

On the Cusp of National Revival?

What an opportunity the political landscape of America has provided for her church.

For generations now, the American church has been declining in both relevance and number as it sought to placate sinners rather than model holiness, call for repentance and watch Jesus save them. The hold-hands-and-sing-kumbaya-with-culture way of doing church looked as though it was modeled after the accommodate-and-yield way of doing politics, especially in the Republican Party. “Whatever we can do to keep you from getting mad” has been the mantra of both for decades.

Then Obama was elected. Twice. Americans got to watch for eight years as he lorded over the nation in general and the Republicans in particular. He dared anyone to try to stop him from transforming America into a seething bed of racial animus; a hedonistic, sexually infused brothel where even public bathrooms became targets of government deviancy and a third-rate banana republic ruled by the whims and partisan ideologies of black-robed oligarchs who trampled regularly on the will of the people.

And the church provided little in the way of hope for change or guidance. She was more interested in being accepted by the puppeteers of culture driven by darkness than transforming the lost through the proclamation of God’s righteousness and the powerful blood of Jesus Christ. Repentance makes people too uncomfortable and is impossible without pointing out sin. So like the RINOs in Congress, much of the church became the CINOs (Christian in name only) in culture.

Yet here we are. America has been stunned by the election of Donald (the Outsider) Trump. Hardly anyone foresaw it (except

Ann Coulter), with most major polls giving Hillary Clinton the victory as late as the night before the election. And rather than sensing that perhaps a number of Americans are yearning for someone to fight for instead of against them and preach an unfiltered gospel to a nation that seems ready to acknowledge it has lost its way, our church leaders are turning their congregations into “safe spaces” from reality. Some of the stuff I’ve seen on clergy-only Facebook pages rivals what I’ve seen in the media about how universities are offering students coloring books and puppies to deal with the trauma of Donald Trump’s election. That’s all we’re offering?

Spoiled liberals who didn’t even bother to vote have taken to the streets to protest Trump’s election. They’re actually protesting the result of their own apathy. Apparently, a rather large segment of liberals thinks they’re entitled to the candidate of their choice without even bothering to show up to pull a lever, touch a screen or fill in a circle.

Americans were drawn to Donald Trump because of his fearless tell-it-like-it-is attack on what’s clearly wrong with the nation. That same go-along-to-get-along mentality he railed against in government has clearly trickled into the churches and found a home. We have hope for a better tomorrow in this country because a few pastors and Christian leaders boldly stood up and said Trump’s vision for America was more in line with biblical values and our founders’ intent than Clinton’s dream of open borders, taxpayer-funded abortion and gun control.

Something is going on in America, and it’s not just about the president. Republicans are now in control of the White House, both houses of Congress and a record number of state legislatures and governorships. Liberals in government have been telling the American people for too long to “sit down and shut up” while they tell us what we need to do and even think. At one point in her campaign, Hillary Clinton even said, “deep-seated cultural codes, religious beliefs and structural

biases have to be changed.” Mrs. Clinton wanted the government in charge of changing religious beliefs. People are obviously fed up with this. And the same goes for liberals and progressives in the church. People are sick of their pervasive input.

Smart churches experiencing growth have found that people are hungry for plain talk from the pulpit. America’s parishioners are rejecting the progressive religious message just as they are rejecting the progressive political message. They are sick and tired of being told by programmed clergy that the Bible doesn’t mean what it clearly states.

This country, as demonstrated by the 2016 presidential election, is ripe for a message of repentance, renewal and restoration. Someone has said the electorate voted to make America great again, and the church should decide to make America a Christian nation again.

It won’t be easy, because unlike conservatives, liberals in politics and theology don’t relax or give in when the road ahead looks hard. Evangelical leaders actually made a difference in this election. So, too, can their counterparts in the nation’s pulpits make a similar national impact if they get back to preaching God’s holiness and the message of repentance.

Now is the time to speak truth to power from the halls of Congress to the padded pews in the vaulted ceilings of our church sanctuaries. The left will call it hate speech, bigotry and a long list of words ending in “phobia.” But it is crystal-clear that people are ripe for straight talk on both politics and religion. Thank goodness, we will always have a welcome and needed contingent of people calling the body of Christ to love, forgive and accept God’s love. But what we have lacked for a long time is the voice of the prophet thundering about God’s judgment on unrepented sin. Surprisingly, we find out people want to know God doesn’t look

the other way when we sin.

I know because I'm living proof. I had heard of God's love from as early as I can remember. I knew John 3:16 from hearing it spoken over and over again. It didn't phase me. What liberals and theological progressives don't want to hear or believe is this: hearing God isn't OK with sin actually puts some people on the pathway to salvation. That's right. As a sinner, John 3:16 didn't mean anything to me. But when I found out about Matthew 12:30, I was jerked out of my sin-anesthetized slumber. Jesus looked at people and had the unmitigated gall to tell them they were either for or against Him. They were either helping Him gather the harvest or were hindering the harvest.

I took note.

Apparently, people have had enough of an ever-expanding government that forces bakers to bake wedding cakes against their religious convictions for unions the Bible condemns as sin. And I believe with all my heart that churches are full of people who are just as sick of being told that their Bible doesn't mean what it says.

Jesus told Peter the gates of hell would not be able to prevail against the church. That means Christ believes the Spirit-filled church should be storming the gates of hell, not helping sinners feel good about their sin but going on the offensive to set the captives free. Calling people to a decision. Shining the light in the darkness.

This may be our last chance. The political climate has actually paved the way for it. People are responding to plain talk. If our preachers will stop apologizing for the contents of the Bible and start reminding people God is both loving and holy, teaching about forgiveness and heaven as well as God's judgment and hell, we just might have a revival in the country. We might make America a Christian nation once

again.

I wonder if that might have been the real purpose in the miracle of the Trump victory? {eoa}