SERMON(S) ON THE MOUNT

Earlier this week, just a few minutes from where I lived in Aurora, Colorado, over 500 teens took over a shopping center (Hoffman Heights) and invaded a grocery store and also took over and damaged a Burger King restaurant. The videos (see videos on the internet) are disturbing and even scary. Aurora, a suburb of Denver, is not unique in this regard - these lawless "takeovers" are happening in a number of large metro areas nation-wide. *What in the world is happening to our nation?*

America is no longer a nation of the Book. The Bible has disappeared from most arenas of discourse. Nonetheless, the Sermon on the Mount is still widely recognized, or at least aspects of it... the golden rule for instance (Matt. 7:12). Nowhere else in scripture does Jesus so beautifully prepare his followers for their life on earth and their trek to heaven. The more we, as a nation, lose touch with the 5th, 6th, and 7th chapters of Matthew the more we lose touch with Jesus, and the more we lose our civility.

But another famous passage is also shrinking from the American psyche. It has been said that we are a nation without proverbs. We lack "grandma's proverbs" such as, "A stitch in time saves nine," and we lack God's book of Proverbs as a personal and national guide. During the Watergate investigations, the judge would often quote a very applicable Bible passage from the book of Proverbs at the beginning of the day's proceedings. But today, though we hear an abundance of political rhetoric, we hear little proverbial recitation.

I have come to believe that the book of Proverbs is the "Sermon on the Mount" of the Old Testament. To this day, no one book, biblical or otherwise, gives us such a solid and successful world view as the book of Proverbs. It is in this book that God teaches the widest array of practical ways to relate to the world around us. With Proverbs' truths, God builds into us a world view that says integrity wins over manipulation, honesty prevails over deception, and suffering for right is victorious over the ease and pleasure of wrong.

Proverbs has 31 chapters and most months have 30 or 31 days. I am convinced that the best way to start your day is reading a chapter of Proverbs that corresponds to the day of the month. On September 6th, read Proverbs chapter 6, etc. The entire Bible is vital to our earthly living and our living forever, and the Book of Proverbs is the key to understanding how the world works, how to work in the world and how to stay focused on God's plan for your life.

Pray for Aurora, pray for America. And from Genesis to Revelation, walk "in His steps," (1 Peter 2:21).

Love, Ray Wallace