

How This Failure of the Church Is Keeping Revival at Bay

“Failure is not fatal: it is the courage to continue that counts.” –Winston Churchill

Why is it we all tend to panic when viruses invade our domain, but remain hopelessly sanguine about issues of far greater destructive impact, year in and year out (such as the pandemics of drug abuse, murder, criminalization and mental illness prevalent in “enlightened” modern societies)?

Drugs and drink are too often the solution. Over 470,000 people died from opioid overdoses in the U.S. in the last 20 years. Where is the large-scale reaction to this tragedy?

What’s missing is the lack of media hype. Death from addiction has not been treated as a media-driven political issue because the ingestion of ruinous drugs and alcohol has become as socially acceptable as fornication, Hollywood-driven TV and internet porn.

Just this week, we read of a pack of rabid teenagers in Des Moines, Iowa firing guns randomly into another bunch of nearby teens who were just harmlessly hanging out. The gang killed their primary target and badly wounded two innocently helpless girls. Why?

How could the shooters be so vacant of human kindness they could care less? I’d love to also do a profile of the gunmen’s parents. What kind of examples were they?

The world in general has few answers, because the world tackles these spiritual issues as though they are mere psychological, genetic or relational disturbances. The “smart”

world sneers at spiritual underpinnings because relativity, evolution and physics have “proven” there is no God—no hereafter.

Spiritual problems arising from families who no longer teach or practice biblical values are ministered to by humanists offering psycho-palliative theories. College professors play intellectual games called humanism, each trying to out-clever the others in explaining ephemeral matters that are unexplainable, bringing young minds into their mold of thinking and then scratching their heads as to why student-victims have so many mental problems.

What Is Going on Here?

But wait, the news gets worse. A Sunday, March 6, 2022, article in the *Denver Post* reports that state universities are unable to meet the demand for mental health disorders in their student populations. The article claims universities across the nation are failing to keep up with the growing demand for mental health services: a demand growing five times faster than long-term averages, an unexplained, perhaps *unexplainable* phenomenon.

The implication is that the mental pandemic mirrors a major failure of the Christian church in fighting these particular vices. We no longer effectively proclaim and project joy, celebration, harmony, selflessness and purposeful moral lifestyles to those around us. Too many churchgoers instead mimic the general population, making a mockery of their proclaimed beliefs. Too much talk, too little obedience.

We live in an era when majorities of all worldviews openly endorse and practice with pride the sins that will ultimately destroy them and those around them. They have far more influence on society than do we in the church.

An effective Christian church should automatically revolutionize and energize society as an irresistibly dominant

force for good amongst all brothers and sisters sprung from God's domain. After all, our leader is an irresistible force, flinging the universe into endlessly scattered formations of pure light upon a single breath. What more could we want from someone who also promises He will always "have our six" ?

God's 'Little' Problem

So what's the problem? The answer is predictable: Humans—we who are our own worst enemies way too much of the time. If only we could just get out of the way.

There remains one profound but rarely considered answer. I stumbled upon this rare truth in Frank Bartleman's superb book on the Azusa Street miracle/Revival. After taking us through opening scenes of the unforgettable 1906 revival in California, Bartleman reminisces about problems and issues soiling critical parts of this particular body of believers. God answered the preacher's reflective musings with an earth-shaking comment: "If you would have made yourself smaller, I could have done more!"

Let's think on this for a bit. The over 100-year-old revival is still growing. In parts of Mexico and South America, the fastest-growing denominations are still Azusa Street spinoffs, such as Assemblies of God, Foursquare and a smattering of other Pentecostal entities. In fact, these Latin American churches are now second only to the Catholic Church in number. The revival is very much alive. (I know because I co-led a full-time Mexico missionary effort down there in recent years.)

But God says it could have been greater. How did the presence of Bartleman, one of the three most influential leaders of the movement, hinder God's work? And what does this tell us about the failings of today's church?

It seems the great bulk of mini-revivals since the early 1900s have been prematurely limited in scope, influence and

longevity. We can only conclude that they all committed the Bartleman error. Every revival I have been in, studied, or at least read about, involved a specific human leadership of some kind.

Sometimes it was a powerfully anointed individual gifted with near-supernatural charisma. Other times, the revivals were centered on geographically related bodies such as churches with a general acceptance that a man or woman's leadership was the center or authority of the temporary movement.

But It's God's Revival, Not Ours!

In this author's 84-plus years of observing all the above phenomena, I have reached some difficult conclusions. The final revival, which is near, will be a sovereign move of God. It will not feature a singularity of locations or human leadership. There is no one small enough to get out of the way of God's perfect way. There will be no human grouping facing up to the challenge because the inevitable disputes and division do not and cannot conform to God's perfect order.

The next and last revival is too important to rely on or ride upon humans and human organizations. God will work through thousands, probably millions, of single, one-act performances. You and I will play roles, but we will be limited and content to reach out one by one or in two-by-twos to our neighbors and community as God originally intended.

Many churches will participate but dare not assume leadership roles because they are unavoidably human-ego-based. Don't get me wrong; God will do all this through His people. All will be involved, but none will dare take on the mantle of ultimate leadership. It is too late an hour on God's timepiece to let human egos ruin this last-call move of the Holy Spirit. It's a final challenge for all of us to get involved. Don't look to humans; turn inward to your great Counselor and follow his instructions to the T.

For over 70 years, I experienced varied physical manifestations of the Holy Spirit, including miraculous cures and various other supernatural events. And I will prophesy one thing without fear of being wrong: The next revival will be a sovereign act of God, including the manifestation of the Holy Spirit in any and all who sincerely and personally chose the winning side. It will be mostly a one-on-one process—not a stage show, not an organized crowd and human-driven activity, but a universal gathering-in via unanticipated forms of God's choosing.

Get ready to be surprised, amazed, thrilled and supremely blessed when God is running the great revival without interference from mere man. We'll talk more about this later, up there! {eoa}

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