

America must be stabbed awake

by Paul Rees

To the keen eyes of the prophet Ezekiel there once appeared the moving picture of the Almighty coming down to search the streets and dwellings of Jerusalem. God looking for a man! A man who will lead out, who will return to the altars of the Lord, and call others to accompany him! A man who will pioneer the way to national revival! Amazingly enough, God could not find that key man. Therefore Jerusalem and Judah went on to their doom in 586, spiritually unawakened and unrenowned.

Now change the historical setting. Come down to the present. In place of Judah, think of America. In place of Jerusalem, think of your city or mine, New York, or Minneapolis, or Los Angeles. In place of the Temple, think of the Church. Then recall this word of Ezekiel's found in chapter 22, verse 30: "I have looked for a man among them to build up the wall and man the breach on behalf of the land." (Moffatt).

Are there any broken down walls in the life of our nation? Think, for example, of what is happening to the home and family life of these forty-eight States. Are there not numerous "gaps" or breaches through which a filthy flood is pouring? If so, then remember that God is looking for men—men who are alerted to the peril, men who will be fillers-of-the-gap and who will stand staunchly for spiritual recovery against all the forces of anti-Christ and apostasy.

The question I now raise is simple and searching: how can we—you and I—answer this call of God?

Show All Her Abominations

First, I should say that if you and I are going to be God's key men for revival, we must get our eyes open to the facts. "Show her all her abominations," is the command that came to Ezekiel with respect to Jerusalem. But would Jerusalem be shown? No! She preferred to live on in her fool's paradise of godless prosperity. Even the temple joined with the market-place and the dens of vice in doing outrage to the holiness of God, and doing it with blind arrogance and complacency.

Consider these flashes of arraignment from the chapter we are examining:

"You are guilty of the blood you shed, befouled by the idols you have made . . . The leaders of Israel within you have been overbearing . . . You scorn what is sacred to me, you desecrate my Sabbath. . . . Within you men live lasciviously . . . The local leaders are roaring lions that tear their prey . . . The priests violate my law and profane what is sacred to me . . ."

The Spirit of God takes no delight in publishing or parading these mean and mischievous failures of society and the church. He brings them up for one reason only: to ram them home to the conscience. We must be stabbed awake to them, or the bells of doom, soon or late, will toll above our helpless heads.

If you are going to be one of God's pioneers for revival, you must begin with yourself. One of the Proverbs might be taken, with all its bluntness, and applied to us who are called of God to further revival. It is the Proverb which reads, "The eyes of a fool are in the ends of the earth." Proverbs 17:24. He refuses, in other words, to face the realities of his own life.

With a View to a Radical Cure

If we are to have spiritual revival in our churches, we must counteract the mania for confessing other people's sins rather than our own. Our criticism of other people is an emotional dug-out in which we are trying to hide from our own failures. It is deadly to our soul's good. It is fatal to revival.

About 1830 Charles G. Finney was the agent of the

A MISSIONARY'S PRAYER

Put any burden on me, only sustain me; send me anywhere, only go with me; sever any tie but the one that binds me to Thy service and to Thy heart.

—Titus Coan, missionary to Hawaiian Islands

FAILURE IS SUCCESS

A Moravian missionary named George Smith went to Africa. He had been there only a short time and had only one convert, a poor woman, when he was driven from the country. He died shortly after, on his knees, praying for Africa. He was considered a failure.

But a company of men stumbled onto the place where he had prayed and found a copy of the Scriptures he had left. Presently they met the one poor woman who was his convert. A hundred years later his mission counted more than 13,000 converts who had sprung from the ministry of George Smith.

—Christian Digest

'NOT FISHERS OF MEN, BUT KEEPERS OF THE AQUARIUM'

SACRAMENTO, Calif.—One year in its early history in America, The Methodist Church grew by 153 per cent while the population increased only 36 per cent.

"Our record today is so sad and sickening that, give us a little more time and they will soon write us off," Dr. Kermit Long, president of the Methodist Council on Evangelism, told the Western Jurisdiction Workshop in Evangelism.

"With all our education, our theology, our fine buildings, our image of the church, we are doing less to win people to Christ than our unschooled forefathers who rode the frontier spreading scriptural holiness," he said.

Dr. Long, pastor of Central Methodist Church, Phoenix, urged 200 pastors and laymen to help strike a note of evangelistic passion.

"Evangelism is the lifeline, and the heart-beat of the church. It is our mainline business, and we ought never trade a streamliner for a handcar. But this is what we are doing.

"We no longer are fishers of men but keepers of the aquarium. Among our churches it has become a matter of 'you swipe from my fish bowl and I'll swipe from yours.'"

"There are 66 million unchurched people in this country. Every year 1 million more are added. A church with a record like ours simply doesn't care.

"If we are not winning people for Christ, what are we doing? Civilization is on trial, and if ever there was a time when we needed an evangelistic revival that time is now."

Spirit of God in bringing revival to the city of Rochester, New York, and its environs. As a result, more than 100,000 persons united with the churches as newly converted believers. Perhaps such a man deserves our respectful attention when he declares: "A revival of religion may be expected when Christians begin to confess their sins to one another." If no one else will support him in that statement, the Apostle James will, for he said, "Confess your faults one to another that ye may be healed." James 5:16.

Pioneering for revival is costly business. The price must be paid, not by the older brother, but by me! "Let us be clear once and for all," said Cecil Rose, "that honest self-examination and introspection are not the same thing. 'Introspection' is looking inside yourself and doing nothing about it. 'Self-examination' means allowing God to give you an overhaul with a view to a radical cure." It is the "radical cure" that we need, else we shall continue to be part of the problem instead of part of the answer.

The King's Highway