

# THE UPWARD CALL

*Brethren, I do not regard myself as having laid hold of it yet;  
but one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and reaching forward to what lies ahead,  
**I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God  
IN CHRIST JESUS.***  
(Philippians 3:13-14 NASB)

#03-0918

## ***Moment of Hope & Pride***

January 21, 2009

Speaking to the nation in his farewell speech, President George Bush, in reflecting on the inauguration of Barack Obama as the 44<sup>th</sup> president (actually 43<sup>rd</sup> man to hold office), stated: “Standing on the steps of the Capitol will be a man whose story reflects the enduring promise of our land. **This is a moment of hope and pride for our whole Nation.** And I join all Americans in offering best wishes to President-elect Obama; his wife, Michelle; and their two beautiful girls.”

For a man that has been hated and vilified for the last eight years, George Bush, along with Laura, left Washington with dignity and grace. Whether one agreed with his policies or not, he is a man who respects the office of President, and he exemplified this as he graciously passed the reign of power to his successor. Politics is a strange thing. The party coming into power, along with the media, didn't seem to give Mr. Bush the same courtesy, as some ignored his exit and others continued to characterize him as if he were evil and stupid rolled into one. But he did not complain.

Well, history, if it will be open and honest, will now be the judge of his successes and failures.

As I have reflected on the transfer of power, I have been bothered by something that keeps gnawing within me. It finally came to me that what is bothering me is that many Christians, especially ones described as the far-right conservatives, had high hopes for Mr. Bush's time in office. I do not like labels and personally strive to steer clear of aligning myself with anything other than the kingdom of God, but I must confess that I too had high hopes for him. To me, George Bush was one of us; he was our guy, so to speak. It didn't matter if the whole world hated him. I am not ashamed of stating this. After all, he had openly confessed that his life had changed when he believed in Jesus. His inauguration was also punctuated when Franklin Graham prayed in the name of Jesus over the nation and the new administration. When I heard the name of Jesus come out of Franklin's mouth, I thought it was a great moment for the nation. However, the pop-culture, antichrist, political world that dominates the US landscape these days does not like the name of Jesus. You can proclaim any other name, but do not publicly proclaim the name of Jesus. So, right from the start, it became obvious that Mr. Bush was not going to be accepted, especially by the elite that might have God on their lips but not the Son of God in their hearts. Of course, the whole controversy around the final vote count between Bush and Gore did much to drive the wedge of division deeper. It was a wound that never healed.

As the years passed, we began to grow discouraged and disillusioned with some of his policies and, yes, the two wars that we found ourselves embroiled in. I even heard some Christians question whether he truly is saved. Some began to throw him overboard, so to speak. I always found this sort of odd. If our salvation were based on how we conducted ourselves or the things we said and did to one another, I imagine that few of us would be saved. Thank God; salvation is by grace through faith. I like the way Paul explains it based on his own experience: **But I was shown mercy, seeing that I do it being ignorant, in unbelief. Yet the grace of our Lord overwhelms, with faith and love in Christ Jesus** (1 Timothy 1:13-14 CV).

The gnawing feeling that I have is that one of our own failed to bring the nation into the place that would honor the Lord Jesus. It was ok that the world might not like him or even hate him so long as he led the nation in a way that brought us closer to proclaiming the name of Jesus over the nation. Of course, some will respond that this is impossible because the president must uphold the Constitution and this requires that we leave God out of the affairs of state. Actually, the founding fathers had no such intention and even expected that the Almighty would have a hand in our affairs. Mr. Bush was not hesitant to invoke God in his speeches, especially to conclude them with “God bless America.” But I am speaking of proclaiming the rightful heir of the nations, the Son of God (Psalm 2). It is one thing to proclaim a nebulous, universal god, but it is another thing to put a specific name to God.

Obviously, it was not the time as fixed by the Father for such a thing to occur. Besides, leadership in our day could be likened to the reign of King Saul, not King David. George Bush's tenure in office has been during the time of the Pentecostal anointing, which is celebrated with leavened bread. In other words, it was never meant to be a perfect time; it was meant to have failures on all levels. This is why Mr. Bush has been what I have called a warrior president. See the series #02-08142-145, *God, Country, Guns, War*. We need the Tabernacles anointing for the nations to acknowledge that God's Son is the rightful heir of the earth. So, I do not blame Mr. Bush. He was placed in authority by God, and he fulfilled God's plan for the time, and the same applies to Mr. Obama, only we do not know the outcome.

When the terrorist attacks hit America on September 11, 2001 (9/11), it was as if the whole nation and the world rallied behind George Bush; although I recall some well-known political figures struggling to acknowledge him while he delivered his famous post-attack speech. As we know, this was all short-lived as the bitterness and political rancor reappeared rather quickly.

However, during this time, many national leaders began to invoke the phrase *May God bless America*. Without knowing it, they were calling the nation to repentance, for this is the purpose of blessing. **"For you first, God raised up His Servant and sent Him to bless you by turning every one of you from your wicked ways"** (Acts 3:26 NASB). Notice that the blessing of Jesus is to turn everyone from their wicked ways.

But did 9/11 lead the nation to repent and turn from its wicked ways? No; it did not. Instead, it quickened our resolve to get even and destroy our enemies, and this resolve was very strong among many Christians. Oh, the church pews filled, but few, if any, Christian leaders stood up during this time and called for repentance. After all, were we not in the right since we were attacked? Perhaps; but who of our Christian leaders and of the political leaders turned to God to seek His view on the matter? Few did and no voice rang out to the nation to fall on its face, call upon God, and turn from our own wicked ways. Instead, the call went out to send the enemy "to hell," and the church seconded it with "Amen."

Beloved in Christ; the failure was not George Bush's failure; it was our failure. He was only a reflection of us. We did not seek God, for if we had, we would have humbled ourselves before God and listened for His voice. *May God bless America* became a demand to God to bless our nation without our nation turning from its wicked ways. We wanted His blessing without changed hearts.

Well, this leads me to the present and the comment Mr. Bush made in his farewell speech. He stated that we now have a moment of hope and pride with the inauguration of Barack Obama. Truly, this is an historic moment and a milestone for our country that was almost ripped apart by a civil war many centuries ago. The first black (perhaps, multiracial) president is a defining moment for us and a source of hope and pride for many who thought this day was long in coming.

However, I have a caution. Some of us had put our hope in a man who confesses the name of Jesus, but we have learned that our hope must remain with the Lord Jesus Christ, who is our Hope (1 Timothy 1:1). Only He can set things right in this world. We don't need more pride or man's hope; we need humility and broken hearts. **Pride goes before destruction** (Proverbs 16:18). Our country, along with the world, now finds itself in an economic crisis, a new 9/11, and the US and the world are looking to Obama to save it, to even usher it into a new global order. Do not be fooled; it is Babylon. Interestingly, the president's new limo is called "the beast." My gnawing feeling asks: Is he one of us?

The call for God to bless America continues to go forth, but where is the call to repent and turn from our wicked ways? When I listen to what is coming from the pulpits in our day, I do not hear this word. Instead, I hear motivational speaking about prosperity, sowing seed, blessing, power, and building the kingdom within mystery Babylon. The Lord tried to speak to us through 9/11, but we would not listen. Now He speaks to us through prosperity that is evaporating. Are we listening?

**"I spoke to you in your prosperity; but you said, 'I will not listen!' This has been your practice from your youth, that you have not obeyed My voice."** (Jeremiah 22:21 NASB)

It is time for the Lord's conquerors from the ecclesia of God to rise up to proclaim the truth of the coming kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ. **Repent, for the kingdom of the heavens is at hand!** It is time to listen, to obey, and to prepare the way for the King!