loyalty to this terrestrial country should not,” he wrote, “become unfaithful to God and His Church, or a deserter and traitor to His heavenly country.”

Racism is a form of idolatry. It replaces the loyalty we owe to God with loyalty to a lower thing. The popes understood that what many men seek—an inheritance, a home, a true community—cannot finally be found in nation or race, because this desire is too large to be satisfied by anything less than the divine. We feel, as Pius XII put it, “a homesickness for things eternal.” This did not lead the popes to disdain worldly forms of belonging. They instead insisted that worldly belonging must be subordinated to a higher and universal authority.

In concrete terms, this meant fully recognizing the rights and freedom of the Church, and fighting any attempt to place state, race, or nation above the law of universal charity. The fact that a person falls outside one’s race or nationality could never justify treating him with anything less than charity in spiritual affairs and justice in the political realm. The one is a supernatural acknowledgement of human dignity; the other a natural acknowledgement. Recognizing a spiritual community above every political community does not license totalitarian theocracy. On the contrary, it limits the pretensions of worldly powers while providing the true basis for gentleness and charity.

Weakened families and weakened political communities have made men clamor for worldly solidarities. But these loyalties will prove to be perverse and unsatisfying unless they are ordered to a higher loyalty. The vague feeling of homelessness, the queasy sense of disinheritance identified by Obama and Toynbee, reflects our spiritual as well as our political conditions. It is the unease of children cut off from a Father who wants to give them everything. It must be directed not to any nation or race, but to our true home, our true inheritance, which exists above. Nothing else will satisfy a world homesick for eternity.

Matthew Schmitz is senior editor of FIRST THINGS.