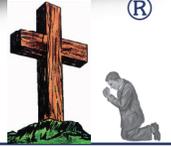




Challenging Christians to Pray

Prayergram

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A 'Moral Revival,' America's Greatest Need

A professor of physics in one of our State Universities writes: *"I have come to three conclusions: the FIRST is that Salvation is not to be found in science; SECONDLY, we must have a moral revival; THIRDLY, we can have no moral revival without a living religion."* That's a powerful insight, isn't it? Kudos to the professor!

It's no exaggeration to say that our culture is in trouble because it is trying to undermine God's will and purpose. As the prophet Jeremiah said, *"My people are foolish, they are wise to do evil, but to do good they have no knowledge"* (Jeremiah 4:22). There is no doubt that permissive behavior is playing a dominant role in contemporary America. According to secular humanism, biblical truth and morality do not exist; they are merely ideas and precepts left over from the Puritan era. Make no mistake that "sexual perversion" has turned our culture upside down. South African theologian F. B. Meyer has written that sensuality (or unchastity, as he called it) can destroy a nation. He says, *"There is no sin which will sooner bring about a nation's fall."* History is full of examples that sexual perversion is the surest way to national ruin; the Roman Empire collapsed because of moral decay within.

Today's know-it-all crowd, who claim to be culturally and intellectually superior or the enlightened ones as they call themselves, are always repeating clever arguments to prove that *"ugly is beautiful and beautiful is ugly."* To some degree, they have succeeded themselves in brainwashing a large segment of people, including some Christians in modern America. The prophet Isaiah said, *"Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil ..."* (Isaiah 5:20).

Our culture is in a moral quandary because it does not seek the mind of Christ. Lawyers and judges are no longer interested in preserving justice and the question of right and wrong, but frantically searching for legal loopholes to push their own agenda.

The immortal words of William Penn, the Quaker statesman, come to mind, *"Right is right even if everyone is against it, and wrong is wrong even if everyone is in favor of it."*

How do we know if something is wrong? We know certain things are wrong because they contradict the Word of God. Mothers are being persuaded to kill their unborn babies in the womb by feminists and profit-minded medical professionals. Is it any wonder we are in the midst of a motherless and fatherless society? Every life is sacred to God, and those who are squeamish about defending life will someday have to stand before the Lord to give an account for their silence.

It seems that many Christians have dropped the idea of praying for or having a *"moral revival"* in our churches because of its declining popularity. Revivals have a way of sanitizing carnality and restoring morality and spiritual hunger among His people without any fanfare.

The penetrating words of Leonard Ravenhill come to mind, *"With all the*

preaching on radio and television in America today, we have not put one dent on the moral corruption of this nation." In earlier years, Christians turned the world upside-down; today, the world turns us upside-down. Harnack, the historian and theologian, said that *"the Church influenced the world, most, when it was most unlike the world."* *"Even fundamental Christians today,"* as one has said, *"are more concerned with being geared to the times than in being anchored to the*

We have the right theology, but wrong living. I know there are some evangelical Christians get all shook-up when they hear the word "separation" from the world, and immediately they launch into a doctrinal tirade in defense of their pet theory. True revival is not caressing the human ego, but convicting the soul; it is not building, but blasting. Jeremiah was sent to "root out," and to "pull down," and to "destroy," and to "throw down." to "build," and to "plant" (Jeremiah 1:10). Revival ministry is often in that order: four (4) parts are destructive, and two (2) parts are constructive. If we want heaven's outpouring, we must be prepared for blasting. If not, all our religious side-shows are nothing but the laughing stock of the devil.

Rock of Ages of His unchanging word.” Obedience to God is exchanged for lip service. Karl Rahner was profound when he said, **“The number one cause of atheism is Christians. Those who proclaim God with their mouth and deny Him with their lifestyle are what an unbelieving world finds simply unbelievable.”** We have the right theology, but wrong living. I know there are some evangelical Christians get all shook-up when they hear the word “separation” from the world, and immediately they launch into a doctrinal tirade in defense of their pet theory. True revival is not caressing the human ego, but convicting the soul; it is not building, but blasting. Jeremiah was sent to “root out,” and to “pull down,” and to “destroy,” and to “throw down.” to “build,” and to “plant” (Jeremiah 1:10). Revival ministry is often in that order: four (4) parts are destructive, and two (2) parts are constructive. If we want heaven’s outpouring, we must be prepared for blasting. If not, all our religious side-shows are nothing but the laughing stock of the devil.

What did the early church have that we do not possess today? Nothing but the power of God! Today we boast about technology, world-class facilities, able administrators, but when it comes to influencing a generation of unbelievers, we fall too short. When Peter and John met the lame man at the gate of the temple and Peter said to him, **“Silver and gold have I none; but such as I have give I thee; In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth rise up and walk” (Acts 3:6).** In today’s religious climate we’re apt to say, **“Silver and gold we have plenty, but it is not that simple or easy to say to the blind and needy to rise and walk.”** There is a quite heresy of the most insidious and deadly kind creeping over the modern Church. Power and purity can never be absent from God’s holy realm.

The greatest hindrance to revival in our community is not the sinful indifference of its sinners, but the carnality of its saints. The Church needs revival in order to promote a new wave of missionary enthusiasm, (like the Moravian Revival) taking the gospel far and wide. I am not saying that all Christians should be “revival historians” or leave the study of revivals to experts. There is no set formula for revivals; God sends revival when His people want it and long for it more than anything else. As Christians, we should never allow ourselves to be bamboozled by people who hold pre-

judicial views about Heaven’s outpouring. I understand that there are historical reasons for such prejudices, but I appeal to such people not to equate true awakening with false stereotypes manufactured by some. Nor should we shut our eyes to what God has done throughout history merely because certain people have promoted some hyper-emotionalism in the name of spiritual outpouring. **I am also surprised and dismayed to know that a spirit of pessimism has invaded and infected the hearts of many fundamental Christians when it comes to a genuine “moral revival.” I tend to agree with Norman Grubbs that “Revival is the Reviver in Action.”**

True revival is not staging a religious extravaganza, stirred up frenzy or overheated and erratic emotionalism, human manipulation, or material boasting. It is God empowering and enabling His saints to live a life of godliness in a not-so-godly-culture. It is God-realization over self-realization in the church, community and the nation. The church needs revival in order to make a great spiritual impact upon our morally mangled society. We have clearly and irretrievably lost our morals.

True revival always brings about a spirit of brokenness and a profound conviction of sin among His people. When in the midst of a moral revival, prodigal sons and daughters would return home and houses would become homes and motherhood and fatherhood would be elevated to its proper place. Real revival will usher in an overwhelming awareness of God’s holy presence where men and women are no longer **“drunk with wine but filled with the Holy Spirit”** without a hangover. Have we seen all these realities taking place in our religious meetings? If not, everything we see and hear on television is nothing more than a religious hype and static utterance. True revival is not staging a religious extravaganza, stirred up frenzy or overheated and erratic emotionalism, human manipulation, or material boasting. It is God empowering and enabling His saints to live a life of godliness in a not-so-godly-culture. It is God-realization over self-realization in the church, community and the nation. The church needs revival in order to make a great spiritual impact upon our morally mangled society. We have clearly and irretrievably lost our morals. **May we hear the penetrating words of General Omar Bradley, one of America’s five-star generals. “We have become a nation of nuclear giants and moral infants. We have grasped the mystery of the atom and rejected the Sermon on the Mount.”** What society applauds is what society approves. What we approve is what we celebrate. When we turn our back on the **“God of Glory,”** we remove all the fences of moral responsibility; and when we break the laws of God, we only break ourselves. **It seems that America has lost her “moral mirror,” and she is on the verge of a moral collapse.**

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*The words of Dwight D. Eisenhower, our 34th president, come to mind.
“A soldier’s pack may be heavy, but it’s lighter than a prisoner’s chains!”
“Far better pay the price of revival than to wear the shackles of a godless regime!”*

EVANGELIST, OR REVIVALIST, A DYING BREED

Evangelists and revivalists are synonymously associated with revivals and awakenings; but today, they are a dying breed. In fact, we don't even speak about revivals readily in our churches anymore. It seems we have given up on the idea of revivals simply because people don't have the toleration for a protracted meeting where they come collectively to weep over the prevailing conditions of the nation and the world. It is mostly in revival meetings where people are brought under the convicting power of the Holy Spirit with repentance follows; but today, we have seminars, studies and retreats for the purpose of **"extracting more blessings"** from God because He has become a blessing machine.

Evangelists or revivalists are dying because their Scriptural ministry has been undermined by some who feel their calling is much more relevant in an electronic generation. The penetrating words of Leonard Ravenhill come to mind, **"The early church was not electronic but electrifying."** The Word of God tells us, **"And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers"** (Ephesians 4:11).

No one has the right to denigrate the ministry of another person who has been called of God for that unique office. Somehow, fear has crept into the ministry and many in the leadership are afraid to launch out on the divine. There was a time, evangelists traveled up and down preaching salvation through repentance like John the Baptist did. Today, such preaching on brokenness and repentance is muted from our preaching vocabulary for fear of losing wealthy donors. **The modern day evangelicals no longer initiate; they simply imitate and the world is their model. We take the print and the pattern from the world for appeasement purpose. How long does it take for one to know that he/she is living in rebellion and disobedience? One half second. We don't need a long Bible study to discover that we are off the chart and living diametrically in opposition to God's will.**

Let history teach us some valuable lessons about evangelist and revivalist. Some of history's greatest preachers were evangelist. Let me name a few: **GEORGE WHITFIELD, JOHN WESLEY, JOHN NEWTON, GEORGE MULLER, CHARLES FINNEY, D. L. MOODY, BILLY SUNDAY, GYPSY SMITH, HYMAN APPLEMAN,** and most recently **VANCE HAVNER, GENE WINFREY and LEONARD RAVENHILL.** Mr. Havner never learned to drive a car, but Mrs. Havner helped him with his traveling through-

out America as he preached in revivals with apostolic power and conviction. Leonard Ravenhill, that passionate servant of God, a real prophet whom I met some years ago and we prayed together. He used to say, **"As long as we are content to live without revival, we will."** Until the day he went to heaven at the age of 86, Mr. Ravenhill never lost a sense of desperate need and longing for both personal and corporate revival. Who can forget that

slim young man from the hills of North Carolina who took the gospel far and wide like no other person in modern history? I am talking about **BILLY GRAHAM**, who still calls himself an evangelist. He is known for preaching the simple gospel of redemption and repentance through utter faith in Christ without any fanfare.

Beloved, we need another Reformation where the preaching of God's Word takes no second place! Look at Western Europe today where materialism has become the popular creed and miracles have ceased. America is heading in the same direction as we follow European morality by dishing the faith of our fathers. **Believe me, Europe needs another MARTIN LUTHER; France needs another SAVONAROLA; England needs another JOHN AND CHARLES WESLEY; Scotland needs another JOHN KNOX AND JOHN WELCH; America needs another JONATHAN EDWARDS AND CHARLES FINNEY.** People are tired of the **"feel good"** gospel messages that sooth and caress the human ego without any convicting power of the Holy Spirit. **Who can change the sin-stained heart of man? The hammer of human logic fails; the hammer of hypothesis fails; the hammer of speculative theorem fails; but the hammer which the Holy Spirit uses**

will never lose its power. What changed Saul of Tarsus? He (Saul) ran into Jesus of Nazareth. *Have you had such an experience with Jesus lately? We need a vision of the crucified and risen Lord and such vision alone transforms lives and nations.*

I want to pay "tribute" to all who responded to the call of God as evangelists and revivalists, traveling far and wide to resuscitate the life of many of our "dying churches," and calling the body of Christ for repentance, renewal, and restoration. We owe a debt of gratitude to all such men who remained "under the weight," strictly depending on God and Him alone for all their needs. Such men were and are quintessential to the survival of the modern church. **God give us men who unabashedly preach the gospel like a "giant and weep for revival like a baby!"**

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MAN AND HIS FOLLY

Man is entrenched in many doubts and fears — the economy, his job, family, health, national and international terrorism, financial instability; he holds a mortgage he cannot afford, a job he dislikes; a life that never satisfies; a belief that is never steady; theories he cannot validate and hopes can never be realized. What's the point of it all, he asks. Man is at war with himself. **“All the labor of man is for his mouth, and yet the appetite is not filled” (Ecclesiastes 6:7).** Most men are destroyed not by their enemies but by their own passions and desires. For example, Alexander the Great conquered the known world but he never conquered himself. Consequently, he died as a drunkard maniac. History is full of such examples.

Underneath that veneer of respectability and success, there lays a side of man no one knows except the Lord. It is astounding how ignorant man is about himself. The

greatest blunder in human existence is conceit: man is the epitome of conceit. As Soren Kierkegaard, father of modern existentialism, once said, **“Man is a creature of duplicity and doubt, a dissipated being.”** As the prophet Jeremiah said, **“the heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it” (Jeremiah 17:9).** The heart of man is darker than the darkest night, said a medical doctor in Nigeria, when I was conversing with him several years ago.

There are two forces at work in the world. Sooner or later man has to yield himself to God or the devil. Our steely determination will utterly fail us. Man cannot redeem himself and he is in need of a redeemer whose grace and mercy are unsurpassed. As the French philosopher Pascal once said, **“Believe in God, you have nothing to lose.” “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved (Acts 16:31).”**

“Man is like a leak of gas, escaping into the thin air.”
—Jean Paul Sartre, French novelist

SKARIAHISMS

BY PASTOR DON QUEEN
FORMER PASTOR OF IMMANUEL BAPTIST CHURCH
TULSA, OKLAHOMA

Some of Bro. Skariah's pungent expressions of his observations of the world we now inhabit will come back to mind as we gear up to reach out for Christ. **In quoting recognizable leaders of the world, both spiritual and secular, Matthew reveals a mind blessed by God in prayer.** Then in very down-to-earth statements of faith in a God who made man and knows all things, he put revealed truth into simple form for us. Each month a newsletter comes from the World Prayer Band. Copies of the next issue will appear on the welcome

desk. These carry thought-provoking articles and news of Bro. Skariah's ministry and reminders of his Christian outlook.

A **Skariahism** is a great truth expressed in a unique, mind-catching statement which will set you to do something more for God. From the home to the nation, he points out the task before us. We'll be looking forward to the next World Prayer Band **Prayergram** with more **Skariahisms!**



The WPB Ministries



PRAYER IS THE MIGHTIEST FORCE — 2 Chronicles 7:14

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