

The Church Must Rise in Righteousness to Stop the Moral Decline of America

Today, I want to share some things that concern me. If you want to call it prophetic, you can. Take it in whatever way you want, but the pressure of this burden on my heart has been building for some time. I'm not saying what I'm about to say to stir up anger. Anger will take us exactly nowhere. I simply want to call for urgent prayer concerning some emerging realities.

Several years ago I was in a meeting of pastors gathered to hear a presentation by a man named Fred Markert, who at the time was working with Youth with a Mission as a researcher, if memory serves correctly. He's a man who reads hundreds of books every year and studies historical trends and patterns that repeat era after era.

One repeated pattern of history he showed us is that in the historical record you see both monopolar and multipolar world power structures rising. A monopolar power structure is when one superpower dominates the world. A multipolar power structure is when several powers vie with each other for dominance. God prefers a monopolar power structure when that dominant power is good because when that exists, the bad guys are kept at bay and everyone prospers. Whenever a multipolar power structure develops, instability results, and war becomes inevitable.

In New Testament times, for instance, Rome was the dominant power and had established the Pax Romana, the peace of Rome, over all the Mediterranean basin. Bad guys and pirates were kept at bay. Roads were built. Commerce on land and sea became possible, and everyone prospered. It was the Pax Romana that

enabled the dramatic spread of the gospel in spite of persecution. When Rome began to weaken, wars erupted, and when Rome fell, the Dark Ages ensued.

In a more modern example, WWII broke out when a multipolar world power structure was allowed to develop in which Germany, Italy and Japan all pressed for empire against other nations—the British and Europeans on the one hand, and the United States on the other. Out of it, the United States and Russia emerged as dominant powers and finally, with the collapse of the Soviet Union, the United States became the lone superpower. The American dollar became the world's reserve currency, and the power of the U.S. military kept the bad guys at bay or at least restrained. Some call these recent decades the Pax Americana.

Today we find the current monopolar power structure under threat because of weak leadership. China is rising, openly challenging the United States, with ambitions to become the world's dominant power and, for the moment, China and Russia are opening some degree of cooperation. As we run up our national debt (which threatens the value of our currency), as a weak presidency allows our military to weaken and as this administration fails to confront the rise of China effectively, the danger increases. This is only compounded by the disaster this administration has allowed to happen at our southern border as we are invaded by hundreds of thousands of illegal immigrants.

On the basis of his research into the patterns of history, Fred Markert stated that if something dramatic isn't done very soon to correct our national decline, both in power and in moral strength, war will become inevitable, and it will be the most destructive and the bloodiest that history has ever seen.

He said this in that meeting of pastors well before the election of Donald Trump. He said that it was incumbent upon the church to rise in righteousness and godly witness to stop

the moral decline of the nation. When dedication to Jesus leads to solid morality, then godly strength can be maintained. Without that, then scandals and weaknesses multiply. America is in decline, disintegrating from within, and if something isn't done—and very soon—the horrendously destructive war Fred Markert saw coming may not be so far off.

At the least, we need a body of Christ on its knees, and not just praying for and obsessed with political outcomes. That's not where the solution begins. The solution begins in a depth of repentance and change on the part of God's people. That quality of repentance that brings real change remains somewhat elusive, in my opinion. I do see a growing number, a remnant, crying out in repentance for the sins of the church and of the nation, but it needs to become more profound and more widespread.

This is not about becoming militant Christians angrily trying to change the government by hurling hatred and judgments. The solution doesn't start with the government anyway. It starts with winning the hearts of men and women to Jesus by proving the superiority of faith in Jesus for healing people, changing lives and, by extension, changing a culture. Currently, that's not how the world sees us. We can't win with the same strategy that lost Donald Trump an election. By that I mean that name-calling, insulting and shouting at our enemies with tones of anger and hatred is a formula for failure.

When we, the church, become the greatest force in the nation for loving people, for healing broken marriages, for feeding the hungry and clothing the naked, for transforming dangerous neighborhoods, for turning felons released from prison into productive citizens, for having the most successful drug and alcohol recovery programs and for generally becoming seen as the most valuable asset to a dying culture, then we earn the right to be heard. Become that and people might beat a path to our door, just as Nebuchadnezzar sought out Daniel and as Pharaoh was able to hear Joseph.

For our praying in the days to come, here's what I see for the next almost four years leading to the next election. Either or both of two things will likely happen. Under the burden of our president's growing cognitive decline, we may find ourselves simply rudderless as a nation, careening from one illogical and foolish decision to another, or simply suffering from a lack of real leadership.

On the other hand, should Democrats succeed in eliminating the Senate filibuster, which would take away the requirement of 60 votes to break it, we will find ourselves living under the dictatorship of just one political party. Legislation will be rammed through Congress on simple majorities that will radically rewrite election law to favor Democrats. It is likely that Washington, D.C., and Puerto Rico will be given statehood, which would add four Democratic senators, ensuring an unassailable majority for that party. This would enable the Democrats to pack the Supreme Court, increasing the number of judges by four or more while enabling installation of far left liberal judges who would rule according to the party line. The next two years are critical. The midterm elections may determine the direction of the nation for decades to come.

I would much prefer to confine my public statements to things that have to do with the internal life of the church. I am a pastor. But on these matters I can't be silent and at the same time feel that I've been faithful to the Lord's mandate. Some of you will think I'm just being political. I think I'm stating realities that will impact the body of Christ profoundly and that will ultimately affect the welfare of the entire world.

The solution to saving the nation begins with the church becoming internally healthy and fulfilling the calling for which we were called, to proclaim the glories of Jesus and to demonstrate His glory in signs, wonders, love that melts the hardest hearts and ministries to real people that show what His love really looks like.

In the church, we need to get our house in order, our hearts right with God, our love aligned with His and our morality in keeping with His holiness. So we begin with repentance. Then we listen for His voice, studying His eternal written Word for the sake of grounding. We develop churches that reflect the wonder of the church in Acts 2 and that enable us to win a world. Changed hearts change cultures, and changed cultures change nations. {eoa}

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