

How We Picked the Top 40

As *Charisma* reflects on its 40th anniversary, we decided to focus this special issue not on the magazine or our organization but on those who we believe the Holy Spirit used to radically change our world.

For the past four years we have used that tag line: “Inspiring people to radically change their world through the power of the Holy Spirit.”

When we articulated that motto it reflected what we’ve tried to do from the early days of the magazine as well as the other parts of our media company—books, Internet and Bible publishing.

With the way the world is hurling out of control we wonder what difference we’ve made. Yet we know that like the time of Elijah when Israel was so wicked and yet 7,000 had not bowed their knee to Baal, we know today that millions have been swept into the kingdom by the Pentecostal movement and its offshoot, the charismatic movement of the 1960s and ’70s.

But this is not about us; it’s about those we’ve covered.

That was our criteria: Those on the list had to have been covered by us in our 40 years. Most were on the cover but not all. Most are identified with the charismatic movement but not all—such as Billy Graham, Luis Palau or Rick Warren. They are full of the Holy Spirit, but so are many we covered, like Bill Bright and others we wrote about.

We agonized over the list, knowing it would not please everyone. Other media might have chosen a very different list and it would have been just as good as ours. Still, this is through the prism of *Charisma* as we have reported over the years on the work of the Holy Spirit.

We decided early that no one connected with our organization could be on the list or we might have included Lee Grady or Jennifer LeClaire. I would have liked to include my late mentors Robert Walker or Jamie Buckingham. We decided early that no more than half on the list could be those who are deceased like Derek Prince or Fuchsia Pickett. As it turned out, only 13 of our 40 have gone to their heavenly reward.

Some like Sid Roth are somehow representative of other messianic Jewish leaders. We couldn't include all. We included a couple of broadcasters like Pat Robertson, but we couldn't include everyone. Others like James Robison or Kenneth Copeland have huge media ministries, but they aren't only leaders in the media.

Our list includes Hispanics, African-Americans, Asians and women. But we decided not to be bound to being politically correct. It's just that as we've covered what's happening in the Christian community we've been bridge-builders among many groups and denominations. As we reflect on our four decades of Christian journalism those groups were reflected.

One thing that was involved in our very subjective decision-making process was integrity. A few names of people who have been greatly used of God have stumbled or had questions about them. As far as we know everyone on the list has high moral character.

Everyone on the list was greatly touched by God and was used of God to influence millions of people. In the process many built huge organizations from scratch in order to extend their impact.

But organization size was a byproduct of what they did for God and didn't influence our selection process. Each has an interesting story that is difficult to tell in a few words, so we tried to focus on how God used them to influence others, hoping our readers will be inspired to do the same.