



CHRISTIAN
UNION

Seven Keys to Kingdom Advancement



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Seven Keys to Kingdom Advancement

KEY ONE: ASPIRATION AND DESPERATION

May God's Kingdom Come



Matthew 6:9-10 - Pray then like this: “Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name. Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.”

Sermon on the Mount, 1877
Carl H. Bloch



Seven Keys to Kingdom Advancement

- 1. Aspiration and Desperation**
2. Theological Foundations
3. Seeking God Wholeheartedly
4. Spiritual Practices
5. Supernatural Aspects
6. Impacting the Three Spheres
7. Leadership



1. Aspiration and Desperation

Aspiration and Desperation

1. The Establishment of the Kingdom
2. Revival as Advancement of Kingdom of Light Over Darkness
3. Motivations
4. America in Spiritual Decline
5. Basis for Hope
6. Desperation



1. Aspiration and Desperation

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Five Phases to Fully Establish the Kingdom

1. **Creation** - God's purpose of a kingdom in creation of image-bearers (Gen 1:1-2:25)
2. **Corruption** - Fall, Nephilim and Flood, Babel (Gen 3:1-11:32)
3. **Restoration** - Abraham, Israel, Jesus (Gen 12:1 - Acts 1:26)
4. **Church Age** - Present age of kingdom expansion (Acts 2:1 - Revelation)
5. **Return of Christ** - Millennium, New Heaven and New Earth! (Revelation)



1. Aspiration and Desperation

Where Humanity Is Headed! Fully Established Kingdom!

The Kingdom Fully Established - Revelation 21:2, 3 - And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. ³ And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, **“Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God.”**

The Establishment of the Kingdom: (1) Creation



God's desire for a kingdom of image-bearers to rule under His authority.

Genesis 1:1 - In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.

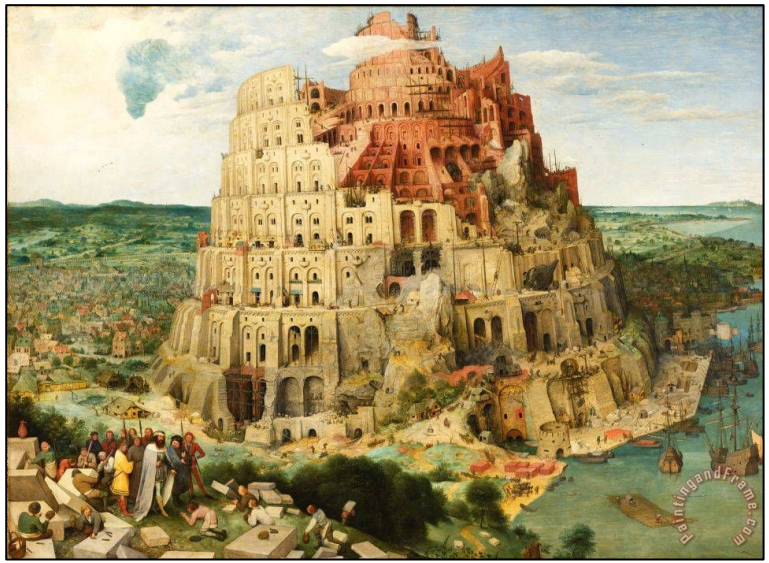
The Establishment of the Kingdom: (1) Creation



Genesis 1:26 - Then God said, “Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. And let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over the livestock and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.”

The Creation of Adam, 1512
Michelangelo

The Establishment of the Kingdom: (2) Corruption



Three Major Corruptions

1. **Fall**
(Genesis 3:1-14)
2. **Nephilim and the Flood**
(Genesis 6:1-9:29)
3. **Babel**
(Genesis 11:1-32; Deuteronomy 32:8, 9)

The Tower of Babel, 1563
Pieter Bruegel the Elder



The Establishment of the Kingdom: (3) Restoration

- **Abraham:** Choosing of Abraham (Gen 12:1-28:9)
- **Israel:** Establishment of Israel (Gen 28:10--Malachi)
- **Jesus Christ:** Life, ministry, death and resurrection of Jesus (Mt 1:1-Acts 1)



The Establishment of the Kingdom: (4) Church Age

- Kingdom like leaven working through all the flour (Luke 13:20, 21)
- Holy Spirit Power for Kingdom Expansion (Acts 1:8-2:47)
- Expansion to the Gentiles (Acts 10:1-11:30)
- Gospel of the Kingdom Proclaimed to Whole World (Mt 24:14; Mt. 28:18-20)



The Establishment of the Kingdom: (4) Church Age

Matthew 24:14 - “And this **gospel of the kingdom** will be proclaimed throughout the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the **end will come.**”

Matthew 28:18-20 - And Jesus came and said to them, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the **end of the age.**”



1. Aspiration and Desperation

Hastening the Establishment of the Kingdom

2 Peter 3:11-13 - Since all these things are thus to be dissolved, what sort of people ought you to be in lives of holiness and godliness, ¹² waiting for and **hastening the coming of the day of God**, because of which the heavens will be set on fire and dissolved, and the heavenly bodies will melt as they burn! ¹³ But according to his promise we are waiting for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells.”



The Establishment of the Kingdom: (5) Return of Jesus Christ



Thy
Kingdom
Come ...



The Establishment of the Kingdom: (5) Return of Jesus Christ

The Lord's Return - 1 Thessalonians 4:16-17 - For the Lord himself will descend from heaven with a cry of command, with the voice of an archangel, and with the sound of the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. ¹⁷ Then we who are alive, who are left, will be caught up together with them in the clouds to **meet the Lord in the air, and so we will always be with the Lord.**

Holy and Righteous Church - Ephesians 5:26, 27 - that he might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, ²⁷ so that he might present the church to himself in splendor, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, that she might be holy and without blemish.



The Establishment of the Kingdom: (5) Return of Jesus Christ

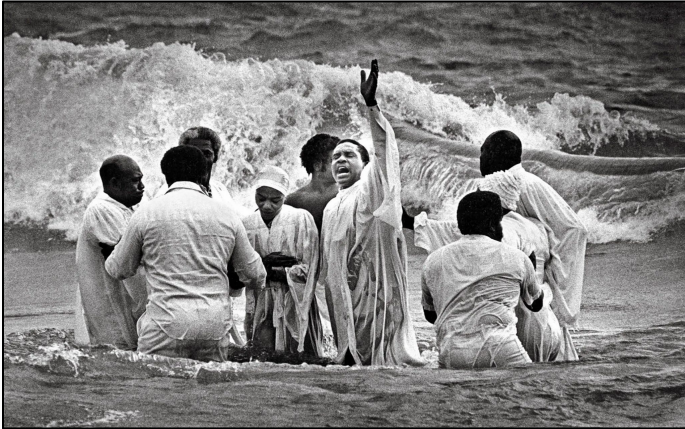
Christ as Ruler - Revelation 11:15 - Then the seventh angel blew his trumpet, and there were loud voices in heaven, saying, **“The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ, and he shall reign forever and ever.”**

The Kingdom Fully Established - Revelation 21:2, 3 - And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. ³ And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, **“Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God.”**



1. Aspiration and Desperation

Faithful to His Call - Where Meaning is Found



Chicago Lakefront Baptism
John H. White

The call to advance the kingdom of God during the church age, taking the gospel to every creature on earth, discipling and baptizing them in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, spreading the kingdom of light to all territories, and all cultural spheres is the greatest commandment ever given to humanity by the greatest person to ever live. By the grace of God may we submit ourselves to His divine purposes and prove faithful.



1. Aspiration and Desperation

*We live in the church age, and it's
our role to hasten the day of Christ's return
by deepening and expanding
the kingdom of God.*



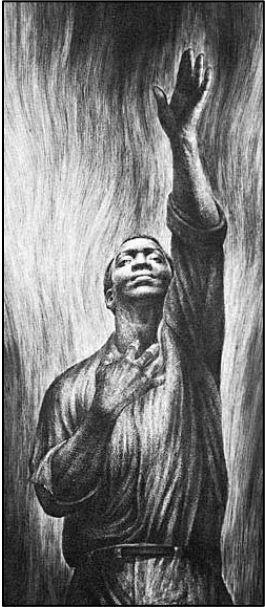
1. Aspiration and Desperation

Aspiration and Desperation

1. The Establishment of the Kingdom
2. **Revival as Advancement of Kingdom of Light Over Darkness**
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1. Aspiration and Desperation

A Definition of Revival



Revival comes by God's grace through Christians' faithful efforts of pleasing Him by seeking Him wholeheartedly, resulting in multiplicative advances of the kingdom of light over the kingdom of darkness in the personal, territorial, and cultural spheres, accompanied by periodic outpourings of the Holy Spirit in group settings.

Man, 1959 by Charles White



1. Aspiration and Desperation

All instances in the ESV of *revive, revived, and revival*

Genesis 45:27

Judges 15:19

1 Samuel 30:12

1 Kings 17:22

2 Kings 13:21

Ezra 9:8, 9

Nehemiah 4:2

Psalm 19:7

Psalm 69:32

Psalm 71:20

Psalm 80:18

(in NIV, but not ESV)

Psalm 85:6

Isaiah 57:15 (twice)

Lamentations 1:11, 16, 19

Hosea 6:2

Habakkuk 3:2

Philippians 4:10



1. Aspiration and Desperation

Important Revival Passages

Psalm 19:7 - “The law of the LORD is perfect, **reviving** the soul; the testimony of the LORD is sure, making wise the simple.”

Psalm 69:30-33 - “I will praise the name of God with a song; I will magnify him with thanksgiving. **This will please the LORD** more than an ox or a bull with horns and hoofs. When the humble see it they will be glad; you who seek God, let your hearts **revive.**”



Important Revival Passages

Hosea 6:1-3 - “Come, let us return to the LORD; for he has torn us, that he may heal us; he has struck us down, and he will bind us up. ² After two days he will **revive** us; on the third day he will raise us up, that we may live before him. ³ Let us know; let us press on to know the LORD; his going out is sure as the dawn; he will come to us as the showers, as the spring rains that water the earth.”



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Three Revival Schools

Focus on the Miraculous

- Toronto Blessing
- Pensacola (Brownsville) Revival
- Ministry of Impartation (Romans 1)

Cities of Toronto, Pensacola, Redding not impacted as much.

Repentance and the Word

- Focus on Repentance (sometimes public) and Proclamation of the Word
- Asbury Revival
- First Great Awakening
- Typically Reformed

Save (leader of Healing the Land Team in Fiji): “They have no power...”

Kingdoms of Light & Darkness

- Christian Union, George Otis, Jr., John Mulinde, Healing the Land Team
- 2 Chronicles 7:14 Prayer, Fasting, Repentance and Seeking God
- First and Second Great Awakenings
- Transformation Videos: Fiji, Uganda, Colombia, etc.

Of course, proclamation of the Word and supernatural also occur.



1. Aspiration and Desperation

Kingdoms of Light and Darkness

2 Chronicles 7:13, 14 - “When I shut up the heavens so that there is no rain, or command the locust to devour the land, or send pestilence among my people, ¹⁴if my people who are called by my name **humble themselves**, and **pray** and **seek** my face and **turn** from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and heal their land.”

Colossians 1:13 - He has delivered us from the **domain of darkness** and transferred us to the **kingdom of his beloved son**



1. Aspiration and Desperation

Kingdom of Light

- “Kingdom of God” → 67 instances, mostly in Luke
- “Kingdom of Heaven” → 30 instances all in book of Matthew
- “Kingdom of Christ and God” → Ephesians 5:5
- “Kingdom of His Beloved Son” → Colossians 1:13
- “Heavenly Kingdom” → 2 Timothy 4:18
- “Eternal Kingdom of Our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ” → 2 Peter 1:11



1. Aspiration and Desperation

Kingdoms of Light and Darkness

Personal Sphere

Mark 1:14, 15

- Salvations
- Holiness, Fillings of the Holy Spirit
- Sanctification
- Fruits of the Spirit
- Deliverance, Healings, Miracles
- Widespread Fervent Prayer
- Love for others and God
- Involvement in Christian Discipleship

Territorial Sphere

Genesis 28:10-22

- Fruitfulness in the Surrounding Land
- No Hauntings, or Spiritual Power for Psychics
- Atmosphere of Godliness, Life and Joy
- Non-Christians spontaneously experience the things of God

Cultural Sphere

Isaiah 61:1-7

- Religious
- Family
- Business
- Education
- Government
- Media
- Medical
- Arts
- Entertainment
- Athletics



Revival is an Increase of the Presence of God Himself:

1. **Invasion into the Three Spheres** - It is the multiplicative (not just incremental) increase of the kingdom of God in all three spheres: Personal Sphere, Territorial Sphere, and Cultural Sphere.
2. **Visitations** - There are periodic visitations of the Spirit in group settings, where attendees look at each other, knowing that God has come, including manifestations of God in the room.



Expansion of the Kingdom of Light

1 Thessalonians 1:2-10 - We give thanks to God always for all of you, constantly mentioning you in our prayers, ³ remembering before our God and Father your work of faith and labor of love and steadfastness of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ. ⁴ For we know, brothers loved by God, that he has chosen you, ⁵ because our gospel came to you not only in **word, but also in power and in the Holy Spirit and with full conviction**. You know what kind of men we proved to be among you for your sake.



1. Aspiration and Desperation

Expansion of the Kingdom of Light

1 Thessalonians 1:2-10 (cont'd) - ⁶ And you became imitators of us and of the Lord, for you received the word in much affliction, with **the joy of the Holy Spirit**, ⁷ so that you became an example to all the believers in Macedonia and in Achaia. ⁸ **For not only has the word of the Lord sounded forth from you in Macedonia and Achaia, but your faith in God has gone forth everywhere**, so that we need not say anything. ⁹ For they themselves report concerning us the kind of reception we had among you, and how you turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God, ¹⁰ and to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead, Jesus who delivers us from the wrath to come.



1. Aspiration and Desperation

120 Fiji Villages From 2000 - Present

Personal Sphere

- Salvations
- Reduction and elimination of drugs and alcohol
- Kids destroying marijuana plants
- Deliverances and healings

Territorial Sphere

- Massive increase in fish, crabs, mussels
- No flooding in four years
- Hurricanes passing by
- Streams healed of pollution
- Coral reefs returning
- Yams twice the size
- Trees bearing fruit continually
- Unfruitful land growing crops

Cultural Sphere

- Wednesdays: fasting til 3pm and evening service, Sundays all day
- Reconciliation among churches
- Fathers reuniting and family reconciliations
- Chiefs changing their induction ceremonies
- Government providing schools and transportation
- Chinese leasing land



1. Aspiration and Desperation

Two Recent Revivals at Princeton



Princeton saw two revivals in recent memory. One from 1996-2001 and the second from 2008-2013.

**Nassau Hall
Princeton University**



1. Aspiration and Desperation

Princeton Late 1990's

Personal Sphere

- Increased Salvations
- Two turning selves in for honor code violations
- Increase in personal holiness and commitment to lordship of Christ
- 70 to 450 involvement
- Increased love for others, and divine revelations

Territorial Sphere

- “I never thought Princeton would be so religious”
- Newspapers
- Campus Whig-Clio debate
- Dean of engineering school wanted to hear the gospel

Cultural Sphere

- 450 All campus worship
- Spirit falling at AIA meetings, LLS, Ski Safari
- 8am Daily Student prayer meeting of 45
- Public confession of sin
- President: “I know who you are”
- Triangle Club
- Tigerlilies Singing Group
- RA invitations
- Athletic teams
- Student government



1. Aspiration and Desperation

Princeton 2009

Personal Sphere

- Increased Salvations from 2 to 10, 20, 30 annually
- 70 to 400 involvement
- Turning selves in for honor code violations
- Visions, dreams, trances
- Atheist Religious Life Rep becomes Christian
- Captain of Football Team converts, President of Eating Club steps down
- Powerful deliverance of student leader

Territorial Sphere

- Once a week via website asking to be involved
- Chuck Hetzler - Harder to pray when back home in Illinois

Cultural Sphere

- 120 day fasts, spirit falling at retreats, all night prayer
- Night meetings for worship at ministry fellow's
- Students spontaneously evangelizing in campus center - Announcing God loves you..
- Athletic teams impacted
- Entire cross country team
- Professors asking for prayer
- Student presented to Anthropology class



1. Aspiration and Desperation

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1. Aspiration and Desperation

Motivations

1. Our Identity
2. Gratitude to God
3. He Helps Us
4. Good and Bad Consequences
5. People Need God



Motivations (1) Our Identity

- **God's Glory.** We were created for His glory and purposes (Isa 43:7).
- **Loving God.** We are to love God and please Him (Lk 10:27).
- **God's Commands.** God commands us to expand his kingdom (Mt 28:18-20).
- **Knowing Him.** It deepens our relationship with Him so we truly get to know Him (1 John 2:3).



Motivations (2) Gratitude to God

- God has given us life (Job 33:4).
- Jesus died on the cross and rescued us from our sins (1 Corinthians 15:3).
- God provides for us (Mt 6:25-34).
- God has given us His Holy Spirit (Acts 2:38, 39).
- Jesus continually mediates for us (1 Timothy 2:5).
- God hears our prayers (Hebrews 4:16, 17).



1. Aspiration and Desperation

Motivations (3) He Helps Us

- He is with us (Joshua 1:6-9; Hebrews 13:15).
- He empowers us (Acts 1:8, 9).
- He equips us (Ephesians 4:11-16).
- He comforts us (2 Corinthians 1:3-7).
- He inspires us by serving as our example (Hebrews 4:14-16).



Motivations (4) Good and Bad Consequences

Rewards - God rewards Christians temporally and eternally as they obey Him (Hebrews 11:6). The advancement of the kingdom worldwide the past 2,000 years has seen incredible blessing come to humanity. It's meant forgiveness of sins, but also material blessings, freedom from superstition and fear, promotion of education and equality of all people, justice, poverty relief, peace and joy.



Motivations (4) Good and Bad Consequences

Books Documenting the Radically Positive Impact of Kingdom Advancement:

- *For the Glory of God: How Monotheism Led to Reformations, Science, Witch-Hunts, and the End of Slavery* by Rodney Stark
- *The Victory of Reason: How Christianity Led to Freedom, Capitalism, and Western Success* by Rodney Stark
- *Christianity on Trial: Arguments Against Anti-Religious Bigotry* by Vincent Carroll and David Shiflett
- *What if Jesus Had Never Been Born?* by D. James Kennedy
- *Return of the God Hypothesis: Three Scientific Discoveries That Reveal the Mind Behind the Universe* by Stephen Meyer



Motivations (4) Good and Bad Consequences

Punishments - God punishes Christians in this life (1 Corinthians 11:27-32), and Christians forgo potential rewards in the next life when they rebel against Him (1 Corinthians 3:12-15).

- God punished Israel by destroying Jerusalem in 70 AD because they rejected the Messiah.
- Through history God has brought judgment to countless individuals and nations because of their rejection of Him.



Motivations (5) People Are Lost Without God

- **Harassed Sheep** - People are harassed and helpless and need shepherds (Matthew 9:35-10:1).
- **Much Brutality in the Darkness** - Life can be brutal when there's so much darkness in the three spheres (Ezk 12:17-20).
- **Some Destined for Heaven** - Heaven is real and the destiny of the redeemed (John 14:1-3).
- **Many Destined for Hell** - Hell is real and the destiny of all the unrighteous (Mt. 5:22; 7:13, 14).



1. Aspiration and Desperation

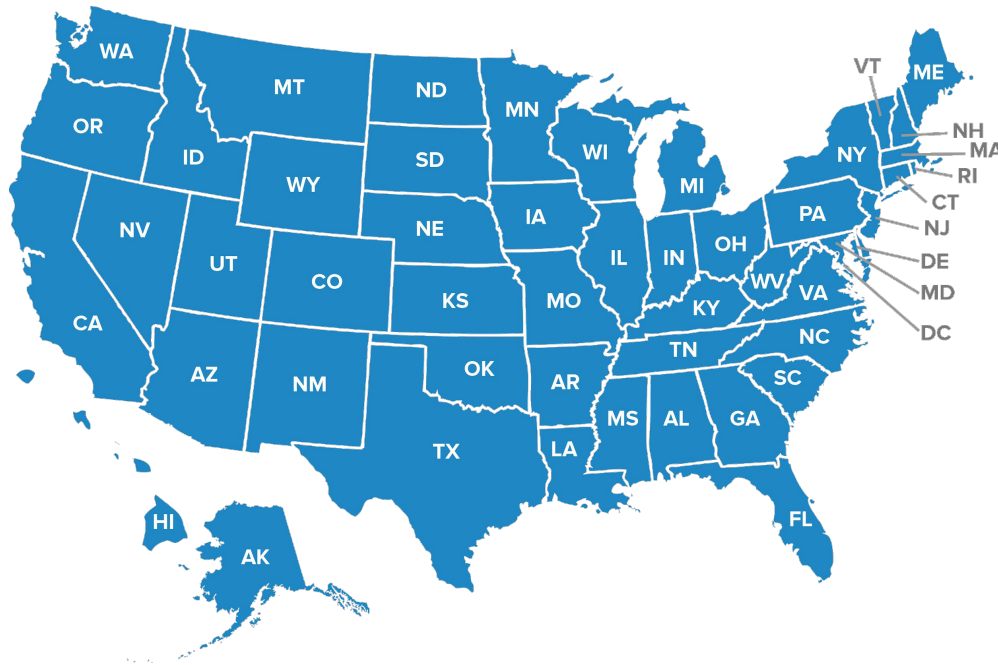
Aspiration and Desperation

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1. Aspiration and Desperation

Assessing U.S. Religious Commitment



Can be assessed
anecdotally in terms
of what's seen and
experienced.

Can be assessed
through surveys and
scientific
methodology.



Pew Research Confirms Downward Trends

Pew Research confirms the multi-decade downward trend of Christian belief and practice in America.

OCTOBER 17, 2019

In U.S., Decline of Christianity Continues at Rapid Pace

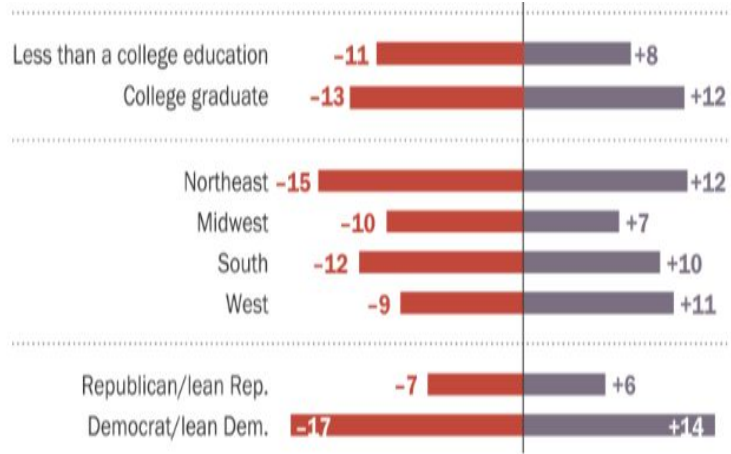
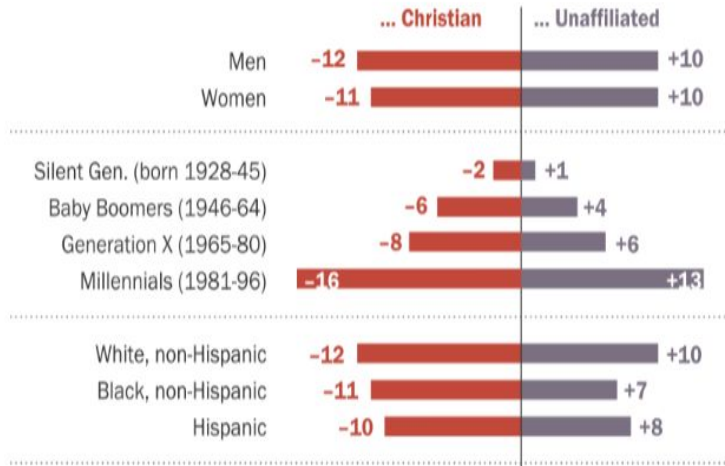
An update on America's changing religious landscape



1. Aspiration and Desperation

Broad-based declines in share of Americans who say they are Christian

Percentage-point change between 2009 and 2018/2019 in the share who identify as ...



Source: Aggregated Pew Research Center political surveys conducted 2009 and January 2018-July 2019 on the telephone.

"In U.S., Decline of Christianity Continues at Rapid Pace"

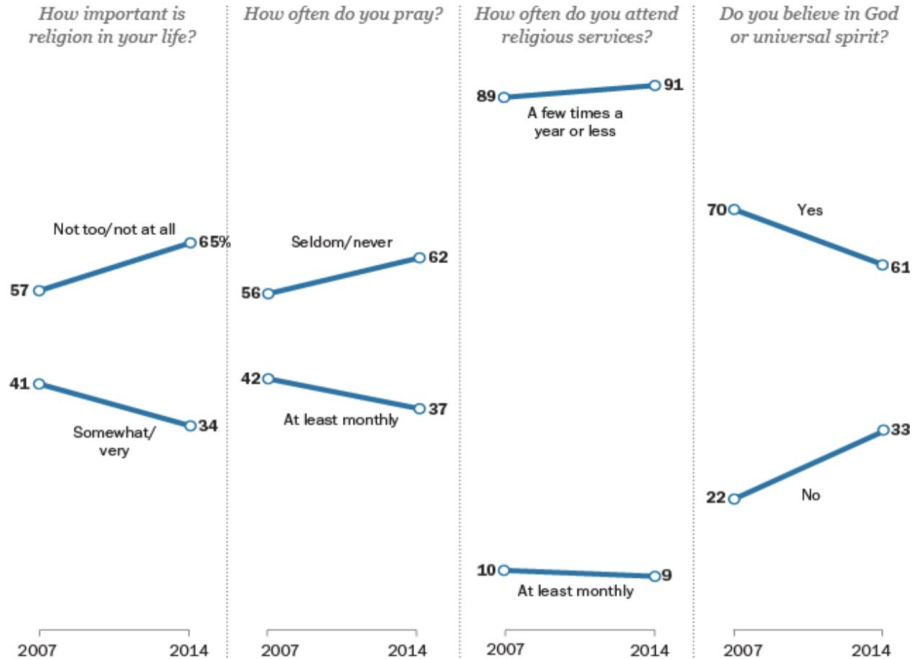
PEW RESEARCH CENTER



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The 'Nones' Are Becoming Increasingly Secular

Among the religiously unaffiliated



Source: 2014 Religious Landscape Study, conducted June 4-Sept. 30, 2014.

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

2007-2014

How important is religion in your life? Not too/not at all from 57% to 65%

How often do you pray? Seldom/never from 56% to 62%

Do you believe in God or universal spirit? Yes from 70% to 61%



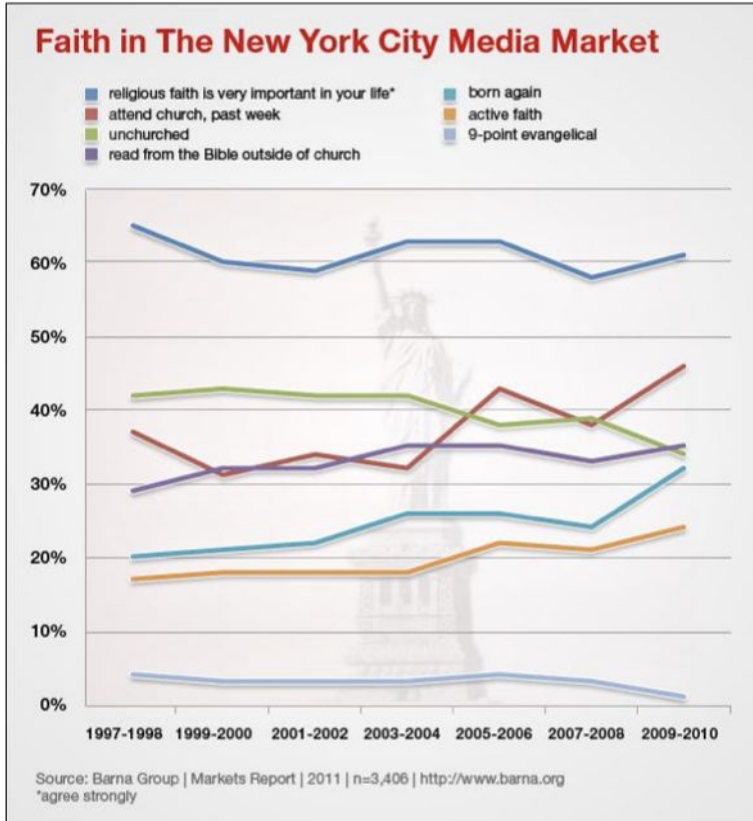
1. Aspiration and Desperation

Barna Research Confirms Downward Trends

Barna Research confirms the multi-decade downward trend of Christian belief and practice in America.



1. Aspiration and Desperation



“9-Point Evangelicals” meet the born again criteria (described above) plus seven other conditions. Those include:

1. Saying their faith is very important in their life today;
2. Believing they have a personal responsibility to share their religious beliefs about Christ with non-Christians;
3. Believing that Satan exists;
4. Believing that eternal salvation is possible only through grace, not works;
5. Believing that Jesus Christ lived a sinless life on earth;
6. Asserting that the Bible is accurate in all that it teaches; and
7. Describing God as the all-knowing, all-powerful, perfect deity who created the universe and still rules it today.

Being classified as an evangelical is not dependent upon church attendance or the denominational affiliation of the church attended. Respondents were not asked to describe themselves as “evangelical.”



1. Aspiration and Desperation

The Pinetops Report

February 2018

What Does the Future Hold for Christianity in America?

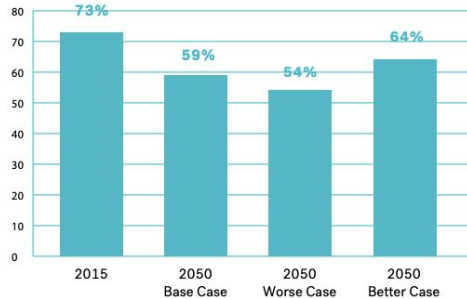
Director and CEO - Joshua Crossman



1. Aspiration and Desperation

50 Million More Lost by 2050

PROJECTED PERCENTAGE OF
CHRISTIANS IN AMERICA



Base case: 35 million disaffiliate
 Worse case: 42 million disaffiliate
 Better case: 19 million disaffiliate

The Pinetops Report relies most heavily on four major research efforts: the Religious Landscape Study produced by the Pew Research Center; the Baylor Religion Survey; the PRRI/RNS September 2016 Survey conducted by the Public Religion Research Institute; and the Gallup Annual Religion Surveys. Full report can be found at:

<https://www.greatopportunity.org/>.

73% to 59%

The overall Christian percentage of the population will drop to 59 percent, from today's 73 percent

50 million

The unaffiliated population will nearly double as a percentage of the U.S. population, from 17 percent today to 30 percent in 2050, an increase of more than 50 million people



30 Million Lost in 10 Years

Does this break our hearts?

50 Million More Lost by 2050



Just The Marginally Committed Leaving the Faith?

Against the data, some believe it's only the marginally committed who are losing the faith. Not acknowledging the dire situation, they do not take the radical steps necessary to call the nation to God.

Jeremiah 6:10 - “To whom shall I speak and give warning, that they may hear? Behold, their ears are uncircumcised, they cannot listen; behold, the word of the LORD is to them an object of scorn; they take no pleasure in it.”



1. Aspiration and Desperation

National Spiritual Decline

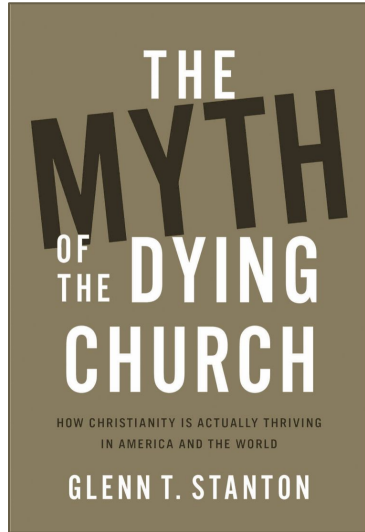
Myth: Spiritual decline in America is limited only to the marginally committed becoming non-committed, thus making the church more pure.

Fact: There is dramatic decline of millions of strongly committed Christians in the United States over the past decades with projections of continual indefinite decline. This is in addition to the reduction of the number of the marginally committed.



1. Aspiration and Desperation

Some Argue that America is Not in Spiritual Decline



Glenn T. Stanton wrote an article and a book arguing that “new Harvard research says U.S. Christianity is not shrinking, but growing stronger: is churchgoing and religious adherence really in ‘widespread decline’ so much so that conservative believers should suffer ‘growing anxiety’? Absolutely not.”

But the data is misread and misrepresented.

[“New Harvard Research Says U. S. Christianity Is Not Shrinking But Growing Stronger” by Glenn T. Stanton in *The Federalist*, January 2018](#)



1. Aspiration and Desperation



The Persistent and Exceptional Intensity of American Religion: A Response to Recent Research

Landon Schnabel,^a Sean Bock^b

a) Indiana University Bloomington; b) Harvard University

[Article Link](#)



Assessing U.S. Religious Commitment through Surveys

Believing

- Bible as literal word of God
- Jesus is God
- Christian sexual ethic as normative
- Salvation only through Jesus

Behaving

- Frequency of church attendance
- Frequency of Prayer
- Pattern of giving
- Pattern of volunteering
- Pattern of Christian conduct

Belonging

- Stated Christian Affiliation
- Describing oneself as “born again,” “Christian,” “evangelical,” or “none.”



1. Aspiration and Desperation

General Social Survey

[The General Social Survey](#) (GSS) is a project of the independent research organization NORC (National Opinion Research Center) at the University of Chicago, with principal funding from the National Science Foundation. The GSS gathers data on contemporary American society in order to monitor and explain trends and constants in attitudes, behaviors, and attributes. Hundreds of trends have been tracked since 1972. In addition, since the GSS adopted questions from earlier surveys, trends can be followed for up to 80 years.

The [GSS has twenty questions assessing religious commitment.](#)



1. Aspiration and Desperation

Assessing from General Social Survey Data: Bible as the Word of God

Is the Bible the Inspired Word of God, Literal Word of God, or a Book of Fables?



1. Aspiration and Desperation

Schnabel and Bock Intensity of American Religion

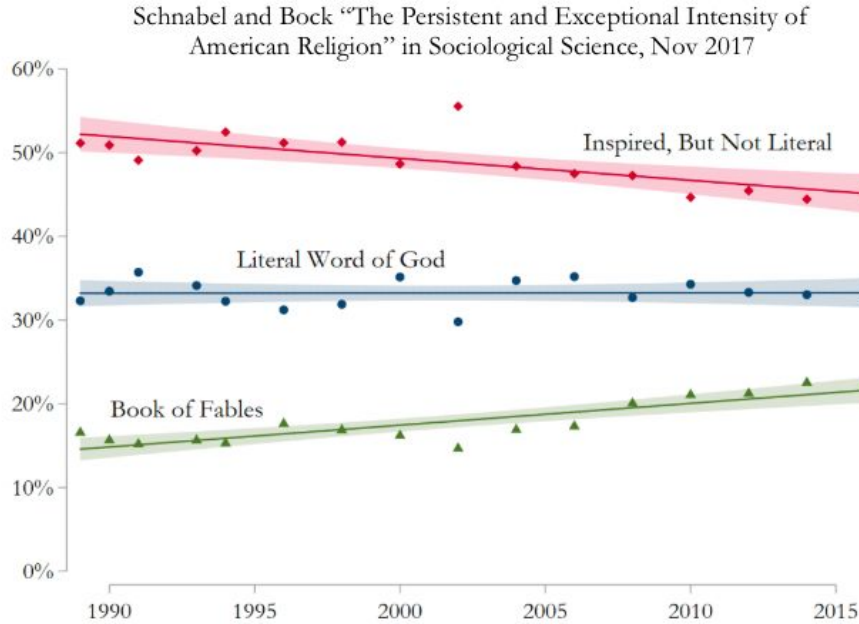


Figure 4: View of Bible over time, General Social Survey. Source: General Social Survey, 1989 to 2016. Note: The GSS question asks which of the three views toward the Bible presented in the figure comes closest to their own. Those who volunteered responses other than the three given were excluded from this analysis.

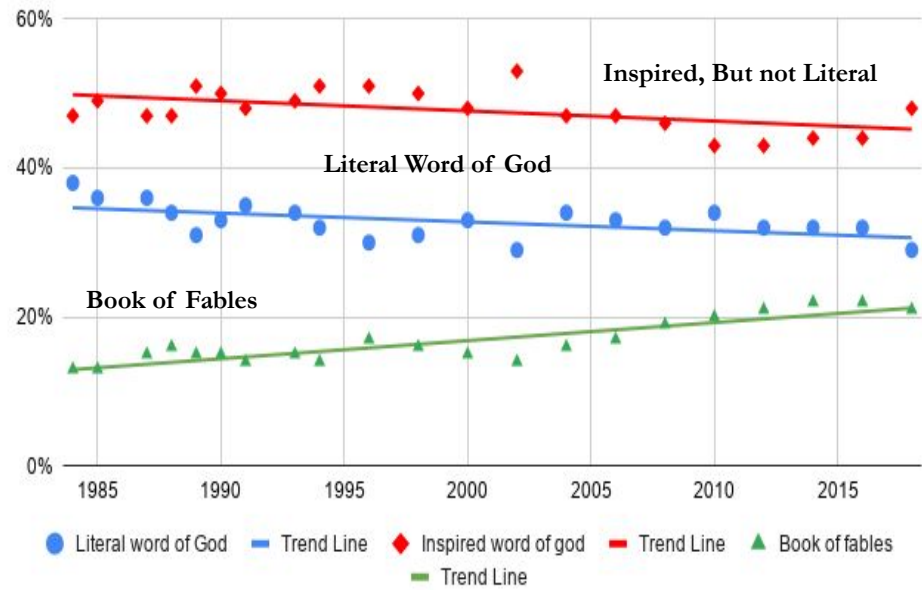
Schnabel and Bock Study

- Included data only from 1989 until 2016 without explanation.
- Appears to show no change in percentage who regard the Bible as “Literal Word of God”



1. Aspiration and Desperation

General Social Survey Data from University of Chicago
 Literal: 35% to 31%; Inspired 50% to 45%; Fables 13% to 21%
<https://gssdataexplorer.norc.org/trends/Religion%20&%20Spirituality?measure=bible>



Data from 1984 to 2018

Entire General Social Survey Data Set

- The entire dataset is from 1984 until 2018.
- It clearly shows downward trend in percentage of those who regard the Bible as the “Literal Word of God”



1. Aspiration and Desperation

Decline in Robust Beliefs About the Bible

U.S. Population in 1984: 236M; in 2018: 327M; Average: 282 Million

“Literal Word of God”	Decline of 4%	11 million people
“Inspired Word of God”	Decline of 5%	14 million people
“Book of Fables”	Increase of 8%	23 million people



Assessing from General Social Survey Data: Christian Affiliation

Do Americans identify themselves as strongly or lightly affiliated with Christianity, or not at all?



1. Aspiration and Desperation

Schnabel and Bock Intensity of American Religion

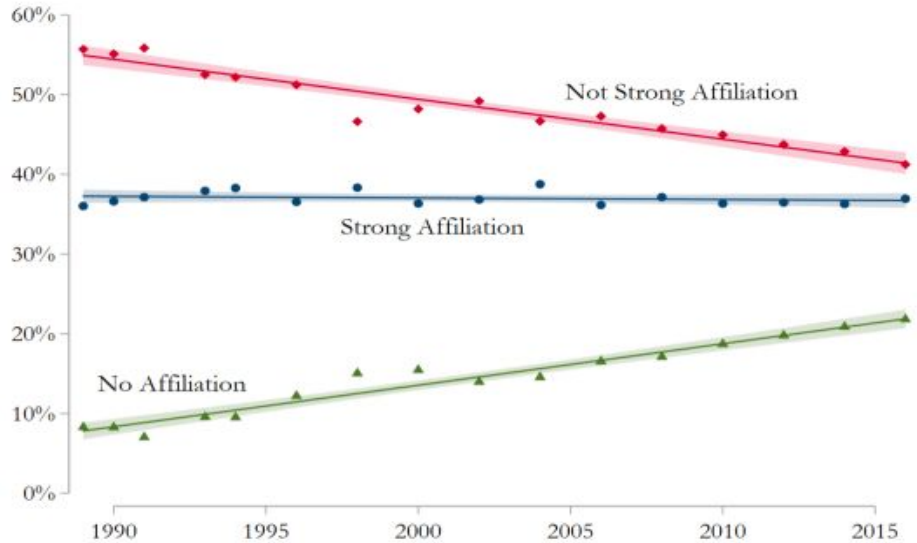


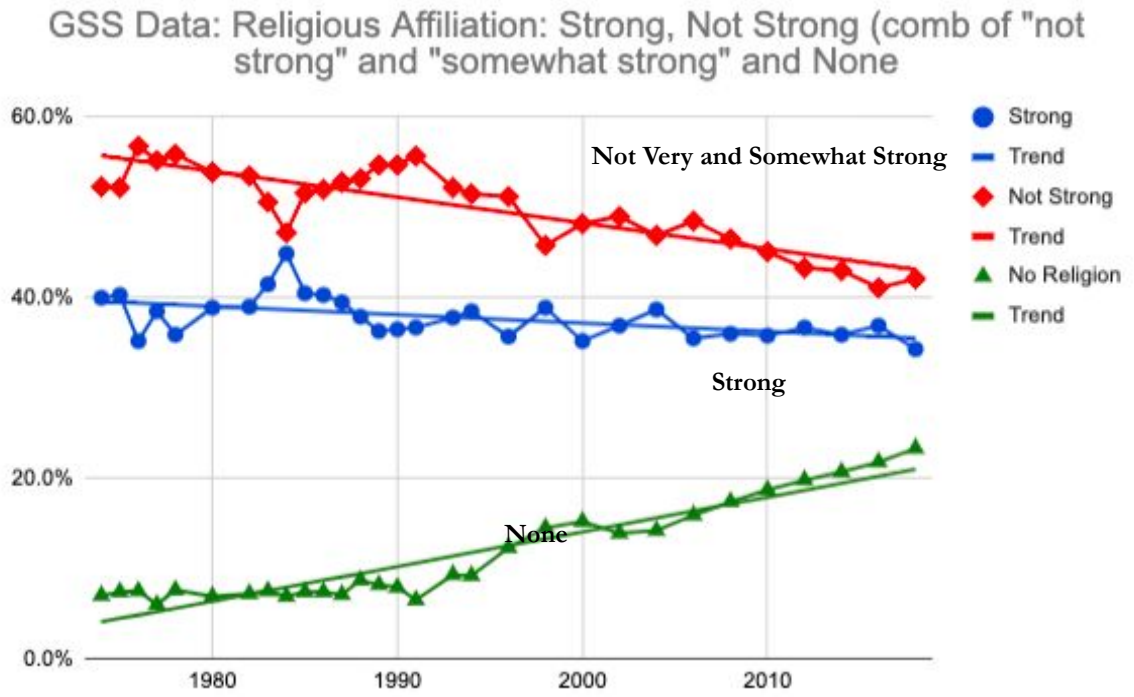
Figure 1: Strength of affiliation over time, General Social Survey. Source: General Social Survey, 1989 to 2016. Note: The GSS affiliation strength categories are created by using two items. First, respondents are asked their affiliation. If they have one, they are then asked whether they are a strong or not strong [their affiliation]. “Not strong” affiliation in the figure includes both those who said they had a “not strong” affiliation and those who volunteered “somewhat strong.”

Schnabel and Bock Study

- Included data only from 1989 until 2016 without explanation.
- Appears to show no change in percentage of Christians with “Strong Affiliation”



1. Aspiration and Desperation



Data from 1974 to 2018

Entire General Social Survey Data Set

- Included data only from 1989 until 2016 without explanation.
- Clear decrease in percentage of Christians with “Strong Affiliation”



1. Aspiration and Desperation

Decline in Religious Affiliation

U.S. Population in 1974: 213M; in 2018: 327M; Average: 270 Million

“Strong”	Decline of 4%	11 million people
“Somewhat Strong”	Decline of 3%	8 million people
“Not Very Strong”	Decline of 10%	27 million people
“None”	Increase of 17%:	46 million people



Shortcomings of Schnabel and Bock Study

1. **Data Years Excluded** - Certain years of data inexplicably excluded.
2. **Categories Combined** - Certain categories combined that exaggerate the thesis.
3. **Measures Excluded** - Five of the twenty measures of GSS Religion data inexplicably selected.



1. Aspiration and Desperation

Conclusion

GSS data does not support Schnabel and Bock's thesis that the decline in Christian belief and practice is primarily the result of the marginally committed becoming the non-committed.

- Strongly committed are becoming less committed
- Lightly committed are becoming non-committed
- Non-committed are becoming even less committed



1. Aspiration and Desperation

Testimony of the Data

1. Pew Research
2. Barna Research
3. Pinetops Report
4. General Social Survey

Conclusion- The United States for decades has been suffering a massive secularization resulting in an increase in the kingdom of darkness and decrease in the kingdom of light.

In last ten years alone, 30 million more identify as “Nones.”

1. Aspiration and Desperation

The Focus on Incidentals in the Midst of Massive Decline





Managing the Decline With False Hope

Jeremiah 7:3, 4 - Thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel: “**Amend your ways and your deeds**, and I will let you dwell in this place. ⁴Do not trust in these deceptive words: ‘This is the temple of the LORD, the temple of the LORD, the temple of the LORD.’”



1. Aspiration and Desperation

Managing the Decline With False Hope

Churches - Church Planting Movements, Willow Creek Church, Saddleback Church, Redeemer, Brooklyn Tabernacle, Vineyard churches, Calvary Chapel churches, Bethel, PCA, Southern Baptists

“Revivals” - Jesus Movement, Toronto Blessing, Pensacola (Brownsville), Asbury

Books, Movies, TV Series - *The Purpose Driven Life*, *The Passion of the Christ*, *The Chosen*



1. Aspiration and Desperation

Managing the Decline With False Hope

Celebrities and Prominent People:

Bob Dylan, Roger Staubach, Kurt Warner, George W. Bush, Tim Tebow, Kanye, Jeremy Lin

Christian Agencies, Movements and Leaders:

Promise Keepers, Cru, YoungLife, Gospel Coalition, Christian Union, Hillsong, Bethel Music, Bill Bright, John Piper, Tim Keller, John Wimber, Beth Moore, Bill Johnson, Billy Graham



1. Aspiration and Desperation

It can be tempting to hunger for false encouragement to avoid having to return to and to seek the Lord wholeheartedly.

Self indulgence, love of self, love of pleasure, and love of money blind American Christians to the current spiritual condition, much as in Jeremiah's day.

The Fear of God is Not in You



Jeremiah 2:19 - “Your evil will chastise you, and your apostasy will reprove you. Know and see that it is evil and bitter for you to forsake the LORD your God; the fear of me is not in you, declares the Lord God of hosts.”

Jeremiah Mourning Over the Destruction of Jerusalem, 1630
Rembrandt



Peace Peace When There is No Peace!

Jeremiah 8:10-12 - “Therefore I will give their wives to others and their fields to conquerors, because from the least to the greatest everyone is greedy for unjust gain; from prophet to priest, everyone deals falsely. ¹¹ They have healed the wound of my people lightly, saying, **‘Peace, peace,’ when there is no peace.** ¹² Were they ashamed when they committed abomination? No, they were not at all ashamed; they did not know how to blush. Therefore they shall fall among the fallen; when I punish them, they shall be overthrown”, says the LORD.



1. Aspiration and Desperation

Aspiration and Desperation

1. The Establishment of the Kingdom
2. Revival as Advancement of Kingdom of Light Over Darkness
3. Motivations
4. America in Spiritual Decline
5. **Basis for Hope**
6. Desperation



Blessings When America Returns to God

When Americans return to God in large numbers, with the presence of God falling on our churches, cities and nation, then we can expect many incredible blessings including family members and loved ones becoming Christians; churches thriving, growing, and unified; children and society much more protected from destructive ideologies; families restored and strengthened; radical reduction in social tension and racial division; dramatic drop in drug overdoses, anxiety and mental health issues; crime plummeting; joy and economic opportunities increasing; and communities thriving like no one has seen in their lifetimes. Instead of seeing the kingdom of darkness continuing to advance in the three spheres, the kingdom of light will pervade our families, communities and nation.



The Basis for Hope

1. **Scriptural Promises** - The Scriptures promise that God comes when we return to Him!
2. **American History** - American history is replete with episodes of the nation returning to God wholeheartedly.
3. **Global Christianity** - Global Christianity is in revival and serves as an example for America.



1. Aspiration and Desperation

Scriptures Promise that God Comes When We Return to Him!

2 Chronicles 6:36-40 - “If they sin against you—for there is no one who does not sin—and you are angry with them and give them to an enemy, so that they are carried away captive to a land far or near,³⁷ yet if **they turn their heart** in the land to which they have been carried captive, and **repent and plead** with you in the land of their captivity, saying, ‘We have sinned and have acted perversely and wickedly,’³⁸ if they **repent with all their heart** and with all their soul in the land of their captivity to which they were carried captive, and **pray** toward their land, which you gave to their fathers, the city that you have chosen and the house that I have built for your name,³⁹ then hear from heaven your dwelling place their **prayer and their pleas, and maintain their cause and forgive your people who have sinned against you.**⁴⁰ Now, O my God, let your eyes be open and your ears attentive to the **prayer** of this place.



Five Greatest Moves of God in American History

1. **Great Awakening** (1730's and 40's) - Edwards, Whitefield, John and Charles Wesley, Gilbert Tennent
2. **Second Great Awakening** (1801-1840) - Cane Ridge Revival, Lorenzo Dow, Timothy Dwight, and Charles Finney
3. **Businessmen's Revival** (1857-58) - Jeremiah Lanphier on Fulton and William
4. **Pentecostal Awakening** (1906) - Seymour and Parham: 500+ million worldwide
5. **Jesus Movement** (1960's and 70's) - Lonnie Frisbee, SoCal and across the nation

Honorable Mention: **Student Volunteer Movement**

United Prayer Begins the Move of God



Historian J. Edwin Orr gives a dramatic description of the incredible social good that God brings when Christians come together to seek God wholeheartedly, and it always begins in concerted prayer.

Dr. J. Edwin Orr, Revivalist Historian
“The Role of Prayer in Spiritual Awakening” (26:15)



Global Christianity is Rapidly Expanding

In the last thirty years the church has rapidly expanded in:

- Africa
- South America
- Asia
- Pacific Islands



1. Aspiration and Desperation

Christian Growth in Africa

Africans have turned from tribal religions to Jesus Christ on an incredibly massive scale. The change is nothing less than extraordinary.

1900: 9 million Christians in Africa

2015: 541 million Christians in Africa

2000-2015: 51% increase from 2000 to 2015 = 33,000 per day.



1. Aspiration and Desperation

Where Christianity is Growing Fastest

	COUNTRY	CONTINENT	CHRISTIAN AVE. ANNUAL GROWTH RATE	YEARS TO DOUBLE	MAJORITY RELIGION	% CHRISTIAN IN 1970	% CHRISTIAN IN 2020
1	NEPAL	Asia (South Central)	10.93%	6.6	Hindu	0.1%	3.8%
2	CHINA	Asia (Eastern)	10.86%	6.6	Non-religious	0.1%	10.6%
3	UAE	Arabian Peninsula	9.34%	7.7	Muslim	5.9%	12.9%
4	SAUDI ARABIA	Arabian Peninsula	9.27%	7.8	Muslim	0.3%	4.6%
5	QATAR	Arabian Peninsula	7.81%	9.2	Muslim	4.5%	9.5%
6	OMAN	Arabian Peninsula	7.62%	9.4	Muslim	0.5%	4.6%
7	YEMEN	Arabian Peninsula	7.09%	9.1	Muslim	0.0%	0.2%
8	MONGOLIA	Asia (Eastern)	5.96%	12.1	Buddhist	0.3%	2.0%
9	CAMBODIA	Asia (South Eastern)	5.87%	12.3	Buddhist	0.5%	3.6%
10	BAHRAIN	Arabian Peninsula	5.49%	13.1	Muslim	3.9%	7.9%



1. Aspiration and Desperation

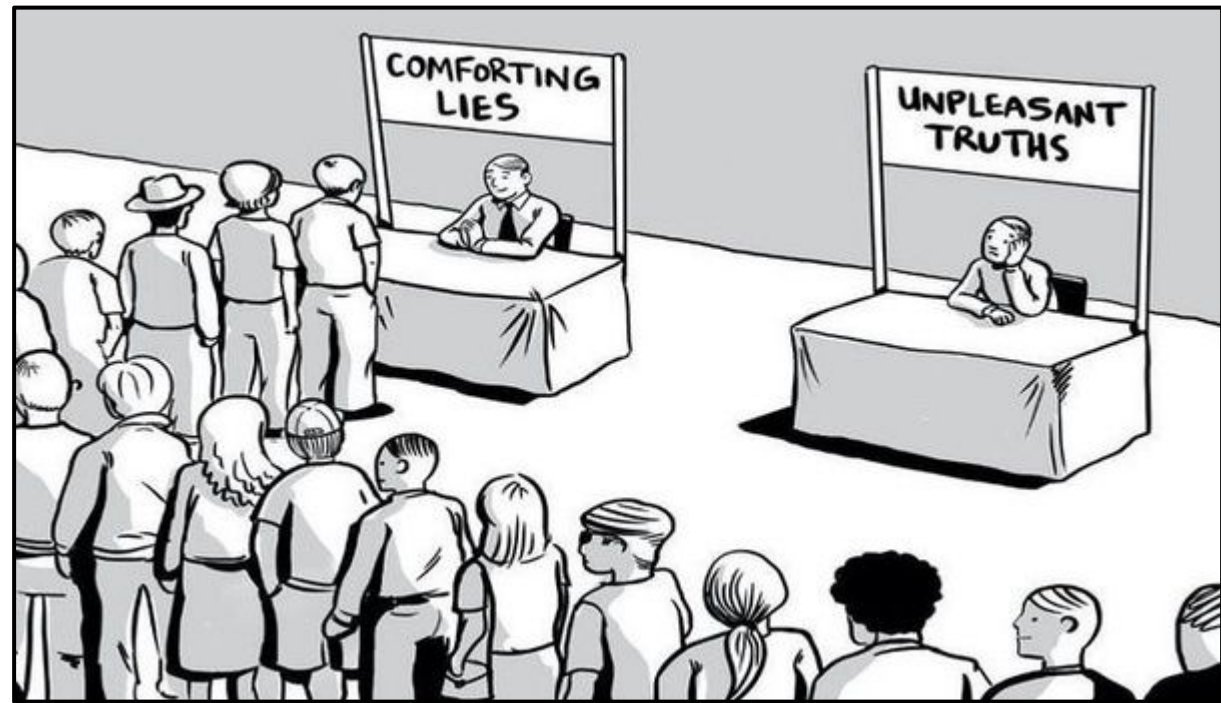
Aspiration and Desperation

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- 6. Desperation**



1. Aspiration and Desperation

Facing the Truth is a Beautiful Thing





1. Aspiration and Desperation

Church Growth

- **The Prevailing Worldwide Church** - The worldwide church will continue to grow, flourish and ultimately be victorious, but is always at risk of dying in certain locales (see the seven churches of Revelation).
- **The Dying Western Church** - The Church in America and the West is currently dying as demonstrated through decades of surveys and overwhelming anecdotal evidence.
- **False Theologies Blinding and Binding the Church** - Yet, doctrines taught by churches and Christian agencies is often intended to make people feel good about themselves and the larger situation, even while the church is dying. Peace, peace when there is no peace!



1. Aspiration and Desperation

Implications

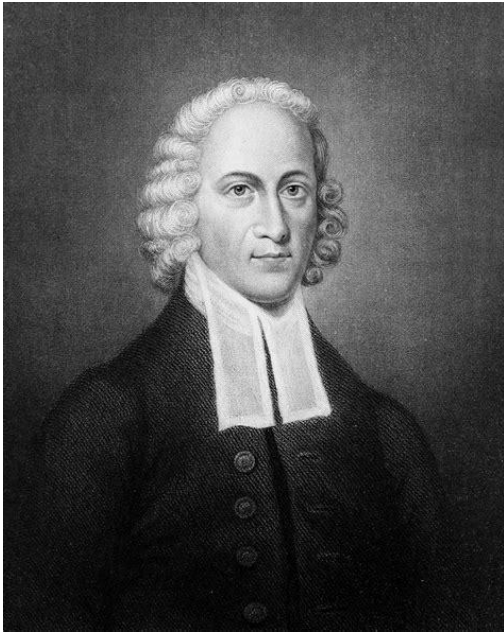
- **Facing the Truth** - America is in desperate need of revival.
- **True Optimism** - Optimism or hope should not be placed in events or movements which have never shown the power to change, but in God Himself and His promises.
- **Focusing Ourselves** - Doesn't it make sense to focus attention on the Scriptures, revivals in American history, and the current international church to see what they have in common which has yielded such rapid, radical increases in the kingdom of light?



Leading for Revival

1. **Desperation Discontent** - Leaders are to be discontent with the status quo, motivated and hungry to make drastic changes.
2. **Mindset Change** - Leaders need a radical shift in their minds about who God is and the nature of the spiritual world.
3. **Behavioral Change** - Leaders are to make dramatic changes in their behavior, meeting the conditions of 2 Chronicles 7:14.
4. **New Direction** - Leaders are to disciple fellow Christians to seek God wholeheartedly, and not just as is comfortable or familiar.

1. Aspiration and Desperation



“The state of the times extremely requires a fullness of the divine Spirit in ministers, and we ought to give ourselves no rest till we have obtained it. And in order to [do] this, I should think ministers, above all persons, ought to be much in secret prayer and fasting, and also much in praying and fasting one with another. It seems to me it would be becoming the circumstances of the present day, if ministers in a neighborhood would often meet together and spend days in fasting and fervent prayer among themselves, earnestly seeking for those extraordinary supplies of divine grace from heaven, that we need at this day.”

Jonathan Edwards (1703 - 1758)
American Pastor and Theologian



1. Aspiration and Desperation

Aspiration and Desperation

1. **The Establishment of the Kingdom**
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5. **Basis for Hope**
6. **Desperation**



We live in the church age, and it's our role to hasten the day of Christ's return by deepening and expanding the kingdom of God.

As Christians seek God wholeheartedly, He gives the grace, power and direction to be used as His instruments in our families, communities and nation.

**Blessed is the nation whose God is the Lord,
the people whom he has chosen as his heritage!**

Psalm 33:12



CHRISTIAN
UNION