

TODAY'S "UNSAVED" CHURCH

~Other Speakers S-Z: Andrew Strom:

It is an interesting fact that Charles Finney spent his entire ministry preaching to professing Christians. And yet he was called the greatest 'evangelist'! What he was doing was evangelizing the church people - because he found that most of them were not living in a state of true salvation at all. The church was 'unsaved'! Thus his first calling was to the believers of his day - to see them converted. -Just like Jesus and the apostles were called first to the Jews - the 'believers' of their time. Finney found himself preaching piercing salvation messages his whole life in church buildings, Bible Colleges and so-on. The "Christians" must be saved. Actually, you see this pattern in most Revivals down the centuries. In many cases, what Revival was, was the church coming into true SALVATION for the first time. They THOUGHT they were saved before, but they had been under a delusion. When the 'Revivalist' arrived and preached to them, suddenly they saw that they were undone and in a lost state, and multitudes were converted. Revival almost always begins with the church.

I believe it is no different today, especially in America where church attendance is very high (-around 40 percent) - the highest percentage in the world. Everyone agrees that there is a lot of 'nominal' Christianity and 'social' Christianity going on - as well as a huge number of people who attend churches where they are told they are 'saved' when clearly they are not.

It is difficult not to come to the conclusion that most of these churches are like "holding pens" for the damned - telling people that they are 'OK', when in reality they are headed for destruction. Personally, I find this very hard to take. What will God do to the preachers who are lulling the flock to sleep in this way? And when will men be found who will dare to tell the "Christians" that many are not 'saved' at all - but still in their sins? -Such is the role of the true prophets of God. Such is the role of the coming "John the Baptists".

Of course, Finney was hated and despised by church men for saying such things. How DARE he preach in such a way that assumed that many 'fine church members' were unsaved? How offensive and ill-mannered! But Finney had such a passion and a burden to REACH THE 'CHRISTIANS' with the gospel. -And this was exactly what God had called him to do.

Today we see exactly the same thing in the West as Finney saw in his day. We see a church that is very largely UNSAVED. A truly "saved" church (in the New Testament sense) behaves and looks and sounds utterly different to what we have today.

Even in Pentecostal/Charismatic circles we often find many "previously-saved-but-no-longer-walking-in-it" believers. Friends, this is not a state of 'salvation'. The Bible is very clear that only those who CONTINUE in New Testament Christianity and who "overcome" will be saved. These people are lost. You are either walking as a 'new creature' in love with Christ or you are not. If you are not walking in it then do not assume you are "saved" - no matter what some preacher tells you. It is all or nothing with God. The Bible tells us to "work out our salvation with fear and trembling". I would be very surprised if more than a quarter of the West's so-called "Spirit-filled" believers are actually walking with a clean heart before God. What on earth do they think will happen to them on Judgement Day?

Added to this, we have millions upon millions of 'mainline' believers who literally NEVER get the opportunity to find out about "FULL" salvation. -The Holy Spirit is never made real to them, and many have never been fully BAPTIZED in water, either.

Now, we have already discussed elsewhere how people became Christians in the Bible. We know that there were THREE THINGS that always needed to happen when someone wanted to become a Christian in the New Testament:

- (1) Repentance
- (2) Water Baptism
- (3) Being filled with the Holy Spirit.

-Every time, these were the three things that happened STRAIGHT AWAY. (-See Acts 2:37-41, Acts 8:12-20, Acts 10:44-48, Acts 19:1-6, Acts 22:16, Heb 6:1-2, Mk 16:16-18, etc.)

As I have said before, the doctrine of "Asking Jesus into your heart" does not exist in the Bible, and personally

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I would come very close to calling it a lie from the pit of hell, because it falsely assures people that they are "saved" just because they have 'prayed a little prayer'. It is very dishonest and totally unscriptural. So we know that a basic "New Testament Christian" is someone who has:

- (1) Repented
- (2) Been Baptized (immersed) in water, and
- (3) Been filled with the Holy Spirit (-accompanied by 'tongues', as far as we can tell in Scripture).

So how on earth do we reach all these vast millions who are being duped with this half-Christianity of "Asking Jesus into your heart" - but never hear the full gospel? What on earth can be done to get this message through to them?

This is a burden that is very much on my heart. And I am convinced that only the coming "John-the-Baptist" ministries will have the anointing to break through the walls of 'Religion' to reach these people with the truth. We are talking about millions upon millions of precious souls here. And they are people who DO BELIEVE in God. But they have been lied-to, and the real truth has been denied them.

I am convinced that the coming harvest will BEGIN IN THE CHURCH. It will begin with converting the "CHRISTIANS". -This has always been God's order. "First in Jerusalem, then in Judea...."

I am deeply burdened for the church in the West. Let the new "Charles Finneys" arise. Let the trumpet sound go forth. The message of PIERCING REPENTANCE must be heard in the land once again. And the idol of "Mammon" must surely be one of it's key targets.

I am convinced that such prophets must arise for Revival to come to the West in these days. "For the word of God is quick and powerful, sharper than any two-edged sword." -May this mighty sword be brought to bear on the walls of Religion and false 'assurance' in these days.