

PHILADELPHIA WHERE ARE YOU?

The following article is not something I planned on writing. It was somewhat of a "prophetic" urging on my heart to write. I believe it to be from the Lord. But I, like you am human so I would never say my human opinions are not expressed in it. I pray you will prayerfully read the following and respond according to the will of God for you. In some ways it would be easier to avoid subjects such as these, but in my heart, I know I cannot. I pray you will read this in the heart it was written in, which is to exhort, encourage and comfort the body of Christ.

A few years ago I was at a church that had just put in a new pipe organ system. It was massive and beautiful, but to me the beauty of it paled when compared to the ugly horror of the poverty I'd seen in the third world. The music minister was telling me "the deal" they got when they were able to purchase it for about \$250,000. When I heard that, my heart sank! ***I thought of the 35,000 children that die every day from malnutrition and starvation and thought about how God's heart must weep when He sees our warped priorities.***

Is it possible that in heaven we are compared to the likes of the Churches at Laodacia or Sardis in the book of Revelation? It is written in Rev. 3:2 *"Be watchful and strengthen the things that remain and are about to die."* And in Rev 3:17 *"Because you say, 'I am rich, have become wealthy, and have need of nothing - and do not know that you are wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked - I counsel you to buy from me gold refined in the fire, that you may be rich.'"* He is writing to a church here! ***This was***

communicated by a loving God who found a faithful servant who was not willing to "mix words" but was committed to speak the truth in love.

He knew God's plan for these churches was to renew them into their proper place as the bride of Christ.

God warned the church at Ephesus in Rev. 2:4-5 saying *"..you have left your first love. Remember therefore from where you have fallen (note: we can't fall from a place unless we have been to that place); repent and do the first works, or else I will come quickly and remove your lampstand from its place - unless you repent"*. It is easy for us to believe God would say and do that to the Church at Ephesus, but not us, "look at all we do for Him!"

As we read these chapters we must take note that in some of the letters to the churches, He starts out by pointing out the good about them. ***He is our loving Father! His plan is that we use our time as pilgrims here as wisely as possible!*** He even says in Rev. 3:19 "As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten".

We must remember He came to seek and save the lost, not to build an earthly kingdom built on worldly riches and real estate. ***He will use worldly riches to fulfill His plans but that's what they are for, to fulfill His plans. They are not given to set us up in ultimate comfort while the rest of the world sinks further into the depths of***



poverty and into the black hole of spiritual darkness. It's OK for the church to own buildings etc. but we should exist in moderation. We need to look to the needs of our brothers and sisters in places poorer than we can imagine, as

more important than our own. Let's also remember Jesus said "My kingdom is not of this world". ***Yet as part of the church In America I sometimes literally weep at the extravagance and waist that I see and am sometimes a part of, yes, I too am guilty!*** We sometimes comfort one another in the midst of our extravagance and compromise as if to say "it's OK". But deep in our hearts we know there is something wrong with the picture we have created. We deceive ourselves and then one another! We allow ourselves to fall into a spiritual slumber.

Where are the prophets of God who are being called to sound the alarm? Have we sought to silence them like many of the old testament prophets? Silencing and ignoring them doesn't invalidate their message from God. ***We call these modern watchman "negative thinkers" and then quite often turn our ears from them even though we know, we need to hear their message.*** God is setting "watchman on the wall", let's take note of what God is saying through them and respond accordingly. In the letters to the churches in Revelation we hear the term over and over "let he who has ears to hear, hear what the Spirit is saying to the churches".

We talk about how the Lord could come back any day. All the while spending more and more of "God's money" keeping American Christians "happy" and "well fed" and in extravagant buildings that cost us way to much. Meanwhile, thousands slip into eternity without Jesus as Saviour and Lord! In "American Christianity" we seek to validate needless extravagance by saying "God led us to do this or that". ***I believe we give God credit for a lot of things He had nothing to do with, wants nothing to do with and wants no credit for.***

We, the Church should be investing most of our resources in reaching the rest of the world with the gospel. Much of which has yet to hear the Message for the first time.

Think about this for a moment!
Many don't even have a page of scripture!
Yet we think nothing of filling our bookshelves with every kind of Christian book and commentary imaginable. ***Is it to radical to think that perhaps we should sacrifice some of these "things" so that some may have at least one page of scripture or perhaps get to hear the word of God once.***

The Lord is now calling for a return on His investment in our lives! We have been blessed, given so much in these United States. God wants to pour His heart in and then out of us into the lost world around us! It's time for us to get beyond just believing God for "our needs" which quite often are "our greeds" if we are honest with ourselves!
Let us never echo the words again saying "God's children deserve the best!". In reality we deserve hell, but by grace we've been saved, not of works. Let us treasure that grace but not abuse it's privileges!

It's time to believe God to use us to reach the world, by being faithful to God's specific call in our lives. Let's begin to lovingly challenge one another to "press toward the mark of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus." It says in the book of Proverbs "that open rebuke is better than secret love", so ***let us no longer comfort one another in our sins of selfishness and compromise. Instead let's help each other overcome such sins as these.***

I have to admit, I have done things over the years "in ministry" that were out of improper motivation. ***The Bible calls them dead works, and they will be totally consumed by that "fire" at the Judgement Seat of Christ.*** All of our works will be tried one day with that heavenly purifying fire! It is a must that we begin to examine more closely God's call on our lives and that we "repent and do the first works", the things that God has foreordained that we should do.

The greatest coaches know how to draw the best out of their athletes. ***Let us encourage one another in the same way, not towards mediocrity but towards a fuller commitment and dedication to our great Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.***
In His Love,
Brian Weller



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Philadelphia Where Are You?

A message to
the
Church

By Brian Weller