Has ‘Prosperity’ Hit Hard Times?

The solution for U.S. money woes isn’t ‘prosperity gospel,’ charismatics say

When Standard & Poor’s downgraded the United States’ credit rating, it sent the Dow Jones Industrial Average into a tailspin. That, combined with America’s more than $14.5 trillion national debt and Europe’s growing financial woes, have caused charismatic Christian leaders to stand up and speak out—and they aren’t preaching a “prosperity gospel” message.

Indeed, international evangelist Perry Stone says Americans better get used to major changes in the country and prepare accordingly. That, he says, is because the America we have known is changing. “We were promised in the 2008 election that America would fundamentally change,” Stone says. “America is changing, although I am not convinced this is the fundamental change most people had in mind.”

If the change isn’t working for you, Stone suggests praying according to 2 Chr. 7:14: “If My people who are called by My name will humble themselves, and pray and seek My face, and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear … and will forgive their sin and heal their land.”

As R. Loren Sanford sees it, America’s current situation requires a change of strategy on the part of Christians from coast to coast. Echoing the sentiment of Stone, he says the America many of us grew up with and came to love is gone forever. Some months ago, Sanford, founder and senior pastor of New Song Fellowship in Denver, prophesied that a serious third-year crisis at the presidential level would profoundly impact the nations for years to come.

With this prophecy being fulfilled before our eyes, the question is: How bad will it get? “I’ve been on record saying that it won’t be as bad as many are saying, but it will certainly be bad enough,” Sanford says. “For us who have prepared ourselves and our churches effectively, it will be the moment of glory as God increases His acts of mercy, His demonstrations of power and His love through us who will step forward boldly and with passion.”

For a number of years trusted prophetic voices have warned Christians to get out of debt. Now as the frailty of our entire economic system has been exposed, this warning packs fresh urgency, according to David Shibley, founding president of Global Advance, a ministry that equips tens of thousands of church and business leaders in the world’s neediest areas every year. Shibley offers some biblical advice for believers in any nation.

“In this fragile financial climate, some tend to hoard and stop giving. While this may seem to be a smart course in tight times, it is actually the worst possible strategy for protecting assets,” Shibley says. “God has woven the principle of sowing and reaping into the very fabric of the universe. The planting of seed is categorically required to bring life and growth. God has hard-wired this planet and people so that failure to plant seed ensures barrenness and eventual death.”