

The Holy Spirit Is Moving

What is God doing in the earth today? Twelve important trends are emerging.

This premier decade of the 21st century finds the church in a position to receive both greater harvest and greater hostility than ever in history. What is on the horizon for the next few years?

The following predictions are not prophecies—and they are by no means infallible. They are based on biblical promises, spiritual trends, what I've seen in ministry in 51 nations and what I sense deep in my spirit.

This decade will be one of harvest.

The seeds of harvest planted by the massive prayer movements of the 1990s will bear great fruit in this decade. The church should press in for no fewer than 1 billion souls worldwide. However, we must remember that this harvest will not reap itself. Large numbers of anointed laborers must be dispatched to the ripened fields—and fast.

Christian beliefs will be criticized.

Christians are perceived by many as “the new bigots” because of what unbelievers view as a “narrow and prejudicial” insistence that Jesus is the only way of salvation. Currently the American church is ill-prepared for intensified criticism and persecution, and this may cause a significant reduction in some church memberships and attendance.

Religious opposition will intensify.

Radicals in historically tolerant religions such as Buddhism and Hinduism will intensify their attacks on Christians as more from their ranks profess faith

in Jesus. Already, evangelistic inroads among ancient religions are perceived as threatening. As we impact more—and eventually all—of the remaining unreached peoples, the numbers of Christian martyrs may rise dramatically.

New media will help spread the gospel.

Entrepreneurs will break new ground in evangelism and missions by producing highly innovative media presentations of the gospel. These “Techno-Surgeons” will express eloquence through powerful visual communication. They will either replace or complement those with well-honed pulpit skills.

Standards of leadership will improve.

The pretentiousness of some major Christian leaders, especially in the United States and Africa, will not be allowed in this decade either by God or by the people to whom they minister.

Charismatics will help the helpless.

Charismatics will become a stronger prophetic voice on behalf of those who have no voice—aborted children, the abused, the diseased and the dispossessed. This will win both new friends and vicious enemies and will ameliorate the abuses of some extreme prosperity teaching of the 1980s and 1990s.

Young leaders will step into place.

Young missions visionaries will be mentored by those who will be called Joshuas and Calebs—seasoned veterans who are able to transcend eras and help direct younger visionaries. Just as there was a global MTV generation in the 1990s, there will be a young, global Jesus generation in this decade.

Miracles will blur doctrinal divisions.

By the end of the decade this may be a moot issue, with the overwhelming majority of Bible-believing Christians endorsing and experiencing present-day signs and wonders. The church will live in Hebrews 11. Some heroes of the faith will experience miraculous interventions. Others will be martyred.

International affairs will cause the gospel to spread (see Matt. 24).

Rogue nations and terrorist groups may attempt nuclear blackmail. This level of natural and man-made distress will cause many to turn to God. Others will harden their hearts, wondering how a loving God could allow these things to happen.

Jewish and Muslim leaders will declare their faith in Jesus as Lord.

Some will be killed as a result. Realizing the threat, these leaders will place their testimonies on video, and their stories will receive wide Internet and underground distribution.

Theology and worship will blend to create a fresh expression of Christianity.

Pentecostals and charismatics who once derided the need for apologetics will embrace it because of embarrassing and blatantly unbiblical teaching by a few of their highest-profile preachers. Also, the influences of postmodernism within the church will heighten the need for biblical understanding. Conversely, many evangelicals will sense a dearth in their own spirituality and move toward either a mystic form of orthodoxy or charismatic worship.

The church worldwide will be more interconnected than ever.

The under-40s in the Western church will be alive with missions passion. Many of them will date their fervor back to the short-term missions trips they took as students in the 1990s. Massive churches will continue to be spawned in Latin America and Asia. Dedicated believers will begin to turn back the plague of AIDS in Africa as discipleship impacts the continent as forcibly in this decade as evangelistic crusades did in the 1980s and 1990s.

No doubt God has many other surprises for us. What an incredible time to identify with Christ and to carry the missions addiction!

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