

Leonard Ravenhill and the Other Prophetic Voices We Didn't Heed

Some will call it being an alarmist. But nevertheless, recent events not only in the U.S. but globally indicate the age many thought we would never see is unfolding before our very eyes.

We should not be dismayed, however. The prophets of old, the teachings of Jesus and the writings of the apostles all told us this day was coming—we simply didn't believe it would come within our lifetime.

What we are witnessing did not happen overnight, and to lay out before you how and when the “process” of societal reconstruction would take several posts. Suffice it to say that, by the 1970s (Leonard Ravenhill) and 1980s (Francis Schaeffer, David Wilkerson, and others) many saw what was unfolding in American culture and the devastating effects that would take place once the cultural shifts gained momentum.

Here we have the world spirit of our age—autonomous man setting himself up as God in defiance of the knowledge and the moral and spiritual truth that God has given. Here is the reason why we have a moral breakdown in every area of life.

The titanic freedoms that we once enjoyed have been cut loose from their Christian restraints and are becoming a force of destruction leading to chaos. When this happens, there really are few alternatives.

All morality becomes relative, law becomes arbitrary, and society moves toward disintegration. ... At this point “right” and “left” will make little difference. Those choices are only two roads to the same end; the results are the same. An elite—an authoritarianism as such—will gradually force form on

society so that it will not go into chaos leading most people to accept it.

“We can expect the future to be a further disaster if the evangelical world does not take a stand for biblical truth and morality in the full spectrum of life. For the evangelical accommodation to the world of our age represents the last barrier against the breakdown of our culture. And with the final removal of this barrier will come social chaos and the rise of authoritarianism in some form to restore social order.” – Francis A. Schaeffer, *The Great Evangelical Disaster* (1984)

Schaeffer laid it out before us so vividly, but no one heeded the call. The consequences are now obvious.

We live in a Post-Modern era that is marked by Neo-Pentecostalism and Neo-Propheticism.

In this Post-Modern era of the “Emerging Church” what has emerged is a Neo-Pentecostal movement that embraces charismatic figures rather than the charismata of the Holy Spirit. Rather than embracing the power of the Holy Spirit, it embraces a message of personal empowerment and entitlement.

Much of the worship is designed to solicit an emotional response rather than worship of the true and living God. Congregants have become addicted to a feeling rather than seeking a clear revelation from God.

We live in an age of idolatry. Yet today’s idols are not figurines crafted from stone, wood, or metal but are images of success and prosperity. Americans worship the bold and the beautiful, celebrities, athletes, power brokers and even thugs and gangsters that shape values and morals upon which many within the church pew make their decisions. Rather than the Scriptures shaping core beliefs and values that determine attitudes and actions, Hollywood, Wall Street, Madison Avenue and the sports arena hosts the prophets of the age and

influence who and what we are.

Americans spend billions of dollars on movies, videos, sports, and an endless array of ways to absorb the heart and mind of the millions who believe they can find fulfillment by filling their spirit with sound bites, dazzling visual effects, unnecessary realism, violence and voyeurism. One entertainment insider said the driving force behind entertainment is "self-actualization." Americans live vicariously through actors, athletes, pop and western singers, and perpetuate their idolatry by emulating them, purchasing their clothes designs and attempting to live their lifestyles.

If we say the Post-Modern church isn't tainted by this influence, we deceive ourselves.

Neo-Propheticism finds itself powerless to address the Neo-Paganism of the American culture. There are many self-proclaimed prophets and prophetesses who wrap empty promises in packages of gold and glitter.

Listening to the false prophets of wealth and prosperity with the intent of positioning itself to receive the mantle or an impartation, the church is hardly equipped to fight the issues that once laid dormant but now rear their ugly heads with a vengeance—child and spousal abuse, drugs, family disintegration, pornography and homosexuality.

No amount of binding and loosening or declarations of prosperity present effective measures to address the shift of moral values in the church pew much less outside the four walls of the church. No longer can the church claim to be salt and light but have played the fool and become insipid (or "played the fool," Matthew 5:13f).

The Apostle Paul saw the solemn descent the world would take. Some call it an apostasy, a deterioration of faith in the church. But the word is actually better translated "rebellion." It isn't simply a falling away from the faith; it

is shaking an angry fist in the face of God. This rebellion doesn't deny His existence as much as it launches a militant campaign against Him—and the remnant of believers who remain faithful. Paul wrote in 2 Thessalonians 2:

“Do not let anyone deceive you in any way. For that Day will not come unless a falling away comes first, and the man of sin is revealed, the son of destruction, who opposes and exalts himself above all that is called God or is worshipped, so that he sits as God in the temple of God, showing himself as God. ... Now you know what restrains him that he might be revealed in his time. ... and with all deception of unrighteousness among those who perish, because they did not receive the love for the truth that they might be saved. Therefore God will send them a strong delusion, that they should believe the lie: that they all might be condemned who did not believe the truth but had pleasure in unrighteousness. (2 Thess. 2:3-4, 6, 10-12, MEV).

The true Post-Modern Day prophet faces a daunting task, but it isn't unlike those who have gone before. Challenging the status quo has never been easy, nor has it always been successful (in terms used for success today). There is a remnant, a number of believers who are becoming more and more discontent with the status quo, of being entertained, of being fed self-helps rather than the Word. There are those who are tired of preachers who place their message above the Word and whip the congregation into a co-dependent altar service.

There is a growing number who are looking for revival, restoration, and reformation. It can happen.

Leonard Ravenhill wrote in his introduction to his book *Sodom had no Bible* (1979):

“When we get humble enough, and low enough, and desperate enough, and hungry enough, and concerned enough, and passionate enough, and broken enough, and clean enough, and

prayerful enough, *then* God will send us a revival that equals and surpasses the awakening this country experienced in the days of Charles Finney.”

Schaeffer and Ravenhill had their fingers on the pulse of America and recognized the fading heartbeat of the church and sounded the alarm. They were prophetic voices we did not heed. Consequently, should the church in America attempt to sound an alarm today, not only may it be too little too late, congregants remaining true to the faith may also experience something they thought they'd never see—American societal persecution.

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