

Revivalist: I Saw the Fire of God on the Baptismal Waters

Many of the people who filled Thrive Church in Apopka, Florida, on Memorial Day evening may have been at the beach earlier that day, but they brought beach towels to church for an altogether different purpose. They came to receive a touch from Holy Spirit in the waters of baptism on “Encounter Night.”

Kevin Craig, senior pastor of Thrive, an Assemblies of God congregation outside of Orlando, invited Todd Smith, senior pastor with his wife, Karen, of Christ Fellowship Church of Dawsonville, Georgia, to speak a second time at Thrive. When Smith visited and spoke at Thrive a month ago, a young man’s tumor disappeared, a healing that was later confirmed through a CT scan.

Smith appreciated that hundreds came on a holiday for Encounter Night.

“Revival does not follow our Western calendar,” said Smith, noting that he had seen the glory of God “intensify on special days” when people would show their commitment and come seeking a touch from God. He said he expected a “special outpouring” during the service.

Hundreds gathered Monday evening to hear Smith’s message of faith-building testimonies of the move of God in several locations where revival is breaking out, including the North Georgia Revival at the Smiths’ church, in other small- to medium-size churches and in a Messianic congregation, Beth Hallel, in Birmingham, Alabama. Smith also told of a church in Sulphur Springs, Texas, that had 60 prisoners enter the waters of baptism in their prison uniforms.

Smith said the North Georgia revival that started at his

church has now seen about 6,900 people from around the world baptized in water. Early on, he had seen a vision of the fire of God on the baptismal waters. He noted that other pastors had objected to believers being baptized again, but he believes God is simply using the water of baptism as “a point of contact” to move in the person’s life.

Smith also called the church out of carnality, saying our churches have become more “like carnivals.”

“When the church has gotten in trouble, they’ve made it about themselves,” he said, cautioning against being relevant in the culture.

He pointed to God as the only one who can come to the aid of the church and said, as a pastor, there was nothing he could do to help the people who came Monday night. God is seeking people who “will host His presence,” Smith said.

For a movement that has seen many miracles, Smith is not focused on these extraordinary acts of God.

“Very rarely do we even pray for miracles,” said Smith, because “miracles are not enough to sustain a move of God.”

Although many believers tend to focus on what happens when they receive a touch of the Holy Spirit, Smith advised a different perspective.

“Manifestation is not your validation,” he said. Manifestation “does not validate life change.”

He warned against “courtesy falls in the church” when people fake being slain in the Spirit, perhaps so as not to embarrass the minister praying for them.

Smith said people had lost their healing after three weeks because they did not “steward” well what God had given them.

“It was coming to Jesus because He had some goodies,” he

cautioned.

He pointed out it's also not only physical healing God accomplishes in the water. God may also be "going after" bitterness and unforgiveness in your heart, Smith said.

Before the people at Encounter Night entered the waters of baptism in an outdoor-type pool set up so more people could be baptized than in the church's regular baptismal, Smith advised them to enter "with fear and trembling." From young to old, they came to receive from the Lord in the pool, with a spirit of prayer in the house.

Watch the Encounter Night service [here](#).