

Prophetic Warning to Mega-Churches: Free Chapel's Revival Signals Paradigm Shift

In a recent episode of the Encounter Today Podcast hosted by Bishop Alan DiDio, Larry Sparks from Larry Sparks Ministries shed light on the powerful revival that took place at Free Chapel, led by Pastor Jentezen Franklin in Gainesville, Georgia.

The revival, spearheaded by Evangelist Perry Stone, witnessed a profound outpouring of the Holy Spirit, with approximately 3,000 individuals experiencing a transformative baptism in the Spirit.

Amidst the chaos and disunity prevalent in the 21st-century church, Sparks passionately conveyed a call to move beyond superficial expressions of many modern churches, emphasizing a genuine hunger for more of the Holy Spirit. He highlighted an unfortunate trend of what he termed "Pentecostal light" in certain gatherings, where the pursuit of God's presence is diluted to mere comfort without embracing the dynamic move of the Spirit.

"I've been to meetings, where they're trying to people" Sparks explains. "That was not what was happening [at Free Chapel]."

The surprising backdrop, according to Sparks, for this revival was Free Chapel, a megachurch previously perceived by Sparks as more non-denominational. Witnessing the church's openness and hunger for the Holy Spirit marked a paradigm shift for him. Stone and Franklin's leadership encouraged participants to fully embrace the Holy Spirit's transformative work, shattering preconceived notions of cultural relevance within

megachurches.

“Maybe I probably inappropriately judged them, but here I am watching this service, Perry Stone’s up there leading 3,000 people in the baptism of the Holy Spirit. Opening the altar, people running up there, literally. ...Nobody was discouraging manifestations of the Holy Spirit,” Sparks says.

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As Sparks recounted his personal encounter with the electric presence of the Holy Spirit during the service, he underscored the authenticity and hunger displayed by Free Chapel. Stone’s unapologetic call for manifestations of the Holy Spirit, including praying in tongues, created an atmosphere where believers could experience a profound encounter with God.

The revival at Free Chapel, according to Sparks, carries prophetic significance in the midst of contemporary chaos. He suggested that megachurches across the nation should heed this as a warning, urging leaders to recalibrate priorities away from mere cultural relevance. Sparks emphasized the importance of embracing the Holy Spirit’s dynamic move, advocating for authenticity and biblical truth in fostering genuine spiritual transformations.

“I’m not seeing anybody who has an agenda that they’re trying to put on the Holy Spirit. They’re literally saying ‘Holy Spirit, You dictate our agenda.’ It’s powerful,” says Sparks.

In exploring the prophetic theme of signs of the times, Sparks acknowledged the necessity of balanced teaching on eschatology. He cautioned against extremes and advocated for harmonizing the understanding of end-time events with a continual embrace of the Holy Spirit’s transformative outpouring.

The heart of Sparks' message lies in the hope that the revival at Free Chapel serves as a catalyst for a renewed emphasis on the authentic, transformative power of the Holy Spirit in churches worldwide. As the church navigates these unprecedented times, the outpouring at Free Chapel stands as a beacon, calling for a revival that transcends cultural norms and seeks a genuine encounter with the living God. {eoa}

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Is Israel Always to Blame for the World's Problems?

In the early 1990s, I attended a dinner in New York City sponsored by a Jerusalem foundation, highlighted by a dialogue between Henry Kissinger and Fouad Ajami, moderated by Dan Rather. (Ajami was a Lebanese-born university professor who often appeared as a talking head on TV as an expert on the Middle East.) At one point in the evening, Prof. Ajami noted that when Saddam Hussein used nerve gas on his own people, the UN said nothing. But when Israel uses tear gas, it draws international rebuke.

It's the same today, except worse. Much worse.

Israel experiences the most horrific bloodbath in any one day since the Holocaust, with details too sickening to repeat yet again, and who gets blamed? Israel!

In the words of the infamous document signed by 31 student

groups at Harvard, “We, the undersigned student organizations, hold the Israeli regime entirely responsible for all unfolding violence.”

But of course. Israel is always to blame. The leadership of the people who were murdered, slaughtered, butchered, incinerated, raped are to blame—not the murderers, the slaughterers, the butchers, the pyromaniacs, the rapists.

Israel drops more than one million leaflets throughout Gaza City, urging the civilians to flee to the south. Israel makes tens of thousands of phone calls—yes, calls to individuals on their phones—as well as sends out tens of thousands of text messages, saying, “We’re going to bomb your neighborhood. Please get out so you can be safe.”

Hamas, in contrast, urges their people to stay, blocks them from leaving, putting up roadblocks to stop them and allegedly confiscating car keys and shooting their own people dead. Hamas leadership even makes clear that they welcome the death of their own people.

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In short, Israel seeks to minimize civilian casualties in Gaza while Hamas seeks to maximize civilian casualties there, but Israel is guilty.

Yet Israel is to blame.

As expressed by Brendan O’Neill on the Spiked website, “So let me get this right. If Israel bombs Hamas targets in Gaza, it is recklessly endangering civilian life. But if it gives civilians fair warning to move away from certain areas, it is engaging in ethnic cleansing. If it drops bombs in built-up suburbs, it is committing a war crime. But if it advises civilians to leave those built-up suburbs before the bombs

come, it is also committing a war crime. If it attacks northern Gaza, that's genocide. Yet when it tells the civilians of northern Gaza to leave first, that's 'forced transfer', which is to say: genocide.

"Everything Israel does is a war crime. Everything. Killing civilians—war crime. Trying not to kill civilians—war crime. Bombing populated areas—war crime. Giving a population time to leave before dropping bombs—war crime. The surrealism of these screams of 'genocide!' every time an Israeli soldier so much as picks up his gun was brought home by two headlines in the Independent last week, published just 10 hours apart. Israel is engaged in 'collective punishment in Gaza', claimed the first. 'Israel accused of "trying to ethnically cleanse Gaza Strip" as one million ordered to evacuate', said the second."

But of course. Israel is always to blame.

That's because the spirit that animates the demonizing of Israel is the same spirit that animates Jew-hatred in general.

Jews are hated for being rich and for being poor.

Jews are hated for being powerful (they're trying to take over the world) and for being weak (those miserable, wretched Jews).

Jews are hated for being religious (they think they're better than us) and for being secular (they're trying to fit in as if they were just like us).

Jews are hated by Communists and by Fascists.

Jews are hated when they are victims and when they are victors.

Jews are hated for not fighting back (why did they go as sheep to the slaughter under the Nazis?) and for fighting back (they're guilty of ethnic cleansing and genocide).

Jews are hated when they are in exile (there's a reason they've been expelled from so many countries) and when they're in their homeland (they are evil occupiers who don't belong there).

Jews are hated by Black supremacists and White supremacists.

And Jew-hatred has a strong tradition in both Christianity and Islam.

It's always those dirty Jews/Zionists.

And lest you think this is just a matter of rhetoric – a matter of mere words – consider this.

On Nov. 4, I wrote an article titled, "Wake Up World Before Jewish Blood is Shed In Your Country."

One day later, on the very day the article was posted, Paul Kessler, a 69-year-old, Jewish, pro-Israel protester was struck on the head by a pro-Palestinian protester. He died as a result of his injuries. It only took one day.

That is why I will not be silent at such a critical time in Jewish history, not to mention world history.

What about you?

Will you use equal weights and measures, or will you go along with the spirit of the age?

By all means, Israel can be criticized along many lines, and true friends of Israel are more than happy to share their comments, their criticisms, and their concerns.

But this unequal, unfair, unethical demonizing of Israel and the Jewish people must be confronted and exposed, especially when the nation faces yet another existential threat.

Which side are you on? {eoa}

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Michael Youssef Alerts Americans on the Dangers of Biblical Illiteracy

In a clip heard 'round the western Christian world, Andy Stanley seemed to suggest in 2018 that believers ought to “unhitch” themselves from the Old Testament. While the megachurch preacher later claimed the widely condemned statement was stripped of its context, the criticism—and subsequent conversation—was already unfolding in Christian communities around the country.

Egyptian-born theologian and Christian author Dr. Michael Youssef, pastor of the Church of the Apostles in Atlanta and the executive president of Leading the Way, recently spoke with CBN Digital about the necessity of the Old Testament, offering a warning to believers in the West, many of whom, he asserted, suffer from serious “biblical illiteracy.”

To make his case, Youssef referenced the American Bible Society’s latest State of the Bible survey, which revealed a mere 9% of Americans read their Bibles on a daily basis. Only a quarter of respondents said they open the Scriptures each week. Thirty-eight percent said they never use their Bibles.

That same study found a stunning 26 million Americans stopped turning to Scripture regularly during the height of the COVID-19 pandemic, when routines and norms were profoundly upended.

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“This is grieving to me,” said Youssef. “And we are surprised at what’s happening in our culture and our society? Are we surprised when we have neglected the measuring stick? ... In fact, when they were forming the [biblical] canon – the word ‘canon’ actually is an Arabic word, believe it or not, and it comes from the [phrase] ‘measuring stick.’ ... How do we know what is right and what is wrong and what is deceptive and what is false and what is right and what’s truth, unless we have that measuring stick?”

The preacher, author of the new book “How to Read the Bible (As If Your Life Depends on It),” briefly addressed statements Stanley made about the Old Testament and its importance to the Christian faith.

Youssef likened the Old Testament to the foundation of a building—a necessity for any sound structure.

“Get ‘unhitched’ from the Old Testament?” he asked. “This would be like saying, ‘I love this big, beautiful, tall building, but the foundation is not really necessary. Let’s get rid of it.’ You get rid of the foundation, the building will not stand for very long. And I often say if you understand the Bible ... if you understand the unity of that book, it is one book—not two books.”

“I often liken it to a house,” the author continued. “The Old Testament is that house—the foundation and the walls—but it’s lacking a roof. The New Testament is that roof. And therefore, together, you have one building, one house. Or like a play that has two acts, act one and act two. One without the other does not really make a lot of sense.”

The books of the Old Testament, Youssef instructed, constantly declare “Christ is coming,” which comes to fruition in the

pages of the New Testament, written after Jesus' resurrection.
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Charisma News Brief: Historic Prayer Partnership Targeting Freedom for Hostages in Israel

Christian congregations and Jewish synagogues across the United States will form a historic prayer partnership during the weekend of Nov. 17-19 for a crucial cause that affects the entire world. The two communities will come together to cry out to God on behalf of Israel and approximately 240 hostages that continue to be held by the terrorist group Hamas.

The efforts are spearheaded by the International Christian Embassy Jerusalem's USA branch. The ICEJ labels this weekend of prayer for Zion's sake and will be an "unprecedented moment in history to stand with the Jewish people in support of Israel and the hostages.

"The ICEJ is mobilizing the American Christian Leaders for Israel network of some 3,000 leaders to promote the weekend of

prayer for Israel to their churches and networks," ICEJ USA Director Dr. Susan Michael says.

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"We're calling on churches around the world to stand with and for our Jewish friends in prayer according to Isaiah 62:1, which says: 'For Zion's sake I will not hold my peace,'" Michael says. "It is our hope that a weekend of concentrated prayer in unity with the Jewish community will bring about a breakthrough in Israel's situation and the release of the hostages."

The ICEJ is asking churches to lead a time of prayer for Israel and the release of the hostages during their regularly scheduled services that weekend.

Pastors and Christian leaders are also being encouraged to phone their local synagogues and let them know they and their church members are praying for Israel and the release of the hostages that weekend.

"It's more critical than ever that the Christian community shows our support of the Jewish community," Michael says "Our Jewish friends must see and hear us." {eoa}

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Dr. Susan M. Michael is the USA Director of the International Christian Embassy Jerusalem and director of the American Christian Leaders for Israel (ACLI) network. Every Generation's Story: 75 Years of American Christian Engagement with Israel is available on Amazon, Embassy Publishers and many independent booksellers. The International Christian Embassy Jerusalem (ICEJ) was established in 1980 in recognition of the biblical significance of all of Jerusalem

and its unique connection with the Jewish people. Today, it represents millions of Christians, churches and denominations to the nation and people of Israel.

Christians Disagree on Validity and Virtue of AI in Worship Services

Sometimes people in the church will surprise you, and that's exactly what Jay Cooper, pastor of the LGBTQ-affirming Violet Crown City Church in Austin, Texas, appears to be doing.

While many might think Cooper might agree with the use of an artificial intelligence-generated worship service to be a good thing—perhaps to distort the Word of God and its true meaning to fit their social agenda—Cooper's decision to introduce an AI-generated service has drawn criticism from his congregation and deems it “uninspiring.”

The incident reflects a broader sentiment among Christians who question the efficacy of AI in meeting the spiritual needs of a diverse and dynamic community.

“The idea to create an admittedly unorthodox AI-generated worship service came from my belief that the church should not only be aware of the most pressing issues of our world, but also to actively engage in them,” Cooper told the Christian Post. “In short, it was boring.”

Cooper explained that even though ChatGPT did not “generate anything overtly heretical,” it's not a “thinking sentient being,” he told CP.

“It is a program that we have created and it’s doing what we’ve programmed it to do,” Cooper said. “Therefore, in many ways, what it generates is a reflection of who we are, meaning it’s often wrong, misguided, prejudiced and broken.”

However, a recent survey by Barna exposes a significant divide among Christians regarding the compatibility of AI with the sacred space of the church. The majority of respondents express skepticism, challenging the idea that AI can enhance the spiritual experience, which many churchgoing people claim.

As pastors experiment with AI-generated sermons, Barna’s survey reveals a discord within church leadership. Conflicting perspectives on the role of AI in religious practices emerge, sparking debates on the appropriateness of integrating technology into the sacred realm.

Barna’s survey exposes a fundamental disconnect between Christians and AI-generated content in the church. The findings suggest that believers prioritize a genuine, spiritually resonant experience over technologically mediated sermons, pointing to concerns about the depth and authenticity of AI-generated worship.

The Barna survey not only reveals skepticism, but also raises ethical and moral concerns within the church regarding the integration of AI. Congregations grapple with questions about the implications of relying on technology for spiritual guidance, prompting a broader conversation on the intersection of faith and innovation.

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The survey, conducted online in collaboration with Gloop and encompassing 1,500 U.S. adults from July 28 to Aug. 7, paints a nuanced picture of Christian attitudes toward AI. A majority, 51%, disagreed with the statement, “AI is good for

the Christian church.”

Of this, 30% strongly disagreed, and 21% somewhat disagreed. Only a mere 6% strongly agreed, while 16% somewhat agreed. The remaining 27% admitted to being uncertain about the role of AI in the church.

Interestingly, the general public’s familiarity with AI seems to be a factor influencing these opinions. A majority of U.S. adults surveyed were still in the process of getting acquainted with AI, with only 10% claiming to use it often for work or personal business. Skepticism prevailed, with 29% expressing outright distrust, 35% displaying curiosity and 21% expressing fascination about AI.

A previous survey by Gloom earlier in the year examined the perspectives of ministry leaders on AI and the church. While 63% of leaders felt comfortable with their understanding of AI, 28% admitted to being only slightly or not knowledgeable at all. A mere 9% considered themselves very knowledgeable. Additionally, 62% of leaders confessed to rarely or never using AI in their work, indicating a gap between knowledge and practical application within church leadership.

Savannah Kimberlin, associate vice president at Barna Group, commented on the survey, noting the split opinions among church leaders. A substantial 43% admitted feeling uncomfortable or anxious about AI in churches, and 25% even suggested that the church should resist or condemn its use. On the flip side, 33% expressed enthusiasm, believing that AI could improve efficiency and effectiveness.

“The data reveals that church leaders are quite split in their opinion on the role of AI in the church and how they are ready the terrain,” Kimberlin says.

“Forty-three percent of respondents admitted to feeling uncomfortable or anxious about AI being used in churches, and one in four went so far as to say the church should resist or

condemn the use of AI,” Kimberlin says. “However, one in three enthusiastically shared they believe AI will improve their efficiency or effectiveness. Stats like these show that the time is right to come together and have meaningful conversations on the topic.”

As the Barna survey and Cooper’s experiment stir conversations within religious communities, the church finds itself at a crossroads, grappling with the potential benefits and pitfalls of integrating AI into its sacred practices. {eoa}

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Supernatural Encounters Mark Unprecedented Move of the Holy Spirit

In a recent interview with Charisma News, Pastor Brian Gibson shared the electrifying accounts of ongoing revivals at his church’s campuses filled with testimonies of supernatural encounters. The intensity of the events left Pastor Gibson, and those involved, in awe of the power of God.

“I’ve done like, two solid weeks of preaching right now every night. Right. But it’s been, it’s been great,” Pastor Gibson shared, capturing the exhilaration of the revivals taking place. What started as scheduled conferences in Kentucky and Texas quickly turned into something extraordinary—a manifestation of the Holy Spirit that is transcending

expectations.

The Texas revival, in particular, took an unexpected turn when Pastor Gibson and others sensed a powerful presence in the room. Describing the experience cautiously, Pastor Gibson shared, "I physically felt something touch me on my head. And I opened up my eyes and there's nothing there." This encounter, echoed by others present, marked the beginning of a series of miraculous events.

Miracles unfolded as the power and anointing of God permeated the atmosphere. Healings occurred, ranging from a blocked aorta miraculously opening to individuals finding relief from physical ailments. The divine touch was evident, sparking excitement and drawing crowds even before any big names were associated with the revival.

Pastor Gibson emphasized the need for a revival in America, recognizing that no political remedy could address the nation's deep-rooted issues. "The only thing that can help this nation is an awakening," he asserted. The revivals, according to him, are not just about saving a nation but about transforming lives through a renewed passion for Jesus.

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Sharing a poignant moment from the revival, Pastor Gibson recounted a night when, instead of a guest speaker, Jesus Himself took the spotlight. "Can I be your special guest tonight?" Jesus asked, leading to a night where the focus remained solely on the Savior. The absence of a renowned guest allowed attendees to experience the profound simplicity of encountering Jesus.

The themes preached during the revival centered on believing God for bigger things, the controversy between the Jews and Palestine and the return of false gods in contemporary

culture. The revival aimed to keep Jesus at the forefront, emphasizing that the ultimate goal is not just the manifestation of spiritual gifts but a genuine connection with the giver of those gifts.

However, the supernatural encounters extended beyond the church services, reaching into the streets of Owensboro, Kentucky. Pastor Gibson described a surge in demonic activity, manifesting as people oppressed or possessed by evil spirits. The battle against occult practices, coupled with the influx of drugs, brought the spiritual warfare to a new level.

As the revivals continue, the church grapples with unprecedented challenges and opportunities to minister to those in need. The stories of deliverance and transformation underscore the profound impact of these revivals, serving as a beacon of hope in a world yearning for a move of the Holy Spirit.

In the midst of the extraordinary, Pastor Gibson remains committed to his conviction: "We didn't come for the gift; we came for the One that gives the gift." The ongoing revivals, with their miraculous events and encounters, stand as a testament to the transformative power of a genuine encounter with Jesus Christ. {eoa}

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**Radical-Leftist Superstar
Declares 'Proof' There Is No
God**