

Spirit-Filled Pastor Blazes the Trail to Equip Worldchangers

Like most young people starting out in the ministry, Dr. Jamie Morgan had a great deal of enthusiasm. She wanted to venture out and become a world changer as quickly as possible.

But not so she could bring attention to herself. She had pure intentions—to bring glory to God and His kingdom and to help the church return to a life of repentance and prayer. The problem was, like most young ministers, she was beginning from nothing and was largely unknown in kingdom circles.

She didn't possess much patience at the time, but God humbled her and showed her how to build a ministry that He would one day bless and build into a lasting legacy.

"One day I was complaining to God about the huge platform Minister So-and-so has," says Morgan, the lead pastor of Life Church Assemblies of God church in Williamstown, New Jersey. "I lamented, 'If I had a platform as big as hers, I could reach more people for You and call the church back to the place of prayer'. I didn't expect God to answer my tale of woe, but He did.

"He asked me, 'Who gave her that platform?' cutting right to the chase.

"I humbly replied, 'Well, You did, Lord.'

"God has a way of encouraging and correcting all at the same time. He poignantly asked, 'Can I give you a platform?'

"Again, I humbly replied, 'Yes, Lord, of course. You can do anything.'

“What seemed like a mountain was turning into a miracle. Hope was welling up inside of me.

“Then God ended His part of our discourse with two powerful words: ‘Ask Me.’

“I paused for a moment to catch my breath. If God told me to ask, I was going to ask big. Small requests are an insult to our mighty God, so I said, ‘God, I ask You for a platform as wide as the world!’

Platform and Prayer

“End of conversation and done deal as far as I am concerned,” Morgan says. “Since that day, God has given me glimpses of the platform He has in store for me. He is also teaching me how precious a God-given platform is and how to steward it well.”

Indeed, Morgan’s platform has grown exponentially. With a master’s degree in practical theology from Oral Roberts University and a doctorate of ministry from the Assemblies of God Theological Seminary, she not only has pastored Life Church since 2006, she is an evangelist, a revivalist, a prophetic voice, a conference speaker, a podcaster, a television show host, an author and a mentor.

Morgan has published four books, including her most recent, *Thirsty: A 31-Day Journey to Personal Revival*, and writes for worldwide publications like *Charisma* magazine.

A member of America’s National Prayer Committee and the Assemblies of God Prayer Committee. Morgan is also the founder of the intercessory ministry United States Prays, which mobilizes the remnant of our nation to cry out to God for revival. She is also founder of the Life School of Christian Leadership, training leaders for life. In early September, she launched the by-invitation-only Trailblazing Mentoring Network, a mentoring movement for “fire-carrying” women in ministry who are part of the end-time remnant and need a

mentor to help them walk in the fullness of their calling.

With all of that responsibility, Morgan's life's mission is to evangelize the nations, call the church back to the place of prayer, fan the flames of revival and mentor trailblazing leaders to set the world aflame for Jesus Christ. Her passion is to help Christians discover their callings, step out in faith to answer God's call on their lives and blast through every obstacle and stronghold that gets in their way.

How's that for a huge kingdom platform? But beware, Morgan says. Young ministers shouldn't try to build their own platform. God will bring it to you when He sees fit, she says.

"Unless God builds the platform, the laborers labor in vain," she says. "Let Him build it in His perfect timing. Idolatry is to look to man for that which only God can provide. We can manufacture a platform with the arm of the flesh, but it will produce fleshly results. Only God can give you a platform that will result in eternal, lasting fruit."

Ministry and Mentorship

One thing Morgan says she sorely lacked along the way to building her platform was a mentor. While she has been in the ministry for several decades, she only recently found two mentors to guide her in her kingdom journey.

Morgan has been privileged to be mentored in recent years by Dr. Naomi Dowdy, once a pioneering female missionary who, like Morgan, is now, with her apostolic vision, helping a new generation of leaders fulfill God's calling upon their lives. This includes church leaders, business leaders and men and women in strategic leadership positions.

Her other mentor is Cindy Panepinto, who with her husband, Gary, founded Upward Call Ministries in 1996. The Panepintos are apostolic strategists.

Because she lacked a true mentor early on, Morgan sought one out through books, conferences and other media. Morgan says she would read biographies of trailblazing women ministers like Maria Woodworth-Etter and Aimee Semple MacPherson. Marilyn Hickey's ministry also proved to be a huge influence in Morgan's life.

"Most of my early years in ministry, I longed for someone to pour into me," she says. "I longed to have someone I could glean wisdom from, whose experiences I could learn from I could learn from their experiences—what they did right, what they did wrong. I sought a mentor through the covers of those books and whatever women preachers were on TV. I would watch their shows and not so much listen to their messages but see how they conducted themselves. I would watch them and how they would conduct their lives and how they even interacted with their staff.

"I would spend thousands of dollars to fly to those conferences. I remember Marilyn used to have conferences for women in ministry, and I would spend all that money to fly from New Jersey to Denver, Colorado, to position myself to be encouraged, to keep the fire burning, to answer the call in my life."

A lack of mentorship in her own life is perhaps the biggest reason she initiated the Trailblazing Mentoring Network, knowing how important it is to have leaders constantly speak into your life and your ministry. Morgan says it's crucial to seek out those leaders, and that God will hear you and grant your request if you bring it to Him in prayer.

"The bottom line is I never want another woman in ministry or one who's aspiring to be in the ministry to have to go through what I did," Morgan says.

But the Trailblazing Mentoring Network is not for every woman who wants to enter the ministry. On her website, , Morgan

lists requirements to be accepted into the program--separating the wheat from the chaff, so to speak--including those who are:

- Passionate about their call.
- Devoted followers of Jesus (the lukewarm need not apply).
- Eternity-minded (you live to see souls saved).
- Walking in holiness, love, obedience and the fear of the Lord.
- Willing to blaze trails for others to follow.
- Cheering for their sisters in ministry (the network is a "jealousy-free" zone).
- Part of the end-time remnant (loyal to the Lord and His Word to the end).
- Humble, teachable and correctable.
- Not given to complaining or gossiping.
- Steadfast at maintaining unity.
- Not the victim (a victory mentality is required).
- Honoring, respectful, prepared and punctual.

In the Trailblazing Mentoring Network, Morgan offers women apostolic-prophetic mentoring. Per her website, she shares, "wisdom, counsel and encouragement from her decades in the trenches as a woman in ministry leadership."

Morgan helps women navigate all aspects of ministry, offering to "speak into your ministry and answer ministry-related questions and come alongside you as you follow Jesus and see the kingdom advance." She conducts roundtable mentoring sessions via Zoom on the third Tuesday of each month. Since it is a global network, she gives students the choice of either a

morning or evening session to accommodate every student.

Students are given free, unlimited access to Morgan's e-courses, including her popular 40-Day Women in Ministry Bootcamp. Her growing library of e-courses covers a variety of ministry related topics, including "Journey to Your Purpose," "Prayer and Intercession," "Healing from Shame," "How to Make Godly Decisions," "Healing from Betrayal," "The Jezebel Spirit," "The Religious Spirit" and many others.

Students also participate in monthly Q&A sessions via Facebook Live where Morgan answers ministry-related questions, including those regarding her e-courses and specific struggles a student may have with her ministry.

Students also have exclusive access to Morgan's private mentoring group and will receive ministry directly from her as well as network with other women in ministry.

The cost to join the Trailblazing Mentoring Network is minimal including partnership with Jamie Morgan Ministries. Offering open enrollment, Morgan says students can join the network at any time. Many prophetic words were spoken over her to start such a network and now those words have come to fruition, she says.

"It is my greatest honor to pour wisdom into others," Morgan says. "God has placed within me rich treasures that I want to now pour out into others, again, from things I've done right and things I've done wrong; from the painful situations I've been through. God is now using those situations to help other women in ministry.

"Right now in these tumultuous times, all hands are needed on deck. Thank God we have male ministers who have the call of God on their lives. But there are so many female ministers who are ministers or aspiring to be ministers who are sitting on the sidelines. Or a door has opened for them, and they've tentatively walked through and not run through. I want to help

them run through every door of opportunity and walk in the fullness of their calling.”

Revival, Books and Podcasts

Morgan knows from personal experience there is no greater joy than walking in a calling from God. But there is also pain in ministry, she says. And that pain and struggle prompt many to relinquish their calling.

Through the platform God has given her through her books and her podcast, *Fire Starter*, on the Charisma Podcast Network, she says she hopes she can help not only ministers and prospective ministers but also everyday believers navigate through pain and stay on course with Christ and the Great Commission.

Morgan’s latest book, *Thirsty: A 31-Day Journey to Personal Revival*, released in October, asks the bold question, “Are you courageous enough to admit you need personal revival?” An interactive prayer devotional that focuses on 31 aspects of your Christian walk, the book will help you set everything you touch ablaze for God.

“Each day as you think about a different aspect of your walk, through prayer and the God’s Word, you embrace the fire of revival for that specific area of your relationship with Jesus,” Morgan says. “It invites the All-Consuming Fire to bring that area back to life. We can be revived in nine-tenths of our Christian walk. But that other one-tenth, not so much.

“So far, it’s been received very well. People are using it for personal devotions, and churches are using it. They are ordering it for their January prayer and fasting emphasis that most churches have at the beginning of the year, which is coming up soon. It is an ideal companion to that.”

Dr. Naomi Dowdy calls *Thirsty* a “game-changer.”

“Gripping. Soul-searching. Lovingly challenging. Uncompromising. These are a few words to describe this devotional journey,” Dowdy says. “I don’t usually like daily devotionals because they are ‘too fluffy’ for me. But clean your desk and make room for this one! Dr. Jamie Morgan has written my kind of book! This book is a game-changer! It will change your walk with God, and that of your friends, as you journey together.”

Also through her podcast, *Fire Starter*, Morgan continues to hone in on igniting revival that is desperately needed in the church today. Through interviews with special guests, she reports on pockets of revival happening in America today in anticipation of another Great Awakening.

But for the church to experience this Great Awakening, Morgan says believers need a wakeup call; one she hopes she is providing through the now ever-expanding platform God has given her.

“The emphasis of my podcast is to create a desperation for revival in the hearts of God’s people,” Morgan says. “He has given me the opportunity to help do that, and I am eternally grateful to be a part of it. I teach on revival, and I’m also a revival field reporter. People need to know what’s going on around the world, and we need to keep revival in the forefront of the body of Christ.”

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Prophetic Revelation Leads Minister to Kingdom Touchdowns

“I want you to be My voice.” God spoke these words to Sherri Downs five years ago—and astounded her.

She was comfortable with being His voice in the pulpit. Public speaking didn’t intimidate her. But she had little background in written or other more formal types of communication.

Downs, who grew up in a Spirit-filled church, received the baptism of the Holy Spirit with the evidence of speaking in tongues at age 14. In her teens, she became aware of the call and anointing God placed on her life and prepared herself to fulfill them.

Little did she know God would give her a website that would reach the masses. Little did she know He would enable her to write books. Little did she know she would become a podcaster who would teach believers how to . (walk in newness) and equip them to overcome the enemy when feeling discouraged.

Through Downs’ ministry, Touch Downs Enterprise (), God has provided all of that and more. Today, she carries His voice and glorifies His name as an enthusiastic and obedient kingdom warrior.

With more than two decades of touching the lives of others as an early childhood teacher—she began at age 18—God startled Downs in 2016 with an unexpected prophetic message.

Kingdom Writing

“He told me He would cause my voice to be heard, and He told me to start writing,” said Downs, who has now published two books and is in the process of producing a third. “He told me,

'The enemy is going to oppose the word of God in you,' and I knew I was simply stepping into the grace of the call He had for me.

"He told me to write, and I said, 'Lord, I don't know how to do that,' Downs says. "My sister, who is one of the biggest cheerleaders I have, told me to write something the day after I heard the prophetic word. And God kept saying it to me over and over again. So I said, 'Lord, let's do this.'

"While I was praying, God told me to grab my laptop, and the words just started pouring out of me," she adds. "I was just bawling. I knew that I had the gift of gab, but writing was not on my radar. However, it was on His. He knew the plans He had for me, and He gave me the seeds to plant. I just said, 'Thank you, Lord,' and it began to quicken.

"By the grace of God, He's causing my voice to be heard," Downs says. "He's telling me what to do. Some people do it because it's the thing to do. But this is my mandate; it's what He is telling me to do. I started following His voice, and now I'm using these platforms for Him."

Last year, God's prophetic word to her resulted in Downs' first book, *Don't Be Bullied by the Devil: Take Authority and Fight Back*, she conveys that, for years, she observed the enemy's negative influence on believers who lived broken, defeated lives, devoid of the promises of God. She could not fathom why—if they were given the power by Jesus to overcome Satan and realize their dreams—those dreams did not manifest.

In her own life, she clung to John 10:10, which says, "The thief does not come, except to steal and kill and to destroy. I came that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly."

"Where was this abundant life, and why were there so many defeated believers?" Downs asks. "Jesus' arrival on earth was to defeat death, hell and the grave. The coming of Christ was

the catalyst by which heaven bruised Satan's head, and the authority lost in the garden was restored back to man through Christ and salvation. Satan is a defeated foe, and believers must not be ignorant of his devices."

Downs also conveys that message in her second book, *The Keys to Unprecedented Praying Power*. She uses James 5:16b, "The effective fervent prayers of a righteous man accomplishes much," as the catalyst Scripture for that book.

"Sadly, I see that oftentimes people give up before they see the breakthrough they're praying for," Downs says. "I give examples of what it looks like to press through the obstacles, the weariness. The righteous do not relent. They stay there and keep praying and see the manifestation of answered prayers.

"I give examples of how He pushes us in prayer," she says. "Again, unfortunately, people are desensitized to the power of prayer. They act like it's not enough when, in reality, it's the most powerful thing you can do.

"His thoughts are not our thoughts," Downs adds. "We submit under the authority of God. Many people just try to put their hands on it, and they don't give God time to work. He doesn't deal in microwave answers; He deals in crockpot answers. The crockpot will do its job. But many people just don't expect God to come through.

"As believers, we have to plug into the power source of prayer," Downs says. "Go to God and leave your prayer there and know He will answer. When you take your prayer back from Him, it's false humility."

Kingdom Touch Downs

Downs' podcast, *Kingdom Touch Downs*, has become another of the ways God uses her to touch hearts and change lives. As a certified life coach, one of her main objectives is to

convince believers that there are no losers in God's kingdom, only winners. On Kingdom Touch Downs, Sherri has explored topics like getting to the root of sin issues, accessing your destiny in Christ, learning how to grow in God's grace, and letting believers know they are born to win.

The podcast, launched in February 2021, was yet another prophetic surprise to Downs in God's plan for her kingdom voice to be heard. He spoke to her in the middle of the COVID-19 pandemic, and the prophetic word began to come together in late 2020.

In the natural, she had no idea of how to finance the podcast; she only knew that if the Lord wanted her to execute it, He would take care of those details, no matter how large an obstacle it might become.

"The podcast came because God told me it was coming," Downs says. "He caused me to dream about it, and then to prophetically decree over it. I told God I didn't want to do anything He wasn't breathing on. I told Him I needed a confirmation, and when the people in my ministry got hold of what God had told me to do, the finances came pouring in. He provided because I was obedient to what He was calling me to do."

Downs' husband, Sylvester Downs, serves in the worship ministry at Joliet First Assembly Church in Joliet, Illinois. He says obedience—no matter what God calls Sherri to do—is perhaps her most admirable character trait. The couple previously served the kingdom for five years as church planters and lead pastors at Perfecting Word Church in Midlothian, Illinois.

"I pray for Sherri every day, I encourage her, and I support her in whatever endeavor she undertakes," Sylvester says. "She definitely walks well in the office of prophetess, and she has the heart of a servant."

“The gifts God has given her are tremendous, and we see the fruit of her ministry—the breakthroughs, the deliverances,” he adds. “We see that fruit because Sherri does whatever God tells her to do. She’s obedient, and she just loves God with all her heart.”

Touch Downs Academy

While her newly developed communications skills have touched the lives of many believers in the past five years, the impact of Downs’ ministry reaches much further as she continues in prayer about new ways to serve the kingdom. God again spoke to her during the COVID-19 pandemic, a time when many believers needed encouragement to move forward.

Through Touch Downs Academy, Downs now teaches e-courses on spiritual resistance training to help believers understand spiritual warfare and defeat the enemy in every area of their lives. The blueprint for Touch Downs Academy, she says, was laid from the journals she kept during her teen years.

“I realized back then that I would fully walk in who God wanted me to be. And so, He said, it was time to put it all on the table,” Downs says. “The year 2020 is when a lot of things started to birth fully. I started putting the finishing touches on and launching e-courses about spiritual warfare. I wanted to be a resource for women who really needed this.

“We started this full time back in September of 2020, and now we have about 40 women involved,” Downs says. “We haven’t lost anyone, and we are continuing to add to our numbers. It started out as an eight-week course, but now we continue to meet virtually on Tuesday each week, and we have a prayer group on Saturday mornings. It’s definitely been a blessing for the women involved, and I’m just so honored to be able to lead it.”

Here are only a few testimonials from the Touch Downs Academy group called The Huddle, as gathered from Downs’ website:

“Sherri Downs is truly anointed. I had been seeing her from time to time on my own. One particular day I was watching her live, and I was confused with some things in my life. I desperately needed to hear from the Lord, so I asked God to speak to me. Sherri and I had never met before, But she said my name and started to prophesy to me everything I needed clarification on. I knew it was the Holy Spirit speaking to me through her, and it just gave me more clarification that God was real.” – *Sierra Michelle*

“I have only been in the group for a couple of weeks, but man, oh man, every time we link up it feels like TNT dynamite. I thank God for this group because for years I have walked alone in life and thought, Well, that’s it for me. So much has changed in these past weeks. I see so much potential that things cannot and will not be the same from this point on.” – *Chasity*

“The Huddle for me was God sent. Coach Sherri breaks down the Scriptures so that I get a better understanding. Since then, my confidence has changed. – *Nydia Sharp*

Kingdom Victories

Aside from the obvious correlation with her surname, Downs chose her ministry’s name for one reason: her heart to see believers overcome the enemy’s lies and deception about who they really are.

“It’s difficult to watch people who feel like they can’t win in life, and I want to see everyone obtaining victory,” Downs says. “In football, when you think about touchdowns, you think about victory. You think about success and achieving goals. Christ wants us to have those wins in life.

“When we’re living for God, we can get disappointed, as everyone does at times, but you can’t stay that way,” Downs says. “God wants victories in His pews. The enemy tries to roar like a lion, and that causes us to run and hide in fear,

to back down and not push back. Through Christ we triumph, and we triumph because we follow Christ and obey Him. ... The enemy tries to bully us out of God's promises, but we must respect the authority the Lord places over us. But God has given us power over the darkness. We need to partner with Him to see the manifestation of breakthrough, and we will begin to see victory. That's what we're all about."

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Positioning for the Next Great Move of God

As the lead pastor of Empowered People Church, a non-denominational church in suburban Chicago founded in 2006 by her and her husband, Deland John, Dr. Kisia Coleman has been charged by God with many crucial tasks. Not only must she protect her flock from the cold, dark culture that has enveloped this country, but she must also prepare it for the next Great Awakening, which she believes is coming very soon.

With the many kingdom duties God has challenged her with "for a time such as this," the latter is a responsibility she accepts without hesitation or reservation.

"It's not just some cliché, some religious jargon that we all tend to have. I authentically believe that we are on the verge of a tremendous move of God that is going to be incredible," Coleman says. "There is a lot that is going on right now. The Lord has really been waking me up.

"I have cried out to the Lord and said, 'whatever you are

doing in this particular season, I don't want to miss You. Whatever it is, please tell me.' I do believe that the Lord wants us positioned for the next season, and the next season is here."

Coleman's kingdom-focused attitude keeps her busier for Jesus than most. Not only is she a preacher of God's Word, Coleman, the founder of KishKnows Inc., is a certified life and leadership coach and the head of a self-publishing book firm.

Online, she executes a prayer ministry she started in 2000, where dozens of people pray daily for each other and for the culture of this country on a prayer conference phone line.

She has written books and helped publish books that have impacted thousands. And, in addition to all of that, she and John have raised a family of five, including their own two children and two orphaned nieces and a nephew, whom they took in since the untimely death of the children's parents.

On top of all of that, in the past year, she has become a podcaster. She is the host of *Mastering Your Message with Dr. Kish* on the Charisma Podcast Network. In her "spare time," she also writes plays and spoken word pieces.

While everything combined can become overwhelming at times, Coleman takes none of it for granted and says she knows all of these tasks have been commissioned by God Himself.

"I would say that, according to Scripture, I believe there is an appointed time for everything," Coleman says. "I just really believe that it has been building up to this point in time. Two years ago, I became the lead pastor of Empowered People Church as my husband was transitioning so that he could venture more into international ministry. We have a grown son who is doing well working for Apple. My daughter was graduating from college at that time, and our nieces and nephew, whom we ended up taking in about a decade ago, were at the point where they could start to take care of themselves.

“My business that I started from scratch back in 2013 had a system in place where it was really working for me, so, if I needed to, I could step back from it. I really do believe that, by God’s grace, I had come to a point in time where I could focus on more things and handle all of it.

“We know that God has appointed times and seasons right now for all of us. In the church, when people talk about Pentecost and the Holy Spirit, we think about God having an appointed time for the Holy Spirit to show up. So, when it comes to us as believers, it’s an appointed time. If it were up to me—and it’s not—I would be doing all of this anyway. I grew up in church, in a pastor’s home, so I’ve been around this stuff for a long time.

“It’s just that point in time, and it’s been building to this point. I know what God has spoken to me and what He has told me to do, and that’s what I’m doing.”

Empowered People Church is hitting a growth spurt after having gone through various transitions due to relocation, and Coleman says it currently consists of about 25 to 30 families. But there is a consistent flow of new partners coming aboard on a weekly basis both locally and internationally. Under its parent organization, Kingdom Church International Ministries, the church’s reach is felt around the globe as it partners with ministries and other believers in the U.S. and various nations.

Locally and worldwide, Kingdom Church International’s core values focus on building families, restoring communities, awakening dreams and enforcing God’s kingdom plan in the earth with its creative outreach services to the community.

As a pastor, Coleman and her husband take these responsibilities very seriously. But it is only one aspect of Kisia Coleman’s ministry to help prepare the nations for the next great move of God.

KishKnows Publishing

As a writer, Coleman knows fully how difficult it is to become a published author. Many people, she says, simply write a manuscript because they believed God spoke to them to get a certain word out to the public.

And while their idea and His message may be ordained to reach the masses, Coleman is convinced that these potential authors are not completely listening to what God is telling them to do with it.

That is perhaps the main reason why she created her self-publishing company, KishKnows Inc. The company's goals, according to her website, are to:

Help authors create quality, attractive, professional self-published books

Coach our authors to develop the mindset as the recognized authority in their industry and the credible go-to person in the marketplace

Empower our authors to attract their target audience so their message can reach the masses

Alleviate the frustration and overwhelm in the publishing process.

Alleviate the uncertainty and lack of clarity in the publishing process.

And, to alleviate the procrastination and delay that many aspiring authors and writers encounter when desiring to publish.

"When aspiring authors don't understand the process and the investment, which are really one and the same, they most likely are not willing to go through it," Coleman says. "We know that when it comes to actually writing the book, you have

to take time and effort to sit down and map out your thoughts.

“But, if you are really going to do it, you have to have an objective point of view; you have to have people to help you with the process, and that includes editors. Many people are afraid to go through the process because they are afraid of red marks, or the editing. They don’t want to be groomed.

“They also don’t understand that there’s a financial investment involved. They think about the old adage, ‘if you build it, they will come.’ Well, it just doesn’t work out that way. When you are writing and publishing a book, it’s like building a house. You don’t just build a house that you’re going to move out of next year. You build a house that you’re going to be in for a long time. And so, you want to make sure that foundation is right. And with that, I’m talking about some key strategies. It’s a process and an investment. A lot of people don’t understand it and are not willing to go through it.”

That’s where, as a book publishing coach, Coleman comes in. She conducts regular workshops for potential writers to learn the process and obtain the skills to help them accomplish their dreams in getting their book published. Coleman helps them to understand the entire process, the costs involved and the marketing aspects of the publishing project.

Most of her clients are potential Christian authors, but she does publish some positive non-Christian literature also.

“If the writer isn’t aware of key elements involved in the process, they’re going to get frustrated,” Coleman says. “So, when we do our workshops, our main focus is on how to write and publish a quality, attractive book that gets your message to the masses in an excellent, exciting way. So, when you’re writing and publishing a book, one of the things that we have to get our audience to understand is that you are talking to a target audience and you are targeting a specific reader.

“If you are just wanting to write this book for yourself, make it a journal. But if you have a specific message for a specific audience, make sure you know exactly what you’re doing so you can accomplish what God wants you to.”

Lakeea Kelly is a prime example of one of Coleman’s clients who followed the process well. Kelly’s book, *TransHermation*, helped her to win both the Pitch Competition and Judges Choice Awards at the Battle Creek, Michigan, Small Business Pitch Competition. Kelly, who was also a coaching client of Coleman’s, won a total of \$3,000 to help start her new business with ideas that came from her publishing project.

Dr. Cynthia Chess’ book, *Grace to Administrate*, has become a “go-to” book for many ministry leaders, churches and training centers in the Tracy, California, area.

Coach Kish’s website, [www.kishknowspublishing.com](#), houses many other positive client testimonials:

“I am a Doer and now that I’ve been armed with the content of your workshop, I am a soon-to-be-author.”– *K. Parks*

“The information you shared was priceless!”– *Q. Robinson*

Empowering Podcast

Mastering Your Message with Dr. Kish is a prime example of Coleman’s ministry as a life and leadership coach. Her mission through her podcasts is to help her listeners mold, maximize and monetize their kingdom message to the masses and spread the Word of God worldwide.

She interviews many of her self-published authors through KishKnows Publishing and helps those authors who might not normally know or understand how to market their message to reach a much wider audience.

“We want them to know how to define their core message and understand how to deliver that message to a target core

audience,” Coleman says. “During this past season, we had a lot of interviews with our published authors, with people who are just empowered to do whatever God has called them to do. These people want to inspire listeners to know that, if they did it and succeeded, then others, with God’s help, can do it, too.

“But the thing is, you’ve got to find out what message it is that God has given you. What is your life’s purpose? And then, you’ve got to learn how the message can be communicated, whether it’s by podcast or by social media, blog writing, or whatever. It might be communicated through your service to someone else. So whatever that core message is, that is your purpose. Like John the Baptist, when you understand what your purpose is, you just really come forth with the power of the Holy Ghost to articulate it and communicate it and get it to those who need to hear it.”

Ready for the Next Move of God

Coleman knows that she is saved by grace—the powerful result of Jesus’ death on the cross—and not by works. She knows that everything she is currently doing for the kingdom will not get her into Heaven.

But she says she also knows that believers must position themselves for the next great move of God.

And by positioning herself with the talents and skills God has given her, it will speed up the timing of that move by equipping others to take advantage of the talents and skills God has given them.

“Our hearts must be receptive to hear God’s Word and listen to what Jesus is saying and to receive the move of the Spirit,” Coleman says. “The next move is upon us, and I believe it is already here. It is an honor to be in position to be the ones who are going to be used by God in such a mighty way.

“I believe God’s miracles, signs and wonders are about to come to the church again. I don’t know exactly what part I’m going to play in that, but I don’t want to miss what God is doing in this season. I don’t want to miss this next move, and I don’t want others to miss it, either.”

Shawn Akers is a content development editor for Charisma Media.

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Brave New Breed of Believers Raising Up World Changers for Christ

More than a decade ago, the Lord downloaded a life-changing prophetic word to Darlena Fields. And she wanted no part of it.

God spoke to Fields and told her that she and her husband, Phillip, were going to lay down their ministry as leadership coaches to develop one that would train warriors for the kingdom of God.

Though the couple wanted to walk in obedience to God’s plans, Darlena says she felt as though they were already making an impact as leadership coaches, helping believers live courageously and find their kingdom purpose. She questioned the Lord’s timing. But He saw what she could not, ultimately bringing them both into true obedience. But none of this came till they had walked through challenges to their ministry,

their marriage and more.

Valley of Suffering

Prior to their ministry as leadership coaches, the Fieldses served on staff at a megachurch in Tulsa, Oklahoma, under the tutelage of Pastor Carlton Pearson. That church became known as one of the fastest-growing churches in America, and the Fieldses believed they had found their kingdom niche.

In the late 1990s, however, Pearson announced to his staff of eight pastors that his beliefs had changed. He no longer believed the Bible was inerrant, and he now thought there were many ways to God. Pearson said he was going to write a new theology called “The Gospel of Inclusion,” and the announcement shook Phillip to the core.

“We watched that ship go down like the Titanic,” Phillip said. “That sent me into a tailspin and, personally, it almost cost me my life. I went through a very ‘dark night of the soul’ wilderness season.”

Phillip said the experience proved so challenging that it forced him to seek healing from a deliverance ministry. Shortly thereafter, he contracted hepatitis B, fibromyalgia and some other physical ailments that caused the doctors who diagnosed him to inquire about what he was doing to cause his own death.

In addition, the Fieldses had taken positions with a homeless ministry in North Tulsa, which cut their income in half.

All these experiences were working together to teach Phillip how to live bravely. In the valley of suffering, God was shaping him—and Darlena—to move as kingdom warriors and train others to do the same. Through it all, God gave him a strong word in June 2002.

“The Lord said to me—and I’ll never forget it—‘I’m going to

heal you,'" Phillip says. "'But you have got to get real with Me.' So it was in that getting-real process that our ministry was born, and my life started over.

"When you've lived through something like that and you rise out of it ... when you burn out on that level and you get hit that hard, you know God's going to do something with that," he says.

"I think that's what Joshua and Caleb developed in the wilderness," Phillip explains. "They came back with their glowing report, and everybody wanted to stone them. That's how I felt through that season in my life, wondering if anyone were going to hold the truth high."

Attacks on Marriage

Through all the challenges they faced, the Fieldses' marriage also took some unhealthy shots from the enemy and became very "messy." Darlena said she had plans to divorce Phillip before they discovered his illnesses, and she developed what she termed as "suicidal depression."

"At that point, our lives were a complete train wreck," she says.

But just as God healed Phillip's body, He also healed the relationship between Phillip and Darlena.

Like many other couples, the Fieldses were striving for an unattainable perfection in their marriage. The quest for "stuff" did not provide relational security, and Darlena says their pursuit of the American dream/fantasy "put us on the performance treadmill."

Wanting to spare others from the same fate, in 2019, the two wrote *The UnPerfect Marriage: Liberation for Couples Trapped in the Fantasy of Perfection*. As it turned out, the book served a kingdom purpose greater than either of them

anticipated.

“The reason we put the book together was to show people this whole journey we went through to get where we are today—strong, united and capable of leading leaders who are struggling,” Phillip says.

“So when we use the word ‘courage,’ we don’t take it lightly,” he adds. “We recognize that it’s more than heroism. It’s really being able to embrace our full story. We don’t hide it. We’re not one of those ministries that believes that you just talk about the Word of God; we believe in sharing our story because I believe our story is how we connect with people. And when they read our book, or they hear our story, we minister to them, and it really liberates them to know what we’ve been through.”

Darlana wholeheartedly agrees.

“The reason we put the book together was to show people this whole journey we went through to get to where we are today—strong, united and capable of leading leaders who are struggling,” Darlana says.”

Training Up Warriors

By 2020, the Fieldses had purchased a warehouse as a base for their ministerial offices. During that time, they began to conduct Saturday-night prayer meetings.

But for Phillip and Darlana—and for God—that wasn’t enough. They received another prophetic word from the Lord, impressing upon them that He had much larger plans for them and that, just as He had told Darlana years before, He wanted them to lay down their ministry as leadership coaches and prepare warriors instead.

“Going into a new year, Phillip and I always pray about a word from the Lord, what He would have us do for that year,”

Darlana says. "And going into 2020, the word the Lord gave me was 'warrior.'

"It was time for war, and we actually pulled from an old word that He had revealed to us several years ago that we would someday spend our lives training up warriors," she says. "At the time, it was not a word that I had wanted to hear. I didn't relate to it. He had just given us a reminder of what He had already told us we were going to do for him. When He reminded me, it began to make a lot more sense.

"When the Lord was telling a lot of other people that 2020 was going to be about dreams and visions coming to pass, my word for the year was 'warrior,' and I thought that kind of a downer," Darlana says. "But I felt it so intensely that I had T-shirts made for all of my team members. Our Christmas picture was made in T-shirts that said, 'warrior.' When we got into the midst of 2020, I began to see why the word for that year was warrior. We went into warrior mode and started training warriors. So we said yes to it."

And in saying yes, the couple went right to work to obey the word the Lord had given. They planted a new church, Courageous Community Church. They also started a school called . (Warriors Awakened for Revolution) Academy. Its purpose, the Fieldses say, is to train a new breed of believers to live bravely in an ungodly culture intent on stirring up fear and chaos.

On top of that, the Fieldses relaunched their book, The UnPerfect Marriage, and created the UnPerfectPodcast, launched in early 2021 on the Charisma Podcast Network.

"The Lord just kept impressing upon us to take this bigger," Darlana says. "In those prayer meetings, the Lord gave us the word that it's time for a brave new breed of believer. He said, 'It's time for a brave new church, brave new pastors,' and so we said yes to starting a new church. We felt like the

challenge was to show the world what this new model would look like.”

When they work with this brave new breed of believers, the Fieldses want to impart three crucial ideals to help make their ministries impactful and powerful.

“One is an unshakable identity, two is covenant-centered relationships, and three is a God-given purpose,” Phillip says. “We see that as the foundation of leadership. So the tools we use to help them get there are vital. That’s really what we’re trying to do, to raise people up in this hour accordingly.”

“In our prayer time, I felt like the Lord challenged us to assist Him in helping to make the church great again,” Darlena says. “The way we’re going to make America great again is by starting at the foundation. The church has to rise before America can rise. And before the church can rise, we have to also heal the family and get the family unit and the family to rise. That’s what we’re going after.

“That is a huge pursuit, to help make the church great again,” she adds. “But I believe there’s so much power behind saying yes to God, no matter how small the request. And so that’s why we said yes to God and started this church. Our motto for our church is building family while we’re building an army.

“And that really is our ultimate goal,” she says. “In all of this and helping people learn to live brave and courageous, it is to assist God and help Him make His church great again so that America can be great again.” {eoa}

Shawn A. Akers is the online editor for *Charisma Media*.

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Daniel Kolenda Exposes the NAR Conspiracy

Have you heard of the New Apostolic Reformation? Some people say it's a nefarious organization of heretical charismatics who are scheming to take over the entire world. The conspiracy theories surrounding the NAR range from mere speculations to full-blown Illuminati-type accusations. However, after talking with those accused of being a part of the NAR, I realized they had never even heard of the group and were shocked to find out they were among its "members." In fact, I now believe these theories point to nothing more than the discord between traditional evangelicals and charismatics that we've known about for years.

After hearing questions about the NAR come up multiple times from our listening audience, I took several months to research this subject to make certain I had the full picture. Then I decided to share what I discovered in a recent episode of my new podcast, Daniel Kolenda, Off the Record. During the podcast, I play audio recordings and published quotes from the accusers, addressing each of their accusations head-on. I will summarize my findings in this article, but for more detail, please listen to the podcast.

My quest began when I received a question from one of my podcast listeners named Max, all the way from Germany. He had heard rumors about the NAR in his congregation and was shocked to hear I had been named as one of its members.

Max wrote, "At some point, I read that Daniel Kolenda is a part of this movement and that he would believe [its teachings] himself. My first thought was, definitely not!

After everything I've read and heard from you, I can't even imagine that you believe [like the NAR] even in part. But since statements from some of these 'members' find their way into our congregation, I would be very interested in what is this New Apostolic Reformation all about, and what exactly are the goals of this organization/movement."

Significant Trend or Concerning Movement?

Where did the term New Apostolic Reformation originate? C. Peter Wagner, a church growth expert and professor at Fuller Theological Seminary, coined the phrase. Unfortunately, Wagner died in 2016, so we can't ask him to address the matter. However, he lived long enough to see the beginnings of the snowball effect he unintentionally started. He gave a public response, explaining the reasons he coined the terminology, in an article published on August 24, 2011, on Charisma News:

"The NAR is not an organization. No one can join or carry a card. It has no leader. I have been called the 'founder,' but this is not the case. One reason I might be seen as an 'intellectual godfather' is that I might have been the first to observe the movement, give a name to it and describe its characteristics as I saw them. When this began to come together through my research in 1993, I was professor of church growth at Fuller Theological Seminary, where I taught for 30 years."

This means there is no organization, ministry or denomination called the NAR. Wagner simply coined a phrase to describe a real phenomenon he had seen happening all over the world for the past 50 years or so. He noticed the shift because, for most of church history, there were basically one or two main Christian denominations, but then thousands of nondenominational church movements began experiencing exponential growth. Some of these church movements grew so large they dwarfed the mainline denominations in some regions.

This isn't just a Pentecostal or charismatic movement; it's a significant trend that crosses over into all sectors of the church at large. This is why Wagner described it as "independent," and he was correct. Had he gone with the term "postdenominational" as a title for the movement rather than the "New Apostolic Reformation," I doubt there would have been any backlash. Instead, critics have grabbed hold of his term and taken full advantage of Wagner's innocent, albeit unfortunate, attempt to describe this type of church growth. I now believe the critics have done this as a way to push a nefarious agenda of their own.

The Wikipedia entry for the NAR is a great example. Here's what this online outlet gives as a definition:

"The New Apostolic Reformation (NAR) is a movement which seeks to establish a fifth branch within Christendom, distinct from Catholicism, Protestantism (which includes Pentecostalism), Oriental Orthodoxy, and Eastern Orthodoxy. The movement largely consists of churches nominally or formerly associated with Pentecostal denominations and Charismatic movements but have diverged from traditional Pentecostal and Charismatic theology in that it advocates for the restoration of the lost offices of church governance, namely the offices of prophet and apostle."

If we examine the source for this entry, we find only one citation for the definition of the NAR, and it points to one Charisma News article from 2011. When we compare the Wikipedia entry to the source itself, we realize it doesn't support anything Wikipedia says other than the part about advocating for the restoration of the offices of apostles and prophets. The rest is completely unsubstantiated. I mention this because I find this typical, not only for this Wikipedia entry, but more generally for people who discuss the NAR. Much of what they say is pure and simple nonsense.

Doctrinal Issues or Dangerous Heresy?

The whole NAR question reminds me of a spectrum. On one end, we have some truth and a few facts, even if they're mostly misunderstood, and on the other end, we have extreme full-blown "Illuminati type" conspiracy theories. There in the middle, where most of the NAR criticism lands, we find pure speculation or exaggeration. Even when a critic raises a good point about a questionable doctrine or practice, when we uncover its root, it has nothing to do with something called the NAR. It's just a doctrinal issue that needs to be addressed.

Those who talk about the NAR are almost always critics who never have a clue what they're talking about. They usually use the term as a sort of catch-all, generic label to brand people they dislike as heretics. There may have been a handful of doctrinal issues typically associated with the NAR in the beginning, but that list has morphed into anything and everything the critics find distasteful in others' theology.

One of the main doctrinal issues that can brand a person as belonging to the notorious NAR is a concept known as "dominion" or "kingdom now" theology. This is taught in various ways, but the common denominator is the idea that as Christians, we're called to do more than just hang on until Jesus comes and rescues us from this God-forsaken world. No, we are called to be salt and light. We are here to make a real difference. Part of our assignment as the church is to influence society and culture through our gifts, our talents and our lives in general.

Most Christians would agree with what I've just stated. If that applies to you, you might be surprised to learn that this could cause the critics to call you an NAR heretic. How do I know? Because I've been branded this way. Yet as far as "dominion theology" goes, what I just described is what I believe and teach.

A more radical view of dominion theology is post-millennial

eschatology, or the belief that Jesus will return to set up His kingdom after the millennium rather than before. Essentially, this eschatological system sets forth the idea that the church will usher in the return of Christ by taking over in leadership. People like Charles Finney, John Wesley and Jonathan Edwards, whom the Calvinists usually revere, all ascribed to a post-millennial eschatology. Have these evangelical heresy-hunters accused Jonathan Edwards of being a heretic, part of the NAR or someone who believed in dominion theology because of his post-millennialism?

Of course not. He's one of their heroes. Yet they call charismatics "NAR heretics" on the basis of less radical views on the same subject. How is that consistent? How is that fair?

Jealousy or Charismatic Cabal?

The second part of the whole NAR conspiracy is the charismatic connection. This part is pretty easy to understand because evangelical heresy-hunters have always disliked charismatics. Why? Much of it boils down to jealousy. The Bible tells us that even Jesus was delivered up by the Pharisees because of jealousy (see Matt. 27:18).

It's easy to understand why the critics are jealous. The largest spiritual movements in the world are charismatic. The most popular worship music is charismatic. Most of the large churches in the world are charismatic. There's energy and excitement and, more importantly, abundant evidence of fruit in the charismatic camp.

What's more, the charismatics expose the complete spiritual bankruptcy of these critics. If what the charismatics experience is indeed authentic, what does it say about their critics? Of course, it makes them look bad. It makes it look like they're missing out on something really important—and they are! But rather than repent and seek God, it's a lot easier just to attack charismatics, accuse them of heresy and

claim everything they're doing is counterfeit Christianity. That way they can feel better about themselves and save face in front of their friends without having to change the very attitudes and doctrines that keep them unfruitful, miserable and critical.

The NAR narrative was the devil's gift to the critics for their help in His divide-and-conquer plan. For years now, they have been painting the charismatic movement as heretical and unorthodox, but thanks to the NAR conspiracy theory, they can now make it seem diabolical and nefarious as well. They took over all of the leftist talking points, added a few of their own, made a few new guilt by association connections—and created a theory designed to divide. They created a picture of Christian leaders dedicated to taking over the world by any means possible and working in the shadows to accomplish their goal.

The truth is that there is no secret charismatic Illuminati. I'm sorry to disappoint anyone. I know the world would be a lot more interesting if there were things like Bigfoot and the Loch Ness monster, and if Elvis and Tupac were still alive, but these theories are simply untrue. I think a lot of these conspiracy theorists are bored out of their minds and longing for mental stimulation. There is no secret cabal of charismatic leaders behind the scenes, pulling strings, trying to take over the world. Wagner coined the term NAR, wrote about it in several books and preached on it. In his mind, that terminology was a good way of categorizing the largest, most diverse and most influential swath of Christendom the world has ever known, but that was Wagner's terminology. It was his category.

The people Wagner described would have identified as charismatics, Pentecostals, nondenominational or as part of one of countless independent church movements. They never agreed on terminology, joined an organization or signed a particular statement of faith. In fact, they didn't even

realize the term existed.

I think these critics have vastly overestimated Wagner's influence. I spent my entire life in the charismatic world and rarely heard him mentioned. The charismatic world is massive. There are up to 700 million people who identify as charismatic, according to some sources, and few of us, relatively speaking, have any connection to Wagner. If I happen to believe something Wagner also believed, such as the relevance of the apostolic and prophetic offices, I promise there is no direct connection. I believed that way long before I heard Wagner's name. I didn't get my views from his or anyone else's book but from the Bible itself.

If we listen to these critics for long, we notice many seem to have great difficulty suspending their preconceived biases to evaluate in a fair and objective way. Maybe they're just irrational people. I don't know them personally, so I can't say. But they may tolerate irrationality on this particular issue because it confirms their bias.

Frankly, to dismiss our beliefs with this silly argument is lazy—the equivalent to a concession of defeat. When these heresy hunters talk about the NAR, we should interpret their words as though they're describing full-gospel, Bible-believing, Spirit-filled Christians. That's all we have in common. The people accused of being part of the NAR don't share a set of doctrines or beliefs beyond some basic ones, such as believing the gifts of the Spirit are for today—a belief held by hundreds of millions of people worldwide.

Do the NAR critics understand the difference between correlation and causation? Just because I believe apostles exist today and Wagner believed that apostles exist today doesn't mean one caused the other. This seems to be the central issue. Yes, millions of people believe apostles exist, probably more like hundreds of millions. We're called charismatics, not disciples of Wagner. We will continue to

stand for the gifts of the Spirit and the full counsel of Scripture, no matter what Wikipedia—or anyone else—says we believe.

READ MORE: Enjoying this discussion? Find more topics at Daniel Kolenda's new podcast, *Off the Record*.

Daniel Kolenda is a missionary evangelist who has led more than 22 million people to Christ face to face through massive open-air evangelistic campaigns in some of the most dangerous, difficult and remote locations on earth. As the successor to world-renowned evangelist Reinhard Bonnke, Daniel is the president and CEO of Christ for All Nations—a ministry that has conducted some of the largest evangelistic events in history.

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10 Ways the Church Can Thrive in These Evil Days

The contemporary church is facing unprecedented challenges to its faith. In addition to the increasing pressure upon believers to conform to the values of secular culture,

churches have experienced considerable declines in attendance and finances due to COVID-19. However, Jesus commanded His disciples that amid tribulations, they must “take heart” because He has “overcome the world” (John 16:33b). His words have proven true as the early church not only survived, but thrived. It became a massive movement that has outlived and outlasted every worldly and political empire for the past two millennia.

The following are 10 ways the church can thrive in these evil days:

1. The church needs to gather together all the more during times of testing. The book of Hebrews tells us to assemble more as we see “the Day approaching” (Heb. 10:25b). Whatever your perspective on the precise meaning of this passage, we can all agree that “the Day” is referring to an ominous day of reckoning, a time of testing and judgment that every generation experiences to one degree or another. Thus, the only way the church can thrive during such challenging seasons is to come together to support one another. The devil would like nothing more than for Christians to use COVID-19 as an excuse to remain fragmented and isolated. Enough is enough! We need the whole body of Christ to physically gather as soon as possible (depending, of course, upon the physical health of each individual).

2. Pastors need to connect with each other. After a challenging season in my own life in the 1980s, I received a life-altering call from God in 1991 to focus my attention on uniting the pastors of New York City. I realized that a spirit of ethnic segregation and independence was limiting the potential of God’s purposes for our huge metroplex. Jesus said seven times in the book of Revelation that we were “to hear what the Spirit was saying to the churches” (Rev. 2:7, 11, 17, 29; 3:6, 13, 22). This illustrates that there are some things God will not speak to individuals alone, especially when it comes to what Jesus wants to do in a community or region.

After starting a prayer movement called All City Prayer in 1991 and combining it with the Concerts of Prayer in 1994, we saw the crime rate drop dramatically in our city. Even more importantly, united prayer became the catalyst for breaking racial barriers and developing great levels of trust among hundreds of pastors.

The united church in our city paved the way for a robust response after the 9/11 attack on our city. Many pastors came together to coordinate crisis counseling as well as a memorial service broadcast to the nation. After that, a huge church planting movement began in Manhattan and beyond, which, to this day, is positively affecting every borough and region of the greater New York region. A united church is more than up to the task of meeting the challenges of the day. Truly, God releases a blessing commensurate to the amount of unity that exists in the body of Christ (Ps. 133).

3. Church place and workplace leaders need to collaborate. God never willed that there would be a separation between the church place and the workplace. Historically, the original 12 apostles were recruited from the workplace, not from the religious class. (Several had fishing businesses, one was a tax collector; another was involved in politics as a zealot; and even Judas Iscariot was the treasurer, indicating that he had experience managing money.)

Arguably, the greatest church in the New Testament, the church of Antioch, had leaders connected to the marketplace. For instance, Barnabas bought and sold real estate. Paul was a tentmaker, and most likely Manaen was a politician raised with Herod the Tetrarch (Acts 13:1-2, 4:37, 18:3).

During times of financial lack and social unrest, the church must form partnerships with key community leaders in both the church place and workplace so they can put a collective of gifts and resources together to serve their city. Pastors and leaders who aren't open to collaborative efforts with the

marketplace essentially tell more than 90% of their church that they are not needed. Indeed, for the church to thrive, we need to end this unbiblical bifurcation so the church gathered on Sunday becomes the church scattered on Monday.

4. The church needs to discern divine opportunities in the crisis. Paul commands the church to make the most of every opportunity because the days are evil (Eph. 5:15-16). Scripture teaches us that the “sons of Issachar” had a divine assignment to understand the times in which they lived so they could know what Israel should do in response (1 Chron. 12:32). In light of these principles, every crisis becomes an opportunity for the church to go to another level of effectiveness to shine the light of Christ to the community. For example, the betrayal and subsequent crucifixion of Christ revealed an opportunity for Jesus to rise from the dead. The challenge of feeding all the Grecian widows in the early church moved the apostles to set up the permanent ministry of the diaconate (Acts 6:1-6, 1 Tim. 3:8-10).

The persecution of the Jerusalem church afforded an opportunity for Philip to preach to Samaria and witness a great awakening (Acts 8:1-8). The imprisonment of Paul and Silas led to God bringing an earthquake that resulted in the Philippian jailer and his whole family getting saved (Acts 16:25-34). Hence, the present-day crisis in the church is an opportunity to manifest the power of Christ and dispel the darkness. Furthermore, the fear, depression, confusion and hatred abounding in the world today reveal an opportunity for the true church to manifest the truth, love and peace of God to unbelievers. The true church will always thrive amid darkness and chaos!

5. The church needs to be bold amid opposition. The focus of the early church was never about preserving people’s lives and human freedoms. They thrived because they were willing to risk life and limb for the sake of the gospel. The apostle Paul said, “I consider my life worth nothing to me, my only aim is

to finish the race and complete the task the Lord Jesus has given to me—the task of testifying to the good news of God’s grace” (Acts 20:24, NIV). What a far cry from many in the American church who invest more time, talent and money in protecting their religious freedom than they do in gospel proclamation! (It is fine to protect religious liberty if it does not replace the proclamation of the gospel and winning the lost.)

The early church did not even consider persecution an obstacle. When the people prayed, they did not ask for less persecution but that God grant them boldness to preach the gospel with signs, wonders and miracles (Acts 4:29-31). The church will thrive when Christ’s followers fearlessly proclaim the gospel despite persecution and cultural disapproval.

6. The church needs to put its trust in the Lord Jesus instead of political leaders. Although the church is called to nurture good citizens who vote and engage in the political process, our ultimate trust should be in King Jesus, not in elected officials. When the church puts too much of its hope in a mere man or a political system, it practices idolatry and will witness a swift correction from the Lord. (The past election has revealed the hearts and motives of many in the church, for good and for evil.) Jesus, as King of kings and Lord of lords, is sovereign over all the kings of the earth (Rev. 19:16). They are commanded to bow down before Him and “kiss the Son” lest His wrath flare up and destroy them. Hence, we are blessed only if we put all our trust in Him (Ps. 2:7-12). Thus, when Jesus is truly Lord of the church, we will thrive no matter who the president is!

7. The church needs to maintain corporate spirituality during evil days. Since most societal systems lie under the control of the evil one (1 John 5:19), the church needs to continually walk in the faith of Jesus to overcome the world (1 John 5:4-5). However, the only way for the church to walk this way is to cultivate certain spiritual disciplines within its

congregations. Paul tells us that amid evil days, we need to discern the will of the Lord so that we do not walk foolishly. How do we do this? We do this by continually being filled with the Spirit, by saturating ourselves with the Word, psalms and hymns, and living lives of thanksgiving (Eph. 5:15-20).

Hence, the church will only thrive if both corporate and individual spirituality are taught and celebrated. Only the church saturated with the Word of God will prosper and bear fruit in every season (Ps. 1). Notice, Ephesians 5:19 begins, "Speak to one another." This passage connects being filled with the Spirit and the knowledge of the will of God with assembling together for the purpose of corporate spirituality. When the church equips and releases the saints to minister to one another, the body of Christ will thrive no matter what the challenges are.

8. The church should employ regular times of corporate prayer.

The book of Joel illustrates how the people of God should respond in the midst of a crisis. God instructed the people of Israel to call a "solemn assembly" that consisted of fasting, prayer and repentance (Joel 1:13-14; 2:12-13). The result is that God would remember His people and pour out a blessing (Joel 2:18-28). Peter quoted this book on the day of Pentecost after a 10-day prayer meeting that culminated in God moving in power and saving 3,000 people in one day (Acts 2:17-40). The church that engages in much corporate prayer, fasting and repentance will thrive even during the days of evil.

9. The church should put on the full armor of God.

During the days of evil, the church can only stand fast by putting on the full armor of God. This primarily involves complete alignment with the Word of God. In Ephesians 6:10-17, we see the church must put on "the helmet of salvation." The helmet protects the head, which is where our thoughts emanate. Hence, Jesus wants our thought life protected during times of testing. Proper thoughts are those based upon the knowledge of God's Word, which alone is able to cast down every imagination and false

thought (2 Cor. 10:3-5).

We have to wear “the belt of truth,” which is the piece that holds the whole armor together. Only those whose view of reality is framed by the Word of God are those who will escape deception and stand fast in the midst of spiritual battles. “The shield of faith” quenches the fiery darts of the wicked one. How does this overcoming faith develop? “Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God” (Rom. 10:17, MEV).

Finally, “the sword of the Spirit” is our only offensive weapon. Jesus employed the Word of God against the devil when He quoted Scripture to counter his temptations (Matt. 4:1-11). The church that aligns with the Word of God will thrive in these days of testing.

10. The church should have an eternal perspective to counter temporary suffering. Paul says the sufferings of this present world are not worthy of being compared to the glory that will be revealed (Rom. 8:18). With an eternal perspective, the church will weather any storm, since its anchor does not rest upon temporal things and circumstances (Isa. 40:6-8, James 4:13-14, 1 John 2:17). The eternally minded church does not place significant value in things like material goods, wealth, fame and popularity. Hence, when any of these are threatened or lost, we can still walk in the joy of the Lord. When the church has an eternal perspective, it will thrive amid every crisis.

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Joseph Mattera's teachings reach thousands of leaders and believers in more than 175 nations. His call is to influence leaders who lead nations.

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How Mario Murillo Affected the Direction of My Life

This month's cover story on Mario Murillo means a lot to me because of his impact on my own life and ministry. As you will read in our article, the Lord has given him a huge influence at a time when we need a fresh move of God. That's why Murillo was one of my main sources for my new book, *God and Cancel Culture*, which outlines what's happening in America and how we face having Christianity canceled if we don't take a stand before it's too late.

However, my book is not all doom and gloom. As believers, we know God has plans and purposes we don't understand. I believe good things will happen in spite of all the negative trends we see around us. In fact, Murillo helped give me the word picture "Hurricanes of Revival," which became one of my chapter titles.

"One of the patterns for revival that Jesus referred to was weather," Murillo told me. "He said, 'You see the color of the

sky and the cloud formations, and you know what's coming, and you don't discern the signs of the times.'"

Murillo said the big flashing sign of the times today is spiritual hunger and a vacuum of answers. When a vacuum of good exists, something must rush in to fill it. Observing the cultural signs, Murillo believes it is "inevitable that the revival is coming."

"The natural hunger for God is something that no atheist can abolish, no university can ban," he said. "No human engineering is ever going to be capable of erasing man's deep desire to know God and the inner emptiness they feel. When you create a culture where you don't know what gender you are, or what love is, you don't know what's up, what's down, what's truth, what's false or who you can believe—all of a sudden, these deep, eternal yearnings rise to the surface, and people turn to God."

Just like a hurricane. In fact, Murillo and many others believe the spiritual vacancy and hunger are so profound that "When God's Spirit falls on a culture that is starved for truth, it will overrun the walls of the church." We have seen this happen many times through history in the great revivals we now honor and celebrate.

"The hunger is there," Murillo says. "The tide of spiritual awareness has gone out so far that the youth are starved. It could be a new Jesus Movement; it could be something else. But anyone who supposes that something big is not at work is going to miss it."

God and Cancel Culture contains additional insights from Murillo. But his statement that there is a hurricane of revival should give us all hope. This is not the first time in history things have looked bleak or that history was altered by a mighty outpouring of the Holy Spirit. Things were pretty bleak when God gave Martin Luther the revelation that the just

shall live by faith.

We can also point to many Spirit-birther events that changed the trajectory of our nation, such as the First and Second Great Awakenings, the Azusa Street Revival of 1906, the charismatic renewal movement of the late 1950s and 1960s and the Jesus Movement of the late 1960s and early 1970s. One of the early leaders of the Jesus Movement was Mario Murillo, who, at age 19, founded a ministry called Resurrection City on the campus of the University of California at Berkeley.

At one point I visited Resurrection City just to see what was happening. Two other times I attended meetings where Murillo ministered. At one, God dramatically healed my back. At the other, I distinctly remember responding to a call from God to serve Him with my whole heart no matter what. Over the years I have stayed in touch with Murillo, and I've told him how much that ministry transformed my life. I have no doubt that what I received under his ministry and decisions I made in those services directly influenced what I'm doing today.

You can understand why it means so much to me to cover Murillo's ministry after all these years. Each of us has probably been impacted by Christian leaders as Murillo impacted me. But we must also understand that we impact the lives of others God may use in future decades and remain sensitive to letting God use us as He used Murillo in my life.

Stephen Strang is the founding editor of Charisma. His latest book, *God and Cancel Culture*, released Sept. 7.

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Do You Believe You Have Jesus' Supernatural Power?

When God spoke a prophetic word into Cathy Coppola's life years ago that she would "preach and teach" but also "be known for signs and wonders," Coppola hesitated.

"Oh no!" she responded. "Lord, I would like a respectable ministry like Joyce Meyer."

She rebuked that response almost immediately, Coppola says. Today, God floods her services with demonstrations of the power of the Holy Spirit in signs, wonders, healing and deliverance. Through her ministry, the physically sick find healing, the emotionally hurting find restoration, those bound by demonic spirits find freedom, and families are reconciled to their heavenly Father's original design.

"When God spoke that word to me, almost immediately the fear of man and the possibility of ridicule came to my mind," says Coppola, the founder of House of Glory Church, Cathy Coppola International Ministries, Mighty Wind Broadcasting TV Network and Fired Up Conferences and the host of the Apostolic Fire podcast with Cathy Coppola on the Charisma Podcast Network.

"Immediately, I repented." Coppola says. "I've been a Christian long enough to know that, when God tells you you're going to do something, the No. 1 thing for you to do is to obey. One of the biggest things in my life is obedience. Just obey God because you know that He has our best interest at

heart.

“So immediately, I knew what a lame response that was,” she adds. “I knew I just needed to say, ‘Lord, forgive me, I repent. I want what You want. I trust You.’ I knew that meant I had to get rid of all the fear of man. I had to be completely delivered of that fear of man because I knew where God wanted to take me, that fear would limit me.

“And so I did get rid of it,” Coppola says. “Honestly, I was just focused on the mission; just standing on the Word and just sitting in prayer. God eradicated the fear of man through His own encounters. He would encounter me with His love and really started to teach me how to walk in the Spirit.”

Moving to California

But discovering that glorious walk carried a cost. Raised as a Catholic, Coppola says she was taught to fear God but never really had a relationship with Him, nor had she ever heard the true gospel message about being born again.

Although Coppola loves her family, she describes it as a “controlling situation” where oppression was the rule and “you were seen but never really heard.” That made hearing a life-changing message from God in her early 20s all the more surprising.

Still an unbeliever, she married another unbeliever at 19 and had a child soon afterward. With her marriage in trouble and her daughter only 6 months old, Coppola had what she calls her “Abraham experience.”

“I heard the Lord say, ‘Move to California. I’m doing a new thing, a new generation,’” Coppola says.

“What?” she asked the Lord.

“At that time, I was very broken,” Coppola says. “Then I told my husband that I just heard the Lord say this, and he said,

'Why would God talk to you? You're not even close to God.' He was Catholic too, and he took his religion seriously. He believed in going to confession and all this other stuff. I loved God and wanted to be obedient. I just didn't know anything about Him.

"So again, my husband says, 'Why would God talk to you?' I said, 'I don't know. I just know that He did.' And I said, 'I know we need to be obedient.'

"OK, let's wait and see," Coppola's husband told her.

"I knew we just needed to be obedient, and so we did [move to California]. God totally sold our house, and my husband totally got a job."

Despite the opposition of Coppola's parents and other family members, the young family packed up and moved to California.

"I told my mom, 'I don't know why, but I know we just have to obey,'" Coppola says. "Tell me that wasn't the Holy Spirit talking. You know it was."

Preparing for Her Calling

A year and a half later in California, in 1989, Coppola and her husband both got saved—but her life with Christ was more stagnant than alive, she says. Going to a Baptist church left her unfulfilled, and reading the Bible was "like pulling teeth," she says.

The first time she ever heard about the Holy Spirit was when she overheard someone in the church parking lot talking about His power moving in another church, Coppola says.

Coppola says she knew immediately what the family had to do, and once again, she encountered resistance, this time from her husband.

"I told my husband we had to go to that church," Coppola says.

“He asked why. I told him, ‘There’s more.’ He said we had everything we need here; we have Jesus. I told him there was more, and so we went. I had gotten baptized in the Baptist church, but I did it for everyone else but me. I had also gotten baptized as a child in the Catholic church.

“But now, three years into my walk, I’m really being drawn by the Holy Spirit and to the Father’s love,” she says. “I didn’t even really know what The Father’s love was.”

In 1991, after an invitation to a backyard service in a heated pool, Coppola was baptized again. But this time, things were different, she says.

She was instantly filled with the power of the Holy Spirit and the joy of the Lord. She was taken upward into a vision, where she felt God’s love for the first time. In the baptismal waters, she saw heaven open, and the supernatural realm became real.

The Lord then began healing Coppola from years of emotional pain. He spoke to her again, verbalizing Psalm 51:17 and telling her, “Cathy, a broken and contrite heart I will not despise.” He brought healing and deliverance from spirits of death, suicide, eating disorder, fear, shame, worthlessness and timidity.

“There was something that happened to me in the baptismal waters. I know it ties into the Holy Spirit,” Coppola says. “I received my gift of tongues. I saw heaven. ... I came out of the water, and the clouds parted right in front of my eyes.

“I saw this essence that came down from the clouds,” she adds. “I didn’t know what it was other than I was feeling pure joy. I used to be severely depressed, and I felt pure joy. I got filled with the Spirit, and I knew it was the joy of God.”

This joy of the Holy Spirit—and a vision she received from the Lord—gave Coppola the boldness to found Cathy Coppola

Ministries in 2009.

In the vision, the Lord gave her a vivid picture of how she was to begin her ministry. But she wouldn't understand its kingdom impact until years later.

Jesus visited her and took her to the third heaven, Coppola says. There, she found herself in a beautiful garden with Him, and He showed her a flashback of her life—of what He had rescued her from. God's grace and will had kept her from suicide at the age of 16, keeping her alive to prepare for her calling.

"You are an injustice breaker!" Jesus said. "Break the injustice off my people." In bold white letters, Coppola saw the words, "Reconciliation and Restoration Prayer for Families, 10 a.m., Thursdays, Hope Room." Jesus gave her the names of two people to invite.

"Will you go for Me?" Jesus asked her. "Will you be My mouthpiece for the nations?"

"Yes, Lord, I will go wherever You call me," Coppola responded. "I am Your handmaiden. Let it be done to me according to Your Word."

She initiated a prayer meeting in January 2010, and it grew despite what she calls "massive demonic attack" upon her family. As she ministered, she contended for her family and the others God brought her way. Before long, they outgrew their meeting room and moved to a larger one.

Again, the Lord spoke to her, telling her to bring a message before the prayer meeting each week. And again, Coppola obeyed.

Walking in Miracles

Before long, altar calls became a regular part of the meeting, and God brought freedom and deliverance to many. The prayer

meetings soon turned into what Coppola says the Lord told her are “miracle services.”

In 2015, her obedience became even more evident when she cried out to God, saying, “Lord, bring me the homosexuals, the prostitutes, the drug addicts—the ones the church doesn’t want and doesn’t understand.”

God answered that prayer in miraculous ways, Coppola says. One by one, those she had prayed for came to her miracle services and found freedom. God then equipped her for other aspects of the ministry to which He had called her.

He taught Coppola how to fight for the lives of her children and take authority over the enemy with her anointing. Out of this warfare, she wrote her second book, *Devil! Get Your Hands Off!: 6 Strategies to Snatch Your Kids Out of Deception*. She was ordained as a pastor under The Holy Spirit Apostolic Association of Churches in 2017, and later ordained as a prophet and apostle by the same association. God then showed her a vision of planting a church called The House of Glory that would become a reality on a significant date—May 6, 2017—her biological and spiritual birthday.

The church holds two services each week, at which miracles, signs and wonders are the norm.

“During the prayer meetings and eventually when we planted the church, the anointing of God really started to flow,” Coppola says. “I would feel myself shaking, the power of God flowing. I knew I needed to lay my hands on these people. I just knew it. How did I know? It was just the power of God, the inner witness.”

A man from Africa who was blind and had cancer came to a service at The House of Glory one night after a friend told him he should go. When Coppola learned of his medical issues, she extended her hand toward him although he was not sitting nearby.

“I just started to command healing,” Coppola says. She walked toward him, still extending her hand, as he flipped out of his second-row chair and threw himself into the third row.

“The power of God was flowing through my hand,” Coppola says. She walked toward the man, and he stood up.

“And finally I laid hands on him, and I’m commanding the cancer to leave and commanding the eye to be opened,” she says. “He received his sight. He went to the doctor to get his testing, and they verified that they couldn’t find cancer in this man. He was healed of his blindness. And so he went back to Africa knowing the real power of God. But that was my first healing—a blind eye opening and cancer being healed.”

Since that time, Coppola has seen God use her to bring about many other miracles of healing, including a deaf, mute 5-year-old boy who can now hear and speak. She has witnessed eight medically documented cases in which people who were either legally or partially blind can now see through the healing power of the Holy Spirit.

“To truly walk in the Spirit—being so connected with the Holy Spirit that you’re in agreement with what heaven is doing—you bring it down here to earth,” Coppola says. “That is how I move in the realm of the glory, and that’s why I believe there are so many healings in our services.

“It was like God was trying to give me something so beautiful and powerful, but at the time, I was allowing fear to grip my life,” she says. “Once I was delivered from the spirit of fear and the fear of man, I became consumed by His fiery love. And once you are consumed, you walk empty—empty of self and full of His glorious, abundant, rich and weighty presence and power.

“From there, God healed me, and He showed me how to really walk in step with the Holy Spirit,” Coppola says. “And now, throne room encounters just continue to happen. But during my

healing period, God just took me into this place that is really unexplainable. By 'the throne room,' I mean I'd see Jesus come onto His throne, and He could come and dance with me, I had all of these encounters—on and on, and on, over and over—where my heart was being healed. I was being strengthened for the walk that He had set apart for me, the walk that He has for me now.”

Jesus says in John 14:12, “Truly, truly I say to you, he who believes in Me will do the works that I do also. And, he will do greater works than these, because I am going to My Father.”

Had Coppola given into the fear of man and not believed in those powerful words of Jesus, her supernatural ministry would not exist today. “I know I have the gift of faith, and I'm just trying to bring everybody along,” she says. “Part of that gift is that I've been through so many things. God has raised me up through those things. I'm trying to just bring everybody to a place of believing.

“As I'm walking back and forth in my services, I tell people to just believe God,” Coppola says. “Come with expectancy because there's the power of God that wants to flow. I know the power is going to flow through me, but will you receive it? It's just like what I went through years ago. If you have faith on the other end, then you've got a connection that the power of God will flow to you, and you will receive all you need.”

Shawn A. Akers is a content development editor for Charisma Media.

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In This Dark Age, Christians Must Exercise This Spiritual Gift Daily

Tim Ferrara takes the gift of discernment seriously, so much so that he staked his professional career, his life and his family on this precious kingdom blessing.

After nearly a quarter of a century in retail with the same company, Ferrara used the discernment God gave him to not only begin a new vocation as a pastor but also to initiate a ministry he knew would affect thousands of lives.

In the summer of 2020, after nearly 2½ decades in the same job, Ferrara knew he had to make some major life changes to see his dreams to impact the kingdom come true. While making a solid living in retail, he sensed God's call into full-time ministry two years before. But he faced some huge hurdles—the biggest being the reality of how he could support his family.

When offered the position as executive pastor at LifePoint Church in the Phoenix, Arizona, area, Ferrara knew God was putting his gift of discernment to a radical test.

“I honestly didn't know if I could make the money we would need,” says Ferrara, the host of Everyday Discernment podcast on the Charisma Podcast Network. “God obviously had different plans. That really started this long process of discerning God's voice and hearing from Him. Online, I was preaching this message about how to discern His voice, but now I had to live it out in one of the biggest decisions I could ever make, this tremendous career choice.

"I worked in retail for 24 years at the same company, managing a store, and I was just getting burned out. I knew that I couldn't do it for another 10 years—physically, mentally and spiritually. It was just too much for me. If I were still in my 20s, I could have done that easily. So I had to go before God in prayer and ask Him, 'Is this really your will for me? Is this just something that is a good opportunity but not necessarily a God opportunity?'"

Hearing From God

"That led to a month of praying without an immediate answer," Ferrara says. "I'm not really a big risk taker. That's why I was at the same job for 24 years. That's where my financial security was. That's where my nest egg was—if you will—my 401(k). It made sense to stay there. But we know how God works. It's not always doing what the world thinks is the best option. So, yes, it was scary. Honestly, even though I knew God was behind it, it still took a measure of risk and faith to know that God was going to be there after I opened that door.

"My wife knew right away that it was from God, and she felt God would bless me either way no matter what decision I made," he adds. "But she told me if I went with the pastor role, I would understand God in a deeper relationship. Obviously, I wanted that, but I really needed to hear from God. Basically, this was going to be a 50%-plus pay cut. It was going to be a big struggle as far as changing our lives and our budget around.

"I really wanted to make sure 100% of this decision," Ferrara says. "So I went before God, and I said, 'I want to know if this is from You.' I put a few fleeces in front of Him. God doesn't always answer by fleeces, but He can choose to if he wants. And so that was kind of my thinking: Hey, God, if You want to let me know through these fleeces before You, then that would make it so much easier."

God responded quickly to two of those fleeces, Ferrara says. That gave him a good indication of God's will for him and what he needed to do. The very next day, God responded to the third fleece by bringing him a check in the exact amount needed for a brand-new laptop. Ferrara had received his confirmation.

"I felt peace about it, and my wife felt peace about it," Ferrara says. "It was amazing, and I felt like I was on the right path. Since then, God has just been so faithful. The money that I thought would be a struggle has not even been an issue based on different things that have happened. There's just been an immense blessing with being able to do this ministry, helping people and just doing what I love. What is really cool is I have been able to take the knowledge that I had in the business world and apply it to being a pastor."

Even as a pastor's son, Ferrara says he only toyed briefly during college with the idea of becoming a pastor himself. For five years, he served on the elder board at LifePoint Church, but Ferrara says he never thought he possessed the personality to preach.

His journey to the pastorate came through small steps of what he calls an "open door analogy." One of those small steps was to begin to write—yet another aspect of his ministry he never thought he would undertake.

"If you walk through the open doors, there will be a blessing on the other side," Ferrara says. "Even though I didn't really want to or wasn't even thinking to do it, God opened the door for me to write. And that's an amazing story in itself considering the ridiculous stuff I was seeing on social media and the internet."

Moving Into Writing

In 2018, Ferrara says he became disillusioned with what so many people—even Christians—spewed forth on various social media channels. As an elder in his church, the hate speech and

vitriol he saw caused him to consider discontinuing his participation in social media all together.

But God had other plans for Ferrara.

“Yes, He certainly did,” Ferrara says. “I was ready to quit, just kind of sick of what I was seeing out there on the internet. I was serving my church, but I wasn’t really putting anything out there that would have any kind of effect on the kingdom. But then God started to give me a vision for some things I believe he wanted me to write—ideas for possible blogs.

“And then all of a sudden, one Sunday in particular, I just clearly heard from God,” he says. “We were talking about spiritual gifts in our message, and previously I had taken a test that showed discernment to clearly be one of mine. I received a call from God during that service to start a ministry called Discerning Dad and to begin to blog. I went home and wrote down in a journal some short-term and some long-term goals, like writing a book and doing a podcast.

“At this point, I hadn’t written anything since I had graduated from college,” Ferrara says. “Honestly, I really didn’t even like to write. So I had to go on this journey: How do I do this? How do I blog? How do I do Instagram? How do I do all these social media sites I was trying to get away from?

Ferrara says his Discerning Dad ministry “started small,” and few people were interested in reading it. He didn’t even attach his name to the blog until his mother urged him to do so.

Soon after, God prompted Ferrara to write his first book, *Everyday Discernment: The Importance of Spirit-Led Decision Making*. He formed a partnership with an independent firm called Kingdom Winds to publish the book. Since God had blessed him with the gift of discernment to make godly decisions for his own life, he knew he needed to share this

gift with other believers.

“This was a book to honor God, and it was designed to help people make better decisions in all areas of their lives,” Ferrara says. “After we make the main decision of following Christ—which is obviously the most important decision we can ever make—we are left with tons of decisions every single day. It’s been said that we, as individuals, can make up to 30,000 decisions or more daily.

“How do you put God first in all of your decisions, both the big ones and the small ones, ones that won’t lead you down a path that leads to sin and struggles but actually lead to blessing?” Ferrara asks. “That was a book I knew God wanted me to share. And then in the summer of 2020, I began a podcast by the same name called Everyday Discernment. So that’s really been my journey of growing this online presence and being faithful to help others grow in discernment, which is really the main focus of my ministry.”

Ferrara will release a second book, a 90-day devotional titled *Eyes on Jesus*, this fall. Teaching others how to keep focused on Jesus every day has served as the main topic of season two of his *Everyday Discernment* podcast even as he continues his emphasis on discernment.

Pursuing the Gift

In a world of confusion, lies and deceit, where sin is sugar-coated and compromise is popular, discerning what you should do every day can be a major challenge. Yet life demands that we make critical choices.

Experience has taught Ferrara just how difficult those choices can be, and from that experience, God gave him a heart to teach others where to find the discernment they need to make the right ones. In both his book and his podcasts, believers can discover how to measure teaching against God’s Word, how to develop a life-giving connection with God and the path to

find clear direction from the Holy Spirit. They can also learn how to discern God's will for their finances, their relationships, their careers as well as how to distinguish truth from lies and right from wrong. They will learn how to overcome the assault of a biblical mindset, which leads to compromise.

Ferrara says believers must learn to lean on Scriptures such as James 1:5 (ESV): "If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask God, who gives generously to all without reproach, and it will be given him."

"There are three sources of discernment, with the Bible being the main one because it's our source of truth," Ferrara says. "God's Word is infallible; it's never changing. And then the Holy Spirit will quicken things to us in a moment where we can make a decision on the fly when we need to. We can say a quick prayer, like, 'Holy Spirit, where are You guiding me? How are You leading me?' That's called discernment—Spirit-infused decision making, where the Holy Spirit's involved, helping us when we need it.

"I kind of think about it like in the movie *The Matrix*, where the bullets are coming at you and you go in slow motion to dodge them.," Ferrara adds. "When decisions come, we have to kind of slow it down and ask God for advice instead of just trying to do it through our own effort.

"Then the third source of discernment is the godly relationships that the Lord has put in our lives; whether it's a pastor, a teacher or a friend," he says. "It is not just any relationship, because there are some relationships that don't speak life into us. We want to be filled up with relationships with people who themselves are hearing from God and who can confirm things through prophecy or words of knowledge, or just through wisdom. Maybe they are people who are older than we are who have gone ahead of us down the journey that can speak wisdom to us and to areas of our life that we're walking down.

It's really important that people use all three of those sources."

Ferrara believes if he had failed to use all three of those sources of discernment, he might still be stuck in a job he hated, without the ministry God had planned for him. In fact, he says his gift of discernment saved him from a life of misery.

"Being able to discern what God had in mind for me instead of what I might have had in mind for me continues to be a tremendous blessing in my life," he says. "That's why I encourage people to pursue this gift so that they can discover God's will for their lives instead of doing what they think is best for them. People need this heavenly gift, and God will reward them for their obedience when they receive it."

Shawn A. Akers is a content development editor for Charisma Media.

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Prophets

It's only when you look back at the steps you've taken that the birth of your call makes sense. Our first ministry step occurred on our wedding day when the prophetic word came. God told us we'd leave our country, South Africa, and board an airplane with two small children to go to a foreign land. He would send us to a people we didn't know. He would use us to reach places we had never heard of.

I was 20 years old at the time and Craig, 21. He had a minimum pay job and we were living with our parents. That word sounded like a fantasy compared to our reality. What many don't realize is that when a prophetic word is spoken, it causes the things in the natural to come in line with God's plan. We still had so much to learn!

From the moment we moved into our first little home, ministry began. Our humble house became a hub of activity. Every weekend, others our age were drawn to us. We worshipped, played board games and talked about Jesus. We didn't get it yet, but the DNA of our ministry was taking shape.

We did life, served in a local church and often dreamed of when God would release us to the world. When the call came to leave everything behind and move to Mexico to start a ministry, that prophetic word had done its job. We landed in the San Diego airport and drove over the border to Mexico with two toddlers. We looked around, wondering what on earth we had just gotten ourselves into. It was a massive culture shock.

We had only been in the country for a couple of months when our financial support dried up. Foreign country, kids to care for and no ministry to show for it yet—what was the Lord thinking? It seemed that instead of opening doors, He shut them. We were stuck. We had no means to fly home and no way to earn finances on the visas we had for Mexico. So, we did what any other prophets would have done—we prayed and worshipped.

We spent hours a day on our faces before the Lord. We sang all the songs we knew, and when we got tired of the same repertoire, we worshipped in the Spirit. Much like Jesus was born in a manger where no one could see, so also was our ministry born in the back side of the Mexican desert.

The Lord kept us hidden until we reached the point of becoming comfortable with it. Not long after this, the Lord rewarded our faithfulness and opened doors to the rest of the world.

This is what a prophetic journey looks like. Our doors didn't open because we had the right contacts. They didn't open because we marketed well. They opened because God had a plan for His people, and He needed someone simple and foolish enough to obey.

We often look at the great men and women of God, imagining how righteous they must have been to be used so mightily. No, God uses the faithful. He uses those who have the courage to step out into the unknown. Someone who heard our full story asked us, "When you were without food or electricity, did you ever wonder if you missed God?" Our answer: "No, not once."

The Lord never promised He was sending us to fame and fortune. He never said He was calling us to stand on platforms.

Instead, Jesus called us by name and asked us to love His people. He asked us to be willing to be sent to heal His broken sheep. Jesus made no promise other than He would never leave nor forsake us. When the Lord puts a call on your life and passion in your heart, you cannot rest until you fulfill it.

When things got so bad that we were forced out of our home to live in tents, and we were boiling the unsafe water to drink—no, we didn't doubt God. Instead, we prayed and worshipped more.

Turning Point

Walking the beach of Rosarito one evening, we prayed for a miracle. "Father, we need to feed our children!"

The revelation came as clear as day, "Start a prophetic school."

We had no idea what that was. It was 1999, and the prophetic movement was still gaining momentum. How would we begin?

We used what we had. We took a video camera and our tape

duplicator and began recording the experiences of our prophetic journey, all in a makeshift studio set up in our lounge. We then did as God said and structured those teachings into an online prophetic school.

We received an overwhelming response. It was as if the church were waiting for someone to have the boldness to say, "Look here!"

Before long, we had students from all walks of life. Craig and I look at our incredible team of Next Gen Prophets today and cannot help but smile at where it all began. There in the wilderness, God shaped us for this purpose. All He required of us was to walk in obedience. And as we walked in obedience, He opened the doors.

Those doors opened to the world. Before long, students in Switzerland and Germany wanted us to spend time in their region. Once again, we boarded a plane. From the time we landed, young prophets came from everywhere to meet us.

Our feet had only just begun moving. With our then three daughters in tow, the Lord sent us to many different parts of the world to find His prophets. From Barbados to Italy, we met prophets just like us. All of them were in the wilderness and hungry to learn. At that point, we learned that prophets were the same everywhere, and they all needed the same thing: a place to belong.

God sent us to strategic places, to large and small ministries. Sometimes He sent us to teach; other times He sent us to stand in the background and watch. But every time we went out, the Holy Spirit drew prophets to us and allowed us to find His hidden warriors. All we needed now was a place for them to grow.

Expanding Ministry

That place fully took shape when the Lord sent us to the

United States, a place not initially on our radar since we believed God had given us a mandate to Europe. However, in 2009, with the birth of our son, God opened the doors for our first ministry center in San Diego, California. In that instant, everything changed. Instead of sending us out to find the prophets, God now sent them to us.

We had incredible testimonies of prophets hearing directly from Him, "Go online and find Colette Toach."

One lady really had us laughing when she shared how God sent her to us. "I was dreaming one night of this very loud white lady, and I heard the Lord tell me, 'I need you to find her. She will teach you what you need to know.'"

The woman went to YouTube, searching for the "loud white lady" in her dreams and finally came across one of my videos. She signed up to our school and made her way to our ministry center. God was getting our attention.

By then our spiritual daughter, Chaifa Thao, was an essential part of our team. A first generation American Hmong, she was one of the first orphans the Lord laid at our doorstep. Our family grew by one and as we took her through healing, God prepared her for the next open door.

The same workshop where we met our YouTube friend dropped Nathan Berry at our doorstep. In true prophetic arrogance, he waltzed himself into our lives and never left. Before long, he and Chaifa were married and flourishing in their apostolic call. They became the big brother and sister to our unruly and entirely endearing team of Next Gen Prophets.

Our daughters had grown in their callings by then. As the Lord brought more prophets into our circle, He sneaked in our sons-in-law, who all now serve alongside us. What started as a small fellowship in our humble home evolved into an international ministry.

He called us to give His prophets a place to belong. Today, our ministry has expanded to three different online schools and the Next Gen Prophets podcast on the Charisma Podcast Network. We maintain divisions in Mexico, Switzerland, the United States and South Africa. In each of these are teams of Next Gen Prophets whom we spent years personally training in our home. Find us online at [www.nextgenprophets.com](#), on YouTube, Facebook and Twitter.

If you are a Next Gen Prophet, you are a team player. You are a builder. You weep with those who weep and are anointed to heal the brokenhearted. You're processed to serve alongside pastors and apostles. You're trained by the Holy Spirit to establish kingdom structures that will remain.

You aren't a title seeker, and neither are you a platform seeker. You're a Jesus seeker. You'd gladly give up all acclaim to spend just a moment more in His presence speaking to Him face to face. Your heart is your true gift, and your mandate to usher in the new move is unprecedented.

Craig and I have the tremendous honor of mentoring, training and parenting Next Gen Prophets just like you. If you have a prophetic call on your life, get connected. God is calling you out of the wilderness and into the trenches to build alongside kingdom leaders. It's time to find your place. God is poised to change what we all know as church, and He is calling you out, Next Gen Prophet, to build it.

Colette Toach of Toach Ministries International is the author of 40 books, including the widely popular 8 Ways to Hear God's Voice. She works alongside her husband, Craig, training their passionate Next Gen Prophet Team, with divisions in South Africa, Switzerland, Mexico and the United States. For more of the Toaches' prophetic teaching, check out [www.toachministries.com](#).