

# Break the Silence

**By Byron Paulus**

We can no longer afford to play “The Quiet Game.” Parents have been playing this game for generations. When things get too boisterous, they challenge their children to see who can go the longest without making noise.

For some reason, kids love the challenge. But for Mom or Dad, the quiet feels a little cheap. They know that instead of dealing with the root issues of their children being out of control, they have simply diverted their attention.

The diversion trick may work with small children, but not with a big God. In fact, there are times when He expects us as His children to refuse to be hushed by the world’s tactics that keep us quiet and on the sidelines about the spiritual emergency in our nation.

## Where Are the Voices?

Where are the prophets who will not be silent? Where are the John the Baptists who willingly declare with every last ounce of courage that there is no hope without turning back to God in humble repentance (Luke 3:1–20)?

Where are the Isaiahs who willingly exclaim, “For Zion’s sake I will not keep silent, for Jerusalem’s sake I will not remain quiet, till her vindication shines out like the dawn, her salvation like a blazing torch” (Isa. 62:1)?

Where are the Jeremiahs with strong tears of lament: “Oh, my anguish, my anguish! I writhe in pain. Oh, the agony of my heart! My heart pounds within me, I cannot keep silent. For I have heard the sound of the trumpet; I have heard the battle cry” (Jer. 4:19)?

Where are the voices and leaders like Peter who, in the mist of confusion and chaos, are willing to stand up and speak out to bring clarity, context, and community during an outpouring of God's Spirit (Acts 2:14–36)?

Throughout history, when it seemed everything was about to come crashing down, God would begin to stir hearts and raise up voices. They became heralds to prepare the way for a great work of God.

## **Pursuing Spiritual War**

When our nation's founders decided to convey America's independence publicly and formally, they used the term *Declaration*, signifying that the days of debate were over. Urgent times required a commitment to be made, a cause to be embraced, a price to be paid.

But it was the First Great Awakening that provided the force of character and hotness of heart that undergirded the beginnings of America's government and laid the foundation for what would become the greatest gospel-preaching, missionary-sending, social-caring nation in all of history.

Frelinghuysen, Whitefield, Edwards, Tennent, Brainerd, and other leading ministers of the Awakening were not waging physical and political wars as much as they were spiritual wars. They, like godly leaders throughout history, paid a high price fighting against the enemy for the souls of men.

They put their physical well-being, reputation, comfort, and convenience on the line. As citizens of another Kingdom, they sacrificed family time, vocational pursuits, and personal pleasure to fight for something of even greater value than a sound government—the knowledge of the glory of the Lord covering the earth as the waters cover the sea (Hab. 2:14).

They understood that being a revivalist was more important to God than being a survivalist. No one understood this more than

noted martyr Dietrich Bonhoeffer when he exclaimed, “We will not and must not be either outraged critics or opportunists, but must take our share of responsibility for the molding of history in every situation and at every moment, whether we are the victors or the vanquished.”

## Nothing Else Matters

During the weeks ahead, it is prime time to let the world around you know that while electing the right leader is important, turning to God is even more important. Calling out to Him is truly the *one cry* that can make a difference.

Several years ago, two Christian leaders met privately in the Oval Office to discuss the rapid moral decline taking place in our nation. Unexpectedly, the president extended the meeting by 45 minutes. As they were leaving the meeting, one leader turned to the other and hopelessly stated, “If we do not have revival, nothing else really matters.”

The other leader wisely and enthusiastically replied, “And *if we do have revival*, nothing else really matters!”

During these days of unprecedented darkness, division, and distress, we must not only declare there is no hope apart from revival, but that *there is no hope like revival!*

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