

A Spiritual Laboratory Analysis of What Is Presently Happening in America and What the Church's Response Must Be

The following article is an excerpt from what one old Pentecostal minister termed the best, most dynamic, timely and seasonal book he's read in a long time, *Passing on the Move of God to the Next Generation*.

One day Satan asked himself a question:

"How can I destroy America? No army can defeat them. Their economy is foolproof. They're geographically isolated and cannot be invaded. I know what I'll do. I'll get them through their children. I'll erase the commandments, the godly traditions, the family, morality, ethics, truth and decency."

We are seeing this today in increasing proportions.

Then, while pondering on this evil, hellish strategy, Satan says:

"If I can get the Holy Spirit out of the church, I can really take over."

And so there you have it—a spiritual laboratory analysis of what is presently happening in America. I wonder which evil strategy is the worst. Are you more concerned about what is happening in the nation or in the church?

My concern is not as much for the nation, or the government or the evils that have befallen our society because I understand that an evil, decadent society is never a match for the glorious, Spirit-filled church.

Jesus walks among the lampstands (churches—Rev. 2 and 3). His concern is for the state of His church. Although God is concerned about governments and His Word exhorts us to pray for all those in authority, for kings, presidents, governors and such (1 Tim 2:1-2), there is hardly a mention found in the New Testament of the evils prevalent in a nation, a society or the government. No word from the New Testament writers on Nero, Herod or any ruling Caesar. No complaints about wicked governments, criticisms about wicked kings, how evil society was or the state of failing economies. No attention was given to any of these issues. The church and the spiritual health and welfare of the saints have always been the issue. Jesus wants His lampstands to burn bright.

As long as we are in this world, there will always be sin and evil. Nations, societies and governments are made up largely of unregenerate sinners. Sinners are dead in their trespasses and sins. They are possessed by a sinful nature that makes them slaves to sin. Until they come to Christ and are born again, they are powerless to overcome the ravages of sin.

A strong spiritual church burning brightly in the midst of a decadent society is our only hope. The true church is the voice and moral conscience of a nation, and a restrainer of sin and evil.

The mind of the Spirit that the early apostles possessed was for the church to be salt and light in society and to impact it through its character, power and authority. A church full of the Holy Spirit and reflecting the glory of God will affect any society. But to actually change society, you must change the hearts of the individuals within it.

The power and testimony of a transformed life and a heart on fire speak louder than any old tradition, new program, perfected logic, polished sermon or eloquent speech. Give the local church a few burning testimonies of changed lives, and it can start to impact a city.

“Come, see a Man who told me all things that I ever did” (John 4:29).

Where is the power of the Spirit-inspired testimony in the Pentecostal/charismatic and evangelical churches? It is only the effectual working of God’s power in a human heart that will allow a man to go outside of himself and share the gospel boldly and testify of Jesus. “In order to stop me, you’ve got to kill me,” is the battle cry of the radically transformed man.

“For we cannot but declare what we have seen and heard” (Acts 4:20).

When the saints of God are spiritually healthy and vibrant, it brings light into the local church and city. So precious are those who are on fire for Jesus, especially in times of gross darkness and moral decline as we are in now. Heaven takes note of them, and they shall shine as the stars forever.

“Those who are wise shall shine like the brightness of the firmament, and those who turn many to righteousness as the stars forever and ever” (Dan. 12:3).

In a time of spiritual declension in Great Britain in the 1800s, Catherine Booth, wife of Salvation Army founder William Booth, went about the churches “looking for burning words.” She recognized that doctrine alone is not enough. Logical-sounding phrases and great swelling words are not enough. Oratorical skills are not enough. We must have the Word on fire and the power and move of the Holy Spirit.

Many churches need to get out of the twilight zone of cessation theology and postmodernism, and learn what it means to be filled with the mighty Holy Spirit and press on into all the fullness of God (Eph. 3:19).

While there are pockets of revival throughout certain parts of the nation, there has also been a disturbing trend in many

Pentecostal and charismatic churches of a lack of emphasis on the work, power and fullness of the Holy Spirit. Listen to the words of the late John G. Lake, that great apostle to South Africa:

“I believe that the first essential in a real Holy Ghost church and a real Holy Ghost work is to begin to surround the baptism of the Holy Ghost with the reverence due an experience so sacred and so terribly costly.”

The gospels and the book of Acts portray the original blueprint for the operation of the real church. She was born in Spirit and fire (Acts 2:1-4) and can thrive only in the same. Yes, thrive even in the midst of a morally declining and grossly dark, decadent society.

More Spirit and fire churches is the real cure for America's degradation and society's ills.

Imagine if all Pentecostal/charismatic churches caught fire. Imagine if all evangelical churches did, too. The impact on our nation would be unprecedented.

More of the workings and fullness of the Spirit is what we need—and fire, fire, fire on the churches of Jesus Christ!