

EXCLUSIVE: Nick Hall Talks Billy Graham, Unity Across Denominations and Prophecies for 2020

The Holy Spirit is moving among this generation in miraculous ways. Charisma reached out to nine “new voices” who are advancing the kingdom of God around the world. Each story is featured in our Charisma January issue, and we’ve posted the transcripts below. This interview has been edited for grammar and clarity.

Nick Hall is the founder of PULSE Movement and has been referred to as the next Billy Graham because of his evangelistic work.

At the time of recording, you just finished your Together 2018 event in Dallas. Tell us about that.

We gathered at a NASCAR track, Texas Motor Speedway, and really just had a vision of seeing one of the largest equipping events America has seen in decades, trying to equip a generation to move closer to Jesus, and really to move closer to the world that needs Him and just really trying to rally a generation of revivalists and from pastors and evangelists or even going into the workplace. It was full of preachers. Everybody from Sammy Rodriguez and Todd White, Ravi Zacharias, Francis Chan, Priscilla Shirer, Brian Houston to artists like Jesus Culture, Bethel, Hillsong, Lecrae, Christine D’Clario and many, many more.

There were over 50 people on the platform. There were thousands of organizations that partnered toward this, and we saw over 100,000 people flow through the track and get hands-on training, equipping, and it was just an incredible, incredible experience. I would say it was probably the most in-depth equipping time I’ve ever seen or been a part of. I’m just so excited about what God is doing in this generation.

How did you first come to Christ and get this vision?

I came to faith at a young age, and God had some grace early on to protect me from a lot of the things you hear from different people's testimonies. From the time I was a little kid, I really had a hunger for the things of God. And my mom, actually, we knelt by her bedside when I was probably 4 years old, and I surrendered my life to Jesus, and just wanted to know God, wanted to be a part of the things God was doing. Immediately, I just felt this urgency for the gospel.

And it's kind of funny to say that because I have kids now, and I see it in them. But man, when I was a kid, I was telling everybody about Jesus. I mean, kids on my baseball team, kids in the neighborhood—there's really not a time in my life I can look back at that I wasn't seeing people come to Christ. I'll even joke with people that no one had to ever tell me to share my faith. I actually will joke that I had to go to church to learn not to share my faith, because sometimes it's not popular for people to be bold. It's just been this incredible ride. But that's really how it started.

You've traveled a lot with people like Greg Laurie, Billy Graham, Todd White and now Francis Chan. How did you meet up with these incredible men of God?

It's been a crazy ride. I'm from North Dakota, and I didn't come from a ministry home. My parents were ordinary lay believers in love with Jesus, but they never had those kinds of connections or people who could immediately open doors for me. I was 17-18 years old when I experienced just a real strong sense that I was on earth to preach the gospel. Specifically, I just felt this urgency and passion that I wanted to tell more than a billion people about Jesus. I remember this vividly. And then there was this word that I had of, "My life exists to put Christ at the pulse of a generation."

It was in my notebooks, and that eventually turned into this college English paper at a secular university, and that led to all these opportunities. When God calls you, He opens the doors for you, and He goes before you. It's not a matter of you making it happen. I always love to encourage people who are stressed and worried and anxious; it's like, man, all the good things that happened from God, they just happen. Yes, there's a role we play in trying to be proactive and certainly trying to pursue holiness. But man, every good thing in my

life, it's just happened naturally, like God opens the next door, opens the next door. And it's as you are being faithful where you're planted that God loves to open up what's next for you.

There I am; I'm surrendered to this call. And all of a sudden, I start getting opportunities to travel with people like Billy Graham and Luis Palau and others. It just started to steamroll into these chances for me to travel with these men of God who had really impacted my parents' and even grandparents' generation. I really learned under them as we traveled around the world: India, Africa, Europe, North America. That was really my training. All the way through college, I was traveling to crusades and revivals and different meetings. Then simultaneously while I'm serving under these men and women of God, I'm trying to lead my own efforts and trying to start where I'm planted—reaching my friends, reaching my classmates.

That's how PULSE started in the midst of that, just university campuses from North Dakota to Minnesota to Wisconsin. It's grown now to become a coast-to-coast movement. I mean, we're in front of about a million students every year just in the United States alone.

I love to encourage people that this is from the next generation for the next generation. This is a tangible answer to the prayers of intercessors and people crying out to God. This year alone, we've already seen 150,000-plus young people give their lives to Christ in the US. And so we just see kids are hungry. They're searching. It's happening from Texas Motor Speedway to university campuses to small coffee shops and just sharing the gospel everywhere we can go. We can't *not* talk about Jesus.

How does your ministry compare to Graham's or Palau's?

I always think God raises up for each generation exactly what that generation needs. Billy Graham specifically came about at a time when people were largely writing off the next generation. There was a lot of division in the church, and that started a youth movement. Youth for Christ was kind of the banner they launched under. That wasn't a time of a bunch of megachurches or even megaministries. It was a new thing to have a youth grassroots movement.

In the same way, we really see this as a grassroots youth

movement. We might not be called Youth for Christ. Maybe it's called PULSE. Maybe it's called Together. But honestly, the name doesn't really matter. What matters is it is a generation coming after God, and saying, "We want to follow Jesus. We want to be a part of the things that God's doing, whether that means people being healed, whether that means people being saved, or set free, we just want to see people unleashed into what God's calling is for their lives."

Graham and Palau started in the '40s. Here we are starting into 2010, 2015 and into today, and now, it's grown. Similarly, I would say is just that calling to unite. We really feel called to be a neutral vehicle. I'm often kind of in between a lot of different streams and movements, and I even think Together was a great example of this. I mean, we had Todd White on the platform, who's up there just calling down heaven, signs and wonders and deliverance. Then on the same platform, we have a leader from the Russian Orthodox Church, who is very stoic, but just in love with Jesus. In the middle of those movements is PULSE, and it's our team of just saying, "Man, can we come together? Can we unite around Jesus, the need we have? Is there room at our table that we can actually see a demonstration of what it's going to be like in heaven?"

I always loved to encourage my friends or fellow believers that heaven is not going to be a bunch of people just like you. It's going to be different streams, different expressions, like different movements—and then, how awesome is that? Man, if it were just people like us, it would be so boring. But heaven is going to be so beautiful in its diversity and diversity of worship styles, diversity of prayer, diversity of people groups and ethnicities. I just think that's really our calling. Certainly, we picked up that baton from leaders like Billy Graham and others who went before just trying to unite.

Something that's different about our ministry, though, is we certainly are more charismatic than some of the previous more neutral evangelical movements. But that's also a personality trait of the next generation. We're not wanting to play it safe. Just last night in the hotel lobby here, our team was gathering; we were celebrating what God is doing. And then all of a sudden, somebody was talking about having cancer, and

then all of a sudden, it's a huddle of people praying out this cancer out of this man's body, and just praying and asking God for healing.

I think in past generations, especially in the evangelical world, it was almost like a tagline of "Don't put the Lord your God to the test." That almost becomes a little bit of, "We don't want to do anything that would potentially make God look bad." It's almost like, "We want to give God a back door in case He doesn't want to answer our prayers."

I just think this generation is much more like, "You can't make God look bad." Like, "He is God. He doesn't need our help. And so let's just believe Him for the greater thing. And let's trust him for revival, awakening. Let's trust Him for all the gifts God has for his people. We ultimately just believe He does not want us to be these lifeless, powerless believers, but He wants to unleash us. He's given us the Spirit, and He's given us revelation. He's given us truth. He's given us the gospel. We have all the weapons we need, and the time is now."

What do you see happening among this generation?

I think it's just a willingness to walk across every aisle. It's so easy to be labeled. It's so easy to just be in one stream. I just think this generation longs for everyone, and I think there's just an openness to God speaking in different ways. There's an openness in just the reality that we don't have all the answers, that my vantage point isn't the only one. Obviously, we have all the answers from God's Word. We have all the history from Jesus. There's no question on what's truth, and there's no compromise in that.

But I think at the same time, I think it was easy in past generations to feel this sense of being dogmatic or looking down on those who are different. With this generation, there is just like a willingness and a desire to learn from those who are coming from a different perspective than your own. I think that positions them both for a greater depth of understanding of Scripture and understanding of the things God is doing. But it also positions them to be even more effective evangelists, even more effective apologists, even more effective revivalists, because there is a willingness to go out there and meet people where they are, understand where they're coming from, and then see where God is moving in their

lives and intersect right there with the power of God and the power of the gospel. There is so much happening that people write off as negative that I actually see as part of God's narrative for what's potential.

Someone may say, "All these kids are so into technology, and maybe they're exposed to too many worldviews."

I'm like, "Yeah, they are. That's their greatest asset."

Or, "Oh, man, they're not good at this." Well, they might not be good at that. But they're really great at eight other things that previous generations weren't great at. I think God is positioning them and has created this situation that maybe the enemy intended for evil, but God can always redeem and work out for good.

What does this mean for speaking truth about social issues?

Yeah, it's one thing to talk about a sin or about an issue—and I love to just paint a picture for people and say, "It's one thing to talk about sin, but does the issue you're talking about—does it have skin on it?" 'Cause it's one thing to talk about it as a Bible verse or as a principle. It's another thing to talk about as a person. And when somebody embodies what you're talking about, it very much changes the way you talk about it. It changes the way you think about it. It changes the way you process it. It humanizes it.

In past generations, it's been really easy to talk about specific sins or specific issues or politics or whatever and to really talk about it in a very tone-deaf way that can come across really not loving, not caring and not grace-filled. And it's not intended that way. Like I don't think that's the heart of any believer. But young people are surrounded by people with differing viewpoints, friends from different orientations and different backgrounds, different religions.

One of my friends, he heads up Barna Research Group, his name's David Kinnaman, and he describes this generation that they've grown up in what he calls a digital Babylon. He says it's similar to how Daniel and Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego were surrounded by culture, worldview, religion. These kids have been surrounded from the time they were born. But because of that, they're able to adapt. They're able to contextualize. They're able to speak and reason and process. And I just think, *Man, the church is struggling, and you all need to see it.* So it's so hard and often so awkward seeing the church try

to figure out how to speak to culture and speak to these issues of flourishing, or sexuality, or politics, or race or whatever.

Meanwhile, God has hardwired these kids with life experiences, Holy Spirit and Scripture. I think they are the ones who are going to lead the church forward with the right way, the right methodologies and ways that can, yes, not compromise on truth, but come alongside people in their sin and lead them to a better way.

What's next for you?

We are really just after unleashing this generation. For us, that manifests in a couple different ways. We will continue to work towards these large-scale campaigns. I mean, we have a team that is really built to put on the biggest events in the world. Right now, we're working on some massive events in Russia. We're praying with leaders there about something even in Red Square, praying for a Together event there.

We have leaders here in Texas for working toward a stadium event in Mississippi in the heart of the deep South. In the midst of the time of racial tension, we just see this revival happening, and we think it's going to be a national movement launching in 2019. Come 2020, we're looking back at the National Mall. In 2016, we gathered at the National Mall and had upwards of half a million people come, but we got shut down five hours early because of the heat. But it was also honestly because the crowds overwhelmed the infrastructure the government had.

We've really just felt the sense that God is still working and still unleashing, and we have a little bit of a sense of unfinished business. So we're looking at 2020 in the summer being back on the Mall. And frankly, we talked about a million people in '16; I think a million is not going to be a big enough number for what I think God wants to do in 2020, because this thing just continues to grow. And so we really see just these streams colliding.

Probably something I'm most excited about beyond all these big things is we've launched this digital platform, which is really a ministry training tool for discipleship, life-on-life discipleship, like just seeing simple multiplication. I think a challenge for all of our churches and after so many events and gatherings is just, "How do we take this down and actually

get simple multiplication of believers? How do we get real discipleship to take place?"

So we built out this platform called the Move platform. It's like a Spotify-type digital discipleship thing. It's videos and curriculum. We've got everybody from Banning Liebscher from Jesus Culture on there to different urban leaders to different Hispanic leaders. But it is very much a Millennial and Gen Z-built platform. But it's for anybody who wants to go through a discipleship experience with a friend or neighbor. It's about going through it and then bringing others. Complete it; grab somebody else. Complete it; grab somebody else. So it really is built for life-on-life multiplication. And I just think that's the future of effective ministry. So much is going to be digital, and so much of it is going to not have to do with specific brands or streams, but it's just going to be a neutral vehicle for the whole church to use. This is really a huge initiative that we've been working on with hundreds of partners, and it literally just launched, so I'm super excited about that.

What else can you tell us?

I would just encourage people that God is not done. He's moving. He wants to break out of our mold. He wants to break out of our boxes, and I don't care how free and Spirit-filled you are. We all inevitably place God in a box. We all start to think, "This is how it happens. This is not how it happens." I want to encourage people: He's doing a new thing.

He's not done working in America. He's not done working in the nations of the earth. But this is about all of us uniting. This is about all of us praying. This is about all of us fasting.

Sept. 25, 2019, is the 70-year anniversary of Billy Graham's tent revival in Los Angeles. And so 70 years ago, not only the ministry of Billy Graham launched, but I would say an era of Christianity launched. This is super important for those who are from the Spirit-empowered movement. Because I think people would say, "Man, it was great what Billy Graham did, and it was great how God used that vehicle."

I really see that this next September on the 25th, this is an opportunity for not just America, this is an opportunity for the world to unite. We're going to call for a 40-day season of fasting and prayer as we head into 2020, and you think about

2020 as a year of vision. We can't refute this. It's too obvious: 2020, we have to do something. But it's like, man, if we're going to have a vision, we need to get before the Lord. And we need to be desperate before the Lord. And we need to cry out to God that He would be our vision.

And so far more than what we do for the Lord in 2020, I think what's even more important is how we prepare the way with fasting and prayer in 2019. And so starting on Sept. 25, which is the day of See You at the Pole next year, high schoolers across the country will be praying on the 70-year anniversary of that tent in Los Angeles. And we're going to call for over 2 million believers to fast and pray for God's vision for their lives, like not fasting and praying for an event or initiative, just really getting simple, calling people to fast and pray that God would give them a fresh vision for their life.

Even if we get half the churches in America with one of the senior pastor leaders, can you imagine what God would do in the church if we would have all these leaders fasting and praying? This is a longtime vision. There was a leader named Bill Bright who had a vision in the '90s and early 2000s that revival was going to be unleashed when 2 million believers united in fasting and prayer.

And so it wasn't fulfilled, but we're like, "Man, now is the time to fulfill this past generation's vision." And this is the next generation taking up the baton to say, "Man, we need a vision from God. We need revival." And so that's something we think is super important, and it's on the heart of God.

Follow Nick on social media: Twitter, Facebook, Instagram

Follow his ministry: Twitter, Facebook, Instagram