

Stephen Strang: Outpourings Leading to the Asbury Revival

One of the things I have devoted my life to is reporting on the moves of the Holy Spirit. Across history, there have been innumerable moves of God, all of which can give historical perspective to the Asbury University revival happening today.

Jim Garlow says, “history is written in phases.” I’m breaking down some of those phases of America’s revival history, to give more perspective to Asbury and the start of the Third Great Awakening in my latest “Strang Report” podcast.

First Great Awakening

The First Great Awakening started around the 1730s and is often known by the famous sermon from Jonathan Edwards, “Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God.” Edwards depicted a spider being hung by a thread above hell and people were crying out in repentance.

Edwards later wrote how there needed to be a move of God because of the carnal ministers during the time period. He described ministers with hard hearts and fleshly appetites. I covered this in 1975 in an article that was published in the first issue of Charisma magazine.

During the “Bicentennial Era” (1971-1976), Americans gathered together to celebrate the 200th anniversary of the Declaration of Independence and the American Revolution. In the 1976 issue of the magazine, I speculated that it was the Great Awakening that set the stage for the independence of the colonies from England.

At the time of the Great Awakening, the colonies were not connected to one another and it was a struggle to even survive. This caused the new Americans to start believing in

something greater and more important than the crown in England. It was their faith and fervor to serve God that opened the door to revival.

Second Great Awakening

Later came the Second Great Awakening which started in 1795 to 1835 in Northern Kentucky just one hour north of Asbury University in Wilmore, Kentucky. Known as the Protestant religious revival on the frontier, people would go out into the woods to worship and preach. People came from all over the country. Reports of manifestations, people falling on the ground shaking came from that move of the Holy Spirit.

Holiness Movement

After the Civil War in 1861 came the Holiness Movement with a series of Methodist revivals. There was a deep fervor to not partake in the things of the world like dancing, gambling, drinking and smoking. Out of the Holiness Movement came a deep cry for God to send a revival and baptize people in the Holy Spirit.

Topeka, Kansas and the Azusa Street Revival

In 1900, the Topeka Kansas Outpouring set the stage for what later became the Azusa Street Revival. What started with Charles Parham and a group of students willing to sell everything to study the Bible and go to the ends of the earth led to an incredible encounter. Parham and the students read Acts 2 and went on a mission to find biblical proof of the baptism of the Holy Spirit and found it was always accompanied by speaking in other tongues.

During a prayer meeting one of the students, Agnes N. Ozman asked Parham to lay hands on her so she could be baptized in the Holy Spirit to become a missionary in a foreign land. A halo was described forming around her face and she started speaking in Chinese.

That little prayer meeting led to the Azusa Street Revival 10 years later. Led by William J. Seymour, a home group meeting on Bonnie Brae street became so packed people were hanging out the windows and a porch collapsed. Someone gave a prophetic word that God was going to take what happened in that house around the world.

The meeting moved to a larger location and people came from around the world. The revival got notoriety when a Los Angeles newspaper reporter showed up to cover the event thinking it was full of hysteria. A man stood up and said God was going to judge San Francisco and days later there was a large earthquake. People came from all over the railroad and received the baptism of the Holy Spirit.

Tent Revivals

After World War II, tent meetings were led by Oral Roberts in the beginning days of the charismatic movement. In the 1950's ordinary businessmen would come to the meetings and be touched by God. They would stand up and share their testimonies to the crowds. People were hungry and wanted to be touched by God.

Catholic Charismatic Renewal

In 1967 a group of Catholic students were praying and it later became known as the Catholic charismatic renewal. A history professor, William Storey, and a graduate student Ralph Kiefer were baptized in the Holy Spirit which led to a great outpouring. I was in college at the time and remember it being a renewal of the gifts of the Spirit.

Jesus Movement

Next came the Jesus Movement in 1970. A movie is coming out in a few days depicting what happened called the "Jesus Revolution." This movement greatly impacted my life and close friends of mine like Dr. Michael Brown. Before this revival, I had experienced a lot of legalism and was repelled by it. I

found a group of people who had a lot of excitement in their life and I became involved with the young people in the Jesus Movement.

Christians were skeptical at first of the hippies with long hair and funky clothes that had come off of drugs and given their lives to Jesus. Many of those hippies are now leaders in the church today.

The revival in Brownsville in 1995 in Pensacola, Florida started on Father's Day and people started flooding the altars. The revival went on night after night led by Evangelist Steve Hill.

There are many kinds of different revivals. There are mass movements that go on for hundreds of years or sometimes a week or two.

What is unique about the Asbury University revival is that it started as a chapel service and then it never stopped. There is no big evangelist or speaker, just hungry hearts and the presence of God. As you read through all of this revival history I pray it is stirring in you a hunger for more of God in your life. It has for me.

My new book "Spirit-Led Living in an Upside Down World" is available for pre-order and it's a book I had to dig deep for. It goes into greater depth on revival history and living by the power of the Holy Spirit. {eo}



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