

Why the Spiritual Temperature in These 3 Critical Cities Is Close to Zero

Three geographic points represent the cultural centers of dominance in American life: New York as the business capital of the world, Los Angeles as the world's entertainment center and Washington, DC, as the nation's political hub.

The spiritual temperature in these three cultural spheres of influence hovers just around zero. Their present-day secularists' dominance is the fallout of 100 years of Christian torpidity in the public square. What was recorded for our instruction—"You have not because you ask not ..." (James 4:2)—shows the inevitable outcome of faith not exercised.

"Discernment is God's call to intercession, never to fault finding," noted Scottish evangelist Oswald Chambers [1874-1917] in his devotional *My Utmost for His Highest*.

My last two op-eds involved exposition of the spiritual fortitude of Congress and the nation in 1787 in passing the Northwest Ordinance, declaring "Religion, morality and knowledge, being necessary to good government and the happiness of mankind, schools and the means of education shall forever be encouraged." Five years earlier, then 76-year-old Benjamin Franklin had produced a pamphlet with the purpose of apprising Europeans considering coming to America. As an additional picture of the spiritual climate of late 18th-century, normal American life, the pamphlet reads:

... bad examples to youth are more rare in America, which must be a comfortable consideration to parents. To this may be truly added that serious religion, under its various denominations, is not only tolerated, but respected and

practiced. Atheism is unknown there; infidelity rare and secret; so that persons may live to a great age in that country without having their piety shocked by meeting with either an atheist or an infidel. And the Divine Being seems to have manifested his approbation of the mutual forbearance and kindness with which the different sects treat each other, by the remarkable prosperity with which He has been pleased to favour the whole country.

President Ronald Reagan famously observed that “Freedom is never more than one generation away from extinction. We didn’t pass it to our children in the bloodstream. It must be fought for, protected and handed on for them to do the same.” That same principle applies with regard to spiritual fortitude. “The serpent’s final defeat under Messiah’s heel is delayed to effect God’s program of redemption through the promised offspring. In the interim, God leaves Satan to test the fidelity of each succeeding generation of the covenant people and to teach them to ‘fight’ against untruth.”

In 1857, as the spiritual fires diminished in New York City, lay missionary Jeremiah Lanphier began inviting people to the 88-year-old Old Dutch North Church at Fulton and Williams streets in the heart of lower New York City for lunchtime prayer meetings. Six men showed up. When three weeks later, nationwide financial panic broke out, with banks closing and men out of work, Lanphier’s attendance jumped to 40. Within six months 10,000 businessmen (out of a population of 800,000) were gathering daily in New York City for prayer. A modest beginning with six men showing up led to the Third Great Awakening in American history.

A real spiritual struggle is taking place in today’s America. Christians face an array of invisible offensive powers, showing that “For our fight is not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, and against spiritual forces of

evil in the heavenly places" (Eph. 6:12).

Unsurprisingly, Satan and those who serve him therefore will go all out in order to gain power over America's various cultural mountains of influence.

To paraphrase A.W. Tozer, if Christianity in America were to be filled with new life and vitality, it will have to be done by other means than any of those now used. If evangelical and pro-life Catholic Christians are to recover from the harm suffered over the last 75 years, a new type of Christian must arise. The go-along-to-get-along type won't do. Ministry leaders can't any longer dip into politics with an election sermon to almost in the same breath allow the culture to deteriorate for the rest of the year. There is no sense in running a bus across the state the week before an election when 50 percent of the vote is already in from early voting.

Another type of leader must emerge. Christians and their families came within a hair's breadth of losing their freedom with a Hillary Clinton presidential win in 2016. Evangelicals must come to comprehend the scope and scale of what's at stake in the Nov. 6, 2018, and November 3, 2020, elections.

New York City, Los Angeles and Washington, D.C., need spiritual leaders, leaders who have seen visions of God and have heard a voice from the throne. More than one will be needed. When they come, "they will stand in flat contradiction to everything our smirking, smooth civilization holds dear. They will contradict, denounce and protest in the name of God and will earn the hatred and opposition of a large segment of Christendom."

This is our *kairos* moment, the appointed time in the purpose of God. With Christians being active in the public square, "Satan's work is held in check; but let them—the Holy Spirit and the Church—be removed, let the salt be taken away and the One who gives it pungency, and the restraining and preserving

influences are gone, and then nothing remains to stay corruption or hinder the outworking of Satan's plans."

Thanks be to God there is good news. Gideons and Rahabs are beginning to stand.