

# America Is Not Free Indeed

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— W.W. McEad —

America! The land of the free and the home of the brave! Land of opportunity! This land we call “home” has long held an irresistible attraction for weary and oppressed peoples all over the world. Even when this land was nothing more than a wilderness sparsely populated with Native Americans, the concept of “freedom,” carried on the wings of thought, fired the imagination and dreams of millions. These millions have left all—home, family, career and all earthly possessions; and some have lost all—even their lives—in order to reach our borders and drink, both legally and illegally, from the fountain of America’s promise.

In this land, “freedom” is a sacred watchword. We vigorously and proudly defend and champion, even to the point of bloodshed, the ideals embodied in the freedom of speech, the freedom of religion, the freedom to travel, freedom of the press and other freedoms that have become almost synonymous with America. These ideals formed the framework of the vision for America which inspired and drove the founding fathers of this nation.

Sadly, however, in spite of the noble aspirations of our founding fathers and the lofty ideals which those aspirations spawned, there is a serious flaw in the fabric of America’s freedom. America is not really free, at least not “free indeed.”

Jesus said to his disciples, “If you abide in My word, you are My disciples indeed. And you shall know the

truth, and the truth shall make you free.” The disciples responded with a bit of confusion by saying, “We are Abraham’s descendants, and have never been in bondage to anyone.

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How can You say, ‘You will be made free?’” We might understandably echo such thinking today by saying, “We are Americans! We are not in bondage to anyone. How can Jesus say ‘we will be made free?’” Jesus explained: “Most assuredly, I say to you, whoever commits sin is a slave of sin. And a slave does not abide in the house forever, but a son abides forever. Therefore if the Son makes you free, you shall be free indeed.”<sup>1</sup>

America is not really free. Her people by and large are in bondage to the most grievous slavemaster of all. It is popular in Washington to use the word “quagmire” when speaking of economic, social, military and a whole host of other difficulties in which America finds herself mired. It is hard-

ly ever mentioned, however, that the greatest threat to this nation is the quagmire of sin and depravity which has caught the nation in a death grip. Corruption in high places, sweeping relativism, abortion, all forms of sexual perversion, and rampant moral depravity are just a few of the sores that have erupted on the landscape once praised for its “purple mountain majesties and amber waves of grain.” No indeed! America is NOT free indeed!

The cause of this desperate situation can be traced in part to the failure of the Church to vigorously pursue and fulfill the Great Commission in America:

In 1900 there were 27 churches for every 10,000 Americans. In 1950, there were 17 churches for every 10,000 people.<sup>2</sup> Since 1950, we actually have 30 percent fewer churches to reach the growing number of un-churched people in America!

Estimates place the number of church closures in our nation at between 3,500 and 4,000 every year. Yet even the most optimistic estimates suggest that about 1,300 new churches are being planted annually.<sup>3</sup> The net result is that opportunities for people to hear the Gospel are growing fewer and fewer with each passing year.

America is the most ethnically diverse nation in the world and one of the most religiously diverse nations as well.

Christianity is declining while cults and traditional world religions are up 400% from 1950.

Both Muslims and Mormons now outnumber Jews and Episcopalians in America.

Islam now claims an estimated six million followers, making it the second largest faith in our nation. Buddhists now number 2.5 million adherents; Hindus, some 1.2 million. False cultists have increased from one million in 1900 to over 26 million today.<sup>4</sup>

We have just turned the page on a new year and these alarming trends are still at work in the battle for men's souls, wresting even more territory from the grasp of the Church (which has been sent into the world with the Lord's assurance that even the gates of Hades cannot stand before it). And yet it would seem as though a large portion of that Church in America has circled the wagons and sits hoping the Lord will return soon and rescue us from this miserable world.

The time has come for a new vision for America. It is time for the message of spiritual freedom, carried on the

wings of prayer and on feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace, to permeate every level of our society so that millions may drink from the fountain of life eternal.

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It is time for God's people and the churches where they worship to redouble their efforts to make America the land of the spiritually

free. It is time for America to be the home of those emboldened by the Spirit of God to go forth from "Jerusalem" to our "Judea" and "Samaria" with the purposeful intent of pushing back the darkness by establishing new churches that will proclaim the message of the Gospel, thereby snatching souls from the kingdom of darkness and bringing them into the kingdom of light!

Vision America is a bold new initiative by IFCA International for such a time as this. It shall be our endeavor to increasingly blanket America with the faithful, biblical ministry of an ever-growing number of independent Bible churches. The fabric of that blanket will be made by weaving together the involvement of each individual member, church, organization and church planting agency as we work together to establish new IFCA International churches across the land.

In this endeavor we must allow no feeble excuses. We must shun no sac-

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rific. We must countenance no indifference. We must tolerate no pettiness. The eternal destinies of men and women and, perhaps, the very soul of America hang in the balance. We can and must make a difference! If not us, who? If not now, when? If not you, why?

If you are reading these words, there is a vital part for you to play in Vision America. Read the articles in this issue of VOICE Magazine and browse the Vision America web-page accessible through the IFCA home page ([www.ifca.org](http://www.ifca.org)). Begin planning prayerfully for your involvement and

that of your church. Your involvement in Vision America today will make a difference for America's tomorrows.

#### ENDNOTES

- 1 John 8.31-36
- 2 Richard Harris in—*Church Planting Today*, page 2. See also Lyle E. Schaller, *44 Questions for Church Planters* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1991), 14-26
- 3 Win Arn, *The Pastor's Manual for Effective Ministry* (Monrovia, CA: Church Growth, 1988), 16. See also Tom Clegg and Warren Bird, *Lost in America* (Loveland, CO: Group Publishing, 2001), 30.
- 4 For stats on religionists in America, see Clegg and Bird, *Lost in America*, 30-32.

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# Young Pastors' Conference

## *The Purity of the Pastor...The Purity of the Ministry*

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**APRIL 7 - 9, 2008**

The Apostle Paul exhorted the young pastor Timothy to make it his priority to train men for ministry (2 Timothy 2:1-9). The YPC seeks to facilitate the ongoing equipping of young men for long-term ministry effectiveness.

Equipping young pastors to navigate the sometimes dangerous waters of church ministry is just a part of IFCA's commitment to the preparation of those who will suffer hardship in ministry like good soldiers, disciplined athletes and dedicated farmers. Our Young Pastors' Conferences are one of the growing number of tools used to develop effective pastoral leadership, fully equipped for ministry in the local church today.

Equipping young pastors with an understanding of, and appreciation for, the historically rich significance of biblical fundamentalism - what it is and what it is not.

Equipping young pastors with a broad range of practical ministry knowledge shared by men proven in

the trenches of ministry and who can provide first-hand knowledge of the "do's and don'ts" of ministry

Equipping young pastors in the essential disciplines necessary to protect and preserve their marriage, family, ministry and above all, their own walk with Christ as His approved servant-leader.

The 2008 YPC will focus on this theme *The Purity of the Pastor...The Purity of the Ministry*. As goes the pastor, so goes the ministry. Those placed by God, through the agency of local ministries, into the ministry are obligated to live a life of purity lest they become shipwrecked and bring harm to Christ and His precious bride, the Church.

**Who qualifies?** Pastors in their first 5 years of local church ministry (no age restriction) who are either members of IFCA International or are pastoring an IFCA member church.

**Where?** The YPC takes place in the facilities of the Home Office of IFCA

International, in Grandville (Grand Rapids), Michigan.

**Expenses?** You provide for your transportation to Grandville MI and IFCA will provide lodging, meals, and materials.

**Schedule?** Begins Monday, April 7, 2008, 5:30 pm (Eastern) with supper, and concludes Wednesday, April 9, at Noon.

**Limited?** To maintain a personal and practical forum of interaction and learning, the YPC will be limited to the first 20 men who sign up.

For more information, or to sign up today, call the IFCA Home Office at (800) 347-1840. Or you may register on line at [www.ifca.org](http://www.ifca.org), and click on the link to Young Pastors' Conference.