

A.W. Tozer:

THE MOST CRITICAL NEED of the Church at this moment is men - the right kind of men, bold men. The talk is that we need revival, that we need a new baptism of the Holy Spirit - and God knows we must have both - but God will not revive mice. He will not fill rabbits with the Holy Spirit.

We languish for men who feel themselves expendable in the warfare of the soul because they have already died to the allurements of this world. Such men will be free from the compulsions that control weaker men. They will not be forced to do things by the squeeze of circumstances. Their only compulsion will come from within - or from above.

This kind of freedom is necessary if we are to have prophets in our pulpits again instead of mascots. These free men will serve God and mankind from motives too high to be understood by the rank and file of religious retainers who today shuttle in and out of the sanctuary. They will make no decisions out of fear, take no course out of a desire to please, accept no service for financial considerations, perform no religious acts out of mere custom, nor allow themselves to be influenced by the love of publicity or the desire for reputation.

Much that the church - even the evangelical church - is doing today, it is doing because it is afraid not to do it. Ministerial associations take up projects for no higher reasons than that they are scared into it. Whatever their ear-to-the-ground, fear-inspired reconnoitering leads them to believe - or fear - the world expects them to do, they will be doing come next Monday morning with all kinds of trumped-up zeal and show of godliness. The pressure of public opinion calls these prophets, not the voice of Jehovah.

The true church has never sounded out public expectations before launching its crusades. Its leaders heard from God and went ahead wholly independent of popular support or the lack of it. They knew their Lord's will and did it, and their people followed them - sometimes to triumph, but more often to insults and public persecution - and their sufficient reward was the satisfaction of being right in a wrong world.

Another characteristic of the true prophet has been love. The free man who has learned to hear God's voice and dared to obey it has felt the moral burden that broke the hearts of the Old Testament prophets, crushed the soul of our Lord Jesus Christ, and wrung streams of tears from the eyes of the apostles.

The free man has never been a religious tyrant, nor has he sought to lord it over God's heritage. It is fear and lack of self-assurance that has led men to try to bring others under their feet. They have had some interest to protect, some position to secure, so they have demanded subjection from their followers as a guarantee of their own safety. But the free man - never. He has nothing to protect, no ambition to pursue and no enemy to fear. For that reason he is completely careless of his standing among men. If they follow him - well and good. If not, he loses nothing that he holds dear. But whether he is accepted or rejected, he will go on loving his people with sincere devotion, and only death can silence his tender intercession for them.

Yes, if evangelical Christianity is to stay alive, it must have men again - the right kind of men. It must repudiate the weaklings who dare not speak out, and it must seek in prayer and much humility the coming

Our MOST CRITICAL NEED

again of men of the stuff of which prophets and martyrs are made. God will hear the cries of His people as He heard the cries of Israel in Egypt, and He will send deliverance by sending deliverers. It is His way.

And when the deliverers come - reformers, revivalists, prophets - they will be men of God and men of courage. They will have God on their side because they are careful to stay on God's side. They will be co-workers with Christ and instruments in the hands of the Holy Spirit. Such men will be baptized with the Spirit indeed and through their labors He will baptize others and send the long-delayed revival.

(~SOURCE: "This World: Playground or Battleground?", Chapter 7).