

# Christian Reconstruction

Isaiah 61:4

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## PREPARATION FOR INUNDATION

by Gary North

*When they therefore were come together, they asked of him, saying, Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel? And he said unto them, It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power. But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth. And when he had spoken these things, while they beheld, he was taken up; and a cloud received him out of their sight (Acts 1:6-9).*

The disciples wanted to know when the kingdom was going to come. They had asked a similar question before His resurrection. His answer then was, to say the least, disconcerting:

And as he sat upon the Mount of Olives, the disciples came unto him privately, saying, Tell us, when shall these things be? and what shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world? And Jesus answered and said unto them, Take heed that no man deceive you. For many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ; and shall deceive many. And ye shall hear of wars and rumours of wars: see that ye be not troubled: for all these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet. For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom: and there shall be famines, and pestilences, and earthquakes, in divers places. All these are the beginning of sorrows. Then shall they deliver you up to be afflicted, and shall kill you: and ye shall be hated of all nations for my name's sake (Matt. 24:3-9).

"The end is not yet." **For as long as there are wars and rumors of wars, the end is not yet.** (This is as clear a prediction of the coming millennial age of peace as I know of.) Between their day and the end would come trouble and persecution. It was obvious why they would want to know if Jesus had any new information about the dating of these events.

They were interested in prophecy. They were interested in victory. What Jesus told them was that they were to go to Jerusalem and wait. They would soon receive power. They did what He said, and the Holy Spirit came upon them. It was the beginning of the harvest.

### Swamped With Success

Peter preached Christ crucified on the day of Pentecost, and three thousand people professed faith and were baptized on that day (Acts 2:41). This was only the beginning.

And as they spake unto the people, the priests, and the captain of the temple, and the Sadducees, came upon them, Being grieved that they taught the people, and preached through Jesus the resurrection from the dead. And they laid hands on them, and put [them] in hold unto

the next day: for it was now eventide. Howbeit many of them which heard the word believed; and the number of the men was about five thousand (Acts 4:1-4).

Here they were, a handful of disciples who had been with Jesus at the time of His ascension to the right hand of God. They had no New Testament, no money, no church building, no experience, no pastor with a Th.M degree from an accredited seminary, not even a mailing list. Then, within weeks, they had about 23 thousand people to instruct in the ways of the New Covenant. (The five thousand men had wives and children).

Their leaders were, by the standards of the day, "unlearned and ignorant men" (Acts 4:13). They were immediately put into prison by the religious leaders. They were beaten (Acts 5:40). They kept teaching anyway.

Almost immediately, the church began to murmur. It was Israel in the wilderness all over again. "And in those days, when the number of the disciples was multiplied, there arose a murmuring of the Grecians against the Hebrews, because their widows were neglected in the daily ministration" (Acts 5:1). The apostles needed an institutional solution. They did what Moses' father-in-law told Moses (Exo. 18): they decentralized.

Then the twelve called the multitude of the disciples unto them, and said, It is not reason that we should leave the word of God, and serve tables. Wherefore, brethren, look ye out among you seven men of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business. But we will give ourselves continually to prayer, and to the ministry of the word (Acts 6:2-4).

Consider the problem. There were a dozen apostles. Now there were half a dozen untrained deacons, who were assistants to the apostles. They were overseeing tens of thousands of new converts. How did this handful of officers oversee this many people? The Bible does not say. Almost immediately, they were short a deacon: Stephen was stoned to death. The persecution of the church began in earnest. This was just what the church needed:

As for Saul, he made havock of the church, entering into every house, and haling men and women committed them to prison. Therefore they that were scattered abroad went every where preaching the word (Acts 8:3-4).

God had brought them in. Now God would send them out. They had come to Jerusalem at Pentecost; they went out as missionaries, fleeing organized persecution.

And not one of them had a seminary degree.

### Putting New Converts to Work

In Douglas Hyde's account of his years as a Communist, *Dedication and Leadership*, he tells of the Communist Party's strategy of sending new members into the streets

to sell the *Daily Worker*. No matter how little knowledge the new member had, he was deemed ready to go to work. He would be subject to jeering, cross-examination, and even beatings. But this created a tremendous incentive for him to find out answers. The new members would come to training sessions. They would read the paper, cover to cover, to be ready with answers. They would read the classics of Communist doctrine. In short, they imitated Peter's injunction: "But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear" (1 Pet. 3:15).

Hyde made it clear that the key to successful recruiting was to call a person to total dedication in a cause that was world-changing. Calling men to small tasks was self-limiting. The Communists told new recruits that their sacrifices would mean something in the big picture of history. This is why small sacrifices were inappropriate. The task at hand was too great. So was the potential payoff.

So, the new recruits were put to work. They were told to plan for the long haul. They recognized that their educations would never end. There was always more to learn, more to put into action. There were always new techniques of mobilization to be discovered. To use Marx's terminology, there was always plenty to learn about the fusion of theory and practice.

### **We Are Better Provided for Today**

The early church had the Holy Spirit to tell them what to say.

But take heed to yourselves: for they shall deliver you up to councils; and in the synagogues ye shall be beaten: and ye shall be brought before rulers and kings for my sake, for a testimony against them. And the gospel must first be published among all nations. But when they shall lead you, and deliver you up, take no thought beforehand what ye shall speak, neither do ye premeditate: but whatsoever shall be given you in that hour, that speak ye: for it is not ye that speak, but the Holy Ghost (Mark 13:9-11).

That advantage is not given to us. But we do not need this gift in most cases. We have the Bible, creeds, catechisms, and commentaries. We have the tools made possible by mass production. We have the technology of communications. We even have seminaries.

More important than technology, we have the **division of labor**. We have people inside the church who can be mobilized, as surely as the Communist Party in Hyde's day had people who could be mobilized.

But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal. For to one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom; to another the word of knowledge by the same Spirit; To another faith by the same Spirit; to another the gifts of healing by the same Spirit; To another the working of miracles; to another prophecy; to another discerning of spirits; to another divers kinds of tongues; to another the interpretation of tongues: But all these worketh that one and the selfsame Spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will (1 Cor. 12:7-11).

What is missing today is that sense of belonging to an army on the march. An army knows that it must mobilize, organize, motivate, and train every member to do his assigned task and much more. The modern church has lost its vision of conquest. It sees itself as involved in a holding action. It is holed up inside Fort Contraction, waiting for the arrival of Col. Jesus and His angels.

All the training, mobilization, and effort in the world cannot bring lasting success to a poor program. The Communists have proven this as no other experiment in history has. The Communist system was morally corrupt, structurally corrupt, and self-destructing. Hyde was convinced several years ago that the old vision was gone. He said that the Party's old training methods had been abandoned.

But what of a program that has the constituent parts for success? That program can muddle through even with mediocre leadership and unmotivated members. But how much better the organization would do if each member was ready and competent to serve! The waste in today's church is historically unprecedented. More buildings, more tools, and less dedication than at any time since the late Middle Ages.

As one Eastern European Christian told a friend of mine: "We pray for the Western Church. It has had to contend with the Renaissance, the Enlightenment, prosperity, and now the New Age movement. All that we in the East have had to contend with is persecution."

### **Conclusion**

If God were to inundate the modern church with proportionally the same numbers that those few early Christians in Jerusalem had to contend with, what would happen? What kinds of institutional changes would have to be made overnight to handle the harvest?

One thing is sure: there would have to be much more decentralization. There would have to be packaged training programs and systems manuals that would, in the words of Michael Gerber, enable ordinary people to produce extraordinary results. We do not have such packaged systems today. Where are we going to get them?

The future is now. What is happening in Eastern Europe is unprecedented. A window of opportunity is open, but for how long? It is open to the cults and *Playboy* as much as it is to the church. The question is: Are we ready to take advantage of this opportunity? Is this going to serve as a training program for a wave of revival closer to home? And if we fail to take advantage of this opportunity, what then? Revival without systems in place, or no revival at all?

I cannot answer this question. All I know is this: standing around waiting for the bodily return of Christ isn't what God has in mind: "And while they looked steadfastly toward heaven as he went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel; Which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven. Then returned they unto Jerusalem from the mount called Olivet, which is from Jerusalem a sabbath day's journey" (Acts 1:10-12).

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