

Michael Brown: An Urgent Cry to a Holy Uprising

America experienced a cultural revolution in the 1960s, and the effects of that revolution have been felt until this day. Now we are in the midst of yet another nation-shaping cultural revolution. I warn you—change can happen quickly. The country you enjoyed last year may not exist next year. Just ask anyone who saw it happen before.

As Roger Kimball observed: “The Age of Aquarius did not end when the last electric guitar was unplugged at Woodstock. It lives on in our values and habits, in our tastes, pleasures and aspirations. It lives on especially in our educational and cultural institutions, and in the degraded pop culture that permeates our lives like a corrosive fog. ... Although we are sometimes tempted to ignore it, we are living in the aftermath of a momentous social and moral assault.”

What this means in practical terms—and I wrote these words in 2000—is that our public school teachers can hand out condoms but not gospel tracts; that homosexuals have more right to freedom of expression in the classroom than do evangelical Christians; that churches have to encourage believing teenagers to remain virgins until marriage; that by the mid-1990s, the majority of women giving birth to their firstborn children conceived those children out of wedlock; that we have moved from *Leave It to Beaver* to *Melrose Place* and from Mike Douglas (Do you remember his daily TV talk show?) to Jerry Springer. That is just the tip of the iceberg.

I have conducted impromptu surveys while speaking throughout America, asking all those 50 years old or more to stand up and respond to two questions (Today, I would ask the question of people at least 65 years old). First, “When you were in high school, did you know of anyone your age who either tried to

commit suicide or actually committed suicide?" Invariably, just a few hands go up (in some cases, not one hand is raised). Second, "When you were in high school, did you know of any girls your age who either had a child out of wedlock or had an abortion?" In this case, a few more hands go up, but it is still a small portion of those standing.

I then repeat this with young people between the ages of 15 and 19. Without fail, when I put the same questions to them, almost every hand is raised in response (many times every single hand is raised). And many of these kids are "church kids" educated in Christian schools or even homeschooled. What a different world they are being raised in, and what a changed society that confronts them at every turn in life—yet this is the only society they have ever known.

What makes my unofficial survey all the more striking is that the few in the older crowd who raised their hands did so because they knew of one person in their entire school who fit the description, whereas many of the teens know of numerous people who fit the description. A revolution did make an impact on our society over 50 years ago, and the results of it are undeniable. The year 1968 in particular was a turning point, not only in America, but also around the globe.

It was in 1968 that Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and Robert F. Kennedy were assassinated. Hippie and yippie activists rocked Chicago during the Democratic convention. Bloody riots broke out in inner cities, and student protests erupted on college campuses, often producing dramatic change. In fact, at the beginning of 1968, some secular universities had curfews and dress codes. By the end of the year, those rules were gone, a thing of the past, almost unthinkable in today's society.

One of my friends living in Israel today, a Jewish believer saved in the early 1970s, told me that when he first attended college in the fall of 1967, almost all the young men were in fraternities, and hardly any of them had long hair or took

drugs. One year later, in the fall of 1968, things had changed dramatically. Everywhere he looked, young men were growing their hair long, doing drugs and dropping out of fraternities. What a change one year had wrought!

The 1960s and early 1970s were years of tremendous upheaval and change, years of shaking and disruption, years of moral and cultural revolution. Yet for the most part, the church slept her way through the revolution. The devil seized the moment, while God's people missed the opportunity of a century. What on earth were we doing?

In light of this fleshly onslaught, Randy Alcorn, author of the probing book *Christians in the Wake of the Sexual Revolution*, could only ask, "Where was the church when all this was happening? What did it do to counter the country's moral decline?" His carefully documented answer is a painful pill to swallow: For the most part, we American Christians did not counter the country's moral decline; we contributed to it. We participated in it. The darkness made the light dimmer, rather than the light exposing and brightening the darkness. What an indictment!

Another indictment is even more painful to recognize: The church missed one of the greatest potential spiritual harvests in modern history, since the 1960s were a time of seeking and questioning, a time when the very meaning of life was up for grabs, when the gods of materialism and greed were renounced and the power of dead traditionalism was cast off. What a golden opportunity for the people of God to rise up and say, "We have the answer! We have the real thing!" But we missed the moment. To this hour, the thought of it causes me pain. How many lives were needlessly destroyed?

It seems that even *Mad* magazine had more spiritual insight into those critical years than did many Christian leaders, satirizing the late 1960s as a time of great spiritual hunger, especially among young people. The April 1968 edition of *Mad*

featured Alfred E. Neuman on the cover, pictured as a hippie and surrounded by the words "Turn On, Tune In, Drop Dead." True to form, this particular issue contained a mock new periodical called "Hippie: The Magazine That Turns You On." Hippie was acutely aware of the signs of the times.

Among the headline articles was "What to Do About God After You Finally Find Him," while Hippie's classified ads included: "Young Male Hippie, Leaving for India to find God, desires Young Female Traveling Companion in case I don't connect"; and "Looking For God? I will tell you where to find Him. No kidding, I know where He's at, and who He is. \$ gets this information. Your money back in seven days if you're not completely satisfied with Him."

Other ads pointed to Eastern spirituality, including mountains for both meditation and sexual adventures and cures for hernias by sitting in the lotus position. How accurately this parodied the spiritual journey so many young people were on. *Mad* even had the insight to recognize how many Jewish seekers populated that 1968 generation, creating hippie names such as Mohammad Tishman, Zen Rappaport and Shah Bernbaum and featuring a counseling column by "Abba Bennadam" (Hebrew for Father, Son of Man), a "Mystic, a Seer, a Prophet, a Poet, a Free-Thinker and an Aluminum Storm Door Salesman" (the latter, of course, to provide an income!). One of the questions posed to him came from "Rattled," living in Chicago: "Dear Abba: I am approaching 30, and I still haven't found God! Man, I'm getting uptight over it! How and where can I find Him?" Abba replied, "Dear Rattled: Don't lose your cool. I'll tell Him you're looking for Him the next time I see Him."

Do you grasp the significance of all this? The spiritual search of these young people was so obvious that *Mad* could satirize it in the silliest terms. Yet God's people hardly recognized how ripe these radical seekers were, failing to present them with a radical Jesus—the Jesus of the New Testament, rather than the Jesus of the traditional church. In

just a few short pages, *Mad* made reference to hippies trying to “find God” four separate times, yet those who knew Him did far too little to make Him known.

To say it once more: We failed to seize the opportunity of a lifetime during the lifetime of the opportunity. We miserably missed the moment. But Satan did not miss the moment. He rushed in to fill the void with sexual freedom, illicit drugs, rock music and its message of rebellion, transcendental meditation and Eastern religions, and every kind of activist cause, from the admirable to the absurd. What a harvest hell reaped! Again I ask, What were God’s people doing?

As I write these words now in the year 2020, we are living in even more tumultuous times, an even more intense, nation-shaking year than even 1968. Will we seize this moment for God’s purposes, or will we sleep our way through another revolution?

As a lover of God and a student of His Word, I do not see this spirit of pessimism and hopelessness in the Scriptures, nor do I believe that is what the Holy Spirit is saying today. The Word does not teach that the Great Commission of Jesus decreases in scope at the end of the age. Rather, it increases (Matt. 13:39, NIV): “The harvest is the end of the age” (Matt. 24:14; Rev. 7:9-10). The authority Jesus received and the authority with which He sends us is to the ends of the earth until the end of the age (Matt. 28:18-20). In fact, more people were saved worldwide in the last 50 years of the last century than in any hundred-year period of church history before.

One reader of the first edition of *Revolution!* wrote, “To me the book portrayed a Pied Piper luring youngsters into his fantasy.” The reader continued:

“Unfortunately many gullible and innocent people fall for this kind of thing. Wrap something with the name of Christ and

people jump on the bandwagon because there is no discernment. I have been hearing about 'revival' nonstop for years now, but have been seeing a great falling away instead. It has come to me that even though there is a church on every corner this country has become morally unraveled. A large percentage of people, when polled, profess to be Christian yet we have rampant decline. How can that be, I asked myself? For some time now I have held the unpopular opinion that we are about to experience the judgment of God. I personally feel we have passed the point of no return."

Tragically, this theology of defeat produces a mentality of retreat, and this is exactly what happened in the 1960s. For one reason or another, God's people missed a massive opportunity to provide reality to a confused and disillusioned generation.

Others, however, were not asleep. Speaking of the turning point in modern homosexual history, the Stonewall riots in New York City in 1969, gay activist Marc Rubin asked, "How did that singular event in June 1969 become the fountainhead for so many of the changes that have made the world so different for queers 30 years later?" His answer: "It spawned the Gay Liberation Movement."

First there was The Gay Liberation Front proclaiming loudly, clearly and brilliantly the truth that gay is good, that queers had embodied within them all of the genius of humanity and owned all privileges of that status.

The Gay Activists Alliance stood for writing the revolution into law. Although individual members would ally them selves with causes not directly related to the oppression of homosexuals, the organization's single issue focus enabled it [sic] direct all of its energies toward working intensively in, on, with and against "The Establishment" on issues effecting [sic] lesbians and gay men.

It said, "We demand our Liberation from repression and to the point where repressive laws are removed from the books and our rights are written into the documents that protect the rights of all people, for without that writing, there can be no guarantees of protection from the larger society."

The means to achieving these ends included street actions famously defined as "zaps," marches, picket lines, political lobbying, education, active promotion of the need for lesbians and gay men to come out of their closets and a constant in-your-face presentation of the fact that gay is good. Its goals were revolutionary in that it sought, through these means, to restructure society.

The gay activists were not only unashamed; they pursued an agenda to change society—and they succeeded.

God's people missed their opportunity, but gay and lesbian activists did not miss theirs. And while we were trying to overcome our shame and convince ourselves to stand up and be counted, groups like STAR, the Street Transvestite Activist Revolution, made themselves heard. For this, we should feel ashamed. Without a Bible to guide them, without a Holy Spirit to lead them, without eternal life to encourage them, gay activists birthed and carried forth an ambitious agenda that changed an entire generation. What ever became of our agenda?

With all my heart, I believe we are in the early stages of another cultural revolution, a time of great upheaval and shaking, a season of supernatural spiritual seeking, especially among the youth. The first 20 years of the 21st century have already witnessed massive cultural shifts, especially in the areas of sexuality, gender identity, the meaning of marriage and the definition of family, all of this an outgrowth of the sexual revolution of the 1960s. Those who were once marginalized and confined to the closet have not only come out of the closet with passion and conviction, but they have effectively marginalized and put into the closet

those with biblical values, in particular Christian conservatives. Society has been turned upside down.

People of God, it is high time to wake up! As Paul wrote to the believers in Rome almost 2,000 years ago: "And do this, understanding the present time: The hour has already come for you to wake up from your slumber, because our salvation is nearer now than when we first believed. The night is nearly over; the day is almost here. So let us put aside the deeds of darkness and put on the armor of light" (Rom. 13:11-12).

The revolution will not wait. {eoa}

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