

EPHESUS REVISITED
By Dr. Hal Webb, Evangelist

In the beginning of the book of Revelation, John addressed the condition of seven churches existing in the first century. The first of these was Ephesus, whom God had been watching and desired to stir to new zeal. From the perspective of man they had accomplished much good. They were a patient, purposeful people who refused to tolerate evil in their ranks. Their labors were faithful and much of their works had been done for the glory of God. Even though the church was commended, from God's perspective He informed them, "I have somewhat against thee." For 66 years, I as a fundamental evangelist, have labored among thousands of great pastors and churches. I have learned that no church rises above the pastor who personally must strive for mastery in his God-called ministry. **I deeply love pastors. To me they are the heroes of His church; holy guardians of the faith, crucial to present day believers, and vital leaders into the 21st century.** Could it be the Lord has somewhat against the church in this generation? Let me prayerfully suggest some troubled areas and hopefully the solutions.

There must be personal and congregational **RETURN** to our first love. Jesus said, "*remember from whence thou art fallen*" Rev. 2:5. The man of God lives in the middle of a highly scheduled future, often forgetting the challenges and battles of the past and how God stood by him. Remember your first passionate love for Christ. It captivated your thinking, gave boldness to your talk and confidence to your walk. Oh! how the fire burned in your heart, you read the word with great expectation and the initial call of God was a heaven sent commission. He has not changed. True revival begins in the remembrance of great, proven victories of the past. Remember, God and you

are still a majority. The church through the ages has had a great part in our nation. We need to return to strict Bible control as did the early church. Everywhere there are churches that used to be examples of Godliness but have become skeletons of shame. The social has eclipsed the spiritual. Sermons are often based on watered down weakened theories of current, accepted, religious wisdom. Today's politics seek to disclaim what the Bible commands. It is shaped to allow the most perverse human opinions and actions. Paul referred to this in 11 Timothy 4:3 "*For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers having itching ears.*" Churches around us have lost their punch and power for God and in these latter days turned from obedience to compromise. We need to support strong preaching and be the standard of Godliness which the Bible commands. The world desperately needs a standard and an example to see, based on the Word of God.

Today, as then, the need was to "repent" Rev. 2:5. We do need to **REPENT**. We servants of God need to analyze the direction taken, the motives that drive us and the true value of the accomplishments pursued. Has something or someone replaced that first love? Is there anything or anyone that excites your energies more than your love for Jesus? Only you can know the true condition of your heart. We need to see that the church is indeed a reflection of our own lives. If our example has slid, our dedication has weakened, our resolve has waned, how can we possibly expect our church to see revival? Grab by faith the promise, "*Draw nigh to God and He will draw nigh to you*" James 4:8. Press your knees together, clean up the innermost secrets of the heart and with sorrow fast and pray until the challenge of the call of God is new and fresh upon you. Only then will God bless us and give revival as we end time churches seek to lead in our lost