

# CALL TO PRAYER AND SOLEMN ASSEMBLY

September 17, 1989

## **WHEREAS God has revealed to us through His Word and His activity that:**

1. The times are very serious. Many factors indicate that the church should be preparing for the return of the Lord. Revelation 19:6-9 says that the Bride will prepare herself for her union with Christ.
2. He is calling extraordinary numbers of people to pray for spiritual awakening and we are seeing more prayer than at any other time in decades (Isa. 62:6-7; Zech. 8:20-23).
3. He has begun awakening a growing number of His people who are making radical adjustments in their lives to God (Acts 2:16-21).
4. Because of our impurities, God is bringing judgment on America and on His church in America by removing His hedge of protection and giving us over to the consequences of our sins (Isa. 5).
5. Unless we repent, the gravity of His judgment will intensify with each passing day as He begins to pour out His wrath in turning us over to disasters (Ezek. 7:1-14).

## **WHEREAS God has revealed His displeasure because:**

1. His people have disregarded His Lordship for their own selfish desires and self-serving practices (Matt. 7:21-22; Luke 6:46).
2. His people have not honored His holiness and are not becoming holy as He is Holy (1 Pet. 1:16-17).
3. His standards and commandments in His Word are not being used to determine right and wrong (Isa. 5:20).
4. His people are disoriented to Him and apathetic to His voice and activities (Luke 19:41-46).
5. His Bride has prostituted herself with worldly values, priorities, and methods and is not preparing herself for the wedding feast at Christ's second coming (Eph. 5:25-26).
6. His warnings have been ignored again and again (Rom. 10:21; Ezek. 12:21-28).
7. His house is not known as a "house of prayer for all nations," and He is displeased with much of the religious activity and worship of His people (Matt. 21:13).
8. Many leaders remain in personal sin and disobedience and have not led His people to corporate repentance (Jer.23).

## **WHEREAS God has given us a way to come to repentance and spiritual awakening:**

1. Individually by confessing and forsaking our sins (1 John 1:9).
2. Corporately by calling a solemn assembly to seek the Lord (2 Chron. 7:14; Joel 1:13-15; Joel 2:1,12-17; Daniel 9).

## **THEREFORE we urge all leaders to call a solemn assembly of the people they lead.**

1. *WHAT is a solemn assembly?* The urgent call of a leader to all the people he or she leads to come together:
  - to humble themselves
  - to seek God's face
  - to fast and pray
  - to turn from their wicked ways
  - to hear God's Word read
  - to remove all things and practices from their lives that are displeasing God
  - to worship God with all their hearts
  - to make a solemn covenant with God to become God's instruments to spread the gospel to all the world.

2. *WHY hold a solemn assembly?* Because of God's judgment on His people, a fresh revelation of God, or a rediscovery of truth from His Word.

3. *WHO should call a solemn assembly and who should attend?* The leaders in Israel called all the people together. Usually the call came from the prophet, priest, and/or the king.

- 2 Chronicles 12:1-8 Rehoboam
- 2 Chronicles 15:1-19 Asa
- 2 Chronicles 20:1-29 Jehoshaphat
- 2 Chronicles 29-31 Hezekiah
- 2 Chronicles 34 Josiah
- Ezra 10:7-9 Ezra
- Nehemiah 8-9 Nehemiah
- Joel 1-2 Joel

In our day solemn assemblies should be called by every leader for the people he or she leads. The call could be for a family, church, state convention, national convention, or the whole country by leaders of each respective body.

4. *WHEN should a leader call a solemn assembly?* At God's sovereign direction. As soon as possible!

"Blow the trumpet in Zion, sanctify a fast, call a solemn assembly: Gather the people, sanctify the congregation, assemble the elders, gather the children, and those that suck the breasts: let the bridegroom go forth of his chamber, and the bride out of her closet. Let the priests, the ministers of the Lord, weep between the porch and the altar, and let them say. Spare thy people, O Lord, and give not thine heritage to reproach, that the heathen should rule over them: wherefore should they say among the people, Where is their God?" (Joel 2:15-17).

## **THEREFORE we also plead with all Christians to join in prayer groups on a continuing basis until spiritual awakening comes in our churches and nation by including:**

### *1. Explicit Agreement*

Make a covenant with one another to pray for at least one year for spiritual awakening in your church, association, convention, and nation. Consider renewal of the covenant at the end of the first year.

### *2. Visible Union*

Set a specific time and place for your group to meet on a regular basis. We recommend that it be on Saturday or Sunday for an hour, and occasionally for a day or a half-day of fasting and prayer.

### *3. Extraordinary Prayer*

Make the prayer extraordinary in asking God to do extraordinary things, praying at extraordinary times, with extraordinary fervency, depending on the sovereignty of God and the extraordinary power of the Holy Spirit.

"Who knows? He [God] may turn and have pity and leave behind a blessing" (Joel 2:14. NIV).

Issued by the prayer leaders of the Southern Baptist Convention:

- Douglas Beggs, Brotherhood Commission
- Henry Blackaby, Home Mission Board
- Minette Drumwright, Foreign Mission Board
- Barbara Elder, Woman's Missionary Union
- T. W. Hunt, Baptist Sunday School Board
- Avery Willis, Baptist Sunday School Board