

Encourage

Inspiration for IPHC Leaders



I'm Slowly Learning
About **Patience**

Stop Counting Heads!

BEWARE of
Oncoming Stupidity!

God's Kingdom Is Shifting

To Burnout and Back ...
My Comeback Story



A Message from Our Bishop

I'm Slowly Learning About Patience

A recent visit to Turkey caused me to reflect on the importance of God's character-building process.

Patience, or as it is sometimes translated, perseverance, is a gift that I wish I could attain more quickly! Most of us know the other laughable comments we make as we struggle with our impatience.

I'm learning more about patience. First, I'm in an ongoing study and reflection of Romans 5:1-5. The apostle Paul informs us that patience derives from the tribulations we experience. Thus, to gain God's gift of patience, we have to be willing to stand in the grace we have received, declare our hope in the glory of God, and "rejoice in hope of the glory of God" (NKJV).

We can "rejoice always" (1 Thessalonians 5:16) in the trials and sufferings of life because we know that tribulations "produce character, and character produces hope."

It is through those tribulations that we learn to persevere with the knowledge that we are standing in God's grace. The important thing for us is that while we may not feel God's grace, we must trust His grace.

The fire-chamber of pressure reveals my immaturity, my haste, my self-preservation, my idolatries, my unmet needs, my fears and anxieties, and above all, my need to control people and circumstances around me. Those are the very things that God's grace wants to engage and bring into the healing light of His love and hope.

That is why as my character is transformed; God's hope arises in me. No longer is my hope based on the circumstances or what people do or think; my hope



BY
DOUG
BEACHAM

DOUG BEACHAM is the presiding bishop of the IPHC. He has served in various roles in the church including Georgia Conference Director, executive director of Church Education Ministries, and executive director of World Missions Ministries.

is based on the power of the Holy Spirit revealing life to me through the Word and His work in my mind, will, and spirit.

Second, I have a deeper appreciation for the millions of Christians around the world for whom suffering, perseverance, character, and hope are worked out in their cultural histories. Last month Susan and I, along with Dr. Harold Hunter, were privileged to have a private audience with the spiritual leader of the 300 million Orthodox Christians around the world, the Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew. We met him in his office in Constantinople (Istanbul).

Since the year 1453 and the fall of Constantinople to the Moslems, the Orthodox have been a dwindling minority and are barely 15,000 in the entire nation of Turkey. Millions more lived under the oppressive atheistic influence of communism in Russia and Eastern Europe. This godly man spoke of the pressures Orthodox Christians face in his own nation as well as in the current situation in Syria.

I asked him how Orthodox Christians did it. How did they survive being persecuted and marginalized in the face of oppressive human systems? I remarked that many of us in the West are starting to feel some of that same marginalization. His reply impacted me greatly, "Patience. We must be patient." He picked up a small icon of Saint Yponomi, (her name means Patience) to make his point.

The Patriarch understands Romans 5:1-5 better than most of us in the West. He demonstrates an eschatological reading of Romans 5, a reading that is reflective and hopeful with a long view of history and confidence in Christ's victory.

This is why I do not give up hope in our darkening society. We must be patient, transformed in our character by Christ's love, and boldly certain that in spite of all appearances, Christ's kingdom will come and will prevail. O

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Bishop Doug Beacham met with Patriarch Bartholomew of the Orthodox Church in April in Turkey. He is shown here with Dr. Harold Hunter of the IPHC (left) and Susan Beacham.

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A place of hope. A people of promise.

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International Pentecostal Holiness
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To Burnout and Back ... My Comeback Story

I crashed and burned because I kept my stress a secret.
Finally I reached out for help.



BY JOHN
CHASTEEN

JOHN CHASTEEN served as a pastor in the IPHC in Texas for many years. He later served as dean of the graduate school at Southwestern University in Bethany, Oklahoma. Today he serves as a life coach and ministers to leaders through his consulting firm, The Chasteen Group. He is the author of *Coaching the Next Generation*. You can learn more about him by visiting his web site at heycoach-john.com.

Burnout—that’s something that happens to other people, right? At least that’s what I thought until a few years ago when it actually happened to me. I call it my “burn out and back” story. It goes like this:

Like most good ministers I was living my emotional life on the edge. Over crowded schedules, unguarded private time and very few boundaries contributed to a severe case of burnout that eventually pushed me over the cliff. I spiraled downward into a state of clinical depression that lasted over a year and a half.

What did I do? Like most good ministers, I kept it hidden. That is until I couldn’t hide it any longer. Finally, I sought help and found it. Fortunately, it never displaced me from ministry, but very easily could have. Needless to say I’m on the backside of it and I’ve lived to tell my story.

Burnout is a serious problem in America today, not only with clergy; but also with people from all walks of life—especially professional people. Burnout is primarily a modern malady caused by the stress and busyness of modern day society.

What is burnout? Burnout is a physical, mental and emotional response to constant levels of stress. When body and mind are relentlessly strained, unusual levels of emotional and physical fatigue develop. If not attended to, it can

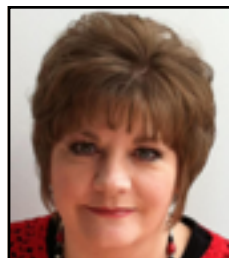


lead to many other unhealthy emotional and physical responses and yes, even sin.

What are a few things that are at the root of burnout? Well, to answer this question would take much more time than you would care to read about. However, I have found a few common threads that are easy to spot and could signal a warning:

*The disparity between expectations and reality. Someone once said, "False expectations, like cataracts, must be removed because there is no way around them." Wrong expectations can be clergy killers. The reason is that they have a tendency to cause much undue pain and stress. Wrong expectations could also in-

I've learned the very nature of ministry causes most pastors to live continually on the edge of burnout.



BY BETH BAILEY

BETH BAILEY and her husband, Terry, serve in pastoral leadership at South Greenwood PH Church in Greenwood, South Carolina.

A Prayer for Pastors

Heavenly Father,

We come before You in gladness and with thanksgiving for You are good and Your mercy is everlasting (Psalm 89).

We lift up the ministers of the International Pentecostal Holiness Church. Let Your Spirit rest upon them in peace, confidence and everlasting mercy as they enjoy access to Your presence and power (Phil. 4:6-7).

We ask that You release a new anointing to break every yoke of discouragement, constriction, fear, failure and weariness. Establish, strengthen and settle them in truth with wisdom, knowledge and understanding. Keep them from compromise, deception and carnality making no provision for the flesh (1 Pet. 5:10; Gal. 5:16). Grant great grace for a divine exchange of weakness for Your strength (2 Cor. 12:9).

Activate a heart of stewardship concerning private and public life in faithfulness to You. Cause them to wear a new mantle of humility and hope in the pursuit of being rooted and grounded in love without hypocrisy (Rom. 12:9). Cause them to be steadfast, immovable and abounding in Your work (1 Cor. 15:58). Guide their giving as You supply every need according to Your riches in glory (Phil. 4:19). Renew diligence and passion for effectual, fervent prayer and study of Your word, and cause them to desire spiritual gifts (James 5:16; 1 Cor. 14:1).

Endue them with power for success, prosperity, longevity, provision, favor and increase in every area of life and ministry. Activate gifts and talents for opportunities, productivity and creativity (Heb. 8:6). Bring completion to old cycles and give liberty to fully possess a new dimension in divine alignment for Your kingdom purposes (Matt. 6:10). Enable them to comfort, console and proclaim the liberty and the hope of the gospel in boldness with reward of souls (Isa. 61:1-3; Eph. 6:18-19).

Cause all things to work together for good as they serve in the newness of the Spirit (Rom. 7:6; 8:28). Release grace to navigate and discern warfare with strategies to always triumph (2 Cor. 2:14).

We judge You faithful concerning all things!
In Jesus name. Amen.

clude unrealistic and unfulfilled expectations.

As a minister, learn to take life and ministry as it comes—to deal with hard realities in stride.

*Finding balance between ministry and personal time. H.B. London, director of Focus on the Family's Pastoral Ministry, says that, with most ministers, "balance is the principle issue—everyone wants it but few seem to be able to make it work for them." Sadly enough, many pastors do not have a good handle on their private and personal life. Learn to guard and develop your own personal time. Build margin and boundaries into all you do.

* Less than ideal ministry conditions. Every minister at one time or another is tempted to look at their so-called "less than desired" ministry conditions and question their calling and effectiveness. The temptation is to look around and think that there are "greener pastures" elsewhere. Better ministry conditions are not the only answer to fulfillment—contentment is the key.

* Negative effects of ministry on spouse and family. H.B. London says every couple going into ministry should have two identical signs artfully lettered with the message, "Warning: Ministry May Be Hazardous to Your Marriage." This sign should be hung in the pastor's study about eye level with his desk and the other hung in their bedroom. Without a doubt, happily married pastors tend to be more effective in their ministry.

So how do I avoid ministry burnout? How do I know when it is encroaching on my life and ministry? Here are a few things to remember about burnout:

1. Burnout is not an overnight occurrence.

For me, it was an accumulation of many years of living on the edge. I've learned the very nature of ministry causes most pastors to live continually on the edge of burnout. It is important to recognize the early warning signs and adjust. Here are a few.

- Constantly feeling drained (emotionally and physically)
- An overwhelming resentment about workload or life in general.

- A continued state of frustration.
- Small decisions become major issues.
- Physical symptoms, including fatigue, high blood pressure and headaches.
- A marked loss of appreciation for people.

2. It is nearly impossible to avoid unless you learn to guard your private world.

Ministers and professional people must learn to find balance in their private and ministerial or professional world. Most want it—few achieve it. A balance of work, play and spiritual life is a must.

There are many good books out there on the topic; one I recommend is *Ordering Your Private World* by Gordon McDonald. I also highly recommend you find a peer or, if possible, a personal life coach to offer you support and encouragement in this area. Don't ignore this important area of your life—it's crucial.

3. Denial is the number one enemy of recovery—you must find someone to talk to.

For me, this was the most difficult part of my recovery. I mistakenly believed that I couldn't share my problems with anyone, especially my superiors. After all, it might displace me from ministry - I thought. I was too embarrassed to tell my close friends, my spouse included. After all, I was a "successful minister." I shouldn't be depressed.

Unfortunately, many ecclesiastical systems are structured to save and preserve the system, at the expense of its constituents. This is why I am such an advocate of coaching. I believe coaching creates a safe place for those in need.

I believe we must continually address these issues by creating structures that preserve both ecclesiastical systems and its constituents. You must find someone to talk to. There is much more that could be said about the topic. My purpose is not to give an in-depth study of it, but rather to merely heighten awareness of it.

Burnout is a real issue for many leaders. Some of you may be walking through it as you read this article. Be encouraged—burnout is curable as well as preventable. So what are you doing to avoid it? Or recover from it? I believe the steps I've outlined here will propel you into a place of healthy, balanced ministry. O

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Stop Counting Heads!

We often measure a church's success by looking at Sunday morning attendance. But it's time to change the score card!



BY KEVIN
BORDEAUX

KEVIN BORDEAUX is the lead pastor of Thrive Church in Richmond, Virginia. Ordained in the IPHC, he attended Emmanuel College and Southwestern Christian University.

If you are part of a church, leading a ministry in a church, or even pastoring a church, you can agree that we measure success on different standards than the Bible. The question is usually, "How many are you running on Sundays?" or we talk about finances.

If you have a smaller church, you may be tempted to make up different criteria. You talk about the outreach event you accomplished or how many responded to the altar call.

The point is that we have to change the way we evaluate success. The scorecard of ministry has to change. I had a professor who would frequently say, "Thousands pack out sports arena's because they have great entertainment. They yell, they get loud, they play music and enjoy the sport but nothing spiritual is really happening."

I am afraid that could be said for many of our churches in America. What are the authentic signs of success in churches?

I don't have all the answers. We are still in process at my church to develop the criteria for what makes a successful church. I have learned that you cannot make a church grow, but you can cultivate the health of a local fellowship. Here are just a few of the criteria that matter. If you want to find some great statistical guidelines to follow, then pick up the book *Pull* by Bob Franquiz.

The following eight evaluations are what we give in our annual report each year to our partners. These measurements indicate signs of actual success.

1. Baptisms versus average attendance. Don't just talk about how many you have attending on average on Sundays. What matters is how many have been baptized. A healthy church has over fifteen percent of their attendance baptized in that year. So, instead of asking, "How many are you running?" Ask, "How many have we baptized this year and in the last five years against our average attendance?"

2. Small group percentage participation versus average attendance. You should be measuring how many of your people are engaged in small groups versus your average attendance. You are not making disciples simply by having people occupy a seat on Sunday morning!

A church should set a high bar on this one. Plan and pray to have over forty percent of your people involved in small groups. Talk to the congregation about it. Ask them to pray with you about it. Make it the norm.

3. The percentage that actively serve in the church versus average attendance. Another important ratio is looking at how many are serving on a team in the church versus your attendance. Your members should be engaging in the work of ministry. In the same manner as small groups, you should set the bar high for this percentage. You should pray and plan for over forty percent.

4. Small groups that are actively involved in the community each semester or year (depending on your group structure.) We have set a goal for every small group to engage their community each semester. They pray, get ideas and find creative ways to be involved in their community. This takes the small group participation to another level.

5. The ways your church is engaging the community. We are called to be salt and light—outside the walls of the church. Each church should have a unique niche in which they engage their community. It may be just one area and that is fine. But always reflect on how your church is actively involved in your community.

6. Salvations. The next two are key indicators that the main purpose of the Church is being fulfilled. If you are not seeing people regularly come to Christ then there is a major health issue in your church. This should be our heartbeat.

7. Baptisms versus the number of salvations. You should be measuring how many baptisms you have versus the number of salvations. For instance, in February of 2013 through February of 2014 we had 150 salvations and 62 baptisms. That is about forty-one percent.

If you have a high number of salvations but a very low baptism rate then that shows that people are not taking the next step after surrendering to Christ.

8. Membership. Now I know what you are thinking, Yes! We have 500 on our membership roll! The issue is that you only have

200 attending.

In the 1950s through the 1990s American churches had the mindset of padding the membership roll. We are in a season now where we are making it harder for people to become a "member." We use the term "partner" instead. Members have to go through level 101 and 201 before they can sign up for partnership. Membership becomes partnership when members acknowledge that God has called them to join in fulfilling the vision at our church.

About 31 percent of our attenders are partners. They are the "Navy SEALs" of our church. You should strive to have a process for membership, set the bar high and then give them the next step after membership. Our next step is that members will now be on our Dream Team. They will be asked to lead and mentor. We teach that it takes teamwork to make the dream work in level 401.

Have you noticed the big difference in these evaluations? They are all percentage based and reveal true commitment and involvement. It doesn't matter how many you have showing up to a show on Sunday, what matters is how many are disciples and actively making disciples.

Take some time to review these percentages. Use these as your new means of assessment. When someone asks how your church is doing, don't just blab about nickels and noses, but talk about the percentage involved in serving, small groups, baptisms and partnership. Change the scorecard! O

When someone asks how your church is doing, don't just blab about nickels and noses. Change the scorecard!



BEWARE of Oncoming Stupidity!

If you aspire to ministry, don't be stupid. Decide now to avoid these obvious pitfalls so you can finish well.



BY J. LEE
GRADY

J. LEE GRADY is an ordained IPHC minister who serves as contributing editor of Charisma magazine and editor of Encourage. He also directs The Mordecai Project, an international missions organization based in Florida. He is a member of the IPHC's Sonshine Conference.

I shared a pulpit with Dr. Mary Ann Brown two times. This gutsy charismatic Bible teacher was bold and painfully blunt. People who hate women preachers hated her even more because of her no-nonsense sermons, always delivered in her Texas twang. She would get her audience laughing and then skewer them with a hot blade of truth.

When Mary Ann died in 2012, I remembered the last words she said to me when we were together at a conference in Chicago a year earlier. After lamenting the fact that so many ministers were suffering moral failures, she locked eyes with me and said with stern, motherly authority: "Lee, please don't ever get stupid."

I've pondered her words often since her death. I don't want to be stupid; I want to finish well. So how can we avoid spiritual stupidity? We can start by avoiding these 10 mistakes that have become common in our movement during the past decade:

1. Take illegal drugs. I know people who never got complete deliverance from their drug habit. When the pressures of ministry grew intense they turned to illegal substances to escape. If you allow drugs or alcohol to control your actions, you have no business in min-

istry. Run for the nearest exit and get help.

2. Reject accountability. The Lone Ranger was an intriguing comic book hero, but isolation doesn't work in real life. Lack of accountability is stupid! If you don't answer to people smarter than you, you are an accident waiting to happen. You have no right to be in authority if you are not under authority.

3. Beat or abuse your wife. The Bible says in 1 Peter 3:7 that God will not listen to your prayers if you mistreat your wife. If you are an abuser (and even if you are a master at hiding your sin from others), the Lord will oppose you until you seek help.

4. Surround yourself with adoring fans. Years ago, fallen PTL founder Jim Bakker said his biggest mistake was planting "yes men" around him instead of people who had the guts to challenge his bad decisions. If you aren't willing to invite input—including criticism—from your followers, you are a weak leader headed for disaster.

5. Fake spiritual gifts to impress others. In our movement there is pressure to produce the sensational in order to keep people entertained. But if you stoop so low as to fake a healing or push someone to the floor, the Holy Spirit will step away and let you run the sideshow without His power. It's stupid to mix strange fire and risk offending God!

6. Be lenient toward sexual sin. Many preachers celebrate "grace" but refuse to label fornication, adultery, homosexuality or pornography as sins. If you are casual about sexual sin in your own life, or if you don't require purity among those you lead, you are stupid.

7. Manipulate people during the offering time. Ministers often use hypnotic mind games to raise funds on Christian television. Nobody challenges their fraud, so it seems they get away with it. Be assured that these people will answer to God for their deception. You are stupid if you try these tactics in your church.

8. Refuse to share power. I meet ministers who have been leading their churches or organizations for 30 years and yet have no succession plan in place. That is dumb! Train the next generation now so they will be ready to lead in your place.

9. Teach exotic doctrines. Some charismatics and Pentecostals tend to feed people a "flavor of the month" to satisfy the craving for angels, gold dust, gold teeth, manna,

heavenly portals and indoor rain clouds. But history has proven that those who make spiritual manifestations a focus end up in deception. Let's keep the main thing the main thing. Focus on Jesus!

10. Become an egomaniac. Some of America's biggest religious stars have gone loony because of pride. They require private jets, bodyguards and personal chefs while maintaining a cold aloofness from the people they are called to serve. If you let Satan dupe you into becoming an arrogant ministry diva, you are stupid. Repent and start acting like Christ instead of a rock star.

In memory of my late friend Mary Ann Brown, I pass on her advice to you: "Please don't ever get stupid." Let's grow up, reject foolishness and aim to finish well. o

A man in a striped shirt and dark pants stands on a tall ladder, looking through a telescope. The background is a vast city skyline under a blue sky with scattered clouds. The ladder is positioned vertically, and the man is at the top, looking towards the horizon.

God's Kingdom Is SHIFTING

God is always moving. Our challenge in this hour is to stay in step with Him!



BY TONY
MILLER

TONY MILLER is the senior pastor of The Gate Church in Oklahoma City. He and his wife, Kathy, also lead Destiny World Outreach, an international organization dedicated to training 21st century ministry leaders. Tony is the author of the book *Journey to Significance*. You can learn more about his ministry at destinywo.com. You can follow him on Facebook at facebook.com/tonymillerdwo.

Several years ago I was struggling with the realities of transition when I read an old proverb that seemed to sum things up. It said, “The bend in the road is not the end of the road, unless you fail to make the turn!” It was at that moment that I realized, more clearly than ever, that life in general is ever-changing and life in the kingdom of God is full of continual change.

A changeless God is continually working change in us. In fact, the term “God” in scripture is a verb—He is moving!

We are living at a time when the earth is experiencing tremendous birth pangs—cultural upheavals, unusual weather patterns, shifting political allegiances—all indicators that we are standing on the threshold of a new day. Jesus declared that these conditions would exist as the clash of the kingdoms became more manifested and there emerged a generation that would demonstrate the kingdom of God with boldness and authority.

In Isaiah 43:19, the prophet declared, “...I will do a new thing....” It is interesting that while preparing the people for the changes that were going to take place, he never attempts to define what the new thing is. What wisdom! I have found that in every new season that we experience, if we seek to define it, what we end up doing is confining it.

In most incidents the real challenge for us is to discern the bend in the road, not to make every new thing fit into our preconceived ideas. The kingdom shifts we are experiencing—and must embrace—are more than a faddish, stylistic face-lift. Rather, it is more like an extreme makeover! God is at work reforming his church.

Some time ago, while in a meeting with Pastor Jack Hayford from Church on the Way in Van Nuys, California, I was challenged by the impact of a statement he made concerning this next season of church life. He said, “The catalyst for a spiritual reformation is the willingness to be re-shaped.”

Wow! I strongly believe that what the Spirit of God is doing in the earth today is establishing reformational churches that, like the sons of Issachar, understand their times and know how to respond. The key to becoming a person of reformation is the willingness to change.

Those who are sensitive to God know the importance of being on the front end of a change, rather than being forced into change. The first is pro-active and the result of choice. The other is re-active and the result of pressure.

Somewhere inside of each of you, I believe, is a strong desire to grow and enlarge your capacity. To live on a different level demands that you hunger on a different level. I learned a long time ago that people never change what they are willing to tolerate! As long as you are content to be broke or in debt, you will never prosper or live debt free. As long as you are satisfied to be alone and isolated, you will never seek to build proper relationships. To embrace change—to shift—most often requires intentionality to be successful.

As we begin to discern the shifts that are taking place in the kingdom, each one will require that we think on a different level. Some of the mindsets that have prevailed in previous days will prevent us from embracing this new day. I challenge you to allow the Holy Spirit to renew your mind as we discuss a few of the kingdom shifts that are taken place in our world!

1. From church to kingdom.

Most Christians think in terms of church. By that I mean the local assembly of saints that we gather with on a regular basis for worship, teaching and mutual edification. In my opinion the local church is God’s primary avenue of kingdom expansion. Jesus said in Matthew 16:18, “I will build my church and the gates of hades will not prevail against it.” He is still building the church.

Yet, in the economy of heaven, God’s emphasis has always been on the kingdom. The prophets of old prophesied

a coming kingdom. John the Baptist and Jesus both preached that the kingdom of God was at hand. The apostles disrupted cities when they proclaimed there was a new king in town, thus implying the kingdom had begun to manifest itself in the earth.

Here is why this shift is important. If we continue to think church, we will confine ourselves to what we can do, either individually or as a single church body. When I think kingdom, my ability to impact is so much broader since I have greater resources. Also, when I think church, I see every other church in town as my competitor.

But if I think kingdom, every other church in town is my partner. We are part of the same company, just different franchises. Don’t misunderstand, the church is in the kingdom, but it is not the entirety of the kingdom.

2. From harvest to inheritance.

A harvest is the result of something you do. In order to have a harvest, you must prepare the soil, sow seed, nurture the ground while the seed is growing and then collect the harvest. It is primarily about doing. Much of our Christian world has been occupied in doing. We gain all of our affirmation by what we do, our sense of success by how we did.

An inheritance is about being. If I am to receive an inheritance from someone, I have to be somebody to him or her. For example, it is one thing for Bill Gates to write me a check for \$1 million dollars. That would be exciting! But it is still another thing for him to put me on the account and let me write a check anytime I want to! In the first example, I more than likely did something that warranted the check. In the second example, I had to become something to him to have those privileges.

I believe the Father is teaching us that there are many harvests that will come to us in our lifetime. What we must begin to believe, as the people of God, is that we will walk in our inheritance. Colossians 1:12-13 declares that we have been transferred from the domain of darkness into the kingdom of light and that we are qualified to receive the inheritance that is ours in Christ. Salvation, healing, deliverance, prosperity, the unbelieving world—they are my inheritance in Christ!

3. From “me” to “we.”

God is shifting our focus from the individual to the corporate body. For way too long it has been easy for believer’s to make everything about them. However, the truth is that Jesus is not busy building my ministry. He is at work building His kingdom.

Friends, there is no such thing as personal destiny out-

Those who are sensitive to God know the importance of being on the front end of a change, rather than being forced into change.

side of corporate destiny. In other words, you really discover your purpose and place by being joined to the whole, not as an individual part. Psalms 67 is a prophetic promise of the “earth yielding its increase” to those who declare His praise. Amazingly it begins with a cry of “God bless us!” Most of the prayers offered today are “God bless me!”

In the epistle to the Romans, Paul taught the principle that no man lives to himself and no one dies to himself. In other words, we are strategically and deliberately connected. Every decision you make may be private, but it will never be personal. It will affect everyone you are connected to. Every time a husband is unfaithful to his wife, or a leader fails in the stewardship of their office, it affects more than just them. The decision will impact everyone connected to them.

The Spirit of God is calling for a corporate mindset in this hour. We must think as one mind, speak as one voice, and move as one body.

4. From isolation to influence.

Jesus taught us that the kingdom of God is like a “city set on a hill that cannot be hid.” One of the major shifts taking place in the body of Christ today is the understanding that we as kingdom citizens have a mandate to engage our world at every dimension. For many this is a totally new way of thinking. In fact, for many it will require a spirit of revelation (Ephesians 1:15-18) to break us free from the limiting belief systems of traditional religiosity.

We are called to be salt and light in the midst of a dark and dying world. Somewhere along the line we were taught the limiting truth that we live in a dichotomy. That thought pattern tries to persuade us that there is a secular world and a spiritual world. Only problem is, I am not a part time Christian! I live in the spiritual world all the time.

My friend Lance Wallnau reminds us of the discovery made by Loren Cunningham and the leadership of YWAM many years ago. They discovered that every society of people, no matter where they lived, had seven basic foundational pillars that shaped their culture. Those are: the community of faith, the family, media, educational systems, government, business/economics, and arts and entertainment.

As the church, we have been guilty of only focusing on one of these pillars, or at the most two, while we have been content to ignore the others. Bad theology has convinced much of the full gospel world that what happens in our cities or government really does not matter because our home is not in this world. As a result we have become poor stewards of our potential influence and forfeited our place of impact in the present culture.

What we need is an awakening to the reality that this is our hour to rise and shine! Whether I am employed in the marketplace or by a church makes no difference, we are all in the ministry!

In order for this shift to happen in our nation there must be a renewing of our minds, causing us to be aware that we were intended to influence the world in which we live. Jesus’ illustration of being “salt” was to let us know that we affect everything we touch. Paul described the work of the kingdom as leaven, where a little bit influences the whole loaf. For far too long the church has preached humility and practiced insecurity, shouted about having the power while retreating from the frontlines of kingdom conflict, isolating itself behind the four walls of the church structure. Loved ones, may I remind all of us that we are not a dangerous threat to the powers of darkness in the church house!

The kingdom of God is experiencing a great season of shaking and shifting. Often, He will shake us so that He may shift us. If you are sensing the winds of change shaking your spiritual house, it may be that God is aligning you for advancement in this generation. The bend in the road is coming—will you make the turn? We are all being reshaped for kingdom purposes.○

