

‘Glory in the Church’

By PAUL J. SCHARF

One of the greatest privileges that I enjoy as a church ministries representative for The Friends of Israel Gospel Ministry is that I get to preach in—and be in—lots of churches.

For the most part, these churches are quite similar in terms of their understanding and interpretation of Biblical truth and, of course, they find common ground with our ministry when it comes to the core issue of the importance of God’s plan for Israel.

Often, of course, these churches have different backgrounds, traditions, practices, standards, convictions—sometimes even distinct doctrinal teachings that set them apart in one way or another. But I’d like to set those differences aside for a moment and focus on all that we have in common—indeed, all that we should take time to celebrate!

You see, I’ve come to believe something, especially, as we’ve witnessed the many deleterious blows that have rocked our beloved United States of America to its foundation in recent years.

But before I share this persuasion of mine, let me ask: Where does the real power lie in this nation? Is it found in the White House? No, it’s not there. Is it in all the myriad of three-letter agencies that dot the skyline of Washington, D.C.? No, it’s not there either. Then—you might say—it’s in the deep state, the *swamp*! No, not even there. Finally, then—it must reside in the gathering of global leaders who convene in Davos, Switzerland, for the World Economic Forum! Nope—not even close.

Jesus, in fact, said that such people “could have no power at all ... unless it had been given ... from above” (John 19:11). The Apostle Paul teaches us “the wisdom of God ... which none of the rulers of this age knew” (1 Cor. 2:7-8). Paul also referenced the deluded soul who “thinks himself to be something, when he is nothing” (Gal. 6:3). I believe this to be an apt description of many among the so-called elite of our society, who must remember that “there is no authority except from God” (Rom. 13:2).

No, I believe that the real power in this nation—the engine that makes it run, to the extent that it still does, and the skeleton that continues to hold it all together—resides in the pulpits and pews of our faithful churches.

Many of these are smaller churches. Some are country churches. Most of them are not flashy. They conduct their business with little to no fanfare. And, of course, they still have all the problems that we as church people know all too well.

But these congregations also have a lot going for them. As I travel and speak in them, I find lots of people who still care deeply about “the Book, and the blood and the blessed hope.” It’s an honor and a privilege, even a thrill, to shake their hands as they exit the church house, and to serve as the recipient of their testimonies of faith and gratitude.

Now, we fully acknowledge that these are imperfect people—each and every one of them. But we also realize that they give rides to the elderly, take meals to the sick, invite neighborhood kids to church programs, and give of their limited funds to keep missionaries on the field. And many of them fill those pews every Sunday, rain or shine.

And they have some even bigger things going for them. Consider this—together, they form local manifestations of “the body of Christ” (1 Cor. 12:27)—“the pillar and ground of the truth” (1 Tim. 3:15). They also have access to the ultimate *power* in the world today—“the gospel of Christ” (Rom. 1:16).

Sadly, our nation will only fathom the full extent of such power once it is absent. That will occur at the moment of the pretribulational rapture—when the greatest force in the world to inhibit evil and sin “is taken out of the way” (2 Thess. 2:7). In that instant, I believe that the nation we have loved so dearly will quickly disintegrate. It will be a complete and total collapse.

There is an old term in our language which has fallen out of favor, and is rarely used today—but I think it is worth reviving. It is *churchman*.

If you are a believer in Jesus Christ today, your very identity is not tied even to your earthly ancestry, but to your place in Christ’s body, with your brothers and sisters in Him (see 1 Cor. 10:32). You, dear friend, are a *churchman*!

Dear churchman, this is your time to shine. Yep—it’s game time, time to give it everything you’ve got! If I may say it like this ... it’s time to take a little bit more pride in the lofty place that you hold in the only program God is building in the world today. It’s time to grasp how much *power* you really hold in your hands!

I conclude with the words of Paul in Eph. 3:20-21:

Now to Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us, to Him *be* glory in the church by Christ Jesus to all generations, forever and ever. Amen.

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