

# God's Call to His Church

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God is moving in unprecedented ways in our midst today! In this decade of the 1990s we are witnessing God moving on many different levels, both in His church and in the world. Yet in the variety there is a unity or harmony in what He is doing. It is these different levels that create this wonderful wholeness that we will address in this article.

## First level - Personal

God is certainly moving on a very personal level. Individual Christians are experiencing a mighty touch of the Holy Spirit resulting in a spiritual renewal encompassing a greater love of Jesus, a more sanctified life, a greater sense of God's presence, and more power of the Holy Spirit. These personal renewals are happening not only here in America but all over the whole world as well.

## Second level - Churches

There is also no doubt that God is moving at the corporate body or church wide level. We all are aware of dramatic manifestations of the Holy Spirit occurring within churches or other corporate Christian organizations. We need only listen and we will hear wonderful reports of this sweeping move of the Holy Spirit on God's people at various locations. This move is resulting in unprecedented revival breaking out, phenomenal church growth, and the presence of God being manifest.

## Third level - Regional/national

The third level of God's move is over geographic regions or even entire nations. There are churches in South America numbering 100,000 plus where God is moving mightily! We all know of South Korea's church of several hundred thousand members. We hear reports of entire villages or cities in the 10/40 window coming to Christ because every person in the village had a vision of Jesus on the same night! God in His sovereignty seems to be selecting geographical areas and sending His Holy Spirit into those regions with amazing results (amazing from our point of view, that is!)

These levels of God's move are truly awe inspiring, especially for those of us who have been Christians for a long time and have hungered for revival for years. But now I want to address yet another level on which God seems to be moving among His people.

## Fourth level - Transnational and transdenominational

In the last few years God appears to be calling His more mature people into a deeper commitment of prayer, targeted evangelization, and spiritual warfare. By more mature I mean those believers who are the ever present remnant within God's church; those who are mature, faithful, and on whom God can call for His special purposes.

Another term for this remnant is God's holy or royal priesthood. 1 Peter 2:5 refers to God's chosen people as a "holy priesthood."

"(you) also, like living stones, are being built into a spiritual house to be a **holy priesthood**, offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ."

1 Peter 2:9 refers to God's chosen people as a "royal priesthood."

"But you are a chosen people, a **royal priesthood**, a holy nation, a people belonging to God, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light."

The King James Bible, in Revelation 1:6, refers to God's chosen people as "kings and priests."

## God's Call to His Royal Priesthood

As I have already stated, I believe that today God is calling His royal priesthood to a level of spiritual activity virtually unheard of, at least in this century. It is this level of activity to which I want to devote the remainder of this article. We will examine such things as spiritual mapping, identificational repentance, prayer walks, prophetic intercession, and breaking down the barriers of worldwide racism and denominational walls.

But first let me make clear that I am not saying that this chosen remnant doesn't need or will miss out on the first three levels of God's move. The remnant will not be, and is not being, excluded from the personal renewal, the sense of His presence, and the moving with power that God has for all His people. It is simply that I believe God has an additional work for those who are mature in Him. For we know that, "For unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required . . ." (Lk 12:48 KJV)

## Spiritual Sight Beyond the Local Church

The first thing that is obvious when we analyze this unique move of God is that He is calling His priesthood to a vision far beyond the local church. In fact, He is calling us to a vision beyond even our own nation and our own denomination. God seems to be uniting believers all over the world with His plans and purposes. As we are all aware, this expanded vision can be communicated and coordinated with our growing worldwide technology and our communication super highway, with such tools as computers, fax machines, and so on.

### 1. Spiritual Mapping

As I understand the term as used by today's church, it involves superimposing our understanding of forces and events in the spiritual domain onto places and circumstan-

ces in the material world.<sup>1</sup> Another way to say it is that spiritual mapping is the targeting of specific locations, events, or people groups for prayer, spiritual warfare, and evangelization.

It used to be that the western church had the "whole world" to reach with the gospel of Christ so we could start anywhere and go from there. That is no longer the case. Because the early missionaries have done their work so well, we now have entire regions and nations that have strong national churches and, while they may need advanced technology and teaching tools, they no longer need the traditional missionaries.

So it was that we began to hear about targeted "unreached people groups." These were identifiable groups of similar people who had not yet heard the gospel. I believe God then gave us the inspiration of the 10/40 window. This "window" is the belt of people groups running from the 10th to the 40th parallel which contains the highest percentage of nonChristians who are the most resistant to the gospel.

Now, as we are becoming more refined in our targets, organizations such as AD 2000 and Beyond, the Christian Information Network, and The Sentinel Group, are coordinating specific cities all over the world for prayer. For example, in October of 1995, churches and individual Christians all over the world joined for a month of directed prayer for more than 100 cities within the 10/40 window.

The underlying principle in spiritual mapping is the understanding that certain demonic forces control certain regions. They have the authority to control an area because of some past act by the people who inhabited that region. For example, several hundred years ago a people in a region of South America could have made a covenant with a demonic being, even sealing it with a blood sacrifice. When this event occurred, that established a demonic stronghold over that area. Usually the people were looking for some sort of protection or favor from the demon in exchange for worshiping it and making sacrifice to it. Down through time most of these strongholds have never been broken.

What then has been happening is that the ongoing local festivals, holidays, rituals, and the like continue to renew or perpetuate these demonic commitments. And most often the people participating today don't even realize what they are doing. But so long as the covenant or bargain remains in force, the demonic beings have a free hand in the control of that region.

One man God is using mightily in this whole area of spiritual mapping is George Otis, Jr. His book, *The Last of the Giants*, is a pioneering work and is worldwide in scope. Otis explains how his organization, the Sentinel Group, is now analyzing such events as local and regional festivals, feast days, and region-wide carnivals. They are tracing ma-

ny of these events back to demonic rituals and dedications to local gods. Otis' organization is also making data available on specific locations or categories of physical places such as historic locations of blood sacrifices. These places where blood covenants were made with the demonic realm and sealed with a blood sacrifice are no different than the places we read about in the Old Testament which were demonic strongholds and an abomination to God.

This spiritual mapping is a tool, and I believe a very powerful tool, which God wants His chosen priesthood to use to break the strongholds of the enemy over places, regions, and people. It is this local or regional Christian priesthood that has the standing and power to declare the old covenants broken. Of course, that breaking of the demonic hold is only a step in the process of clearing the region of darkness so people will be free to embrace Christ when they hear the gospel preached. For Paul said, "The god of this age has blinded the minds of unbelievers, so that they cannot see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God." (2 Cor 4:4 NIV).

## **2. Prayer Walks**

A companion element to this spiritual mapping is the activity now known as the Prayer Walk. This consists of a group of believers actually walking around, over, or to a specific place. Again, the point is not just to walk, but to engage in spirit led prayer, repentance, and spiritual warfare over that specific area. For example, at a conference we recently attended, one of the speakers told us that he had recently engaged in a prayer walk from a location in a city in the southern U.S., to a specific town square where there was an old slave selling block still located in that square. There can be no question that the selling of one human being by another is a despicable act and one which opens the way for the enemy to invade and occupy a land. The speaker shared about how overcome with grief he was as he stood looking at that block. He repented before God for the sins of his ancestors (he was able to identify with his Anglo Saxon heritage in this matter which we will discuss next) and he asked God's forgiveness for the awful human evil which was per-petrated at that location. He and his group also bound the demonic stronghold which was in place there because of those events and loosed the light of God over that region! I believe there is mighty spiritual power in acts such as these. It is God's royal priesthood moving mightily in the heavenlies!

## **3. Identificational Repentance**

"(I)f my people, who are called by my name, will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then will I hear from heaven and will forgive their sins and will heal their land." (2 Chr 7:14 NIV)

I believe God is calling his royal priesthood to a new level of repentance, not only repentance for our personal sins, but corporate repentance as we identify with the sins of others.

Much of what I say in this section will be based on a book written by John Dawson entitled *Healing America's Wounds*.<sup>2</sup> He is also the founder of the International Reconciliation Coalition. I believe Dawson has captured the heart of God in this matter. I also believe that this book and its content are prophetic in the sense that, although it is written primarily to the American church, its principles can be applied to every nation and people group on this earth. Dawson shares a vision of God using His royal priesthood to heal wounds inflicted by people in every land.

The term "identificational repentance" can be defined as the call of God on a Christian to identify with his or her people group and its history, to accept not only the benefits of that heritage, but also its sins against others and against God, and to repent before God and those wounded by those sins. In a sense it is God calling on us to recognize our own society's injustices and to repent for them so that a healing can take place.

Dawson makes the very valid point that only the Church of Jesus Christ is in a position to do this because only the blood of Jesus can truly cleanse and heal these wounds. Unbelievers can't do it because they do not have the authority to apply Christ's blood in this manner.

Some might say that this identifying with the sins of our forefathers isn't necessary because Christ died for all our sins and there is no need to do anything more. Dawson addresses this objection in the following manner. He reminds us that God had instructed the Israelites to apply the lambs' blood over the door of every Israelite home in Egypt on the night of the final plague of the death of the firstborn. What would have happened if one Israelite father said to his family, "Look, we are part of God's chosen people. We don't need to apply the blood to our front door because we already have the right to use it!" We know what would have happened, don't we? The firstborn of that household would have died that night.

In the same manner, we Christians not only have the right to apply the blood, but we must do it! It is not enough to have the right to avail ourselves of the blood of Christ, we must apply it. And who better to do this applying than God's royal priesthood?

There is strong Biblical precedent for this identificational repentance. One of the most beautiful prayers in all the Bible is when Daniel, one who was highly esteemed in the heavenlies, prayed for forgiveness of his people as he identified with their sins. He prayed, "**We** have sinned...." (Dan 9:5 NIV, emphasis added.) The prophet Ezra under-

stood this when he asked God to forgive the sins of his people and referred to himself and others as "a remnant." (Ezra 9:8 NIV) Nehemiah also makes this type of identificational prayer of forgiveness in chapter 1. And in Nehemiah 9:2 the Israelites confessed their sins "and the wickedness of their fathers" as they asked God's forgiveness.

Dawson lists four steps which embody this concept:

1. Confession: Stating the truth; acknowledgment of the unjust or hurtful actions of myself or my people group toward other persons or categories of persons.<sup>3</sup>
2. Repentance: Turning from unloving to loving actions.
3. Reconciliation: Expressing and receiving forgiveness, and pursuing intimate fellowship with previous enemies.
4. Restitution: Attempting to restore that which has been damaged or destroyed, and seeking justice wherever we have power to act or to influence those in authority to act.

Dawson understands that, like the Jews who returned to Jerusalem during the Babylonian captivity, God is calling on His people to build up the walls as well as stand in the gap. Indeed, God expressed His displeasure when He stated, "I looked for a man among them who would build up the wall and stand before me in gap on behalf of the land so that I would not have to destroy it, but I found none. So I will pour out my wrath on them and consume them with my fiery anger, bringing down on their own heads all they have done, declares the Sovereign LORD." (Ezek 22:30-32 NIV)

So God is calling us to both build up the walls and also to stand in the gap. It is this standing in the gap that encompasses spiritual warfare. We know that demons enter into wounded places. They see hurt as an open door, both to the individual and to a corporate body. Dawson uses the following analogy to further emphasize the necessity of building up the wall as we stand against demonic forces.

Suppose a worker was out in a field using a very sharp knife to cut a crop. And suppose the worker cut his arm badly during the course of the day's work. Immediately the flies and other insects would start to swarm around the wound, trying to make a home in it and live off it, wouldn't they? At this point the worker has two choices. One, he can just keep on working, pretending the wound isn't there, or that it isn't so bad, and just do the best he can to keep the flies away. Or two, he can pause, recognize the seriousness of the wound, dress it and take care of it, and then continue his work. Of course, once the wound is given proper attention, the flies and other insects will realize that they have no future there and will leave!

And so it is with the sins and wounds of our societies and people groups! No one can deny that they are there. We in America have our wounded race relations, particularly among the whites and Afro-Americans and Native

Americans. For example, in recent months the entire Southern Baptist denomination issued a public statement repenting of its historic role in slavery in America. Clearly this denomination has come to an understanding of the power of this repentant move.

Other nations have the wicked "ethnic cleansing," tribal wars such as in Rwanda, the "superior race" problems of Asia, the cast system of India, and the list goes on. There are powerful demonic strongholds gripping every region and nation in the world.

Here in America God has stirred up a powerful new work in the last few years called Promise Keepers. Promise Keepers is dedicated to calling Christian men to become the kind of men that God and His word call us to be. I am convinced that this movement is God breathed, Holy Spirit led, and is part of the movement we are talking about. One of the areas that Promise Keepers is addressing is the racism in America. It is moving across racial lines and its leadership is calling American Christian men into a deeper understanding of the absolute necessity of tearing down racial barriers. Promise Keepers is also calling on God's church to reach across denominational barriers to accomplish His purposes.

To give you a concrete example of how God is working all these principles together, let me tell you of a prayer walk we heard about recently. History tells us that the Crusades began in Cologne, Germany when the bishop of that city urged his followers to retake the Holy Land, even at the point of the sword. We all know the wicked acts against the Muslim and other non-Christian peoples which took place during the Crusades . . . all in the name of Christ. Recently a group of Christians undertook a prayer march which began in Cologne and which will end in Israel. They are walking over the crusade route and all along the way they are asking forgiveness of the peoples along the route for the atrocities which their ancestors committed against these people in the name of Christ.

This walk is also a time of intercessory prayer and the

breaking down of demonic strongholds which have gripped these peoples for centuries. There is no doubt in my mind that this prayer walk, this prophetic act, will help to build the broken walls. I am also confident that, by this act and others like it, as we as God's priesthood, engage in intercessory prayer and spiritual warfare, we will clear the skies above these areas of the darkness so that the light of Christ may shine forth!

As I said at the beginning of this article, I believe that God is moving in unprecedented ways in the world today. I also believe that God is calling His royal priesthood to partake of a worldwide vision of targeted intercessory prayer, spiritual warfare, and identificational repentance which will heal every land and make the way clear for the preaching of the gospel in these last days.

Oh, Lord! Thank You for Your awesome move in our world today. Thank You that You care for and love every human being on earth so much. Thank You for moving on countless individual believers and on Your church in this hour.

Thank You, Lord, that You are calling on Your royal priesthood to enter into this awesome work of global evangelization. Thank You for giving us such powerful tools for this work as intercessory prayer, prayer walks, and an understanding of what deep repentance can do.

Oh, God, continue to move on Your people. Continue to send Your Spirit to call our spirits to unite with Yours to accomplish Your plans and purposes in this generation. Continue to purify Your church and prepare us to stand without spot or wrinkle as the bride of Christ. In Jesus' mighty name we pray!

1 . Defined by George Otis, Jr. in his excellent book, *The Last of the Giants*, page 85; Chosen Books, A division of Baker Book House Co., Grand Rapids, Michigan 49516.

2. *Healing America's Wounds*, John Dawson, Regal Books, A Division of Gospel Light. Ventura, California, U. S. A.

3. *IBID*, page 135,136.

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