

Let The Rains Come

By Chris L. Horsley Dungan, first published in Paper Rabbit Writings March 2016. c. Chris L. Horsley Dungan 2016.

We are approaching Easter, the anniversary of the resurrection of Jesus Christ. But for too many of us, all we have done is **approach Easter**. What is truly needful is that we **experience Easter**. And once we have experienced Easter—once we have embraced the Living Jesus—well, everything changes, everything is new. Life replaces Death, Light replaces Darkness, Hope replaces Despair, Joy replaces Sorrow, and Purpose replaces Aimlessness.

The experience of Easter is what the soul longs for. It is the assurance of the new birth. It is the promise of revival. It is the great need of every individual and every family. And today, as much or more than at any time, our nation needs to experience Easter.

The following article expresses that concept through a bit of history and through the imagery of rain.

Let The Rains Come

The Early Rains and the Latter Rains, we have known them.

I have. Our nation has. Perhaps you have.

For many, they are part of our individual and family histories. They are certainly part of our national history.

“While America did not have a Christian founding in the sense of creating a theocracy, it was deeply shaped by Christian moral truths” (Hall, Mark David, 2011, June. Did America Have a Christian Founding? <http://www.heritage.org/research/lecture>). In fact, most English colonists were Protestants seeking religious freedom—men and women who refused to compromise biblical convictions in spite of the persecution they experienced in their homeland.

Although the Christian colonists began well, by 1662 Puritan pastors had introduced what came to be known as the Half-Way Covenant. You see, the first generation settlers had been dying out, and their children and grandchildren tended to be less interested in spiritual things. Piety was of little concern to them. Material things had captured first place in their hearts and lives. Full membership in a church required a personal testimony of conversion. And these folks had no testimony. Hoping to maintain some of the church’s influence in society and hoping these folks would come to know Christ personally, the church began offering partial membership. Hence, the Half-Way Covenant.

But Hope without a foundation is fruitless. The Half-Wayers were neither Light nor Salt in their communities. Most never came to know Christ personally. Church attendance and participation left them with a false sense of soul security although they remained spiritually and morally careless and carnal. Rather than strengthening the church, the Half-Way Covenant left the church weak and corrupt.

The downward trend continued for approximately 65 years. And then the Rains came. It’s dubbed the *First Great Awakening*. George Whitefield and Jonathan Edwards, among others, brought the Truth back into the churches. They understood the problem of the church and society to be sin. They understood the only way to deal with sin was through new birth in Christ. They understood new birth came through

the preaching of the Word. And each man began—and continued—preaching the Gospel of Jesus Christ deliberately. And the Rains came. The Church revived. And when the Church revived, the moral and social environment of the colonies changed.

The ebb and flow—the highs and lows—of Christ-centered spirituality in America is a matter of historical documentation. When the Church flounders...when its banners of Love, Truth, and Holiness no longer fly high, but lay limp in the mud...when Christians waste their time in useless debate with one another rather than redeem their time proclaiming the Good News to those who don't know Christ as personal Savior...when church members don't have a testimony to share...when the Church is indistinguishable from the World...then it seems, God Himself calls upon a faithful remnant, and they begin to pray. Trace this truth in history. The Rains...seasons of refreshing...revival...call it what you will...it is God answering prayer. God intervening—stepping in to repair, re-clean, reclaim, and re-launch the Church.

It occurred in the First Great Awakening, as well as the Second and Third Great Awakenings (1800-1830 and 1857-1860 respectively). There was the World War II revival in America dating from 1935-1950. And there was the Baby Boomer Revival from 1965-1975. I was in high school in the 1970s, and I had a taste of the revival. I saw some of the Jesus People. A slogan of the time is still in my consciousness: Jesus is the Answer.

I believed that slogan in the 1970s. I never stopped believing it. But for too many years—because it's important to appear open-minded, because tolerance is a powerful buzzword, because we live in a much more pluralistic society than ever before—I have perhaps been reticent to speak it. Today—to be true to myself, to be true to my Lord, that the Church may be revived, that the world may be redeemed—today, I unashamedly speak these words aloud: JESUS IS THE ANSWER.

Young couple on the verge of divorce because of infidelity, Jesus is the Answer. Only when we have been forgiven by Him do we understand how to forgive others. Only He can successfully put a marriage back together. Traumatized soldier coming home from war, Jesus is the Answer. Trauma is healed by Trust. You can trust Jesus. Addict, Jesus is the Answer. Truth sets us free, and Jesus is Truth. Let me proclaim...let every Believer proclaim...let the Church proclaim...Not: Jesus is sometimes the answer. Not: Jesus is the answer for some. Let this be our motivated-by-love proclamation: JESUS IS THE ANSWER.

And the rains will come.