

FOURTH QUARTER STRATEGIES – Saturday, April 11, 2015

I left Fort Monmouth, New Jersey in April 1969 just four months before the Woodstock Festival took place a few miles north in Bethel, New York. As a Captain in the US Army, I doubt I would have attended had I not been transferred to Fort Huachuca, Arizona, but I've often wondered since I considered myself a bit of free spirit in those days. Well, the small college town of Isla Vista adjacent to the University of California at Santa Barbara just experienced its own unsanctioned event recently. Easter weekend (during Spring Break) saw over ten thousand young people partaking in what has been tagged as Deltopia in recent years. In 2009, the last major Floatopia was held in Isla Vista on the beaches of Santa Barbara. A badly trashed shoreline after the party that year led to the demise of the event. It was quickly replaced by Deltopia named for Del Playa Street where most of the activity takes place. Local law enforcement agencies were delighted that the crowds this year were peaceable and only ten thousand showed up Saturday evening. There were over twenty thousand the prior year and the crowds were uncontrollable. But I'd like to pivot from the event to the people.

In my view, the people represent what such events are all about. Twenty thousand is quite small compared to the 400,000 claimed to have been at Woodstock in August 1969. But the draw was the same and I imagine it will always be that way. There was no music festival at Deltopia, but there was plenty of alcohol and a sundry of drugs to be had for a price. That price assimilates to 102 arrests and 140 citations. Nine people were transported to area hospitals. On the surface it appears that all went well as compared to the previous year when there were 130 arrests, 190 citations issued and over 520 calls for service by medical professionals and law enforcement. Yes, all appeared to be under control, but I question why people act the way they often do!

Teenagers comprise most of the crowd at these events and they'll attest that they really just want to have some fun and enjoy a big party. Frankly, I see no difference between these young folks and the Israelites reaction to Moses when he did not come down from Mount Sinai. As you may recall, they decided to follow Aaron's lead and worshipped a golden calf which greatly tarnished their relationship with God. There was a deep cost for their disobedience and the loss of around 3,000 lives. I suspect those young revelers will also face some consequences for their behavior just as all have experienced through the centuries. I'm certain we all regret some stupid things we've done in our early lives. There's nothing we can do to right those wrongs, but we can certainly attempt to learn from our mistakes. Whether it's a block party, a Deltopia or a Woodstock, we need to assess the consequences of our actions and the impact it may have on others. No doubt there were young Christians caught up in this recent event and they may not even feel that their actions were wrong. I believe there's an acid test, a bottom line. We need to simply ask this question "Is our action pleasing to God?"

Some of you may think I'm being harsh in my assessment. Well, I believe a cursory glance at God's Word will prove my point. God knows we can easily stray, yet He wants dearly to be in a close relationship with all His creation. Our goal should be to walk as close to Him as Enoch did. He wants us to have life more abundantly rather than the whims of this world. The Deltopias will continue until Jesus returns, but as followers of Christ we need to be set apart from this world and its snares. I chose to simply follow Jesus and I trust you'll join me!

Here to serve,

Jim Langley, CLU

Passages to Ponder: Genesis 5:21-24; Psalm 145:18; Proverbs 15:33; Proverbs 1:10; John 12:43; Romans 12:2;
1 John 2:15;

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Genesis 5:21-24 New King James Version (NKJV)

²¹ Enoch lived sixty-five years, and begot Methuselah. ²² After he begot Methuselah, Enoch walked with God three hundred years, and had sons and daughters. ²³ So all the days of Enoch were three hundred and sixty-five years. ²⁴ And Enoch walked with God; and he *was* not, for God took him.

Psalm 145:18 (NKJV)

¹⁸ The LORD *is* near to all who call upon Him,
To all who call upon Him in truth.

Proverbs 15:33 (NKJV)

³³ The fear of the LORD *is* the instruction of wisdom,
And before honor *is* humility.

Proverbs 1:10 (NKJV)

¹⁰ My son, if sinners entice you,
Do not consent.

John 12:42-43 (NKJV)

⁴² Nevertheless even among the rulers many believed in Him, but because of the Pharisees they did not confess *Him*, lest they should be put out of the synagogue; ⁴³ for they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God.

Romans 12:2 (NKJV)

² And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what *is* that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.

1 John 2:15 (NKJV)

¹⁵ Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him.