

Rebuild



Then they will rebuild the ancient ruins, They will raise up the former devastations, And they will repair the ruined cities, The desolations of many generations. (Isaiah 61:4)

The Church With a *Real* Point

Christ was a revolutionary. To follow Christ in the first three centuries of the Church demanded the dedication of a revolutionary. It should still be the same today. A major characteristic of the Church – if she would be faithful to her Leader – is that it raise up revolutionaries for Christ.

Jesus took a stand against a government that challenged His Lordship, the religious elite who refused to believe, and the crowds who wanted a King more than a Savior. Such a stand cost Him His life.

Christ was a revolutionary. He came to raise up fellow revolutionaries that could take a stand the way He did. Those who would be Christians better brace themselves to accept this reality. If one dared to identify with Him and His Church in Christianity's beginnings, he or she knew that such an identification would be interpreted as defiant rebuke to the world. Back then, Church membership meant more than "regular attendance," it meant a dedication that was willing to live and die for Christ. This zeal and focus pricked the world's conscience, and led many to reset their reference from the world to God's Kingdom.

Real or Rubber?

I used to play with a rubber "Indian" knife when I was a kid. I loved to try to fool people into believing that my rubber (yet "realistic looking") knife was real. I would stab myself, and then, in "Hollywood style," fall into a

crumpled heap, "dead." No one fell for it. It was obvious the knife was fake, and my "acting" did nothing to add any sense of realism. ("OK, Jordan, get up from the floor now. Dinner is ready.")

It is a good thing that soldiers are not given fake, but "realistic looking," weapons. Rubber bayonets probably would not strike fear in the heart of the enemy. Maybe the advancing forces would be fooled at first, but once actual contact was made, and the rubber blade went wagging wildly right and left, there would be no doubt.

The Church is to be God's Weapon against the enemy. Christ promised that the Church (the Covenanted People of God) is able to "overpower the Gates of Hades" (Matthew 16:18). Such a victorious assault by God's People is not a common sight today.

Overall, the American Church is not a stiff, sharp weapon, but a rubber tip, slipping, sliding and bending. Politicians do not take notice of the Church for her revolutionary dedication to Christ, but for the votes it can cast. The cynical Media, likewise, is not startled by the Church's "no-angles" love, but rather writes to expose her hypocrisies. Their by-line is clear.

The call must again go out, "Christian, you are to be a revolutionary! Church, you must be the *breeding* ground for

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revolutionaries!" If you do not live as if your Cause is worthy of thoughtful sacrifice, you cannot bring in God's Kingdom.

The Gospel is "good news" of *another* kingdom and of *another* way of life deserving of revolutionary consecration. God the Son took our humanity to come to earth and usher in another "government," one which will not accept the status quo, but rather, seeks to "make all things new" (Revelation 21:5). To identify with *this* Christ is a call to challenge the world's assumptions to their core.

The Church of Christ does not dull its edge by seeking to "fit in" or to gain influence in the world. To be "in Christ" and of His Church is to look to God's Throne as the reference point, and then to love God with an intensity of passion and fiery zeal that would lead the surrounding culture to wonder: "What *is* going on with this people? Could it be that the Gospel is not just religion after all? Could it be that Christ was *really* God's Son?"

If you and I are to be "Church People" then you and I are to be

revolutionaries, revolutionaries who testify by word and lifestyle that time-bound life on earth is not all that there is. There is a King and Kingdom worth investing time, life, blood and treasure. The Church is to challenge us, train us, and then support us to live in light of this Eternal perspective. This is the Church that Christ, The Revolutionary, is head of, and the One He will lead in battle on the Last Day (Revelation 19).

A Good Reason For Zeal

Before the surrounding culture can take Christ seriously, the Christian Church must witness to her Lord with a serious love. Here are four reasons why such zeal is warranted.

- **God has come in Christ.** This is not a fable. This is not some monk's wild imagination. This is historic reality. A Reality that has consequence. A Reality *each* will face. *The* Reality that shows everything else to be rubber and illusion.

- **Our lives were made by God, and for God.** Many people evaluate the purpose of their lives by how much money they've made, how much they've done, by what others think about them, or even how they may feel about themselves. Life has more depth to it than getting stuff, do-

ing stuff, or feeling good. What is its purpose? It will begin and end with God.

- **God is worth it.** Why do many sacrifice time, money, and even relationships for fame and success? Because they think that the "prize" merits the sacrifice. But what or who is more deserving of our best and all than the God who created and loved us enough to give Himself for us? What greater prize can there be than God Himself?

- **We are Christians, and as such, we belong to Christ.** We have been *purchased* by the blood of Christ (Acts 20:28). We have died with Him in baptism (Romans 6:4-9). We are no longer our own (2 Corinthians 5:15). Therefore, each Christian should be able to say what Paul said when he said, "For me, to live is Christ, and to die is gain" (Philippians 1:21).

Christ's Criteria for Church

Many people "Church shop" for a place that has a certain kind of children's ministry, a specific type of preaching, a particular style of worship, small groups, etc. But when a Christian is clear that his or her call is to be a revolutionary, when he or she looks for a People of God, the

first question this one asks is, "How will this community call me on to zealous love for God?"

A Church With A Point Has A Point

Many have dispensed with Christ and the Church. "Tried that. Been there," they say. But have they, really? No. Many Christian bodies do not even appreciate the significance of Christ enough to call people to lay down their lives for Him. How many unbelievers know that this is what it means to follow Christ?

But what if a "seeker" attended our service and heard, "Becoming a member of this Church will demand your life given up to loving God. Christ is our example." Their shocked response might be, "How can these people ask for so much?"

That is precisely the response that each human being should be compelled to ask when faced with Christ's Church. That is the Church with a *real* point, and has a Point - the Kingdom of God. *This* is the Home of Christ the Revolutionary.

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