



**THE INDIVIDUAL,
THE CHURCH,
AND
THE NATION:**

**A Pervasive
Identity Crises**

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THE INDIVIDUAL, THE CHURCH, AND THE NATION:

A Pervasive Identity Crises

THE INDIVIDUAL

Since God called me into the ministry in 1967, we have seen the Holy Spirit transform lives plagued with most of the complaints for which people normally visit psychologists. Those whose lives were drastically changed had one thing in common; they were at the end of their own resources.

Most were Christians who had tried to live the Christian life in their own strength. In doing so, some had tried everything that they knew the church had to offer only to find that defeat was their daily experience.

Being at the end of themselves, the invitation to lose their lives in order to save them was a sterling invitation! At such an extremity that they could no longer go on and having tried many dead ends, they were in such a condition that unless the Holy Spirit showed up they were goners!

To use the biblical example, where the children of Israel were in similar

straits--they had obstructions on both sides with Pharaoh's army hard on their heels and the Red Sea in front of them. If the Red Sea did not open, they had had the course! They could struggle, strain and groan; but a miracle was required if they were to be delivered!

In like manner, when we are at the end of ourselves so that the only way out is up, it requires the direct intervention of the Holy Spirit to bring about deliverance. We can even have an intellectual understanding of our identification with Christ in His death and resurrection, but the illumination of the Holy Spirit is required for resurrection life to become revealed reality. Such is the nature of renewal or revival, and nothing less will suffice to bring about transformation. Man can devise schemes to bring about change; only the Holy Spirit can bring about exchange of the self-life for the Christ-life.

There are those, such as myself, where this is a crisis experience at a point in time; the lives of others may be changed just as radically over a relatively short period of time. One is no more real than the other although the crisis change may be more dramatic to the onlooker.

Once the Christ-life for the self-life is a reality, such a believer can be taught to share the same message with another struggling believer such that renewal or revival passes from one to the other.

THE CHURCH

The church, being made up of many individual believers, can be transformed in identically the same way. However, it is much more difficult to turn around a body of people since not all believers in a body are at the end of themselves at one point in time. If they were, the pastor would have a zoo on his hands! It is much easier to turn around a canoe than a ship, though the effect is the same.

Whereas the individual may try various and sundry methods to bootstrap the flesh, the church may suffer from programitis. Faltering churches may try new buildings, special speakers, programs on church growth, on and on, ad nauseum; however, it will be necessary for the church to come to the end of itself if it is to know renewal or revival.

Since it is usually thought that the pastor is responsible to turn things around, a very common thing is to acquire another pastor to give the church a shot in the arm (of the flesh?). While there may be spurts of growth followed by decline, the general trend is downward until a point is reached where only the Holy Spirit can effect transformation through the death/resurrection process.

The individual will do everything he can to keep from coming to the end of himself because he doesn't know there is an Answer when he gets there; likewise, the church that is downward bound does not know that a free fall can result in revival. It is possible that neither pastor nor people have a Spirit-

given understanding of the dynamics of revival. Many times, evangelistic meetings are held to try to bring life back into the church. Although it is wonderful to have new believers, they are likely to be schooled in self-effort as are those who make up the average church.

When the church is in such a condition that it can no longer help itself and the Holy Spirit shows up and begins to transform lives, neither pastor nor people can claim credit for it.

THE NATION

The nation, being made up of many individuals and churches, must go through the same process if it is to be radically changed. Our country was founded on Christian principles as embodied in the founding documents. The founding fathers openly expressed their reliance upon Holy God and the church was the conscience of the nation. Once the country was developed and had many resources on which to depend, it became common to depend upon self-strength and to turn to other gods and religions.

When we put God out of our thinking and go our own willful ways, He has to allow some things to happen to bring us up short and face us with our inability to keep it in the road. The depletion of natural resources, warming of the planet, and secular humanism aided and abetted by other religions and the attacks of terrorists could be sufficient to bring our nation to the end of itself.

Just as individual repentance and church repentance are a necessity before the Holy Spirit brings about major changes, it will require national repentance for the Holy Spirit to show up and make major changes in society as a whole.

The gods of pleasure, materialism, secular humanism and all religions that preach a gospel other than Jesus Christ will prove grossly insufficient to revive a country at the end of itself. Such slogans as God Bless America sound good and noble but, presently, could be rephrased, God Bless This Mess!

God is not going to join our side of attempting to live in our own strength; we must repent of trusting other gods and fall on our knees before Holy God. Then, we will be on His side where He can bring about individual and corporate revival.

We have seen our Lord transform the lives of individuals over the past 35 years. Our churches and our country are constituted of many individuals so it does not take a quantum leap of faith to extrapolate from the individual to the nation. Our national sin is unbelief; believing in the Lord Jesus Christ and His death and resurrection for us must be accompanied by our belief in our death and resurrection with Him. Since many Christians have never understood this latter truth in experience, we have, in effect, churches full of unbelieving believers!

CONCLUSION

To sum it all up, the problem of individuals, churches and our nation is consummate selfishness. While there are a myriad of symptoms, most of which are addressed by throwing money at them, the answer is generally applied in the same self-strength that caused the symptoms initially. However, when the chips are down, self-strength will not resolve the impossible circumstances that can be faced; miraculous transformation is required, and the Holy Spirit is the only One Who has the credentials needed. At this extremity, many turn to thoughts of suicide and some follow through with it since they see no other way out. While death is the only way out, it is understanding our death and resurrection with Christ that is indicated; and many do not know that such death is a live option!

When identity is found in people, possessions and power, it is always subject to change without notice! When world conditions no longer permit relying on such identities, it can bring a person to grips with himself in an entirely new aspect; finding identity in the Lord Jesus Christ can be an inviting prospect. Coming to the end of ourselves makes it imperative that we find an identity that works and which is empowered by the Holy Spirit.

Since this has become an obscure truth in many churches, believers must come to understand who they are in Christ if they are to go beyond surviving to abounding; then, massive training needs to be done so that there

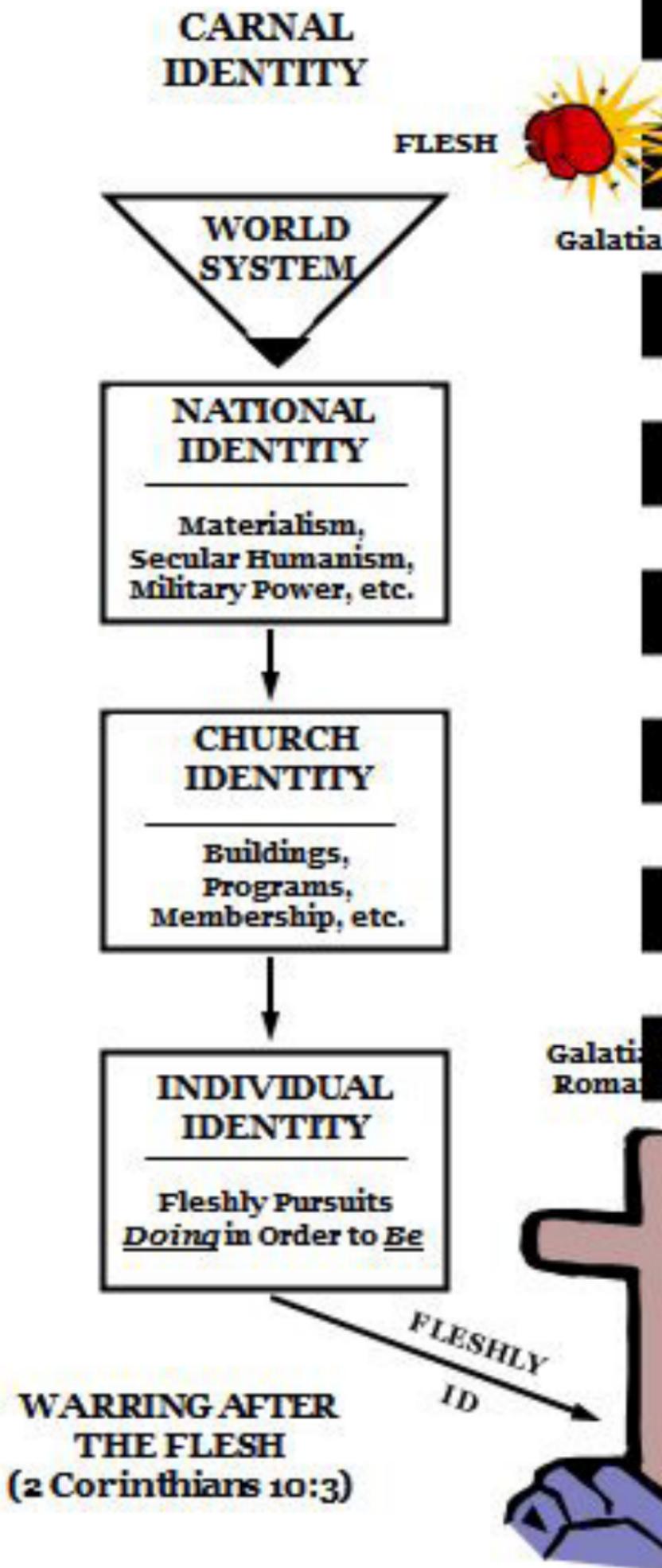
will be many believers, in addition to staff, who may be pressed into service. Training materials and methods are available which can be multiplied to meet what may be an unprecedented need as world conditions worsen. A suffering church must be ministered to by a suffering Savior!

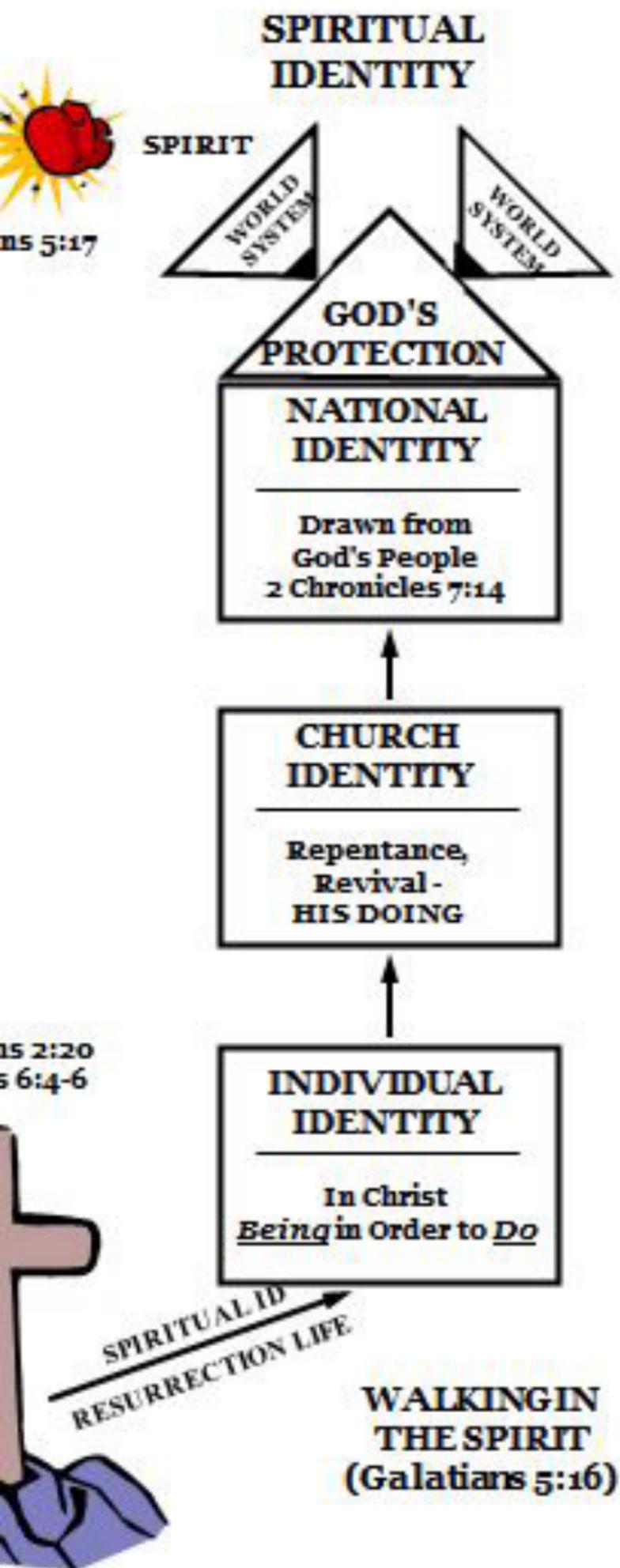
When the majority of believers come to understand their identity in Christ, the church will be a force with which to be reckoned. The Holy Spirit, moving in revival power, will sweep many into the Kingdom and could rout the enemies of the Church. As in the Old Testament, the enemies of the Children of Israel began to fight among themselves and destroy each other. This type of intervention of the Lord on the behalf of believers can once again take place when the Church of today becomes the Church of old.

Let's pray that our Lord will once again move in revival power in answer to our prayer and teaching the message of the Cross which is the power of God and which is the hope for the United States and the world.

Due to the anemic condition of the American church, many believers are deriving their identities from the world system, as are all unbelievers. As a result, they are living out of their own resources which means that the miraculous is not commonplace. Also, it makes the church part of the problem rather than part of the answer.

The following diagram (pages 10 and 11) depicts the inverted values that typify the functioning of our country when saint and sinner alike are living out of self-strength (left side).





CHURCH AND COUNTRY

The church at rest
Is the Church at work;
We can be blessed
Or our duty shirk.
When our lives we lose
It is His Life we gain;
That which we choose
Will bring joy or pain.

The church at the Cross-road
Will know victory or defeat;
It will be His abode
If at the Cross we meet.
Our country is adrift
In a secular sea;
Only as our Lord we lift
Can revival our answer be.

Charles R. Solomon
December 31, 2002

The Cross at the bottom depicts the believer's identification with Christ and the resurrection life which flows from it. The right side shows the proper order with the revived believer feeding into the church and the church, in turn, to the nation. Thus, the death/resurrection process is completed with the consequent loss of a carnal identity in exchange for one born out of the Life of Christ in the believer. Since judgment must begin at the house of God, it is incumbent upon the church to chart the way through the wilderness of car-

nality which our country has grown to expect, but not to respect!

The teaching of the Cross in this manner has resulted in thousands of transformed lives around the world in the last third of a century. It is a return to First Century Christianity which can, again, turn the world upside down, or right side up, as the case may be.

THE CHALLENGE

Out of which identity will we live? It will either be one of our own making, which is influenced by the world system, or one by revelation of the Holy Spirit; the choice we make is a matter of death and Life. Continuing to live out of an identity shaped, or bent out of shape, by the world system is to deny our birthright as Blood-bought children of God.

Not to make a choice is to make a choice. We will either choose to walk according to our new and true identity in Christ, or we will continue to follow the old path downhill to our detriment. We can assess the present situation and see what the logical outcome will be; without Holy Spirit revival, it can only become worse. It is up to the church whether to be obedient unto the death of the Cross and resurrection life — the formula for revival; or we can default and admit defeat by the forces of spiritual wickedness in high places arrayed against us (Ephesians 6:12).

The posterity of our children and grandchildren awaits the decision we make—whether of obedience unto re-

vival or disobedience unto chaos or worse! God, help us to choose against the apathy and conformity that have hobbled the church so that the Holy Spirit will be pleased to bring wide-scale revival that will result in the lost being swept into the Kingdom to the glory of our Lord.

Then said Jesus unto his disciples, if any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross and follow me. For whosoever will save his life (or identity) shall lose it: and whosoever will lose his life (or identity) shall find it (Matt. 16:24,25)

TWILIGHT

'Tis twilight in our nation;
The Light of the world is shunned.
If our country is to survive,
There is much work to be done.

We're past the point of no return;
Man's effort is of no avail.
Unless we heed God's warning,
We're bound to utterly fail!

Humbling ourselves seems un-American—
Our forte has been our pride;
But going our own willful way
Is the reason Jesus died.

God promised to hear from Heaven
If we humble ourselves and pray,—
Forgive our sin and heal our land
When we turn from our wicked way.

(2 Chron. 7:14)

The right to reign we must deny (Luke 9:23)
And count all our effort but loss;
Our lives to save we must lose (Matt. 16:25)
Victory is ours through the Cross.

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IDENTITY

Not what we do
But who we are;
What we have
Does not empower.

Not where we are
Or where we've been—
What's of self
Is surely sin.

Not what we gain
Nor what we lose—
'Twixt God and self
Is ours to choose.

To live is Christ;
Self is but loss.
Victory in Him—
Ours through the Cross.

Charles R. Solomon
April 12, 1997

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Handbook to Happiness & You
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Conquering PTSD
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Grace Discipleship Course

Advanced Grace Discipleship Course

Book by Captain Reginald Wallis:

The New Life

The Individual, Church, and Nation



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