

And if the bugler doesn't sound a clear sound, how will the soldiers know they are being called to battle? 1st Corinthians 14:8 NLV

First Love Ministries, Inc.

PRAYER STUDY #171

The State of the Church in America

The ekklesia is the Greek word translated in English as church and literally means the called out ones. (The word *Church* is not found in the OT.)

And I say unto you, that you are Peter, and upon this rock, I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. Matthew 16:18

NKJ

You are Peter, a rock. This is the rock on which I will put together my church, church so expansive with energy that not even the gates of hell will be able to keep it out. Matthew 16:18 The Message

Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave Himself for it, that He might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word; that He might present it to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that it should be holy and without blemish.

Ephesians 5:25-27

Is the American or Western church that glorious church so expansive with energy that not even the gates of hell will be able to prevail against it?

We are so utterly ordinary, so commonplace, while we profess to know a power the 20th century does not reckon with. But we are harmless and therefore unharmed. We are spiritual pacifists, non-militants, conscientious objectors in this battle to the death with principalities and powers in high places... We are 'sideliners' coaching and criticizing the real wrestlers while content to sit by and leave the enemies of God unchallenged. The world cannot hate us-we are too much like its own. Oh that God would make us dangerous.

Jim Elliot, the young American Christian missionary who was martyred by the Auca Indians in Ecuador in 1955 at the age of 28

It is widely held that the battle of the century will be between Marxism, Islam, and Third World Christianity. Western Christianity is considered too weak and ineffective to contribute anything significant to this universal struggle. David Watson, an Anglican priest, 1982

People shop for churches like they shop for automobiles or groceries. People want something that fills their needs. We have missed the boat because we think Christianity is about us. It is not about us. It is about God and His Kingdom on earth as it is in heaven. He has chosen Christians to play a significant role in showing the world what His kingdom looks like. Western Christianity has retreated from the battle for the souls of people into the pursuit of personal comfort.

James T. Draper in a 2003 article from the Baptist Press

I look at the whole religious scene today, and all I see are inventions and ministries of man and flesh. It's mostly powerless. It has no impact on the world. I see more of the world coming into the church and impacting the church rather than the church impacting the world....I see entertainment taking over the house of God, obsession with entertainment in God's house, a hatred of conviction and a hatred of reproof. Nobody wants to hear it anymore.

David Wilkerson, in a recent sermon *Call to Anguish*

Why is the Body of Christ so powerless and weak in America?

- 1. It is full of clergymen who no longer believe the Bible is the inerrant Word of God. These pastors entertain with Chicken Soup stories and try to be seeker friendly churches more interested in political correctness and in counting "nickels and noses" than in being salt and light to a dying world. For the shepherds have become stupid and have not sought the Lord; therefore, they shall not prosper and all their flocks shall be scattered. Jeremiah 10:21**

Survey of American pastors by Sociologist Jeffrey Hayden 1982
(Hayden sent the survey to 10,000 pastors and priests. Of that number 7,441 replied.)

Was Jesus born of a virgin?

- 60% of Methodist pastors said, "NO!"
- 49% of United Presbyterian pastors said, "NO!"
- 44% of Episcopalian priests said, "NO!"
- 19% of Lutheran pastors said, "NO!"

Was Jesus the Son of God?

- 82% of the Methodist pastors said, "NO!"
- 81% of United Presbyterian pastors said, "NO!"

89% of Episcopalian priests said, “NO!”
57% of Lutheran pastors said, “NO!”

Is the Bible the inspired Word of God?

82% of Methodist pastors said, “NO!”
81% of United Presbyterian pastors said, “NO!”
89% of Episcopalian priests said, “NO!”
57% of Lutheran pastors said, “NO!”

Does Satan really exist?

62% of Methodist pastors said, “NO!”
47% of United Presbyterian pastors said, “NO!”
37% of Episcopalian priests said, “NO!”
33% of American Baptist pastors said, “NO!”
14% of Lutheran pastors said, “NO!”

Did Jesus physically resurrect from the dead?

51% of Methodist pastors said, “NO!”
35% of United Presbyterian pastors said, “NO!”
30% of Episcopalian priests said, “NO!”
33% of American Baptist pastors said, “NO!”
13% of Lutheran pastors said, “NO!”

This survey result was printed in Christ for the Nations magazine in the 80's. In another survey around the same time, 93% of the students studying for the ministry in one of the largest, most well-known theological colleges in the United States admitted that they had no devotional life of prayer and daily Bible reading. Many of these seminarians most probably are now in senior pastor positions across the United States.

How Important is the Word?

Did you know that Jesus values His Word more than He does His Name? Psalm 138:2b says: “...*for Thou hast magnified Thy word above all Thou name.*”

2. **Believers have fallen for doctrines of demons.** *But in vain they do worship Me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men. Matthew 15:9 Now the Spirit speaketh expressly that, in the latter times, some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing*

spirits, and doctrines of demons...1st Timothy 4:1 Woe unto them who call evil, good, and good, evil; who put darkness for light, and light for darkness; who put bitter for sweet and sweet for bitter.

Isaiah 5:20

A. The main doctrine of demons that I hear today is “There are other ways to get to heaven besides Jesus.” *...I am the way, the truth, and the life; no man cometh unto the Father, but by Me. John 14:6*

B. A second doctrine of demons that is very subtlety being preached is “All we need to do to get to heaven is love everybody.” *Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? Whosoever, therefore, will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God. James 4:4*

3. The American church and ministries are made up of superstars and men-pleasers who glorify men instead of glorifying God. *For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh) dwelleth no good thing...Romans 7:18a Woe unto you, when all men shall speak well of you! For so did their fathers to the false prophets. Luke 6:26 But God forbid that I should glory, except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world. Galatians 6:14 I am the LORD; that is my name; and my glory will I not give to another...Isaiah 42:8*

We have become a pampered church, which has substituted entertainment for joy, popularity for conviction, complacency for power, Chicken Soup stories for the Bread of Life. How we need to see His Glory come down! We need to be not just challenged but changed. We need to die to self, die to ego, die to flesh, die to pride. When we truly die to these things, we will see the glory of the Lord come down. There will be meetings where no one speaks but sits with a holy hush in the presence of the Lord. No one will want to leave. Many will weep before the Lord and will be filled with joy unspeakable. I know in my heart of hearts that there is a day of joy coming that will stir the Body in America and cause the genuine believers to go forth in power to change the nations. Joel 1:12-13 tells us, *The vine*[His presence in our lives] *is dried up, and the fig tree*[Israel which types the church] *languisheth; the pomegranate tree*[the fruit of the spirit], *the palm tree*[blessing and fertility in harvest] *also, and the apple tree*[maybe healing of life], *even all the trees of the field*[believers] *are withered, because joy is*

withered away from the sons of men. Why is joy withered away from the sons of men? Because we are not waiting in His presence. In His presence is fullness of joy. (Psalm 16:11) The joy of the Lord is our strength (Nehemiah 8:10b). Since we disrespect and disbelieve His Word, we disrespect and disbelieve Him, the Word who became flesh and dwell among us (John 1) and see no value in waiting for Him. Therefore, He has removed His presence from us. Hence, we have no joy and are weak.

Here are some Biblical reactions to that Glory:

1st Kings 8:11

And it came to pass, when the priests were come out of the holy place, that the cloud filled the house of the Lord, so that the priests could not stand to minister because of the cloud; for the glory of the LORD had filled the house of the LORD.

Isaiah 6:1-8

In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw also the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and His train filled the temple. Above it stood the seraphim; each one had six wings; with two he covered his face; and with two he covered his feet; and with two he did fly. And one cried unto another, and said, "Holy, holy, holy is the LORD of hosts; the whole earth is full of His glory." And the posts of the door moved at the voice of him who cried, and the house was filled with smoke. Then said I, "Woe is me! For I am undone, because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips; for mine eyes have seen the King, the LORD of hosts. Then flew one of the seraphim unto me, having a live coal in his hand, which he had taken with the tongs from off the altar. And he laid it upon my mouth, and said, "Lo, this hath touched thy lips, and thine iniquity is taken away, and thy sin purged." Also I heard the voice of the Lord, saying, "Whom shall I send, and who will go for us? Then said I, "Here am I, send me."