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# Gleanings

## The Option of Last Resort



Gerald R. Chester, Ph.D.  
President

Strategies@Work, LLC  
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The oil leak in the Gulf of Mexico continues seemingly interminably. To date, all efforts to stop the leak have been only marginally effective. As of late June the estimated volume of oil released into the gulf was 125 million gallons and rising. In May, drilling of two relief wells commenced, which hopefully will enable BP to stop the uncontrolled leak. These relief wells should be completed in August; hence, the contamination to the Gulf Coast region will continue until at least then.

In the meantime, businesses in the Gulf Coast area are suffering. Tourism and commercial fishing have been significantly impaired. The trickledown effect impacts virtually everyone. No one knows the full economic impact. Some estimates, however, are more than one hundred billion dollars.  
([http://money.cnn.com/2010/05/26/news/economy/gulf\\_economy/index.htm?postversion=2010052603](http://money.cnn.com/2010/05/26/news/economy/gulf_economy/index.htm?postversion=2010052603))

There is also the economic impact on the energy industry. Because of this disaster, there will be increasing pressure to curtail drilling in the gulf, at least in deep waters.

Given that the United States is still heavily dependent on foreign oil from, at best, marginally friendly sources, moving toward energy independence is very important for political and economic stability. Public policy decisions that impair efforts to move toward energy independence would therefore be unwise. Nevertheless, the political pressure to curb deep-water oil and gas exploration will be enormous.

Two basic worldviews have been widely adopted in responding to the Gulf Coast disaster—naturalism and deism.

Naturalists believe that physical reality is the only reality and there is no spiritual reality; therefore, all of life must be explained by natural causes. Atheists and agnostics are naturalists.

Deists believe in a God who created the universe and made all the rules for the universe but believe that God is no longer involved in the universe. This means that the universe is left to fend for itself without divine intervention. Therefore, like naturalists, deists explain events using natural causes. In practice, deists think like naturalists.

So far, both BP and government officials seem to be approaching the gulf disaster as deists/naturalists. All efforts to understand and respond to this catastrophe are rooted in the natural.

But what if deism and naturalism are wrong? What if God exists and is involved in His Creation, and therefore, in some way, is involved in the Gulf Coast disaster? If our thinking does not allow for this possibility, then we may not understand the real root issue. And if we don't understand root issues, we will only work on the symptoms. We may be able to abate the symptoms, but we never really solve the problem. So the problem will return, perhaps in different ways, but it will return.

No one seems particularly pleased with the efforts of the Obama administration's management of this disaster. The president supposedly persuaded BP to set up a twenty billion dollar fund to pay for compensation and cleanup costs, but it appears that BP was already providing financial relief for those damaged by the disaster. So the influence of the Obama administration is unclear.

As for Congress, it did as it typically does—it reserved a room for a meeting (a congressional hearing). Along with getting reelected, meeting to talk and cast blame seems to be one of the fortes of our legislators.

Consequently, the efforts of the federal government seem to be marginally effective at best, and inept at



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worst. Perhaps this is because of the naturalistic/deistic worldview that seems to be embraced by BP, the Obama administration, and Congress.

In the absence of spiritual leadership from the federal government, there is at least one state that is willing to discard naturalism/deism. Louisiana decided to pull out all the stops and chose what most would view as the option of last resort—prayer.

Louisiana Senate Resolution 145 (<http://www.legis.state.la.us/billdata/streamdocument.asp?did=718485>), which I did read, declared Sunday, June 20, 2010, a “Statewide Day of Prayer for Louisiana and for the population and region surrounding the Gulf of Mexico.” This is bold in light of Judge Barbara Crabb’s recent ruling that the National Day of Prayer is unconstitutional ([http://www.usatoday.com/news/religion/2010-04-15-prayer-day\\_N.htm](http://www.usatoday.com/news/religion/2010-04-15-prayer-day_N.htm)) because it violates the First Amendment known as the “establishment clause.” I guess the Louisiana Senate did not get the memo from Judge Crabb. Or perhaps when the circumstances of life get too difficult and people feel helpless because their deistic or naturalistic worldview is not working, there is something in man that causes him to look to God. So attempts to reject God are discarded, at least until the current disaster or difficulty is over.

The Louisiana Resolution contains some interesting language. For example, it acknowledges the heritage of theism—based on a God who intervenes in the affairs of men—and our proper place of humility before God. Note the following quotes from the resolution:

WHEREAS, in times of great distress and need, we, the people of this land, have always turned to private, public, and corporate prayer . . .

WHEREAS, a Statewide Day of Prayer provides each of us with a powerful opportunity to humble ourselves before our Almighty God . . .

Wow—very interesting language in a day when the wholesale rejection of God seems to be in vogue.

It appears the legislators knew that their resolution would not be politically correct so they sought to soften the Christian overtones by projecting a pluralistic and syncretistic view. Note these words:

WHEREAS, the citizens of Louisiana are urged to pray for a solution to this crisis, *each according to his or her own faith*, to pray for God's continued guidance and protection, and to join in the observance of a day of prayer, seeking God's blessings upon both our state and nation . . . (emphasis added)

The wording allows for each person to embrace his or her own worldview, inferring that all worldviews are acceptable. This is known as *pluralism*. The next step beyond pluralism is *syncretism*. Syncretism not only accepts all other worldviews but also *finds value* in all worldviews. Syncretism is based on pluralism; however, pluralism does not have to be syncretistic.

Pluralism and syncretism are not biblical. They are symptoms of idolatry. The Bible is clear that there is only one God, revealed in Jesus Christ. Since all worldviews are based on some view of God and there is only one true God, there is only one true worldview. All other “gods” are not gods but idols. (See Exodus 20:1–6.) Therefore all other worldviews are false. A biblical worldview is the only worldview that will enable us to correctly understand and respond to the Gulf Coast calamity.

While I applaud the Louisiana Senate for acknowledging the heritage of theism in the United States, the need to be humble before God, and for rejecting deism/naturalism, I do not applaud their pluralism and syncretism. It is not enough to pray to any so-called god. Consider the prophets of Baal in the Old Testament who prayed to their “god” but he did not answer. (See 1 Kings 18.) The God of our Lord Jesus Christ is a living God who responds to those who seek Him. (See Acts 17:27–30.) He is the God who provides help in times of need. (See Hebrews 4:16.)

People with a biblical worldview need to turn to the Lord and seek His face. We need to pray to the one true God—the God of the Lord Jesus Christ who is revealed in the Bible. This is our only source of true help. We need God's wisdom to understand why this Gulf Disaster happened and how to truly solve the problem at the root level.

May the Lord grant us grace to reject naturalism, deism, pluralism, and syncretism and to seek Him biblically. This is the only worldview from which to truly solve the Gulf Coast problem and indeed all the problems of life.

In God's universe, sound theology leads to economic and political blessings, and bad theology leads to economic and political calamity. (See Psalms 1.) So if we really want to solve the problems of life at the root level, deism/naturalism will not work. Nor will prayer to other gods. The only real help and true solution to the issues of life comes by embracing a biblical worldview and praying to the one true God who is revealed in and through Jesus Christ.

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	<a href="#">Webinar</a> : Strategic Life Alignment Alumni Event	September 2010
Biblical Principles of Work	<a href="#">Webinar</a> : Financial Management II	Fall of 2010