

Part 3: Bringing the Comatose of the Church Back to Life

Sadly, churches today pander to those who want to come, who want to belong, but who are not willing to make a total surrender. There are many Rich Young Rulers in the pews who are affirmed by their pastors but who are actually following Jesus in an unsaved condition.

"Now one came and said to Him, "Good Teacher, what good deed shall I do to have eternal life?" He replied to him, "Why do you call Me good? There is One who is good. But if you would enter life, keep the commandments." He said to Him, "Which ones?" Jesus said, "You shall not murder, You shall not commit adultery, You shall not steal, You shall not bear false witness, Honor your father and your mother, and, You shall love your neighbor as yourself." The young man said to Him, "All these I have kept from my youth. What do I still lack?" Jesus said to him, "If you would be perfect, go and sell what you have, and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. And come, follow Me." But when the young man heard this, he went away sorrowful. For he had great possessions" (Matt. 19:16-22).

Those who aren't willing to make a total surrender will be evident when the bar of commitment is appropriate. They will avoid the prayer meetings. They will be slow to respond to the call. They will resist the cross and the mandate to die daily.

When we do find those who are willing to make a total surrender, we can move on to the next step in Evan Roberts' revival protocol:

Pray and wait.

This next phase will eliminate even more people. I believe it would make a lot of sense based on what is found in Scripture

to replace the primary weekly service with a fiery prayer meeting. Further, the call to pray and wait should result in a prayer culture in the church that is often grueling, sometimes electric.

Finding those who will actively participate hour after hour in prayer is a tough task, though it's a non-negotiable one. The church is a house of prayer, and it's an indictment on today's leadership that people can participate in church activities and call themselves Christians without having a fervent, devoted life of continual prayer.

"With my whole heart I cry; answer me, O LORD! I will keep your statutes" (Ps. 119:145).

"Be gracious to me, O Lord, for to you do I cry all the day" (Ps. 86:3).

"... praying at all times in the Spirit, with all prayer and supplication. To that end keep alert with all perseverance, making supplication for all the saints ..." (Eph. 6:18).

"Likewise the Spirit helps us in our weakness. For we do not know what to pray for as we ought, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words" (Rom. 8:26).

When we have a group of people who will pray continually, we can consider the next step in the revival prescription:

Believe God's promises.

Call everybody to an extreme life of faith.

There is much that I could write here about this, but suffice it to say that many challenges and opportunities to stand in extreme confidence of God's ability to meet us will arise.

When such an extreme, inconvenient revival lifestyle dominates our daily schedules, we will have to learn to trust God to

supply our needs, ensure our families are strong and united and provide the energy necessary. The enemy will work hard to destroy our faith, yet we must be unmoving.

"... For whatever does not proceed from faith is sin" (Rom. 14:23).

"And without faith it is impossible to please him, for whoever would draw near to God must believe that He exists and that He rewards those who seek Him" (Heb. 11:6).

If we've accomplished the first three steps, this next one will certainly bring the pressure in today's busy culture:

Hold daily meetings.

"Daily, in the temple and from house to house, they did not cease to teach and preach Jesus Christ" (Acts 5:42).

Is there anyone who has what it takes to defeat the cares of life and to order their calendar in such a way that they could gather together every day of the week?

This has been one of my greatest challenges in my 25 years of ministry. Finding a remnant people who have filtered out every competing, lesser activity in their week to make room to gather in prayer every day has been nearly impossible.

Yet, it's happening in China. It's happening in other more desperate parts of the world. It's happening where entertainment isn't king and t-ball and ballet don't rule. Today's Christian culture is heavily marked by pleasure and the typical American dream. This not only puts revival at risk. It puts their eternity at risk.

"Just as it was in the days of Noah, so will it be in the days of the Son of Man. They were eating, drinking, marrying, and were given in marriage until the day when Noah entered the ark. Then the flood came and destroyed them all" (Luke 17:26-27).

When I ministered in Haiti, more than a thousand people walked to the church building every day, many of them for over two hours, just to be in prayer and to advance as one people toward revival. It was humbling. It was awe inspiring. They had nothing better to do than to be with God as a passionate family every night of the week.

It also happens when there are outpourings. People cancelled everything in their lives to attend the outpourings at Brownsville and Toronto every night.

During the Second Great Awakening, over 10,000 people attended a prayer meeting every day in New York City. People from other states visited those prayer meetings and then started their own in their region.

I'm sure you can see why I said I believe there may only be a few thousand remnant Christians who are fully devoted to prayer and revival in a city the size of Chicago. The number may actually be much smaller.

"And continuing daily with one mind in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, they ate their food with gladness and simplicity of heart" (Acts 2:46).

The fact that we have better things to do than contend for revival in the place of prayer every day is evidence enough that the church is asleep, comfortable and in a very dangerous place. It's time to fall in love with Jesus again, gather together and pray and model the first century church.

"But I have something against you, that you have abandoned the love you had at first. Remember therefore from where you have fallen. Repent, and do the works you did at first, or else I will come to you quickly and remove your candlestick from its place, unless you repent" (Rev. 2:4-5).

Final Thoughts

We need an awakening movement in our nation, and in the nations. John the Baptist-type messengers must arise and confront the slothful, lazy and religious spirits that are in the land with great boldness. Those who don't fear being labeled legalists must open their mouths and shake the comatose back to life.

A call to radical intimacy with Jesus that can only be nurtured in the place of continual prayer needs to be shouted from the rooftops. The resistance to radical prayer is resistance of Jesus himself. If we don't desire to be with the one we love, and to hear his heart and intercede on his behalf, our commitment to him is suspect.

There is truly no greater glory than to live a life of prayer and there is no greater mystery than those who have taken his name yet refuse to be with him.

"...Therefore He says: "Awake, you who sleep, arise from the dead, and Christ will give you light." (Eph. 5:14).

John Burton has been developing and leading ministries for over 20 years and is a sought-after teacher, prophetic messenger and revivalist. He has authored nine books, has appeared on Christian television and radio and directed one of the primary internships at the International House of Prayer (IHOP) in Kansas City. Additionally, he planted two churches, has initiated two city prayer movements and is currently directing a prayer- and revival-focused ministry school in Detroit called theLab University. John also has a web- and graphic-design business and is continually developing new and exciting ventures. He and his beautiful wife, Amy, have five children and live in the Detroit area. He can be reached via his website at .

For the original article, visit . This is the second of a three-part series.