

3 Keys to America's Spiritual Resurrection in 2016

In this year's presidential election, America's greatest hope is spiritual resurrection.

What St. Augustine prayed in the fifth century should be on the lips of 21st-century Christians: "Revive Thy Church, O Lord, beginning with me," says David Lane, founder of the American Renewal Project, an organization helping energize pastors to mobilize their congregations to "register and vote their faith."

"We are asking 100,000 American Renewal Project senior pastors to hold weekly prayer services asking God for mercy for what we have allowed to a once-Christian nation," Lane says. "As we begin to re-establish prayer in America, Christ's disciples can expect an increase in wickedness as we prepare to return our nation to a biblically based culture. Men and women of faith must pick up the shield of faith, for nothing else can quench Satan's fiery darts."

At a time when several caucuses and primaries—including the all-important Iowa Caucus—are beginning, faith leaders are calling on believers to pray and vote. Of the nation's 80 million self-identified evangelicals, only half are registered to vote, and only half of those actually voted in the last presidential election. If 4 percent more had voted differently in 2012, the nation would have a different president today.

"I truly believe that if evangelical Christians will begin now to seriously pray for a national spiritual awakening and turn out to vote en masse that America can be saved and taken in a new and godly direction," says Eddie Hyatt, a historian and pastor. In his book, *America's Revival Heritage*, Hyatt has written about what it takes to ignite another Great Awakening.

Traditionally, the Iowa Caucus has garnered mass attention as an early indicator of which candidates may win the party nominations. The top three finishers will benefit from an increase in fundraising and millions of dollars' worth of free media. For many years, Dr. Michael Brown, host of the nationally syndicated talk radio show "The Line of Fire" and president of the FIRE School of Ministry, says pundits have pointed to each election as being "very, very important, and on some level, that was true."

"It's all the more true this time," Brown says. "We've seen the radical policies that were encouraged and aided by President Obama. We've seen the bad fruit of that. We've seen the weakness of the Republican establishment to stand up for many of the values of its constituency. So we have very serious challenges, and in my view, we need a strong, godly candidate who will also face down the political establishment."

Lane, Hyatt and Brown understand, though, that it's going to take far more than a righteous president to change the nation.

"I want to emphasize that another election in and of itself will not change anything," Hyatt says. "But if the people of God will begin now to seriously pray for spiritual awakening throughout the land, such an awakening will provide the spiritual and moral strength and backing for a Christian president to make the difficult decisions that will take the nation in a different and godly direction."

If America is to survive, men and women of Issachar (1 Chr. 12:32) must bring their values to the public square, Lane says. His effort to inspire 1,000 pastors to run for city council, school board, county commissioner, mayor and Congress this year is "taking off." So far, more than 2,000 pastors and their spouses have attended Issachar Training seminars, and 350 have said they will run for office this year.

With all this momentum, Hyatt says believers must seriously and fervently pray for a national spiritual awakening. "It is not enough to just elect a 'Christian' president," Hyatt says. "We have done that in the past and continued to lose the culture to secular godlessness. A genuine spiritual awakening that restores morality and a virtuous mindset will provide the social and spiritual force for a Christian president to initiate positive change.

"Five years ago, I had given up hope that America would see another national spiritual awakening, but God surprised me with a visitation that lasted for several hours and made it very real to me that America can see another great spiritual awakening."

As the nation turns its attention to the presidential election, many say prayer is vital. Brown says Christians should pray for "God's best choice for America."

"We should ask God to have mercy on our country," Brown says. "We should go into prayer, repenting of our corporate sins, which transcend political differences. We have sins on all sides of the aisle."

Hyatt encourages people to pray the prayer of Jesus: "Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. As the people of God, it is His kingdom (administration) that we desire to see expressed, and His will that we desire to see done in this election."