



WHEN I WAS A YOUNG LAD I thought that Dwight D. Eisenhower had *always* been the president of our country, and that Reverend Anderson had *always* been the pastor of our First Baptist Church.

That's not surprising, because in the late 1950s the immediate world surrounding a boy in Middle America was a pretty stable place. Oh, sure, we were all digging bomb shelters in the back yard for fear of a thermo-nuclear ballistic missile arcing its way over from the Soviet Union, but the immediate world—home, neighborhood, family, school, church, Main Street—was one in which you could depend on tomorrow. Your dad went to work, your mom sent you off to school every morning, and someone was always there waiting for you when you came back home in the afternoon.

Back fifty-odd years ago, a young boy had a well-established idea of right and wrong. That's not to say that he always *obeyed* the

rules, but he knew which behavior would bring praise—and which would bring punishment. If he dutifully memorized his verses for summer church camp, took out the garbage when asked, and came straight home after school, he was praised. If he broke a neighbor's window, he was punished—and had to pay for the new one. If he was disrespectful to an adult (that is, someone *outside* the family; it would never occur to him to behave so to his parents), he was punished. If after the final school bell he detoured to the local creek to catch crawdads, and was late getting home, he was punished.

There were rules, and they didn't change much from day to day.

Reflections
by the Pond

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*My hope is built on nothing less
Than Jesus' blood and righteousness;
I dare not trust the sweetest frame,
But wholly lean on Jesus' name.*

*On Christ, the solid Rock I stand:
All other ground is sinking sand,
All other ground is sinking sand.*

Edward Mote

Our world is now a different kind of place. The Soviet Union is no more, and Russia is a third-world country overwhelmed by corruption and greed. There may be a young boy today who thinks Barack Hussein Obama, even after just a few months in office, has always been the president. But that same young boy also knows that the *office* of the United States presidency no longer holds any moral authority—in fact he surely doesn't know that it ever did. No matter its occupant, the office is now reviled by half the country and worshipped by the rest—but respected by none.

Our world no longer has any rules. Today's little boy who breaks the neighbor's window will just as easily be declared a victim of a dysfunctional family, told that it wasn't really his fault, and be awarded a scholarship to Yale. World leaders meet with each other and, too timid to do the heavy lifting, accomplish little more than posing prettily for the cameras.

Even allowing for the rose-tinted perception of hindsight, it seems like society used to sit atop a solid foundation, while today it sways drunkenly atop shifting sand dunes.

When I was a boy, I could depend on President Eisenhower and Reverend Anderson. I looked up to them, I respected them. But respect is fast becoming an antiquated notion. "Trust" has become the habit of fools alone.

Is there no longer *anyone* dependable?

"Let my teaching drop as the rain,
My speech distill as the dew,
As the droplets on the fresh grass
And as the showers on the herb.

For I proclaim the name of the Lord;
Ascribe greatness to our God!
The Rock! His work is perfect,
For all His ways are just;
A God of faithfulness and without injustice,
Righteous and upright is He."

Deuteronomy 32:2-4

This same society that so knowingly teeters upon the leeward edge of the nearest shifting dune, displays a virulent loathing of the one thing that would bring it stability and peace:

Faith in God.

It refuses to acknowledge the only one—the only leader, the only head—worthy of our trust and respect:

God.

It refuses to believe in the only one who dependably offers true hope, true joy, true and lasting constancy:

The only Lord, Jesus Christ.

"My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me; and I give eternal life to them, and they will never perish; and no one will snatch them out of My hand. My Father, who has given them to Me, is greater than all; and no one is able to snatch them out of the Father's hand. I and the Father are one."

John 10:27-30

For now, just for now, this society may be wallowing in a slough of distrust, disrespect, and cynicism regarding our fellow man. We may have lost just about anything here on this earth in which we can trust.

But we have not lost our God.

He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation. For by Him all things were created, *both* in the heavens and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things have been created through Him and for Him.

He is before all things, and in Him all things hold together. He is also head of the body, the church; and He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, so that He Himself will come to have first place in everything. For it was the Father's good pleasure for all the fullness to dwell in Him, and through Him to reconcile all things to Himself, having made peace through the blood of His cross; through Him, I say, whether things on earth or things in heaven.

Colossians 1:15-20

