

Why the Church Needs a Change in Strategy

It doesn't take a prophetic voice to point out that  our nation and our world are in trouble and the trouble we're facing won't go away any time soon. The body of Christ must prepare to stand in the midst of it to exert influence for the kingdom of God—and the clock is ticking. It remains to be seen whether we have adequately prepared spiritually, in attitude or materially for what must come.

At virtually every other crisis point in United States history God has provided one or more great leaders who have helped the nation come out the other side victorious and ready to build on what has been won. George Washington led the colonies through the Revolutionary War to defeat the world's most powerful army and establish our nation's independence. By the grace of God Abraham Lincoln turned out to be the right man to carry us through the trauma of the Civil War and preserve the union. Beginning in the Great Depression we had Franklin D. Roosevelt to shepherd us through World War II and lead us to a victory that set the stage for the unprecedented level of prosperity and influence the United States has enjoyed since 1945. Clearly, the Lord has favored us. To fail to acknowledge the Lord's hand in these things would be inexcusable blindness.

Granted, historically we have not always understood or lived out the full implications of the godly values and concepts our founders articulated and we claimed to believe in. For example, as a member of the Osage Nation (Native American) I am well aware of the injustices perpetrated on nonwhite peoples over the years since Europeans first came to these shores. Neither have we always been a moral people by such a basic standard as the Ten Commandments. We did, however, always acknowledge God and His place in our nation at both cultural and governmental levels.

But no longer.

I hardly need to bore you with the litany of court decisions, laws and policies that now repudiate our historic acknowledgement of the Creator and His sovereignty. Nor do I need to explain what now constitutes a growing prejudice against the very Christianity espoused by virtually every one of the founding fathers.

Psalm 34:7 says, "The angel of the Lord encamps around those who fear Him, and rescues them." The hard truth is that because we no longer truly fear the Lord, the angel of the Lord no longer encamps around this nation to rescue it. This does not mean the Lord's judgment is falling upon us. That may come, but it is not yet. It simply means that we now stand on the same footing as every other nation on earth—neither more nor

less favored; and therein lies the problem.

We now face a growing set of world crises that demand wise and strong leadership. Having forfeited the favor of God, no such leadership has emerged or will emerge. I am therefore deeply troubled concerning the coming election.

Pardon the harsh tone of the following statements, but we have a man of profound wisdom-deficit in the White House who will soon launch a re-election campaign. Obama could have been a great president. Even though I voted against him, I saw the potential when he was elected, and I said so. But humility, as well as the wisdom that would have come from humility, have not been in evidence.

A similar wisdom deficit can be seen in those who now vie for the Republican nomination to run against him. Unfortunately, as this election cycle unfolds, it has become painfully apparent that not one among the Republican field has the grace or wisdom to do any better than our president.

Rigid ideologies have mired both Congress and the White House in a legislative gridlock that will not soon be broken. No one really listens—not to one another and certainly not to the American people. Proverbs 12:15 admonishes, “The way of a fool is right in his own eyes, but a wise man is he who listens to counsel.” This root of foolishness has taken deep root at the highest levels and has resulted in a

government broken
at every level, powerless to lead us out of the quicksand we
find ourselves
currently sinking into.

This is not the time for Christians to attempt to
exert influence through shrill, judgmental and angry
statements. This
perpetuates the foolishness that wins no one's heart and now
destroys us. The
time is long past for us to be thinking we can pull the
country back to
something we thought it once was. Too many shifts have
occurred culturally,
racially and ethnically for that to be possible.

We therefore need a change of strategy based in
blessing, the servant heart and prophetic wisdom. Daniel and
his three friends
changed the hearts of the kings of Babylon and Persia by
serving, not by
pronouncing railing judgments. They did this for the
government of the very
empire that had brutally conquered their own nation and
carried their
population into exile. Why can't we do this for officials we
ourselves have
elected? Why not pray for opportunities to bless those in
authority in any
sphere of life with gentle and godly wisdom for the situations
and problems
they face?

Joseph in Egypt blessed the Pharaoh even while
confined in a prison to which he had been unjustly condemned.
And he not only
interpreted the Pharaoh's dream but also proposed a solution
to the looming

famine the dream prophesied. He ended up ruling the country.

Why not pray for godly men and women to be strategically placed to earn influence by means of humble service, even in the face of persecution and prejudice, just as Daniel and Joseph were?

I know: This can seem a difficult thing for many who feel their most cherished values are being trashed due to a set of ideologies and resulting decisions that seem diametrically opposed to so much of what we stand for. But put yourself in Daniel's or Joseph's place. In a contest of dire situations—theirs versus ours—they win; and yet they served and changed the hearts of kings.

The difficulties of the coming days present us with unprecedented opportunities to demonstrate the love and power of the kingdom of God flowing from the heart of our Father through Jesus His Son. We can be Daniels and Josephs wherever and at whatever level God has deployed us. Please, let's not miss the moment. Darkness cannot overcome light. The world may crash around us, but we get to win in the midst of it. The most powerful outpouring of the Spirit of God since Pentecost is upon us if we will choose to receive it and use it in the loving heart of our Father.

About the author: R. Loren Sandford is the founder and senior pastor of New Song Church and Ministries in Denver. He is a songwriter, recording artist and worship leader, as well as the author of several books, including *Understanding Prophetic*

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