

Revolution 4

Are you a revolutionary?

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In 2005 George Barna, the founder and director of the Barna Group, a research and

resource firm that provides valuable information to ministries and corporations,

wrote a book titled Revolution. It is a book that discusses the paradigm shift that is

happening in the church today. In the book Revolution Barna gives an awesome

definition of transformation.

He writes, "Spiritual transformation is any significant and lasting transition in

your life wherein you switch from one substantial perspective or practice to

something wholly different that genuinely alters you at a very basic level."

For example, if you switched from a Catholic church to a Pentecostal church, that

is not transformational. If you decide to attend Sunday School, that is not

transformational, if you decide to take a leadership position in the church, that is

not transformational.

What is transformational is if you change your world view to a Biblical perspective, or if you recognize the gifts that God has given you and use those gifts

to further the Kingdom of God, or if you start seeing God in a whole new way and

begin to worship Him every hour of every day. Those things are transformational.

He goes on to say, "Transformation, as I am using it, is a significant spiritual

breakthrough in which you seize a new perspective or practice..." The result of the

transformation is that you are never the same again. That is what we are called to

experience when it comes to our relationship with God. It is supposed to be life

changing.

So many people have it wrong today; they think it is all about church.

What church

do you go to? There is nothing wrong with going to church; as a matter of fact I

highly recommend it. But going to church does not mean that you are saved. It

does not mean that you are righteous; it does not mean that you are holy. If that

were true then going to Coors Field would make you a professional baseball

player.

What is important is being in a right relationship with God through Jesus Christ.

The most important thing in our lives needs to be our devotion to God. Serving

Him with all that is within us.

That is what it is all about. It is not all about church.

Yet-It is all about The Church. What is The Church? We have gone over this

before. You should know the answer. We are The Church: the people who are

actively in participation in the advancement of the Kingdom of God. This is the

church and this is what it is all about.

The church today the way many people perceive it isn't even described in the Bible.

The church as we know it today was created centuries ago by mankind to help the

believers become better at following Christ. The best description of a church that I

can find in the Bible is in Acts 2:42-47. But it does not describe the church as we

know it.

They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. ⁴³Everyone was filled with awe, and many wonders and miraculous signs were done by the apostles. ⁴⁴All the believers were together and had everything in common. ⁴⁵Selling their possessions and goods, they gave to anyone as he had need. ⁴⁶Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, ⁴⁷praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved. Acts 2:42-47

In order to get the right description of the church all you really need to do is

understand that being the church means that you are going to live your life in a

way that pleases Christ... When you do that, you are the church and you are a revolutionary.

Webster's New World Dictionary has five definitions for the term revolution.

Definitions 1, 2, & 3 are basically the same. And 4 and 5 are different. I am giving

you definitions 1, 4, & 5.

Definition 1 – Movement of a body in an orbit or circle.

Definition 4 – A complete or radical change of any kind.

Definition 5 – Overthrow of a government or social system, with another taking its place.

Let take a look Over the next two weeks at these three definitions and how they

relate to the body of Christ.

Each of these together gives us a good definition of what a Revolutionary Christian

is supposed to be. According to Barna, the Revolutionary mind-set is simple; "Do

whatever it takes to get closer to God and to help others do the same.

Obliterate any

obstacle that prevents you from honoring God with every breath you take.
Be such

an outstanding example of the Christian faith so that no one will question
your
heart or lifestyle.”

The only people who will question the life style of a Revolutionary is the
person

who sees the institution of the church as something that is more important
than

being the church. We cannot allow this!

In other words being a Revolutionary Christian is not about going to
church it is

all about being the church that is what we are called to be.

If we are being the church that we are supposed to be then we will do
whatever it

takes to get closer to God and we will do whatever it takes to get others to
do the

same.

That is not to say that going to an organized church service is unimportant.

I

believe that it is very important but going to an organized church service
must be a

result of a life changing relationship with God. Church should happen every day in

private worship, before you ever step into church-on Sunday morning.

If you are here today because you have always gone to church or if you are here

today because your parents went to church or your grandparents then you are here

for the wrong reasons.

You need to be here today because you want to draw closer to God, to God's people

and you want to bring others to know God like you do. The question that you

must answer is, "Are you a Revolutionary?"

How do you figure it out? Barna says the best way to identify a Revolutionary is to

see if they are a person who lives only to love, obey, and serve God, rejecting and

overcoming every obstacle that emerges to prevent such a life.

This was the kind of person Jesus was. Aren't we commanded in the Scripture to be

like Christ?

Is it not the key to our mission statement-to evangelize the lost in Elbert area and

to make them fully devoted followers? It doesn't matter how old you are or how

young you are, if you can understand what it takes to be this way then you can be

a Revolutionist for God. Are you living your life to only love, obey and serve God?

Are you rejecting and overcoming every obstacle that stands in your way to

prevent this things from happening?

We can learn a valuable lesson about this from the planets. What do I mean? I

mean we need to be closer to God.

Remember definition 1 – The movement of a body in an orbit or circle.

Another definition says, "the action by a celestial body of going round in an orbit

or elliptical course, as in "the revolution of the earth about the sun takes one year."

How does this relate to us spiritually?

Look at Romans 12:1-2 *"Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God –*

this is your spiritual act of worship. Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is – His good, pleasing and perfect will.” Romans 12:1-2

This portion of Scripture addresses all three definitions of revolution. A closer

revolution, a war-like revolution, and a radical revolution. Let's look at the first

one. A closer revolution. To offer in the NIV and present or in other translations,

means to stand beside or stand near.

To worship means to center our lives around God instead of centering our lives

around our self. To worship means to live a lifestyle of worship for the glory of

God. This begins with us completely surrendering our lives to Christ. The problem

is that we have lost our way. To many people in the church have conformed to the

patterns of the world. It is time for a Revolution because of this. We have lost

our orbit.

We have lost our orbit. Instead of God being our orbit we have made our selves the

orbit, our jobs our orbit, our recreation our orbit, or even our religion our orbit.

In Romans 12 Paul was calling the church to a revolution. You are to be different

from the world. You are supposed to have a different attitude; you are supposed to

live a different life. This is where the lesson from the planets comes into focus.

It takes the earth 365 days to orbit around the sun. The earth is 150 kilometers \

from the sun. It takes the planet of Pluto 90520 days, that is 258 years, to orbit the

sun. Pluto is 6 billion kilometers from the sun. The planet Mercury takes 88 days

to orbit the sun. Mercury is 58 million kilometers from the sun.

What makes this so interesting is that the closer you are to the sun the hotter it is

and the further you are from the sun the colder it is. The temperature on Pluto is

around minus 385 degrees Fahrenheit. The temperature on Mercury is 750 degrees

Fahrenheit. Somewhere in between is the planet Earth, which by comparison is

lukewarm. When we orbit away from God we become like Pluto.

We become cold towards the things of God. When that happens it takes us longer to

hear His voice. It takes us longer to follow His Word. It makes it harder for us to do

His will. Jesus' words in Matthew 24:12 stand out, "Because of the increase of

wickedness, the love of most will grow cold..."

There are many things in this life that will try to draw us away from our orbit

around God. We have to make a decision in our lives to stay in orbit and even look

for ways to move into a close orbit.

Maybe it was something in life that knocked you out of orbit, something like a

problem or a circumstance. Maybe it was something that you thought looked better

than the orbit you were in.

Whatever the case it is time to return to a closer revolution around the true Son.

Spiritually speaking we don't want to be like Pluto because that is too cold. And

realistically in our spiritual orbit we don't even want to be like the planet Earth.

That is the place of comfort; that is the lukewarm place. When Jesus met with John the Revelator and told John to write to the seven churches, he was told to write to the church in Laodicea, "I know your deeds, that you are neither cold nor hot. I wish you were either one or the other! So, because you are lukewarm – neither hot nor cold – I am about to spit you out of my mouth." Revelation 3:16-17

We need a closer Revolution. We need to be like Mercury around the sun. We need

to make sure that God is the center of our lives. We need to make sure that we are

not self-centered, that we are not man centered, that we are not institutionally

centered.

We need to “do whatever it takes to get closer to God and to help others do the

same. Obliterate any obstacle that prevents you from honoring God with every

breath you take. Be such an outstanding example of the Christian faith so that no

one will question your heart or lifestyle.” We need to make Jesus Lord of all that is

in our life. How do we know if we are in a close orbit with God?

By looking at your life. By looking at every aspect of your life. How is your giving;

your giving of time, your giving of self, your giving of finances? How is your

thought life? Do you honor God with your thoughts? How is your passion for

God? Do you love Him more than anything else? Are you willing to

come nearer to God than you have ever been before? Revisit-Acts 2:42-47 and see

how the early church deepened their depth and drew near Christ. See how they

revolve closer to Christ and set the world on fire. . . They devoted themselves to the

apostles' teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer.

About 3,000 people became new believers when Peter preached the Good News

about Christ. These new Christians were united with the other believers, taught by

the apostles, and included in the prayer meetings and fellowship. New believers in

Christ need to be in groups, where they can learn God's Word, pray, and mature in

the faith. If you have just begun a relationship with Christ, seek out other believers

for fellowship, prayer, and teaching. This is the way to grow the revolution in your

heart! This is Revolutionary. Are you a Revolutionary? Where is your orbit? What

are you revolving around?

The overthrow of a government or social system, with another taking its place.

Whether or not we like to admit it, this is what is taking place today in the spiritual lives of many Americans. The Christian faith is not about going to church. Anyone can go to church but not everyone can be The Church. The Church

is the people who are helping the kingdom of God, Grow!

What is happening today is that The Church is beginning to understand that we

have been doing it wrong for the last few hundred years. The result of doing it

wrong is that Christians are becoming a minority in the United States.

The transformation that is taking place in many lives is that Christians are returning to a “first-century lifestyle based on faith, goodness, love, generosity,

kindness, simplicity, and other values” that many in our world today have given

up on. Remember, Acts 2:42-46: *All the believers were together and had everything in common. ⁴⁵Selling their possessions and goods, they gave to anyone as he had need. Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts,*

The people who are thinking this way are the Revolutionaries of today. They have

searched for ways to deepen their relationship with God, they have listened to the

traditional thoughts of the past and they have found that they are not working.

The Revolutionary is looking for the love of God, they are looking for holiness, they are looking for God's blessings but they are also looking for something that isn't going to fizzle out in a few months. They are looking for something that is substantial and real.

They are looking for something that is only found in an intimate relationship with God through Jesus Christ. And in order to have that kind of relationship you have to change, you have to transform, and you have to pay the price.

When you become a Revolutionary you are going to be faced with challenges and even opposition.

There are going to have to be some tough choices made and they will have to make those choices carefully because each choice we make matters to God.

But when the Revolutionaries make the right choices we find that there is an

awesome eternal reward waiting for them. Just this last week I encountered, heroes of the faith, who are revolutionaries. I have a friend who has been a ministry position of 30 years, considering leaving the paid position for an unpaid position, to advance the kingdom of God! A young lady from my old youth Group, leaving her young son for 3 weeks seeking answers to what God is calling her to do! The servants in the church who are making the Basketball camp happen-VBS happen! Barry Ward is going to African in part because of the generosity of the missions committee-and the church in Elbert!

Remember, a Revolutionary is a person who will "Do whatever it takes to get closer to God and to help others do the same. Obliterate any obstacle that prevents you from honoring God with every breath you take. Be such an outstanding example of the Christian faith so that no one will question your heart or lifestyle."

Conclusion: Sure, it is easier not be a Revolutionary. Not being a Revolutionary is

the comfortable way; it is the wide path and the wide gate that most people will

choose to take. Jesus warns us about that path way in Matthew 7:12 when He says,

“Enter through the narrow gate. For wide is the gate and broad is the road that leads to destruction, and many enter through it. ¹⁴But small is the gate and narrow the road that leads to life, and only a few find it.

So ask yourself What are we going to grow closer in our orbit to Christ? Then ask

yourself what are you going to do to help those who are part of the ECC growing

closer to Christ? What are your going to give up to help the family of ECC help

others? What will you be willing to do, for ECC's budget to grow to

advance the kingdom of God! Ask yourself are you a revolutionary? Are you the

Church? If you need Jesus-Come forward and give your life to him! If you need a

church family to grow in come up front as we stand to sing?