



DENIED, DISRUPTED, AND DIVERTED
Detoured "Off Mission" in perilous times.
Lessons from Christianity in the Southern Sudan

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And it came to pass, when Joshua was by Jericho, that he lifted up his eyes and looked, and, behold, there stood a man over against him with his sword drawn in his hand: and Joshua went unto him, and said unto him, Art thou for us, or for our adversaries? And he said, Nay; but as captain of the host of the LORD am I now come. And Joshua fell on his face to the earth, and did worship, and said unto him, What saith my Lord unto his servant? Joshua 5:13-14

No man that warreth entangleth himself with the affairs of this life; that he may please him who hath chosen him to be a soldier. II Timothy 2:4

I happened upon an interesting article on a ministry's web site researching the history of Islam and Christianity. It is from Frontline Fellowship, a ministry reaching out to Angola, Mozambique, Malawi, Nigeria, South Africa, Sudan, Zambia, Zimbabwe and the Congo and headed by Dr. Peter Hammond. Titled "Why Did Christianity Die Out In Northern Sudan," in a very short space it offers some very revealing insights to the Spirit-filled Church in America.

Since I first wrote "A Rear-guard Action" mid-2010 and ensuing events and research, there has been an evident and regular pattern many Christian writers and commentators on Islam have been missing, although I know others in past history, the spiritually perceptive, have faithfully pointed it out. It is the defining issue of the debate and we miss it at our own peril. In the almost ten years since 9/11, more has been written about Islam than in the preceding thirteen centuries, which is good, but what are we really learning?

Rather, why has Islam seen yet again a dynamic and historical resurgence since the fall of the Ottoman Empire, violently persecuting all in its path, now to the point menacing Christianity in middle America? From Asia and the Persian Gulf, to Lebanon, to Europe and now the US, Jesus promised of His Church, "...the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." (Matt. 16:18) Yet it seems the gates of hell are prevailing.

A stark conclusion? The two major patterns throughout history, where the Lord has permitted Islam to rise as a prod and correcting influence: a tepid, compromised and comfortable Church, having strayed far from Biblical orthodoxy, and with no concern for the lost, a complete lack of effective and aggressive evangelism. These are the most conspicuous failings.

Dr. Hammond speaks on Sudanese history in his essay, and these are some high points:

"There is little historical evidence that the common people were effectively evangelized. ... Most of the leaders of the church were Egyptian, Greek or Coptic. These languages were understood by the king and the educated people in his court - but not by the common people. Hence, Christianity in Northern Sudan was a religion of the educated elite and not of the common man."

"...Christianity did not die out in Northern Sudan because of external persecution by Muslims. The churches were empty and abandoned long before Islam filled the vacuum and became well established. The fact that few Nubians were literate and that services were in Greek and Coptic meant that the Word of God was not well known amongst the common people."



Reading this man's views, most of what was historical Christianity in Africa mirrored little of the Church's posture and conduct in the book of Acts at the beginning of the Holy Spirit's drive into that continent (Acts 8:26-40), with Philip on the point of the spear.

A very basic military tactical doctrine is the diversion. If you can divert and detour your enemy's attention and resources off mission from their objectives - their victory and your defeat - whether immediately or long term, it strengthens and gives you cover to attack them from another angle. Satan has become adept at this in

American Evangelical Christian culture in recent decades. Now, frankly, we have been outflanked.

This comment should resonate with anyone well-versed in contemporary political trends:

“...The churches were so closely connected with the kings and to the patriarchs of Alexandria (in Egypt) that they rose and fell with them. ... The churches were too closely allied to the political power structures and fell with the kings. ... We need to be very careful not to be co-opted by secular politicians, only to be used to advance their humanist agendas.”

Paul Proctor, writing in December of 2004 after the American public voted into office a Republican President, Republican House, Republican Senate and a majority of Republican Governors and the Supreme Court made up of a super-majority of Republican appointees—a Republican majority—registers a long list of “conservative” issues one would assume would be concentrated on by this golden calf of political activism’s potential now realized.

Of course we know now they weren’t. The post-Bush era is stark, irrefutable proof of this betrayal. After he won his second term, the concerns of Evangelical Christians/Conservatives were largely cast aside. Political analyst James E. Campbell of the University at Buffalo stated, "I don't see this as a big rift," ... Christian evangelicals will not sit out next year's presidential election, Campbell said. "Where are they going to go?"

Where we should have been right after 9/11, at the foot of the Cross, repenting of our unfaithfulness to the Lord and returning to our “first love,” (Rev 2:4) returning to our “first works,” (Rev 2:5) and abandoning the world’s way of doing things, focusing on political and social “activism” to reform society at the expense of preaching the Gospel and returning fully to the Spirit-filled Church’s original mandate.

But we didn’t, and haven’t and the Bride of Christ is still “riding around on the back of someone else’s Harley.” And the Lord is supposed to bless this? The Lord is supposed to say nothing to this disloyalty and infidelity.

Dave Hunt writes recently on this issue on his Facebook site:

“The Christian mission has been to call individuals out of this evil world and into God's "heavenly kingdom" (2 Tm 4:18). Any "reformation" of society has been a byproduct of the transformation of individuals who were born again through faith in Christ and whose lives then became an influence for good. Further, for Christians to join with unbelievers to reform this world was unthinkable. Then it began to happen....”

Now Muslims—eternally lost souls—are praying at the White House, where Evangelical Christianity was doing so just a few months prior and Islamists are

building a mosque near Ground Zero. It is mirroring the Sudan and Lebanon all over again as internal national conflict increases and following the same pattern. And with the recent nominal Republican resurgence in the 2010 midterm elections, the charade of “taking America back” is continuing. What utter futility.

At the 2010 mid-term elections, almost 3.98 *billion* dollars would be spent on the elections, a more than thirty percent increase from 2006, and making it the most expensive *ever*. This happens in the midst the worst economic downturn since the Great Depression. How much of this money is from Christian donors; resources detoured from the storehouse of the Lord? How much diverted from funding churches and seminaries teaching apologetics so the next generation is grounded in their faith and worldview? What has the political process given the Spirit-filled Church in America for all this?

Chuck Colson recently wrote:

“Look in the mirror. The Church, the bride of Christ, has been unfaithful. WE are at fault. We—collectively and individually—have chased after every idol the world has to offer. We have tried so hard to be relevant that we've become almost completely irrelevant. We offer no other way, there is nothing distinctive about us.

We have not been what Jesus called us to be: Salt and light. We have blended in with the world so well that we are practically invisible. That's why so few nonbelievers can see what Paul wrote about in Colossians: ‘the glorious riches of this mystery, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.’”

Do you want to “take America back?” Do you want to see a reversal of this cultural slide into Gomorrah and Sharia Law? Are you are one who “names the name of Christ?” (II Timothy 2:19)

Talk radio host Ingrid Shlueter writes at WorldViewWeekend.com:

“...Some evangelicals are calling for conservatives to ‘take America back.’ The truth is, we can't take our own churches back from false teaching and moral squalor that at times rivals that of the world. The resignation of a well-known pastor after an affair with his personal assistant made headlines just a few weeks ago. If Christians can't keep their own homes and lives in godly order, how in the world are we supposed to “return America to its godly roots?””

We need to quit whoring around with the things of this world (Judges 2:17). I have been part of “organizations,” and “movements,” and “efforts,” which came to nothing and expended an incredible amount of time, resources, and effort that went no where because they were worldly; secular; “non-sectarian” and always

addressed the symptoms of various cultural pathologies and not the disease. I am still chagrined at the waste of my personal time and energy on these things. In spite of that, maybe others will learn from these errors.

This is meant to diminish the importance of Christians being involved in the political process, rather, as Dr. Del Tackett meticulously illustrated in The Truth Project, there are distinctly different social spheres that have their separate roles and *priorities*. New Testament, book of Acts Christianity has a *spiritual* mandate, not a temporal political agenda.

We are already a member of an “organization” - His Church. (I Corinthians 12 - Ephesians 4:25) We already have organizational goals and mandates. (Mark 16:15 - II Timothy 4:2) This was Jesus' Purpose Statement. "I must preach the kingdom of God to the other cities also, for I was sent for this purpose." (Luke 4:43) "...Wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business?" (Luke 2:49)

"We are not called to proclaim philosophy and metaphysics, but the simple gospel. Man's fall, his need of a new birth, forgiveness through atonement, and salvation as the result of faith, these are our battle-ax and weapons of war." - C. H. Spurgeon

The encroachment of Islam in America culture is just another, although more overt, symptom of our national decay, taking root in the rot of already decades present progressive liberalism and religious pluralism—and these present in our own churches! That's our fault. The one feature of Dr. Hammond's writing is he puts the burden of responsibility where it belongs—on the Spirit-filled Church; as I argued in A Rear-guard Action, Islam once again a power the Lord providentially permitting on His Church as a prod/correcting force ever since the 7th century.

Rather, put thirty million Evangelicals on American streets, testifying the Gospel message. We already have them. Put thirty million Evangelicals with a Biblical worldview, working outward from well funded churches and seminaries bankrolled by finances not diverted into secular “activist” organizations and useless politician's campaign coffers. Put thirty million Evangelicals on the streets with a first century book of Acts worldview, rededicated to the transformative power of the Word of God, “declining neither to the right hand, nor to the left” (II Chronicles 34:2 - Proverbs 4:27) engaging the culture and this world with the truth. Give it a year. See what happens.

Still, there are some who, rebelling in their hearts against God's clear correction, like the Jews in Jeremiah's time (Jeremiah 21), refuse to see this and would radicalize the Church against Muslims as a missionary field, only making things worse.

It was Dr. Joseph Holden who said in his definitive presentation, “Islam and Our

Communities,” at Calvary Chapel, Chino Valley: “But yet today we're finding this radicalizing against Islam, as far as socially speaking. We're finding groups, even here in Southern California, across the country, groups overseas, they're wanting you to radicalize politically and socially against Islam, to the extent now where you don't even share the faith or attempt to evangelize Muslims. ... Don't let anyone radicalize you against the great commission.”

Muslims oppressing and killing minorities? That's what unbelievers do. Muslims being deceitful of their intentions, practicing Taqiyya and Kitman” a Shi'ite form of religious lying? Yes, that's what unbelievers do.

Muslims can't be reached with the Good News of Jesus Christ's final and complete atonement on the cross? Nonsense. Muslims are coming to genuine Holy Spirit directed repentance and into real and dynamic relationships with Jesus every day. If one who claims to be a Christian says otherwise, it reveals much on where their hearts are at, and why the Spirit-filled, Evangelical Church finds itself on the defensive on so many issues.

Any speaker or “anti-Islamist” organization that does not couple their presentation with the Gospel, clear separation between the ideas of Islam/the Koran and the people who are imprisoned in this false belief system, and the need of the Church to repent of their unfaithfulness to Biblical truth should *not* be allowed to speak or recruit on church property! Anything else at this point, and the Church is “off mission” and dabbling with sin.



In 2010, the three big cultural conflict items, among other less high-profile conflicts, were the “Ground Zero” mosque proposal, the Murfreesboro, Tenn. mosque proposal, and the Temecula Valley, Calif. Mosque

proposal. All three are on track to being built, no matter all the rallies and protesting, organizing, compelling stories and riveting testimonies from those who have escaped Islam. The planners of the Park51 project even exhibited the audacity to seek public funding for the venture from a federally subsidized aid agency set up to help small businesses harmed by 9/11. And why not? They'll get it. They, Progressive liberalism and Islamism have the field in the American cultural arena, not us.

A few blind Christians, in the grip of their own rebellion against our socio-political reality, have even suggested amending the Constitution/City Charters to “...prohibit an organization from calling itself a religion if it advocates terrorism,

slavery, gender inequality and other beliefs that clash with the U.S. Constitution.”

Really? I have seen Biblical Christianity described this way in many progressive liberal and transnational forums. This is being deceived by the enemy; tying the knot on our own noose. Deception, lies, and darkness have the field, not us.

Yet, as we have seen, repentance from temporal, worldly efforts and a radical return to the Great Commission and Holy Spirit directed evangelism by the Church in America, back on mission, is the only answer.

Dr. Hammond writes:

“...The Church in Malawi had fallen victim to the myth of neutrality. One Malawian commented that they had neglected to effectively "disciple the nations ... teaching them to obey all that Christ has commanded" Matt 28:19 and failed to preserve Biblical principles in the public sphere. "... if the salt loses its flavor ... It is then good for nothing but to be thrown out and trampled underfoot by men." Matthew 5:13

The myth of neutrality. We are either advancing or losing ground. Jesus said, “He that is not with me is against me; and he that gathereth not with me scattereth abroad.” (Matt. 12:30) No middle ground or “strange fire” on the altar. (Lev. 10:1)

The much watched city of Temecula Planning Commission meeting is instructive. The effectiveness of a policy of confrontation and protest advocated by some was tested and predictably failed pertaining to the Islamic Center of the Temecula Valley proposal. Bright, motivated Christians, “chosen soldiers,” diverted into this clamor where their energies would be much more effective supporting and proclaiming the Gospel, seeking to save the lost in these spiritually critical times, squared off against these Muslims, only to see the Imam of the mosque boast, “We Muslims aren’t going anywhere,” and the Planning Commission members, more concerned with the “city’s image” in self-righteous indignation condemning them for their “bigotry” and intolerant “fear.” The proposal passed 5-0 unanimously. It was hard to see these few Christians in the audience, partnered with a mixed multitude, coming to grips with the sovereignty of their Lord. Unfortunately, this militant misrepresentation of the Lord possibly hardened the hearts of a portion of the community to the truth of the Gospel.

That prod again.

This spiritual and cultural challenge will continue and get worse, but it does not have to. These mosque proposals have stirred up a lot of ugly stuff, and certainly people with a temporal world view have responded predictably. But we are not of this world (Eph. 2:2) to model an “us against them, are you for us or our adversaries” mentality; Nay, but as our Captain of the Host of the Lord, Jesus

is now come.

As I pondered the aftermath in the early morning following the Planning Commission meeting, what the Lord was trying to convey to His Church in this matter in Temecula, a mosque being built right across the street from a Baptist church, I had a quiet and clear impression from the Holy Spirit on my heart.

“Where is your love for the lost?”

Indeed, where is our love for the lost...



"Perhaps if there were more of that intense distress for souls that leads to tears, we should more frequently see the results we desire. Sometimes it may be that while we are complaining of the hardness of the hearts of those we are seeking to benefit, the hardness of our own hearts and our feeble apprehension of the solemn reality of eternal things may be the true cause of our want of success." - Hudson Taylor.

"The American culture is obsessed with salvation by politics. We as a corporate body cannot comprehend any other way of changing the culture. They do not understand that God changes cultures by the preaching of the Word. Nineveh's culture was not changed by Jonah getting elected king or arguing that Nineveh stop socialism or stealing from her citizens. It was changed when God ordered him to preach." ~ Tom Pardue Sr. LtCol. U.S. Army (retired)



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