

The Revival Reformation

The VISION Newsletter / May 2015

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2 Chronicles 7:14 (NKJV) “If My people who are called by My name will humble themselves, and pray AND SEEK MY FACE, and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin and heal their land.”

This is my fourth article in a series entitled, “God’s Prescription for a Troubled Nation”. America is a troubled nation. America is sick with sin, blinded by pride, deaf to the truth. America is dying and is in need of a cure. God has the prescription for what ails America. The prophet Jeremiah lamented, *“Is there no balm in Gilead, is there no physician there? Why then is there no recovery for the health of the daughter of my people?”*¹ Is there hope for America? Is there a cure for what ails America? Yes there is. God’s prescription for a troubled nation is not a change in Washington or Wall Street. God’s prescription for America is revival in the church.

In previous articles I talked about other ingredients in God’s prescription for revival. First, God seeks a godly remnant, a “Revival Core”. Second, the revival core must have the “revival attitude” which is humility. Third, this revival core must pray and thus acknowledge their need and dependency upon God. Now we come to the fourth ingredient which is for this revival core to seek God’s face. I call this the “revival reformation”.

What is a reformation? Webster’s Dictionary defines “reform” as “to put an end to (an evil) by enforcing or introducing a better method or course of action”.² The term “Reformation” was used to describe a 16th century religious movement by a few priests within the Roman Catholic Church to reject and correct particular areas of wrong doctrine and practice. These modifications were rejected by the church hierarchy. The Church also excommunicated those priests and members who sought to bring reform. Their removal led to the Protestant Reformation and the rise of Protestant churches.

In biblical terms, a reformation is the process of ending an unbiblical belief system or practice in order to re-establish a biblical belief system or practice. In Hebrews 9:10 we are told that the Tabernacle ceremonies were *“concerned only with foods and drinks, various washings, and fleshly ordinances imposed until the time of reformation.”* That time of reformation took place with Jesus Christ.

A biblical reformation is the natural result of seeking God’s face. “God’s face” refers to His presence, favor, and blessing. God’s presence, favor, and blessing were invoked upon Israel through the priestly blessing found in Numbers 6:22–27: *“And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying: ²³ ‘Speak to Aaron and his sons, saying, “This is the way you shall bless the children of Israel. Say to them: ²⁴ The LORD bless you and keep you; ²⁵ The LORD make His face*

¹ Jeremiah 8:22 (NKJV)

² Mish, F. C. (2003). Preface. Merriam-Webster’s collegiate dictionary. (Eleventh ed.). Springfield, MA: Merriam-Webster, Inc.

shine upon you, and be gracious to you; ²⁶ The LORD lift up His countenance upon you, and give you peace.” ²⁷ So they shall put My name on the children of Israel, and I will bless them.”

Looking at another’s face is important in every healthy relationship. Parents will often say to their children, “Look at me when I am talking to you!” In the same way, seeking God’s face refers to a desire to have a relationship with Him. In the calligraphy of the Chinese language there are symbols that date back 3,300 years before Christ. One is the symbol for happiness. The literal rendering is “a man in a garden in the presence of God.” You and I will never be happy and fulfilled apart from God’s presence, favor, and blessing in our lives.

In order to experience God’s presence, favor, and blessing we must turn from sin and seek to please God. Sin causes God’s face to turn away from us: *“Behold, the LORD’s hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; nor His ear heavy, that it cannot hear. ² But your iniquities have separated you from your God; and your sins have hidden His face from you, so that He will not hear.”³*

Seeking God’s face means to know and pursue what pleases Him. In order to know and pursue what pleases Him we must first have an encounter with *Truth*: *“Then Jesus said to those Jews who believed Him, ‘If you abide in My word, you are My disciples indeed. ³² And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.’”⁴*

Some people have never heard divine Truth. Some have mistaken lies for the truth. They may be sincere in what they believe but they are sincerely wrong. Practicing a lie will not produce the results that come by practicing God’s truth. Some people have believed that the Bible is God’s truth but they do not abide in the truth of God’s word. There are others who don’t want an encounter with the truth. They are satisfied with the lie they have embraced and they don’t want anyone to challenge it. Many people would rather believe and defend a lie than to know and follow the truth. Revival cannot come until we are willing to allow God’s Word to challenge and expose the lies we have believed.

Revival reformation is preceded by an admission of the lies we have embraced regardless of how sincerely we may have held to them. We must refuse to embrace any belief that is based upon a lie: *“casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ.”⁵* Are you building your life upon a lie? Are you hiding behind a lie? Have you lied to others? Are you lying to yourself? Have you lied to God? Have you become so determined to have your own way that you have built up a fortress of lies that seems air tight so no one can penetrate? Are you willing to die for that lie? Are you willing to allow wrongly held beliefs to be challenged by the Word of God?

God will sweep away the refuge of lies that we build as a wall around us: *“Also I will make justice the measuring line, and righteousness the plummet; the hail will sweep away the refuge of lies, and the waters will overflow the hiding place. ¹⁸ Your covenant with death will be annulled, and your agreement with Sheol will not stand; when the overflowing scourge passes through, then you will be trampled down by it. ¹⁹ As often as it goes out it will take you; for morning by morning it will pass over, and by day and by night; it will be a terror just to*

³ Isaiah 59:1–2 (NKJV)

⁴ John 8:31–32 (NKJV)

⁵ 2 Corinthians 10:5 (NKJV)

*understand the report.*⁶ God will strip away the hiding place of lies so that He can bring us into an encounter with His truth that we might be free.

Revival reformation is preceded by a desire to know truth and the God of truth. Do you honestly desire to know the truth? Then you must also desire to know the God of truth. Are you seeking to know the God of truth through His Word?

Revival reformation is preceded by a hunger to know the true and the living God. As God's inspired and infallible Word, the Bible tells us who the true God is and what He is like. Our opinions about God, what He is like, and what He approves mean nothing. Believing in a god of our imagination is idolatry. All that matters is what His Word reveals Him to be. Do you have a hunger to know and follow the true God as revealed in His Word? Are you reading and studying His Word in order to discover Him?

Revival reformation is preceded by a realization that we are responsible for the consequences of our sin. Are you ready to admit that through independence and selfishness you have brought upon yourself consequences that you cannot control? Are you ready to admit that you are your own worst enemy?

Revival reformation is preceded by an admission that we have turned away from God and to our own ways. We must see the danger ahead and turn around before it is too late. Will you admit that you are going the wrong way? Will you admit that you have gone astray after your own way? There are many who once walked with God and who no longer do. Are you one of them? It is time to turn around!

Revival reformation is preceded by a sincere desire to return to the God of the Bible. That step is motivated by a desire to regain God's presence, favor, and blessing. Returning to the God of the Bible means to return to the Bible as God's self-revelation to us. The Bible not only tells us who the true God is and what He is like, it also tells us how He wants to be worshiped. Acceptable worship of God is only found on His terms, not ours. Are you worshiping God on His terms or on your own?

Seeking God's face is initiated by God. As people who have sinned against God, we have no merit upon which God should receive us back. In reality, we never seek out God.⁷ It is God who seeks after us. It is God who, in His mercy and grace, invites us to seek His face: *"Hear, O LORD, when I cry with my voice! Have mercy also upon me, and answer me."*⁸ *When You said, 'Seek My face,' my heart said to You, 'Your face, LORD, I will seek.'*⁹ *Do not hide Your face from me; do not turn Your servant away in anger; You have been my help; do not leave me nor forsake me, O God of my salvation."*⁸ Do you hear the voice of God calling you to seek His face? What will be your response?

We must have a revival reformation. We must put an end to the lies and embrace the Truth that will set us free. Isn't it time to stop going your own way? Isn't it time to stop hiding behind a refuge of lies? Isn't it time to experience an encounter with the truth and the God of truth? Isn't it time to ask God to show you His way and then follow it? Isn't it time to seek God's face that you might regain His presence, favor, and blessing? *"But from there you will seek the*

⁶ Isaiah 28:17–19 (NKJV)

⁷ Romans 3:11

⁸ Psalm 27:7–9 (NKJV)

LORD your God, and you will find Him if you seek Him with all your heart and with all your soul.”⁹

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⁹ Deuteronomy 4:29 (NKJV)