When a Prophetic Word Sparks Citywide Transformation

The year was 1736. The Industrial Revolution was in its infancy, and thousands of England's poor were moving into London to seek a better life in the factories of the city.

As a result slums were forming all over London as the poor congregated within the city. England had become a nation of drunkenness, despair and moral decay. One in every six houses in London was a "grog shop." The grog shops were private homes that operated as unlicensed taverns. The grog houses were known for watering down the ale.

The watered-down ale was called "grog." John Wesley saw the condition of his beloved England and set out with a vision of awakening and transformation that would bring England out of the decay and debauchery. In the midst of all the chaos, God birthed an awakening that transformed England and America socially, economically and spiritually at the same time.

Often, I wonder what the area in which I now live looked back in 1736. In 1736, the residents of what is now Taylor County were first-nations people. Huge virgin cypress and pine trees covered the area. Wild game and fish were abundant. In its early days, the community was first pioneered at a spring, which had hundreds if not thousands of wild roses growing in the area and the early settlers simply called the settlement, "Rosehead."

Around 1800, my dad's family settled in an area of Taylor County now known as Shady Grove. I have often wondered what the region was like when my forefathers first walked into this area and decided this was the land for them. During the next 100-plus years, the area would become a vital part of the development of Florida. It would become a hub of the

railroads, industry would boom, a world-class hotel would be built just four miles north of the small bustling community, and the city would change its name from Rosehead, now being named after the fourth governor of Florida, Madison Stark Perry.

The city was then called Perrytown and later would drop the word town simply to be called Perry.

No, the city is not the size nor notoriety of London, but it does have a history and a bright future.

After a schoolteacher was murdered close to Shady Grove in December 1922, race riots erupted in Perry. Actually, Charles Wright, a black man, was burned at the stake, and the black section of Perry was under siege by hundreds of white men. After looking back at the facts, it is this author's opinion the violence of December 1922 opened the door for a curse to come upon this community and county. The area began to go into a gradual but steady downward trend that would last for decades. The luxurious Hampton Springs Hotel, which opened in 1910 and had been visited by presidents and heads of states from as far as Asia, would close then burn in 1954.

During the early part of the 20th century, the main highway through Perry, U.S. 19, was one of the leading ways into Florida. Small motels opened, offering a place of rest for the weary travelers, but the building of I-75 and I-10 during the 60s by passed Perry and the decline became more rapid and apparent. While many great people called Perry home, the city and region became known for racism, poverty, drunkenness and drug addiction. A spirit of oppression covered the region and hung in the air like a huge, wet blanket.

On July 4, 1973, Jesse and Joyce Webb with their four children moved to Perry. Jesse had been called to pastor a small congregation on the west side of Perry. Little did the family realize God was positioning a prophet to speak life into a

city that was decaying and dying. Their only son, Justin, who was 10, simply moved with Mom and Dad to yet another church. Little did he or his parents realize God had a plan to redeem Perry, Florida, and was calling this young prophet as a voice of redemption to not only a city but also a region.

As Justin began to grow into the fullness of his calling, he would prophesy, calling the city and region a hub. He told how Perry would become a prototype of living heaven on earth and the kingdom of heaven in a city. Justin became senior leader of the church his dad had founded in 1998, Evangel Christian Fellowship. He would walk the streets of Perry praying for an outpouring of God's Spirit on this city. He would lay on the altar of the church for hours tarrying before the Lord.

During the fall of 2014, a prophet came to Perry and told the church—which Jesse had founded and Justin was then leading—that the city, and the congregation was in a time of acceleration, and God was going to do it suddenly. Transformation of not only a local fellowship but also an entire city and region was about to happen.

God had placed the sights of His prophetic rifle on a small almost forgotten city in North West Florida. He was about to move in power and might not only in a congregation but an entire region.

The year 2015 was going to prove to indeed be a time of acceleration and turn around not only a congregation but also an entire city.

Apostle Ken Malone, founder of Forerunner Ministries, while in Perry in January of 2015, prophesied over the Big Bend Region.

Word of the Lord to Perry, Florida, 1/30/15

"I will leave a mark of redemption and healing in Perry. I have assembled my angel army for war and harvest. I will

awaken a sleeping giant called the church that shall begin to possess the land and atmosphere of the region.

"The Big Bend will bend in worship and humility for three days. I say to 'occupy' the territory through worship for three days, and I will release My presence in the land.

Prepare, prepare, prepare, for in these three days you will possess the land."

Evangel Christian Fellowship received the prophetic word as an assignment from the Lord and prepared to enact 72 hours of continuous worship. From May 6-9, 2015, worshippers from Alabama and Florida gathered to bend in worship for 72 hours. As the worship ascended upward, people came from all over Taylor County and North Florida engaging in worship.

Approximately 24-plus hours into the 72, Evangel's worship team was doing their second set and, suddenly without cue, every singer, every musician and the entire congregation became silent. The atmosphere became thick with the tangible presence of God. Every person from the youngest to the oldest remained completely silent and still before the reverence and awe of our heavenly Father.

During that time I did not see a window open in heaven over a region, but I saw heaven itself open, not only our region of North Florida but also the entire nation. I saw the worship of God's children ascending like a sweet aroma into heaven. While I did not see the Lord, I did sense He was inhaling every fragrance of worship as a sweet offering of love and adoration by His children.

By nature I am very inquisitive and ask questions to discover what is really happening. I heard the Lord reply to my questions, "I have been inhaling the sweet aroma of My children's worship for an extended season, but I am preparing to exhale." Immediately, I thought of Joel 2 and remembered God saying, "I will pour out My Spirit." How do you pour out

spirit?

The answer is simple. One of the meanings of the word “spirit” is breath or wind. At times, Jesus would breathe on His disciples, signifying He was pour out His spirit on them. God is about to respond to our worship with an outpouring like the world has never seen.

According to Joel 2, the pouring out of God’s Spirit would be accompanied with physical events on the earth as well as in the lives of multiple generations of believers. Suddenly, the generations would come alongside each other to advance the kingdom of heaven on the earth.

One of the greatest results of God’s exhaling is a great harvest of souls from every race, tribe, kindred and nation upon the earth—a revival unlike the church has ever experienced or the world has ever seen. The first outpouring on the day of Pentecost erupted in a revival that lasted over 324 years. Lord, awaken Your church today and send revival to our world.

After the 72 hours was complete, one of the intercessors made a very profound statement. “God said if we would, He would. We did, so now He has to.” Later as events in the region began to unfold, she modified her statement saying, “God said if we would, He would. We did, and He is.”

Perry, Florida, is in the midst of social transformation. While many of the things I will list started before the 72 hours of worship, it seems they were all hindered from happening. But immediately after the event, things began to happen. Let me list only a few of the events that have transpired in our city that seemed caught in stagnation and decline, but today are coming alive.

1. New restaurants opening—totaling at least five

2. Fine dining restaurant coming to Keaton Beach

3. Phosphate mine coming to county

4. $700,000 grant for downtown improvements

5. Downtown renovation

6. New town houses being built

7. $100,000 grant to improve sports complex

8. Duke Energy building solar plant

9. New apartments created upstairs in older downtown buildings

10. VA Clinic comes to Perry

11. Coast Complete Urgent Care Center opens

12. Churches in the city cooperating for worship and evangelism

13. Crime rate has dropped 35 percent

14. Entrepreneurs who have struggled for years to obtain license and means to begin new businesses suddenly cut through bureaucratic red tape and within days were in operation.

Most recently, Barnabas Eatery opened downtown, where historic pharmacy operated for years.

Today, the church of Perry is pressing into an outpouring of the Spirit of God in our region bringing total transformation and awakening.

The founder and president of Keys of Awakening, Jim Rawlins is the author of Twenty-One Keys of Awakening*;* A Prayer Journal for Personal and National Revival*;* The Kingdom, Yesterday, Today and Forever*;* Dream Boat *and* Bible Study Made Easy*. He has served in ministry for over 40 years as a pastor, school principal, college professor and missionary. He has dedicated the rest of his life to fulfilling his lifelong*

dream for his beloved country, America, to experience a Third Great Awakening. Visit .