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Why We Are Losing So Many Churches In The United States?

October 26, 2013 (2013-10-26T12:46:53+00:00) by [Jack Wellman](http://www.patheos.com/blogs/christiancrier/author/jwellman/)

What are some of the reasons that churches in the U.S. are losing members? What can be done to stop this bleeding? How can you help?



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The Decline of the American Church

You might not be surprised that Brazil is the number one receiving nation of foreign missionaries in the world but you might be surprised about who is the 2nd most missionary receiving nation in the world. It is the U.S. Why? In a recent sermon, [Pastor James McDonald](http://jamesmacdonald.com/) from Walking in the Word Ministries revealed these shocking numbers about Christianity in America:

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Of the 250,000 Protestant churches in America, 200,000 are either stagnant (with no growth) or declining. That is 80% of the churches in America and maybe the one you attend, if you attend at all.

4,000 churches close their doors every single year.

There is less than half of the number of churches today than there were only 100 years ago.

3,500 people leave the church every single day.

Since 1950, there are 1/3rd fewer churches in the U.S.

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As I mentioned, the U.S. is the number two receiving nation of foreign missionaries and perhaps now you can see why. Churches in America are declining and may be following the trend that has been occurring in Europe. Why? What can be done about this? What is the root cause of why so many churches in the U.S. are disappearing?
Seeker Sensitive Churches

I believe part of the reason that the church is declining in America is that expository preaching is no longer the rule but the exception. Too many churches are seeker sensitive that try to appeal to the masses to make them solve their everyday problems or try to make their lives happier. This is not the gospel for Christ Himself said that the road is hard and that we will all have to take up our cross and bear it (Luke 9:23). The gospel has been compromised and has been changed from a repentance, confession, and trust in Christ gospel to a feel good, real good, health, wealth, and prosperity gospel. This is not the gospel that Christ or Paul preached but another gospel (2 Cor 11:4).

A Works Based Religion

Another reason is that some churches teach a work-based gospel that robs God of glory. Paul rebuked the Galatian church for this very reason writing

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“O foolish Galatians! Who has bewitched you? It was before your eyes that Jesus Christ was publicly portrayed as crucified. Let me ask you only this: Did you receive the Spirit by works of the law or by hearing with faith? Are you so foolish? Having begun by the Spirit, are you now being perfected by the flesh” (Gal 3:1-3)?

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Some churches are critical of other churches who do not keep the Sabbath or who allow members who smoke or drink when the most critical issues of repentance and faith are ignored. Instead they teach that a person is not a Christian if they do certain things or don't do other things. I often tell other Christians who believe this that we have a section of town where no one smokes, no one drinks, no one dances, no one works on the Sabbath and not even one there plays cards. We call it the cemetery. If a person is saved by works then Christ died for nothing (Gal 2:21)!

Revival Starts With The Believer

The church in America is in desperate need of revival but where does revival start? Revival is not an appeal to those outside of the church. We can't pitch a tent and put up a sign saying "Revival Tonight." Revival is not for the lost for if you are still dead in your sins then you cannot be revived. Here is the only place that revival can begin. If you are standing in the sand, draw a circle around yourself. Inside of that circle is where revival must first begin. In the same message about the decline of American churches James McDonald gave some diagnostic questions that reveal whether a

believer needs personal revival or not. I have added some of my own.

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When I hear the Lord’s name taken in vain and used as a curse word and am not moved to righteous indignation, then I need revival.

When striving for personal holiness ceases to dominate your thinking then personal revival is need.

When you do not attend corporate worship regularly with the church Jesus built or have no desire to be with the redeemed in the Body of Christ, the church, then you are in dire need of revival.

When I sin and know that it is sin and fail to repent immediately, then I need revival on the spot!

When I don’t rejoice in the success of others but instead are secretly or inwardly jealous or envious, then I need reviving by the Spirit of God.

Where there is no hunger for hearing the Word of God or for reading the Bible then I need revival.

When biblical truth is ignored or we rationalize our sin against what the Word of God says, then that person needs revival.

When the eternal fate of those in our family, our co-workers, our friends or even strangers fails to move us to share the gospel, then we need personal revival.

When my prayer life ceases to be an everyday necessity then I am really saying to God by my silence, “God, I am good to go...I don’t need your intervention in my life today.” That is a critical sign that you are in need of reviving.

When I am able to watch degrading movies filled with violence and profane language or I can read publications with the same things then I need to have revival.

If I find more joy in discord or disunity than in unity in the church, workplace or the family, then I am not in tune with the Holy Spirit and need reviving.

When I see an injustice or suffering and fail to be moved by it, then my heart is hardened and I desperately need revival.

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What do you believe reveals the need for revival in yourself or in others? Is there something that you can add to this list?

Revival in the Church

If revival is to take place in this nation or any nation, then revival must begin with the individual believer. Revival starts within each one of us. Then it spreads to other believers in the church. Then the church which is revived can impact the proximate

community around it. That revival can then spread from that neighborhood into the district of that town or city. Only then can this revival begin to impact the entire town or city. The revival of this city initiated by born-again believers can start to spread outward to other cities and affect the state. States can impact neighboring states and states impact the nation. Only then can that nation impact those bordering nations... and those bordering nations can affect the nations around the world. Revival will never come until it first comes to believers.

Conclusion

You can help bring revival to America but it must start with you and with me but we cannot have revival until revival has us. We cannot revive what is not first alive. If you are not born again then you are dead in your sins. The greatest revival in human history began with one man. Jonah, the reluctant prophet brought salvation to Nineveh. Nineveh was the arch-enemy of Israel and Jonah hated the idea of having them be saved but God told Jonah “And should not I pity Nineveh, that great city, in which there are more than 120,000 persons who do not know their right hand from their left, and also much cattle” (Jonah 4:11)? Who doesn’t know their left hand from their right? They are those who are under the age of accountability and are very young children, babies, infants and toddlers. So if there were over one hundred thousand young children in Nineveh, then there must have been over one million souls in that city-state. Nineveh did repent and more than a million people were saved. Does that excite you? If not, then you need revival.

Only God can bring revival. We can fall on our face and repent of our spiritual laziness which I have had to do. We can pray that God sends revival to us and then pray for those around us and that God will bring revival to our church, to our city, to our state, to our nation and to the world so that millions might be saved. This is the will of God. He doesn’t take pleasure in or desire that any perish. Is that your wish too? Then pray for God to revive you so that others might be saved and bring glory to God because bringing glory to God is what it’s all about.

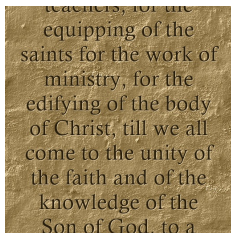


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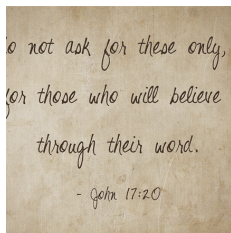


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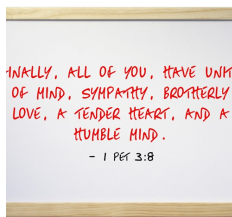
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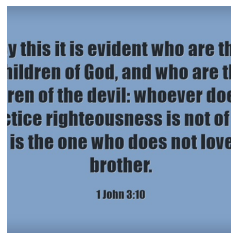
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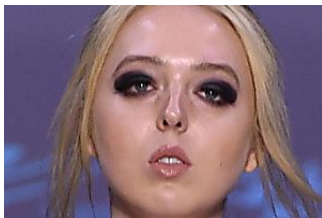
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