

A Word for 2013: Cry Out for a Youth Awakening

What is God saying as we enter 2013? Many Christians have a gloomy outlook. They are focused on the negative events of 2012: Freakish weather patterns, mass shootings, political division and the looming fiscal cliff. Others wring their hands over our national shift in values and declare that God will have to apologize to Sodom and Gomorrah if He doesn't judge us swiftly.

There's no doubt we deserve fire and brimstone for our sins. Yet when I pray for my nation in the light of the cross of Christ, I am reminded that His plan is redemption, not destruction. And I believe God has redemption in mind for 2013.

At the end of each year I always seek the Lord for a clear prophetic word for my own life, and sometimes He speaks something to me about the nation. This year the message has been clear. He told me: "Pray for a great awakening in the younger generation."

This was confirmed when I received a prophetic word that was sent out by the Rev. Dale Gentry, a respected church leader from Texas and director of Let's Pray America. He sent out a message on Dec. 19 that said: "I hear the Holy Spirit saying that He will do nothing until we pray. And then He will do nothing without the youth. No one will be excluded, but the youth must be included. Intercede for the young people. Keep your eyes upon the youth of the nation. He will do a work among your sons and daughters that will cause the nations to tremble."

My heart leapt when I read this message because it confirmed everything I was sensing. I have my prayer assignment for

2013. Here's how the Lord has instructed me to intercede:

1. Pray for a great "turning" in the hearts of the young.

American churches are aging, and young people are becoming increasingly secularized. Certainly if current trends continue, the impact of the gospel could shrink drastically over the next 10 years in our country. But what would happen if God sent something similar to the Jesus movement of the early 1970s?

I believe we are on the brink of such a miracle, but we must cry out for it. A Jesus movement in 2013 will not be accompanied by tie-dyed headbands, afros or hippie beads. The style will be different. But the spiritual fervor could be just as intense.

2. Pray for a great "recall" of backslidden youth. There have been many times in history when spiritual trends were negative—yet they were reversed by the invisible force of spiritual awakening. This is what was promised in Malachi 4:5-6: "Behold, I am going to send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and terrible day of the Lord. He will restore the hearts of the fathers to the children and the hearts of the children to the fathers, so that I will not come and smite the land with a curse" (NASB).

There has been so much generational breakdown over the past few decades. Families have disintegrated and fathers and mothers have gone AWOL. Even in the church the values of parents have not been transferred to their children.

Yet when the supernatural power of awakening is released, hearts are mended, families are reconciled, backsliders return and God's ultimate purpose is restored. It is this "Elijah anointing" of revival that sparked the first and second Great Awakenings in our past, as well as the Azusa Revival and the Jesus movement. It is time for God to do it again!

3. Pray for great boldness to arise in the younger generation.

King David began his rule with a bunch of pitiful losers, but by the end of the story his followers had become “mighty men” who performed valiant military feats (see 2 Sam. 23:8-22). Please remember that the Holy Spirit has not finished shaping this generation!

Young Christians today may seem immature, but they are works in progress. They will end up in the “mighty” category—and they will surprise us and surpass us. God intends to raise up a generation in the United States (made up of all races and immigrant groups) who have committed their lives to missions, evangelism, holiness and radical discipleship.

Will you pray for this miracle? Some Christians prefer to condemn our nation to hell because they are angry at President Obama, homosexuals, abortionists, Hollywood, atheists and Muslims. Some are even mad at young people for turning away from the church. But this angry, vindictive spirit does not even remotely resemble Jesus—and it will not draw anyone to Him.

Please don't judge—pray instead. God wants to give America another chance. The prophet Jeremiah pronounced many words of judgment on wayward Israel, yet he prayed this: “Restore us to You, O Lord, that we may be restored; renew our days as of old” (Lam. 5:21). God loves to answer that prayer! His desire is to restore—and He can orchestrate a great turnaround in our nation if we will humble ourselves and cry to Him with all our hearts.

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