

# Do We Really Want a Third Great Awakening?

First there was the removal of the Bible from public schools; then there was the legalization of abortion. And just last month the U.S. Supreme Court ruled in support of **same-sex marriage**.

All of this has evangelical Christians hoping and praying for a spiritual revival in America. But are too many Christians sitting on the sidelines both spiritually and politically?

An endeavor by spiritual leaders in Iowa as well as across the country is challenging both Christians and pastors to rise to the occasion.

## **Pastors and Pews**

Here's an evangelical riddle: What combines gospel singing, political speeches, and prayer for possible presidential candidates?

The answer is Iowa's Pastors and Pews event, a recent two-day gathering for hundreds of pastors in Des Moines to hear the importance of speaking boldly from the pulpit about today's cultural issues.

"Preach the word and leave the outcome to God," Laurence White, pastor of Our Savior Lutheran Church, told the crowd.

The July 18-19 event is part of an effort that has reached more than 10,000 pastors since it began nearly a decade ago. After Iowa, these events will soon spread to more than a dozen other states around the country.

The effort is lead by influential evangelical and political operative David Lane.

"Thirty-five years ago I was one of the wildest men that ever

lived. I deserved judgment and I got mercy,” Lane said.

The movement mixes faith and politics with the goal of returning America back to its original founding principles.

“If the Lord does it, we’re going to turn America back to Him and re-establish a Christian culture,” Lane told CBN News.

That will take pastors helping to organize those in the pews. Consider the following startling figures:

- Event organizers say of the roughly 65 to 80 million **evangelicals** in the United States, only 50 percent are registered to vote.
- Only half of those registered show up on Election Day.

“Our people need to understand if they do not vote, they are betraying the Lord Jesus Christ,” Pastor White said.

### **Reaching a Younger Generation**

The Wilks brothers worry that America’s declining morals will especially hurt the younger generation, so they’re using the riches the Lord has blessed them with to back specific goals.

“I just think we need to make people aware and bring the Bible back into the schools and start teaching our kids at a younger age and focus on the younger generation,” Dan Wilks said.

“They’re being taught the other ideas, the gay agenda, every day out in the world,” his brother, Farris Wilks, said. “So we have to stand up and explain to them that that’s not real, it’s not proper, it’s not right.”

Many of those gathered believe the church has allowed secularism to creep into their flocks.

“You want to do what you can to catch the fish and to bring them out of the water and into the boat and I like there being out doing that, but I don’t want the water in the boat and it’s bad,” Matthew Floyd, pastor of Calvary Bible Church,

said.

“No matter how much water, it’s bad to have that water in the boat. Well, we’ve been allowing the world into the Church,” he added.

Part of the problem is many pastors fear the IRS will come after their tax exempt status if they bring politics to their pulpit.

“We’re not being thrown to the lions. We’re not having our heads chopped off. We’re being cowards because we want money,” Pastor Floyd told CBN News.

All those gathered—including possible presidential contenders Sens. Rand Paul, R-Ky., and Ted Cruz, R-Texas—agree that boldness is needed.

“The book of Hosea tells us, ‘My people perish for a lack of knowledge,’” Sen. Cruz told the Pastors and Pews audience. “Edwin Burke put the points a little differently when he said, ‘The only thing necessary for evil to prevail is for good men to do nothing.’”

Sen. Paul agreed.

“We must do something our world often tells us not to do: we must seek God, for our redemption and salvation, for our country’s revival,” Paul said.

### **A Third Great Awakening?**

That’s what these pastors pray for above politics: spiritual **revival**.

“Father, we’re again in need of another Great Awakening,” one pastor prayed.

The first Great Awakening began in the 1700s, led by pastors like Jonathan Edwards and George Whitfield. In the following century, a second revival saw large camp meetings spread like

wildfire.

Is there a third **Great Awakening** around the corner?

“There are a lot of people who want it to happen,” Pastor Floyd said. “I don’t know if people are committed enough yet to see it happen.”

Some of that doubt could be due to events over the last 50 years that have taken aim at Christian principles. In 1963 public school prayer ended, and a decade later, abortion was legalized.

Now there seems to be a cultural acceptance of homosexual marriage.

“I’m telling y’all this is breaking my heart,” Jason Taylor, pastor of Bar None Cowboy Church, said. “This is serious stuff. Our Lord is fixin’ to look at the Father and say, he’s fittin’ to say, ‘America will not do. They’re just not gonna get it.’”

This group of pastors and other leaders, however, does get it. And across the many denominational lines, they’re united in the belief that you can’t put trust in a political party to bring the change.

“They use us, they manipulate us, they lie to us and nothing changes,” Pastor White said, drawing applause from the crowd.

“These politicians aren’t good at much, but they’re good at this: Seeing which way the wind is blowing. We need to change the direction of the wind,” he added.

That wind, they believe, can only come from above.

“Somebody’s values are going to reign supreme, so my guess is spiritually speaking we need mercy, the mercy of God,” Lane concluded.