



# Gleanings

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## Wisdom

Do you see a man wise in his own eyes? There is more hope for a fool than for him.

Solomon Pro 26:12 (NIV)

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## The Rules of Corporate Governance

Corporate America has gone nuts with titles. Most organizations have a CEO, COO, and CFO. In recent years, some organizations have created positions such as CIO (chief information officer), CKO (chief knowledge officer), CMO (chief marketing officer), CVO (chief visionary officer), etc. Now we are seeing the CGO (chief governance officer).

According to the AP wire service on July 14<sup>th</sup> of this year, "Pitney Bowes Inc. (PBI) last week named Amy Crean Corn to its newly created position of chief governance officer. Corn, who will remain Pitney Bowes' corporate secretary, will be charged with overseeing governance policies, corporate compliance, integrity affairs, and the company's safety and environmental units." AP goes on to report Chairman and CEO Michael Critelli's comment regarding this announcement: "At a time when corporate governance has come under fire, creating this position will further solidify our commitment to maintaining the highest standards in corporate governance and integrity."

While it is laudable to recognize the importance of compliance, the question is compliance to what? Compliance implies a standard. Is there a standard of corporate governance to which organizations are obligated to comply? If so, who defines the standard and what happens if organizations fail to comply? If the universe was created, does it not logically follow that the creator would make the rules for all the games of the universe; namely, personal, family, business, church, and government? If so, the creator defines the standards of corporate governance to which organizations are to comply. Is it possible that the corporate collapses of Enron, Arthur Andersen, WorldCom, et al were simply failures to comply with the creator's rules for corporate governance?

## When It's Your Time, It's Your Time

Recently while waiting to board an airplane, I overheard someone make the comment, "when it's your time, it's your time". On the surface, it is not a terribly profound comment. However, it reflects an assumption about life that many today would find offensive; namely, it implies the existence of a divine being of some sort who has enough control over the affairs of men to decide when people die. In fact, this divine being may even determine the circumstances of the death of us mortals.

As many in America race to de-Christianize educational and governmental institutions, the American people, at least some of us, are stating that they do not wish for the God of Christianity to have any influence over us. Hence, they don't want the Christian God in public education much less in the legal system.

What if the Christian God is the God of the universe? If the Christian



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God is the only God of the universe, what would His opinion be about the de-Christianization of our society?

Stonewall Jackson, the famous civil war general, was a professor of logic before the Civil War at the Virginia Military Institute. He was an avid debater and loved to engage in ardent dialogue with those who opposed Christianity. One of his favorite arguments was this. Speaking to his atheistic opponent he stated that if you don't believe in God and are right, you no better off than I am. We both end up dead and there is no after life. But if I am right and the God of Christianity is real, I am infinitely better off than you because I will spend eternity in heaven and you in hell. Therefore in the long run, there is no advantage to your position.

So the question is very simple. Do you believe that when it's your time, it's your time? If you do, you need to be about knowing the God who is controlling your time. If you don't believe that such a God exists, you might be wrong.

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## **Nepotism**

From time to time, when I was working in the family business started by my father, I would encounter an article, book, or seminar dealing with nepotism. Since I was the son of the owner, I rarely paid much attention to this topic. I didn't want to discover too much; after all, I might not like what I found out.

There is a good side of nepotism in that it promotes generational transfer. Generational transfer is simply the practice of passing on to the next generation all the resources possible to help them do a better job at ruling planet earth than the current generation. This includes encouragement, direction, knowledge, and finances. In this way the earth is subdued and affords each succeeding generation greater opportunities for advancement.

There is also a negative side to nepotism, which all too often is the side that is seen. When relatives are given jobs in organizations simply because of their blood relationship, this usually proves to be ill advised. A good manager is always seeking the right person for each job. Allowing blood relationship to trump all other considerations frequently leads to the wrong people in jobs. Imagine a football team with an offensive line composed of 200-pound lanky wide-receiver types who would be hopelessly annihilated by 350-pound defensive linemen. The quarterback would become easy prey in such a dysfunctional scenario. Everyone would immediately recognize the problem; the wrong people are in the offensive line. So it is when a businessman or manager fails to properly qualify his/her blood relative for a job.

If one really wants to develop an excellent organization in every respect, one must hire the best people and properly place them in the organization. As difficult as it is, excellence demands that personal agendas be subordinated to the good of the organization. Anything less will compromise the organization's ability to be world-class. This means that blood cannot be the major criterion for a job.

Yes, blood is thicker than water, which is why dysfunctional nepotism is so ubiquitous. But if one really wants to bless a blood relative, one should not seek to give him/her a job. Rather one should help the relative understand why he/she is here and what he/she is called to do. Then everyone wins. The organization is not burdened with a poorly performing, and usually miserable, employee, and the blood relative finds great satisfaction fulfilling his/her destiny. Now this is success, don't you think?