

Is the American Church Doomed?

The question of the future of the American Church was brought up as a topic of discussion at a recently held round table of which I had the honor of being involved. All of the men there were individuals whose names would be recognized among any seasoned believer.

In order to gain honest perspective, we determined that the only valid point of reference we would be able to use would be the vehicle of church history.

Whether we believe that the dispensation of the church actually began with the resurrection of Christ or on the day of Pentecost, there is little doubt as to the well documented history of how the churches influence has ebbed and flowed across the globe over 2000 years.

We would all agree that the church began in Jerusalem. By the middle of the first century the influence of the gospel made its way throughout the near east (Egypt, Syria, Mesopotamia and Asia Minor).

By the fourth century, the church's influence was well established throughout the Roman Empire. As a result of the influence of Rome and Constantinople, the gospel's expanse had made its way throughout the whole of Europe.

The invasion of the Moors began in the early 700s. It swept from Gibraltar, through Spain and Portugal, and much of France. By the 1400s, many persecuted Sephardic Jews joined the expeditions of Cortez and Columbus to a new world. In doing so, they were converted to Christianity by the missionaries. They established themselves in the Canary Islands, the Caribbean and the Americas.

The Reformation in 1521 brought about a well-needed spark. In doing so, it also revealed how the wickedness of man could easily corrupt this glorious gospel. There was no longer a homogeneous alignment within the church. This was evidenced by its deep chasms and fragmentation.

In 1611, the King James bible was completed which ensured that the influence of the gospel was clearly in the hands of the British. They sent missionaries across the globe establishing that the word of God as the primary voice in that part of the world.

Within a century frustration arose among those who desired to worship free of the hard hand of the Church of England upon them. They sought out a new world; a land where they were liberated to worship as they chose.

The modern era of Revivalism was well on its way. A great awakening flowed in conjunction with a manifest destiny that opened the doors for the great revivalists and revivals.

Names like, John Wesley, Charles Wesley, George Whitefield, Daniel Rowland, Howel Harris, William Williams and others blazed the gospel trail throughout Western Europe and the Americas. Enter, the Pentecostals. A former National League baseball player, William Ashley "Billy" Sunday propagated holiness with a fiery brand of preaching and antics never seen before. These revivals were evidenced by entire cities converting to Christ. Bars and brothels would close down. People would tarry and fast, seeking the face of the Holy One.

The move of God in America was well on its way. Names like Nettleton, Taylor, Finney, Stone, Campbell, Cartwright and others were now household names.

In the late 1940s, Israel was reestablished as a nation and a great healing revival broke out across America. In order to facilitate the goings on, a magazine called Voice of Healing was established by Gordon Lindsay. Names like, William

Branham, Oral Roberts, A. A. Allen, Jack Coe, W. V. Grant, Raymond T. Richey, T. L. Osborn, Kenneth Hagin, and over 70 others graced its pages. Though many of the miracles were genuine, the door was also opened for the frauds.

Billy Graham walked on the scene preaching a simple message of: "God Loves You"!

Money poured in and the temptation for power and riches muddled the waters. It was nearly impossible to decipher the real from the fake.

The next move began by many who rejected what they saw as a materialistic gospel. Chuck Smith found himself surrounded by shoeless hippies looking for leadership. The Jesus People revival spread eastward across America and we see its effects today.

Over the past decades, some believe that we have experienced revival. I beg to differ. Not one of these so-called revivals has done one thing to stop America from moving closer to the edge of her slippery slope.

The American church in our generation has spent more money on Christian television, Christian radio, Christian books, Christian T-shirts, Christian music, Christian concerts, Christian bumper stickers, Christian colleges, Christian schools, and much more. Yet, we have never been closer to the destruction of our nation than we are today.

Are we deceiving ourselves? Are we being presumptuous? We have witnessed how the Holy Spirit has moved in and out of nations for 2000 years. Why would we be the exception? Europe has deferred its belief in Christ and many believe that the next generation all but ensures a Muslim Europe.

All the while, revival has broken out in places like Central and South America. The church in Asia is much stronger than ever. If history is correct, America will become apostate and

the church will expand in Asia, and then back to Israel.

As we in America intoxicate ourselves with our mega churches, the facts speak for themselves. Not one mega church has ever changed the heart of a city. In all actuality it is proving quite the opposite.

Have we become legalistic? Are we preaching a gospel of hate? Do we use grace to bring people in and the law to keep them under our control?

We have raised up Christian leaders and placed a false expectation of perfection upon them. They have trained themselves to camouflage their human frailties teaching those under them to do the same.

When these leaders or any individual in our congregation have a moral failure, we don't restore them gently. We call them anathema and place them out of the fold as if they were not worth of the gospel of mercy that they represent. So-called "restorers" rush toward their carcasses to see how they may further empower themselves.

We preach revival and define it as jumping, shouting, exercising the glossolalia phenomenon (speaking in tongues), running, dancing, laughing, being flung to the ground, and fake miracles. That's not revival.

Revival begins when the hard hearts of men soften and they desire God more than their next breath of air. It will cause abortion rates to fall off, infidelity to cease, the innocence of morality to become desirable and a godly pursuit toward purity. Hollywood trends will genuinely sicken the hearts of young people from within.

This manufactured emotional gospel we now master, must be destroyed! We need God's love and God's power or we are doomed!

Yes, we are all familiar with the fact that America has helped the world. We've sent food, medicine and missionaries across the globe. Does this justify the fact that we have completely corrupted the house of God?

"You are simply preaching fear and unbelief," the Pharisee might say.

No, I grew up in the "Word of Faith" movement. I know how to believe God; but also know that we will reap what we have sewn.

We are in danger. If we do not repent and seek Him, America will go the way of the nations before her. Islam will continue to rise in her and this once great nation will take her place in line with the other nations who have gone before us.

David Vigil is CEO and founder of . His life focus is to serve those who have been called of God and see to it that they are free to be exactly what they have been designed to be. His ministry is based out of Oak Hills Church in San Antonio, Texas. Under the tender of Randy Frazee and Max Lucado, he serves to restore ministers across the globe.