

# From Jesus Rock to TikTok Revival: Charisma Magazine Celebrates 50 Years!

In August 2025, *Charisma* magazine celebrates its 50th anniversary—a milestone that marks half a century of Spirit-led journalism bringing the news of what the Holy Spirit is doing around the world. From its humble beginnings in a Florida church bound by a commitment to spreading the Gospel, to becoming a global media powerhouse, *Charisma's* journey is a testament to supernatural guidance, shrewd obedience to God-given calling and faithful, diligent effort.

## A Vision Ignited

In 1975, Stephen Strang, a 24-year-old reporter for the *Sentinel Star* (now the *Orlando Sentinel*), felt a divine calling to create a magazine that would share the Christian faith beyond church walls. An award-winning recent graduate of the University of Florida's School of Journalism, Strang had already earned a reputation for integrity and diligence in the newsroom—but his heart was gripped by a higher calling: to chronicle what the Holy Spirit was doing across the world. He envisioned a publication that would break down denominational walls, celebrate the gifts of the Spirit and showcase the supernatural move of God in modern times.

He approached leaders at Calvary Assembly of God in Winter Park, Florida, where he and his wife, Joy, were faithful members. The church agreed to underwrite the first six issues. And *Charisma* magazine was born.

The inaugural issue featured Thurlow Spurr, the church's minister of music, on the cover. Spurr challenged readers not to be judgmental about the emerging trend of "Jesus rock music," setting the tone for *Charisma's* forward-thinking

approach. The Strangs did not seek to create just another church publication. They wanted to launch a magazine that would serve as a voice for the growing charismatic movement—a publication that would boldly proclaim what Spirit-led living is, what the Spirit was doing in the world.



**The very first issue of Charisma magazine, August/September 1975.**

Operating initially with a tiny staff, *Charisma* quickly gained traction. Its early distribution was modest, but the response from readers across the nation was overwhelming. Letters poured in thanking the magazine for reporting on what traditional religious media often ignored. Within two years, the magazine moved to its own offices and began monthly circulation. From the very start, *Charisma* was more than a publication—it was a platform for revival.

## **Spirit-Led Reporting Through the Decades**

**The 1970s: Capturing the Jesus Movement** *Charisma's* early years coincided with the height of the Jesus Movement, a powerful revival that swept across the United States and drew a generation of young people to Christ. *Charisma* gave voice to this grassroots revival, providing a platform for emerging leaders and covering the explosive growth of charismatic worship, street evangelism and contemporary Christian music.

Figures like Kathryn Kuhlman, Derek Prince, and Arthur Blessitt graced the magazine's pages. Blessitt, known for carrying a cross through whole nations, exemplified the spirit of bold evangelism that *Charisma* was blessed to amplify. Readers were drawn to real stories of supernatural encounters, testimonies of healing and Spirit-led ministries that defied denominational boundaries.

*Charisma* also explored topics such as the baptism of the Holy Spirit, speaking in tongues and spiritual gifts in the

everyday life of believers. It helped report as much as it taught on issues that were often misunderstood or marginalized, if not outright ignored and rejected, in traditional denominations. By giving room to controversial yet Scriptural themes, *Charisma* carved out a unique space in the Christian media landscape that no other magazine was occupying at the time.

**The 1980s: Navigating Growth and Challenges** As the charismatic movement matured, the 1980s presented both opportunities and challenges. The magazine documented the rise of Christian television and the influence of televangelists such as Jim Bakker and Jimmy Swaggart. But it also served as a watchman on the wall, addressing scandals and excesses within the movement without flinching through seminal reporting by longtime *Charisma* voice, Jamie Buckingham.

*Charisma* covers topics including spiritual warfare, deliverance and prophetic ministry with theological depth and journalistic integrity. It sought to balance the excitement of revival with the caution of discernment. The magazine grew in influence, becoming a trusted voice not just for Pentecostals and charismatics, but for Spirit-filled believers across all denominational lines.

This decade also saw the launch of in-depth theological series and feature-length interviews with emerging leaders like Jack Hayford, John Wimber and Lester Sumrall. *Charisma* engaged with the broader evangelical world while maintaining its Spirit-led distinctiveness. As concerns about moral failure and theological drift crept into the wider charismatic landscape, *Charisma's* investigative journalism provided both accountability and restoration-minded truth.

**The 1990s: Embracing Digital Frontiers** The 1990s ushered in the exciting new era of the internet, in which *Charisma* expanded its reach through early digital initiatives. Recognizing the power of technology to amplify its mission,

*Charisma* launched *Charisma Online* and *Charisma News Service* in 1999, the present-day and . These platforms allowed real-time reporting of Spirit-filled events and prophetic insights, ensuring readers stayed connected with what God was doing globally.

This decade also saw *Charisma* deepen its coverage of global revival movements. From Toronto to Brownsville, the magazine sent correspondents to cover outpourings of the Holy Spirit that were transforming lives and challenging church norms. These revivals ignited a hunger for God's presence, and *Charisma* was there to report every flame.

The '90s also marked *Charisma's* growing engagement with issues such as spiritual formation, apologetics and cultural transformation. The magazine featured coverage of the Promise Keepers men's movement, renewal in mainline denominations and the blending of charismatic renewal with evangelical theology. These stories blessed reader with the breadth and depth of Spirit-led Christianity beyond emotional experiences alone.

**The 2000s: Diversifying and Deepening Impact** With the turn of the millennium came new challenges—and greater opportunities. In the late 1980s under the umbrella of Charisma Media, the company had expanded its operations to include book publishing, multimedia content and custom products for ministries. The vision that began with one magazine had now grown into a Spirit-led media company influencing millions. By the early 2000s through the Charisma House book imprint, the company published best-selling books such as *The Faith of George W. Bush* that reached beyond the pages of the magazine. Other bestsellers including 2012's *The Harbinger* by Jonathan Cahn, *The Bait of Satan* by John Bevere and *Prayers That Rout Demons*, by Apostle John Eckhardt, shaped the spiritual landscape of the day. These resources extended *Charisma's* prophetic voice and equipped believers to walk in the power of the Holy Spirit.

Meanwhile, the magazine continued to explore urgent themes such as prayer movements, national repentance and end-times prophecy. It featured interviews with leaders like Cindy Jacobs, Lou Engle and Reinhard Bonnke—champions of revival who called the church to action.

*Charisma* also amplified the voices of Spirit-led women, minorities and next-generation leaders. It boldly addressed controversial cultural issues like abortion, same-sex marriage and religious liberty from a biblical worldview, never retreating from the intersection of faith and public life.

This five-decade journey of coverage was not merely historical reflection—it is Spirit-guided journalism, rooted in the belief that God is still speaking and moving through His people today.

### **The Present and Future: Continuing the Mission**

Today, Charisma Media reaches millions through its books, online platforms, digital newsletters, MyCharisma app and podcasts. The mission God gave Stephen and Joy Strang in 1975 remains as powerful, inspirational and crystal-clear as ever—to report what the Holy Spirit is doing and help believers live Spirit-empowered lives.

*Charisma* is still the magazine about Spirit-led living. From coverage of revival breaking out on college campuses nationwide to analysis of cultural challenges facing today's church, *Charisma* continues to be a trusted source of Bible-grounded truth and Spirit-filled insight.

Charisma Media has become a digitally agile, multi-platform brand that leverages modern technology while staying soundly planted in its original call. Sites like and deliver fresh content daily, reaching the generations especially the growing Gen Z and Gen Alpha groups who consume media through phones and apps more than printed pages. The Charisma Podcast Network is thriving, featuring voices from the frontlines of ministry

and commentary from prophetic leaders.

The company has also invested in publishing resources for discipleship and spiritual formation, including the Modern English Version Bible introduced in 2014, along with a wide variety of devotionals, study Bibles and online teaching series. Its expanding presence on video platforms and social media channels reflects a determination to be where the people are—to meet them with the power of the Gospel, regardless of media.

*Charisma's* legacy is not a museum—it is a movement powered by Acts 2 Holy Spirit fire that burns as bright as ever. As the global church faces new challenges—from cultural hostility to spiritual confusion—*Charisma* is the prophetic voice and equipping center to unpack the messages behind the headlines.

As we commemorate 50 years of *Charisma*, we celebrate not just the past but the promise of what's to come. The Holy Spirit is not done moving, not even close. The church is not done growing. And *Charisma* is not done reporting.

We look to the next generation of Spirit-led writers, preachers, artists and visionaries to carry the torch. The same fire that sparked in a Florida church in 1975 roars today, fueled by obedience, passion and the breath of the Spirit.

May *Charisma* continue to be the watchman on the wall for the Pentecostal and charismatic movement and the body of Christ worldwide. May it never lose its prophetic edge, its journalistic integrity or its bold witness for Christ. And may the next 50 years be even more fruitful as we proclaim the works of the Lord to a world more in desperate need of His truth than ever.