

Romans 13 Re-Encountering- Culture 'The Prayer 20/20 Impact'

February 16, 2020

Dear Praying Friends, and Partners In Prayer Team,

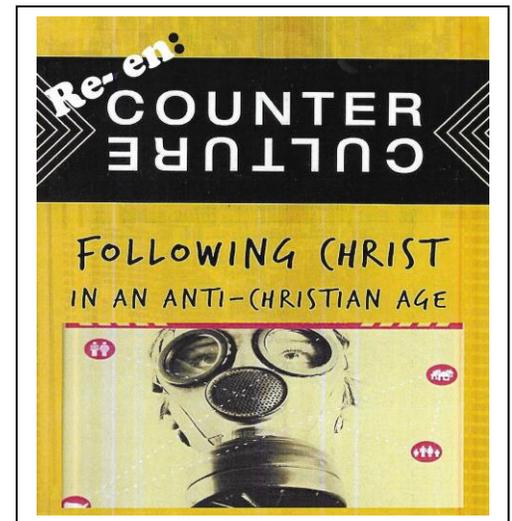
*"For we walk by faith, not by sight." 2 Corinthians 5:7
(NKJV)*

"Continuing steadfastly in prayer!" Romans 12:12 (NKJV)

"Therefore I exhort first of all that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks be made for all men, for kings and all who are in authority, that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and reverence." 1 Timothy 2:1-2 NKJV

"Jesus traveled through all the towns and villages of that area, teaching in the synagogues and announcing the Good News about the Kingdom. And He healed every kind of disease and illness. When He saw the crowds, He had compassion on them because they were confused and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. He said to His disciples, 'The harvest is great, but the workers are few. So pray to the Lord who is in charge of the harvest; ask Him to send more workers into His fields.'"

Matthew 9:35-38 (NLT)



How often have we been surprised by change? How often have we said, "Wow, I didn't see that one coming?" Recently while watching the news, I was interested in the pundits and what they were saying at the Iowa Caucus. One reporter was standing with a microphone and behind him was a crowd of people. Behind the crowd was a huge sign that said, "Change!" It was used as a prop. The reporter was saying, "Behind me sums up what the nation is looking for. We are looking for change to occur." I wondered how often in the last twenty years of politics that statement has occurred. We as American people are always looking to change for the better, especially in these times of turmoil politically, with the epidemic outbreak of Coronavirus, and constant crime and horrid news reports of family shootings and suicides. But what would it be like if "change" occurred, and you didn't know about it?

Let me give you an illustration from a past political election. It was the 1912 United States presidential election, and Democratic Governor Woodrow Wilson of New Jersey unseated incumbent Republican President William Howard Taft and defeated former President Theodore Roosevelt, who ran as the Progressive Party ("Bull Moose") nominee. This was a win that nobody saw coming. The entire campaign leading up to the votes was totally taken over in the news by Roosevelt and Taft causing and fighting for the presidency. Both were former or sitting presidents. Roosevelt had served as President from 1901 to 1909 as a Republican, and Taft had won the 1908 Republican presidential nomination with his support. However, following Taft's election, his actions as President displeased Roosevelt, who challenged him for the nomination at the 1912 Republican National Convention. After Taft and his conservative allies narrowly prevailed at the convention, Roosevelt rallied his progressive supporters and

launched a third party bid. Roosevelt's Progressive Party was nicknamed the Bull Moose Party after journalists quoted Roosevelt saying that he was "feeling like a bull moose" on the campaign trail shortly after the new party was formed. But what they didn't see coming was that Wilson carried 40 states and won a large majority of the electoral vote, taking advantage of the split in the Republican Party. He was the first Democrat to win a presidential election since 1892.

After Wilson won the election, which was all over the newspapers, he made a quick visit to his home and elderly aunt he hadn't seen in a long time. Woodrow Wilson walked into his aunt's house expecting a congratulatory greeting, but she said, "Well, Woodrow, what have you been doing lately?" He said, "Well, Auntie, I've just been elected President." And she said, "Oh, Woodrow, president of what?" To which he replied, "Auntie, I've just won and been elected President of the United States of America!" And she bristled back and said, "**Oh, Woodrow, you've always exaggerated yourself, don't be silly!**" It's hard to imagine in this day and age isn't it? In a modern age of news and media, everybody would know and everybody would be aware of the change, yet his own aunt didn't know he was the President. She wasn't aware of the change. She didn't see that one coming.

Now that is a cute and innocent anecdote in the context of politics, but what if it was a battle and change in the context of Christian values? What if it was an issue of change occurring because of spiritual warfare? What if it was a terrorist threat? What if unknown to our Christian values, our churches and most morally good people in our country, would say, "Don't be silly" because they didn't know that we are now a "post-Christian" nation? What if they didn't know that all the values that our democracy was built on are now changed? What if we didn't know, as believers, that we are trying to live a good life that is suddenly "counter-cultured" of the accepted world view in America? What if we are in a battle and losing a counter-cultural movement? How do we follow and live Christ in an anti-Christian age? That loved ones, is the turn of events that Paul helps believers to understand in Romans 13. When we see such turmoil and sudden change in our world, especially counter-cultural decline in the morals and direction of our country, what are we to do?

One of the cultural changes that has happened in our lifetime has been the making and establishing of "US Department of Homeland Security." Until September 10th, 2001 we didn't see the need. Most Americans, if asked, "Do you think that some terrorist could take and smash planes into our cities major buildings?" Most people would say, "Oh, don't be silly." On September 11, 2001 all of America believed that people like Osama bin Laden wanted to destroy the "Big Satan" of America and the "Little Satan" of Israel. The Department of Homeland



Security was formed since the attacks on the World Trade Center and now employs over 200,000 people. Then through the last two decades, Homeland Security has implemented a five color-coded system to assess the levels of terrorist threat throughout our nation. Red is the most significant, and we've only been at that level five times up until January 8, 2020. We've stayed either at level orange or yellow mostly through the years. Never have we digressed to level blue or green which indicates safety. Because of that, in 2009 Homeland Security replaced the five-color signal with ratings to a National Terrorism Advisory System called NTAS number

rating. If you are planning a trip or planning a vacation, you can go online and see what the number rating is in the particular area you plan to visit either in or out of the United States. The purpose of the Department of Homeland Security is to respond to, protect, alert and assess how vulnerable our nation is to terrorist attacks. The world is confused about knowing who the real enemy is. They don't know that there is a spiritual agenda threatening us as a nation, threatening our homes, families, and even our very souls. The world doesn't know what to do. Most people would respond like Woodrow's auntie, "Oh, don't be silly!" But as believers, we should know who our enemy is, and the spiritual terror that threatens us in our culture today. What if life is about a spiritual battle and we don't know who our enemy is and the counter-cultural change that he is implementing today? That mistake could be fatal!

We are realizing we will never live in a world without terror. Paul reminds us that as believers in Christ, we will never live in a world without a spiritual enemy, the devil (Eph. 6:20), or dangers of spiritual terror until Jesus returns. I am introducing this series and calling the first message: **"Homeland Security- Assessing the Threat Level" (Romans 13:1)**. We are fighting a spiritual battle in our nation, and we have been the generation to see the tide turn from being a "Christian" nation to a "post-Christian" nation. Our children will never grow up and live in a country that is pro-Biblical in its worldview. We are admittedly going to live consciously counter-cultural in a world that is as Paul reminds us *"Trying to conform us"* (Romans 12:2). Remember he said: *"Do not be conformed, but be transformed."* I love the Phillips Translation the most that expresses it: *"Don't let the world press you into its mold."* Like Jell-O, the world is changing the way people think. And they don't know that the spiritual enemy is working and winning in the morals of our country. Christians in America must live out their faith amid the significant social issues that surround us. Just within five short years the Supreme Court made rulings on so-called same-sex marriage, and it has become normal law across the country and the Federal Government that threatens to withhold children's education money from States who do not allow men who wish they were women to use public bathrooms alongside young girls. The rate of social and moral change in contemporary America is both staggeringly swift and historically unprecedented.

So how should Christians respond to such a rapidly changing American culture? Do we resign ourselves to pessimism? Do we bring rebellion and revolution? Do we cry out for reform and revival? Do we pick up our rifles or picket signs? Or, do we reassure ourselves with optimism, confident that we can still win the culture war if we unite politically and philosophically?

I propose that Paul promotes none of this! Paul calls us to righteousness, to submissive respect, and reviving prayer! You may be shocked to know Paul's top answer to living and feeling the persecution against Christianity is: *"Let every soul be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and the authorities that exist are appointed by God"* (Romans 13:1). Are you serious? How could believers be asked to be "submissive" or "obedient" to a corrupt government run by evil intent or ill intent people? The answer to that is to remember what the Roman Empire was like in Paul's day. He was under the rule of some of the most notorious political rulers of his day. Nero, Tiberius, and Caligula just to name a few. You don't have to read far into history to know how difficult it was to be a professing believer during this day and age. And yet, Paul when in prison, appealed to Caesar as was his right as a Roman citizen when people plotted to kill him (Acts 26:32). You would think he would

tell Christians to rise up and rebel, not be submissive. This message series as we enter into Romans 13 and 14 is about encouraging and equipping followers of Christ to re-encounter our culture. To counter the culture which will inevitably and inescapably flow against us. By loving the Gospel and sharing the powerful truth of Christ. My prayer and aim is to ask God to help us live out His Gospel power in our lives, families, and church in an age of sexual confusion, legal abortion, rampant materialism, violent racism, escalating refugee crises, diminishing religious liberties, and a number of other significant social issues.

These messages are not about retreating from the realities of change around us, but inspiring us to choose to face them with a fearless faith that is full of hope in Christ and free to love even those who would belittle Christian belief. To be sure, I don't claim to be the expert on how to live Christ-like in an anti-Christian age. Nor do I claim to know all the ways my culture (or others for that matter) will continue to change in the days, months, and years ahead. Yet I do know timeless truth that is guaranteed to stand the test of cultural trend. We are on a journey to discover how to humbly, lovingly, faithfully, and fearlessly put truth into practice in a way that exalts Christ in this age and place that God has intensionally placed us. The Gospel is the lifeblood of Christianity, and it provides the foundation for countering culture. For when we truly believe the Gospel, we begin to realize that the Gospel not only compels Christians to confront social issues in the culture around us, the Gospel actually creates the issues of how our sin and brokenness can find real answers. I pray we become "compassionate." This world changes, but God does not! Our world is in a constant state of change. God is not! *"I am the Lord, I do not change!" (Malachi 3:6)*. I love how Corrie ten Boom, writer and survivor of a Nazi prison camp says this: *"Conditions are always changing; therefore, I must not be dependent upon conditions. What matters supremely is my soul and my relationship to God."* (*Devotional Prayers to Start Your Day*, pg. 19)

When you study the *"The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire"* written in the 1780's by Edward Gibbon, he gives the five top answers that contributed to the Empire's demise. They are:

1- *Decline in values and morals.*

Even during the Pax Romana (stable and relatively peaceful period), there were more than 30,000 prostitutes in Rome. Emperors such as Caligula and Nero are historically famous for their wasting of money on luxurious parties, where guests ate and drank wine and spirits until they became ill. The most famous popular entertainment during this era was to see gladiatorial battles of the Roman Colosseum.

2- *Public health and diseases.*

In the Roman Empire there were many environmental and public health problems. Only those who were more wealthy had water that came to their houses through lead pipes. Previous to that, the aqueducts even purified the water, but finally it was thought that the pipes of lead were better. Due to water poisoning, the death rate was very high among the citizens of higher status. But lead poisoning not only caused death, but also infertility, loss of memory and a significant reduction of cognitive abilities, in addition to other symptoms that expanded in the Roman nobility. The ruling class became less intelligent, another of the causes of the fall of the Empire. In addition to this, the continuous interaction of people with the Colosseum, where contact with dead bodies and blood were frequent, spread a lot of diseases. The most affected were the people who lived in the streets, contagious of a great amount of diseases. Also, the consumption of alcohol was important, which generated another significant problem of public health.

3- *Poor technological development.*

Another factor that contributed to the fall of the Roman Empire was that during the last 400 years of the empire, the scientific achievements of the Romans were limited to engineering and the organization of public services. The Romans came to build wonderful roads, bridges and aqueducts, as well as establishing the first system of medicine for the benefit of the poor. The problem is that they relied too much on the work of humans and animals, so they lagged behind the invention of a lot of machinery that could have done the same tasks much more efficiently, such as the production of raw materials. The Romans reached the point of not being able to provide sufficient goods for all its growing population, whereas in parallel they no longer conquered other civilizations to absorb its technology. In this way, they began to lose territories that they could not maintain with their legions.

4- Inflation

The Roman economy underwent inflation (excessive increase of prices) just after the reign of the emperor Marco Aurelio. When the conquests of the Roman Empire were halted, the flow of gold from the new territories to Rome began to decline. In addition to this, the Romans had spent a lot of gold to pay for their luxurious goods, so there was less gold to use in the coins. In this way, while the amount of gold used in the coins was decreasing, the coins became less valuable. In order to sustain this loss of value, the merchants raised the prices of the goods they were selling. Because of this measure, many people stopped using coins and began bartering for the things they needed. Eventually, wages began to be paid in food and clothing and taxes to be collected in the form of fruits and vegetables.

5 - Urban decay

The wealthy Romans lived in "domus", or houses with marble walls, floors made of multi-colored tiles and windows closed by small glasses. But most of the Romans were not rich. The common people lived in small, smelly houses, like apartments of six or more floors that were known as islands. Each island covered a whole block. At first there were more than 44,000 apartments within the walls of the city of Rome. The apartments on the first floor were not occupied by the poor, since the rent was more expensive. But the higher the feeble ladder they had to climb, the cheaper the rent was. The high apartments that were leased to the poorest were dirty, unventilated, crammed with people, dangerous and too hot. However, if the people did not have the money to pay these rents, they had to live in the streets, infested with crimes and diseases. All these events caused the cities to begin to decline. (From Wikipedia summary on line.)

One certainly can't read these and not relate them to current culture in America. We see all these signs in areas of our modern society. But there is one major difference between Romans and America. The influence of Christianity isn't the same so our demise and turning of counter-cultural thinking is not the same. Christianity entered the Roman world and all its multidiverse cultural aspects as a missional witness. It grew and influenced people through plagues and the message of the Gospel was the major influence. You can't change people from the outside, you only can change them from the inside and that is why the Gospel is said to be the "power of God" (Romans 1:16). Despite the Roman influence of Christianity, even in the days of Constantine and the Roman Catholic Church movement to make Christianity the state religion, it was always an outside force that was trying to knock back the darkness.

I would like to propose that America, only two hundred years old, is completely different. The formation and founding of our country was primarily by religiously persecuted believers looking to build and find freedom. The colonists during the American Revolution were championing democracy as influenced by a born-again majority. That is why we can say "America, America, God shed His grace on Thee." We are a country founded from the beginning on Biblical morals and values. What has happened, unlike the fall of Rome, is we have over the two hundred years been a country profoundly influenced and shaped by Biblical standards and truths. Beginning with our generation, we have seen slipping of values such as prayer taken

out of schools in the 1960s, and we are the generation that suddenly finds ourselves in a moral reverse. Instead of the culture being Christ driven and influenced, we are now flipped end over end into an unbelieving vast majority of American mindset which has taken the flow and current of our culture. We as believers are suddenly awakened to being the counter-culture of influence and belief. Yes, our homeland is under attack, but we are already on the losing side of the culture. We are as Christian author Josh McDowell who penned a in book- *"The Last Generation of Believers!"* We need to wake up and be aware that everything we do is counter-cultural. When we live, when we speak, when we vote, when we decide to make claims, we are living under the flow of "not letting the world cast us into its mold" (Rom. 12:2) Paul asks the question in Romans 13:11 "So how are we to then live understanding our times?"

That is what our series is about. I want you to pray for my series of messages, but you may be wondering where are we headed in the days ahead. I want to try to lay out the messages and titles for you, as best as I currently can.

Sermon #2: "Civil Duty and our First Counter-Cultural War" (Romans 13:1-7). We will look at the differences of America's first counter-cultural change that occurred in the 1960's and how it differs from today.

Sermon #3: "Was Jesus a Republican or a Democrat?" (Romans 13:3-5; 1 Timothy 2:1-2). What do we do with the constant political divide? How has this affected and is currently ruined our churches? What are we to do when we realize that we are not winning people to Christ by our political bashing? We need to stop portraying each other as "evil." I am tired of people coming and saying that they are no longer coming to church because of the things we put out on our Facebook post about our political views. We need to get a revival to understand what it means to be a "citizen of heaven" (Philippians 3:20; 1 Peter 2:4-7).

Sermon #3: "I Hate taxes! American Greed and the American Dream!" (Romans 13:6-7). What trend that involves the "love of money" are moving our young people away from living a different and clear life for Jesus (1 Timothy 6).

Sermon #4: "What If I'm a Christian and Gay, Don't Tell Me Who to Love!" (Romans 13:8-10) What do we do if our young people come and share they have same-sex attractions? How do we respond? We will increasingly face this since 2014 when the Supreme Court made into law the validity of same-sex marriage and transgender sexuality; allowing men who wish they were women to use public bathrooms alongside young girls. Television is being pressured to feature "same-sex" advertising and characters in every movie and current show. At the same time the media is portraying Christians as the haters and people who hold Biblical standards and morals as hypocritical and abnormal.

I read a book called *"Unchristian"* by Dave Kinnaman and Gabe Lyons that provides statistics of this generation and how they think about Christianity. It will devastate you to know that the growing society considers Bible believers to be the "outsiders" of our culture. A story is told in that book of a pastor who was aware of a discussion in a Barnes and Noble. "Oh, check this out. It's a Bible with a metal cover!" caught this pastor's attention. From the next aisle he watched a group of Generation Z young people talking about this Bible. "The young girl said, "What? What are you talking about?" "Yeah," said the young man, "Look, it's a Bible encased in metal." "Huh?"

What's that for?" replied the girl. "How the heck should I know? Maybe it's supposed to be indestructible. Let's see if it is." Then the pastor heard the young man throw the Bible and hit the floor. "I guess not!" they laughed and stuffed it away. But this is the growing belief of our young people in the area of same-sex attraction and belief. And I might say it also is the view of all sexual behavior heterosexual or other. Now polysexuality is becoming the topic of young people since the standard of Biblical marriage and sexuality has been thrown to the floor.

Sermon #5 "A First Century Terrorist and Rise of Fundamentalist Religions!" (Romans 13: 11). Why do people not like hearing "Jesus is the only way?" (John 14:6). Is Jesus unique? Almost all people in the world who know anything about Jesus, including the most secular of scholars, would say that Jesus was a good man. People find Jesus easy to identify with- but they don't understand how Christians seem to be narrow and hypocritical. Is our nation in danger of those "fundamentalists?" Don't for a second believe that when we heard political leaders cry out against the terroristic fundamentalism against our nation through the fastest growing religion in the world which is Islam, that Christians will not also easily be categorized into those generalizations. People will soon believe that Christians are dangerous and will be lumped together with radical Islam. Our culture will believe that any proselytizing of belief is wrong. Or do they already believe that? Anybody who believes in his/her radical book must be a threat to America. 56% of atheists in America believe radical Christianity is already a threat to our society. So the question is, "Why can't Christian say, 'This is what I believe' anymore?"

Sermon #6: "Porn and the Sex Trafficking Trade" (Romans 13:11-14). Do we really know that our church and families are being destroyed by "soul thieves?" We do not have to kidnap children and sell them to another country to understand that in this world the immorality of this world is destroying families, marriages, and the lives of believers. Pornography is a 186 billion dollar industry, which is more than the gross profit of the NBA, the NFL and the Major League Baseball combined in a year. We need to be the hope and healing of those experiencing sexual abuse and the destruction of the family.

Sermon #7: "How Shall We Then Live and Breathe Anymore?" (Romans 13:11-14). Francis Schaeffer wrote: *"We as Bible-believing evangelical Christians are locked in a battle. This is not a friendly gentleman's discussion. It is a life and death conflict between the spiritual hosts of wickedness and those who claim the name of Christ. ... But do we really believe that we are in a life and death battle? Do we really believe that the part we play in the battle has consequences for whether or not men and women will spend eternity in hell? Sadly, we must say that very few in the evangelical world have acted as if these things are true... where is the clear voice speaking of the crucial issues of the day with distinctively biblical Christian answers? 'How shall we then live?' With tears we must say it is not there and that a large segment of the evangelical world has become seduced by the world spirit of this present age. And more than this, we can expect the future to be a future disaster if the evangelical world does not take a stand for Biblical truth and morality in the full spectrum of life."* May it not be said of us. May we not sin through silence. May we speak clearly and live "Christ" to a world going to hell. My mother shared that she has been praying and witnessing to a dear elderly lady near her who is dying of cancer. This lady calls my mom and cry's every day about the difficulties of life she faces. When my mother lovingly asked her if she was ever thinking of Jesus and how He loves her and died for her and can provide assurance of heaven, the lady replied, *"Listen Elanore, I'll have more friends in hell than you*

will ever have in heaven. You can pray for me, but don't preach to me. Nobody else around here even prays for me, you Christians are just weird." Doesn't that make compassion rise in your heart?

As I have been listening and studying Scripture, I was reminded of Matthew 9:35-38. What was Jesus' response to the counter-culture of His day? *"Jesus traveled through all the towns and villages of that area, teaching in the synagogues and announcing the Good News about the Kingdom. And He healed every kind of disease and illness. When He saw the crowds, He had compassion on them because they were confused and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. He said to His disciples, 'The harvest is great, but the workers are few. So pray to the Lord who is in charge of the harvest; ask Him to send more workers into His fields'"* (Matthew 9:35-38). Notice there are three words in this text that give us where we begin to respond to the terror of our counter-culture thinking.

1. Jesus "saw!" (vs. 35) As Jesus was going into all towns He was living and showing us an evangelistic and missional heart. Evangelism and missions are different. Evangelism is reaching people who don't know Jesus. Missions are reaching people who don't know there is a Jesus. Our reaching is evangelistic and should be loving. And what did He see? Lost people. If we are not looking and seeing lost people we will not share the Gospel. Jesus sees people. Do we? Why aren't we more like that? We can't become compassionate if we don't see. People Need the Lord. Steve Green made a song popular years ago that went like this:

*"Every day they pass me by
I can see it in their eyes
Empty people filled with care
Headed who knows where
On they go through private pain
Living fear to fear
Laughter hides their silent cries
Only Jesus hears
People need the Lord, people need the Lord
At the end of broken dreams, He's the open door
People need the Lord, people need the Lord
When will we realize people need the Lord?"*



2. Jesus was moved with "compassion!" (vs. 35) If Jesus went to the mall to watch people He wouldn't just gaze on the lives of people around; He wouldn't look at their clothes, or their packages, or their homes, or their style. Do you know what that word "compassion" means? Used in Philippians 2:3 it literally it means to **"have your stomach twisted in knots."** Jesus saw people and His stomach was tied in knots of compassion. When has that happened to you? When you watch the impeachment events, when you watch the New Hampshire primaries, when you listen to the State of the Union, does your stomach get tied in knots because of the peoples' need of the Lord, or because of your own ideas of right and wrong? In the story of the Prodigal Son, Luke 15:20 says the father "saw" and was moved with compassion." In the story of the Good Samaritan in Luke 10:33 this unpopular and unassuming man "saw" and was moved with "compassion." John MacArthur states in his commentary these words: *"When Jesus was not preaching, He was demonstrating His great compassion for the pain and hardships of men in their personal lives. Even the most casual reading of the Gospels reveals that His compassion was not merely emotional or idealistic. He not only empathized with sinners, but healed countless thousands of every sort of disease and affliction, often at*

great personal sacrifice. It was never Jesus' goal to reform Roman systems. He sought to redeem individual souls. Social morality and structure were never Jesus' concern. Some evangelical pastors and other Christian leaders have turned from emphasizing the Gospel to emphasizing politics, from emphasizing the Word of God to emphasizing coalitions to 'impact culture.' Some Christians expect the government to be not only the church's ally but its primary partner. Our task is the proclamation of the Gospel. We are called to build the spiritual kingdom through the Gospel- not trying to change society from the outside rather than individuals from the inside." (Romans pg. 211.) Why aren't we moved like that?

3. Jesus called for "earnest prayer!" (vs. 38) When Jesus looks at us today He isn't asking us to give more money so people can go to the harvest fields. He isn't even asking us to volunteer to go and be a missionaries. Jesus doesn't say we need to "go" or that we need to "support" more missionaries or evangelists. He simply asks us to pray. The intensity of prayer is a word that means "earnestly" and "intensely." It is the same word used in Exodus 32 where Moses fell and begged God not to destroy the golden calf worshippers. It is the same word used in Deuteronomy where Moses got the Ten Commandments to give to the people and God said at this moment to Moses because he wouldn't stop praying, "*Leave me alone!*" Moses pleaded earnestly for the children of Israel to be spared. He prayed persistently! Is that kind of prayer happening in churches today? Why are prayer meetings the smallest of gatherings in American churches? Could it be that our nation has turned counter-cultural because we haven't been praying so furiously that God could dare express "Just leave me alone!" The Scripture in both the Old and New Testaments say we are to be an influencing, passionate, praying people. Paul says in 1 Timothy 2: "*Therefore I exhort first of all that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks be made for all men, for kings and all who are in authority, that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and reverence.*" If we must pray earnestly for our government, will that be the first and foremost response we as believers should make? Pastor Robert M'Cheyne was striving for personal reformation and social reformation of his day and wrote this: "*I ought to pray before seeing anyone. I ought to never to do anything without prayer, and if possible, special secret prayer. I ought to spend the best hours of the day in communion with God. It is my noblest and fruitful employment. I ought to pray and labour for the deepest sense of my utter weakness and helplessness that ever a sinner was brought to feel.... My only safety is to know, feel, and confess my helplessness, that I may hang upon the arm of the Omnipotence. I ought to study Christ as the living Saviour more,- as a Shepherd, carrying the sheep He finds,- as a King, reigning in and over the souls He has redeemed,- as a Captain, fighting with those who fight with me. I ought to study Christ as an Intercessor. If I could hear Christ praying for me in the next room, I would not fear a million of enemies! Yet the distance makes no difference; He is praying for me... I ought to study the Comforter more, -His Godhead, His love, His Almightyness. I have found by experience that nothing sanctifies me so much as meditating of the Comforter, as John 14:16.*" (Bonar, *Memoir and Remains*, pg. 153-154).

So, will we dare to walk by faith? Will we see others? Will we have compassion so much that we have humble submission in our hearts instead of rebellious lusts? Will we cling to Jesus as the One who best keeps our "homeland" secure? We should pray deeply through these future issues and pray as 2 Chronicles 7:14: "*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 I will hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin and heal their land.*" My hope is that we would heed this challenge. We would believe the gospel of Christ and that our belief would move us to re-encounter our culture. My prayer is that in this

journey we are on, God might open our eyes to the needs of people in our culture and around the world, bringing us to our knees in tears and prayers on their behalf. That Christ will rise in us to have conviction, compassion and courage to humbly respond to our governmental authorities with truth and selfless love. That we in all hopeful anticipation will remember the government is upon His shoulders and not ours (Isaiah 9:5)! May we live with the weight of all we face on His shoulders and not ours.

Pray with me,

“Father and Captain of our souls, we bow and humble ourselves to Your authority today. This world changes, but God You do not! You are our “homeland security” and rock of Salvation. Since our world is constantly changing, when we face the tides against our walk of faith, help us to turn to You for strength and assurance. We pray earnestly for the souls of our nation not that they cast the right votes or change the right laws, but to come with brokenness, to find forgiveness for lives of sin. Thank You that in Your Son’s deep love for us, You have not despised and abhorred us in our afflictions, but treasured us and sent Jesus to rescue us. Give us loving and compassionate feelings to help those whom we don’t see eye to eye with. Give us clean hands, and a pure heart. Help us have a submissive obedience to all authority because it reflects our respect for You. Holy Spirit, we struggle with selfish hearts that lack compassion. Give us hearts like Jesus! Melt our hearts’ hardness, for we cannot soften them. Cause us to see how we have been rescued by our Great Savior, and give us the desire and ability to look around us, to see people as they are, and to love them deeply from a heart of gratitude and concern. Help us to enter this counter-cultural current of this world to engage people, not with swords, rebellion, revolution, or social justice, but with caring affections, hands that ready to help, and the hope of the Gospel. May we grow into people who love as we have been loved and serve as we have been served. We ask in the mighty Intercessor and Prince of Peace’s Name- Jesus Christ, to the glory of God the Father. Amen.”

***Searching and praying for a right obedient heart for myself,
Pastor Corvin <><***

Quote: “True prayers are like carrier pigeons: from heaven they came, and are only going home.” ... Charles Spurgeon (1834-1892)

Quote: “Christianity introduced no new forms of government, but a new spirit which totally transformed the old ones.” ... Lord Acton (1834-1902)

Quote: “It is impossible to rightly govern the world without God and the Bible.” ... George Washington (1732-1799)

Quote: “It is out of the question that there should be a Christian government even over one land... since the wicked always outnumber the good.” ... Martin Luther (1483-1546)