

God Is Shaking Things Up

Editor's Note: *The following message first appeared in the Summer 2008 issue of Unchained!, a quarterly magazine published by Pure Life Ministries (). It is still relevant for us today and offers encouragement about the times we are living in. The message is reprinted here with the permission of both the author and the publisher.*

God promised to shake everything that can be shaken, and He  is not slack about keeping His promises. I don't ever recall a time such as today, when almost everything is being shaken.

We are seeing unprecedented natural catastrophes taking place throughout the earth. It was just a few years ago that a tsunami claimed more than 200,000 lives. And in the spring of 2008, within a week's time, we saw two more disasters in the Far East kill at least another 120,000 people. There is no doubt in my own mind that such events are the promised "birth pangs" Jesus spoke of in Matthew 24.

The United States has not been exempt from this alarming trend. For example, in the first half of 2008 we had more deaths by tornadoes than we have had in any given year for more than two decades. The U.S. economy is fast heading into a recession—maybe even a depression. The almighty dollar, once the benchmark of monetary value throughout the world, has now been surpassed by the euro. As the United States continues to weaken, Muslim terrorists and rogue nations grow stronger.

In addition, we are witnessing a moral implosion unlike any that has occurred in previous history. California has taken the unthinkable role of sanctioning homosexual marriages. [In November 2008, Proposition 8 reversed the California ruling, but gay marriage is legal in 5 other states.] Pornography is now regularly viewed by millions of people. Even child

pornography has escalated at an alarming rate.

Another concern I have is the blatant anti-Christian attitude emerging in our country. Although the two incidents that have occurred at different times involving religious cults in Texas (Branch Davidians and polygamous Mormons) clearly had extenuating circumstances, the government's response seemed very heavy-handed. I can't help but wonder if this is a precursor of things to come. It wasn't so long ago that newscasters and politicians were comparing some Christians to Islamic terrorists.

American Christians have never experienced real persecution before, but Jesus made it very clear that this would be pervasive in the Last Days. Let's face it, in the current environment, about all it would take would be for some weird "Christian" group to attack the government to bring about a public outcry against everything Christian. I believe during our lifetime we could very well see a president, in the interest of national security, closing churches and establishing a Guantanamo Bay for "religious insurgents." Have you forgotten what it was like right after 9/11?

How will believers make it through such difficult times? I don't think the answer will be political maneuvering or mass crusades. This is a spiritual issue that requires a radical *old* approach. When the church faced persecution and opposition in times past, she always triumphed through *koinonia*: believers binding together in fellowship, prayer and mutual support. This is normal, everyday living for our brethren in numerous countries right now.

Nevertheless, as contradictory as it may sound, I believe the church is heading into her finest hour. It is an exciting time to be a believer! We are going to witness God's bringing everything into subjection to His Son.

The Lord is shaking things for a reason—so that "what cannot

be shaken may remain" (Heb. 12:27, NIV). I for one will be happy to see the church purged of all her carnality and worldliness. I long for the bride of Christ to be without spot or wrinkle, a true light in the midst of increasing darkness.

Perhaps the best way to prepare for what is headed our way is to begin to live as though it were already here. What I mean by that is to start focusing on the eternal, rather than the temporal; start forming quality relationships with other like-minded saints. Then when life as we have known it begins to unravel, we will be ready to meet the future as a friend rather than as an enemy to be feared.

About the author: David Ravenhill () has served the Lord for more than 40 years, working as a missionary, pastor, teacher and itinerant minister. He is the author of several books, including *Surviving the Anointing* and *Welcome Home* (both Destiny Image), which reflect his burden to see the church come to maturity through intimacy with God.

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