

Church Triumphant

PO Box 2806, Antioch, CA 94531-2806

(925) 360-9012

<http://www.churchtriumphant.com>

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“YE ARE A CHOSEN GENERATION, A ROYAL PRIESTHOOD, AN HOLY NATION” I Peter 2:9

God is calling the Church in America to recognize who we are and what time it is on God's time schedule. Because of the hour that we are living in, we feel like God is changing the focus of our ministry at Church Triumphant. He is giving us a clearer understanding of the road ahead. We will be continuing our ministry outreach in Romania and in the Philippines although we will not be providing the workers there with regular monthly support as we have in the past. God wants them to look to Him as their Source and to raise up regular support locally through the tithes and offerings of God's people in the Philippines so the work can be self sustaining. We believe God wants us to focus on doing what they cannot do for themselves in paying off the mortgage on the main church and headquarters building in Tagum City (approximately \$8,000), assisting to build churches, and helping support the Bible schools by finding sponsors for each of the students (approximately \$100 a month for six months). The ministry on Mindanao is coming into a place of maturity and we don't want to get in their way.

We believe God wants us to include the Church in America in our focus. We believe God is calling us to serve not only as foreign missionaries but also as missionaries to America as well to share His heart with His people. He has challenged us with Isaiah 58:11-12.

“And the LORD shall guide thee continually, and satisfy thy soul in drought, and make fat thy bones: and thou shalt be like a watered garden, and like a spring of water, whose waters fail not. And they that shall be of thee shall build the old waste places: thou shalt raise up the foundations of many generations; and thou shalt be called, The repairer of the breach, The restorer of paths to dwell in.”

This is the theme for our outreach in America. We have been given an assignment to help restore the Church in America to her First Love. Revival will only come to America when God's people recognize who they are, what time it is, and what God has called them to do. We feel like God wants us to do Restoration seminars across America, teaching on the priesthood of the Believer and calling the Church to return to her First Love. If you know of a church that would be interested in having us come to do a such a meeting or a seminar on “Restoring the Church in America to her First Love”, please contact us by phone at (925)360-9012 or by email at hgard@churchtriumphant.com. We praise God for each of you and value your prayers. Below is a message that we feel God wants us to share with His people in America. It is a bit long but I believe it worth taking the time to read. May God bless you richly.

WHO ARE YOU? WHAT TIME IS IT?

Most Believers in America have no clue as to who they are and what God has called them to do. More than that, they are totally unaware of where we are in God's time schedule. God praised the men of Issachar in I Chron. 12:33 because they “had understanding of the times, to know what Israel ought to do”. Believer, it is imperative that you know who you are, what time it is, and what God is calling you to do.

For too long, the Church has acted like ministry was the job of the pastor, evangelist, and missionary. After all, that's what we pay them for. But Eph.4:11-16 says that their job is to equip you so that you can do the work

of the ministry. Contrary to popular opinion, you were not saved to sit but you were saved to serve. Read I Peter 2:1-12 especially verses 5 and 9. This portion of Scripture declares emphatically that the Believer today is called to serve as a priest before God.

God has called you and set you apart as His priest. In the Old Testament the priest's duties were to offer acceptable sacrifices on behalf of the people, securing God's blessing on the land, the people, and the nation. They were to act as mediators between God and man. In the Old Testament the priesthood was limited to just one family, the descendants of the tribe of Levi. However in the New Testament this has all changed. In the New Testament God has made all Believers in Christ to be one family and one nation. In Ephesians chapter two Paul points out that the wall of separation has been removed. We are now all one people and one nation. We are all to share the same priestly duties before God.

2 Cor. 5:17 tells us that if we are in Christ then we are a new creation. The old should have passed away. Rom. 12:1-2 and I Peter 2:9 tell us that we are to present our bodies as living sacrifices so that we can show forth the praises of Him who called us out of darkness into His marvelous light. In short, we are to offer sacrifices as priests before God.

Look at I Peter 2:5 "You also, as living stones, are being built up a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ." This verse says that we are called into a holy priesthood to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable unto God. Simply stated, "holy" refers to something or someone that has been set apart for a very special purpose. It also refers to being physically pure and morally blameless before God. You might say, "Well, that leaves me out". No, if you have been born again by repenting of your sins and asking God the Father to forgive you because of the Blood of His Son Jesus, then you have been justified. "Justified" means "just as if I'd never sinned". You have been made physically pure and morally blameless by being washed in the Blood of Jesus. Now that's what grace is all about. You have been declared "not guilty", not because of what you did, but because of what Christ has already done. There is absolutely nothing that you can do to make yourself more holy. Jesus has already done that for you. However you do need to desire to live in righteousness and holiness before God and man. You see if more Christians would live like Christians then there would be more Christians.

The second thing mentioned in verse five are the duties of the priesthood. These duties are primarily to offer spiritual sacrifices. A sacrifice is something that costs you something. King David said that he would not offer a sacrifice that costs him nothing (2 Sam. 24:24). You might ask, "What is the cost?" It will cost you time, discipline and effort. The sacrifice is to offer prayer and intercession on behalf of your family, friends, coworkers, community, state and nation (1 Tim. 2:1-4). This I believe is part of what Jesus was talking about in Acts 1:8. We are to pray especially for political leaders remembering the promise of God that the heart of the king is in his hand and He is able to turn it in any way He wants (Pr. 21:1). He only needs for more people to pray. Remember that God will do nothing except it is through the prayers of His people. When wickedness prospers in a nation, God does not hold the wicked responsible for bringing deliverance. He holds His people responsible for bringing about change (2 Chron. 7:14). It has been said that evil triumphs when good people do nothing. Let me rephrase that by saying evil triumphs when Christians don't know who they are or what time it is.

Now look at 1 Pet. 2:9 "But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light. In verse five we are referred to as a holy priesthood but in verse nine we are called a royal priesthood. It is important that we understand the difference. What does it mean to be a royal priesthood? The word "royal" has to do with sovereign power and authority. A royal priesthood is one that exercises sovereign power and authority in the name of the King. In Luke 10:1-20 we read how Jesus sends out the seventy. Notice that these are not just the twelve apostles but seventy unknown followers. They were given specific instructions to preach the gospel and heal the sick. In verses 17 to 20 we read that upon their return they reported to Jesus how that even

the demons were subject unto them. Jesus then declares that as a result of their obedience that He saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven. He also told them that He was giving them power to tread upon all the power of the enemy. I believe that this same royal authority is extended unto us today. Do you know who you are?

It isn't enough to know who you are. You also need to know what time it is. Look at Lk. 19:41-42. "Now as He drew near, He saw the city and wept over it, saying, "If you had known, even you, especially in this your day, the things that make for your peace! But now they are hidden from your eyes". In Luke 19:28-40 we read the story of Jesus' triumphal entry into Jerusalem. The people rejoiced with singing and dancing saying, "Blessed is the King who comes in the name of the Lord." They received Him as their King. Yes, the people were worshiping God but it was for all the wrong reasons. They didn't know what time it was. They were praising God because they thought He was finally answering their prayers for a deliverer. They were crying out to God to send someone who could deliver them from their physical bondage and slavery to the Romans. God was sending not just someone but His own dear Son who would deliver them from their spiritual bondage and slavery to sin. When they entered the city Jesus began to weep. The Greek word that is used here is "klaio". The word means to sob or to wail out loud. It refers to a kind of crying that is uncontrollable, like a parent who had just seen their child struck and killed by a car. This was not just a tear running down the cheek. This was deep heart wrenching sobbing because the people didn't understand what time it was.

Some time ago, I was in prayer for the church in America and the Lord spoke to me saying that He was weeping over America in the same way that He wept over Jerusalem. He took me to the Scripture in Rev. 2:4-5. The church in America has left her first love and must return or else judgment will come. The Lord told me that He wants to pour out His Spirit upon America once again but the church is not ready. The church in America is much like Jerusalem on the day that He entered the city some two thousand years ago. There is much singing, dancing and expectation. Everyone is crying out for a visitation from Heaven but it is for the wrong reason. Many are looking for an outward show of God's power. They want a God that can make them rich and prosperous on the outside but He wants to first bring a spiritual healing and deliverance for the soul. The church in America has become much like the people in Isaiah 58.

Isaiah 58:1-3 "Cry aloud, spare not; Lift up your voice like a trumpet; Tell My people their transgression, And the house of Jacob their sins. Yet they seek Me daily, And delight to know My ways, As a nation that did righteousness, And did not forsake the ordinance of their God. They ask of Me the ordinances of justice; They take delight in approaching God. 'Why have we fasted,' they say, 'and You have not seen? Why have we afflicted our souls, and You take no notice?'"

The church in this last generation has stood by and done nothing while the Bible and prayer have been taken out of the public schools and replaced with guns, murder, and violence. The Ten Commandments have been removed from many of our public buildings. In many communities it is forbidden to have a public display of the nativity at Christmas. Every year through abortion we sacrifice more than a million babies to the gods of pleasure and convenience. There are just as many if not more divorces among Christians than there are among the unbelievers. In our churches today there is a lot of singing, dancing and laughing but very little heart wrenching prayer for the souls of men. Christians today spend more money on pet food than on reaching a dying world with the gospel of repentance.

The church in America seems to have forgotten that a love relationship with God must start with repentance. By the way repentance means a turning away from sin not just being sorry that you got caught. We have turned from preaching a gospel of righteousness and holiness, "without which no one will see the Lord" (Heb. 12:12-17), to proclaiming a 3-B gospel. The 3-B gospel is a gospel of buildings, bodies and bucks. Instead of being a church that is gospel of the Kingdom friendly we have become one that is "user or seeker friendly". We don't want to offend anyone. Most churches today have gone from having three services a week to having services only on Sunday morning. The reason is because people don't have time for God any more. They have "left their first love".

It is time for the church in America to wake up before it is too late. God has showed me that He wants to once again pour out His Spirit upon this land like a mighty rushing wind. He is only waiting for the church to wake up, put on her priestly garments and assume her role as a holy and royal priesthood. However He will not wait forever.

What can we do? I believe that God has shown me a very effective way to take back America for the Kingdom of God. God told Joshua to go in and possess the land. God told him that wherever the sole of his foot would tread that He would give it to him for an inheritance (Josh. 1:3). I believe that it is time for the Body of Christ to wake up, take up her cross, exercise her priestly duties and possess the land. The medical profession keeps telling us that we all need to exercise more and that walking is one of the best forms of exercise that we can do. Perhaps God is trying to tell us something. As priests before God we need to exercise our holy and royal duties. Start by anointing your shoes with oil and claiming God's promise to give you the land for an inheritance. Then start walking around your neighborhood. As God leads, you can stop in front of certain homes and pray for the people who live there. Walk around schools establishing a holy perimeter, binding the power of darkness, loosing God's light to penetrate the darkness and bringing down the strongholds of Satan. Where you can't walk, perhaps you can anoint the tires of your car and drive the area. I hope you can get the idea. Do you know the hour of your visitation? Do you know who you are? Do you know what time it is?

Please agree with us in prayer for the following needs –

- 1 – Our dear friends at Mana Ministries in Timisoara, Romania have a very effective ministry to the street children in that city. Right now, they are fighting an uphill battle to keep the government from closing their Girls' Home that has brought hope to so many. Please pray for great favor with the authorities in Bucharest that this ministry will be allowed to continue without further harassment and that they can open the Boys' Home that is already under construction.
- 2 – Pray that God will quickly provide the funds necessary (about \$8,000) to pay off the mortgage on the headquarters property in Tagum City that this burden will be lifted off the ministry there.
- 3 – Pray that God will provide us with a new vehicle that will allow us to travel across America wherever He opens the door. Our old van has over 150,000 miles on it and no longer provides reliable transportation.
- 4 – Pray for Howard's brother in law, Don Bailey, who had surgery Jan 29 to remove a badly infected kidney and cancerous bladder. Don made it through the surgery OK but the doctors didn't bother to remove the bladder because cancer has spread throughout his body and the doctors have no hope for his recovery. But God has the last word. Continue to pray for his salvation and healing. Continue to pray for his wife Cathy, Howard's sister, and for their children during this difficult time. We have also learned that Howard's other brother-in-law, Jack LaVallie who also lives in Omaha, NE is currently undergoing chemotherapy because his colon cancer has returned but it is still localized. Pray for his healing and salvation as well. Pray also for his wife Betty and their children and grandchildren during this doubly difficult time.
- 5 – On Friday, Feb 1, Barbara was taken to the emergency room via ambulance because she was having chest pains. Initial test indicated she had suffered a mild heart attack so the doctors kept her overnight for observation. We asked many of you to pray. God moved in response to your prayers. God touched Barbara's heart and restore it completely so that the doctors could find no evidence of damage, and the doctors sent her home late Saturday afternoon. She is doing just fine. Thank you again for your prayers. Please continue to pray for Barbara's continued health and well being.

GOD LOVES YOU!!!

Rev. Howard & Barbara Gard