

Jack Hayford: America Is Suffering From a Spiritual Drought

America is suffering from an extended spiritual drought. While the social and moral decay of this hour may grieve us, discernment of the larger reason for this blight lies at the door of an all-but-prayerless church.

We share a part of that responsibility because—had we been more conscientious earlier—we would not have allowed the progressive dismantling of weekly, united, extended corporate prayer gatherings.

I am not writing to assign guilt, for I have been too slow a learner myself. But I am writing with an invitation, one spoken from heaven and beginning to resonate in many hearts.

Although the enemy of humankind is rising viciously, knowing he has only a short time, the Holy Spirit of God is present. He is not here to condemn, but to convene the hearts of believers with His promise, wisdom and expectancy.

Above all, I feel a hope, born of prayer rising from my heart and one of love and brotherly commitment to Foursquare pastors, leaders and members. With that hope, I am writing in earnest and crying out for the igniting of an awakening to prayer.

Pray with me that we would unite to lead our congregations from our knees. Let us lead people into a lifestyle of intercession as God's Word directs (1 Tim. 2:1-2).

Unless we are biblically renewed to this first of all calling of the body of Christ, our first calling as believers will be sacrificed on the altar of sloth, and the spirit of the age

will run even more rampant.

Let us affirm that there is nothing old school about the New Testament's order of the church's prayer-life. It is an ever-contemporary pattern of biblical spirituality, and nothing—not even the finest programming, productions or tactical strategies—can substitute for it.

Our Spiritual Foundation

Prayer is the foundation and fountainhead of spiritual power, breakthrough and revival; prevailing prayer, both at the local and national level, is what we and America need.

Given this situation, my hope is that The Foursquare Church may “rise to this hour” and make it a “restoring the ancient landmarks” of former victories. That, as a united-and-agreed fellowship, a vast majority of pastors and congregations would unapologetically welcome the Holy Spirit into their midst.

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Such well-ordered prayer gatherings will overthrow strongholds of darkness and release rivers of “living water” and revival blessings. Sound-minded, bold and believing prayer is prayer with a “cutting edge,” namely, a lifestyle that penetrates the darkness of spiritual blindness and brings God's mercy and deliverance.

It is this kind of prayer that shatters the darkness and drives back the kind of spiritual challenge we face with the plague of evil and rebellion in our nation.

Jesus' Concern for the Last-Days Church

Someone recently asked me: “Some people think of the 1950s and 1960s as a golden age for the church in America, but were there drawbacks to the church being socially respectable?”

I answered: “I don’t think of the church being ‘respected’ as a drawback. However, a socially comfortable church has not historically produced a spiritually passionate church.”

Jesus’ letters to the church in Revelation contain a similar opening, where Christ spells out His awareness and notice to each congregation and its leaders. His love for them all is never in question, but His concerns wave red-flag warnings to all of us who lead today:

You who have ears to hear, listen to what the Holy Spirit is saying!

Jesus points out that many of these churches are distracted or have neglected their central call, values and mission. The distractions are the same today; congregations are either:

- resting on their laurels
- impressed with their own perceived status
- blinded to their loss of focus on the Word and the Spirit, or
- by indulging their own carnality, losing clarity and integrity of heart.

The issue is clear: The Holy Spirit is seeking to find—and speak to—those with ears to hear!

Whether you are a Foursquare pastor, leader or church member, I am a bond servant with you. I invite you to join a multitude of those who are unabashedly attuned to hear, obey and respond as Holy Spirit-filled servants of Christ. This is vital for two crucial reasons:

- There is nothing more disabling than to become tone deaf to the voice of the Holy Spirit.
- There is nothing more numbing to the soul than to be unresponsive to His call.

In this critical hour, we dare not hedge on the implications

of “hearing” the Holy Spirit. We dare not compromise His intentions for our fellowship as Spirit-filled and Spirit-led people.

The Key Question

The question of this hour in history resounds from the lips of the Lord: “When the Son of Man comes, will He find faith on the earth?” (Luke 18:8, NIV). Namely, the faith that answers the call to rise up in prayer!

As with any nation, the battle for America’s soul will only be won with the weapons of spiritual warfare. These weapons—wielded by people systematically meeting in prayer gatherings to marshal sound-minded, biblically ordered intercession—have yet to be restored in The Foursquare Church in America.

Yet if God’s people don’t assemble in agreement, on their knees, who else will “destroy arguments and every lofty opinion raised against the knowledge of God, and take every thought captive to obey Christ” (2 Cor. 10:5, ESV)?

The church is the one agency on Earth with access to this promise. Heaven is waiting. God has indicated His sovereign choice: He is ready to answer with His open hand of unlimited blessing if, under His authoritative directive, we will take our stand and advance in prayer.

Today, we must remember the promise God made to Solomon long ago: “If my people ... humble themselves, and pray ... then I will hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and heal their land” (2 Chr. 7:14, ESV).

However, we must ask ourselves, “Where can God find a people who will align themselves with God’s conditions?” This cannot be a halfway proposition. His Word of promise is only spoken into action where people welcome His Holy Spirit, and on His terms.

Aligning With the Spirit

I want to honor the wisdom, sought and applied, by which our leaders have brought administrative adjustments that we as a movement have pragmatically applied in recent years.

However, whatever else we have wisely and worthily realigned structurally, our definition of local intercessory alignment has yet to “hear what the Spirit is saying to the churches.”

In this critical hour, we dare not hedge on the implications of “hearing” the Holy Spirit. We dare not compromise His intentions for our fellowship as Spirit-filled and Spirit-led people.

We are in need of reviewing Jesus’ confrontation of leaders who busied themselves with religious duties but neglected God’s command: “My house will be called a house of prayer for all nations” (Is. 56:7, NIV). Let us abandon all self-excusing passivity indulged when we negate our Lord’s focus on the priority of prayer.

No society should ever be seen as beyond hope of revival, the recovery of sanity or the rebirth of multitudes—if it is laced with congregations everywhere where the Light of the world still shines.

The divine call of God addressing The Foursquare Church in America is no different than the one trumpeted to the larger believing body of Christ. Too many have traded the timeless for the transient, the costly for the clever, the eternal for the contemporary and the seeker-sensitivity for man-pleasing management.

Our beginning point of reference must be on our knees, in our closets and at altars of repentance. New furniture isn’t required, but a ready and renewed passion is!

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