

PASSIONATE CHRISTIANITY

By Rev. Bill Banuchi Sr.

“Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.”--Mark 12:30

Why are we passionate about our faith? Why are we so passionate about the focus of our ministry, namely, saving marriages and restoring families?

First of all, it comes from hearts of thanksgiving for the love God has shown us in giving up His only Son for our eternal salvation.

Second, we're thankful to God for saving our own marriage. You see, after 20 years of marriage, and 8 years in the pastorate our marriage was on the rocks. But because of His grace and our willingness to do whatever it would take, our marriage went from being on the rocks to being *on The Rock*. In November we'll be celebrating our 42nd anniversary, and we're more in love now than we were when we were newly-wed teenagers.

The third reason we're passionate about our faith, saving marriages and restoring families is because we've come to understand that this is much bigger than us. You see, we've learned that:

- As the man goes, so goes the marriage
- As the marriage goes, so goes the family,
- As the family goes, so goes the Church
- As the Church goes, so goes the community
- As the community goes, so goes the Nation.

We're passionate about seeing our Nation turn back to the God of our Fathers for the benefit of our children and generations to follow—our posterity. This mission has been entrusted to us, as part of our stewardship responsibility as Christians. That's why God instructs us clearly, without ambiguity, when he says:

“If my people, who are called by my name, will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then will I hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and will heal their land.” (2 Chronicles 7:14)

ARE WE TO GET POLITICAL?

Charles Finney, renowned revivalist of the second Great Awakening told us:

“Politics are a part of a religion in such a country as this, and Christians must do their duty to their country as a part of their duty to God... God will bless or curse this nation according to the course Christians take in politics.”

We see throughout Scripture that the peace and prosperity of a nation is always a reflection of the spiritual condition of the people within its borders.

We have been blessed in this Nation as no other nation has ever been. In fact, even in our darkest hour, during our own Civil War in which we lost over half a million men, President Lincoln, just three months after he issued the Emancipation Proclamation called the Nation to prayer and fasting saying:

*“...We have been the recipients of the choicest bounties of Heaven.
We have been preserved these many years in peace and prosperity.
We have grown in numbers, wealth and power as no other nation has ever grown.
But we have forgotten God. We have forgotten the gracious Hand which preserved us in peace,
and multiplied and enriched and strengthened; and we have vainly imagined, in the
deceitfulness of our hearts, that all these blessings were produced by some superior wisdom and
virtue of our own.
Intoxicated with unbroken success, we have become too self-sufficient to feel the necessity of
redeeming and preserving grace, too proud to pray to the GOD that made us!
It behooves us then to humble ourselves before the offended Power, to confess our national sins
and to pray for clemency and forgiveness...”*

Today, we find ourselves in a much more precarious place than we were even during the Civil War. Though slavery was a horrendous sin against mankind, both sides believed then that God was on their side and they trusted God for their victory.

ANOTHER CIVIL WAR

We're now fighting another civil war, but today one side is fighting to remove every vestige of our Christian identity, while the other side isn't engaged nearly enough to contend for the faith. We are "complacent in Zion." (Amos 6:1)

If the victory is won by the anti-God forces, our children and theirs will pay the price for our complacency. We have become too accustomed to the goodness of God. We must learn from the history of Israel and heed the lessons from their trials and triumphs. Among them is the fact that if we are ever conquered it will not come from a foreign conqueror, but rather from within.

Listen to what 21 year-old young Abe Lincoln said to the Young Men's Lyceum in Springfield, Illinois on January 27, 1838 as he spoke on this subject:

*“At what point shall we expect the approach of danger? By what means shall we fortify against it? Shall we expect some transatlantic military giant, to step the Ocean, and crush us at a blow? Never! All the armies of Europe, Asia and Africa combined, with all the treasure of the earth (our own excepted) in their military chest; with a Bonaparte for a commander, could not by force, take a drink from the Ohio, or make a track on the Blue Ridge, in a trial of a thousand years. At what point, then, is the approach of danger to be expected? I answer, if it ever reach us it must spring up amongst us. It cannot come from abroad. If destruction be our lot, we must ourselves be its author and finisher. **As a nation of freemen, we must live through all time, or die by suicide.**”*

We don't generally think of Lincoln as a prophet, but in this case he was right on. Our Nation is dying by suicide, slow suicide.

It is like the old frog in the kettle illustration. You know, if you throw a frog in a kettle of hot water he'll jump right out. But put him in a kettle with water at room temperature and he'll be fine. Then turn up the temperature just 1 or 2 degrees at a time and let him get acclimated to each incremental increase, and he'll stay in that kettle until he's cooked alive.

INCREMENTAL TAKE-OVER

Forces hostile to Christianity have been slowly, steadily, incrementally removing every vestige of our Christian tradition replacing it with godless Secular Humanism.

Many of those incremental advances were achieved through the courts. In 1962 the Supreme Court removed prayer from schools, (*Engle v. Vitale*). In 1963 they did the same to Bible reading (*Abingdon v. Schempp*). In 1980 the 10 Commandments were deemed unconstitutional. (*Stone v. Graham*). These are just some examples of how Secular Humanists have slowly advanced their *coup* using the courts as one of their most effective weapons. They have also been effective in using public education and the media to advance their cause

Until this year they have been succeeding. But now with the radical changes which the present administration is trying to impose, America is finally reacting. Americans are now feeling the water is too hot and the frog is jumping out of the kettle and morphing into a movement that is going back to our founding documents to learn the truth about this great nation. As in the days of King Josiah when revival broke out in Judah when the scrolls containing the Law of the Lord were discovered, so too, can a revival come as we study our history and rediscover the reality of being "One Nation Under God." Ironically, the election of Barack Obama could have been the best thing that has happened to this Nation if it will bring us to our knees, bring us to National repentance and cause us to become educated about our faith and the role God and the Bible have played in the founding and the preservation of this great Nation. What the enemy intended for evil God can turn for good.

REVIVAL BEGINS AT HOME

Why are we passionate about saving marriages and families? Because we are passionate about saving a Nation. And it begins in every individual heart.

This is not the first time godlessness has run rampant through the countryside. It happened in the 1700's and God brought revival through the Great Awakening, then again in the 1800's and God brought the Second Great Awakening. And in the 1900s we saw periods of revival that began with the Azusa Street Pentecostal revival of 1906, then the healing revivals of Smith Wigglesworth, Maria Woodworth-Etter, Oral Roberts and others. Then came the net we were caught up in--the Jesus movement and the charismatic renewal of the 60s and 70s. God has always had a faithful remnant of passionate believers who would cry out to him for mercy, and He has always answered. Aren't we glad!

AMERICA IS EXCEPTIONAL

Vital Christianity has always been the life blood of this great Nation. America is exceptional, not because our citizens are exceptional, but because our systems and institutions are uniquely rooted in the principles of the Bible and our reliance upon its Author. In fact, American liberty is nothing less than the civic manifestation of the Christian religion.

Passionate Christianity is about understanding that this is much bigger than us. We are part of a great redemptive plan authored and empowered by our God who loves us and wishes that none would perish.

Passionate Christianity is about understanding our call:

1. To walk in personal integrity and to pursue holiness, to be filled continually with the Holy Spirit to witness in power.
2. To love one another, beginning with the love of a husband for his wife,
3. To teach our children how God has delivered us from our “Pharaohs” throughout our American history.
4. To be engaged in the culture to be the salt of the earth and light of the world, (Not the salt in the Church and the light in our prayer closets.) by praying for leaders (1 Tim. 2:1), by voting for godly men to fill positions of leadership (Exodus 18:21) so that we might “possess the gates” (Genesis 24:60), instead of complaining about those who do.
5. To Speak to our neighbors, not about the latest T.V. phenomenon, but about preserving liberty for our children and coming generations.

THE CLERGY MUST LEAD

And it falls upon the clergy of this great Nation to teach our congregations, and those who look to us for leadership, what passionate Christianity is all about. The future of this great Nation, or any nation, lies in the hands of its clergy. The clergy must teach, by example, that passionate Christianity is about giving our lives to a cause greater than ourselves.

Passionate Christianity is about giving ourselves first to the person of Jesus Christ, then to the cause of Christ. We follow in the tradition of our founders by pledging our lives, our fortunes and our sacred honor to a cause greater than ourselves—a cause we believe in passionately.

Will we pledge our allegiance to The Lamb of God and passionately pray and work to see the kingdoms of this world become the Kingdoms of our Lord and Christ? God’s not asking for much—just all we’ve got. That, my friend is passionate Christianity!

Why are we passionate about our faith and saving marriages and restoring families? Because:

- As goes the man, so goes the marriage
- As goes the marriage, so goes the family,
- As the family goes, so goes the Church

- As goes the Church, so goes the community
- As goes the community, so goes the nation.

How will we respond?

(Rev. Bill is co-founder and director of the Marriage and Family Savers Institute, a ministry committed to reducing the divorce rates in our communities and restoring a sense of dependency on God and Biblical principles for a healthy community and Nation. He can be reached at 1-877-MSAVERS or on the web at www.marriageandfamily.org.)