

August 2000

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## Prophets for Our Times

*"...but the people who know their God shall stand firm and take action." --Daniel 11:32*

Our local newspaper featured an article this weekend that was of particular interest to me. The piece begins: "A dear older pastor/friend/mentor of mine said to me, several years ago, that one of the most avoided roles of the pastor is that of 'Prophet.' The role of the biblical prophets was to confront wrong and call people to right living. With a heavy heart, I take that role in my article this week."

The writer was Rev. Ed Quillin, senior pastor of Timberline Baptist Church in Lacey. He was writing with a heavy heart following his public testimony at a Regional Library Board meeting. By a 4 to 1 vote, the trustees endorsed a policy of providing unfiltered access to Internet pornography for library patrons - in the name of "free speech." The board said it is the responsibility of parents to protect children from harmful material - not the library.

Taking up the mantle of prophet, Pastor Quillin spoke out about this issue, even taking his message to the local paper. He wrote: *"You, oh Timberland Library Board members are at a significant level, responsible and culpable for any damage to the minds of children that occurs in the Timberland Library system. You the jury found the children undeserving of defense. As a pastor I say, "Father forgive them for they know not what they do." As a prophet I say with Isaiah, "Woe to those who call evil good and good evil."*

As I read the word *Prophet*, the Lord brought to mind a letter we wrote to you more than a year ago while forming a pastor-advisory board. That letter explained that we had been "...led by the Lord to encourage and support pastors to be prophetic voices in their communities and to establish a partnership with them."

Good reports in recent weeks confirm to me that many pastors are strongly exhorting their flocks to take unambiguous stands against sin while speaking prophetically to a culture desperately in need of correction.

One report informed us that Pastor Don Detrick of Bethel Church of the Assemblies of God, south of Chehalis, is leading a petition drive against unfiltered Internet access in Timberland Regional Libraries. Recently, he traveled several hours to a remote library on the edge of the Quinault Indian Reservation to testify at a three-hour evening library board meeting. The Lewis County Sheriff, the Mayor of Napavine, and several others accompanied him.

Pastor Dan Secrist of Faith Assembly in Lacey, recently used his opportunity in the Pastor's Perspective column in the local newspaper to write about the Governor's unseemly desire to grant benefits to same-sex partners of state employees. He wrote: "Maybe the time is here for churches to no longer require government sanctions to perform church marriages since domestic partner registries have turned the marriage license into a meaningless tax." [Editor's note: Partner Registry - \$25.00, Marriage License - \$52.00]

Jim Galbraith of *Facts for Freedom* told us that his pastor, Rev. Scott Montagne of Bayside Community Church in Kingston, recently spoke so forcefully about the same-sex benefits issue, that his congregation was moved to stand to their feet in applause. Pastor Montagne also asked his people to contribute money to the **Marriage Benefits Defense Initiative** that will attempt to reverse the Governor's decision on domestic partner benefits. His people responded with a generous \$2400 offering.

Several friends have sent us tapes of passionate sermons that their pastors have preached, exhorting the church to rise up and be the moral conscience of our state. Some have called to say, "You should have been at my church on Sunday. I've never heard my pastor speak like that before!"

Why are many pastors speaking prophetically at this time? According to Gary Bergel, writing for *Intercessors For America*, perhaps they are responding as Habakkuk did in his day when God sent the Babylonians to judge and punish Judah. Habakkuk was perplexed because the Babylonians were so evil, yet God was allowing them to oppress His people.

In anguish, Habakkuk cried out and God revealed His divine purpose in using the Babylonians to execute "a terrible yet redemptive judgment."<sup>1</sup> Judah had lost its awareness of the Kingdom of God, and God was using the Babylonians to bring them back to an eternal focus.

Bergel reasons, "What, more than the assault from secular humanists against biblical morality and Christian belief, has caused the church in America to awaken, re-engage itself in prayer unto repentance, unify, and freshly examine the Word of God for truth and life-restoring principals?"<sup>2</sup>

Our modern day pastor-prophets are recognizing God's call to return to living our lives with eternity in view. God is raising up prophets to first call the church to holiness and then to send the church out to impact their culture.

Pastor and Bible teacher, Dr. Adrian Rogers, was criticized for activism. "Sounds like your trying to mix politics and religion." This was his response: "Let me tell you something about the church. The church is not the master of the state, nor is the church the servant of the state. The church is the conscience of the state. We need to speak up and say what God's Word says...Satan's strategy is to keep good people silent in evil times."<sup>3</sup>

Martin Luther said, "*Where the battle rages, there the loyalty of the soldier is proved...*"

Oh Lord, let the shame of our silence come to an end.

*Rick Forcier*

Executive Director

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<sup>1</sup> Bergel, Gary; "Thy Kingdom Come," *Intercessors for America Newsletter*, July/August 2000

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> Rogers, Adrian, "Will God Impeach America?"