

## **FIRST AND CENTER**

### **Pastor's Blog**

**July 3, 2018**

I admit to being confused every time someone suggests that the United States of America was founded as a “Christian” nation. Or that we **are** a “Christian” nation. If that is so, then this nation, in its laws, policies, and practices, would be following Christ’s teachings. That’s what Christians are supposed to do. If we did, then the number one law would be “Love God.” The second would be “Love your neighbor as yourself.” That particular law would be defined as Jesus defined it to a lawyer: the story of the Good Samaritan, a man who helped another man from a different country and religion when he needed help. If the US was a “Christian” nation, then all our laws would be summed up by “love others as I have loved you,” the “I” here being Christ.



I’m not seeing it. Not in our laws. Not in the policies by which those laws are carried out. Not in the way our leaders in general speak or act. Actually, it never was that way in a nation founded by people who drove out or killed the original inhabitants of the land in order to steal the land. In a nation that carefully crafted its founding documents to allow for enslaved Africans to be sold as property and used as though they were not human. So, no, we are not, nor were we ever, a “Christian” nation.

No nation is, or ever was. Christians in the beginning were those who questioned the prevailing cultures and provided an alternate vision for human society and relationships: The Kingdom of God vision. At our best, our role has been as those who lift up love and call others to embrace love as the moral grounding of their lives. Our role, like that of Jesus, is to be healers, truth tellers, those who care for strangers, teachers about the merciful character of God.

Tomorrow, we will all hear rhetoric from politicians of every party claiming that this is the greatest country in the world, or words to that effect. It’s actually not a competition. If it was, we’d remember the words of Jesus, that the greatest among us are to be those who serve. That the first will be last, and the last first. Christian Americans, our role continues to be what it is for Christians in every nation: proclaim and live the gospel, no matter what. God be with us all!

~ Rev. Shelly Stackhouse  
Transitional Minister