

Stoking Holy Spirit's Flame of Awakening in Your Life

The only way to approach and participate in the imminent great awakening is to keep in mind it is all about God and God alone. "I will give you thanks, O Lord my God, with all my heart, and I will glorify Your name forever" (Ps. 86:12). Everything having to do with revival throughout our nation's history, as well as today, centers on God's nature and God's purposes revealed in His Word.

During the past two decades, the growing prevalence of ungodliness in our country has heightened a new readiness and hunger for God. For those who have spiritual eyes to see, the powers of darkness and light have become almost inescapable. Like the cave I wandered into as a teen, the destructive forces in our world seem overpowering and ready to swallow us up. Yet the truth is God's light has never been extinguished—and for good reason: "For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ" (2 Cor. 4:6). Today, God's light is shining in the hearts of Jesus' followers in some of the darkest corners of our nation and our world.

In 2013, Chanda Crout, a wife and mother in Gilbert, South Carolina, felt stirred to pray. She and her husband had served the previous two years in Tegbi, Ghana (West Africa) with Father's House International, a ministry that rescues children out of slavery. "As in-country directors, we gave eight boys a new home where they were safe. We were their parents and taught them about Jesus, so they could experience His love, learn to trust Him and discover the Lord's hope and purpose for their lives," Chanda shared.

Once home in South Carolina, Chanda confronted a dark,

disturbing chapter in her state's heritage. "It's a history of rebellion and greed, including years of slavery involving tobacco and others crops. I felt a strong call to confess the sins of our state, our people and our government. I didn't fully understand it at the time, but I knew I had to seek the Lord in a deep spirit of repentance and ask Him to plant new seeds of obedience among our people. The Lord was directing me to seek out, meet and pray with our governor, Nikki Haley."

True to her conviction, Chanda traveled to the South Carolina State House in Columbia. "I prayed that the Lord would direct my path to the governor's office. The first thing I saw when I arrived on the grounds was a monument to African-Americans. In the granite stone, amazingly, I saw an image of the country of Ghana and arrows pointing to South Carolina.

"In that moment, it all came together for me. If we are going to see a spiritual awakening of God, we need, I need, to repent from our past sins. I heard the Lord say, 'I have allowed you to see this monument and see the connection of slavery and of sin between Ghana and South Carolina because I am a God of redemption. I want you to see the redemptive work in Ghana and the redemptive work I am doing in South Carolina.'"

"I was simply awestruck. I began to repent for myself, my family and the leaders of my state." Soon, Chanda was face-to-face with Governor Nikki Haley. "After some brief conversation in her office, I asked if she would be willing to pray with me. Governor Haley extended her hand and bowed her head. I thanked God for her life and her position in government. I asked God to guard her and surround her so that He would be glorified. I prayed that the people of our state—our businesses, schools, churches and leaders—would repent and receive the Lord's forgiveness." *(Editor's note: Gov. Haley would remove the Confederate flag from the South Carolina state house grounds in 2015.)*

God is transforming corners of darkness into new pockets of light and life in places like South Carolina. Two things have happened: People who had been surrounded, and thus lost, in spiritual darkness have been awakened and drawn to the light outside of their cave.

Jesus, who brings light to God's human creation (see John 1:4), is turning the corners of darkness in our cities, workplaces, schools and churches into new pockets of light. Those who see and surrender to Jesus are being awakened to God, who was there all along. In the life and light of Jesus, they're basking in the freeing truth that revival comes not from our own determination but rather from *God's* initiation—in His timing and for His purposes. {eoa}

Excerpt from the new book Jesus Now Awakening—God is Up to Something Big by Tom Phillips.