

Is the Church of America in a Persistent Vegetative State?

In 1991, I wrote these words in the preface to *Whatever Happened to the Power of God? Is the Charismatic Church Slain in the Spirit or Down for the Count*:

“While the American Church celebrates, our beloved country sinks into lower and lower depths. We are not only killing unborn babies, but we have begun to kill helpless adults—actually starving them to death! It is claimed that some of them are in a ‘persistent vegetative state.’ *I believe it is the Church that is in a persistent vegetative state.* Will nothing awake us from our stupor?”

That was back in 1991, when we had “only” killed about 25 million babies in the womb. Today that number is well over 55 million, while three of our states have legalized voluntary euthanasia.

Back in 1991, the idea of the president of the United States using his inaugural speech as a platform for **gay activism** would have been unthinkable, and if some preacher predicted that in 2013, a pastor who believed homosexual practice was wrong in God’s eyes would be disinvited from praying at the president’s inauguration, he would have been laughed to scorn.

After all, **Billy Graham** prayed at both presidential inaugurations for Bill Clinton (1993 and 1997), while Franklin Graham prayed at the first inauguration of George W. Bush in 2001. Even as recently as 2009, at President Obama’s first inauguration, **Rick Warren** was able to offer the invocation despite criticism and controversy. Those days seem like a distant memory now.

In the years since 2009, professors have been fired from

university jobs, college students have been punished or expelled, employees have been dismissed, and even ministers and military men and women have suffered discriminatory treatment for their failure to affirm **gay activism**.

1991 was one year before MTV's reality TV show *The Real World* made its debut. As raunchy as that show was, it was a far cry from *Queer as Folk*, which made its debut in 2000, or *The L Word* (meaning "lesbian"), which made its debut in 2004, or *Polyamory: Married and Dating*, which made its debut in 2012. And I haven't mentioned reality shows that turn unwed teenage moms into national celebrities, like *Teen Mom* or *Mom at Sixteen*, nor did I mention reality shows celebrating polygamy, like *Big Love* and *Sister Wives*.

In 1991, there were no nationally respected, "evangelical" leaders advocating homosexual "marriage" (as Rob Bell and Jim Wallis have done this year; last year, Brian McLaren performed the same-sex "marriage" ceremony for his own son!). Twenty years ago, if a **prophet** predicted this, he would have been openly mocked. And in 1991, no nationally respected, "evangelical" leaders were boldly proclaiming universal reconciliation (the idea that everyone will ultimately be saved), as Rob Bell and others currently do.

Things have gotten to the point that even the word "evangelical" has lost its meaning, since today, anything goes in the name of being an "evangelical" or "born again" Christian. In fact, according to Barna polling data, less than 20 percent of "born again Christians" in America hold to a biblical worldview. That's how much biblical illiteracy there is today's "born again" church.

In 1991, about 8 percent of Americans claimed "no religion" as their religious preference. By 2012, that number was up to 20 percent, with a conspicuous amount of the younger generation leading the way of those dropping out of the churches. And 1991 was a well over a decade before the rise of the

aggressive “new atheism” in America and Europe.

Yet so many of us in the American church, including pastors and leaders, continue to slumber (or, in our charismatic churches, party!), somehow believing we are making great progress with our slick, multimedia presentations; or thinking that, somehow, almost magically, another great move of God will be right around the corner; or imagining that our latest and greatest “revelation” will suddenly turn the tide (like the new, so-called “Grace Reformation”).

And while God is pouring out His Spirit mightily around the world, the American church continues to backslide. What will it take to wake us up? How long will it be before we become desperate?

In the year 2000, in *Revolution!* I wrote these words: “Fellow-soldiers, holy servants of the risen Lord, blood-bought disciples of the Master, heed the call. It’s now or never, time to put up or shut up. Either we take a stand once and for all or forever we hang our heads in shame. History is awaiting our move. So ... on with it! Let’s start a revolution”—a Jesus revolution, in the love of God, by the Word of God and through the power of God.

Isn’t it time? Dare we wait another day? If your heart cries out, “Count me in!” then download these Ten Commitments of a Jesus Revolutionary, and let’s go rock our nation with the gospel.

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