

# Down But Not Out by Gene McCoy

The New York City Transit Company bus driver was fed up with the cold weather, his nagging wife, and rude passengers. So he took off in his bus after work one evening and didn't stop until he got to Miami, FL, where he enjoyed the sun and surf until the authorities caught up with him ten days later. Haven't we all felt like that bus driver at times? We get so frustrated and aggravated about life that we want the world to stop so we can get off!

I confess I have entertained such thoughts since Election Day. The outcome is a huge disappointment for all those who worked so diligently in making the advances in various aspects of pro-life legislation over the last several years. But we must not allow this setback to paralyze us or to let the loss of this battle cause us to retreat.

I realize this scenario of me urging you on after a stinging defeat may make you feel like the boxer who went to his corner after being knocked down in the first round. His trainer patted him on the back and said, "Go back out there and get him. He hasn't laid a glove on you."

In the second round he was knocked down twice and saved by the bell on the count of nine. He crawled back to his corner where his trainer patted him on the back again and said, "Go back out there and get him. He hasn't laid a glove on you."

Then the boxer said to his trainer, "I'm going back out there and get him this next

round. But keep your eyes on that referee because somebody out there is beating me to a pulp!"

The new administration has promised to repeal the Defense of Marriage Act (DOMA) and to pass the Freedom of Choice Act (FOCA). These will undermine and reverse laws that reflect God's design for marriage and the sanctity of human life. We must prepare for and respond to this collision according to Biblical precept and apostolic precedent.

The Bible enjoins us to pray for kings and all who are in authority so that we may lead a tranquil and quiet life in all godliness and dignity (1 Tim. 2:1,2). It also teaches us to submit for God's sake to governing authorities, being ordained and established by God (1 Pet. 2:13-17; Romans 13:1-7). Prayers for our elected officials and government should be to the end that we may honor the Lord in worship and service in a peaceful and tranquil context. To pray for authorities does not require us to support them or their policies when they oppose God's expressed will.

Jesus and the apostles provide a model we may emulate when government collides with Christianity. Jesus challenged the high priest when He was being treated illegally and unfairly (John 18:19-24). The apostles refused to be intimidated by the authorities (Acts 4:13-22)

who threatened them. Charged not to speak in the name of Jesus, the apostles defied the ruling and refused to comply, boldly proclaiming that they answer to a higher authority. The principle they followed is succinctly stated by Peter in Acts 5:29, to wit, "We must obey God rather than men."

In your prayers regarding our governmental leaders include this prayer from the lips of our first-century brothers: "And now, Lord, take

note of their threats, and grant that Your bondservants may speak Your word with all confidence (or boldness)." (Acts 4:29)

And remember the words of Jesus to comfort and reassure His

disciples who were facing persecution: "In the world you have tribulation, but take courage: I have overcome the world." (Jn. 16:33)

I am not a boxing enthusiast or fan. But I do like true stories of people who overcome the odds to achieve success and accomplish goals against seemingly impossible odds.

When the stock market crash and hard times stalled the boxing career of James "Cinderella Man" Braddock in the early 1930s, he refused to be defeated. In one of the most memorable comeback



stories of all time, Jim Braddock won the world heavy weight boxing title and showed everyone what it means to be a champion.

Floyd Patterson became the youngest man to win the heavyweight championship of the world in 1956. He was at the top of the boxing world until he was defeated in 1959. Patterson was so discouraged that he never left his house for a year. He kept the drapes pulled and lived in seclusion. He was down and he was out. Finally, he got hold of himself, went back into training, and in 1960 made boxing history again when he became the first man to regain the heavyweight crown, defeating the same man who had knocked him out.

Jesus' apostles suffered great persecution and opposition. Paul alludes to this in his letter to the Christians who lived in Corinth. J.B. Phillips' translation is good. "We are handicapped on all sides, but we are never frustrated; we are puzzled, but never in despair. We are persecuted, but we never have to stand it alone: we may be knocked down but we are never knocked out!"

A colleague of mine, Victor Knowles, is both a preacher and an expert wordsmith and prolific writer. He exhorts us along this theme. "Paul and his colleagues were often knocked down, but they were never knocked out! They never took a knee. They never stayed down for the count. They always rose to fight again. They never failed to

answer the bell for the next round. They never threw in the towel. If life was a ten-round fight, they went all ten. They fought to the finish, until the last bell rang. How could they do that? Where did they get the power to get back up when they had been knocked down? Paul shares with us the secret of their success. 'This all-surpassing power is from God and not from us' (2 Cor. 4:7).

Troubles of all kinds seem to surround us and batter us, just like a boxer when he is on the ropes. Punches are powerfully thrown at us with lightning speed. Many of them almost knock the wind out of us . . . The punishing round ends and we stagger to our corner. Thank God for the corner! There something marvelous and wonderful happens. God is in our corner. Our cuts and bruises are tended to. We receive direction on how to ward off some of the pounding we are taking. We are given insight in how to go on the offensive and take it to the opponent and put him down for the count! The bell sounds and we go back into the fray – refreshed, renewed, ready to fight another round. For the power is from God and not from us.

Fellow fighters, it is true. "We may be knocked down but we are never knocked out!"

Tanzania's contestant in the Olympic marathon event several years ago finished the event hours after all other runners had crossed the finish

line. He limped into the stadium bruised, bloodied, and bandaged, the result of a bad fall during the race. Asked why he continued after suffering such injuries that left him three hours behind the pack, he replied, "My country didn't send me here to begin the race, but to finish it."

We are engaged in a heavyweight struggle that must go the distance. The election knocked us down, but we are not out. We have been bruised and bloodied, but the race is not over. This is a marathon, not a sprint. We must keep on running. If we cannot deliver the knock-out punch, we must be prepared to fight every round with determination and grit.

This will require incredible stamina. But we can endure. We can go another round. We can stay in the race. The power is from God, Whose cause we champion.

When a friend asked Sir Douglas Haig, British Field Marshal, during a very bad time in WWI if he was discouraged, he replied, "Discouraged?! A Christian man has no right to be discouraged in the same world as God!"

The Election Day bell sent us to the corner. We lost the last round. But the inauguration bell has sounded the beginning of the next round. The new administration has answered the bell and is waiting for us at center ring. Let's get back out there and engage the opposition. The lives of untold millions depend upon your involvement.