

Warring Against the Delusion Plaguing Today's Church

This post was written as an answer to the reader question we received on the post "How to Escape the Delusion of the Church": "Great post pastor, I look forward to reading more on this. For example, when people come across this, what are we to do? God bless you as you continue to walk in His truth without compromise."

It was terribly disenchanting.

He remembered when his alma mater was grounded in the Word of God and the light of truth shone bright. It had been 26 years since he was a student on campus. He had returned as a tutor two years after graduation and taught for six years.

The 18 years intervening had seen a flood of rationalism and acceptance of the philosophy of Voltaire and Rousseau.

Age of Reason by Thomas Paine was being read by almost every college student. Now the distortion and deception of the Enlightenment resounded from the lecterns and filled the debates of Yale.

Holy living was equated to a puritanical attitude.

Compromising lifestyles and immorality was the behavior of students and faculty.

Princeton, Harvard and New Haven were suffering the same spiritual darkness. Indeed, virtually every college campus in the newborn nation had been captured by the Enlightenment.

The selection of Timothy Dwight, grandson of the spiritual giant from the Great Awakening, Jonathan Edwards, as the new president of Yale College was truly a divine appointment.

He had been fiercely opposed by the religious moderates and especially disliked by the previous Yale president, Ezra Stiles.

When Dr. Dwight arrived back on campus, he confronted head-on the infidel philosophy and moral decline.

His baccalaureate address in 1796, "The Nature and Danger of Infidel Philosophy" is considered one of the first embers that sparked the Second Great Awakening.

The commencement address was later published in book form by George Bunce.

The condition of Yale College and the churches of America in 1797 are not unlike many Christian universities and churches of the United States in 2017.

The impact of relativism, tolerance, and political correctness resounds from pulpits and lecterns.

It distorts biblical truth and compromises moral principles.

Holy living is labeled legalism.

The moral decline among parishioners, professors and preachers is more than disturbing.

The teaching of sound biblical doctrine is weak and pale.

Embracing rationalism and higher criticism, some professors in evangelical and Pentecostal universities and seminaries have weakened the foundation of the infallibility and inerrancy of the Scriptures to the softened position that the Holy Bible contains God's Word.

The call for acceptance of same-sex relationships has been sounded loudly by many of the leading voices in the evangelical and Pentecostal movements.

What does one do when the church begins to embrace deception

and delusion?

Abandon the church, as many so called “doners” are doing?

Become critical and judgmental of preachers and the church like so many on the social media?

Sit quietly and grieve, wishing for the good old days when the Holy Spirit moved with power and the preachers proclaimed with anointing and conviction?

While many are following these steps, it is in such times that God always seeks to raise a remnant that will be the embers of new fire and awakening in the midst of a sleepy church.

Into the flood of infidel philosophy of the 1700s God set fire to burning coals like Lyman Beecher, an undergraduate student of Yale and protégé of Dr. Timothy Dwight.

Francis Asbury of the Methodist movement in the mold of his predecessor, George Whitfield, was ablaze and “on the stretch for God.”

The solution to a church turned cold will not be found in a critical spirit or a judgmental attitude.

Complaining about your pastor or posting harsh outlandish articles about popular preachers whom you believe have gone apostate will not bring fire to the lukewarm heart.

The following six steps have proven to be the answer from the time of Martin Luther and the Reformation to the 1960s and the Jesus People and Charismatic Renewal, and they will work in the Laodicean church of the second millennium.

6 Things to Do When Your Church is In Delusion

1. Go into your closet and pray.

Remember the instructions of our Lord, “But you, when you pray, enter your closet, and when you have shut your door,

pray to your Father who is in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you openly" (Matt. 6:6).

My deep concern is you will quickly push this point aside. You have heard it so often the power and the significance of this call no longer carries impact.

God does nothing but by prayer! President Dwight spent hours praying for his deceived and lost students.

A prayer covenant went among the communities of the newly formed states. Pastors and church members united in fasting and prayer on the first Tuesday of every quarter. They committed to keep this commitment until revival broke forth no matter how long it took.

In Kentucky, a prayer covenant was made to pray every Saturday night and Sunday morning and to fast every third Sunday of the month.

Within a year, revival broke through.

This not casual praying.

It is not your usual three-to-five-minute prayer or even a 15-to-20-minute prayer.

The kind of prayers that break the coldness of spirit and bring the fire of revival involves deep brokenness of heart, an awareness of one's true spiritual condition and genuine authentic repentance that causes one to cry out to God for His mercy and grace.

It is praying that will melt your heart and cause you to stay before God crying for souls and longing for a move of the Holy Spirit that will melt the hardest heart and rekindle the fire of passion in souls grown cold.

2. Fall in love with truth.

Lukewarm hearts and spiritually cold worship services are enjoyed by those believers who have lost their first love and no longer have a passion for truth.

The Apostle Paul warned of such a spiritual condition in 1 Timothy 4:1-2 and 2 Thessalonians 2:10-12.

It is imperative the pastors and preachers proclaim the uncompromised Word of God with passion and full confidence they are proclaiming the infallible inerrant Word of the Living God.

It is equally imperative for the hearers to love the truth and welcome it to pierce their heart and convict their soul of sin, of righteousness and true holiness.

“For the Word of God is alive and active and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, of joints and marrow, and able to judge the thoughts and intents of the heart. There is no creature that is not revealed in His sight for all things are bare and exposed to the eyes of Him to whom we must give account” (Heb. 4:12-13).

3. Lay down your life and follow Jesus Christ one hundred percent.

In spite of the historical rewrite, the redefining of morals, and the over-emphasis of grace; the words of Jesus are still in red letters, and they have not changed.

“If anyone will come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me. For whoever would save his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life for My sake will find it” (Matt. 16:24b-25).

The first and the greatest commandment remains “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is the first and great

commandment" (Matt. 22:37-38).

God does not want to share your heart with any other thing or person. "You shall have no other gods before Me" (Ex. 20:3).

It cannot be your hobby, your job, your wife, your husband, your children, your toys, your sports team, your talents, your body or the fear of man.

Nothing fills your heart like He fills it.

You give up the right to all redress.

You surrender your volition and your stubbornness to Him.

You give up the right to your hurts and your offenses; your appetites and your desires; your ambitions and your right to be recognized.

You surrender all to Him.

4. Passionately seek eye-scorching holiness.

The Apostle Paul declared to the believers in Thessalonica, "For God has not called us to uncleanness but to holiness" (1 Thess. 4:7).

He wrote to the Christians in Galatia, "Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh" (Gal. 5:16).

Dr. Michael L. Brown wrote, "There is no message more radical, more revolutionary, more prophetic, more dynamic, more dangerous to hell than the message of HOLINESS UNTO THE LORD. It is the message that flies in the face of this sin-soaked generation" (*Revolution, the Call to Holy War*, 173 Dr. Brown's emphasis).

If we are to see the fire of the Holy Spirit as the men and women say it on the Day of Pentecost, we must have the same passion for the Holy Spirit.

We must passionately desire to be like Him.

He is holy.

That is not only His name. It is His nature and His character.

That must be our character and our daily behavior if we are to be His temple.

5. Love your shepherd and pray for his heart to be filled with holy fire.

Pray for your pastor to be man on fire by the Holy Spirit.

Do not allow gossip, backbiting or a critical spirit to fill your thoughts or to be spoken about him.

If he seems to be lukewarm and preaching a compromised message that carries more of the politically correct tolerance than it does the Word of the living God set a day to fast and to pray for him.

When others complain to you, call them to pray and fast for him.

Love your shepherd and believe for God to make him a firebrand for this generation.

6. Boldly speak truth with love and grace.

How can a deceived person come to know and embrace the truth if those around them who know the truth keep silent, or worse yet, speak deception?

You have a grave responsibility to be an ambassador of the truth to a generation that honestly does not know.

But, you must “speak the truth in love.”

You do not compromise the truth.

However, you must speak the uncompromised truth with a heart

and voice of love, mercy and grace.

Don't beat them with the truth.

Love them with the truth. {eo}

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