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# The Shelby Daily Star

Henry L. Weathers, Publisher  
Ned Smith, Business Manager

James P. Allen, Editor  
Lindsey E. Dail, Advertising Mgr.

4—Sat., May 22, 1965

## A Wave Of Good News

### Parson To People

# Spiritual Renewal

By DR. JOSEPH McCLAIN  
Pastor First Baptist Church

There is abroad in our land today a spiritual renewal concept that is specifically designed to make the churches of this same land more meaningful and relevant. To me, I believe that this is something we need to be working on all the time, and many churches are diligently doing just that. In case you might think that this concerted effort by some Christian fellowships is new and just beginning; relieve yourselves, it isn't. The concept is just now trickling down from the "high-ups" to the "lower downs."



McCLAIN

IN THIS spiritual renewal there is a theological renaissance; this in short is a "back to the Bible" movement. The other part of the spiritual renewal concept that I wish to emphasize is the use of the average or not-so-average church member so that this theological renaissance might be fully effective.

I FIRMLY believe that in order to have a spiritual revival in our day and for our day there must be a basis upon which we must build. That basis to me has been and always will be the Bible. This means that each of us will have to be more knowledgeable than ever. To break this idea down so that all will know what is meant by "knowledgeable;" each, in order to know what divine scriptures say, will have to know the historical settings, linguistic meanings, critical problems, geographical and archaeological findings and most of all the meanings of the Bible to that day and our day. The Bible is still applicable and "appropriate" for our day, if for nothing

else, because human nature and needs remain basically the same. This is so whether Hosea is speaking to Ephraim, Jesus to the scribes, Paul to Philemon or about Demas, or John to the seven churches of Asia — Min- or Asia.

AN ILLUSTRATION of this spiritual revival is seen in the stated objectives of student work of several years back with the present statement of a certain denomination that goes as follows:

#### I. AN OLD STATEMENT:

1. To guide the student in the development of an integrated Christian personality.
2. To lead to an intelligent appreciation of Jesus and the implications of the principles of His teaching for our personal and social living.

#### II. A NEW statement of objectives:

1. We begin with the affirmation that God has acted in Jesus Christ, reconciling His world to Himself and setting men free to live in joyous, self-affirming relation with Him and other men.
2. The act of God has occurred, and the Christian life is one of Thanksgiving and praise. We now accept ourselves and our world as given to us, to be enjoyed responsibly in ways that glorify the Creator-Donor.
3. It is this act of God that is the Gospel: the good news that God is God, that he presides over history, and that the Kingdom is coming. God has defeated all the other powers in all creation, be they geographic or economic or national or racial or familial or political or social. The kingdom of man has fallen and we are free.

ALTHOUGH, DEAR readers, you might not subscribe to either of these, you will have to admit the great difference between the two. The reason for

showing a portion of these two statements is to show the trend back to God and the Bible. Now without pointing out any group or groups specifically there has been, and always will be, people who base their faith and beliefs in the Bible.

THE GREATEST and most authoritative revelation of God to man is the Bible. It is the book of books. It is the spiritual authority that man must have. Man tries to flee from the authoritative, but he inevitably sees his need of it. The Bible is spiritual authority on life and how to love it and on death and how to be conqueror of it. Man in his search for spiritual truth must and always will come back to the base of all spiritual truth — the Bible. A "back to the Bible" time is long overdue and will be a time of rejuvenation and revival.

THE UTILIZATION of the so-called laity is the other part of the spiritual renewal. This concept has been in practice a long time in most Southern Baptist churches. I personally think that as a denomination we are in danger of going too far in this direction. Whenever a church loses a basic respect, that it must have for the ministry by making the minister just a figurehead or a necessary evil then watch for the collapse because it is at the door. However, our total membership from the oldest down to the youngest, from the most experienced to the novice must be thrown into the battle that is in for the battle of its life. Individual churches are engaged in the battle of their lives. We need more than a shot in the arm, more than a nudge and more than a temporary solution. We need a direction, a plan, a divine leadership, a cure, an everlasting renewal that knows no limitations and that has a Godly boldness that overcomes the most deadly disease of all — deadness.