

## Monday Morning Rewind – January 4, 2010

Good morning! It's the first Monday of the new decade. Let the "revolution" begin! On Sabbath we paused to look back at the last ten years and discovered why many considered the '00s the decade from hell. American confidence and optimism have taken a serious hit and the situation isn't much rosier in the Christian world.

Famed researcher George Barna interviewed thousands of people during 2009 to see how Christianity in America was faring at the end of the decade. The news wasn't great. It seems that at the conclusion of a depressing decade, with the country desperate for some good news, fewer Americans are looking to Christianity for the answers. And Christians themselves seem to be adrift. Four themes emerged from Barna's research that we need to pay attention to:

### **Theme 1: Increasingly, Americans are more interested in faith and spirituality than in Christianity.**

Reasons are two-fold: 1) the mostly negative portrayal of the Christian faith, devout Christians and Christian churches by the media. 2) "It is relatively rare to find someone who is an exemplar of the Christian faith."

**Theme 2: Faith in the American context is now individual and customized.** In a postmodern society we have become our own unchallenged spiritual authorities, defining truth and reality as we see fit. Barna states: "In some ways we are creating the ultimate ecumenical movement, where nothing is deemed right or wrong, and all ideas, beliefs and practices are assigned equal validity. . . Pragmatism and relativism, rather than any sort of absolutism, has gained momentum."

We feared that an ecumenical movement would be forced upon us as our religious freedoms were stripped away, but it seems as if no force is needed. Listen, the greatest threat to our faith today is not the pope in Rome, but shockingly it is the pope in the mirror. We are abandoning true faith willingly at the hands of pragmatism and not the persecution we expected. It is convenience we worship and not Christ.

**Theme 3: Biblical literacy is neither a current reality nor a goal in the U.S.** Barna's survey revealed that just half of all self-identified Christians firmly believe that the Bible is totally accurate in all of the principles (not the facts, just the principles) that it teaches.

**Theme 4: Self-examination of spiritual growth is uncommon and likely to stay that way.** The research seems to show that Christians are not willing to examine themselves to see if they are in the genuine faith of Christ, or if they've adopted a Frankenstein faith of their own making.

Is this really the best we can offer? It's obvious that we need more than resolutions, we need a **revolution** to shake up the old Laodicean order of things. This is 2010 and we need to decide if we're going to have a faith that matters or a faith that is convenient.

Rewind to Isaiah 43:18-19 and hear God's call for change in this new year. "Forget the former things; do not dwell on the past. See, I am doing a new thing! Now it springs up; do you not perceive it? I am making a way in the desert and streams in the wasteland." (Isa. 43:18-19)

God is calling for the revolution of a sanctified life and He wants you and I to join it. Here are four aspects of our walk with God that I believe require a revolution:

**Revolutionary commitment.** "Love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength" (Deut. 6:5). Revolutionary followers of Christ are radically committed to doing the will of God. "True sanctification is an entire conformity to the will of God." (*The Sanctified Life*, p. 9) In 2010 the only faith that matters is a faith that makes us relentlessly pursue the will of God in every aspect of our lives.

**Revolutionary faith.** You are responsible for your own spiritual condition. No more blaming the church, the hypocrites, etc., for your spiritual deficiencies.

Consider this. What if, instead of directing people to the church building, we direct them to the church of *you*? You *are* the church, so wherever you are the church is. What will those who come to the

church of you learn about God? What will be their experience? Your life as a revolutionary is to be a road map to salvation for others. Is your map accurate, or will people end up lost following you?

**Revolutionary clothing.** "While the outward adorning beautifies only the mortal body, the ornament of meekness adorns the soul and connects finite man with the infinite God. This is the ornament of God's own choice. He who garnished the heavens with the orbs of light has by the same Spirit promised that 'He will beautify the meek with salvation.' (Ps. 149:4). Angels of heaven will register as best adorned those who put on the Lord Jesus Christ and walk with Him in meekness and lowliness of mind." (E.G.W., *The Sanctified Life*, p. 16)

In the new year's revolution, your life is going to be a continuous 24/7 proclamation of the gospel. **You're not simply going to do evangelism, you are going to be an evangelism campaign wherever you are simply by the way you live your life in the presence and power of God.** It's called letting your light shine.

**Revolutionary obedience.** Rewind to John 2:1-11 and realize that the real fruit of the Kingdom is flat-out, no-excuses obedience to God. In 2010, the Lord is looking for "Nike Christians"—those who just do it. Just do His will. Leave the excuses and the rationalizations and the fence-sitting and the self-interest, and the half-heartedness behind in the past decade. Let the revolution of obedience begin today. "Do whatever He tells you."

In the end the most revolutionary thing you can do is to give your life to Christ. Your whole *life*, not just a piece of it called the Sabbath. Not just the part you choose to give Him when it's convenient.

Joining the revolution means giving Christ your life because He intends to fundamentally change you at the core of your being into something totally different than you are. We could choose not to join and stay the way we are. Jesus doesn't force anyone to follow Him. But if you want 2010 to be different than 2009, and if you truly want a faith that matters, ask God to do a "new thing" in you to revolutionize your commitment, faith, clothing, and obedience.

The following is the excerpt from George Barna's book, *Revolution*, that I read at the conclusion of my message on Sabbath. It is called, "The Affirmations of a Revolutionary." Read it, pray about it, and ask God to help you live its principles. Here's to new beginnings. —Pastor Randy

## **The Affirmations of a Revolutionary**

(Excerpt from "Revolution" by George Barna)

*I am a Revolutionary in the service of God Almighty. My life is not my own; I exist as a free person but have voluntarily become a slave to God. My role on earth is to live as a Revolutionary, committed to love, holiness, and advancing God's Kingdom. My life is not about me and my natural desires; it is all about knowing, loving, and serving God with all my heart, mind, strength, and soul. Therefore, I acknowledge the following:*

*> I am a sinner; broken by my disobedience BUT restored by Jesus Christ in order to participate in good works that please God. I am not perfect; but Jesus Christ makes me righteous in God's eyes, and the Holy Spirit leads me toward greater holiness.*

*> God created me for His purposes. My desire as a Revolutionary is to fulfill those ends, and those ends alone. When I get out of bed each day, I do so for one purpose: to love, obey, and serve God and His people.*

*> Every breath I take is a declaration of war against Satan and a commitment to opposing him.*

*>God does not need me to fight His fight, but He invites me to allow Him to fight through me. It is my privilege to serve Him in that manner. I anticipate and will gladly endure various hardships as I serve God; for this is the price of participation in winning the spiritual war.*

*>I do not need to save the world; Jesus Christ has already done that. I cannot transform the world, but I can allow God to use me to transform some part of it.*

*>My commitment to the Revolution of faith is sealed by my complete surrender to God's ways and His Will. I will gratefully do what He asks of me simply because He loves me enough to ask. I gain my security, success, and significance through my surrender to Him.*

*>I am not called to attend or join a church. I am called to BE THE CHURCH.*

*>Worship is not an event I attend or a process I observe; it is the lifestyle I lead.*

*>I do not give away 10 percent of my resources. I SURRENDER 100 PERCENT.*

*>God has given me natural abilities and supernatural abilities, all intended to advance His Kingdom. I will deploy those abilities for that purpose.*

*>The proof of my status as a Revolutionary is the love I show to God and people.*

*>There is strength in relationships; I am bound at a heart and soul level to other Revolutionaries, and I will bless believers whenever I have the chance.*

*>To achieve victory in the spiritual war in which we are immersed, there is nothing I must accomplish; I must simply follow Christ with everything I have.*

*>This is no greater calling than to know and serve God.*

*>The world is desperately seeking meaning and purpose. I will respond to that need with the Good News and meaningful service.*

*>Absolute moral and spiritual truth exists, is knowable, and is intended for my life; it is accessible through the Bible.*

*>I want nothing more than to hear God say to me, "Well done, My good and faithful servant."*

*Thank You, God, for loving me, for saving me, for refining me, for blessing me, and for including me in the work of Your Kingdom. My life is Yours to use as You please. I love You.*

p.s. The other book I am reading myself and strongly recommend for reading this year is *The Sanctified Life*, by Ellen G. White.

p.s.s. Watch the Community Conversations Webcast, "Faith, Addictions, and Recovery," this Wednesday night at 7:00 PM, Mountain Time at [www.kunaconversationslive.org](http://www.kunaconversationslive.org). And tell a friend!

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2 Chron. 7:14

*"The need is great. The key is prayer. The time is now."*