

GROW IN GRACE

NEWSLETTER

Volume 44b, No. 4, January 29, 2019 / Southside Baptist Church / P.O. Box 1594 / 1028 South Water Avenue, Gallatin, TN 37066 (615) 452-5951 / The Grow in Grace Newsletter is a WEEKLY Bible Study, plus local church news notes— designed first and foremost for members and those attending services at Southside Church; and is sent forth with the desire to aid one and all, (including friends far and wide), in the experience of 2 Peter 3:18. *"But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our LORD and Savior JESUS CHRIST. To Him be glory both now and forever. Amen."*

HEART CRY FOR CHANGE! FOR REVIVAL!

OFTEN, when Christians in America start speaking about 'revival' and/or the need for 'revival'— a significant part of their [OUR!] desire is that our nation be returned to previous times when it is believed that America was much more Christian or at least more 'Christian friendly!'

I. THE WORLD AND THE CHURCH

WE MUST FIRST understand that the Bible makes a clear distinction between "the world" and "the church", or what 1 Corinthians 5:12-13 calls *"those who are inside"* and *"those who are outside."* Jesus said [of His disciples] *"They are not of the world, just as I am not of the world"* (John 17:16). Christians cannot be the world and the world cannot be Christian— although both keep trying!

Nations are part of the world and its system; THE TRUE CHURCH IS NOT — the two can never be the same. **CONFUSION:** American Christians are quick to get excited about a SAVE or REVIVE AMERICA campaign!

CHRISTIANS are too quick to want the destruction of ‘ENEMY NATIONS’ and **forget that** the chief mandate of the New Testament is **the saving of the LOST in those nations; and we forget that** we have brothers and sisters in Christ in such nations; **AND we forget that there is ONE** and only one ‘CHRISTIAN nation’— the world-wide nation of HIS CHURCH, 1 Peter 1:9!

II. WHICH KINGDOM IS TO BE OUR FOCUS?

JESUS SAYS, "**My kingdom is not of this world.** If My kingdom were of this world, My servants would fight, so that I should not be delivered to the Jews; but now My kingdom is not from here," John 18:36.

1. Thus, the New Testament Church does not FOCUS ON the issues of earthly citizenship. She is focused on the ONE HOLY NATION that spans the globe which has been purchased by the blood of Jesus Christ: **1 Peter 2:9-10!**

2. The New Testament Christian is called to be a good citizen in the midst of whatever temporal nation one may reside (Romans 13; 1 Timothy 2:1-4; Titus 3:1-7); *AND we are to live in the reality of*

(1) THE COMING JUDGMENT;

(2) The burning up of this present world by fire; and the Glorious hope of NEW HEAVENS and a NEW EARTH! (2 Peter 3:7-14);

(3) The Great Commission is to be our master passion (Matthew 24: 1-14; 28:18-20; Acts 1:6-8); and

(4) WE ARE looking for a city whose builder and maker is God, (Heb. 11:13-16, 36-40; 1 John 3:1-3.)

III. Change! — Everybody Wants Change!

In 2012, Former President Obama won the presidency on the slogan, **“Change you can believe in!”** Every political candidate of every party in America promises change. Many Christians and churches are actively campaigning for change in the country. They are QUICK to rally around REVIVAL for our nation! **LET’S GET REAL: Can worldly, sin filled, strife filled Christian homes and churches be effective for REVIVAL in the land?**

[NOTE: The purpose of this article is not to claim that there is no value in participation in our earthly political process. The purpose is to call for a FOCUS which is clearly drawn from the Word of God!]

IV. CHANGE— from the TOP down or from the BOTTOM Up?

MOST folks expect change to come from the top. The President, the Congress, the Supreme Court must change the country! The pastor and/or deacons and elders must change the church. And if they can’t do it, then we need to get the right leader/leaders in the job who will make the changes we need. **But the truth is that leaders cannot bring about change when the people (And even leaders!) refuse to change.**

It is true that ungodly leaders have ungodly influence and godly leaders have godly influence. Ungodly leaders will have an ungodly agenda. **However, we seem to forget that WE PLACED the leaders in office; and so often they are but a reflection of us!** Nevertheless, God is still on the Throne of the universe and He rules in the affairs of men!

BUT AS TO the ‘right’ leader, consider the following: **Moses was [one of] the greatest spiritual and political leaders of all time! HOWEVER, in spite of all his gifts, skills and anointing— he could not get the people to change from a nation of fearful slaves to a victorious people of God.** They refused to love and obey God. Thus, God destroyed that whole generation.

TODAY, EVEN IF GOD SENT Moses to become the President of the USA; or the PASTOR of our church— MOSES would not be able to make the people change!

The Pastor is not the church and the President is not the nation. ***The ability and desire to change lies with each individual; and IS THE FRUIT OF NEW BIRTH and the indwelling of the Holy Spirit.***

SPECIAL INSIGHT FROM THE PROPHET ISAIAH!

The first five chapters of Isaiah reflect the political situation in many countries and many churches today. In Isaiah's day, Judah was filled with corruption, sin, materialism, immorality, addictions, arrogance, hedonism, and a perversion of justice.

Isaiah saw all of that evil; and had as much to say about it as we have to say about our society. **WE FIND IT EASY TO CONFESS THE SINS OF OUR COUNTRY... AND CHRISTIANS LOVE TO CONFESS THE SINS OF OTHERS IN THE LOCAL CHURCH!**

Six times Isaiah pronounces woe on the sin and the sinners but in chapter six something dramatic happens. ***Isaiah saw the Lord and he saw himself in comparison to God.*** This time his response is ***“Woe is me, for I am undone!”*** (Isaiah 6:5)

Isaiah finally understood that BEFORE HE COULD BE OF GOOD USE IN MINISTRY TO A SPIRITUALLY NEEDY NATION— he would need to deal with his own imperfections and problems first!

THIS IS A COMMON ROOT PROBLEM— WE WANT THE SOLUTION, the change, the healing, the revival to start with someone else! We find it so easy to blame everyone else and to list the nation and/or the church's problems:

1. **We want the Ten Commandments** written in stone in the court house, but it is not written in our hearts. In fact, we can't even recite them!
2. **We lash out** about the impact that **Islam** is having on our society but we have done [little or] nothing to impact our community with true Christianity.
3. **We will speak against abortion clinics** but MANY CHURCH FOLK will use the same clinics when OUR TEEN'S licentiousness bears fruit.
4. We are angry about the **3,500 babies that are aborted every day** in America (and we should be). But who cares about the millions of lost souls before whom and to whom WE CHRISTIANS place stumbling blocks and hostile environments?
5. **We protest against same-sex "marriage"**, yet our own marriages are a mess; **AND MORE AND MORE PASTORS are leading the way** as love failures— divorcing their wives and/or having no humility of heart to own personal failure; and not seriously seeking to save troubled marriages; and/or to restore a fallen spouse.
6. **We complain** about **homosexuals** and their rising visibility and influence. But we are not an example to our children of what a godly man and woman looks like.
7. **We emasculate** [weaken] men and smile when boys are effeminate and fathers are either brutes or wimps and we wonder why boys become homosexual. **Men do not know the meaning of true love** and they do not take responsibility to be leaders in their homes and yet wonder why girls grow up to hate men and love women.
8. **Everyone is frustrated about corruption**, pork barrels and special deals in government **yet we bribe our children and spouses** when we have not done the right thing or we bribe them to get them to do the right thing.

9. We show favoritism to children, church members and others; and at the same time we blame the government for favoring special interest groups and for nepotism.

10. We complain about the government bailing out big business when big business deserved to crash. At the same time we bail our children out every time they paint themselves into a financial [or moral] corner.

11. Very few Christians read the Bible and pray regularly; and even fewer read the Bible and pray with their children. Yet those same people are angry about the removal of prayer and the Bible from schools.

12. Everyone is perturbed by the **rising national debt** and the inability of the government to curb expenditure when their personal credit is maxed out and their own greed drives them to spend more than they earn.

13. Many complain about the **removal of the cross** from public places but very, very few live a crucified life. **This is the problem.** *It is much easier to lobby, picket, protest and blame others for the very problems we are not willing to fix in our own lives.*

14. We can have a cross on every street corner, but until we Christians, learn and practice what it means to take up the cross daily, nothing will change. Like the fornicating, drunken celebrity who wears a cross around his/her neck, so Christians think that architectural crosses **will cover** the nation and church's backsliding and sin. But it does not.

15. Many Christians want revival in their church and complain about the state of the church, but they themselves are cold and far from God.

The same people who complain that the church does not grow, never bring an unbeliever to hear the Gospel, let alone witness to anyone.

16. Some Christians wonder why the meetings are not full, but they themselves miss meetings for any excuse.

17. People complain that the worship is dead but they themselves do not sing with all their heart and never open their mouth to say a few words to praise the Lord.

18. Christians complain about the lack of love in the church, but they themselves will not go out of their way to show love to others.

19. Every church has a group of people who wish they could have a better pastor, but they never pray for God to anoint him and make him better.

You see, ALL TOO OFTEN we think that if we can get different leaders in the church and/or in the nation that things will change. They will not.

Change begins with you and me. If every Christian in our church suddenly began to serve the Lord the way He should be served, revival will break out in our church, in spite of the pastor.

There is a huge difference between an Evangelical, Fundamentalist Revival of religion vs. a genuine life transforming God-sent Revival!

1. To have a Revival of Religion all one needs to accomplish is to raise the attendance, get a lot of 'decisions for Christ', bring about a number of baptisms, have good offerings, entertaining music, and a fiery evangelist with a good splattering of humor who will blast culture's sins but not the sins of the seated congregation; but, sadly, after a few weeks— all is back to sin-filled normal.

2. In contrast, God-sent Revival is very disturbing to those in the local pulpit and pew!

Change begins **with you and me**, personally.

OURSELVES: that is the only area you and I have jurisdiction and control over.

Jesus said we should begin in Jerusalem, then Judea, and then Samaria, and then the rest of the world (Acts 1:8), but we want to begin in Washington, London, or 'where ever' and then work back. It does not work that way.

Change, REVIVAL begins with me and you!

Every nation in the world desperately needs change and so do most churches. But the change will never come from the top down.

In the last book of the Bible, (The Unveiling of JESUS CHRIST) ... Jesus has 7 specific letters to His church:

1. These letters do not lament the darkness of the world.
2. They do not give a strategy for calling nations to righteousness.
3. These letters call local congregations to revival!

The same is true in the other New Testament letters to churches. GOD IS CALLING ME, GOD US CALLING US to revival! (This Newsletter message is drawn from an article by Pastor Anton Bosch,)

Grace to one and all! / James Bell / www.southsidegallatin.org

James Bell

SOUTHSIDE NEWS NOTES:

MONDAYS: Jail Ministry— (This ministry is ON HOLD... PRAY FOR opening of doors!)

TUESDAYS: Come and sing every Tuesday night at Gallatin Health Care Nursing Home. Meet at the front door at **5:15PM.**

WEDNESDAYS: ➔ 6:30pm— Children Ministry/activities; ➔ 6:30pm—

Youth Activities and Bible Study—

➔ **6:30pm— Wednesday CHURCH PRAYER SERVICE** ➔ Enter via IRON STEPS, side door...



***** LADIES BIBLE STUDY—** **Next** meeting scheduled for **Tuesday, February 5, 2019 @ 11:00am;** Continuing in LUKE. ENTER at the back of the church building, [*Doors open at 10:30am... re-locked at 11:10am*]

***** MEN: EVERY SATURDAY @ 8:00am:** Men's Fellowship/Bible Study! (**STUDY: THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN!**) ENTER AT THE back of Church building... under the drive-thru awning. [**DOORS OPEN FOR FELLOWSHIP, Juice, coffee, Hardee's biscuits & Donuts at 7:30am!**]

******* SHARE the Preaching of the Word of God!**

http://www.southsidegallatin.org/Listen_to_other_sermons_on_sermonaudio/

SUNDAY SERVICES: February 3, 10, 17, 24

9:30am— Bible Study and Fellowship for ALL ages

10:45am— Sunday MORNING WORSHIP service

SPECIAL NOTE FOR SUNDAYS:

February 3— NOON Covered Dish Fellowship meal

February 10— 5:30pm, FAITHFUL MEN

February 17— LORD'S SUPPER, following Morning Worship Service

HOME GROUPS— Most meet at 5:00pm

**February 24— at 6:00pm— Equipping Disciples... presently
'SHEPHERDING THE HEART OF A CHILD**