

Bruce Vantine's  
**CORNERSTONE  
CHORALE AND BRASS**

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***“It is now,  
Now that you must not give in.”***

**-Dag Hammarskjöld**

“Fatigue makes cowards of us all,” said legendary football coach Vince Lombardi. Might this human tendency contribute to the predicament many churches find themselves in as they face an aging and declining membership, reduced resources, and sometimes reticent commitment?

Some would argue that after the horrors of World War II, many Americans became more affluent and comfortable. The need for a burning faith -- even the very need for God -- seemed less urgent, rekindled only sporadically when disasters such as *Katrina* or 9/11 revealed the reality of our human vulnerability.

Over the centuries, the *Church* has experienced numerous setbacks, seemingly insurmountable obstacles, exile, slavery and persecution. Our forbearers, often under impossible burdens -- with God's help, mustered the *will* and the *strength* to persevere and overcome, to rebuild and re-energize. Some encouragement:

**Gandhi** said, “There is no cause for despondency for a man [or woman] who has faith and resolution.”

Faith is “the strength to serve, whatever conditions may arise.”  
[*S. E. Kiser*, 20<sup>th</sup> c. Christian author].

“Sacrifice is the first element of religion,” and it manifests itself as “the love of God,” said *James A. Froude* [19<sup>th</sup> c. British writer].

“This is no time for ease and comfort,” said *Winston Churchill* during the Nazi bombing of Britain. “It is the time to dare and endure.... We will not fail or falter; we shall not weaken or tire. Give us the tools and we will finish the job.”

What are the tools for 21<sup>st</sup> century churches in America? *Prayer, patience, sacrifice, truth, faith, courage, commitment, the will to serve others through our love, compassion and forgiveness* – always “looking to *Jesus*, the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross.”  
[*Hebrews 12:2*]

“Whenever *Jesus* gives us more than just a glimpse of Who He truly is, we are ‘afraid’...*afraid that Easter just might be true after all* .... *Jesus*, by rising from the dead, reveals His mastery over sinister forces that defy God...[and]His mastery over death itself. The more our faith grows, the more our fears diminish. Which may be why the first of the Ten Words God gave His people on Mt. Sinai calls on us ‘to fear, love, and trust God above anything else.’” [If] ‘we *cease* to fear and love God, we *begin* to fear everything else.’\*\* For, if *Jesus* is who He is, then we can be who we were meant to be – and there is nothing in that to fear at all.”  
[*The Rev. Rick Mueller*, Lutheran Church of the Atonement, Florissant, MO, quoting \**Martin Luther and theologian* \*\**Helmut Thielicke*].

The question is always whether or not we *really believe* who *Jesus* is? The answer may scare us. It certainly scares me. If we *do* believe, then our responsibility becomes clear: we are called to “*fear, love, and trust God*,” and find the will and courage to unselfishly work for good in the world around us. There's the catch, and there are no guarantees: the risk is real. The way can be difficult. We may fail. Do we hesitate, or do we “*dare and endure*?”

*Dag Hammarskjöld*, Secretary General of the United Nations and a devout Christian, wrote two passages which are similar in his diary, first in 1956 and again in 1961, a few weeks before his airplane was shot out of the sky in Africa on a mission to negotiate peace during the Congo crisis:



Photo: Getty Images

**2018 Tour**

**Oct. 16 - Nov. 11**

***“To see the earth as it truly is,  
is to see ourselves as riders on  
the earth together; brothers  
[and sisters] in the eternal cold.”***

-Archibald MacLeish, on the *Apollo 11*  
moon landing, July 1968.

***Dear Friends of Cornerstone,  
Please help us with your  
prayers and tangible gifts.***

***It is now,  
now that we need your support,  
perhaps more than ever before,  
to touch hearts and minds  
in this time of turmoil.***

**Bruce Vantine**

**ST. LOUIS AUDIENCE:**

**TUESDAY, OCTOBER 23**

**LADUE CHAPEL**

**PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH**

*\*Full tour itinerary coming soon:*

*MO, KS, IA, IL, OH, MI, KY, TN, VA, NC, GA, FL*

“When the morning's freshness has been replaced by the weariness of mid-day, when the leg muscles quiver under the strain, the climb seems endless, and suddenly, nothing will go quite as you wish, it is then that you must *not* hesitate.” [1956]

**“Tired  
And lonely,  
So tired  
The heart aches.  
Meltwater trickles  
Down the rocks,  
The fingers are numb,  
The knees tremble.**

**It is now,  
Now, that you must not give in...”**  
[1961]