

GROWING IN GRACE LETTERS! – Calling saints in Christ, (in our homes and with one another in Church), to walk in the Steps of Jesus! (1 Peter 2:15-25) Edited by James Bell, a servant of Jesus Christ!

6 23 26 V2n8 **“REVIVAL! IS GOD! POINTING HIS FINGER! AT ME!”** [Title is a ‘quote’ from 1977-78, Canadian Revival Fellowship folks, leading some special meetings at Southside!]

SADLY, and more often than not, REVIVAL, in our time, is but a series of meetings, special prayer meetings may be planned; an Evangelist or Revivalist and special musicians are called upon to lead the effort. SUCCESSFUL Revivals are gaged by good attendance, some ‘re-dedications’ ... and some folk who ‘get saved’ and some of them baptized — then a few weeks later all is back to NORMAL CARNALITY; with those IN THE CHURCHES not being HARDLY ANY DIFFERENT from those OUTSIDE THE CHURCHES.

WE NEED TO DIG DEEPER!

I. FIRST THINGS FIRST! WE MUST FIRST understand that the Bible makes a clear distinction between “the world” and “the church” or what 1 Corinthians 5:12-13 calls “those who are inside” and “those who are outside.”

Jesus said [of His disciples] “They are not of the world, just as I am not of the world” (John 17:16). **Christians cannot be the world and the world cannot be Christian — although both keep trying!** Nations are part of the world and its system; THE TRUE CHURCH IS NOT — the two can never be the same!

ADDITIONAL CONFUSION: American 'Christians' are quick to get excited about a SAVE or REVIVE AMERICA campaign ... where they (WE!?) REPEATEDLY POINT OUT HOW BAD THE WORLD IS!

MOREOVER, CHRISTIANS are OFTEN quick to want the destruction of 'ENEMY NATIONS' and forget that the chief mandate of the New Testament is the saving of the LOST in those nations; and we forget that we have brothers and sisters in Christ in such nations;

AND we forget that there is ONE and only one 'CHRISTIAN nation'— the world-wide nation of HIS CHURCH, **1 Peter 2:9-10!** **"But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvelous light; Which in time past were not a people, but are now the people of God: which had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy."**

II. WHICH KINGDOM IS TO BE OUR FOCUS?

JESUS SAYS, "My kingdom is not of this world. If My kingdom were of this world, My servants would fight, so that I should not be delivered to the Jews; but now My kingdom is not from here," John 18:36.

1. Thus, the New Testament Church **does not FOCUS ON** the issues of earthly citizenship. **She is focused on** the ONE HOLY NATION that spans the globe which has been purchased by the blood of Jesus Christ: 1 Peter 2:9-10!

2. YES, the New Testament Christian is called to be a good citizen in the midst of whatever temporal nation one may reside (Romans 13; 1 Timothy 2:1-4; Titus 3:1-7);

AND we are to live in the reality of

(1) THE COMING JUDGMENT;

(2) The burning up of this present world by fire; and the Glorious hope of NEW HEAVENS and a NEW EARTH! (2 Peter 3:7-14);

(3) The Great Commission is to be our master passion (Matthew 24: 1- 14; 28:18-20; Acts 1:6-8); and

(4) WE ARE looking for a city whose builder and maker is God, (Heb. 11:13-16, 36-40; 1 John 3:1-3.)

III. DANGER: Change! — Everybody Wants TEMPORAL Change!

In 2012, Former President Obama won the presidency on the slogan, “Change you can believe in!” Every political candidate of every party in America promises change. Many Christians and churches are actively campaigning for change in the country.

They [WE!] are QUICK to rally around REVIVAL for our nation! LET’S GET REAL: Can worldly, sin filled, strife filled Christian homes and churches be effective for REVIVAL in the land?

[NOTE: The purpose of this article is not to claim that there is no value in participation in our earthly political process. **The purpose is** to call for a FOCUS which is clearly drawn from the Word of God!]

IV. CHANGE— from the TOP down or from the BOTTOM Up?

MOST folks expect change to come from the top. The President, the Congress, the Supreme Court must change the country!

The pastor and/or deacons and elders must change the church. And if they can't do it, then we need to get the right leader/leaders in the job who will make the changes we need.

But the truth is that leaders cannot bring about change when the people (And even leaders!) refuse to change. It is true that godly leaders have godly influence and ungodly leaders will have an ungodly agenda.

However, we seem to forget that WE [In the Nation and/or in the Church] PLACED the leaders in office; and so often they are but a reflection of us! Nevertheless, God is still on the Throne of the universe and He rules in the affairs of men!

BUT AS TO the 'right' leader, consider the following: Moses was [one of] the greatest spiritual and political leaders of all time!

HOWEVER, in spite of all his gifts, skills, and anointing— he could not get the people to change from a nation of fearful slaves to a victorious people of God. They refused to love and obey God. Thus, God destroyed that whole generation.

TODAY, EVEN IF GOD SENT Moses to become the President of the USA; or the PASTOR of our church— MOSES would not be able to make the people change!

The Pastor is not the church and the President is not the nation. The ability and desire to change lies with each individual; and IS THE FRUIT OF NEW BIRTH and the indwelling of the Holy Spirit.

SPECIAL INSIGHT FROM THE PROPHET ISAIAH!

The first five chapters of Isaiah reflect the political situation in many countries and many churches today. **In Isaiah's day, Judah** was filled with corruption, sin, materialism, immorality, addictions, arrogance, hedonism, and a perversion of justice.

Isaiah saw all of that evil; and had as much to say about it, **EVEN** as we have to say about our society. Six times Isaiah pronounces woe on the sin and the sinners; *but in chapter six something dramatic happens. Isaiah saw the Lord and he saw himself in comparison to God. This time his response is “Woe is me, for I am undone!” (Isaiah 6:5)*

IT SEEMS CLEAR that GOD WANTED Isaiah to understand that BEFORE HE COULD BE OF GOOD USE IN MINISTRY TO A SPIRITUALLY NEEDY NATION— **he would need to deal with his own imperfections and problems first!**

THIS IS A COMMON ROOT PROBLEM!—

WE WANT THE SOLUTION, the change, the healing, the revival in the nation ... in the LOCAL CHURCH, to start with someone else!

We find it so easy to blame everyone else and to list the nation and/or the church's problems:

- 1.** We want the Ten Commandments written in stone in the court house, but it is not written in our hearts. In fact, we can't even recite them!
- 2.** We lash out AND/OR HAVE GROWING FEAR about the impact that Islam is having on our society but we have done [little or] nothing to impact our community with true Christianity.
- 3.** We will speak against abortion; but MANY CHURCH FOLK will use ABORTION clinics when CHURCH TEEN'S licentiousness bears fruit.
- 4.** We are angry about the 3,500 babies that are aborted every day in America (and we should be). But who cares about the millions of lost souls before whom and to whom WE CHRISTIANS place stumbling blocks and hostile environments?

5. We BLAST against same-sex “marriage”, yet our own marriages are a mess; **AND MORE AND MORE PASTORS** are leading the way as love failures— divorcing their wives and/or having no humility of heart to own personal failure; and not seriously seeking to save troubled marriages; and/ or to restore a fallen spouse.

6. We DESPISE and fear homosexuals and their rising visibility and influence. But we are not an example to our children of what a godly man and woman looks like.

7. We emasculate [weaken] men and make jokes when boys are effeminate and fathers are either brutes or wimps; and yet we wonder why boys become homosexual. Men do not know the meaning of true love and they do not take responsibility to be leaders in their homes and yet wonder why girls grow up to hate men and love women.

8. Everyone is frustrated about corruption, pork barrels and special deals in government yet we bribe our children and spouses when we have not done the right thing or we bribe them to get them to do the right thing.

9. We show favoritism to children, church members and others; and at the same time, we blame the government for favoring special interest groups and for nepotism.

10. We complain about the government bailing out big business when big business deserved to crash. At the same time, we bail our children out every time they paint themselves into a financial [or moral] corner.

11. Very few Christians read the Bible and pray regularly; and even fewer read the Bible and pray with their children. Yet those same people are angry about the removal of prayer and the Bible from schools.

12. Everyone is perturbed by the rising national debt and the inability of the government to curb expenditure **when their personal credit is maxed out and their own greed drives them to spend more than they earn.**

13. Many complain about the removal of the cross from public places but very, very few live a crucified life. This is the problem. It is much easier to lobby, picket, protest, and blame others for the very problems we are not willing to fix in our own lives.

14. We can have a cross on every street corner, but until we Christians, learn and practice what it means to take up the cross daily, nothing will change.

Like the fornicating, drunken celebrity who wears a cross around his/her neck, so Christians think that architectural crosses will cover the nation and church's backsliding and sin. But it does not.

15. Many Christians want revival in their church and complain about the state of the church, but they themselves are cold and far from God.

The same people who complain that the church does not grow, never bring an unbeliever to hear the Gospel, let alone witness to anyone.

16. Some Christians wonder why the church meetings are not full, but they themselves miss meetings for any excuse.

17. People complain that the worship is dead but they themselves do not sing with all their heart and never open their mouth to say a few words to praise the Lord.

18. Christians complain about the lack of love in the church, but they themselves will not go out of their way to show love to others.

19. Every church has a group of people who wish they could have a better pastor, but they never pray for God to anoint him and make him better.

You see, ALL TOO OFTEN we think that if we can get different leaders in the church and/or in the nation that things will change. They will not. Change begins with you and me.

If every Christian in our church suddenly began to serve the Lord the way He should be served, revival will break out in our church, in spite of the pastor.

There is a huge difference between an Evangelical, Fundamentalist Revival of religion vs. a genuine life transforming God-sent Revival!

1. To have a Revival of Religion all one needs to accomplish is to raise the attendance, get a lot of 'decisions for Christ', bring about a number of baptisms, have good offerings, entertaining music, **and a fiery evangelist with a good splattering of humor who will blast culture's sins but**

not the sins of the seated congregation; but, sadly, after a few weeks— all is back to sin-filled normal.

2. In contrast, God-sent Revival is very disturbing to those in the local pulpit and pew! Change begins with you and me, personally.

OURSELVES: THAT IS the only area you and I have jurisdiction and control over. Jesus said we should begin preaching in Jerusalem, then Judea, and then Samaria, and then the rest of the world (Acts 1:8), **but we want to begin in Washington, London, or ‘where ever’ and then work back.**

It does not work that way. Change, REVIVAL begins with me and you! Every nation in the world desperately needs change and so do most churches. *MOREOVER, nowhere in the New Testament do we find that GOD IS SEEKING TO ‘CHANGE, SAVE’ NATIONS! RATHER, by the GOSPEL, He ‘Changes / SAVES individuals IN THE NATIONS!* **In the last book of the Bible, (The Unveiling of JESUS CHRIST) ... Jesus has 7 specific letters to His church: 1.**

These letters do not lament the darkness of the world. **2.** They do not give a strategy for calling nations to righteousness. **3.** These letters call local congregations to revival! The same is true in the other New Testament letters to churches.

“REVIVAL! IS GOD! POINTING HIS FINGER! AT ME!”

GOD IS CALLING ME, GOD US CALLING US to GENUINE revival!

(This Newsletter message is ROOTED IN an article by Pastor Anton Bosch,)

Grace to all in Christ!

James www.southsidegallatin.org

SUNDAY SERVICES for JUNE 21, 28 [1] **Sunday School at 9:30am:** Nursery, Children's classes, Youth, and Adult classes. [2] **WORSHIP SERVICE at 10:45am!** **JUNE 21 — LORD'S SUPPER // Home Groups** /// **JUNE 28 — 5:00PM WORSHIP SERVICE**

EVERY SATURDAY * 8:00 AM — Men's Bible Study!**
(Doors open by 7:30am... coffee, juice, donuts, and Hardee's Biscuits are available!) JUNE 27 ... ROMANS 10:13-21

NEXT LADIES' BIBLE STUDY IS SCHEDULED FOR TUESDAY, JUNE 23 @ 11:00 AM **TUESDAYS: LADIES PRAYER MEETING @ 10:00am

Young Adults! Tuesdays at 7:15pm at Jaden and Rhī's home!

WEDNESDAY NIGHTS @ 6:30pm, *MEN'S Prayer Service // YOUNG FAMILIES SERVICE*

LOVE OFFERINGS UNTO THE LORD by MAIL or by ONLINE: BY MAIL (checks), make out to Southside Baptist) — MAIL TO: Southside Baptist Church, P.O. Box 1594, Gallatin, TN 37066 / TO GIVE via ONLINE GIVING:

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