

GASHMU SAITH IT

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CONTENTS

	Introduction	1
CHAPTER 1	Our Culture, What Remains Of It	7
CHAPTER 2	Alternate City Walls	13
CHAPTER 3	Membership, Like-mindedness, and Loyalty	25
CHAPTER 4	The Meaning of Love and Justice	35
CHAPTER 5	Little Platoons.	45
CHAPTER 6	An Outlandish Year.	53
CHAPTER 7	Huguenot Hustle	65
CHAPTER 8	Sexual Sanity	79
CHAPTER 9	Church and Kingdom, Cathedral and Town	89
	Epilogue	99

INTRODUCTION

The point of this small book will be to help the reader to better understand the crisis of our times, along with the demeanor we as Christians are called to cultivate in the course of such a crisis. We also must include an explanation of the basic strategy that we have been pursuing here in Moscow for a number of decades now.

This is because we have been *greatly* blessed in our community, and so it is absolutely necessary for us to equip ourselves in two areas. We must educate our immigrants, and we must educate the next generation. If we do not do this, then we will be faced with two disasters. The first is

what might be called “Californians moving to Texas, but continuing to vote like Californians.” The second is the son of a billionaire growing up without ever breaking a sweat, or having any knowledge what having calluses might be like.

Experiencing blessings without understanding the basis of those blessings is like dancing blindfold along the edge of a precipice. As Cotton Mather put it, faithfulness begat prosperity, and the daughter devoured the mother. Or as Moses described Israel’s future prosperity and apostasy, Jeshurun waxed fat, and kicked (Deut. 32:15). Moses knew that once you are well into a blessing, it is perilously easy to take it all for granted, and simply to assume that continuation of that blessing is your irrevocable birthright (Deut. 8:1-20). The apostle Paul saw what had happened to the Jews in this thoughtlessness, and warned the Gentile Christians in Rome against committing the very same sin (Rom. 11:19-21). And he issued the same stern warning to the Gentile Christians at Corinth (1 Cor. 10:1-11).

Under three things the earth trembles; under four it cannot bear up: a slave when he becomes king, and a fool when he is filled

CHAPTER ONE

OUR CULTURE, WHAT
REMAINS OF IT

We are in the midst of a massive religious/political/cultural transformation. But we cannot assume that this is all a downside. God shakes what can be shaken so that what cannot be shaken may remain (Heb. 12:27). This turmoil is rattling things that need to be rattled, and also rattling things that need to be understood, so that they might be defended in wisdom, and not maintained on cruise control.

In the meantime, speaking of traditions, there are no pacifist traditions left. All worthy

traditions must be militant in order to survive this time of upheaval.

And in such a time, Christians must be conservative when it comes to everything that the Spirit has accomplished in the history of our civilization. And we must be progressive with regard to all the things He has yet to do.

THE SINFUL SYMPTOMS

It is difficult to make it through the evening news without encountering multiple examples of our contemporary follies—the blood guilt of abortion on demand, the insanity of transgenderism, the idea that more government can save us from the weather, the acceptance of socialist collectivism, the indulgence of snowflakes, the incompetence of modern educators, the epidemic of food guilt, the pandemic of father hunger, and more. The disease lies deep within, but the blotches on the skin are pretty ugly.

Most people understand that something is desperately wrong. Is there any biblical response to it?

CHAPTER TWO

ALTERNATIVE CITY WALLS

The need of the hour is for the Church to help establish a *defined* counterculture. This requires much more than defined denominational boundaries, or sectarian carve outs. There needs to be a defined center (the *Church*), a defined staging area (the *kingdom*), and a defined mission field (the *world*).

In order to accomplish this, we need brick and mortar to build the alternative city walls. We have been working at this for some decades now in Moscow, and we know how we mix that mortar.

Now one of the key ingredients in that mortar is unrelenting antipathy to the ways of the world. Our danger is that any success in this (what people call “our community”) will attract people who love the walls, and the security they provide, but do not like how we lay the bricks. They love the fruit but do not care for the orchard.

They like how the Church works because they are actually assuming the world (at its best) should be able to work that same way. They want to believe that the world is, at bottom, more or less reasonable. They love how different the Church is because they have a hidden assumption that the Church is not all *that* different. This does require some explanation.

Woe unto you, when all men shall speak well of you! for so did their fathers to the false prophets. But I say unto you which hear, Love your enemies, do good to them which hate you, Bless them that curse you, and pray for them which despitefully use you. (Luke 6:26–28)

Jesus teaches that when we finally have that “good testimony” we have been striving for,

CHAPTER THREE

MEMBERSHIP,
LIKE-MINDEDNESS,
AND LOYALTY

As we build these new city walls in the midst of a ruined and ruinous old order, we will be attacked in ways that seek to divide us. We will be accused of being cultic, in thrall to charismatic “leaders.” But the Scriptures *do* require us to cultivate like-mindedness, and also require us to maintain a solid distinction between things of first importance, things of secondary importance, and things indifferent.

One of the things that modern Christians have a hard time doing right is loyalty. We don't even know how loyalty is supposed to work. We don't understand the spiritual *requirement* of personal allegiance to your church and its leadership, and in addition we have a very poor understanding of what disloyalty actually smells like.

Be of the same mind one toward another.
Mind not high things, but condescend to
men of low estate. Be not wise in your own
conceits. (Rom. 12:16, emphasis added)

As we study this topic, please keep in mind the fact that we are told this same kind of thing *often* (Rom. 15:5-6; 2 Cor. 13:11; Phil. 1:27; 2:2; 1 Pet. 3:8; Phil. 2:20).

As you can see in the text cited above, like-mindedness is a function of humility. It is not necessarily a function of high intellectual attainment. If that is accompanied by pride (as it often is—1 Cor. 8:1), then the opposite of like-mindedness will occur. Never forget that the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace—which necessarily includes this like-mindedness—is in fact a work of the Spirit. And where the Spirit comes He engenders the fruit of the Spirit, which in