

The U.S. Civil War & The Conflict Coming To Your Own House, Friends, & Church Community - posted by MaryJane, on

This was shared and I found it very thought provoking. I have watched some of the documentary mentioned and it is a very powerful piece. I had never really thought about some of the things that this writer points out, it has changed my view of things. Its a bit of a long read but worth it.

God Bless

The U.S. Civil War & The Conflict Coming To Your Own House, Friends, & Church Community

Posted on May 12, 2011 by Jamal Jivanjee

It has been said that the most bloody & defining conflict that America has ever faced was the U.S. Civil War fought from 1861-1865. I had no idea how true that was until recently. I have just finished watching a powerful nine part documentary put together by Ken burns about the American Civil War that has changed my life and understanding of the United States. Even if you are not a fan of history, I recommend this powerful work by Ken Burns.

Why should you care about history? Because history repeats itself. Since there is nothing new under the sun, I am convinced that history is God's gift to us because it can shed light on conflicts that we are currently or will eventually face. Watching this documentary by Ken Burns has shown me 3 major points about the Civil War that I believe have direct correlation to the conflict that Jesus Christ may be bringing to your marriage, your family, and your church community.

1. The Cross

The cross of Christ purchased a new freedom for humanity, and if anyone wants to enter into that freedom, they will have to take up their cross as well. The cross is an instrument of conflict. As believers in Christ, the cross is the necessary means of putting to death the old fleshly reality of slavery that stands in the face of our new reality of freedom. Before the cross is applied to our flesh, however, the freedom & power of Christ's divine life is simply theoretical. The cross is where these two realities meet, and there is always severe conflict.

There is no doubt in my mind that the Civil War was this nation's cross, so to speak. It has been said that the United States, before the Civil War, was only a theoretical nation which was founded upon the premise that all of humanity was created equal. The reality on the ground, however, was something quite different from that premise. If there hadn't been a pretense or written document that proclaimed freedom and equality for all men, then there would not have been any basis for a conflict.

The two realities of slavery and freedom were destined to come head to head in conflict when those words about mankind's inherent identity and worth stemming from our creator were penned in the Declaration of Independence. One reality would have to win out over the other because the two realities of slavery and freedom were not, and are not, compatible with each other.

I believe the same is true regarding the conflict that we are facing with the institutional church system today. The current system, in which only a select few are able to actively function in the church body while the rest must remain passive, produces slavery. The system of religion from the institution, in which the body of Christ is taught to see themselves through the lens of their sinful flesh as opposed to their new nature in Christ, also produces slavery.

There would be no problem or conflict with the system of institutional religion that produces slavery except for the truth of Christ that is revealed through the scriptures. Jesus said when we know the truth, the truth will set us free. He is the personification of truth! The reality of freedom (Christ) and slavery (religion) will clash and war will occur until freedom triumphs over slavery. "It is for freedom that Christ has set us free." (Galatians 5:1)

2. The real problem & the severe cost of conflict

Hindsight is usually 20/20. Today, most understand what the root cause of the U.S. Civil War was. After watching this documentary, however, I learned that this was certainly not the case during the midst of the conflict. Abraham Lincoln himself did not easily come to the conclusion of what the war was about until late in the war. In the beginning, Lincoln believed the war was more about preserving the status quo 'Union' than it was the application of freedom and equality to all people. Consider this statement from Lincoln:

"My paramount object in this struggle is to save the Union, and is not either to save or to destroy slavery. If I could save the Union without freeing any slave I would do it, and if I could save it by freeing all the slaves I would do it; and if I could save it by freeing some and leaving others alone I would also do that."

The Collected Works of Abraham Lincoln edited by Roy P. Basler, Volume V, "Letter to Horace Greeley" (August 22, 1862), p. 388.

Eventually, it became clear to Lincoln that the status quo 'Union' would not be able to be preserved. A new reality of freedom would have to be pursued that would be completely different from what the nation had known since its inception. This realization by Lincoln led to the emancipation proclamation. The emancipation proclamation of 1863 by Lincoln was opposed by not only the South, which was still in rebellion, but the majority of the North as well.

There were riots and attacks upon black people in the North as a result of the emancipation proclamation. Many people in the North expressed outrage at the thought the real cause they were fighting for was the freedom of the slaves. People were more content to fight for the preservation of the status quo (the Union) than they were of the eradication of the system of slavery and oppression.

At this point in the war, the anti-war movement in the North was growing, and it looked as if Lincoln would surely be defeated in the next election of 1864. To the majority of the nation, the cost of the war was too high, and the cause was not worth the bloody conflict. There were a few, however, like Frederick Douglass (a freed slave turned activist) and eventually president Lincoln himself, who realized the stakes of what the conflict was really about. This realization helped them endure the conflict through to completion.

Likewise, scripture says that Jesus endured the scorn of the cross because of the joy set before Him. I have come to realize that Jesus' joy was rooted in seeing His bride (the church), because of the cross, become the expression of His very own body & glory throughout the entire earth! This vision was so great that He endured the scorn of the cross just to make this vision become a reality!

In the same way that many involved in the Civil War lost their drive to fight because of the high cost of the conflict, unless we too have a correct vision of Christ and His body, we will grow weary and surrender the fight as well. We'll settle for the status quo in our relationships, church communities & institutions just to make 'peace'. The sad reality is that there are only a few who will actually endure the scorn of the cross because many Christians don't know what the cause of the conflict with the religious system is, and even fewer grasp a vision worth bearing a cross for.

Many people can recognize the problems with the American institutional church system, but only a few can recognize the roots of the problem. I have written about this very thing in the past. I would encourage you to read about the roots of the problems of the institutional church system.

While we need to understand what the roots of the conflict are, it will take a profound vision and revelation of Jesus Christ to sustain us through and lift us out of this bloody conflict. Unfortunately, there are fewer still who grasp this vision & mystery of Christ even within 'organic' church circles.

Without this vision of Christ's fullness, we will give up the fight, settle for the status quo, and go back to 'Egypt' so to speak. When this happens, the freedom, victory, and dynamic life that Christ has purchased for us stays in the 'theoretical' realm. It never becomes reality among our families or our church communities because our desire to end the conflict may be greater than our vision of Jesus Christ & His body. This never leads to peace, but appeasement. If we truly want 'peace', we'll have to fight for it! History teaches us this. The fight I'm referring to is spiritual, however.

3. It is easier to attack a person than it is to attack a system

Time has a way of making heroes out of villains. While most of the nation now agrees that Abraham Lincoln was one of the

is country's greatest leaders, he was not viewed that way during much of his presidency. Lincoln was seen as a source of conflict and division. After all, the South decided to secede from the Union after his election to the White House. The North blamed him for much of the poor war strategy in the beginning of the war, and they blamed him for making the war about the eradication of slavery with the emancipation proclamation in 1863. He was blamed for being the reason that the country was literally coming apart at the seams.

Obviously, the problems that our nation faced did not originate with Lincoln. It began much earlier. The real conflict in our nation began when truth was presented. When the founding fathers of our nation signed a document that stated that the nation was being founded upon the premise that humanity was created by the creator with equal worth and inherent dignity, the conflict with slavery was all but assured.

While there were a few who knew the system of slavery had to be dealt with, the vast majority seemed intent upon finding a peaceful coexistence between the theory of freedom & equality and the reality of slavery. In the North & South there were many who opposed the idea of slavery, but many of them also opposed the conflict even more. Those people opposed Abraham Lincoln and saw him as the source of conflict as well.

Like I mentioned, history repeats itself. I have seen this personally in the current struggle we are in for the freedom of the bride of Christ (the church). Religion (man's system of righteousness) is slavery, and much of God's people have been, and are still trapped in this system. When truth came (Christ), war between these two systems was declared. I am convinced that religion is Satan's preferred system of slavery because it is hard to recognize. It looks good on the surface. It has a form of 'godliness' but lacks any substance.

Christ Himself (the prince of peace) said that He came to bring conflict right into a person's household and community. If freedom is going to be a reality, this conflict must occur. Notice that Jesus was talking to people who were considered 'God's people'. He was not talking to those who were considered outside of God's household. Christ brings division first to those who claim to be of God's household. This was true in the times of the gospels, and nothing has changed.

If you carry a true vision of Jesus Christ, you will experience division in your own households, and in your own church communities. This is also true for those who are attempting to function in an 'organic' church as well. We may have left the institutional system of religion that produces slavery, but it takes the cross to kill the fleshly system of religion still operating inside of us. There is no escaping this.

Jesus promised conflict, and this has always been the case. Those trapped in the system of religion will not see Christ Himself as the source of their offense, rather they will see you or something else as the problem. Even the thought that Christ is what may be offending them is offensive to them.

Allow me to leave you with a couple of thoughts that may be helpful:

1. Understand that offense & Jesus go hand in hand.

Jesus said "Blessed is he who does not take offense at Me." (Matt. 11:6) Remember Jesus was actually saying this to a very committed servant of God, John the Baptist. I don't care who you are, you will be tempted to become offended at Christ. You will be blessed if you reject this temptation.

2. Understand that if you are in Christ, civil war is coming to you and your household.

Jesus said that our enemies will be those of our own households and communities. The more that Christ reveals Himself through you, the more that others will be offended. Those who are most offended will also be the most religious. When this occurs, you must understand that you are no more the source of the conflict than Abraham Lincoln was the source of the conflict between the States.

Understanding these things will enable you to love those who see you as the cause of the problem, and it will also enable you to withstand the war until peace comes. The prince of peace will establish His church through victory, not appeasement. The conflict will be severe, but love ultimately wins. Christ is the personification of love. He is the greatest warrior and also the greatest weapon. May you embrace Him and fight this war with courage!

Re: The U.S. Civil War & The Conflict Coming To Your Own House, Friends, & Church Com - posted by MaryJane, on: 2011/5/14 11:26

Quote:
-----In the same way that many involved in the Civil War lost their drive to fight because of the high cost of the conflict, unless we too have a correct vision of Christ and His body, we will grow weary and surrender the fight as well. We'll settle for the status quo in our relationships, church communities & institutions just to make 'peace'. The sad reality is that there are only a few who will actually endure the scorn of the cross because many Christians don't know what the cause of the conflict with the religious system is, and even fewer grasp a vision worth bearing a cross for.

After praying on this more I realize I have been guilty of appeasement in my own family relationship. I have avoided being honest and truthful with others because I did not want the conflict. I realize now how sinful and selfish this was on my part.
God bless
Mj

Re: The U.S. Civil War & The Conflict Coming To Your Own House, Friends, & Church Com - posted by rookie (), on: 2011/5/14 11:26

Quote:
-----The prince of peace will establish His church through victory, not appeasement. The conflict will be severe, but love ultimately wins. Christ is the personification of love. He is the greatest warrior and also the greatest weapon. May you embrace Him and fight this war with courage!

I see this conflict...and at times I find myself in the camp of appeasement. Other times, I allow myself to be offended by those who do not recognize the conflict. But my hope continues to grow in Christ because of the conflict.

Re: The U.S. Civil War & The Conflict Coming To Your Own House, Friends, & Church Com, on: 2011/5/14 11:26

Powerful.....just like a lightning bolt out of the clear blue sky, i'm undone.

there was a pastor, by the name of Rev John Rankin, who lived in Ripley, Ohio.

John was raised up by a Godly mother, who was vehemently opposed to slavery, this was in the early 1800's. Later, when John was pastoring the congregation at Ripley, he received word, that his brother, had just purchased a slave.

Stricken, John wrote the first of thirteen letters to his brother, in which he unpacked Scripture, to lovingly reveal to his brother, his sin. These thirteen letters were the basis of what became the first printed refutation of slavery in the United States, "Letters on Slavery".

(John's brother DID repent, and gave manumission to his slaves, making them free)

they hit the nation like a thunderbolt. Mind you, this was in the 1830's, and printed copies, numbered in the hundreds, not hundreds of thousands, and word of this clarion call spread throughout churches, and from this one book, hundreds of "anti-slavery societies" were formed, which were the foundations of what became known as the "underground railroad".

Rev Rankin, walked the talk, and he and his sons, personally spirited away over an estimated 2,000 slaves. a bounty of \$3,000 was placed on his head. He made the decision to buy a house way above the town of Ripley, on a ridge overlooking the Ohio River, into Kentucky, a slave holding state. Word passed throughout the plantations, to look over the river, up to a house, that always had a candle in the window....and there you will find freedom.

i've been to this house, with my son. it was glorious time we had, but as we were walking back to the car, we stopped at the metal sign, that said this house was a national monument. it was about 3/4 an inch thick and there were a half a dozen bullet holes thru it.

i looked at him, he looked at me, we know weaponry, these were no BB gun holes. i was grieved to my core, and asked my son...."look", pointing at the bullet holes, "would we have been "conductors"? He nodded. "Good, let's go"....and we left.

i have a 1970 copy of Rankin's "Letters on Slavery", tried to find 1832 to 1850 copies, very hard. i've read it thru a couple times, its a wonderfully annotated document, and it was the first salvo in the information war on this national sin.

There's a LOT of money in religion, as there was in the institution of slavery, and when you speak against 'golden calves', expect to die, expect to be shunned, expect to be called an "apostate", expect the Cross.

Some things brewing in me, been that way for a spell now, don't know precisely what That is, i DO know its the Wind of the Holy Spirit, but i dont know where Its going to carry me, but i trust God, may i be obedient.

There's going to be a lot of discord on this thread, i feel it, but thats okay, because "proud" men and women, when they die to flesh and self and religion, they die hard, they kick, and they fuss, but the Wind of the Holy Spirit is blowing and blowing hard.

Resist Him at your peril.