

LIGHTS OUT! – PART 3

Burning or Burned Out?

Isaiah 60:2 (KJV) - For, behold, the **darkness** shall cover the earth, and **gross darkness** the people: but the Lord shall arise upon thee, and his glory shall be seen upon thee.

Matthew 5:14-16 (NKJV) - ¹⁴ **“You are the light of the world.** A city that is set on a hill cannot be hidden. ¹⁵ Nor do they light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a lampstand, and it gives light to all *who are* in the house. ¹⁶ **Let your light so shine before men,** that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven.

John 4:35 (KJV) - ³⁵ **Say not ye, there are yet four months, and then cometh harvest?** behold, I say unto you, Lift up your eyes, and look on the fields; for they are white already to harvest.

Our nation is engaged in a multi-decade war with herself. The minds and hearts of this generation have become the theater of conflict. **It is a war of competing, mutually exclusive ways of viewing the universe and man’s place in it.** It is a clash of paradigms, of value systems, and of visions of the future. However, there has been a drastic shift in this war in recent years – this shift should be alarming to everyone under the sound of my voice!

The people at the center of the modern cultural attack are the followers of Jesus Christ!

IN THE MIDST OF A CULTURE THAT IS CALLING FOR CHRISTIANS TO TURN THEIR LIGHTS OUT AND LET DARKNESS PREVAIL...MORE THAN EVER WE NEED TO TURN THE LIGHTS ON!

In the eighteenth century, a generation fought for America's independence from British rule. In the nineteenth century, a generation fought to preserve the Union from those who would tear it asunder. In the twentieth century, a generation fought to defend democracy from the forces of tyranny and oppression in both Europe and the Pacific. **In the twenty-first century, a generation will fight for the preservation and propagation of a culture based on truth!**

Turning our backs on the culture is a betrayal of our biblical mandate and our own heritage because it denies God’s sovereignty over all of life. Nothing could be deadlier for the church or more ill-timed. To abandon the battlefield now is to desert the cause and the belief in the words of our Lord who promised to pour His Spirit out on all flesh in the last days. We cannot give up our hope and our appeal to heaven for God to do what He said he would in our day...

In this day of dreaded darkness covering the earth and gross darkness covering the people (as Isaiah the prophet proclaimed), we must... **Turn the light on!**

- Turn it on starting in the church house!
- Turn it on in your house!

- Turn it on in our schoolhouse!
- Turn it on in our White House...

Make no mistake, many on the other side hate us and despise everything we stand for. But regardless, our biblical mandate is to love and bless in return. Challenge them? Yes. Argue for the superiority and accuracy of our worldview? You see...

When worldviews collide, nations hang in the balance!

There are a lot of prophetic reasons to believe that those alive during the final days of history will see the most powerful and glorious moves of God ever witnessed. We are told that Jesus is returning, not for a defeated, cowering Bride, hiding from the culture behind a calloused heart, but for a glorious one without spot or wrinkle (Ephesians 5:27).

Hebrews 10:12-13 speaks of that profoundly significant moment in which the risen, ascended Christ took His seat of authority at the right hand of the Father: **But this Man, after He had offered one sacrifice for sins forever, sat down at the right hand of God, from that time waiting till His enemies are made His footstool.** (Hebrews 10:12–13, emphasis added)

- This passage suggests that Jesus is waiting to see something before He stands to His feet, marshals His heavenly myriads of angels, and brings history to a dramatic and predestined close. He is waiting to see His church—empowered by His Spirit, and directed by the Great Commission—walking in dominion over His enemies.
- We are Jesus’ feet on this earth. And it is time to win for Christ that footstool for which He continues to wait.
- **Victory will not come if we remain sheltered behind the four walls of the sanctuary. We must be prepared to confront false worldviews in every sphere of human activity and make a compelling argument for the truth of our biblical view.**

We must invade every sphere of influence and **TURN THE LIGHT ON!**

- The home
- Religion
- Education
- Media
- The Arts and Entertainment
- Sports
- Commerce, Science and Technology
- Government and Politics

TURN THE LIGHT ON!

Psalm 22:30 (KJV) – A seed shall serve him; it shall be accounted to the Lord for a generation.

Our heavenly Father is looking for a remnant of believers today who are willing to be the seed for this generation. If He can find a seed willing to make a sacrifice for their peers, He will reap a harvest of an entire generation, and we will see the transforming power of God at work in every area of our culture. God gave us the perfect example by sending His Son, Jesus Christ, as the ultimate sacrifice for all of us. In a similar way, we are that seed for our generation. But we have not “been accounted to the Lord for a generation,” because, very simply, we have refused to die.

The Moravian Christians were a persecuted Protestant minority in Central Europe before there was any such thing as a Protestant. One hundred years before Martin Luther, the Moravians rejected many of the abuses and errors of Rome and pursued a simple faith of worship and charity. As a result, they were severely persecuted, and they suffered great hardship. **Nevertheless, they are marked by history for their extraordinary compassion, their service, and above all, their passion for souls.**

In the early 1700s, Moravians began coming to the New World. Some came because they were escaping persecution or because they were being forced from their homes. Others were compelled by a powerful missionary impulse. For example, some saw the swelling population of slaves being transported to the colonies in the Americas and wondered how these poor souls might be reached for Christ.

The treatment of slaves everywhere in the New World was appalling, but in the West Indies it was especially so. The seemingly endless supply of fresh slaves available from Africa convinced Caribbean plantation owners that they didn't need to provide any care for their slaves at all. They literally worked them to death and ordered replacements. It was this group of shackled and shamed humanity that the Moravians desired to reach. But how? **Their solution was to sell themselves into slavery. The only way to reach the slaves was to become one of them.** They were aware that such a decision would result in ridicule, in harsh conditions and even harsher treatment, and could mean death. Yet they did so with willing hearts.

On October 8, 1732, a Dutch ship left Copenhagen harbor bound for the Danish West Indies. On board were two Moravian missionaries: **John Leonard Dober, a potter; and David Nitschman, a carpenter. Both were on their way to sell themselves into slavery to reach the slaves of the West Indies.**

As the ship slipped away, they looked to their friends and loved ones at the dock and lifted up a cry that would ring in the ears of future generations of Moravian missionaries, **“May the Lamb that was slain receive the reward of His suffering!”**

Some historians estimate that eighty thousand slaves came to a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ through the efforts of Moravian missionaries. They were seeds, willing to fall into the ground and die, that their King might receive the harvest of a generation. They understood what many of us do not. We are placed on this earth for this fleeting wisp of time not to be comfortable, but to comfort; not to be served, but to serve; to bring glory to God, not ourselves.

John 1:5 - And the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it.

God is searching among the slumbering saints for a few good candidates, a remnant of believers who will stand up in the spirit of Moses, point their fingers at Pharaoh, and shout, "Let God's people go!"

His search has revealed that something is missing in the American church, much as it was missing from five of the seven churches He addressed in the book of Revelation. God's strategy to revive His sleeping bride and revolutionize the world requires **revolutionary remnant people who are irrevocably marked by four characteristics that can't be missed.**

They are compelled by an inward desire, to serve an infallible Leader, through irresistible power, based on absolute truth.

Men and women of such spiritual stock will not cave in under pressure. They are ideal weapons in the hand of God to launch world-changing revolution.

Let me talk about the first component that ignites us to BURN BRIGHTLY LIKE A CITY ON A HILL... Inward Desire

Apathy and indifference are two of the greatest obstacles to revival. John recorded in his gospel that Jesus said, "Say not ye, there are yet four months, and then cometh harvest? behold, I say unto you, Lift up your eyes, and look on the fields; for they are white already to harvest" (John 4:35, italics mine).

The New Testament church was in its third generation when John the elder statesman sat down to commit his gospel record to writing (as well as his Pastoral Epistles and the apocalyptic revelation).

The synoptic Gospels of Matthew, Mark, and Luke had been penned long ago, and John was already an old man when he wrote his gospel. His brother James was dead, and fiery Peter was gone too. The apostle Paul was executed in A.D. 68 in Rome's Mamertine Dungeon the same year Nero committed suicide, a number of years before the church's hundred-year anniversary. Jerusalem had been leveled, and the Christians were spread across the expanse of the known world. By that time, John had been boiled in oil three times and refused to die. He endured and

outlived the persecution of Nero, and he was ultimately exiled to the island of Patmos, fifty miles off the coast of Ephesus, accompanied only by wild beasts.

Near the end of John's life, Roman emperor Domitian (Titus Flavius Domitianus), the fifth successor after Nero, encouraged the persecution of Christians and demanded that all men worship him, saying, "Dominus et Deus" ("Lord and God"). Meanwhile, John the Beloved heard a "great voice, as of a trumpet" say to him on the Lord's Day, "Write the things which thou hast seen, and the things which are, and the things which shall be hereafter" (Rev. 1:19).

Apostasy was sown like seeds of leaven in the early years of the church. Those seeds came to full growth in the heresy of Gnosticism: The belief that flesh or matter is totally evil and spirit is the ultimate good invaded the church and threatened to mutate Christianity into something unrecognizable.

The Gnostics propagated the lie that Christ never came in the flesh, and that salvation can come only through secret knowledge of the spirit realm reserved (predictably) for a small, elite group of people. In other words, it set aside salvation by faith and took its converts right back into an impossible salvation-by-works scheme of man. Thus, John did not write to the infant church; he wrote to an infirm third-generation church, a sick and weakened church in imminent danger of judgment. **He set forth his gospel to replace that "missing something" and reattach the body to its Head.**

John wrote with a sense of urgency because he sensed something was wrong in the heart and the soul of the church, and things had to change before it was eternally too late. **The church had been battered by the deadening blows of the God haters and the naysayers.**

Emperor Claudius drove many Christians out of Rome, and Nero completed the job by blaming them for setting the imperial city on fire. His successors in Rome, Vitellius and Vespasian, reduced Jerusalem to rubble and continued to persecute the church. Yet its greatest danger lurked within the church itself: the spirits of heresy, subversion, sedition, hedonism, and division.

In this disjointed and distressed time John the elder quoted the command of Jesus: "Say not ye, There are yet four months, and then cometh harvest?" (John 4:35)

John wrote his gospel for the third generation of Christians, and that is of particular importance to us today because **we are the third American church generation since God reintroduced the gifts and operations of the Holy Spirit in the Azusa Street visitations (1906-1908).** Each generation seems to approach the original truth received in different ways.

IN THE FIRST GENERATION, TRUTH BECOMES A CONVICTION

When you first receive a truth, it becomes a conviction of passion that burns in your heart. This is especially true when personal experience verifies your conviction. Men will gladly lay down their lives for their convictions, but they will give you no opportunity to discuss compromise.

THE SECOND GENERATION APPROACHES THE HARD-WON TRUTHS OF THE PREVIOUS GENERATION WITH COOLER HEARTS.

Secondhand truths without personal experience rarely remain convictions. They degenerate to mere persuasion. If I can persuade you to believe a thing, someone else can persuade you to disbelieve it. Conviction stands on the unwavering foundation of passion, but belief is left to wobble on the unsure foundation of persuasion. Persuasion goes only as far as the head, but conviction pierces to the very heart of man. Few men are willing to die for a mere belief.

- People from the second generation are quick to discuss or debate the truth because after all, “It is only a belief, and beliefs can change.” The moment the door to compromise begins to crack open, we reduce the church to an employment agency for people seeking self-advancement through their skills of persuasion and entertainment. **In an era of second-generation believers, the arguments of men can quickly displace the revelation of God on the center stage of men.** This is the sporting ground of heresy, schism, and ultimate damnation.

Without the passion of conviction, the church loses its divine dynamic. It is no longer a revolutionary force of dynamic change in the hearts and lives of human persons. **A church without power is nothing more than an institution, doomed to rise and fall with the changing fortunes and whims of men.** (This is the best definition of religion...)

THE THIRD GENERATION TENDS TO VIEW ITS GRANDPARENTS’ TRUTH AS NOTHING MORE THAN AN OPINION.

We have so eroded the foundation of truth in many of our churches that there is nothing left to stand on except the slippery slope of man’s ever-changing opinion.

- **Christians become spineless when there is no anointed preaching, doctrine, or Bible teaching in their local church.** Their condition gets worse when they bow down at the shrine of gospel entertainment and base their opinion of the week on the latest statements of the gospel preaching stars.
- We need to remember, like the wise men, the only star worth following is the “bright and morning star”!

We are the third generation, and the good news is that the third generation is also known for new beginnings, completion, and consummation. God never brings anything to a close for any

reason other than to build a platform. He never brings something to consummation for any reason other than to launch an initiation.

It is exciting to live right in the middle of God's divine preparation for a revival. I have news for you: God is counting on you to birth His miracle! It is no wonder you have been feeling out of sorts, on the edge, and out of joint lately. You are changing. Your spiritual palate is changing too. You are no longer content to eat the spiritual food you used to eat. For some odd reason, you have a craving for something richer, something hotter, something you've never tasted before.

All the evidence indicates that you are pregnant. In fact, you are ready to deliver something, and I'd better warn you that things will get messy in your life before they get better. The spiritual clothes you used to wear no longer fit you. It is time to break out of the politically correct restraints and give birth to the "God thing" in your heart. **This is our time to...**

Turn the light on!

We're the third generation from Azusa Street. We're the third generation from pentecostal power, and our chromium-plated, overorganized, superstreamlined, and computerized form of Christianity has been just about as effective on our lost and hell-bound generation as the puny flame of a matchstick on an iceberg.

We boast about religious trivialities as if they represent a move of God while a large percentage of laity and leadership alike are bound by lust and unforgiveness. Meanwhile, rebellious rock stars baptized in blasphemy continue to poison a generation. Hollywood unleashes hundreds of films and a flood of immorality every year that have undermined our homes and blighted our youth.

The entertainment industry taps the best natural talent in America to create a television menu of everything foolish, vile, empty, and violent. Then the whole mess is packaged and promoted with incredible appeal and marketing savvy to deceive an entire generation.

In response, we take God's unspeakable glory and manifold cure to the world and reduce it down to a palatable horderve for the already spiritually dead in a religious atmosphere void of any real, life changing power and call it a "church service".

Therefore, we have drug-addicted mothers sitting on the fourth pew who put their next fix ahead of their children's next meal. We have fathers who put their drive for perverted sexual gratification ahead of their own daughters' need for common dignity. America has produced a warped generation that is convenience driven, not commitment driven. We make crucial decisions based on popular opinion rather than on solid biblical principles.

Here at THE BEND we refuse to continue to build on the faulty foundation of the self-help humanism that pabulum-pumping preachers perpetrate on this generation. Most of it is nothing more than man-centered religious rhetoric and routine that is already dead. It can do nothing for the souls of the afflicted or damned. We need something more, there must be something more!

Nothing's missing? Where are Paul's handkerchiefs and aprons? Nothing's missing? How come the people in your church who don't tithe but steal God's money and then stand there and sing "Amazing Grace" don't fall dead on Sunday morning? Don't tell me nothing's missing. Of course, something's missing. I'll tell you what's missing. **The divine life of God is missing.**

The entity perceived by the world to be the church isn't what it claims to be. It claims to uphold the cause of Christ, yet condemns confrontation. It is little more than a social club that demands rain without accepting the thunder and lightning. Its members practice the art of compromise and conciliation at all costs, avoiding confrontation by willingly dwelling in the devil's demilitarized zone to preserve their facade of peace.

Our entire culture is in chaos. The moral foundations originally constructed on the bedrock of the tenets of our faith are rapidly crumbling around us. We are stalled at a crossroad of crisis, stuck at a strategic inflection point that demands a choice. What should we do...

TURN THE LIGHT ON!

As the third generation in the Spirit, we must choose to either experience revival (and pay the price of righteousness) or become but mere shells and shadows of our former selves. Men will tolerate anything until there is birthed within them a dynamic desire to change. Are you tired of going to church services where you shout, make a lot of noise, jump up and down, and then walk out unchanged? Something is missing, and it is the electrifying life of Christ. It is impossible to have an encounter with Him and leave unchanged! Let me tell you something:

If you're in some dead, cold place where exuberant worship of the King of kings is relegated to the Sunday night service, get out.

If you're going to a place where there's no shout, get out.

If you're going to a place where there's no victory, get out.

If you're going to a place where they never give an altar call, get out.

If you're going to a place where they never talk about the cleansing blood, the old rugged cross, and the glorious resurrection of Jesus Christ, get out, get out, get out!

The good news is that we aren't alone at this crossroads. A Shepherd is walking through the shadows of decision with us, and He has a glorious plan. If you recall, Jesus didn't leave the men on the road to Emmaus until He had revealed Himself to them. He left them only after the holy fire within Him ignited their hearts with unquenchable fire. Jesus is here today to once again burn within us... **TURN THE LIGHT ON!**

Conclusion:

ARE YOU BURNING, OR ARE YOU JUST BURNED OUT?

Do you feel out of joint and out of position, as if something is missing from your life? Ask the Lord Jesus to give you a revelation of Himself and stay in His presence until you forget there is anywhere else to be. Wait upon the Lord until His resurrection life hits your soul anew. It will ignite a fire of revival within you that will never go out.

When the fire of God ignites your desire, you will have eyes only for Him. You will act only through the power from above and speak only the things you received from your Father. The Master used this pattern to launch the first revolution almost two thousand years ago. Now He calls His remnant church to take up the same weapons of warfare.

Remnant believers with hearts afire can overcome even the greatest adversaries. They become the hands of God among men to restore the downhearted, lift the downtrodden, and revive the life of Christ in the hearts of humanity.

[End with the story of Lester Summerall in Africa...](#)