

Does the Prophetic Book of Joel Offer Solutions for a Nation in Crisis?

The book of Joel consists of only three chapters, yet it was written as a wake-up call to a nation in crisis. Joel pleaded for his nation to gather before God in a great sacred assembly. Their time of great crisis and need called for a corporate response—a response of corporate repentance and consecration before God.

Today, we are living in very challenging, critical and volatile times. Every day the news is filled with more human tragedy or disaster. Crises are escalating at an unprecedented rate. As the body of Christ, we must respond. We cannot afford to hit our snooze buttons any longer while ignoring the sounding warnings and alarms around us. In early 2011, Luis and Jill Cataldo from the International House of Prayer in Kansas City, Missouri, David and Cindy Lane of The American Renewal Project, and others came to my office in Houston to discuss the importance of calling for a Joel 2 solemn assembly for our nation.

At first I was reluctant. I did not want another prayer event that ended up being more about preachers pontificating and politicians giving speeches. We agreed that we needed a call to prayer for a nation in crisis and that only one name was to be exalted and lifted up, Jesus!

On Aug. 6, 2011, former Texas Gov. Rick Perry trumpeted what became known as *The Response: A call to prayer for a nation in crisis* that was held at Reliant Stadium in Houston. More than 44,000 people gathered for prayer, worship and fasting.

Logos and egos were checked at the door in a posture of humility and holiness. It was amazing to see a

multigenerational, multiethnic, multi-denominational gathering, all seeking and calling upon the name of the Lord. Many questioned the intent and purpose of *The Response*; including so-called political experts, atheists, gay rights advocates and even some Christian Pharisees. Each had their assumptions. I've learned that assumption can be the lowest form of knowledge.

While on a local television network with a professor from a well-known university and the president of an atheist organization, the professor charged that the event would be a white Tea-Party gathering, and that Gov. Perry was going to use *The Response* as an opportunity to announce his candidacy for president. To set things straight, I assured them that they were going to be surprised by *The Response* and invited them to come and see for themselves. I also shared that when the church gathers in proper alignment and posture before the Lord, even those who oppose us will benefit.

Now fast-forward three years. Louisiana Gov. Bobby Jindal, recognizing the need for prayer for America, invited the nation to pray at *The Response Louisiana* on Jan. 24 in the Pete Maravich Assembly Center at Louisiana State University. Jindal grew up a Hindu and became a Christian in his teens as he attended a nondenominational campus ministry church at LSU. He not only trumpeted *The Response Louisiana: A call to prayer for a nation in crisis*, but he sent letters to the other 49 governors to call for prayer as well.

In one of his other letters, he said, "Our nation is faced with fatherless homes, an epidemic of drugs and crime in our cities, a saturation of pornography, abortion, racism—Jesus Christ, Son of God and the Lord of Life, is America's only hope. We need spiritual transformation. There is good news, Scripture reminds us that as we come before the Lord in a posture of humility, honesty and repentance, then the Lord will hear from heaven, forgive and heal our land."

Again some planned to protest and even tried to prevent us from having the prayer gathering. Again I responded to media questions about the stiff opposition, sharing that the event was not about any of their perceived issues.

I simply stated that *The Response* was about the church and Christians taking our rightful knee posture in humility, personal and corporate repentance, and consecration.

In fact, the right to protest, as well as the liberties and freedom of speech we have in our nation, are largely due to the foundations established on Christian faith and beliefs. Those rights are not granted in many other nations, especially under other religions.

During *The Response Louisiana*, we divided the day into 5 segments:

- Repentance (personal and corporate)
- Reconciliation
- Revival
- Reformation
- Refreshing
- Some of the areas we prayed for were:
 - The shedding of innocent blood
 - Justice—including human trafficking and criminal justice
 - Healing the racial divide
 - Widows and single parents
 - Orphans and adoption
 - Honor and generational blessings
 - Family
 - Government—local, state, national, judicial and the president
 - Education
 - Church awakening
 - Peace of Jerusalem and peace in the Middle East

The Response is not about a protest, program or a movement in

itself. It is a posture. It's about the church humbling herself and crying out before God. Our private posture affects our public influence. Our private choices have public consequences. There is a battle for the soul of our nation. I believe the heart of the nation should be the church. We, the church, need a corporate heart awakening if we are to see the soul of our nation healed—if we are going to see another great awakening and revival.

How will we respond? Humility, repentance and consecration before God must be the answer. *The Response* is part of what God is doing, creating a culture of prayer as a lifestyle, appealing to heaven for His presence on behalf of the nation and our generation.

Currently other governors and governmental leaders are inquiring about having *The Response* () in their states. The next one is set for June 13 in South Carolina.

Pockets of true revival are breaking out across America. Want to know more about the next great move of God? Click here to see Jennifer LeClaire's new book, featuring Dutch Sheets, Reinhard Bonnke, Jonathan Cahn, Billy Graham and others.

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