

10 Hindrances to a National Awakening

Christians everywhere hope for a national awakening that will preserve and revive their nation. However, an awakening does not merely come because people hope and pray for it. Certain preconditions must take place before a nation experiences a spiritual awakening.

By “awakening,” I am referring to masses of people in a community, city or nation turning to Christ, resulting in human flourishing and societal reform.

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1. **There is a lack of true oneness in the church.** Jesus gave the precondition for the world to be awakened to the truth of the gospel when He prayed, “that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you. May they also be in us so *that the world may believe* that you have sent me” (John 17:21, NIV, author’s emphasis). Hence, fragmentation and disunity among gospel preaching churches must be healed in a community for the gospel witness to awaken sinners effectively.
2. **Corporate prayer meetings are based on a cause and not seeking God.** Prayer must be earnest and focused on seeking God’s face rather than solely His hand. Too many corporate prayer gatherings I have seen in the past several years were more focused on winning political elections than seeking God’s face. This is contrary to

the clear precondition for healing the land, as found in 2 Chronicles 7:14.

3. **There is a lack of holy desperation.** A deep, pervasive sense of the need for God often precedes awakening. The book of Joel speaks about the urgency for corporate fasting and prayer so great that the bride, bridegroom and mothers nursing their infants were commanded to assemble to seek the Lord so the land would be healed (Joel 1-2). Jesus also made it clear that those He would fill had to have the precondition of holy hunger (Matt. 5:6). A complacent attitude in the church can stifle spiritual awakening.
4. **There are many compromising church models.** Faithfulness to God's Word is crucial for true spiritual success. Jesus rebuked churches that tolerate sin, have left their first love and are neither hot nor cold. He even called out a church that had a reputation of being alive, but was truly dead. (Rev. 2-3). Unfortunately, too many contemporary churches are built merely to attract crowds and do not make disciples. These churches often quench the Spirit of God and fail to provoke passion for Him, which results in maintaining the cultural status quo rather than igniting the flames of revival and awakening.
5. **There is a lack of sorrow for national sin.** The prophet Amos rebuked those in Israel who lived complacent lives despite their society's moral decadence and looming doom (Amos 6:4-6). The prophet Ezekiel spoke about God expecting His people to wail and groan for the sins of their nation (Ezek. 9:4). When the majority of Christians in a nation are not burdened by the lukewarm

state of the church and spiritual decline of their nation, they cannot expect a national awakening.

6. **There is a lack of the fear of the Lord.** Reverence for God is foundational to wisdom and spiritual awakening. For a nation to return to God, it needs a spirit of wisdom and fear of the Lord. "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, and knowledge of the Holy One is understanding" (Prov. 9:10). The gospel spread in the city of Ephesus because both the church and the city experienced the reality of the fear of the Lord (Acts 19:10-17). Many contemporary churches emphasize an informal, seeker-sensitive atmosphere in which they have lost the fear of the Lord. (I have heard of churches that hit beach balls during the worship service so that it can be a fun experience. In others, many talk, joke and drink coffee during the service.) Consequently, a diminished fear of the Lord leads to moral and spiritual laxity and will not catalyze a spiritual awakening.
7. **The gospel of self-fulfillment is predominant.** The gospel calls for self-denial and Christ-centered living. Many in the church fail to live the cross-shaped life and have recalibrated the gospel to meet their fleshly needs and desires. Much preaching is based upon the false trinitarian gospel (I, me, my) instead of on the lordship of Christ. This occurs despite the fact that the prerequisite to overcoming demonic forces has to do with offering our life as a living sacrifice (Rom. 12:1-2). As the Scripture says, "And they have conquered him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, for they loved not their lives even unto death" (Rev. 12:11, ESV). Consequently, churches that focus primarily on appealing to the desire for "self-fulfillment" rather than the cross distort the gospel,

weaken its power and will never play a role in a spiritual awakening.

8. **Many churches neglect their communities.** The biblical mission of the church extends beyond its walls (Acts 1:8-9). Jesus said, "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations" (Matt. 28:19a). Congregations that are only self-focused hinder broader community impact, gospel outreach and fail to awaken the surrounding community.
9. **Many prophetic voices have been compromised.** One of the preconditions for a national awakening is prophetic preaching that proclaims God's heart to turn people to righteousness. When a nation's primary prophetic voices appeal primarily to its political, cultural, or financial base, that nation will fail to experience a national awakening. "Thus says the Lord concerning the prophets who lead my people astray, who cry 'Peace' when they have something to eat, but declare war against him who puts nothing into their mouths" (Mic. 3:5).
10. **There is much national division.** When a nation is divided against itself, its ideological divisions and moral drift can preclude the ability to experience a national awakening. Jesus said, "Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation, and every city or house divided against itself will not stand" (Matt. 12:25b, NKJV). May God raise wise, uncompromising bridge builders who bring the message of reconciliation so that a national awakening can break out (2 Cor. 5:18-20).

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