

Committed to Finish

What drives Bishop Tim Hill more than anything else in ministry is the fulfillment of the Great Commission. As the general overseer and presiding bishop of the Church of God, headquartered in Cleveland, Tennessee, Dr. Hill wants to see the day come when all people around the globe have clearly heard the gospel of Jesus Christ and have had the opportunity to respond. Hill knows that when the Great Commission is fulfilled, Jesus will come again.

The six divisions of the Church of God (churchofgod.org) range from care to discipleship to education.

“The fundamental foundation stone of all of them is Great Commission visualization,” Hill says. “So we basically have the fundamental understanding that we exist for the purpose of fulfilling the Great Commission.”

For more than 130 years, the Church of God has focused on communicating the gospel in the power of the Holy Spirit. The movement now has a worldwide membership of more than 7 million in 40,000 churches and is present in 185 nations. Thousands of delegates will convene for the denomination’s 78th International General Assembly (ga20.org) on July 21-24, 2020, in Indianapolis.

Accomplishing the Vision

Even before Hill became general overseer, fulfilling the Great Commission was his burden. For four years, during his tenure as director of world missions, the church called this mission the “Finish Challenge,” he says. “When I became general overseer in 2016, we transitioned from it being a challenge to a commitment. And with that, we were basically making a statement that you can be challenged by a lot of different things and in a lot of different ways, but it’s only when you make a commitment to something that you commit to do

something. And so that has been not just a theme, but the driving passion of my administration for the last almost four years. That has been my heartbeat, and anytime you hear me speak, that's what I'm going to be talking about, at least to some degree."

Charisma House released in 2019 Dr. Hill's book *The Speed of Favor: How God Exceeds, Increases and Accelerates Your Life*.

Hill asserts in the book that favor is for believers today, to help them accomplish God's will and work in the world.

The *Speed of Favor* "is largely about mission and accomplishing the vision and the Great Commission, and all that God has for us to do in an accelerated frame of time," Hill says. "I built that around Amos 9:13, where it talks about the plowman overtaking the reaper. All of that has to do really with harvest. And the premise of that is that as soon as you sow seed in the ground, we've been in such a time that God has blessed in so many ways that we're able to harvest greater than we've ever done before in an accelerated amount of time."

With this acceleration, the Church of God continues its laser focus on doing its part to finish the Great Commission.

"We know we can't do that alone or by ourselves," Hill says. "We're part of a great group of people. All churches, all denominations, should be a part of that, working toward spreading the gospel of Jesus. But when we talk about finishing the Great Commission, I personally believe that the Church of God is poised and has access to all that we need to help us play a leading role in finishing the Great Commission."

Using the acronym "FINISH," the church has made its mission easy to remember.

"We talked about the letter F, which stands for Find, and that speaks specifically to unreached people groups. Along that

line, we targeted over the next number of years to reach 1,000 unreached people groups, and we have already had tremendous success in that area.

“And then the letter I stands for Intercede. That speaks to prayer. We have just launched a brand-new prayer initiative called ‘We Pray COG.’ Our goal is to enlist 1.5 million active intercessors to pray for the harvest. The Bible says, ‘Pray the Lord of the harvest.’

“Then the letter N stands for Network. This is a big one with us. A friend of mine, James Davis, makes the statement that if you’re not networking, you’re not working. And I’ve borrowed that phrase many times and give him credit for it, but that is really true. We enjoy networking, not only denominationally and with all of our churches around the world—of which there are 40,000 now in 185 nations—but we enjoy networking interdenominationally. Some of our greatest partners are fellow Pentecostal-charismatic churches, but we also are partnering with non-Pentecostal churches who are spreading the gospel of Jesus, so networking is big.

“Then the next letter, I, stands for Invest. And for us, that doesn’t necessarily speak of fundraising or money, but it speaks of church planting. We talk about investing in communities, investing in cities, in countries, and then doing whatever we need to do and have to do to invest in the families and the couples going to plant those churches through training, through education, through financing, in missions, whatever it may be, digging new wells for water, raising up clinics—however we can invest in a community to build a church.

“Then, of course, the next letter S stands for Send or Sending, and that speaks to missions specifically. And along that line, we’re in 185 nations of the world and are about to go into some new nations we have not heretofore been in, and so we are largely a world missions church with most of our

membership outside the United States. We have a little over 7.6 million members, and 1.6 of them are in the United States. The rest are outside. That speaks of our huge global impact. But the truth of that is, were it not for the United States and the churches in the United States that are funding and supporting, we would not be able to do what we do outside the United States. But with that said, the caveat is, we have maturing nations now that, for lack of a better phrase, have grown up and are now funding their own ministries, and that's a beautiful thing as I see it. So the maturing of the nations is a great thing.

"And then the last letter, H, stands for Harvest. That speaks to itself, just harvesting the opportunities that God has given us to help finish the Great Commission and hopefully usher in the soon return of Christ."

Hill doesn't limit his Great Commission message to his denomination, nor only to Pentecostal churches. He shares his message to mission-minded believers inside and outside of the denomination through his broader ministry.

"In my speaking assignments, I've had opportunities to preach in venues, and some have not necessarily been Pentecostal, but we do agree on the fact that Jesus Christ is Lord and He's risen from the grave," Hill says. "He's coming back real soon, and we want to tell people about that."

"We simply understand that the message of Jesus Christ being Lord of all is the fundamental message. Where we agree, we agree, and that is to reach lost people for Jesus Christ, and we have found it very easy. For instance, we are part of the National Association of Evangelicals. And I must admit that I don't agree with everything and everybody that's a part of that group. But there are some wonderful churches and wonderful people who are a part of the National Association of Evangelicals, and together, we try to work in conjunction and coordination where we can."

Hill says the Church of God is linked more closely with the Pentecostal Charismatic Churches in North America (PCCNA).

“We have partnered together in what we call ‘GO FINISH 2020,’” he says. “In the month of May, we have a concerted effort among PCCNA churches to witness. May 23 is the exact day, but the Church of God has selected the entire month of May to do that.”

GO FINISH 2020 is a global evangelism challenge that will see the Church of God join other outreach ministries and denominations to share Jesus around the world in the same month. The church is partnering with Global Outreach Day (globaloutreachday.com), an evangelistic ministry that is spearheading this worldwide movement.

Dr. Hill asked state administrative bishops, national overseers, pastors and churches in every place the Church of God has a presence to pick a day in May to share Jesus with the lost. The church will celebrate this global effort Saturday, May 23.

Envisioning the Future

Although it wasn't called the Church of God when it was founded in the 19th century, the denomination grew significantly and expects even greater increase in the future.

“We trace our beginning all the way back to 1886, and from there, it became what is now known as the Church of God,” Hill says. “What we see in the future is an expansion.”

One question occupies Hill's thoughts as he contemplates what God has in store for the Church of God.

“We continually ask the question, ‘Is what got us here what will get us there?’ And when I ask that question, I understand that in terms of the power of Pentecost, the moving of the Holy Spirit. Absolutely it gets us anywhere we want to go.”

But Hill knows there's another important question he must ask as head of the denomination: "Do our methods get us there?"

He knows that it's sometimes hard to release some closely held methods in ministry.

"Will those same methods that got us here get us where God wants to take us?" he asks. "The cold, hard facts are: not always, not necessarily and, in some cases, no. And we have to be willing to face up to that and do inventory and ask ourselves the hard questions. What are we willing to change in order to be the church, to be the people God wants us to be, to fulfill the Great Commission?"

One method that often changes with time is the media.

"I believe in the full use of media ministry," he says. "And what do we have to do media-wise to get the attention of a young generation, sometimes even in how we deliver the gospel? Are we accessing everything that God has put in our hands to give the best delivery of the gospel of Jesus Christ to a new generation, and be inclusive of every generation, for that matter?"

Hill sees the use of media as the responsibility of the church.

"I believe that [because of] the accessibility that we have these days of technology (which, in my opinion, all belongs to Jesus Christ or it should), we have a responsibility to use it to the fullest extent," he says.

Hill knows the church must consider how best to connect people with the gospel in global evangelization, too.

"We have to understand that every country, every nation, every continent has its own nuances," he says. "In no way do we think in terms of compromising the gospel, but are we willing to not go into Africa, not go into a European nation, and

Americanize those nations? That's an old, colonial way of doing things that was done generations ago. Are we willing to go in now and accept the fact that we are guests in those nations, and we build trust, and we build community, while at the same time we hold to the truth of the gospel?"

God has certainly blessed that approach as the Church of God has worked in many countries, some in areas restricted to the gospel. Because of that, often missionaries go to the mission field as professionals.

"One of the great things that Church of God has been a part of for several years now is what we call People for Care and Learning in areas where we couldn't just march through the door preaching the gospel," Hill says. "We went in with education, we went in with medicine clinics. In one case, in Cambodia, we went in with what we call the 'Build the City' project and literally built a small community, housing, all kinds of community support buildings to help support a community and help move people out of poverty into a well-respected living environment. And that's one of the greatest things we've been involved in. We dedicated that when I was in world missions."

Historically, the Church of God has been a rural church, but it has reached people in cities, too, as with the Cambodian project.

"We have reached a great rural harvest, but that has a lot to do with our history because we were birthed in a rural area," Hill says. "But for about the last 50 years, particularly since the early '70s, we have seen a huge, major breakthrough in the urban areas. Matter of fact, when you get outside of the Southeast, where our headquarters are, our next greatest area of impact, where we're having the fastest growth, is probably in the New York City/southern New England area. We have a major project going on right now in Brooklyn, New York, with Pastor R.C. Hugh Nelson. He is building a major, major

development there for housing and also including a church and training center. And what's cool about it is he's doing it in conjunction with the city."

Rural or urban, the Church of God wants to reach people in every environment.

"We began as a very rural church, but over the last 50 years, we've committed not to negate that or separate from that, but at the same time, embrace the huge opportunities that we have in major metropolitan areas now," he says.

Hill points to the City of Light ministry as another urban outreach.

"We have selected 15 different world-class cities that we have put a new emphasis on, planting churches, building church-planting centers, educational outlets," he says. "One of those is a new emphasis in Tokyo. We have really put a new emphasis on Amsterdam. [There is also] Georgetown, Guyana, and Paris, France. We've got some huge things that have just started happening for us in Paris, a new church-planting emphasis going on there."

The Church of God has also been involved in disaster relief, sometimes out of necessity. The denomination lost 15 churches when Hurricane Dorian hit the Bahamas in September 2019.

"They're in the process of rebuilding the Grand Bahamas throughout the Abacos," he says. "And that can be repeated over and over again because every time there's a hurricane or a flood, we just turn people loose in that area."

Younger generations in the denomination have also been active on the mission field.

"There's a huge student movement right now, young people, unlike we've ever seen before who are willing to go where others haven't been willing to go," he says. "They just want

to be involved in missions. They may not look like a generation did two generations ago or a generation ago; they may not think the same way or preach it the same way, but the fundamental truth is there.”

As the denomination expands and seeks to complete Christ’s Great Commission, Hill sees a paradigm shift in world evangelization.

“Here’s the big one,” he says. “The big one is the mission field has become a mission force. Missionaries come to America now from the Asian countries, and of course, throughout all Latin America. So I believe we have really everything accessible to us right now that makes it doable.”

The Church of God is a shining example of an effective witness leading the way to reach the world for Christ.

“Since the year 2000, we’ve seen 12 million people saved, come to Christ,” Hill says. “We’ve enjoyed about 30.5% growth globally. And our goal for the next 10 years is to see our membership exceed 10 million.”

Those numbers would be daunting to some, but Hill looks to the future full of faith in God when he says: “I think we’ll do it.”

Christine D. Johnson is editor of 2020 Vision. Share your thoughts on this issue with her at chris.johnson@charismamedia.com.

Dr. Dobson Calls on 'Christianity Today' to Name Replacement for Trump

Dr. James Dobson made a statement calling out *Christianity Today* for its pro-impeachment position. He made the statement as an individual rather than as founder of Family Talk.

"I have read a new editorial published by *Christianity Today* that promotes impeachment of President Donald Trump. The editors didn't tell us who should take his place in the aftermath. Maybe the magazine would prefer a president who is passionately pro-abortion, anti-family, hostile to the military, dispassionate toward Israel, supports a socialist form of government, promotes confiscatory taxation, opposes school choice, favors men in women's sports and boys in girl's locker rooms, promotes the entire LGBTQ agenda, opposes parental rights, and distrusts evangelicals and anyone who is not politically correct. By the way, after *Christianity Today* has helped vacate the Oval Office, I hope they will tell us if their candidate to replace Mr. Trump will fight for religious liberty and the Bill of Rights? Give your readers a little more clarity on why President Trump should be turned out of office after being duly elected by 63 million voters? Is it really because he made a phone call that displeased you? There must be more to your argument than that. While *Christianity Today* is making its case for impeachment, I hope the editors will now tell us who they support for president among the Democrat field. That should tell us the rest of the story.

"Statement made in my individual capacity"

Megachurch Pastor Glen Berteau 'Stable,' Family 'Hopeful' After Cardiac Arrest

Glen Berteau, senior pastor of The House in Modesto, California, is stable and responding to treatment after a major heart attack this week. Senior Associate Pastor Mike Trenton posted to [Facebook](#) today, asking the church to pray specifically that Pastor Berteau's kidneys and liver begin to function normally. Yesterday, church leadership asked the congregation to pray and fast 24 hours for Berteau's healing at this critical time.

Bethel Student Silences Satan's Lies With This Unexpected Tool

Anne Ballard never expected to start a jewelry company. But her business goes far beyond making stylish fashion statements. With an emphasis on the prophetic, Ballard's company, The Crowning Jewels (TCJ), seeks to speak life over women, call forth their destinies and create beauty.

But Ballard didn't always see things that way. Growing up in the church, she had faith in God, but one based more on religion than relationship. Her image of herself and

understanding of God's character were somewhat distorted. Ballard found herself asking two of life's ultimate questions: "Who am I?" and "Why am I here?"

When she heard Pastor Bill Johnson of Bethel Church in Redding, California, speak, she felt he had the missing spiritual key to a truly personal relationship with Jesus. So Ballard decided to attend a three-year program at Bethel School of Supernatural Ministry (BSSM), where students are taught to "enjoy the presence of God, say what He is saying and do what He is doing," to minister in the style of Jesus.

Initially, Ballard says she didn't know what to expect at BSSM.

"I went to ministry school, not really knowing what ministry school was about or what I would learn—but it absolutely changed my life," she says. "In your third year, you choose someone to intern for, and you just serve them. Usually, people choose someone who has a ministry that aligns with the calling on your life, and honestly, I was still figuring that out in my second year."

Thankfully, during her third year at the school, the depth of her understanding grew when she started serving at Igniting Hope Ministries, led by Steve and Wendy Backlund.

"[Steve's] message of hope, identity and learning the power of our words really impacted what I would later do," she says.

Along the way, Ballard learned God was not the judgmental, critical deity she had always imagined Him to be. She says she knew she'd been delivered out of religion—which she associated with judgment and criticism. She saw God as "keeping a list of everything you're doing wrong rather than cheering you on and loving the way He created you."

Ballard's personal transformation was so powerful it birthed a desire to lead others toward their identity in Christ.

“I was really impacted by the message of identity and just learning who God created me to be,” she says. “I wouldn’t say I had a strong identity growing up. As many of us are, I was just kind of tossed about by the messages we get in the media and the world—from magazines to movies to TV, and all of those things. Unless we are firmly rooted in our identity in Christ, we can be tossed about.

“So as my identity started getting shaped and rooted back into truth during my time in ministry school and through serving Steve and Wendy, that started changing me. I saw this need within me, and I knew [there was a need] within other people as well, for a way to practically renew your mind with truth.

“Jewelry just kind of lent itself to that. I’ve always loved beauty, and meaning is really important to me. And the jewelry just became this platform that bridged those two things, something you could wear that was stylish but also carried a weighty message that I was needing to believe at that time.”

Creating for the Kingdom

As Ballard found her footing in her relationship with God, she sensed the Holy Spirit calling her to help others understand who they are in Christ.

“I knew I was called to impact that in the church,” she says.

The creativity that lingered in the background as she spent many years in the “safe” profession of nursing came into play when she founded a company called “The Crowning Jewels” (TCJ) in 2013. She continued as a nurse for two and a half years while she established her Redding-based jewelry company. It has now grown to 10 employees—including herself and four jewelry makers—and also uses some contract workers for photography and other needs.

The company’s name originated with the British crown jewels.

“The name came from this idea of our identity and who God created us to be,” Ballard says. “[There’s] a calling on our lives: the fact that we all are known and loved by Him, that we are worthy. All of those values and those beliefs are like crowning jewels when we choose to incorporate them into our lives, when we choose to renew our minds with truth.”

Ballard also believes quality is important.

“Everything we make right now is high-quality silver- and gold-plated, either gold-plated pewter or gold-plated,” Ballard says. “We do want to move into precious metals in the future, but right now, this is what we have, and it’s really high-quality.”

Either TCJ or the customer can choose the words that are hand-stamped on the jewelry. With its “Heaven Inspired” collection, the customer provides a favorite style and chain color and the name of the recipient. Then the team asks God for an encouraging word for that person and uses it on the jewelry. The “Custom” collection follows a similar process, but this time, the customer asks God for a word or uses a word they’ve already received.

“The point is, we believe anyone can hear from God and be reminded of His truth,” says Ballard, noting that the pieces come with a handwritten card.

Participating in the custom jewelry making has proven meaningful to many.

“That might be people ordering something tied to their spiritual walk, perhaps a season of life, or it may be that the Lord has told them a word for their life that they want to remember,” she says. “And so they can submit that word, whether it’s that ‘I’m Worthy,’ or ‘I’m Beautiful,’ or ‘Hold Onto Hope’ or something like that. And we’ll make a custom piece for them with that word from the Lord or a word they want for their friend.”

TCJ also stands out among Christian jewelry companies because of its emphasis on the prophetic.

“Every month, we sit down and we pray and ask the Lord what He’s doing corporately for the month that we’re praying about,” Ballard says. “Out of that comes a blog for that month, and then we design pieces to go along with that.”

These designs are two limited-edition handmade pieces that reflect each month’s truths and declarations. Ballard sees this as “a way to come into agreement with heaven’s promises as a worldwide family.” The company’s website, *thecrowningjewels.com*, declares, “We believe that your words create worlds.”

TCJ has several levels of jewelry subscriptions, Ballard says, “so people will get a piece in their mailbox every month, so that if the blog is about hope that month, then the piece may have ‘Hope’ on it, and then it’s got a description of what that means for that month.”

The company also has monthly prophetic pages, which she describes as “a guided interactive journal of a way to incorporate what God is doing corporately into your own life and be activated in the prophetic.”

Cooperating With Holy Spirit

Ballard emphasizes the importance of renewing the mind, not just as something God does, but as progress the believer makes through cooperating with the Holy Spirit.

“Growing up, renewing my mind was a concept that always felt so lofty and nebulous,” she says. “[I felt] almost like God would do that, and I didn’t have to have an active role in that. As I started studying, and especially being in BSSM and serving under Steve and Wendy’s mentorship, I started realizing that renewing your mind is a very intentional practice that we all have to participate in if we want our

thoughts to change. Because what we think becomes what we believe. What we believe becomes what we say. And what we say becomes what we do. So if we want our lives to change, we have to start with changing what we believe.”

Ballard made strides in changing her thinking by learning the power of declarations.

“If I’m struggling to be brave in an area, or if I’m feeling insecure or scared about something, I really need to renew my mind with a word from the Lord,” she says. “That’s in the Bible. So let’s say I’m struggling with my finances. I might start making a declaration of ‘The Lord is my provider.’ In that process, I’m renewing my mind with truth rather than focusing on the lie that it feels like I don’t have enough right now. That’s the process of renewing my mind. And our jewelry fits in there beautifully because, in that example, I might get a piece of jewelry that says, ‘The Lord Is My Provider.’”

The Spirit and the Scriptures work in tandem through TCJ’s jewelry. Two product lines, “Icons” and “Legacy,” tie in to key figures in the Bible. In conversations with other Christian women, Ballard observed their attraction to stories of certain women of Scripture who are heroes of the faith. Many believers would identify with those stories.

“They felt like they were a Deborah or a Sarah or a Mary in their own way, or they’d received a prophetic word about that,” Ballard says.

In response, she created the Icons line—with Esther as the first piece. She later included Deborah, Sarah, Mary of Bethany, Hannah and Abigail. The Icons reflect “powerful women who believe God and change the world,” Ballard says.

By contrast, the Legacy collection highlights women in the lineage of Jesus: Mary, Bathsheba, Tamar, Ruth and Rahab.

“There was power in honoring the women that God chose, especially because they almost all have a bit of scandal in their story, and yet God deemed them worthy, and He chose them,” says Ballard.

TCJ also has some unisex products appropriate for men, but for now, the company’s main emphasis is on women. And the testimonies TCJ receives shows the jewelry is making an impact on the people the company serves.

“People who are feeling broken and hopeless will get a word that speaks to them and gives them hope,” Ballard says. “Or they may get a word that says ‘Whole,’ and then the encouragement that comes with a handwritten card. We have countless testimonies of how that has changed people’s lives. ... We have a lot of testimonies from the monthly subscription and how the word that came was just right on time, and it was a word they needed for that month.”

In a statement on TCJ’s website, Ballard explains just why words are so significant in the kingdom of God: “Words have the power to affect the world around me, as well as the world within me.” {eoa}

READ MORE: *To learn more about The Crowning Jewels, visit thecrowningjewels.com.*

Christine D. Johnson *is editor of Charisma Leader magazine and a Charisma Podcast Network producer.*

How to Equip the Next

Generation With the Power of the Spirit

As executive officer of the historic Azusa Street Centennial, Oral Roberts University (ORU) President William "Billy" Wilson came into an unexpected blessing.

"We found ourselves with the largest database of Pentecostal/charismatic leaders in the history of the movement," Wilson said. "We had cellphone numbers and email addresses of people who came to the centennial literally from all over the world. Initially, we really didn't know how to steward that forward."

Pentecostals from around the globe marked the Azusa Street Centennial in 2006, drawing thousands April 25-29 to Los Angeles to commemorate the historic outpouring of the Holy Spirit. In 1906, black pastor William Seymour led the interdenominational revival that also crossed races, and 100 years later, Wilson led the charge to commemorate this special time in church history.

"We had about 50,000 people from 114 nations," he said. "It was a monumental and profound homecoming for the entire Spirit-filled movement globally."

Leaders, including T.D. Jakes, Kenneth Copeland, Reinhard Bonnke, Dr. David Yonggi Cho, Jack Hayford, Claudio Freidzon, Charles Blake, E.A. Adeboye, Rick Warren and Jim Reeve, and hundreds of others attended centennial events. Charisma House published a book of Azusa's pictorial history by Dr. Eddie Hyatt and Joel Kirkpatrick.

Azusa and Oral Roberts University seemed to be inextricably linked, in part because of their leadership.

"In 2008, I became part of Oral Roberts University's board of

trustees, serving as vice chair,” said Wilson, who is now licensed under the Church of God but has also worked with the Church of God of Prophecy. “ORU was in a season of profound change, and the new board chair, Mart Green, wanted to show alumni of ORU that this university would continue to focus on the Holy Spirit.”

This opportunity led to what Wilson calls “a series of conversations around the world.”

“Our team traveled to five different continents and hosted 17 events asking about Spirit-filled, Spirit-empowered Christianity in the 21st century. These gatherings culminated in a global gathering held in Tulsa at ORU in 2010 that ultimately became known as Empowered21.”

Birthing a New Movement

At first, Wilson and ORU didn’t comprehend fully what had been birthed during the 2010 gathering.

“We thought the conclusion of this massive event would be the culmination of Empowered21, but instead we discovered it had become the launchpad for a powerful and fresh movement, empowering the nations through the power of the Holy Spirit. It was like nothing we had ever seen before!”

Although Empowered21 (E21) is for all Pentecostals and charismatics of all ages, the movement still had to appeal to younger generations and try to serve them well as the future of the church around the globe.

“We did extensive testing of words to determine how this new generation would self-identify, whether they would consider themselves to be Pentecostal, charismatic, evangelical, Spirit-led, Spirit-filled or Spirit-empowered,” Wilson said. “They embraced the term ‘Spirit-empowered’ by a wide margin. These college-age students also determined it would be highly impactful to add ‘21’ to remember this movement through

history as the one that impacted the 21st century. Now we explore what it means to be Spirit-empowered believers in the 21st century.”

President Wilson became global co-chair of Empowered21, at first sharing leadership with Pastor Jack Hayford and now with Dr. George O. Wood.

“Dr. Wood is the chair of the World Assemblies of God Fellowship and a wonderful friend and a great partner,” Wilson said.

As for how Wilson was named global co-chair, he takes no credit.

“Dr. Wood and I didn’t ask for this leadership position,” he said. “We ended up providentially stumbling into this significant relational network that is the largest in the movement’s history. I have extensive relationships all over the world and have been honored to preach in 98 nations personally. As a result of the Azusa centennial and our relationship-building over the years, I was blessed to earn trust among Spirit-empowered leaders. This trust has been a key factor in gathering people around the world to discuss the issues at hand within the Spirit-empowered movement and to offer to a hurting world the hope that only Jesus Christ can bring.”

The international tapestry of the movement shines through in its broader leadership.

“Under the Global Council, we have 14 regional cabinets,” Wilson said. “Most of these are populated by 15 to 30 leaders in that part of the world who are top denominational, independent, charismatic/Pentecostal leaders—all of them working on the same goals, purpose and mission as the Global Council.

“We also have several auxiliary groups such as Next-Gen

Leaders, an Evangelist Alliance, a Scholars Consultation and a task force on discipleship.”

As executive director, Caleb Wehrli is leading the day-to-day operations of Empowered21 from the Oral Roberts University campus. He works with the network around the world.

“The network’s leadership continues to grow,” Wilson said. “Our research has told us that more than 600 leaders are serving Empowered21 around the world.”

Encompassing a Broad Vision

Empowered21 has a less restrictive structure than a typical organization.

“We have a Global Council that gives inspirational oversight to the network,” Wilson said. “It’s a relational network without bylaws, a constitution or dues. It’s made up of people of great integrity who pay their own expenses to attend and who collect no speaking fees or honorariums—it’s a wonderful model that has worked exceptionally well.”

Along with integrity, the network also has a huge vision.

“In one of our Global Council meetings a few years ago, we asked a very important question: ‘What’s the one thing that is so big that no organization, no one network, no one ministry could possibly do it by themselves?’ The answer was profound: ‘That we would see every person on earth have an opportunity through the power and presence of the Holy Spirit to know Jesus Christ by 2033—the 2,000-year anniversary of Acts, chapter 2.’ We don’t necessarily believe everyone is going to be saved, but we passionately believe everyone deserves the opportunity to know the Jesus we know. We believe the work of the Holy Spirit is going before us and in us and through us to give every person a realistic opportunity to know Jesus Christ—this is the big vision of Empowered21!”

Global Council members look to Jesus' prayer for unity in the Gospel of John for direction.

"When you look at John 17, there are three components to the prayer Jesus prayed," Wilson said. "The first is relational unity, that we would be one as He and the Father are one, in relationship together. Empowered21 calls Spirit-empowered believers all over the world to be in relational unity.

"The second is a missional purpose, which we see when Jesus says, 'I'm praying this will happen so that the world may believe.' In fact, we've learned over the years that bringing people together simply for the sake of being together is not a sustainable model. If we want something that will stand the test of time, then we need a shared purpose—a shared mission. When we can share a mission in relational unity, we can help the world believe."

Wilson notes the third element in John 17 that he says some people forget.

"Jesus says, 'I've given them the glory, Father, that you've given me that they may be one.' The glory is the rest of the story. E21 provides a platform that allows diverse believers in the Spirit-empowered movement to come together, to share together, to love one another, to get to know one another and to be in relational unity, all bound together by God's presence. We then champion this united vision, a vision so large that it demands we all work together in order to reach every person on earth."

That vision leads to events that bring together the Spirit-filled community around the globe. Every five years, E21 holds a Global Congress, and there's a special location for the next gathering.

"In 2020, May 31 through June 3, coinciding with Pentecost Sunday and the few days after, we'll be in Jerusalem at the Pais Arena for our third-ever Global Congress," Wilson said.

These large E21 gatherings are supported by smaller regional gatherings.

“In the five-year interim, our regional cabinets organize diverse kinds of events to meet the needs of their region,” Wilson said. “For the most part, those are done at the regional level, and the Global Council does not necessarily dictate to the regional cabinet what events they should do.”

Wilson believes events are part of a significant process.

“We’re after a bigger process, an intergenerational process, helping a new generation connect with the power of the Holy Spirit and bringing Christian unity for world evangelization. We encourage the regional cabinets to do what works in their part of the world,” he said. “And then we also ask that one region volunteer each year to host a congress or conference immediately before Pentecost Sunday. Our Am rica Latina cabinet graciously agreed to host this year’s event in Bogota, Colombia, in early June, for an incredible time with some of the best Spirit-empowered speakers, anointed music, powerful moments of prayer and opportunities to connect with men and women seeking a greater outpouring of the Holy Spirit.”

Influencing Next Generations

E21 is also tuned in to young voices with its Next Gen Youth Leaders Network.

“We just hosted an event in Dubai in January, called ‘40 Under 40,’ where 40 of the top leaders in Spirit-empowered Christianity under the age of 40 came together to encourage each other, build relationships and prepare themselves to support each other when the full mantle of leadership is passed to them. We have young people in all of our meetings, and we encourage them to have older people in their meetings—we are intentionally intergenerational. We believe there’s a blessing released from heaven when generations come together, honor one another and bless one another, as

indicated in Malachi 4.”

As president of Oral Roberts University in Tulsa, Oklahoma, Wilson is occupied with young people in the heartland of America as well. He is completing his sixth year leading the university and has witnessed some real successes.

“ORU has had 10 consecutive years of enrollment growth; we have zero debt; we have 108 nations represented in our student body this year and are serving more than 7,500 students each year—4,500 in for-credit classes, and 3,000 in certificate programs. These are amazing days at Oral Roberts University,” President Wilson said.

Not only is ORU growing in its global reach but also in its educational offerings.

“We’ve added a number of new programs here at ORU,” Wilson said. “We’ve opened a Global Learning Center, enabling the world to come to ORU and ORU to go to the world through Zoom technology, along with virtual and augmented reality. We’re building our first new dorm—an apartment-style residence—since the mid-1970s, and we now have a new home for nursing and engineering on campus and a great new sports complex. Additionally, we now offer a Ph.D. in theology. We also have extensive and exciting plans as we go into the future and launch a 10-year vision called Impact 2030.”

Wilson “grateful” for God’s blessings in his purposeful and significant work at ORU and Empowered21. He’s serving the global movement of Pentecostal and charismatic believers into the future and influencing young people in the Spirit-led way. Wilson said he sees this new generation as “one of the great generations in the history of the world.”

“I’ve always had a heart for next generations,” Wilson said. “I believe God calls us to ensure that His work continues in generations beyond ourselves. Christianity is always only one generation away from extinction, so next generations are vital

to the gospel. That's one of the reasons I'm involved both at ORU and in Empowered21. I am called to give back to this movement that helped birth me and my leadership. I was touched by the power of the Holy Spirit as a teenager. It revolutionized my life in a very dramatic way, and I want to see people all over the world know this same Jesus and same Holy Spirit that changed my life—I'm passionate about world evangelization, and I'm passionate about the Spirit-empowered movement, to see it continue to grow into the future. Recent stats indicate that Spirit-empowered Christianity is not just the fastest-growing Christian movement on earth but also the fastest-growing *religious* movement in the world. It is growing at least twice as fast as world population. I'm excited about what God has done over the last century, but I'm also really excited about what He's going to do in the future through new generations. I want to give myself to that. There's a Scripture that says, 'When I'm old and gray, don't forsake me, Lord, till I show your power to a new generation.' I want this new generation to see and know the power of God." {eoa}

Christine D. Johnson is editor of Charisma Leader. Email her to share your thoughts on this article and issue at chris.johnson@charismamedia.com.

CHARISMA is the only magazine dedicated to reporting on what the Holy Spirit is doing in the lives of believers around the world. If you are thirsty for more of God's presence and His Holy Spirit, subscribe to CHARISMA and join a family of believers that choose to live life in the Spirit. [CLICK HERE for a special offer.](#)

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Will the Real Antichrist Please Stand Up?

For the last 2,000 years, people have been anxiously trying to analyze who the Antichrist might be and when he might be revealed.

Many people have made preposterous claims, and of course, they have been wrong. If you're not careful, you can get caught up in the debate and spend so much time arguing with other Christians over the details that you don't accomplish anything for the kingdom!

To make matters worse, we now live in an era when, for the first time, we have the possibility of an artificial intelligence Antichrist, a human computer hybrid that will demand to be worshipped.

Have you ever wondered if it's OK to have Alexa, Siri, and other forms of artificial intelligence in your home?

We know that the Bible says great deception is coming, so what is a concerned believer to do?

Author and minister Mark Biltz wants you to understand the methods of the Antichrist so you won't be deceived.

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- Is it OK to have Alexa, Siri, and other forms of AI in your home?

Mark Biltz wants to help you know the big picture of what has happened historically, what is unfolding in front of your eyes at this very moment, and what the future holds concerning the Antichrist and the end times based on the purposes of God.

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**From ‘Soul Surfer’ to
‘Unstoppable,’ Bethany**

Hamilton Keeps the Faith

*Known most notably as one of the biggest comeback stories of our era, **Bethany Hamilton** has become synonymous with inspiration. Her story of determination, faith and hope has resounded in encouragement worldwide. At the age of 13 as a rising surf star, Hamilton lost her left arm to a 14-foot tiger shark, which seemed to end her dream career. But one month after the attack, she returned to surfing and within two years had won her first national surfing title.*

Hamilton's foundation of faith has been her backbone; her source of truth, hope and strength. At 17 years old, she realized her dream of surfing professionally and is still an active surf competitor to this day. She has been able to touch a large number of people with her faith message, charitable efforts, and overall spirit. Her greatest joy is being a wife and mother, and she continues to touch and inspire lives globally as a professional surfer, author and motivational speaker. Enjoy our Charisma interview with her today!

I know our audience wants to catch up on your life since *Soul Surfer*—and a lot has happened since then! Let's start with the basics. Can you tell us about your family?

Yeah! I am married now; my husband, Adam, and I have two boys who light up our life! My brothers are both married with kids as well. It's such a joy to see our kids grow up together. Also, I'm surfing professionally as a free surfer, and I'm a motivational speaker.

How did you meet Adam?

We actually met through mutual friends. They set us up in a blind date sort of scenario. We met at the beach and jumped off a cliff into the ocean together. And as Adam will say, "It was love at first jump!"

You and he competed on the 25th season of *The Amazing Race* (and came in third!). How did your partnership in that event reflect your partnership today, especially now that you've added parenting to the mix?

It was important to us then, and is still now, to trust and encourage each other, rather than tear each other down by words or actions—especially in front of a worldwide audience. Taking on so many challenges together as newlyweds was so interesting, bonding and fun! We learned a lot about each other and developed a real sense of teamwork, which has definitely helped us now that we're parents.

What's the best thing about being a mom—as well as the most difficult thing?

I just adore my boys. I have so much fun getting to know them and see them discover the world; but also discover with them. Adam and I love introducing them to the things we love in life: our faith, surfing, time with family, adventuring (camping, seeing the world) and eventually more! I think it is so special for Adam and me to be the main influences in their life. Teaching, guiding and leading by example is both a blessing and a challenge.

You're still a professional surfer, so we'll ask you the question every mom gets: How do you balance your career with your family life?

My family definitely comes first! Adam and I have a unique situation where we've made sure I'm still able to be a full-time mom but also have a career. Adam is a full-time support and partner in it all. Sometimes the boys will come to the beach when I surf or share my cross-training time. Or I'll schedule meetings while they nap! We've found we must say no to more opportunities and try to balance all we do. We still have so much to learn, but our priority is our family, then surfing along with our other work and ministry. I'm so

thankful to share life the way I do. I know I wouldn't want to miss these sweet precious young years, or any years really!

***Unstoppable*, a new documentary about you, released in 2018. Can you tell us a little about that?**

Yeah, [*Unstoppable*](#) premiered in 2018 at some film festivals, but it actually releases theatrically this summer July 12, 2019! We've been working on the film for the last five or so years. It's a raw, personal, real-me version of my life story, highlighting my surfing career and many of the different obstacles that I've overcome. I think it will be a really cool way for people to see a deeper look at my life and the journey I've been on; especially the success I've had as a professional surfer, as a mom and in life—and doing it all at the same time.

How does this film differ from *Soul Surfer*, and what would you like to see come from this continuation of your story?

I love *Soul Surfer*, but *Unstoppable* is the real me. It digs deeper into my adult journey. While it touches on the earlier parts of my life, it carries on from the end of *Soul Surfer* into life after that. The way it shares my life is so different than any way it's been told. I'm just excited to continue encouraging people through whatever challenges they go through, with the message to chase our passions relentlessly, to not let our dreams get away from us—to live “unstoppable.”

And you have a *Be Unstoppable* book project as well; what would you like our readers to know about that?

I do! We published a book to accompany the film, *Be Unstoppable: The Art of Never Giving Up*. It shares some of the beautiful imagery we captured from around the world, along with some behind-the-scenes stories and inspiring thoughts and quotes.

We also published a children's board book that my husband Adam wrote! It's adorable and has a great message of overcoming fear and life's wipeouts. Check out *Unstoppable Me* by Adam Dirks with illustrations by Gill Guile.

You have many achievements in your pro surfing career, which began when you were sponsored at age 9. What goals—surfing or otherwise—are left for Bethany Hamilton?

Thank you. Aside from continuing to work hard to be the best surfer I can be, I am working on setting some new surfing goals right now. Another goal is to spend more time home, we've traveled a ton—as much as six months a year. As we are home, we are looking to share encouragement and our life online and socially more; we need light in the dark places. I especially have a heart for young women and encouraging them through the storms of life!

Even though you're only 29, you've been a role model for many years now. What would you say is the primary message you bring to other women and girls?

I'm sure everyone has a different takeaway from my life story. But I'd like you to remind anyone reading that beauty can come from hard times, and God is more than enough for us. Ephesians 2:9 says God's grace and our faith is a gift from God and it's forever ours. Whatever we may go through, we have God-given value and beauty which should be celebrated, cared for and thought of in a healthy way. And while life is bumpy, there is hope to overcome the difficulties we face through passion, faith and the right perspective.

Is there anything else you'd like to share with our audience?

I have a new website that's all about being unstoppable! This is part of me wanting to pour more into all who follow my life journey; maybe that's you or someone you know. On the new site, I'll surf you through life's tough stuff, talk story and all things girly. I'll share about beauty and pain, joy and

sadness, failure and triumphs, and help you live a deeply rich and meaningful life strengthened in your faith. I will bring you the very best of what I'm living and learning, and keep it real and honest as I go. Check out the new bethanyhamilton.com.

Connect with Bethany on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) or [Instagram](#) as well as at her website, bethanyhamilton.com. Check out the Unstoppable movie at unstoppablethefilm.net.

EXCLUSIVE: MJ Nixon Talks Overcoming Homosexuality, Speaking in Tongues, Battling Principalities

The Holy Spirit is moving among this generation in miraculous ways. *Charisma* reached out to nine “new voices” who are advancing the kingdom of God around the world. Each story is featured in our *Charisma* January issue, and we've posted the transcripts below. This interview has been edited for grammar and clarity. For the full interview, be sure to download the podcast.

M.J. Nixon is a former lesbian who shares her radical conversion to Christ through her organization, Uprooted Heart.

Can you tell the listeners a little bit about your testimony?

So my story starts as a young little girl with hidden attraction. I was that little girl who, looking back, wanted to be a little boy. I always wanted to be the prince rescuing

the princess. I never wanted to be rescued. I grew up in the church. So I knew about God, but I didn't really have that relationship. So throughout my adolescent years, my middle school years and into my high school years, I just hid it; I just suppressed it.

And getting into high school, I got involved with the wrong group of people. I thought if I partied, I thought if I drank alcohol and became part of the cool group, these attractions would go away. But what I found is that I was at those parties, and I was just trying to drink away my sorrows, but I would wake up the next day and still have these attractions. So I was always in that in between, of not knowing what to do, wanting to act out on them.

But also then on Sundays, being in church and hearing that homosexuality was a sin. And I really see as I look back on my life, right before I went to college, for the first time in my life, I opened up to another bisexual male in my school. And I said to him, for the first time, "I'm gay," and it wasn't even a few months later that I was in a full relationship with another female that I went to school with. And we ended up being in a relationship for over five years, did everything that couples do, even propose.

I had the life I finally always wanted. I wanted to live with one person, have a monogamous relationship, be able to live the American dream, and I had that. But at the same time, I always had the inner conviction—I say conviction, it was never condemning—but it was always this still, small voice that said, "M.J., I have something so much greater for you. If you would just surrender your heart, and you would lay down this part of you, your sexuality, and give it to me, then you would live in the fullness of what I have for you." So that was one of the hardest decisions we both ever made in our lives, but we decided to end the relationship completely, cut it off and go full-in with Jesus.

How have you used your salvation and your testimony to just minister to people around the world even?

Yeah, so it's actually been seven years since I surrendered my life and gave my full life to Jesus Christ. And it's been the best seven years of my life—you know, true joy, true happiness. Like I said, you know, drinking, partying, being around people trying to fulfill, you know, this piece that was missing inside of me, my whole life, this relationship with Jesus. Now I truly can celebrate. I truly have joy and peace.

And as I started to realize there weren't many people sharing their stories of overcoming homosexuality, as I started to share, God gave me this vision of my heart. He gave me Matthew 15:13. It says any plant that the Father has not planted would be uprooted. So He showed me my heart in the weeds of deception, of homosexuality, and uprooting it and planting it in His garden to flourish and to grow. So that's how I got Uprooted Heart Inc., and that is my nonprofit ministry. And we are actually established to uplift and show light to other testimonies of people who have come out of the LGBTQ lifestyle. And so we've been doing that now for four years.

That's amazing. I know you also had a vision for a documentary. Can you tell me a little bit about that?

Yes. So the documentary is called *Here's My Heart*, a documentary about surrendering to freedom. The Lord awakened me in the middle of the night. And He downloaded this whole vision of taking six males and six females from all over the United States and sharing their testimonies. And I was so excited about that, because the biggest thing I get when I go to minister is, "I didn't know people could come out of homosexuality."

But I really wanted to share the true stories of individuals whom I knew were overcomers that were living, you know, the fullest identity of who they were really created to be before

the foundation of the earth. So we're just excited. We're traveling now. We love to encourage the church to really be the hands and the feet, to be the bridge to this lost and dying community, to really run toward the homosexual community, not away from them.

Can you tell me a little bit about the response to this documentary and some of the incredible miracles that have happened because you stepped forward in faith?

Yes. Daily, we receive emails from parents of LGBTQ children; we receive emails from people who have seen the documentary, who were just so encouraged in their own walk as they're walking out of homosexuality in their own process. We've received emails from people who have been on the fence, you know, with their sexuality, with homosexuality, who have said, "Thank you. Now I understand."

And what I love the most is this real community of what we call our freedom family of other overcomers; we really step out in a place of love, because love is what led us to repentance. And then we do come then with that truth side, because His truth is what sets us free.

As the freedom family grows, what are some things the Lord has planted in your heart for the future of this movement?

So what we're doing next are what are called Freedom Marches. So most people know the Pride Marches are in every major city. They sow perversion into the city. They sow destruction into the city. And what we found is, I like to call them humble marches, because the opposite of pride is humility, and we're coming in with such great humility. And we want to come into every major city and have a freedom march, where we are just there to share our testimonies, to share the freedom and the love of Jesus.

And so we're just coming together with other overcomers, and also local churches, with anybody who'd be interested in

helping support the mission of just sharing. We have a different narrative. And we also have a space where we should share in a platform that God is giving us. So we're just all banding together and coming to a city near you.

What are some other things you've really had to sacrifice in pursuing forward with the Lord?

I think in the process of sanctification, there are many things. I think the greatest thing was, you know, cutting ties with people who were not the best influence for me, who were not necessarily going to lead me closer to Christ, but further away. So that was something in this process of letting go and letting God move in my heart. But then God is always faithful to bring true community around me.

You've conducted Freedom Marches in massive cities like Washington, D.C., and Los Angeles. What is it like coming against the principalities that are ruling these cities with darkness?

That's where we have to band together. And prayer is so important. And also knowing the authority that Jesus has given us: life and death being in the power of our tongue. You know, we trample over snakes and scorpions and nothing shall harm us. So like I was saying earlier, The Lord was showing me even in these pride events what they're sowing into the ground of the city, and I love that, then we're coming forth, and greater power is in us, and we live life and we live it abundantly. We leave the peace of the Lord on that place. And so He goes before us, and we just believe that as He goes before us, that environment is just being cleansed.

The blood is literally pouring out over the city, cleansing the city of all the defilement, cleansing the city of all the perversion. You know, what's going on in the atmosphere as we come forth and take our authority and take the ground as He even gave to Joshua. He said, "Do not be afraid." So we're not

timid. We're not afraid, because we know His love covers a multitude of sins, and we know His love abounds more. So we just go forth in His love and with His truth, and we just see a radical shift in environments and atmospheres.

How important is grounding yourself in the word when you have such an extensive battle in front of you?

It's everything. I wouldn't be able to do anything without God's Word. It is the most important thing in my life. Because His word is living. It's active. It's not just words on a page that don't mean anything. It's just not fairy tales and fables. It literally is life. It literally is breath. And I would not be anywhere without His Word.

What have you experienced, using the Word even, dealing with your own spiritual warfare?

I look to the example of Jesus. Even Jesus was tempted by Satan, but what did He do? He knew who He was. He is still like, "Get away, get under My feet," but He used Scripture, because he showed us the breakthrough in the battle. He represented what we would walk through when we were tempted, and He used the Scripture to remind Satan the truth. And so I think it's very important that we look to the Scripture and use it. It's a double-edged sword. It splits the flesh and the spirit. It's alive. It's active, like I said, and it has to be used. It's like having a sword in its sheath, and it's there, and we have it, but if we're not applying it, if we're not appropriating it, if we're not speaking it, it's not being used.

When we first met, we attended an event where tongues were a key part of praying for one another. Can you tell me a little bit about how important the Holy Spirit is as you fight this battle?

Yes, everything is well. I don't think you have one thing without the other. The word has been revealed to me through

the Holy Spirit. And He is the revelator, and Jesus said that he would have to go so the Spirit could come and reveal these things to us. So Holy Spirit is just as important as walking with him daily as my time in the word. And yes, the gifts of the Spirit are amazing. And we see them used daily, you know, in prayer, when they go out and speak, just in every part of our lives. It's very important.

Even in the church, we have some people saying homosexuality is acceptable to Christ, that Jesus just wants people to be happy. As someone who was convicted about that, and now that you've left the LGBT community, how do you approach this with people who are still dealing with it?

Like I said, there was always that conviction within me. But when I really looked at the word, and I looked at Romans 1:26 and it says, "women were having unnatural sex with women," I could no longer justify my lifestyle.

You know, I could look at that and try to wipe that out and say, "Oh, no, God's not speaking about me." But that really, for me, was the end of my case of why it was okay to love Jesus and live in blatant homosexuality. I think the thing for me with the church is we try to put homosexuality its own category as something so abominable that those people are just so far gone: "Why even witness to them?"

But the thing is all have fallen short of the glory of God. And sexual sin is sexual sin. Sexual brokenness is sexual brokenness. Whether it be fornication, whether it be pornography, whether it be homosexuality, whether it be transgenderism, whatever it may be, and Jesus wants to meet each one of those people. But how does He meet them if the church is condemning, if the church is judgmental, if the church is standing on the street corner, saying, "Have you gotten HIV yet? You're going to hell." That's not the way Jesus met people.

And I look at Jesus' example. He always met people in love. He knew their sin, but He saw their identity; He saw who they truly were. And yes, He did not tell them that they couldn't. He told them that they had to go and sin no more. But how did He always meet them? And so we try to really live and walk that. Because for me, there were a lot of people praying for me; you know, I didn't necessarily get witnessed to. I wasn't in a church. I was in my car when I got saved. But we hear a lot of stories of rejection. And, you know, one of the greatest stories I think about is somebody we filmed named Montria in the documentary, and she was transgender. She was originally a female. She became male, very blatantly male—most people wouldn't be able to tell. And when she came into the church, they loved her. They didn't tell her, "You've got to grow your hair out; you've got to take off those men's clothes." They allowed the Holy Spirit to move in her heart. And it took time.

But she came to that place where she realized, *I can no longer live like this. This isn't who God made me.* But if that church would have told her she had to get her life together, she said, "I would have been back on the street." And so I thought it was a great example of the witness of the church and how we can love people and allow the Lord to work in them.

What about churches that are concerned that if they love like that, they're compromising what the Lord has asked them to do?

Yeah, that's a good question. I think that is that place where you bridge that relationship and you have a relationship with that person, because it takes that rapport and knowing that person then to be able to speak the truth into them.

It's a good point. Because I know in my church, we do have people who are actively dealing with this who are like, "What do we do? We all have our own sin."

And then I have friends who are still in the community who

attend church, and they get offended if they're not allowed to serve at their church. And I think there's so much within the body of Christ right now where we don't know how to handle sin as a whole, and it's not just homosexuality. I mean, I write stories, sadly, every week about pastors who have fallen to sexual immorality, and the whole thing is a giant mess.

But one thing I am seeing is, there's a remnant rising, that the Holy Spirit is really purifying this generation to speak boldly and speak love, but they're also speaking conviction. What are you seeing in the charismatic movement right now?

Amen. I agree a thousandfold with that. And I pray for more leaders to step up. I believe God's doing something new. They always say you can't put new wine in an old wineskin. And I really see this generation that's coming—not only my Millennial generation, but the next generation after me, where God is supernaturally setting people free, baptizing them in the Holy Spirit. And they're just going forth in such a boldness. And it's exciting.

And I want to encourage the next generation in that too, because we're always supposed to pass the baton, you know, to the next generation. I'm just so grateful for what God has given the work of my hands to do so that it can leave a place for the next generation then to come through and do the same and so much more.

Do you have anything you'd like to share with our readers?

Just if you're someone who's reading this, and you're struggling with homosexuality, I just want you to know you're not alone. You have a Father who deeply loves you. You are known by Him, and you're not too far for Him to reach you. You're not dirty. I just want you to know that. Please reach out to someone you know. Reach out to me. He sees you. He knows you. And He has such a great purpose and plan for you that if you would just seek after Him, He says those who seek

Him will find Him. He will show you who you really are, what you're meant to be in purpose for.

Find Nixon [online](#), on [Instagram](#) and [Facebook](#).

[Watch the Here's My Heart documentary.](#)

EXCLUSIVE: Teo Hayashi Talks Spirit-Filled Explosion in South America

The Holy Spirit is moving among this generation in miraculous ways. *Charisma* reached out to nine “new voices” who are advancing the kingdom of God around the world. Each story is featured in our *Charisma* January issue, and we've posted the transcripts below. This interview has been edited for grammar and clarity. For the full interview, be sure to download the podcast.

Teo Hayashi started his ministry as a missionary at YWAM in 2000. After serving on the mission field in Asia, he spent five years serving as one of the ministers of Kingsley Fletcher in the U.S. and then returned to Brazil in 2008 to serve as one of the pastors at Mount Zion Church. In the same year he returned to Brazil, he founded a paraecclesiastical ministry called *Dunamis Movement*, of which he is currently the leader. In 2013, he became the senior pastor at Mount Zion Church in Sao Paulo.

Can you give a little bit of a rundown of your ministry: What it is that you do in the body of Christ?

I'm actually talking to you from Brazil. Maybe 10 years ago, I

felt the Lord call me back to my country of origin, which is Brazil. I was living in North Carolina and moved down here really to see the university campuses here as a mission field, so the Lord's been doing amazing things in the body of Christ in Brazil.

We've been experiencing awakening; we've been experiencing church growth; we've seen the supernatural in a very palpable way—I would say even a natural way, but one thing we dream of seeing, and we're yet to see, is nationwide transformation and transformation that only the gospel can actually bring to this nation. So as we speak today, we're 60 million people who profess being Christians, but at the same time, our country is not in good shape. We have a lot of corruption, social injustice, even though we are full of megachurches.

Maybe 12 years ago, I was in prayer asking the Lord, "Lord, what's the next step you know for our country, for my country?"

And the Lord actually asked me "Are you"—this is kind of funny because the Lord does those kinds of things—I felt the Lord just ask me, "Are you in this for the American dream or the kingdom dream?"

And I said, "Lord, the kingdom dream for sure."

And he asked me once again, "Are you in this for the kingdom dream or the American dream?"

And I said, "Lord, the kingdom dream."

And when he asked me the third time, I just knew exactly what he was asking me to do.

I was about to become an American citizen. I was about to take over a church of 2,000-plus members in North Carolina. I was supposed to pretty much build my life in America.

And I felt the Lord saying, "I brought you to this nation to

get prepared to actually take you back.”

So I gave up my process of citizenship and moved back to Brazil.

Once I landed in Brazil, I felt the Lord saying to me, “Go into the campuses. Reach the future leaders of society with the gospel, with the kingdom gospel, and make sure that we’re just not packing out venues. That we’re actually putting kingdom people with kingdom DNA in strategic places in society.”

And that’s what we’ve been doing for the last 10 years.

Dunamis Movement is actually campus ministry. We’re full-on revival, but we’re also full-on reformation. We’re in 240 universities in Brazil. We have also universities that we’ve been reaching outside Brazil—a few in Europe, a few in South America and beginning in North America as well. So we do that with weekly meetings that we call Dunamis pockets, and we also have gatherings and conferences. So basically, that’s what we’ve been doing for the last 10 years.

And as you’ve been doing that over the last decade, what have you been seeing the Holy Spirit doing in Brazil?

We’ve been experiencing a lot of the moves of the Holy Spirit. We’re talking to 20-somethings, so Millennials, and lately going into Gen Z. This generation is very analytical. So I would say that a lot of them are having a blast in revival meetings and conferences, but it’s a matter of time for them to come back with questions like, “All right, we had an amazing meeting. It was a Holy Spirit blowout. It was heaven on earth. But what are we going to do about human trafficking? What are we gonna do about the drug trafficking? What are we doing about the crime rate that doesn’t go down?”

And so I say that we’ve been seeing a lot of activity within the sphere of church, but also an awakening of the church to

understand that we need to take the kingdom to the seven mountains of society, that we need to take the kingdom to basically to a point where we will not only disciple people or disciple a church but disciple a nation.

What is going on in Brazil that we in America can be praying for, can be interceding for right now?

You know, I would say that anything that has to do with taking kingdom message and kingdom power outside church world.

I was listening to Loren Cunningham, one of my heroes of the faith, last month, speaking at a conference in the Silicon Valley, and he was talking about education and how the Protestant Reformation was so key, you know, with the press and printing out Bibles, and then basically building up Western civilization. As you look at the West, I would say church in North America and in Europe, there has been something that till today societies of Western civilizations are gleaning from, which are social structures that were built upon biblical principles. It comes down to education.

And one of the things that we did was ... we took education away from church and put it into government hands. So for us right now, we need help in building schools, building universities. We need help in getting biblical principles that were supposed to be something that the church should be championing through education, and how would it look like for the Brazilian church to put that in practice in the business world, in the educational world, in the arts, entertainment?

I'd say our American brothers, and I would say our European brothers, have had more experiencing in discipling a nation. And therefore they are today, they have societies that would be considered more developed and more civilized, because they're based on biblical principles. And that you can trace it all back to the Protestant Reformation.

We in Latin America are in a point where we're learning big

churches don't necessarily mean that we'll disciple the nation or society. So how do we get the kingdom principles that are inside our church and put it to the rest of society? So for sure, prayer, but also, you know, when we think about missions in these nations, I would say it has to go beyond just church world. It has to go beyond just church planning. It has to impose business, it has to involve [things like] how do we raise up political leaders who are standing up for kingdom principles in politics? Same thing in the academic world. Same thing in the arts and entertainment. Same thing in education.

So I would say, not necessarily missionaries who will church-plant—and that's awesome, and we're all about that. But I would say educators, I would say people who will train up political leaders, I would say people who will disciple business leaders in kingdom principles. I think that's key.

One thing that I've heard, especially about Latin American countries, and maybe you can confirm this for me, is that the charismatic and Spirit-filled churches are really growing and exploding down there.

They are.

Can you talk about that a little bit? Because I think in America, it's growing. But it's not like the biggest thing in church.

Yeah, you know, charismatic churches and Spirit-filled churches are the fastest growing churches in Latin America. And I can speak for sure about Brazil, I would say in the last 20 years, the Brazilian evangelical population went from maybe 15 percent to maybe now 40 to 45 percent of the Brazilian population. And 80 percent of that is Spirit-filled. And the reason being is—well, there's a few.

One, I'd say the main thing is our message. We really believe in the power of God for now. It's not a theory, it's practice. And I know *Charisma* magazine believes in that. You as an

organization, you believe in that. I was brought up in a Spirit-filled church, and our church and our ministry are Spirit-filled. And we really have a passion to see the power of God move in a tangible way. So when people come to church, it's not theory; it's theory and practice.

We get in the Word, but we also want to experience healings, we want to experience deliverance, people being touched, being renewed. And so that, of course, is powerful. And I would say across the board, any country you go to, if you have a church that is preaching Bible, good sound doctrine, but also allowing people to experience the move of the Spirit in a palpable way, there's no other other option but growth. People are going to be built up in their faith, and it's going to grow. So that's one.

I would say another one, too, is that there's felt need. So people are coming to church because they're not comfortable. There is a necessity for you to seek the Holy Spirit. Maybe you have a relative who's sick, and you don't have enough money for medical insurance. So it's either you get healed, or you remain sick. So, I mean, the desperation actually draws the Lord to move his hand towards your direction. And so I would say, there are felt needs. A lot of people are coming, because they need a word from God, because they're very hopeless. Unfortunately, they're living in a condition, in a situation, that if it's not by a divine touch, they don't have any other hope. So I would say, one, the power of the gospel that is so strong and so sought-after actually creates momentum, and that momentum is creating this growth that we've been experiencing.

So yes, it is true, there's been immense growth and primarily within the charismatic and Spirit-filled churches.

How did you connect with The Send?

Andy Byrd, the key leader for our executive team, is a

longtime friend. I actually went through YWAM as part of my missionary train with youth with a mission in Kona and so I had that connection, but also I would say, you know, just watching what the Lord did with TheCall. I was involved with TheCall in years past, and Lou Engle, and I was deeply impacted by that. I've always known we were mobilizing people with TheCall for something beyond TheCall.

TheCall was just a means to an end. And that's kind of how I see The Send: it is a means to an end. And it's not an end in itself. Packing out a stadium is not an end in itself. It's actually I'd say a trigger point to something much greater. And so Andy and I, we share that desire, that dream, and Andy reached out to me to be part of this team because he really felt that, you know—and I'm also a firm believer that this next wave of missions will not look like the previous one.

We're coming to a point right now in Latin America that most Western missionaries are actually packing up their stuff and leaving, because after decades of work, a lot of these countries have been Christianized, and so with that comes a responsibility upon ourselves. So now that we've been Christianized, what are we going to be doing about the burden of missions and the Great Commission? Maybe we have role to play in that. And I totally think that way.

I think the next wave of missions will not be necessarily the Western church going into the darkest places of the world, even though I know that will continue. But there are a lot of places where I see the move of the Lord. You know, I recently was in Asia, and there's something happening in Southeast Asia that's very ... it's incredible to see how the Lord is moving there. We've heard so many stories of Africa and South America and Eastern Europe.

These are regions of the world that have been used to receiving missionaries, but I believe these are the places where the Lord will actually raise up a new wave of missions,

and unfortunately a lot of places that sent missionaries to us, like Europe, for instance, have become a mission field. And so I believe it's our responsibility, as we've received so much from these people, to give back to the nations. So that's why I believe I was part of or invited to be part of The Send because I believe The Send will become—you know, it's more than just a packed-out stadium with passionate young people worshipping and saying yes to the mission field. It's about a movement. It's about a domino effect that will embrace other races, other cultures, other nations, and I really believe it's going to be worldwide for the young generation.

But we will see, you know, that Lord is actually sending us. We've called for years for a move of the Lord. The Lord has actually allowed us to experience that, but we need to do something with that now. I'm always challenged by Acts 2:14, where it says that Peter stood up and spoke. It's amazing for us to get slain in the Spirit and just be knocked out under the power; but for me, the key thing is for you to get up and have something to say and keep that move going. So I believe that's what The Send is all about.

Given that you're 38, what are you seeing among your generation for the future?

Well I would say in terms of the Spirit-filled church and charismatic church, we've celebrated revival for so much. We celebrated awakening, the supernatural, the prophetic, and we've become really good in awakening. We've become really good at doing conferences that get people blasted and drunk in the Spirit, which I'm 100 percent all about. Just soaking in the presence? I'm all about that. And with that, we've seen a wave of evangelists, a wave of prophets, and that's awesome. But I really believe in the fivefold ministry, and I believe the Lord is actually—one of the things that the Lord is raising up is young apostles.

These are young builders, people who will get—they're

architects who will understand the blueprint of heaven. And one of the key components, key characteristics of this young breed is they're gonna think reformation. They're going to think, *How do I get the revival that I experience within the four walls of the church and take it into the school system? How do I take that into the financial market? How do I take that into the media?*' and so forth. So I believe that we're on the verge of actually seeing kingdom invade society.

I see that we have a generation that's thirsty for that. It's not that we're sick of conferences. I mean, conferences are amazing. And I'm talking about, we just came out of an amazing conference here in Sao Paulo of 5000 university students just going after the presence, and we just challenged them. Russell Evans from Planet Shakers was with us; Jeremy Riddle from Bethel Music was with us; and a bunch of other national leaders, young apostles from Brazil and Latin America. But our challenge really was we had an amazing two days here, we experienced the Holy Spirit, but how do we take that into our campuses? And how do we take that into spheres of society?

I think that across the globe, there is an awakening happening not only for revival, but a revival that will culminate in reformation. Our generation kind of puts a demand on that, and actually says if the gospel is relevant, it has to transform communities. It has to transform society. And that's why I really believe in The Send. I believe that The Send is not only a movement that will take the gospel of salvation. I'm 100 percent about the gospel of salvation, but we should never lose sight of the gospel of the kingdom. That's what Jesus came preaching. He's talking about the kingdom. He never talked about salvation. Salvation was a means into the kingdom.

And so as we put salvation into the perspective of kingdom theology, I believe we'll see what we yearn for so much, which is heaven on earth. And so that's what I see a generation awakening to. {eoa}

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