

When Decline Is a Good Thing

America is struggling, but those with spiritual eyes are seeing something greater emerge

Revival, by its very definition, requires that something is dead or lifeless. An awakening, by its very definition, requires that something is asleep. Though many have declared the American church dead, lifeless or asleep, one thing is certain: God is stirring up a mass movement of believers to fast, pray and cry out for a spiritual jolt that will shake America.

With the global prayer movement rising like never before, God continues to draw millions of believers across the planet into a lifestyle of fervent prayer and fasting. Houses of prayer are emerging in the least likely, most oppressive corners of the world—all by divine calling. The persecuted church is surging as Christ-followers hold fast to their faith in the face of unthinkable brutality. Meanwhile entire denominations are setting aside theological differences to unite in prayer. It's truly a remarkable time to be alive.

For those who live in America, however, we'd never know this if we based our viewpoint on news reports, stock market returns and TV's talking heads. By all outward appearances, things are not r-o-c-k-ing in the . these days. We are a nation in decline—morally, economically ... you name it. We're hanging by a thread of God's mercy, reaping the results of putting God in a corner as a society and telling Him we no longer need Him, thank You very much.

That's the bad news. The good news? The American church still has a pulse. In fact, not only is there still breath in us, the Holy Spirit is pouring out more of His *dunamis* (miraculous power) and *zoe* (life) upon us for these darkening times. How can I be certain of this amid the steady stream of ministry

scandals, false prophecies and dwindling churches?

Because signs of life are detected first in the spirit, just as a move of God is first revealed in a place of prayer. Elijah saw a distant cloud “as small as a man’s hand” before he experienced the rains that ended a three-year drought (1 Kin. 18:44). Elisha beheld an army of fire surrounding him before his servant’s eyes were opened to the reality of God’s protection (2 Kin. 6:17). Peter envisioned a feast of non-kosher food before seeing the Holy Spirit fall upon the Gentiles (Acts 10). The Bible is saturated with accounts of people seeing in the spirit realm what had yet to come in the natural. And in almost every situation, prayer is what ignited the transition from mere spiritual perception to natural reality.

Within intercessory circles, something big is happening in America. Whether it’s called a revival or an awakening, the bottom line is that God is aligning those in the U.S. who have eyes to see in the spirit with His divine purposes for this nation. But prayer holds the key.

As I worked on this issue, I spoke with prayer leaders and discovered multiple stories of how the Holy Spirit has sparked prayer initiatives leading up to this year’s pivotal Election Day. Many who started these had no idea others were doing the exact same thing—once again proving God is at work.

One incredible story is in our nation’s capital—literally in the White House’s back yard. Jason Hershey, founder of the Washington, D.C., House of Prayer, secured a permit from the National Parks Service to set up a tent on the White House Ellipse for 40 days of continuous, 24/7 pray and worship for the nation. It’s unprecedented, and people have marveled at how God opened this door for what Hershey is calling David’s Tent DC ().

“Before America ever goes into the polls to vote for the

leadership of this country, we want to first enthrone Jesus on our praises continuously for 40 days,” Hershey says. “Like King David established, worship will be next to the seat of government.”

Stories like Hershey’s give me hope for America, because God continues to go before His people to prove the outcome of America isn’t a voting matter, it’s a praying matter. A nation in decline simply means there’s greater opportunity for God’s people to be lights in the darkness. Maybe then more eyes will be open to what’s already alive in the spirit.

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