

Articles and Sermons :: **FEATURED ARTICLE: Are We Playing by the Book? by Vance Havner**

FEATURED ARTICLE: Are We Playing by the Book? by Vance Havner - posted by sermonindex (), on: 2006/10/31 18:56

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Are We Playing by the Book?

by Vance Havner

When a group of small boys, out to play ball, arrived at the play ground, they discovered that no one had brought a ball. "Forget the ball," said one impatiently. "Let's get on with the game." We are trying to play without the ball when the Church tries to evangelize before she has repented. The Church can do many things after she has repented but nothing until first she repents...

The Pharisees had many good points. Our Lord said, in effect, "Do as they say." They read the Scriptures, prayed, went to God's house, tithed, and lived separated lives. They were anxious to preserve religion in Israel. Winning converts to the religion of Moses had been a good and right thing to do. But their religion had become institutionalized, and now they were propagating a dead faith, and every, new convert was a twofold child of hell, a lost heathen, and a lost proselyte. Generally, we are propagating today a degenerate brand of Christianity. Unless the church repents, and has a complete overhauling instead of a tune-up job, our evangelistic and missionary drives may add for the most part only a multitude of proselytes who are both unsaved pagans and unregenerated church members. Like produces like. Worldly churches produce more worldly church members. Churches weak or unsound in doctrine produce more of the same variety. Churches that operate in the energy of the flesh instead of by the Holy Spirit produce more of the same kind. We must improve the present quality of our churches, for converts tend to take on the qualities of the people who convert them...

If God ever visits us again in real revival, there will be many red faces as churchmen and religious leaders blush and hang their heads in shame for the silly and stupid ways in which we have tried to promote the work of God in the energy of the flesh by the help of the world. Drama will be unnecessary. We may not even need great preachers! Gospel jazz will slink away, and we shall be chagrined that we ever sank so low as to tolerate it. All this will vanish in the blinding light of the holiness of God, and no flesh will glory in His presence...

There is no greater hindrance to revival than a comfortable pastor settled and satisfied, coasting along until he reaches retirement, who does not want his flock disturbed or the status quo upset. He has long since lost his burden and concern for a mighty upheaval of God among the resters at ease in Zion. He resents any intrusion into the complacency of a sleeping church, and interprets the prophet's call to repentance as an indictment of his own preaching. He is determined not to get excited, assumes a philosophical tolerance of things as they are, and he may speak facetiously of the prophet's seriousness. Sometimes his own people may get under conviction, and put him to shame by a concern he does not seem to feel. This makes it exceedingly difficult for any revivalist calling Christians to repentance, but what a delight when pastor and prophet stand together! Most pastors understand that the traveling prophet can say things the pastor cannot say-that he fills a different role and follows an utterly different pattern. They complement each other. One plants, another waters, but God gives the increase. The teacher plants the seed, the pastor cultivates the crop, the evangelist gathers it, but the prophet must first break up the fallow ground. Breaking up the ground is never a pleasant, comfortable business, and churches sometimes resent the plow of plain preaching. Blessed is the pastor who knows this, and stands behind the lonely prophet who calls the church to repentance...

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Re: FEATURED ARTICLE: Are We Playing by the Book? by Vance Havner - posted by sermonindex (), on: 2006/10/31 23:56

Quote:
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Quote:

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I just read this quote from Vance Havner: "The **tragedy of today** is that the situation is desperate but the saints are not." We are in a day of urgent need whether we realize it or not, to see the Holy Spirit move in a mighty fresh outpouring upon the church. We are backslidden. The world is much amongst the church, we talk about all the things the world talks about. The church is not holy, is not set apart. God send a purging revival that reveals and makes us shameful again of sin as it is!

Re: - posted by DezCall (), on: 2006/11/1 3:50

Thanks for posting these articles, Greg.

Paul

Re: - posted by rev_eric (), on: 2006/11/1 11:31

Bro. Greg,

This was indeed an awesome posting! I think it speaks directly to what is going on in today's churches, as does your quote from Vance Havner.

God Bless You and keep up the great work.

Re: FEATURED ARTICLE: Are We Playing by the Book? by Vance Havner - posted by RobertW (), on: 2006/11/1 11:39

Quote:

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This is a tremendous point as many in ministry today are growing older and there are few coming in as replacements. What would be the solution to this?

Re: - posted by sermonindex (), on: 2006/11/1 12:20

Quote:

-----This is a tremendous point as many in ministry today are growing older and there are few coming in as replacements. What would be the solution to this?

I believe the solution is in Finney's words here: " **Nothing but a Revival of Religion can preserve such a church from annihilation.** A church declining in this way cannot continue to exist without a revival. If it receives new members, they will, for the most part, be made up of ungodly persons. Without revivals there will not ordinarily be as many persons converted as will die off in a year. There have been churches in this country where the members have died off, and there were no revivals to convert others in their place, till the church has run out, and the organization has been dissolved."

God is looking for men. I am coming to a point of desperation for God to move in revival. Does it mean enough to me that I will miss meals and nights of sleep?