

# That Which We May Expect to see Happen in Christian America in the Next Few Months

By Paris Reidhead\*

Two Scriptures shall be before us as a background for our thinking. First, in Revelation 3, and I begin reading with the 14th verse. And then we will turn to II Timothy 3. Tonight I am speaking about That Which We May Expect to See Happen in Christian America in the Next Few Months. This is probably far too daring for one such as myself. Nevertheless, we shall venture onto this water:

“And unto the angel of the church of the Laodiceans write; These things saith the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of the creation of God; <sup>15</sup>I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would that thou wert cold or hot. <sup>16</sup>So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth. <sup>17</sup>Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked: <sup>18</sup>I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear; and anoint thine eyes with eyesalve, that thou mayest see. <sup>19</sup>As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent. <sup>20</sup>Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me. <sup>21</sup>To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne.” (Rev. 3:14-21)

Now we will add to that this testimony of the Apostle Paul in II Timothy 3:

“This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come. <sup>2</sup>For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, <sup>3</sup>Without natural affection, truce breakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, <sup>4</sup>Traitors, heady, highminded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God; <sup>5</sup>Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away.”

And then to the 4th Chapter:

“I charge thee therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom; <sup>2</sup>Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all long suffering and doctrine. <sup>3</sup>For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; <sup>4</sup>And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables. <sup>5</sup>But watch thou in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, make full proof of thy ministry.”

Some weeks ago, our evening theme was Ecumenism: Church Union in the Light of the Scripture. This message served, as so frequently messages do, to stimulate further thought, inquiry, and study. This has been before me now for these several weeks, and that which was not possible to give on the occasion that I mentioned, that which has come to mind and light since has moved me to share with you some of the growing convictions as to what we may expect in Christian America in the next few months.

You are aware of the fact, many of you at least, that April 15 carried with it considerable significance. It was a touching occasion for all of us, was it not? You might say, Not so much for the Reidhead family with eight exemptions, but nevertheless Income Tax time always is a touching thing. And you were aware of the fact that on your income tax report you were allowed to list that money which you had given to charitable, benevolent, or religious institutions. You were aware of the fact that they allow 30%.

Now the reason for this, so I am told, though I have not sought to verify it, The reason for it is that when Israel was a young State, a young Nation, certain donors in this country wanted to contribute rather heavily and largely to the new Nation, and so they went to the Scripture and proved (and it was not too difficult) that if an orthodox Jew were to have brought everything

that God commanded it would have required at least 30% of their income. They so successfully pressed this that our income tax allowance for charitable giving was increased from 20% to 30%.

Now I suggest that it is the experience of many that, if they give above 10%, it is usually called into question and proof is demanded, but it is possible for one, if they have adequate proof and certification, to have an allowance made on their income tax up to 30% of their income. This means that the largest share of earnings of the American people are now... it is now possible to channel into charitable and religious institutions. And it is further understood that a great percentage of this money goes, not to hospitals, to various research organizations, but goes to local churches. This is where the largest percentage goes. When I began in the ministry some 25 years ago, it was true (this would be 1937) that most of us knew absolutely nothing about income tax. We had heard about it, but I believe it did not even begin until you made \$25,000 a year, and then it was 2% and probably 3% for \$50,000. The figures could be checked. But at least common citizens did not have to worry in those depression years about income tax. All you worried about was income. You could buy, a part of that time, hamburger for about 10¢ a pound. You were not worried about the price. You worried about the dime, getting it was the problem. And many found that in those years they could not believe the time would come when they would pay more in income tax than they were then earning in salary. But such, undoubtedly, has been the case.

Now, when the war broke out and the income tax was generally placed on the public, first 10%, and then 15%, and finally 20%, where it has stayed, of everything above \$600 of annual income, then immediately increasing beyond a certain sum, until finally when one has an income of \$100,000 I gather that it is a considerable amount that is given to the government, or is paid in income tax.

Now, 30% of the income, the net income, is deductible. Do you realize what has happened? Without actually knowing it, and making a decision, the church has become State affiliated and State supported. Do you follow my reasoning? Without actually realizing it, the church has become State affiliated and State supported, because the money that supports the church is money that, is really the governments, and they allow the church to be supported with tax money before it is given to the Government. The only difference between this and any other country is that there the money is paid to the government and paid back to the church. Here it is paid to the church before it is given to the government. We have actually drifted, without any parliamentary decision, without any constitutional change, into a situation where we now have a State supported church.

Now, so frequently, we have had to say that it is necessary to get your receipt, get it in by a certain time, so it will apply against the income tax. And I think we are going to rue the day that this happened. I believe the time is going to come when Pastors, with the wisdom that comes from looking backwards instead of forward, are going to say, It would have been far better if we had at the time this started said, Oh, no! "We will render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and unto God the things that are God's," and we will not allow the money that we give to be deducted from the tax that the Government exacts. Now this would have been more costly, and all of us would have complained, but I believe when we discover what has happened that we are going to feel that this would have been the least expensive of the alternatives.

I was told after the message that I preached, again, something that I had heard before and mentioned, but now it is with even greater clarity and emphasis, that there is now in Washington, in two committees, legislation that has been perfected that will not be brought out to either the lower or the upper House until there is an emergency that will create a psychological condition where it can be presented without reflecting upon either party. Now, no party wants to take the responsibility for initiating this legislation, but it has been jointly worked out in committee and it is residing there waiting to be presented. And the legislation is this, that when a National crisis occurs, the Federal Government will immediately declare that all deferment for religious purpose for either students, or Pastors, or Christian workers, must be approved by the accrediting agency. And the appointed accrediting agency has been the Council of Rabbis, the Council of Bishops, and the National Council with its local representatives, local group. So, all Chaplains will be appointed by... approved or accredited by these agencies. Furthermore the location of all new churches will have to have the approval of the Comity Committee of the local Council of Churches. And, furthermore, the next step will be that all licensing of ministers and ordination of ministers hereafter will have to have the approval of the accrediting committee; and then the next step will be that a given period of time, say two years, will be

necessary for all for all who are to continue in religious function to seek accreditation and approval by the designated committees.

You say, This cannot happen in America. Well, much of it has already happened. For instance, there are many, many cities in America where you cannot start a church unless you have the approval of the local Comity Committee of the Council of Churches. Now this has already happened and it is not in just rare instances. It has been defended in courts. It has been taken, not to the Supreme Court, but so high as they thought it was not feasible or profitable to pursue it any further, that this country is now viewed by our interpreters of Law as being a democracy, and therefore it is that which is for the good of the people, which becomes the ultimate rule.

Benjamin Franklin was asked by a by-stander what kind of a government we had when he came out of the Congress Constitutional Committee, and he said, "We have a Republic, if under God's grace you can keep it." Well a Republic is a Government under Law. We never were constituted as a democracy. We were a government under law, and that law the Constitution. But we have already seen the abrogation of certain constitutional rights. For instance, in the matter of a closed shop, where it is seriously contested by many, and even some in the Court which gave a minority decision that... regarding it that the closed shop is not constitutional. But it has been defended. It has been there and there is no reason to believe but what, out of public interest, it will be deemed necessary in the days to come to avoid exploitation and personal aggrandizement from religious impulses of the public to have the various media that are holding public service approved.

Now I think the approach will be, Anybody can hold religious service, but the money supporting it will not be credited for deduction unless it comes from an approved agency. This will be the approach. Now you say, Is this feasible? Can this happen? Well, I am here to say that I believe it can, and that it inevitably will. I see no question but what this is going to come.

And then I will go ahead and project a little further and say this, that in 15 years no one will be in the ministry, behind a desk such as I am, in public service, an announced, advertised meeting, in regular, stated congregational expression, unless he has the approval of the group. Now, there will always be those that break law, just as they have broken the laws of the 18th Amendment, against stealing, and every other kind of law. There will be those that defiantly say We are not going to submit to this tyranny. But nevertheless this is the climate of our land, and the direction of our thinking, and it is going to be demanded by people.

A case in point. When Jack Wyrzten<sup>1</sup> was holding his meetings here in the Tabernacle some two or three years ago, he found that it was impossible to accommodate the young people that wanted to come. He was only being here himself once a month or twice a month at the most, and the night he was here this place was crowded to the rafters. They were practically hanging from the chandeliers. They could not get in. And so he said, "No one can come if he or she has grey hair, unless they bring a young person with them." I think he said, 35 or something, some other age. I did not quite know how he was going to ascertain that. But nevertheless this was the rule. So there were some people that had come regularly, and they were met at the door by the ushers, very kindly but firmly saying, We are very sorry but we have got to save your seat for young people. This is a young people's meeting. Well they stormed right passed, saying, We have been coming for ten years, and we are not going to let anybody keep us out. And they met me over at the corner and they said, Are you the Pastor of the church? And I said, Yes. Can't you do something? And I said, No, I can't do anything. Well we know who can do something. I said, Who is that? And they said, Dan Potter of the Protestant Council of New York City. And we are going to go to him tomorrow and make him force Jack Wyrzten to let us in. Well it was ignorance speaking, of course. But do you see what I saw in it? The recognition on the part of these two women, after coming for ten years to this open meeting, that there ought to be somebody that could make. Do you see? It was the fact that in their mind they had become so accustomed and adjusted to control that they could not believe that in a city like New York, in a State like New York, and in a Land like the U. S. A., that a man like Jack Wyrzten could say, You cannot come, and make it stick. They just knew there was somebody that had an authority beyond his, and they were

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<sup>1</sup> John Von Casper "Jack" Wyrzten (1913 - 1996) A youth evangelist and founder of Word of Life ministries.

going to see it. And they felt that the logical one was a Council that should be able to speak authoritatively in such matters. Now obviously Dan Potter would have smiled and laughed and said, I'm terribly sorry. I cannot do anything.

You understand that it is not people that make states. It is conditions. It is not individuals that make governments. It's countries, intellectual climates, it's philosophical situations which allow individuals to pursue certain ends and aims, and kinds of life. For instance, if it had not been for the invidious success of the philosophy of Schopenhauer and Nietzsche, there is not any thought in my mind that Hitler ever could have succeeded in gaining control in Germany, or Mussolini in Italy. The strange thing, if you want to go back a little further to the French Revolution and just briefly consider Jean Jacques Rousseau, the philosopher of the French Revolution, who wrote a book entitled Social Contract, which defended his immorality. He had left his wife in favor of some other woman. And so he postulated this, that no social contract is valid without the agreement of both parties concerned, and when one party ceases to be interested, then the contract is broken. This was picked up by the French intellectuals, and they said, Jean Jacques Rousseau is our spokesman, and he is telling us that if we do not like to be governed by a king who has claimed divine right of kings, the thing for us to do is to break this yoke. And he was being supported by the aristocracy. He was not the least interested in the rebels. But it was the spark. And that spark was successful in setting off the dynamite of dissatisfaction in the French people, producing the French Revolution. And so, these the revolters erected a statue to Rousseau. And he was utterly oblivious. Of course, he was wise enough to capitalize on it. If he had gone ahead and testified to his loyalty to and friendship with the aristocracy, his head would have been in a basket. He was wise enough to find which way the wind was blowing, and drift with it. But nevertheless he avowedly said that he had no intention of doing what was done. It was not that his book produced it, but that the climate had.

They say that in a woodshop, when the atmosphere becomes filled with 30% sawdust and 70% oxygen, that it is an explosive atmosphere. So they have heavy fans to draw the dust off, lest it reach this explosive point. And so it is that socially there are conditions which become so explosive. And I believe that the next few months we are going to see explosions. We have had a drifting, a casual moving, a gradual erosion, but I am increasingly troubled when I read columnists now that they have become concerned about the right wing in politics, the John Burk Society and the other groups; and the recent article in the Saturday Evening Post regarding Dr. Billy Hargis carried with it a tone which has been growing in intensity and growing in its wrath, its anger. It is almost like Dickens' description of the murmur of the crowd during those days when the French Revolution was building up. Here is a man who is becoming a little more vocal and a little more determined, and the right (and the right is associated with the fundamentalist, and the fundamentalists are the stake handlers) and so the whole is now that the conservative evangelical position is the position of the obscurantists and obstructionists, and that here is a minority that is nothing more than a quill, a porcupine quill in the side of the society, standing in the way of progress. And there was nastiness. There was a biting edge. There was a temper of resentment against people that would be so archaic as to believe in inspiration, the Deity of Christ, the necessity of repentance and of Blood atonement, and of a miraculous new birth. And so the anger was, they were looking for a minority, looking for someone. And I believe now that we must recognize dear evangelical brother or sister, that we are a minority.

Do you realize tonight that we represent probably no more than 5 to 7 million in America that are avowedly and frankly evangelical? Now mind you there are many other millions in denominational churches that do not know what they are. And if they could have an open presentation of the Gospel would find that this is what their hearts claim and yearn for. But what we are discovering is that we are now reduced down to a minority of 5 million, and I have heard some say, probably 3 million people in America that actually, frankly, openly; avowedly declare that they are evangelical in conviction. Well when you put 3 to 5 to 7 million against 190 million, you begin to realize that we are probably 2 to 3% of the country.

Now if they can begin to say with us, as Hitler's Germany said, You are the cause of our problem and of our difficulty, and then you can expect restrictive measures. And I believe that the next few months... And when I say this, I am asking you to give me 15 to 24 months. Unless there is a strong, supernatural surge of Heaven-sent revival, you will see an increased curtailment of the liberty and of the freedom that we have so taken for granted. And you will find that the ecumenical pressure is going to become so great that anyone that dares to speak out against the union of denominations and the ultimate union of all Christians. (For when Eugene Carson Blake last year in dialogue with Bishop Pike stated that the union of the four major denominations was the first step in union that would include all Christians, including the Roman Catholic and this was not

challenged... There was no argument raised against it... you realize that this was a statement made as a balloon thrown in the air. But when they saw that no one shot at the balloon, and the wind carried it, they said, This is the way we are going.

And thus I remind you of the fact that there was a balloon that came up out of Vatican City, in which the three principles that are going to be considered by the forthcoming Ecumenical Council, called by Pope John, were stated. And there has been no firing at that balloon.

First was that the priesthood would be privileged to marry. The second was that the Mass would be in the language of the people. And the third thing that was to be done was that the Pope would be elected, not by the Cardinals as is presently done, but by the Archbishops of the 11 groups of the Orthodox, including the Roman. However, they would have to elevate a Cardinal to the rank of Pope.

So in this we have the fact that there is this strong stream and strong current that is going back in the direction of ecumenism.

Now, how is it going to affect us? What is going to happen to conservative evangelical groups? Of course, here I am getting on extremely thin ice. Perhaps I have been all evening, but I am going to continue anyway. It is my feeling the moment that, if this challenge were presented today, saying that within two years from this coming January 1, that is by January 1, 1965, all clergymen must have sought and secured approval by the crediting agency, The Protestant Council for the Protestants, I believe that forthwith 50% would say, Well, after all they are not asking us to give up our doctrine, they are not asking us to give up our position, or our ceremony. We can still believe in baptism by immersion or sprinkling, as The case may be. They are not going to put any pressure on, and after all there are abuses. I think 50 percent of the evangelicals would sign up immediately. I think within the first year another 25 percent would have found that their questions were answered, and they would sign up. And I think that by the end of the second year that there would probably be 15 to 12, possibly even 15 percent who would say, I would rather die. I would rather die. But I am not going to. The effect of this, as we see here in this Word of our Lord to the church at Laodocia.

You will notice that they have said first - the Lord has said to them - They are neither hot nor cold. Evangelical, yes. But, after all, we must make adjustments. We must make accommodations. And so there is a spirit of compromise, there is a spirit of "Let's talk it over." And there are just some things that you cannot talk over. I have come to the place in the pilgrimage thus far that there are just some things I won't discuss any more. I will not discuss with anyone the inspiration of the Bible. Years ago I came to the conclusion that the Book is verbally inspired, and I believe in plenary inspiration, and, thank you, I cannot be troubled to discuss it. If you are interested and someone who does not agree with me, there are splendid books that have been written on the subject, but as for me I have committed myself to this point of view and there is no room for discussion. We cannot discuss this any longer personally. And so, on the Deity of Christ, that Jesus Christ is very God, God come in the flesh, the One by Whom all things were made, and without Him was not anything made that was made, very God of very God, very Man of very Man. Now, thank you, I have no room for discussion. I have already committed myself. Trouble me no more. I have already found my place of rest. If someone is still questioning this and has queries about it, there are plenty of books on the subject. I will be glad to give you a list of the authors, but as for me I have reached the point of no return. I have made my commitment, and here I stand.

And so, on the atoning death of Christ, and the bodily resurrection of Christ, and the personal, imminent bodily appearing of Christ, these great basic essential truths of the Faith, I just find no room whatever for even discussion. I have come to the place where I am not going to debate and argue and become belligerent. I trust at least that I will not become belligerent in spirit about them. But I do believe that those of us that are hot for Jesus Christ ought to stay hot, and that there is absolutely no room for us to even consider any other point of view. We have reached a position that is based upon a revelation of the risen Lord to our hearts. I think that it is time that we said, Well here I am. Here I stand. So help me God, I can do no other. This I believe is an hour when a person must know what he believes and stand for it.

Now this is one reason why I believe that we should be careful what we elevate to the rank of convictions. There are a lot of things that I am prepared to hold as opinions. I will argue and discuss my opinions, but, my dear; I am not going to discuss my convictions. I will die for them, but I won't discuss them. Now I will discuss opinions. You want to talk to me about the mode of

baptism and we have a day or so, I will be glad to talk with you. I have strong opinions. But they are not convictions. You want to talk to me about the nature of the Lord's Table? I'll discuss this with you. I am not going to die for the form in which it is presented. But the point of it is, there are some truths that are just more than life. And on these we must stand. There is no possibility of discussion. It is closed. It is a closed matter. And this, I believe, is what He said when He said, You are neither hot nor cold. You can take it or leave it alone. And I believe our Lord in these days is looking for people, not to go around belligerently attacking and abusing, and stirring up strife and storm, but they simply have come to the place that they have reached certain unalterable, unchangeable convictions, and here they are going to stand. They would rather die than change them, and I believe that this is the attitude of the company here.

Now I want to ask you, If you were a Pastor and you were told that it was absolutely imperative for you to secure the approval of groups that do not believe in the inspiration of the Bible, nor in the Deity of Christ, nor in many of the foundational truths of the Faith that are precious to your heart, and that you could not continue in the only livelihood you have ever known, what would be the pressure exerted upon you? Can you see? Can you see the economic vise into which men are going to come in the next few years? You young men that are getting ready to go into the ministry, I want you to know that you are not going to have 25 years of free service such as I have had, 25 years of liberty and freedom. The world into which you are coming to serve is an entirely different world from that in which I began to serve in 1937. A great many changes have taken place; a great many pressures have been released, and so you had better be absolutely sure and absolutely certain that you know what you believe, because these are going to be days that try men's souls.

For the time will come when men will not endure sound doctrine, but will heap to themselves teachers that will satisfy the itching of their ears and give them to hear what they want.

Now, why? As I mentioned some weeks ago, I grew up under W. B. Riley<sup>2</sup> of Minneapolis, a prince of fundamentalists, in that great church, member of it, trained there. And from those earliest years, of the milk that nurtured me in the Lord was the milk of standing for the truths. The affirmation I have made is an affirmation that was made to me, and to which my heart responded. Years ago when a member of another denomination a Bishop came and said the Pastor that is there, a good and godly man who preached the Word, is no longer going to be there. He sent us a man who fed us on the ultra-Fosdickulin liberalism he was getting from his Seminary. And this dear man that had spent his life in the ministry was disenfranchised because of some technical qualification as to not having had denominational education, though he had been acceptable by the denomination for many years. And as a lad of about 15, I said, Never under God will I put myself in a place where a man who is as carnal and as unbelieving as that Bishop can restrict, limit, or cut off my ministry for Jesus Christ. And then about that time I met W. B. Riley and my heart responded. I was nourished then in those early years in the First Baptist Church of Minneapolis where there was a strong statement for truth. They were hot for truth. But you know, ever since that time I have been praying against ecumenism, and praying against the invidious spread of it. And I will have to confess to you tonight, after 25 years that it looks like my prayers have nourished it. The harder I have prayed, the faster it has grown. The more I have labored in intercession, the faster this terrifying monster of religious control has risen, and risen, and risen until today it seems just to fill the horizon, and it looks like all the rest of us that have prayed have nourished it with our prayers.

Now I want to ask why. Is it that God is not strong enough to stop it, or is there something else. And it is this something else that concerns me now, I believe that, as dark as the picture is, and I have not tried to paint it in unusually somber tones. I think I have been as objective as is possible to be, in a situation that has very little to lighten. I would like to say this, that I do not believe that God has stopped at all, and I believe that the days of great refreshing from the Lord are coming. And I will see them in the next few months. And while I see this, the irresistible vise, closing in on so many of the things that we have taken for granted as the only way that God can work, I believe that God is going to simply gather all of this up to Himself and say, All right. There it is. Now have you anything worth carrying on? Anything worth dying for? Anything worth sharing?

Dear friends, if I understand anything of the progress of history properly, I will have to recognize that the church, Catholic, Protestant, and Christian Science, Jewish, in America has become to our culture what the synagogue was to Israel. When our

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<sup>2</sup> Rev. Dr. William Bell Riley (1861-1947) Pastor of the First Baptist Church, Minneapolis, MN and educator.

Lord Jesus came, there was a system called the system of the Synagogue. You search this Book from beginning to end, and you will find where God never endorsed the Synagogue system. There was a place at Jerusalem. But that is the only place He authorized. Why did they develop Synagogues in every village in Judah, in Palestine? I'll tell you why. They had gone into captivity once too often, and when they were there the last time, they said, Well we have had enough of this. Now what are we going to do? And they said, The reason that our people go to idolatry is because the Temple is so far away. So what we need is a little building in our place, something similar to what we have seen out here in the East, among the Buddhists, a simple building where we can gather to read the Torah and have the symbols. It won't be what the Temple is, but it will be a system that we can use to hold religion near to the grass roots of the people, and this will keep them from going into idolatry. So, they developed, invented the synagogue system, and it worked. And for 400 years from the time they returned until the birth of Christ, Israel did not lapse into idolatry again, largely due to the success of the Synagogue system. And when our Lord Jesus Christ came, He never fought it. He did not fight it. He did not argue with it. He did not try to destroy it, nor did He try to revive it or change it. He simply said, It is completely other, totally different, has no relationship whatever to what I am bringing, and sent His apostles out, said, It is a good fish pond, because the religiously interested will usually be found there. So when you go into a city, you had better look around there. Set the bait out, because you will get some nibbles, but just use it as a fish pond. Do not try to change it, or to reform it, or to alter it. Just recognize that it is what it is. It is the vehicle for the trellis.

Now, let me use an image here that may be helpful. It is the trellis on which the vine of Jewish National Life grows. And it keeps that life from getting in the dirt. He said, Do not cut down the Synagogue. You cut the trellis down. You let the thing back down in the dirt. Leave it alone. It is necessary. And I have come to the conclusion as I have studied America, particularly more intensively from this point of view during the past two or three years, and more recently in the past months, that the church life in America, Catholic, Protestant, Jewish... (And with the liberals, you know, theologically it is so difficult. They have now begun to say, Well wherein do we differ? and beginning to think that the whole thing, Christian-Judaic tradition can come back together.) And so I am beginning to believe that what we have in America in church life, in organized church life, similar to what this is — now there are great degrees, and I will qualify it. Do not get angry with me for a moment. Wait until the last, and then get good and angry. So.. But, do not do it in little parts. And so the thing that I am convinced is this, that the... we have got to recognize that the church life, this system that has grown up, and is part and parcel of American life, has by a gradual evolution become the trellis upon which our national western culture rests. And, if we cut it down or attack it, we are destroying the only moral, ethical force that the general public recognizes as being in association with our type of culture and government. And therefore our Government has begun to say, Well, in God we trust; one nation under God; and accepted the churches as a valid part of our national life because of the social, ethical, moral restraining force that it presents. I do not believe that it is in our province to fight that, because society has accepted the church system as being an integral part of the maintenance of certain social, moral, ethical standards.

But I believe this, that there is coming, and already has begun, a movement of the hungry, That is going to increase, in surge, in tempo, in rapidity of expansion, that it has already started, and even the most interesting thing is that part of it is coming through the denominations, the old line denominations.

In my office just a few weeks ago was Bill Nelson, William Nelson, of the American Baptist Literature Office in Philadelphia. I said, What are you doing, Mr. Nelson. He said, Well I have been asked by the American Baptists to edit a new magazine, entitled Fellowship. I believe that is the term. Fellowship. I said, Well what is its purpose? He said, We have begun to recognize that the church service, Sunday morning, is not enough. All the people we get, most of them we get Sunday morning, very few of our churches any more have Sunday Night Services, and very few come on Wednesday. So we have them Sunday morning, and we find that it is not possible to achieve that maturation in the Sunday morning ministry that is needed if they are to grow into strong Christians. And so, since we cannot get them to church, we are going to go where they stay, the home. And the purpose of Fellowship magazine is to encourage the formation of home Bible Study Classes throughout the American Baptist Convention. And we are going to do it on the level of Wesley<sup>3</sup>, with groups of twelve with a leader, and the Fellowship is to be the instrument of promoting this, developing it, guiding it, nourishing it. And he said, And I am the one that has been chosen to

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<sup>3</sup> John Wesley (1703-1791) Anglican cleric, Christian theologian, and founding the Methodist movement

be editor. Well he loves the Lord dearly and has met the Lord gloriously. I have read some of his correspondence with Dr. Tozer<sup>4</sup>, and it is thrilling. Here is a man who loves God and has been put into this key, significant, sensitive position, doing something entirely new. Pray for William Nelson, the American Baptist, the Editor of the newly formed, soon to be released magazine, Fellowship.

We see the same thing is happening with the Presbyterians, with the groups of twelve to which more extensive reference was made earlier.

Brethren, Sisters, I believe that in the next 15 years there is going to be a consolidation of all visible church life, such as we are a part, whether we like it or not; the property will either be brought under one pressure or another-to be open we are going to have to have accreditation. It is inescapable. To perform the kind of function that we are performing now will be necessary. And there will be many good and honorable men in it, and I am not challenging that. But I have begun to realize that the place we must look for revival is not through the organization. And I will tell you why.

Every church that I have ever been in is made up of people of many different degrees of interest. They have come around a creed. They have come around family loyalty. They have gathered there because of marital convenience. There have been innumerable different motivating reasons why any congregation has composed itself, other than of vital revelation of Jesus Christ by the power of the Holy Ghost. And therefore it is unthinkable that you can take people that have come from a hundred different reasons and consolidate them in one particular single purpose. I do not see it. It has not happened here. We have been laboring for six years to see this achieved here, had a definite goal, a definite purpose, but this has not been realized to any significant degree here. But while that has not been accomplished here, we have seen many individuals come to know the Lord in a very precious and real exciting way. And this is happening all over the country. Whereas I see very little prospect for the incorporation, the organization, this or any other, to become the vehicle of national revival. Now this is what I am speaking about. National. A sweeping thing that is going to move across the country. I believe there are too many administrative interests, too many leadership interests, too many vested interests, too many psychological traumas and problems that it will be impossible to look for revival to come through the constituted organized church which is drifting in another direction entirely. I see no evidence whatever that in church life, on a national level, whether it is the strictly conservative separationist movements, or in the others, that indicates that it is going to be on an organizational level that our deliverance will come. But at the same time that this — I have to say this out of all candor and honesty - I am seeing with great delight that Pastors, and Elders, and Deacons and Sunday School teachers, and people all over the country are becoming desperately hungry for God, are finding others of similar hunger, are finding that with the approval of the church and under its auspices they can spend time together, day after day, and night after night, in the Word, seeking God, meeting God, and they have something to communicate, something to share, something is done. And therefore I believe that in the next few months we are going to see something that has become a trickle gather with all of these little drops into a larger rivulet, and I trust that in a year it will be so apparent that what I am saying is true, that you will recognize that you have been a spectator as it were from this point of view of seeing something that is actually taking place. It is, I believe it is going to continue, and the next few months are going to see that the hungry find each other, and in finding each other they are going to meet God.

I have talked at some length with our Brother Salome who is here concerning a movement in Egypt. There in the Coptic Church, where there have been a great many young men that have come to a vital relationship with the Lord, with the approval of one of the Bishops, and with encouragement, and so throughout this section of that land, where there is the tyranny of other influences, religious influences, so we see this happening. And I believe that we are seeing it happening with the Episcopalians, with the Presbyterians, with the Baptists, with many, many others. And so as I would speak tonight of this, I would say, If you have found that God has quickened hunger in your heart, if you ask Him, you will find someone near you that has a similar hunger, and with complete relationship to the church, its eldership, its supervision, and its oversight, you will soon discover that there are hungry ones that will meet with you and spend hours in thinking and praying and talking about the things of the Lord. And it is on this level. Beloved, believe me, it is on this level that the Spirit of God is going to find His channel

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<sup>4</sup> Aiden Wilson Tozer (1897-1963) Pastor and Author, Christian and Missionary Alliance Magazine Editor

of release, and I believe it is going to stay completely free from buildings, completely free from ceremony, completely free from organization, and it is going to be the simplicity of a dynamic movement, and an ideological relationship that affects every area of the life.

Now I want to say this in conclusion. If the communists, 40 years ago, had said, We are going to build buildings and establish a ritual, and fix a ceremony, they would not have made any more progress during these years than we have made. But because they said, We are not going to waste our money, and our time and our energy on anything other than the purpose for which we exist, they have been able to make the astounding progress that they have.

And, therefore, I do not believe that we can waste a moment being anti-ecumenical, or a moment in being anti-clerical. Find out where you, are, stand where you are, stay where you are as long as you possibly can, but recognize that the move of God is coming with the hungry, and so He is joining this hungry one to that hungry one, and this person to that person, and they are going to find that in this fellowship, the Spirit of God is released to work in their lives, and that we will not have to do anything.

I have simply tried to share with you some of the things that I have seen. Now I believe we have it here: I counsel thee to buy of Me gold, tried in the fire that thou mayest be rich, and white raiment that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear, and anoint thine eyes with eye salve that thou mayest see. Three things we need, the truth, that gold that is even in Christ, for He is the way, the truth and the life in a day when many voices are saying, Lo, here; lo, there. There is gold tried in the fire.

And then, raiment, white, purity, righteousness, for everything that He leads us into a closer walk with Him.

And then eyes anointed with eye salve. Oh, for discernment, to see what is happening. The fool goeth on, not knowing what is ahead. But, oh, to ask God for anointed eyes that we can see so that we do not go on to destruction. Ask God to open your eyes to enable you to see.

Let us understand, then, that this is what the Lord said, I counsel thee to buy gold, truth, white raiment, His righteousness, the fruit of the Spirit, and eye salve that will enable to see and discern what is taking place around us.

And then He said this, To every hungry heart, he says this, "Behold, I stand at the door and knock," — and, notice. (Rev. 3:20) If any denomination, if any church open the door? no. In the last, the conclusion, of this Laodicean church, He said, If any man open the door. If any man open the door, I will come in to him and sup with him and He with Me.

And therefore I would conclude not from this, but from what we see, that this is going to be a movement of the hungry opening the door, inviting Him in, finding others, and regardless of denomination or affiliation, finding their fellowship in their hunger and remaining part and parcel of whatever they have been, recognizing it to be what it is and the value it retains, but that the communication of Divine Life and vigor and vitality is going to come when the embers that have been kindled find each other and in that the flame is released.

Oh, may God grant to us that we may see and in seeing share, and in sharing overcome that we may sit with Him on the Throne.

Oh, it is an exciting day in which to live. I think we ought to thank God for the privilege of being alive and serving Him this year. Someone said, Aren't you sorry that you did not know Dr. Simpson<sup>5</sup>. I thought of it for a minute and said, Oh, my goodness, no. I am glad he died the year was born, because just think, if I had known him I would have had to have been at least 20 years old, and think how old I would have been. I am glad that I am 43 in 1962, and I am privileged to serve the Lord in days like these. Pressure, surely. Difficulty, unquestionably, but on the marvel of standing with Him and seeing something released that is His, something that can be to His glory and to His praise. Thank God with me that you are alive, and do not join the Laodicians, neither hot nor cold, but be hot for Jesus Christ and for truth, and stand, cost what it may, what it will.

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<sup>5</sup> Albert Benjamin Simpson (1843-1919) founder of The Christian and Missionary Alliance

Well that is my message. You have it. I hope you are not mad. But something ought to happen, sad, glad or mad, but do not go the way you came. Let us bow in prayer.

Our Heavenly Father, we thank and praise Thee that Thou hast enabled us to live and to serve Thee in days like this. And we think of our honored brethren from Korea, those 400 thousand that died for no other crime than that they loved Jesus Christ even unto death, and that assignation, cruel, heartless, brutal, but Thou hast gathered them, and Satan has been just the express man that has sent them in where they are being built into that glorious New Jerusalem, that habitation of God by the Spirit, that Lamb's wife, the Bride adorned for her husband that is coming down out of Heaven. We do not know what our lot will be, but O God, Father of our Lord Jesus, grant that we may be hot for Him, stand, stand firmly, finding our hearts filled with hunger and finding others who share that hunger and joining one to the other in fellowship that releases the Lord Jesus Christ to be to us and in us and through us all He wants to be. We thank Thee for the groups that are meeting in homes here in this church. We thank Thee for what Thou art doing. And we ask Thee to increase the number rapidly, and grant, Lord, that everyone that is here tonight shall find their hearts stirred with a deep sense or that knocking of the Lord Jesus as He is asking, inviting us to open the door that we can know that full, sweet, precious, wonderful, growing fellowship with Him; And by whatever means it please Thee, get a vehicle for the revelation for the glory of Jesus Christ in these days.

Should there be any that have come in and do not know Him in forgiveness of sins, may something concerning His grandeur, His splendor, His glory, the majesty of this risen Son, His mercy and His grace and love, touch some heart, and might they seek for further help to know Him better. And so as we pray, asking Thee to bless everyone, so now as we conclude we ask that Thy truth may be held; whatever is of man may it be forgotten; of Thee, may it be permanently held. Give us the discernment to know the difference. And so we commit to Thee what has been said. Lord, the issues are in Thy hands. We take, but Thou dost undertake. We speak, but Thou dost fulfill. So, Lord, we have not sought to speak as a prophet but simply to point out some of the things we have seemed to see. Many of them we would like to be wrong, but, O God, wrong or right, Thou art on the Throne. Our eyes are fixed on Thee, and come what may, we love Thee. We love Thee tonight. We adore Thee. And we love Thee more than we have ever loved Thee before, and long to glorify Thee in every part of our lives. Bless these, our dear friends from Ethiopia, as they return, as they minister, and as they serve in that great land of opportunity where so many pressures are exerted. Let Thy Name be greatly glorified wherever Christ is being preached tonight. In His Name and for His sake.

Now let us stand for the Benediction. "May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God the Father, the communion and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be and abide with each of us, now and until Jesus comes again. Amen." (II Cor. 13:14)

\* Reference such as: Delivered at The Gospel Tabernacle Church, New York City on Sunday Evening, April 29, 1962 by Paris W. Reidhead, Pastor.

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