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Are you prepared for Persecution?  
Are you praying for Revival?  
Are you working for Reformation?  
If not, why not?

## **PERSECUTION**

Throughout the Bible, believers are warned that:

*“All who desire to live a Godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted.” 2 Timothy 3:12*

*“Then many will fall away, and betray one another, and hate one another.” Matthew 24:10*

The Apostles' ministry included:

*“Strengthening the disciples and encouraging them to remain true to the faith. ‘We must go through many hardships to enter the kingdom of God,’ they said.” Acts 14:22*

The danger of persecution needs to be realistically faced and practically prepared for.

## **REVIVAL**

Don't these Scriptural prayers echo the desire of your heart:

*“Restore to me the joy of your salvation and grant me a willing spirit to sustain me.”*

*Psalm 51:12*

*“Restore us, O God Almighty; make your face shine upon us, that we may be saved.”  
Psalm 80:7*

*“Will you not revive us again, that your people may rejoice in you?” Psalm 85:6*

The single greatest priority and crying need of churches today is to seek God that He may revive and restore us to a God-honouring condition.

### **REFORMATION**

Surely all Christians desire that God’s law be honoured and obeyed in our society. Don’t you want to see our nation truly ‘In humble submission to Almighty God, who controls the destinies of nations and the histories of peoples’, as our constitution states? Are we still “Conscious of our responsibility toward God and man.”?

As Psalm 101 reminds us, the duty of godly rulers is to destroy the wicked, root out evil and protect the righteous, all to the Glory of God.

Therefore Asa expelled the prostitutes and destroyed idols (1 Kings 15:12). Jehu demolished the temple of Baal and turned it into a latrine (2 Kings 10:27). Jehoiada led the people in the destruction of the temple of Baal smashing the idols and altars (2 Kings 11:18). Josiah ordered articles of false religions removed from the temple of the Lord (2 Kings 23:4).

Jehoshaphat rid the land of Asherah poles and set his heart on seeking God (2 Chron. 19:3). Hezekiah and Manasseh also removed offensive materials, that were not in accordance with God’s law, from their land (2 Chron. 31:1; 33:15). Ezra required the people to bring their marriages into obedience to God’s law (Ezra 10:3). Nehemiah enforced Sabbath observance in honour of the Lord (Nehemiah 13:19).

In History courageous reformers like Wycliffe, Huss, Zwingli and Luther dared to stand up and speak out against the unBiblical practises of the medieval Roman Catholic system. Calvin turned Geneva into a model city of God-fearing, law-abiding citizens by applying Biblical law to

every area of legal, economic and social life. These reformers laboured to restore to the Church the Lordship of Christ, the Sovereignty of God, justification by faith, liberty of conscience, the priesthood of all believers and the Bible as the final authority for faith and conduct. As Martin Luther declared:

***“If I profess with the loudest voice and clearest exposition every portion of the truth of God except precisely that little point which the world and the devil are at the moment attacking, I am not confessing Christ. Where the battle rages, there the loyalty of the soldier is proved and to be steady on all the battle front besides, is mere flight and disgrace if he flinches at that point.”***

And that is the point where we find our selves today. Our society is in desperate need of Biblical reformation and our churches need revival. While the Reformers, Puritans, Huguenots and Pilgrims were characterised by courage and uncompromising faithfulness to God’s Word, our generation is clearly full of cowardice, love of pleasure, and compromise.

### THE HUMANIST POSITION

Our society seems to be gripped by the humanism of eighteenth-century French philosophers like Voltaire and Rousseau:

That man is basically good; that human nature is improving and perfectable. For this reason thieves, rapists and murderers are treated as “victims of society”, needing treatment and rehabilitation, instead of villains needing retribution and punishment. The present world climate is one of “negotiation” (meaning: compromise), “unity” (meaning: conformity), “love” (meaning: passive acceptance of evil), and “peace” (meaning: non-resistance to terrorism). The scandal is that under these delusions, terrorists can be freed even while police men are jailed. Murderers can be granted indemnity even while soldiers are prosecuted. Clergymen and politicians can campaign to save murderers by ending the death penalty, while condemning babies by promoting abortion.

In this age of appeasement, personal and public policy does not seem to be decided by “what is right?” but by “what is popular?” Our society no longer is faithfully building every area of life in obedience to the Word of God. The “new South Africa” seems to be abandoning Biblical principles and embracing humanism at a breathtaking pace.

Francis Schaeffer defines humanism as:

“the placing of man at the centre of all things and making him the measure of all things.”

Alexander Solzhenitzyn described it as:

**“the proclaimed and practiced autonomy of man from any higher force above him,”**

According to humanist thought, there is no clearcut standard of right and wrong.

The inevitable results of humanism are seen in the totalitarianism and massacres of the communist East and in the permissiveness and decadence of the democratic West.

Humanists have to take responsibility for the abortion holocaust, the pornography plague, the drug epidemic, the crime wave, and the proliferation of perversion. These disasters are the logical result of rejecting God’s law and promoting situation ethics, evolution, permissiveness and “alternative lifestyles.”

### **THE REFORMATION POSITION**

The Biblical doctrine of the total depravity of human nature — that man is by nature sinful and unable to please God — led the Reformers to hold an opposite position to the humanists. The Reformers believed that human nature is basically evil and selfish. Therefore they favoured a form of government with strict laws and strict punishments for criminal behaviour. They recognised that the civil government needed to be powerful enough to restrain the evil impulses of sinful people. However, believing that “power corrupts; and absolute power corrupts absolutely,” they knew that rulers could not be trusted with absolute power either.

Their solution was not the pagan Greek utopia of democracy — where man rules — but a constitutional republic — where law rules. Therefore the reformers strove to build their republics upon the unchangeable law of God’s Word. Instead of rulers, they elected servants — civil servants — bound down with the chains of the constitution. And they erected a system of checks and balances to divide the power and responsibility into trinitarian model of Executive, Legislative and Judicial branches of civil government.

Being cautious of the human nature of foreign powers, they also favoured a strong military defence to be a deterrant against attacks and to preserve liberty and security for their inhabitants.

Reformed Christians believe that God's Law, as revealed in His Word, the Bible, contains the absolute and unchanging principles by which all areas of life must be governed. The laws of God reflect the eternal and unchanging character and will of God and therefore can not be ignored. Our concern to apply God's revealed law to every day life flows from the Biblical doctrines of the Sovereignty of God and the sinfulness of man.

The Lord is our King  
The Lord our Law-giver.  
The Lord is our Judge. (Isaiah 33:22)

One of the basic differences between Biblical Christianity and humanistic religion is that: the Biblical faith is a response to Truth, while man-centred faith is an attempt to manipulate God. The Biblical faith aims at pleasing God, while the man-centred faith aims at self-satisfaction.

The Bible asserts that **“Jesus is Lord”** over all areas of life (Cot. 1:15-17).” **The earth is the Lord's, and everything in it.”**

Psalm 24:1.

Christians are to be salt and light (Matt. 5:13-16), preserving what is good in our society and enlightening the world with our witness to Christ. In the Great Commission, our Lord commanded us to “disciple the nations. . .teaching them to obey everything I have commanded.” Matthew 28:19.

## **THE NEED FOR REVIVAL**

We in the West have been warned by great Christian writers like Alexander Solzhenitzyn, Richard Wurmbrand and Francis Schaeffer. Our societies are morally corrupt and in rebellion to God's Word. We are in danger of incurring the wrath of God in judgement upon our sin saturated societies. The murdering of the unborn through abortion, the glamourizing of adultery by Hollywood, the proliferation of drug addiction, the promotion of perversion, the increase in theft, murder, rape and terrorism, child abuse and satanism. How can we avoid the just condemnation of our Holy Creator?

***“Does the church have a future in our generation? ... I believe the church is in real***

***danger. It is in for a rough day. We are facing present pressures and a present and future manipulation which will be so overwhelming in the days to come that they will make the battles of the last forty years look like child's play.*** Francis A. Schaeffer

Only by nationwide repentance, revival and reformation can we re-build the moral walls of our society (as recorded in Nehemiah).

Where do we start? I believe that reading the writings of Solzhenitzyn, Wurmbrand and Schaeffer would be a good beginning. In this superficial world of compromise and ignorance, it is so refreshing to read deeply perceptive and Biblical messages like "The Great Evangelical Disaster", "The Church at the end of the 20th Century" and "How shall we then live?" by Francis A Schaeffer; "Where. Christ is still Tortured" by Richard Wurmbrand; "The Gulag Archipeligo" by Alexander Solzhenitzen; "The Institutes of Christian Religion" by John Calvin; "Productive Christians in an age of Guilt Manipulators" by David Chilton and other great classics.

These books will help us see through the media manipulation, superficiality, decadence and suicidal death wish of Western civilization, and churches. More importantly these writings will take us back to the Bible in all its glorious depth, breadth and height.

The choice is ours. It is God's law or God's judgement. Revival or persecution.

***"If my people, who are called by my name, wilt humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then will I hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and will heal their land."*** II Chronicles 7:14

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