

Professing Christian! Are You Awake? Is Your Church Awake?

By Steve Aivazis

I Corinthians 15:34: “Awake to righteousness, and do not sin; for some do not have the knowledge of God. I speak this to your shame.”

Professing Christian! Do you know that the United States of America is in a state of terminal decline? And, that this is a moral and spiritual reality, the symptoms of which reveal themselves in our politics, education, business practices, media, and the arts? Do you know that the churches of our nation, with few if any exceptions, have become nothing more than glorified religious social clubs? Or, as A.W. Tozer put it some time before his death in 1963, “a social fellowship with a mild religious flavor?” Do you know that the blessing of the Lord God Almighty has been removed from the Church in America? Do you know that it is only a matter of time before the displeasure of our Lord is unleashed in full upon this land with all the glorious might of His truly terrible and inescapable sovereignty? If you do not know these things then you are not awake in heart and mind. If your church is not rightly dealing with these issues before the throne of grace and in the pulpit then your church is not awake.

The attitudes and actions of our churches, along with Jesus’ loving, authoritative, and earnest reply, are reflected in the following passage of scripture.

Revelation 3:15-19: “I know your works, that you are neither cold nor hot. I would that you were cold or hot. So then, because you are lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will vomit you out of my mouth. 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; and white garments, that you may be clothed, that the shame of your nakedness may not be revealed; and anoint your eyes with eye salve, that you may see. As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten, Therefore be zealous and repent.”

Why do you go to church? What are your daily, weekly, and ultimate expectations in terms of your personal relationship with the Lord, and your membership and attendance at your church? Is it your overwhelming resolve and expectation by faith to know the Lord in an increasingly intimate and obedient way, as you grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ? (II Peter 3:18) Is it that your church should be a “house of prayer for all the nations,” and not a “den of thieves?” (Mark 11:17; Isaiah 56:7; Jeremiah 7:11) Is it that lost and dying souls may come to your church and encounter the true and living God? That they may find redemption from sin and death? That they might find reconciliation with a justly offended yet infinitely loving Lord and Master through a sound and faithful proclamation of the gospel of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ?

Or, is it the next pot luck or chili cook off? Is it the next sporting event or movie night? Is it the next camp out or fishing trip? And one could go on and on ad nauseam. Does it even bother you that the Church in America has become a meaningless institution to multitudes of lost and dying souls? Is your attitude this – “Well, after all, that’s just he ‘woke’ generation, the ungodly, the unbelieving – let them go to hell?” This kind of plain language may offend you, but is that not the true spirit and attitude of our churches judging by actions, and not by lip service?

Why then do so few if any of our churches have weekly, or any evangelistic services in which the gospel is presented in something other than a superficial and spiritually inadequate way? Perhaps someone would want to offer a list of all the church activities which contradict the things I am saying. Hear again the words of Jesus:

Revelation 2:2-5: “I know your works, your labor, your patience, and that you cannot bear those who are evil. And you have tested those who say they are apostles and are not, and have

found them liars; and you have persevered and have patience, and have labored for My name's sake and have not become weary. Nevertheless I have this against you, that you have left your first love. Remember therefore from where you have fallen; repent and do the first works, or else I will come to you quickly and remove your lampstand from its place – unless you repent.”

What is our spiritual heritage as the Church of Jesus Christ in these United States of America? Plainly, and historically this – From the days of the Great Awakening (beginning about 1736) and throughout the 19th century, the Church in America exerted a holy and Holy Spirit empowered influence over every aspect of life in our beloved nation. Although it is beyond the scope of this tract to go beyond such a simple statement of fact, the historical facts involved are readily available in a variety of books and other resources. Professing Christian! Does it even interest you to know these facts? Does it even interest you to receive instruction and inspiration from these facts for His name's sake, for the awakening and reviving of His Church here in America, and for the redemption of lost and dying souls? If not, you are not awake! If not, what does it even mean to you to be a Christian? If not, why are you a Christian?

What were the spiritual principles under which our spiritual forefathers operated in those days of wonderful blessing? Two verses from II Corinthians will give us the disciplines by which they faithfully acted in the Name of our Lord Jesus Christ, namely:

II Corinthians 1:12: “For our proud confidence is this, the testimony of our conscience, that in holiness and godly sincerity, not in fleshly wisdom but in the grace of God, we have conducted ourselves in the world, and especially toward you.”

II Corinthians 11:3: “But I am afraid, lest as the serpent deceived Eve by his craftiness, your minds should be lead astray from the simplicity and purity of devotion to Christ.”

Our spiritual forefathers maintained a simple and single-minded faithfulness to the following ways of going about the work which our Lord Jesus has given us to do in His Name – prayer, the ministry of

the Word, and holy blameless living. Anything other than these are either legitimate and needed supplements to gospel work, or needless and harmful distractions. If they are wise and good supplements to a true and powerful gospel work, great care must be maintained to prevent them from becoming a cancer on the Church by growing out of their legitimate proportion. If they are merely corrupting, distracting, and destructive influences and practices, they must be obediently and ruthlessly cut out, even if it means a temporary reduction in church membership and attendance.

To any sincere and observant church member or regular attendee, only one conclusion can honestly be reached. Our churches are weighed down with both legitimate supplemental activities which have grown cancerous, and with corrupting, distracting, and destructive influences and practices which have long since crept in to the American Church. Both are vain and false luxuries which have choked out the true riches of an abundant, powerful, and fruitful, personal Christian life and corporate Church ministry. And, the Holy Spirit is, and remains grieved with us as a corporate Christian fellowship. The only question which remains is whether or not we have arrived at the sad condition declared in II Chronicles 36:15-16, as follows:

“And the LORD God of their fathers sent warnings to them by His messengers, rising up early and sending them, because He had compassion on His people and on His dwelling place. But they mocked the messengers of God, despised His words, and scoffed at His prophets, until the wrath of the LORD arose against His people, till there was no remedy.”

If the situation is as I have described, then we have become like those Jesus speaks of when He quotes from Isaiah 29:13 in Matthew 15:7-9:

“Hypocrites! Well did Isaiah prophesy about you, saying, ‘This people honors Me with their lips, but their heart is far from Me. But in vain do they worship Me, teaching as doctrines the precepts of men.’”

Or, like those described in Ezekiel 33:31:

“So they come to you as people do, they sit before you as My people, and they hear your words, but they do not do them; for with their mouth they show much love, but their hearts pursue their own gain.”

I would seek prayerfully, and in the power of the Holy Spirit, to persuade you that the Church in America, across the theological/denominational spectrum, is, in fact, as I have described. That we have long since become disobedient and rebellious children, too proud, stubborn, and intoxicated by affluence, ease, and convenience to be willing and therefore able to wake up and act.

If things do not change, what will become of us as a Church and as a nation? Be assured that God will vindicate the honor and majesty of His holy Name and law. Be assured that apart from repentance, and a turning again to God and doing works befitting repentance, we have only the Lord’s loving, faithful, and fearful correcting judgment to look forward to. And I, for one, say, that if that is what it takes to turn us, then may the Lord hasten the day, whatever that means!

Professing Christian! If the Holy Spirit is convicting you in heart and mind, make confession. Make confession personally, and make confession as it relates to your place in His Church here in America. Renounce sin, as it relates to your personal standing before our Lord and Master, Jesus Christ. Renounce sin, as it relates to the treason of His Church in America against her only rightful Sovereign. Stand up for righteousness and holiness to the Lord in your life and in the life of His Church. Plead with Him, in the spirit and words of the prophet Habakkuk.

Habakkuk 3:2: “O LORD, I have heard your speech and was afraid; O LORD, revive your work in the midst of the years! In the midst of the years make it known; in wrath remember mercy.”

Be willing to meet the conditions laid out in Joel 2:12-13, with your whole heart and mind.

“Now, therefore, says the LORD, turn to Me with all your heart, with fasting, with weeping, and with mourning. So rend your heart, and not your garments; return to the LORD your God, for He

is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness; and He relents from doing harm.”

From this time forward, let conformity to the image of Christ, the seeking and saving of lost souls under His direction and promised power from on high, and the influence of gospel righteousness in our law and governments, society, and culture, be the all consuming passion and whole-hearted purpose and activity of our church bodies.

To this end, let us cut away and purge out the dross, the chaff of vain worldliness and empty human wisdom. Let personal prayer, prayer meetings, the continuous ministry of the Word, and holy, blameless living, be the banner under which we march forward in the Name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

The Lord Jesus says the following very plainly, and without any chance of misunderstanding, in John 15:7-8:

“If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it shall be done for you. By this is My Father glorified, that you bear much fruit, and so prove to be My disciples.”

It is high time that our churches put this very plain promise to the test. Christian, ask! Church, ask! If we ask and do not receive that for which we ask, where does the problem lie? With Jesus and His words? Preacher, will you explain away the glory of this promise in order to accommodate sin in our personal lives and churches? If so, shame on you! You are derelict in your duties and without faith in your Master!

Professing Christian! Are you awake? Is your church awake? What will you do now? What will your church do now? What will the Lord do, in answer to the decisions we make regarding these eternally serious and decisive questions?

America’s Only Hope!

Send all comments or questions to:
iamaivazis@gmail.com