

ARM Prison Outreach International

"Ministers' Minute" ---- Volume XI Number 6

"Not by Might nor by Power, but by My Spirit"

Editor's Note: This "MM" is the 6th of 2012 -- and the 126th email sermon overall. It was sent previously - it was ten years ago - and we've added many subscribers since then. "Ministers' Minute" is a free service of encouragement to preachers, chaplains, donors, and Christian workers around the world. This sermon, by my brother, Larry Farthing, is a "Fourth of July" type message. It is my prayer that this message will encourage you and those you teach. Use it as a devotional, edit it, share it, or use components of it!

May God bless your labors! -- Rod Farthing, Development Director

ARM'S "ABARC.ORG" WEB SITE!

Among the extensive resources - IN FIVE LANGUAGES - is the practical booklet entitled "So Your Child Wants to Be Baptized." It is a helpful guide for parents and others in guiding children who are reaching the age of accountability and desiring to make Christ Jesus their Lord and Savior. It is also a helpful study to anyone wanting to study the important scriptures basic to becoming a Christian. We are thrilled that many youth ministers and Christian leaders routinely use this resource.

To see (and download) this 11-page resource, click on <http://www.abarc.org/Resources/So%20Your%20Child%20Wants%20To%20Be%20Baptized.pdf>

"Not by Might nor by Power, but by My Spirit"

Zechariah 4:6

INTRO:

It's about 520 B.C. Zechariah, who was both prophet and priest of God, steps to the forefront as the Israelites are trying to re-establish themselves as a community, or nation, following their 400 years of captivity in Babylon.

Zechariah's mission, it seems, was to do what previous prophets had done: Call the people to repentance. However, God called him to deal with a specific task: That of encouraging and motivating the people to complete the rebuilding of the Temple, which was the heart and core of Judaism. Without it, they could not really be Jews! Under Zerubbabel, the foundations had been laid, but the building had not been finished.

So God's angel messenger tells Zechariah to tell King Zerubbabel that the temple will be completed, but *"Not by might nor by power, but My Spirit."*

I see a parallel here. The founding fathers of this United States of America established *"one nation under God..."* But we've wandered away from our roots. We've been "in captivity in Babylon" so to speak. We'd like to rebuild the community, the nation, that we once were.

Our society does not reflect our Christian heritage. How should we describe our society? Someone has described it as "an elephant hanging over a cliff, his tail tied to a daisy." But that doesn't say it all. What about the atheism, the apathy, the number of so-called Christians with no commitment? What about the way timeless moral standards (moral absolutes) are being eliminated from our society?

1. Abortion has become a common exercise of what we call "freedom" and "right."
2. Homosexuality is on the agenda for acceptance and national recognition.
3. Pedophilia has gotten to the point in its proponents' agenda that homosexuality was a few years ago.
4. The morals of politicians have hit an all-time low, and the majority of the American people say that it doesn't matter.
5. Sexual immorality is now the norm. Been to a movie lately? There's more "free sex" today than the "hippies" and "flower children" ever thought of!

And we could go on and on.

How do we "fix" it? How do we get back to what made this nation great?

I. FIRST OF ALL, THE ANSWER IS NOT POLITICS!

Some think that if we can just "elect the right people" to office, things will get better.

Others say, "We've got to lobby for the 'right' laws and against the 'wrong' laws.

I'm not against Christians getting involved in politics. I think we should elect the best people available to political office. We should support those who will legislate according to God's will and be against those who will not.

But we should not do these things with the expectation that our society's ills can be healed through them!

Remember the "Moral Majority" organization? Don't hear much about it nowadays, do you? The reason you don't is twofold:

1. There doesn't seem to be a "moral majority" in this country anymore; the "immorals" seem to be in the majority.
2. Most of the leaders of the "Moral Majority" organization have come to the conclusion that we Christians will stem the tide of unbelief and immorality more effectively by focusing on living godly lives than we ever could by political means.

Cal Thomas, a politically conservative Christian syndicated columnist and former leader in the Moral Majority organization, recently said that he had come to the conclusion that...

II. "THE ANSWER IS SPIRITUAL!"

"Not by MIGHT nor by POWER, but by MY SPIRIT," says the Lord Almighty.

America can be encouraged and motivated to once again become "*one nation under God*," but not through the *might* or *power* of demonstrations, nor through the *might* and *power* of lobbyists, nor through the *might* and *power* of petitions, nor through the *might* and *power* of boycotts, nor through the *might* and *power* of bombings, nor through the *might* and *power* of executions.

Now, I'm not saying that we shouldn't use about any legal, moral, and ethical means available to preserve the freedom and godliness our forefathers intended for our American society. *I'm saying that these things will not turn people's hearts toward the Lord!*

Paul wrote in 2 Corinthians 10:3,4: *"For though we live in the world, we do not wage war as the world does. The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish strongholds. We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God..."*

People, our battle is not in Washington, D.C. or in the state capital! There's work to be done there, but the battle whose outcome is crucial to the eternal destiny of every American and every human being on the face of this earth is a spiritual one! Our battle isn't against flesh and blood but against the *"spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms"* (Eph. 6:12). It's a war for the minds and hearts of people!

Violence, malice, and lies have no place in the arsenal of the Christian! We are Christian soldiers, but we wage war in the power of the Spirit with gentleness, love, and truth. The gospel of Christ is so powerful, that when we live out our profession of faith, strongholds are demolished and arguments are rendered senseless.

Light is still more powerful than darkness! Truth is still more powerful than lies! Christ is still more powerful than Satan!

Let's look at 2 Peter 3:1-18:

1 This is now, beloved, the second letter I am writing to you in which I am stirring up your sincere mind by way of reminder,
2 that you should remember the words spoken beforehand by the holy prophets and the commandment of the Lord and Savior spoken by your apostles.
3 Know this first of all, that in the last days mockers will come with their mocking, following after their own lusts,
4 and saying, "Where is the promise of His coming? For ever since the fathers fell asleep, all continues just as it was from the beginning of creation."
5 For when they maintain this, it escapes their notice that by the word of God the heavens existed long ago and the earth was formed out of water and by water,
6 through which the world at that time was destroyed, being flooded with water.
7 But the present heavens and earth by His word are being reserved for fire, kept for the day of judgment and destruction of ungodly men.
8 But do not let this one fact escape your notice, beloved, that with the Lord one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day.
9 The Lord is not slow about His promise, as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing for any to perish but for all to come to repentance.
10 But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, in which the heavens will pass away with a roar and the elements will be destroyed with intense heat, and the earth and its works will be burned up.
11 Since all these things are to be destroyed in this way, what sort of people ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness,
12 looking for and hastening the coming of the day of God, on account of which the heavens will be destroyed by burning, and the elements will melt with intense heat!
13 But according to His promise we are looking for new heavens and a new earth, in which righteousness dwells.
14 Therefore, beloved, since you look for these things, be diligent to be found by Him in peace, spotless and blameless,
15 and regard the patience of our Lord to be salvation; just as also our beloved brother Paul, according to the wisdom given him, wrote to you,
16 as also in all his letters, speaking in them of these things, in which are some things hard to understand, which the untaught and unstable distort, as they do also the rest of the Scriptures, to their own destruction.
17 You therefore, beloved, knowing this beforehand, be on your guard lest, being carried away by the error of unprincipled men, you fall from your own steadfastness,
18 but grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To Him be the glory, both now and to the day of eternity. Amen.
(NAS)

I get three things from this part of God's Word:

1. The last days will be evil days. We're in the last days, to be sure.
2. This world, as we know it, will be destroyed.
3. These things being true, we Christians should respond accordingly.

Then Peter lists five things that we should be doing:

1. We should be living holy and godly lives;
2. We should be looking forward to Christ's coming;
3. We should be spotless, blameless, and at peace with God;
4. We should be one our guard;
5. We should be growing in grace and knowledge.

My brothers and sisters in Christ, we're not doing this! The power of the gospel that saved us isn't getting out from us in power! We're like an army shooting blanks! There's no power of God's Spirit in our lives because we're so much like the world! Tell me, whom have you impressed lately with your commitment to Christ? Whom have you overwhelmed with your love and forgiveness? Who has seen God's image in you lately?

CONCLUSION:

Roger Babson was once asked by the president of Argentina, "Why is the United States so much greater than the rest of the countries of the Americas? Why, when the other countries have such rich resources, has the United States surpassed the rest of us?"

Babson thought for a few moments, but before he could answer, the president said, "It is because those who settled our lands came in search of gold. Those who settled the United States came in search of God."

What has happened to America's search for God? We have, by and large, forgotten Him. We're searching for gold.

Norma McCovey, the Jane Roe in *Roe v. Wade*, was converted to Christ by a compassionate response from a pro-life worker and a warm reception from a local church. Her positive testimony has done more for the pro-life cause than all the demonstrations and marches combined. Crisis centers that minister to mothers with unwanted pregnancies, support groups for repentant homosexuals, creation science articles, divorce recovery ministries, and individual evangelism by compassionate Christians are far more powerful against Satan's strongholds. We will not win the battle by fighting as the world fights, but by following the example of Christ.

Fellow Christian, I challenge you to walk your talk and show your family, your acquaintances, your community, and your nation what Christianity is really all about.

If you will, we can lead America back to the Lord. You are our last hope.

--From a message by Larry Farthing, Hot Springs Village, ARK

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"Remain faithful unto death .." Rev. 2:10B

Check out our web sites: www.arm.org www.abarc.org

So far in 2012, 86 ABA Bible courses have been mailed from ARM every day--
and THIRTY-FIVE *new inmate/students* have been enrolled each day!