

The Hinge of a New Age: Preparing the Way for Global Revival

by David Orton

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Marriage is a *physical symbol of a spiritual reality*. The apostle uses the same analogy when addressing the church in the city of Corinth:

I am jealous for you with a godly jealousy. I promised you to one husband, to Christ, so that I might present you as a pure virgin to him.

2 Corinthians 11:2

God's Nature Demonstrated through Marriage

The Bible, therefore, treats very seriously the issue of physical adultery. It was so serious under the old covenant that the civil law sanctioned the death penalty for it (see Leviticus 20:10). Because marriage reflects both the nature of God and His relationship with His people, it was protected by the ultimate penalty. In the beginning God created man in His own image, *male and female*, with whom He could fellowship and through whom He could demonstrate His glory—His covenant nature—to the earth. Any violation of the marriage covenant, therefore, does violence to God Himself and damages its symbolic significance.

The Divine Romance

The relationship, therefore, between a man and a woman is designed to bring heaven to earth. It is a parable of the glory to be revealed through the covenant romance of Christ and His church. This divine romance with man, first reflected in Adam and Eve, was continued through Israel, the old covenant church. The Lord said to them through Hosea:

I will betroth you to Me forever; yes, I will betroth you to Me in righteousness and in justice, in lovingkindness and in compassion, and I will betroth you to Me in faith-fulness. Then you will know the Lord.

Hosea 2:19-20 NASB

Israel's Adultery: Breaking the Heart of God

But Israel was unfaithful, pursuing other lovers:

"But you have lived as a prostitute with many lovers— would you now return to me?"

Lord said to me, "Have you seen what faithless Israel has done? She has gone up on every high hill and under every spreading tree and has committed adultery there. I thought that after she had done all this she would return to me but she did not...she defiled the land and committed adultery with stone and wood".

Jeremiah 3:1,6-7,9

Israel committed spiritual adultery at the altars of foreign gods. If the covenant nature of God is affronted by the physical act of adultery, then how much more by spiritual adultery! If the breach of trust and the betrayal of affections between a man and a woman are deeply injurious, how much more when we betray our heavenly Bridegroom! Through our spiritual wanderings we can break the heart of God. In his book *The Church at the End of the Twentieth Century*, Dr. Francis Schaeffer underscores this when he asks:

What does God say to our generation? Exactly the same thing that he said to Israel two thousand five hundred years ago when he said through Ezekiel, “I am broken with their whorish heart, which hath departed from me, and with their eyes, which go a whoring after their idols.” I believe that this is how God looks at much of the modern church, and on our Western culture...above everything else this is the way he looks into the churches...God is saddened. Should we not be moved?

Unconscious Blindness

But the Western church is not moved—indeed it is blind to its true condition. We say:

I am rich; I have acquired wealth and do not need a thing.” But you do not realize that you are wretched, pitiful, poor, blind and naked.

Revelation 3:17

Our problem is unconscious blindness. We are living in spiritual adultery, but we don't know it.

Jesus had just healed a man of physical blindness and used it to underscore a principle of divine visitation. Speaking into this, Jesus said:

For judgment I have come into this world, so that the blind will see and those who see will become blind.

John 9:39

When God comes, He comes in mercy and judgment—judgment to those who claim to see but cannot, and mercy to those who know they are blind. In seasons of divine visitation, those who presume they can see are shown as being blind, and those who admit they can't see are shown as seeing!

Seeing with the Eyes of the Heart

How does this work? Spiritual sight is conditioned by the heart:

*Blessed are the pure in **heart**, for they will **see** God.*

Matthew 5:8

It was because of their *hardness of heart* that Jesus taught in parables:

This is why I speak to them in parables: “Though seeing, they do not see; though hearing, they do not hear or understand.” In them is fulfilled the prophecy of Isaiah: “You will be ever hearing but never understanding; you will be ever seeing but never perceiving. For this people's heart has become calloused”.

Matthew 13:13-15

Humility of heart is the soil of spiritual sight. But the converse applies—a proud heart is the soil of spiritual blindness.

The Pharisees responded, “*What? Are we blind too?*” (John 9:40). It is the exclamation of *unconscious blindness*—of a proud heart. How do I respond to the suggestion that I might be guilty of idol worship? “Who, me? No way—I don't see that!” Well, that's the problem—the religious person or system does not question for a moment its ability to see. The Pharisees were convinced that they had cornered the market on the things of God—they were the guardians of orthodoxy, believing their interpretation of the Word of God was the only true one and that their group was the one God would use. And yet they were

living in spiritual adultery. Jesus said to them:

If you were blind, you would not be guilty of sin; but now that you claim you can see, your guilt remains.

John 9:41

Their self-proclaimed ability to see, coming out of a hardened heart, became the measure of their judgment.

The implications of this are frightening. The Western church, blind to its true spiritual condition, is entering a season of judgment. Presuming to see, it will, like the Pharisees, be *judicially blinded*:

God gave them a spirit of stupor, eyes that could not see and ears that could not hear.

Romans 11:8

Preparing the Way of the Lord: A Voice Crying in the Wilderness

Whenever God determines to move on the earth, He raises up a prophetic voice to prepare the way. John the Baptist came as:

A voice of one calling in the wilderness, "Prepare the way for the Lord, make straight paths for him".

Matthew 3:3

John confronted a religious generation, demanding they "*produce fruit in keeping with repentance*" and that they stop relying on Abraham as their father (Matthew 3:8). His message was clear: *Turn to God and stop depending on your religious pedigree*. But the religious leaders could not hear. Because of their *triumphalism* they were deaf to the prophetic voice. They were "of Abraham"—the elect. If God were to do anything, it would be through them. Filled with their own self-belief they presumed to be the cutting edge—to have the franchise on the things of God.

Let us learn the lesson—whether we are Anglican/Episcopalian, Catholic, Assemblies of God, Baptist, or the latest renewal movement! God is not impressed by our theological pedigree, denominational heritage, or renewal connections. While we may value the history of past movements, the heritage of sound theology, or the pioneering and networking of new movements, pride in these things is offensive to God. What man considers as *valuable*, God views as *vanity*—as empty and meaningless. Because of this, there is no guarantee that He will use our group. *Triumphalism* and *elitism* interfere with our receptivity to the things of the Spirit. Our *heart* conditions our *hearing*. Just because we denominate ourselves as Evangelical, Pentecostal, or Renewal does not guarantee we will hear what the Spirit is saying to the church. Only a broken and contrite heart will open our eyes and ears, empowering us as prophetic forerunners of the next move of God.

Forerunners of the Reformation

God always sends forerunners before a major visitation. They are what I would call "idol busters." In the spirit of John the Baptist they break open the spiritual atmosphere of the church, of cities and nations, and prepare the way for the Lord to come. They fearlessly call their generation back to a *new starting point*—back to the Lord, confronting the idols of religion and culture. They lay aside their own reputations, often forsaking worldly advantage to boldly confront the compromised religious systems of the day. They are men such as John Wycliffe (d. 1384), the Oxford scholar and translator of the English Bible, and his contemporary John Huss of Bohemia (d. 1415). They are men who prepared the way, in their bold rejection of church corruption and control, for the Reformation and the great reformers such as Luther and Calvin.

For a century and a half, from 1350 to 1500, Western Europe was marked on the one hand by an attitude of cynical nominalism toward Christianity as it gave itself to Renaissance humanism. On the other hand, it was marked by fresh movements of renewal, which proved to be the forerunners of the Reformation. By all appearances Western Europe had been radically de-Christianized—from outside the church by humanism and from within by formalism and corruption. However, this was contrasted by fresh stirrings of dissent and renewal. Various voices—mystics and reformers—sought a greater approximation to

apostolic Christianity. Mystics such as Catherine of Sienna (d. 1380) in Italy, Joan of Arc (d. 1431) in France, Walter Hilton (d. 1396) and Julian of Norwich in England, and Thomas à Kempis in Germany, to name a few, led a resurgence of prayer and a call to a deeper devotional life. The monasteries began processes of reform, and the voices of Wycliffe and Huss began to be heard with great impact. In fact, Wycliffe became widely recognized as “the morning star of the Reformation.” But these tremors of renewal were merely warnings of the coming quake.

On October 31, 1517, an obscure Augustinian monk by the name of Martin Luther, in protest of church corruption, nailed 95 theses to the church door of Wittenberg, Germany—and then it hit. The Reformation shook the Western world. With a convergence of virulent social, political, and religious currents the Spirit of God shed fresh light on the truth of justification by faith. Entrenched power structures and belief systems that had held Western Europe in darkness for centuries were shaken and a new day began to dawn.

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There are transition or hinge-times in history on which the destinies of nations swing. As the Middle Ages passed, the Reformation Age (also called the Early Modern Era, 1500–1750) dawned, ushered in by a transitional generation—by prophetic forerunners such as Wycliffe and Huss. In the fullness of time, however, God visited the earth through the Reformation itself and shaped the Western world as we now know it. It not only began a restoration of apostolic Christianity but also a reshaping of society, producing many of the institutions and freedoms that the West now enjoys.

Like the epicenter of an earthquake, the Reformation sent out shock waves of revival into the next age—the Modern Age (1750–1950). The transition into this was marked by the Great Awakening in North America and the Wesleyan Evangelical Revival in Great Britain. Both began in the 1730s, opening the door into the modern era in which successive outpourings of the Spirit have occurred, increasing right through to the 20th century.

However, the sun is now setting on the Modern Era and the so-called post-modern age is beginning to dawn. *The 1950s through to 2025 will prove to be the hinge of this new age.* It is significant that this period began with the Latter Rain and Healing Revivals of the 1950s, flowing over into the more publicized Charismatic Renewal of the 1960s and 1970s and on to the “Third Wave” of the 1980s and the “Toronto Blessing” of the 1990s. These moves of God have experienced a strong prophetic element as the forerunners of what, I believe, will prove to be the greatest spiritual conflagration of history, heralding an end-time era of God’s glory filling the earth.

Like the forerunners of the Reformation, this generation is witnessing a sovereign convergence of social and spiritual factors preparing the way for a new era, for an unprecedented increase of the kingdom.

While *church power* dominated the Middle Ages and *human power* the Modern Age, manifesting in “enlightenment humanism” and “statist tyranny,” it remains for history to record what will dominate the post-modern age. As the idols of the previous ages (of the *church* and of *man*) fall, the generation is now alive that will usher in the next age—an age of *God’s power* on the earth.

The “Elijah Generation”

Just as He did before the Reformation, God is raising up an “Elijah Generation”—a spiritual *avant-garde*—trailblazers who, through a prophetic lifestyle, will bring down the Baals of religion and prepare the way for the new era of God’s power as heaven invades earth.

The Elijah Generation will be used of God to restore the *apostolic foundations* of the church. They will return to a *new starting point*—to the Father’s heart. With the current emphasis on the apostolic, we do not need the implementation of *apostolic strategies* so much as a return to an *apostolic spirit*—in fact, a return to “*the Father of spirits*” (Hebrews 12:9). The forerunner anointing is a call to *move on* by *going back*, to pursue *destiny* by returning to *deity*—to the Father-heart of God.

The Axe Laid to the Root

Jesus prophesied that “*Every plant that my heavenly Father has not planted will be pulled up by the roots*” (Matthew 15:13). Every program, structure, system, or mindset that does not originate in the Father will be uprooted. Every hindrance to full-scale revival will be removed.

Forerunners like Josiah and John the Baptist are *radical* (coming from the Latin *radix* meaning “root”). And as radicals they deal with root causes. They go to the foundations. In fact, they will “*raise up the age-old foundations*” (Isaiah 58:12). But to do so, like John, they will prophetically declare to the religious system that:

The axe is already at the root of the trees, and every tree that does not produce good fruit will be cut down and thrown into the fire.

Matthew 3:10

Excerpt from [*Snakes in the Temple: Unmasking Idolatry in Today's Church*](#)

Read or give as a gift:

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