

The Black-Robed Regiment, Then and Now: A Fresh Call to Revolution

How is it that nine non-elected officials in black robes can have such sweeping authority in our society? It is because the black-robed regiment that once stirred the hearts of the nation has lost its moral authority, leaving a gaping hole in the soul of the nation.

According to David Barton, "The Black Robed Regiment was the name that the British placed on the courageous and patriotic American clergy during the Founding Era (a backhanded reference to the black robes they wore). Significantly, the British blamed the Black Regiment for American Independence, and rightfully so, for modern historians have documented that: 'There is not a right asserted in the Declaration of Independence which had not been discussed by the New England clergy before 1763'" (citing Alice M. Baldwin, *The New England Clergy and the American Revolution*).

"But it was not just the British who saw the American pulpit as largely responsible for American independence and government," Barton continues, "our own leaders agreed. For example, John Adams rejoiced that 'the pulpits have thundered' and specifically identified several ministers as being among the 'characters the most conspicuous, the most ardent, and influential' in the '**awakening** and a **revival** of American principles and feelings' that led to American independence."

As expressed in 1898 by the Methodist bishop and church historian Charles Galloway, "Mighty men they were, of iron nerve and strong hand and unblanched cheek and heart of flame. God needed not reeds shaken by the wind, not men clothed in soft raiment [Matt. 11:7-8], but heroes of hardihood and lofty

courage. ... And such were the sons of the mighty who responded to the Divine call."

What a far cry from the spirit of so many American ministers today—and I'm speaking in particular of conservative ministers, those of us who still believe that the Scriptures are God's Word with a divine mandate for God's people.

Where are the courageous, uncompromising firebrands among us today? Sadly, they are few and far between.

In the past, we were willing to be revolutionary; today we want to be relevant. We used to be principled; today we are pragmatic. Once we were prophetic; today we are professional. We used to follow a kingdom model; now we follow a business model.

As I wrote back in 1989, "Look at our American scene today. The reproach we suffer is not for the Messiah's sake; we are not scorned because of our militant stand. No. We are mocked because of our leaders' sins, because of our failure to be holy and clean. Gospel and greed seem to go hand in hand, and our society equates evangelist with exploiter."

Put on Christian TV today and watch a few shows. What do you see? A carnal prosperity message. Some carnival-like, huckster fund-raising. Another self-improvement sermon. A pep talk. A teaching on how all *your* dreams can come true. And some new revelation based on a bizarre misreading of Scripture, now turned into a best-selling book. With a few noteworthy exceptions, that about sums it up, doesn't it?

Where are the calls to take up the cross and follow Jesus, regardless of cost or consequence? Where are the calls to courage, to compassionate service, to world missions, to glorify God by life or by death—in other words, to be normal New Testament disciples? (Mark this down: What the world calls fanaticism and much of the church calls extremism, God calls normal.)

No wonder our churches are producing consumers rather than disciples. No wonder the world is changing us rather than us changing the world.

As Francis Schaeffer wrote in *A Christian Manifesto*, "As we turn to the evangelical leadership of this country in the last decades, unhappily, we must come to the conclusion that often it has not been much help. It has shown the mark of a platonic, overly spiritualized Christianity all too often. Spirituality to the evangelical leadership often has not included the Lordship of Christ over the whole spectrum of life. Spirituality has often been shut up to a very narrow area. And also very often, among many evangelicals, including many evangelical leaders, it seems that the final end is to protect their own projects. ... I am again asking the question, why have we let ourselves go so far down the road?"

Yet he wrote this more than 40 years ago!

Where were our national Christian leaders when the Supreme Court removed organized, public prayer from our schools in 1962 or when the Court declared abortion on demand to be the law of the land in 1973? Why were there so few who took a solid stand?

For the most part, when we have taken action, we have joined ourselves to a political party, only to find ourselves used for their purposes. Otherwise, we have either thought the social realm was not our responsibility; that Jesus was coming at any moment and so things will only get worse; or that the way to win a spiritual war is to become angry conservatives.

Surely we can do better than that. Surely we can—no, we must!—rise up into the revolutionary, Jesus-exalting, Word-based, Spirit-empowered calling that is on our lives, a calling that is on all believers but in particular on the leaders who must lead the way.

Surely we cannot allow the moral standards of our society be

determined by an unelected, unanointed black-robed regiment sitting in Washington, with all respect to their proper authority and with massive respect for the courageous voices among them.

It is time for the leaders to arise—to get alone with God, to get filled afresh with His Spirit, to get clear marching orders from heaven and to make a new commitment to be part of a Jesus-centered, moral, cultural and spiritual revolution.

By God's grace, I have taken my stand. Will you join me?

(For my video response to the Supreme Court's rulings on same-sex "marriage," [click here.](#))

Michael Brown is author of *The Real Kosher Jesus* and host of the nationally syndicated talk radio show *The Line of Fire* on the Salem Radio Network. He is also president of FIRE School of Ministry and director of the Coalition of Conscience. Follow him at AskDrBrown on Facebook or @drmichaellbrown on Twitter.