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# DISCERNMENT NEWSLETTER

“...how is it that ye do not discern this time?” Luke 12:56

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## Many Believers in South Africa are Jumping on the Bandwagon of Dominionism\*

Professor Johan Malan, Mossel Bay, RSA

"God created the Heavens and the earth and then **handed** the title deed of the earth to mankind. Genesis 3 records man's disobedience to God's specific instructions - causing sin to enter the earth and in so doing, **losing dominion** of the earth and **transferring the title deed to satan**.

"Having **deceived mankind into relinquishing the title deed**, satan immediately takes control of the world system and institutes his diabolical plan to usurp God's authority and destroy mankind. God, however, had made provision for man's frailty and **institutes His plan to rescue** mankind from satan's **influence** and **restore the 'Dominion Mandate'**, including the title deed, to its original owners."

—Joy magazine, "Reclaiming the Dominion Mandate"[1]

Christians are increasingly mobilized towards efforts of controlling and reforming the world by reminding them of their long-forgotten "Dominion Mandate." This is particularly the case in the US and South Africa from where the Global Transformation Movement was orchestrated. Disciples of Christ have allegedly, like believers in the Old Testament, neglected their biblical mandate to rule over the world and are now held directly responsible for the serious moral and spiritual crisis in which the world finds itself.

Joy magazine in South Africa is one of many voices challenging Christians to reclaim their God-given "mandate" which was neglected for almost two millennia. One of the recent wake-up calls by which believers are implored to assume their position as kings, can be seen in a Joy article "Reclaiming the Dominion Mandate." [1] The following comments are made to expose the weaknesses and wrong applications of the arguments in support of Dominionism during the church age, and to offer the correct biblical perspective on the end-time revelation of God's kingdom:

**The nature and fulfillment of the biblical dominion mandate.** The original mandate to subdue the earth and have dominion over it (Gen. 1:26-28) was given before the Fall. It was based upon the assumption that human beings who were created in the image of God would always act in accordance with the divine nature which was instilled in them. As children of the light they were called upon to be co-rulers with God over His creation. However, the depraved nature of humanity

after the Fall rendered them unfit to rule over the works of God's hand. Profs. John Walvoord & Roy Zuck (*The Bible Knowledge Commentary*, p. 29) say: "Because of sin all things are not under man's dominion (Heb. 2:8). But Jesus Christ will establish dominion over all the earth at His second coming."

In Hebrews 2:8 Paul further explains man's present status: "*You have put all things in subjection under his feet... But now we do not yet see all things put under him.*" The fulfillment of the biblical dominion mandate will be Messianic and eschatological. Christians are not in control of the world now and are nowhere commissioned to be so.

"Those keys – that unlock the awesome power of God in the earth – were given to the **Church** to once again **enforce the 'Dominion Mandate'** and **redeem** what the devil had **stolen** from mankind....

"The Church is given full authority by Jesus... to **take back** the ground subjugated by satan and to **restore His rulership** in the earth.

"This means, the **'Dominion Mandate'**, originally given to the first Adam that **he lost to satan** and **which** Jesus redeemed at the Cross, is now the **Mandate of the Church** – the Body of Christ." —Joy magazine

During the church age true Christians have always been a small minority in the world, and this situation will prevail until Christ comes (Matt. 7:14; Luke 13:23-24; John 3:19). We were called to be the **light** of a spiritually dark world and the **salt** of a morally corrupt earth (Matt. 5:13-14). As such we are in opposition to the works of darkness which are practiced by the vast majority of unsaved people (Eph. 5:11). The world will hate and persecute us (John 15:18-19; 16:33) while we are shining as lights in the midst of a crooked generation (Phil. 2:15).

"Dominion is translated from the original Hebrew word 'Radhah' that means: to **subjugate**, to rule, to reign and to prevail against. The word subdue is translated from the Hebrew word 'kabash' which means to **conquer**, and to **bring into subjection**. Significantly, the **institution** God ordains to bring the earth **back** under His **control** is the **Church**.

"The earth belongs to God and **He gave His Church** the express **mandate** and the authority to **restore His rule**.

"It is impossible to reign, rule, or bring anything into subjection, without first **exercising authority**." —Joy magazine

During the present dispensation we are not kings but witnesses for Christ who are often despised by the world. As soldiers for the cross we are admonished to put on the full armor of God to remain standing against the wiles of the devil (Eph. 6:10-12). We have to contend against *“the prince of the power of the air, the spirit who now works in the sons of disobedience”* (Eph. 2:1). Even fellow-Christians will criticize and reject us when we raise the standard of **holiness** to the level expected of us by the Lord.

Spiritual warfare in the church age is clearly applied to **individual** believers. We are taught how to prevail over the temptations of Satan and to become spiritually strong in the Lord. We are definitely **not** commanded to expel Satan from communities, cities, regions or entire countries, thereby to deliver the world from demonic bondages and strongholds as a prelude to re-establishing the kingdom of God. The enemy might even laugh at organized mass-meetings as efforts to bolster power against him and make him flee from that area. He will be around until Christ comes to bind him in a pit and to establish the kingdom of heaven. Until that time we, as individuals, must stand fast in the liberty of Christ and always resist the devil.

Satan rules in the hearts of unsaved people. Since they are in the majority he has considerable influence on worldly affairs. We as Christians live in a hostile environment and must learn to do so victoriously until the Lord comes. Without succumbing to negativity we should rather expect more problems in the world than believing that we can physically establish God's kingdom before the coming of Christ.

#### **Judgment before the revelation of the kingdom.**

The Bible makes it very clear that the church dispensation will **not** usher in the kingdom of God on earth, but instead deteriorate to a point of unprecedented deception. This great falling away from the truth will prepare the way for the revelation and global acceptance of the Antichrist and his satanic kingdom. It may sound like a preposterous idea that Christian churches will apostatize to the level where they will accept “another Jesus” as the cosmic Christ of all faiths (cf. 2 Cor. 11:4; Rev. 13:3-4) but it will happen nevertheless. Scores of deceived Israelites will also follow and worship the false messiah (John 5:43). Despite their natural prejudice against religious ideas which are at variance with their interpretation of the Torah, they will approve the credentials of this coming impostor who will pretend to be the promised son of David. Millions of nominal Christians will follow suit.

The Antichrist's reign on earth (the tribulation period of seven years) will also be a time of divine judgment upon the wicked. The presence of the true church of Christ indwelt by the Holy Spirit is withholding the revelation of the Antichrist and the

outpouring of the wrath of God (2 Thess. 2:6-8). Soon after the bride of Christ has been taken out of the way by means of the rapture, the Antichrist will be revealed following the breaking of the first seal of God's end-time judgments in heaven.

"Instead of taking hold of the '**Dominion Mandate**' for which Jesus paid such a high price, the Church has retreated into the sanctuary, effectively surrendering the earth to the dominion of satan.

"Godless philosophies are promoted at will in the **public square** without a response from God's **anointed leaders** - who for the most part completely ignore the Scriptural imperative. The reality is that **every thought and idea** contrary to sound doctrine advanced in the **public domain** that remains **unchallenged** by the truth of God's Word is accepted as 'truth'. —Joy magazine

Dominionists utterly reject the prophetic scenario of a coming dark time in world history as it clashes with their kingdom vision. They brush aside biblical prophecies on a great falling away as being a sign of defeat against the onslaught of the kingdom of darkness, and set themselves the task of turning around the current process of apostatizing. That is the reason why they do not warn believers against eschatological signs such as spiritual deception, perilous times that will come, the rise of the Antichrist, and the impending outpouring of God's wrath.

By proclaiming their kingdom vision they give people false hope of better times ahead, leave them ill-prepared on what is to come, and generally weaken their resistance against evil powers. They teach their followers a wrong model of spiritual warfare aimed at removing territorial strongholds of the enemy, thus liberating society as a whole from demonic bondage, instead of applying the principles of the pulling down of strongholds to their personal lives.

Furthermore, dominionists are prone to the spiritual dangers of the ecumenical movement. Their kingdom-now objectives demand the collaboration and ultimate unification of all Christian churches and sects to form a united front against the enemy. They do not stand very strong on doctrinal principles so as not to offend their partners who may hold different ideas. Consequently, they build their kingdom upon a very shaky theological foundation and are open to all sorts of fanciful interpretations of Scripture. The dispensational context of the Bible is ignored and they often transfer to the church dispensation promises meant for the future Messianic state.

The Bible categorically states that the church dispensation will be followed by the dispensation of the Antichrist's rule on earth, which will also be the time of judging and destroying the wicked. At the end of the tribulation Christ will return for the final judgment of the wicked at the battle of Armageddon. He will also bind

the devil in a bottomless pit for 1000 years and then establish His thousand-year reign of peace with Jerusalem as capital. To give people a kingdom vision before the coming of Christ, is to completely confuse them by the grave distortion of Biblical prophecies.

**Israel's Messianic kingdom.** Another strong point of criticism which can be leveled against dominionists is the fact that they generally give no recognition to the physical, political and spiritual restoration of Israel in their God-given land.\*\* The promises made to Israel are applied to the church age, including those on the Jews' return to the Promised Land. Joy concludes their article by saying,

"Church of Christ we have a Promised Land to enter. We have a preferable future for our country. But we have to step out to **possess the land**. Rise up Church of the Most High God, take up your shield of faith and **reclaim the Dominion Mandate**."

This is clear proof of replacement theology: Israel becomes the church and the world becomes the Promised Land over which the church should rule right now, before the coming of Christ.

#### **SUGGESTED RESOURCES:**

Read the following article on Israel's Messianic kingdom, in which it is clearly shown that the church is not heir to these promises:

<http://www.bibleguidance.co.za/Weekly/111%20Isaiah-comment.htm>

The following article also exposes the deception of dominionism:

<http://www.bibleguidance.co.za/Engarticles/Dominionism.htm>

The Discernment Research Group offers extensive material on dominionism at <http://herescope.blogspot.com>. See also Sarah Leslie's article, "Dominionism and the Rise of Christian imperialism" at <http://www.discernment-ministries.org/ChristianImperialism.htm>

#### **Endnote:**

1. Joy magazine in South Africa has been compared to *Charisma* in the United States. This Joy magazine article can be found at: <http://www.joymag.co.za/errol-article.php?newsID=194>

\*Bold was added for emphasis in the body of the text as well in the Joy magazine quotations.

\*\*Ed. note: Many Dominionist groups in America are now popularly supporting Israel, which gives them further political credibility to the conservative evangelicals. And there is variation and evolution in various streams of Dominionism eschatology, which has given rise to much confusion. However, historically Dominionists have taught that the church replaces Israel ("replacement theology"); see <http://moriel.org/MorielArchive/index.php/discernment/church-issues/aberrational-theology/replacement-theology-leads-to-replacement-reality> and <http://hftm.org/blog/?p=170> and [www.deceptioninthechurch.com/replacement.html](http://www.deceptioninthechurch.com/replacement.html).

This article also appeared on Herescope:

<http://herescope.blogspot.com/2010/05/reclaiming-dominion-mandate.html>

## **A Dominion Woodstock The "Wilderness Outcry" Joel 2 Gathering Promises To Produce the 3<sup>rd</sup> Great Awakening**

**!!!! Hold The Press.... Apostle Dutch Sheets  
Suddenly Cancels The Wilderness Outcry!!!**

—by Dr. Orrel Steinkamp

This material now is already outdated. Nevertheless, given all the prophesies and Apostolic Decrees, how can Dutch Sheets, the head Apostle in the USA, so easily cancel this for a lack of funds? In this article I deal with the current apostolic practice of making comparisons to Israel in the Old Testament and the nation of America. This is not a legitimate application of OT covenantal teaching. So I will make this material available with the understanding that the "Wilderness Outcry" has now been abandoned. Can we have any confidence is apostolic prophecy any longer? The MAY DAY 2010 event held at the Lincoln Memorial was laced with one-on-one comparisons of Israel and America. [1]

The Apostolic/Prophetic leadership was calling for a weeklong "Wilderness Outcry Joel 2" gathering at Poplar, Missouri, June 14. "Apostle" Dutch Sheets and "Prophetess" Cindy Jacobs were assuring us that God is the author of this assembly and predicting great things to happen. It was said to be a call to save America and also a religious awakening all in one. Dutch Sheets predicted it would be greater than the Cane Ridge Revival—but with a different focus.

This attempt to re-enact a Joel 2 assembly was planned to allow God to recapture "His dream" for America. Jacobs asserted that "we are on the verge of the greatest awakening we have ever seen in our history. Jacobs was confident that this awakening has already begun. She described it as an intentional strategic assembly of warrior leaders and generals who would supernaturally take the Kingdom by force .

Lou Engle foresaw this event as having a reverse effect of Woodstock event nearly 40 years ago. As Woodstock marked a change in American history, the Outcry in the Wilderness was intended to be another event that sets America on an entirely different course toward a national spiritual awakening and the saving of American democracy. Lou Engle is famous for many exotic endeavors, including calling for voluntary blood sacrifices to cleanse our nation's bloodguilt for abortion, leading young people to take marriage vows with Jesus, and his call for re-establishing an order of OT Nazirites. He first made this call at "theCall"

nearly ten years in Washington DC. Now among other things the Wilderness Outcry is calling for a Nazirite Recall. (Why did the first Nazirite vow fail?)

The Wilderness Outcry is also calling attention to John the Baptist, who also was a Nazirite, and John the Baptist also called people into the wilderness of Judea to repent and prepare for the coming of the Kingdom of God. One wonders how far Engle will take this Nazirite thing. Engle proclaimed back in 2000 that America has received her apostles, prophets, but had not seen her Nazirites. Now, ten years later, Engle, has been calling for a Nazirite recall to the wilderness of Poplar Bluff, MO.

Organizers didn't want this to seem as a concert or a campout. Rather it has been described as a national day of repentance based on the concept of "identificational repentance." One specific purpose was to repent for the nation electing Obama President. This surely would be a first in revival history! Never before has the church sought forgiveness for a national political election. This seems odd, in light of the fact that Rom 15 leaves no doubt that it is God who raises up kings and authorities, and Paul requires that believers be subject to the ruling authorities. Is this an attempt to ask God to change His providential prerogatives?

### **The 444 Saga**

There is a podcast of Dutch Sheets interviewing General Jerry Murphy some months ago about the prospect of the Wilderness Outcry on Jerry and Sandra Murphy's acreage near Poplar Mo. This pod cast was taken down quite quickly but not before M'Kaylas Korner listened to it (See this blog for interesting reports on the Wilderness Outcry – <http://mkayla.wordpress.com>).

Dutch Sheets was seen speaking and introducing General Jerry Murphy. Murphy ended up talking for over an hour. In this hour M'Kayla heard some amazing and unbelievable stories. Could that be why the podcast was taken down? These stories include his recruitment into a military unit that taught him how to kill people, perform surgery, build and defuse bombs, fly every aircraft known to man, and fire every kind of weapon. All of this took place before the ripe old age of 15. He claims he owned 27 businesses, and 11 industries. Jerry Murphy's address is 444 County Road 543. The elevation of a giant cross on the property is 444 feet. The number of years since Jerry was handed the keys of the property is 44.

The 444 saga is not exhausted yet. Dutch Sheets was traveling to Texas on a Friday, and when he landed in the airport, his wife called and told him to get to the TV asap. He watched McCain introduce Gov. Palin, and said he began to weep even though he knew nothing of her. He asked what the significance of this 44-year old woman was, and he saw the clock said 4:44. He asked the Lord what that was, and the Lord said "Ezekiel:44:4—"He brought me by way of the northgate (Alaska) to the front of the temple; so I looked and behold, the glory of the Lord filled the house of the Lord; and I fell on my face."

Someone said that 44+4+4 or 8. Chuck Pierce had prophesied that there would be 7 years of war and Sept 11 marks the end of that time and we are entering the 8<sup>th</sup> year. Dutch asked why he and Chuck were in Texas for this announcement; that reminded him that the word for Texas was that it was a prophetic state. Dutch then decreed that she (Palin) will enter the White House. Now if you don't know him (Sheets) he is cautious... and never goes off half-cocked when it comes to prophecy. [From Endtimes Prophetic, Dutch Sheet on religion, politics, and Sarah Palin.]

### **The American "Dominion Mandate"**

Is it the Christian "mandate" to take the nation by force? Can we try to enlist and induce God to change the cultural and political scene in America? Is America in a covenantal relationship with the God of Israel just as God was bound by covenant to Israel? Can we "turn America back to its covenantal" roots as Cindy Jacobs claims?

Behind the whole understanding of the "Wilderness Outcry" (now-cancelled) event and the "Dominion Mandate" is the assumed and yet unstated premise that America is in a covenantal relationship with God. Just as Israel could expect blessings and curses, so America can assume the same. It is this assumption that gives Engle the audacity to call for a return to taking Nazirite vows. It is this assumption that lies behind the Call for a "Joel 2" assembly. It's because of this they will blow the shofar. This all is based on the idea that America is a covenantal nation.

But before Jesus death and resurrection He established a new covenant and the Old Covenant was abrogated. According to Hebrews 8 the Old Covenant has become obsolete. For Jesus (no longer Moses) is the mediator of a better covenant which has been enacted on better promises Hebrews 8:7-12. Consequently, all the blessings and curses which God promised for obedience and disobedience on the Old

Covenant terms are no longer in force today – for America or any other national identity.

Not only is the Old Covenant obsolete but there is no longer any geographical nation in covenant relation to God. The New Covenant includes individuals—people from every nation. Gospel preaching and individual converts in all nations now bring all believers into covenant relationship to God. Peter asserts that it is the church that is the holy nation *“But ye [are] a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvelous light:”* (1 Peter 2:9a).

I remember when I lived in Australia. There were “prophets” forever getting prophesies that Australia was the “Great South land of the Holy Spirit,” etc. Surely Mother England could also claim some kind special status as her Christianity is centuries older than ours.

Do our national problems hinder the church from excising faith or prevent us from pursuing a relationship with God? The early church faced the law of the mighty Roman Empire, but they never exerted any energy or attention against the state other than fervent prayer.

Did they place their hope in a transformed Rome, a more righteous Galatia, a Christian Corinth? Or was their hope solely *“in the grace to be revealed at the revelation (Second Coming) of Christ Jesus”* (1 Peter 1:13)?

### **Moral Enhancement or the Gospel of Salvation?**

The world’s (including America’s) need for moral enhancement is *not* our Calling. How can we expect the world (the unregenerate) to be able to live by the Holy Spirit? In Paul’s day there was no cultural Christianity. The first century world was an ugly place. Did Paul call for a so-called “Dominion Mandate”? No! All he ever said was “we need to evangelize!”

We may be angry at what we are see happening in the courts and in Congress. But keep in mind the believers, in China and Burma not only do not have any rights, but they are persecuted. Should they be planning a Kingdom war? No! Paul’s admonition is to remind the believers in Rome and everywhere in the Roman Empire to be subject to rulers, to the authorities, and to be obedient (unless, of course, believers are forced to sin or to make offerings to Ceasar as Lord). It doesn’t matter whether your ruler is Caesar, Herod, Pilate, Felix, Festus, Agrippa, Stalin, Churchill, Bill Clinton, or Obama.

But dominion teaching outright rejects Paul’s teaching in Romans 13. Rather than being crucified to the world and the world to us, we want to conquer it? ARE WE NOT AWARE that our citizenship is in heaven?! If God chooses to work by his Spirit and causes a season of blessing and salvation – that is His doing. It is not for us to hype up mystically and pscho/spiritually false and unbiblical signs and wonders that leave the landscape no different in the end. We are to be about preaching and witnessing the Gospel of Salvation and the Gospel of the Cross. It alone is the power of God to change lives for the glory of God. It is God who will give the increase and His fruit will remain. We can’t jumpstart it ourselves with false signs that make everyone wonder.

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### **The Coalescing of the Christian Right with Apostolic Dominionism: It is not about FREEDOM, it is about DOMINION**

Dr. Orrel Steinkamp, who wrote the previous article, also wrote a series of Herescope posts this past month which have created quite a stir. The first one (title above, posted on April 8, <http://herescope.blogspot.com/2010/04/coalescing-of-christian-right-with.html>) described how C. Peter Wagner and his New Apostolic Reformation (NAR) “apostles” and “prophets” were mainstreaming themselves into the American political Right via a planned May Day prayer rally at the Lincoln Memorial. This event was spearheaded by a well-known radio talk show host Janet Porter, who had expressed Dominionist views “to take dominion in every area and occupy until Jesus comes.” Porter was associated with Cindy Jacobs at her “Convergence 2010: A Cry To Awaken A Nation” conference. Porter also invited Chuck Pierce, Cindy Jacobs and Dutch Sheets to pray at the May Day event, which created a firestorm of controversy.

In his second article, posted on April 22, “**R&R Revival and Revolt**” Dr. Stainkamp described “**The Tea Party’s Strange Bedfellows and What They Believe.**” <http://herescope.blogspot.com/2010/04/r-revival-and-revolt.html> Of particular concern was the fact that the Tea Party movement was in “danger of being co-opted by the New Apostolic Reformation (NAR) and its radical agenda” to take over the 7 “mountains” of society. This is a “Dominion Mandate with the intent to “take over not only the political institutions, but the cultural institutions, like the press,

the entertainment industry, the universities, and yes the churches.” This 7 Mountain Mandate has been an increasingly popular teaching by C. Peter Wagner and a man associated with him, Lance Wallnau. After a considerable amount of documentation on the increasing evidence of cross-linkages between Republican conservatives, evangelical activist groups and the NAR, Pastor Steinkamp asked, “I wonder if the Tea Party activists are now willing to sign up for Wagner’s spiritual warfare courses?”

The third article posted on April 27, “**May Day Prayers: What Repentance?**”

<http://herescope.blogspot.com/2010/04/r-revival-and-revolt.html> was a joint research and writing project by Dr. Steinkamp and Sarah Leslie. In this article they described the contents of the “Official Program” stating the “Prayers of Repentance for the Seven Mountains of Culture” for the May Day event. They noted more of the cross-linkages between the agenda of the NAR and the specific prayers of the May Day event, which were based on a recently concocted doctrine called Identificational Repentance (repenting for others’ sins, including the sins of ancestors or nations, based on the idea that nations are entities that can corporately sin and/or experience salvation! See <http://herescope.blogspot.com/2007/08/identificational-repentance.html>). Leading the prayers for repentance for the May Day event were a group of women “prophetesses” who were closely aligned with Chuck Pierce and other NAR leaders.

These articles resulted in unprecedented attention for the Herescope blog, including tens of thousands of visitors. Ingrid Schleuter of Crosstalk interviewed Sarah Leslie in an hour-long interview on Monday, May 3 about the repercussions of all of this. The show can be accessed here: [http://www.crosstalkamerica.com/shows/2010/05/the\\_new\\_a\\_postolic\\_reformation.php](http://www.crosstalkamerica.com/shows/2010/05/the_new_a_postolic_reformation.php)

Dr. Steinkamp will be writing future articles for Herescope, as he continues this line of research. It seems fairly certain now that there is a blending of Dominionist streams, and that they are all coalescing around a mandate to change culture via the “spheres” of society. Herescope wrote about this previously in the following posts, among others: <http://herescope.blogspot.com/2007/06/7-m-mandate.html> and <http://herescope.blogspot.com/2007/06/neo-kuyperian-spheres.html>

## National Repentance

By Pastor Anton Bosch

It has become customary to speak of prayers of “national repentance”.

On May Day, this year - 2010, a large number of people met at the Lincoln Memorial in Washington DC to pray various prayers of repentance “on behalf of the American people.” I remember a number of times, when growing up in South Africa, that the Government called national days of prayer and repentance in the hope that God would send rain at times of drought. Shortly after the fall of Apartheid many churches, groups and individuals prayed prayers of repentance on behalf of the nation for the sins of the past. Many have prayed prayers of repentance because of the Holocaust under Hitler. And the list goes on.

But is this a Biblical idea?

The short answer is no – there are a bunch of problems with this notion. The first is that repentance is something that needs to be **done**, rather than prayed. Every day millions of prayers ascend to God in which people pray prayers of repentance. The vast majority of these are a waste of time since the person praying has no intention of changing their actions, lifestyles or habits. Repentance is about **doing** not talking. The word itself means a change of mind and of direction. You can be heading down the road and say a million times that you are going in the wrong direction, but until you actually make that U-turn and stop going in the wrong direction and start going in the right direction, nothing will happen. It’s as simple as that.

John the Baptist said that the Pharisees who had come to see him baptize must: “*Bear fruits worthy of repentance*” (Matthew 3:8). Paul, speaking of the mission to the Gentiles said: “*That they should repent, turn to God, and do works befitting repentance*” (Acts 26:20). Isaiah said: “*Let the wicked forsake his way, And the unrighteous man his thoughts; Let him return to the Lord, And He will have mercy on him; And to our God, For He will abundantly pardon*” (Isaiah 55:7). So, no prayer of repentance is worth anything unless it is accompanied by actions. In spite of the many prayers of repentance prayed on behalf of the nations, all nations are becoming more sinful and thus those prayers clearly do not work.

Secondly, there is no such thing as repentance “by proxy”. This means you cannot repent on behalf of other people, whether living or dead. No one except Hitler himself can repent of the things he did – and he cannot because he is dead and it is too late for him. You can repent on behalf of your family as much as you like, but until they individually and personally repent, nothing is going to happen. We cannot repent

on behalf of our family, a church, and least of all, a nation.

Sin is personal. When we sin, each who has sinned is guilty of that sin and each one has to personally repent. One could argue that Israel sinned as a nation when they refused to cross the Jordan (Numbers 14), yet the two individuals that did not agree with the majority were saved and entered the Land. So, was God dealing with them as a nation or individually? Clearly, individually; since Joshua and Caleb would have had to perish with the rest of the nation if God was dealing with them as a group. When God destroyed the world in the Flood, righteous Noah and his family were saved. The same happened in Sodom. Thus, even in the Old Testament, God's dealings were on an individual basis.

Thirdly, God does not deal with nations. He only deals with individuals. Jesus did not die for America or England – He died for each of us personally. The only nation God ever had a relationship with **as a nation** was Israel. Yet, Jesus did not even die for Israel. All the verses that are quoted as examples of God's promises or dealings with a **nation** are directed at **Israel**, and they cannot be claimed for any other country. When Israel eventually returns to God (Romans 11:26, Zech. 12:10), each individual Jew will still have to make a personal decision. Israel will not be saved because of a decision of the government, but because of the cumulative effect of each Jew coming to personal repentance. We need to be clear the Jews in the end are saved, not because they are Jews, but because each of them has personally believed on the Lord Jesus Christ.

One of the favorite verses used by those who promote the idea of National Repentance is 2Chronicles 7:14: *“if My people who are called by My name will 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.”* This promise is very specific – it is to *“my people who are called by my name.”* Is South Africa, or Germany, or America, God's people? Obviously not. Which country is called by God's name? None – except Israel. So this verse has nothing to do with any nation other than Israel. The only people who can claim both those conditions are Christians. They are the people of God (Romans 9:25, 1John 3:1-3, 1Peter 2:10). And they are called by His name (Acts 11:26, 1Corinthians 12:12).

But then you cannot apply this verse to Christians since their Land does not need to be healed. The Christian's land is the New Jerusalem and that is perfect. Here we are but strangers and pilgrims. (Hebrews 11:13, 16):

*“These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of [them], and embraced [them], and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth.... But now they desire a better [country], that is, an heavenly: wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God: for he hath prepared for them a city.”*

The often-recited verse in 2Chronicles 7:14 only applies to one nation, and that is to Israel, and even then the promise is suspended since Israel rejected the offer one time too many.

Should we not pray for nations? Yes, we can pray but there is only one valid prayer and that is that people, individually, will come to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and repent. Because we are often too lazy to name individuals before the Throne of Grace, we resort to those catch-all phrases: “Lord save the Chinese,” “Lord help the poor,” or “Lord be with those in prison.” What does that mean? I don't want to be insensitive, but it means absolutely nothing.

As Christians we *can* make a difference, but it begins where you are. Pray for each of your unsaved family members; pray for others you know by name – your colleagues, neighbors, and others you have dealings with. First, pray that the Lord will help you to show them what it means to be a real Christian. Next, pray that the Lord will soften their hearts to the Gospel and bring them to repentance. Finally, pray that the Lord will open an opportunity for you to share your Hope with them and that He will give you the courage and wisdom to do it right. Do this until Jesus comes. Yes, that is a lot harder than “Lord save the lost,” but that is our duty; everything else is a copout.

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