

# 'Charisma' Magazine Celebrates 500th Issue

April 2019 will mark *Charisma* magazine's 500th issue. The magazine officially launched in August 1975, with Thurlow Spurr gracing the cover of the inaugural issue. This April, Hillsong's Brian Houston will smile back at readers. Stories in between have covered everyone from Kathryn Kuhlman to Oral Roberts, Mother Angelica to Donald Trump.

"I had a desire to write articles ... about what the Lord was doing," Stephen Strang, *Charisma's* founder and CEO shares in a new interview with publisher Dr. Steve Greene.

In 1975, Strang, a cub reporter at the *Orlando Sentinel*, knew he wanted more than what the newspaper could offer, so he spoke to his church leaders at Calvary Assembly of God in Orlando.

"Back in that day, that was the Jesus Movement Days, and the Jesus Movement people in different cities would have what we called 'Jesus newspapers.' Those were large black-and-white tabloids with testimonies and pictures, kind of the hippie style, which was in vogue at the time. I started publishing it for the church. Somebody else had started it, but it didn't amount to a whole lot, and I took it over and published a couple issues, and in the process, I got to know the printer and thought, 'Hey, I could do this [in a] magazine format!'" Strang says.

Thus *Charisma* was born.

"In the early days, I didn't have as much desire to succeed as I had a desire not to fail," Strang says.

What started as a bimonthly magazine is now a multimedia brand with printed magazines, websites, books, podcasts and more,

all geared to Spirit-filled believers.

“Most people in the Spirit-filled church are sincere people trying to follow God, trying to hear from the Holy Spirit, trying to follow the Bible, trying to do good in their communities, trying to raise their families and vote the right way, and all those kinds of things,” Strang says. “Are they perfect? No, but many of them are on fire for God. They take their Christianity seriously. They are givers. And you know, the media kind of portrays all of us like a bunch of buffoons and Elmer Gantry-type people. That’s not true at all. So we serve that community.”

How did *Charisma* grow? What were some of the biggest challenges the company faced? How did the Strangs pursue God through it all? Strang answers these questions and more in the podcast. Check it out.

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## **Denver Airport’s Gargoyle Welcomes Travelers to the ‘Illuminati Headquarters’**

Denver International Airport has just installed a brand-new animatronic talking gargoyle statue that is making fun of the “conspiracy theories” about the airport. As you can see in this video, the animatronic statue is incredibly lifelike, and it must have cost a fortune to create. The airport claims that the goal is to get more people to travel through Denver, but the truth is that when you are booking a flight there really isn’t much choice.

Denver is one of the main national hubs for air traffic, and I

have personally changed planes there countless times. Nobody is going to add extra time to their flight plans just to go through Denver if they don't need to do so. In the end, this sort of a promotion is very funny, but it isn't going to change consumer behavior. So is there something else going on? Could it be possible that they are attempting to use humor to mask what is really going on at the airport?

Needless to say, a lot of travelers are absolutely stunned when this gargoyle statue suddenly comes to life and starts chatting with them. The following comes from Fox News:

*On Thursday, reps for DEN unveiled the chatty creature, perched in the main terminal, in honor of the airport's 24th year in operation, the Atlanta Journal-Constitution reports. The airport shared video footage of the eloquent gargoyle surprising passersby to YouTube, where it has since gone viral with over 70,000 views.*

*"Welcome to the Illuminati Headquarters, I mean, Denver International Airport!" the gargoyle exclaims, shocking travelers.*

*"You know, you can actually put the phone down and have a conversation with me," the creature—which claims to be 243 years old—chides a "Millennial" on their cell phone.*

The video now has well over 200,000 views, and if you have not seen it yet you can find it here.

As funny as that talking gargoyle is, let us not forget that there are some legitimate mysteries surrounding this airport. The following comes from an article by Stefan Stanford:

*While the entire island of Manhattan, one of the most densely populated cities in the country and home to more than 1.6 million people, sits on square miles of land, the Denver International Airport itself is more than twice the size of*

*Manhattan island at square miles. In fact, as the Denver Channel reports, the DIA is also bigger than the cities of San Francisco and Miami as well. All that size just for an airport?*

*Easily the largest airport in America and by far dwarfing its nearest competition at Chicago's O'Hare, Atlanta's Hartsfield and New York's JFK by some 25,000 acres, DIA has also long been in the public's eye as potentially being much more than just an airport.*

*Containing swastika shaped runways, apocalyptic, end-of-the-world artwork throughout the airport, infamous construction problems which delayed the opening of the airport for years, gargoyles sitting within suitcases on the walls and the demonic blue horse that sits outside of the airport nicknamed 'Blucifer' due to its haunting red eye, that "piece of art" actually fell upon and killed the artist who was creating it being just a few of the very incredibly strange things and events surrounding this airport.*

*And as this October of 2016 story over at the Denver Post reports, due to the mysterious time-capsule "capstone" that sits at the airport which references a "New World Airport Commission," something that doesn't even exist, the mystery surrounding the airport continues to grow.*

And on top of everything else, they have now given us a talking gargoyle.

I don't know if we'll ever get the full truth about Denver International Airport, but there are legitimate questions that need to be answered, and right now, all they are giving us are humorous distractions.

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# Jim and Lori Bakker: Franklin Graham Told Us His Father's Death Unleashed All the Demons of Hell

Jim and Lori Bakker say that after the death of Billy Graham, his son Franklin Graham told them his death meant that all the demons of hell have been unleashed. The Bakkers made this claim on a recent episode of *The Jim Bakker Show*, during a segment about how Revelation 12 explains the current anti-preacher, anti-Israel sentiment gripping the world.

The Bakkers say that while they were at Billy Graham's funeral, they went to Franklin Graham's office with their son Ricky.

In the clip, Lori says, "He locked eyes with you, [Jim,] and you asked him, you said, 'Franklin, what do you believe the passing of your daddy means?' They call him 'Daddy,' Franklin and his sisters and brother. And Franklin locked eyes with you, Jim—he didn't look to me, he didn't look to Ricky, he looked to you—and he said, 'Jim, now is the time to stand. The passing of my father means all the demons of hell have been unleashed.'" (During the video, a slightly different quote by Graham is displayed, which says, "My father's passing signals a change. The demons of hell are going to be unleashed.")

Jim Bakker added, "[Franklin] said the devil is being cast into the world, and this is the time—Revelation 12. And this is what's going on: good is evil, evil's good."

Watch the full clip [here](#).

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# Is 'Captain Marvel' Safe for Christian Families?

Over the weekend, *Captain Marvel*—the first Marvel superhero movie centered on a woman—debuted in theaters, and it's expected to make plenty of money at the box office. But is the latest superhero blockbuster safe for families? Plugged In breaks it down in this video review, noting that while the film features plenty of positives—like heroism and self-sacrifice—it also features downsides in the form of violence and language.

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# Chinese Authorities Blow Up Popular Megachurch

Chinese authorities blew up a well-known Christian megachurch earlier this year, inflaming long-standing tensions between religious groups and the Communist Party.

Witnesses and overseas activists said the paramilitary People's Armed Police used dynamite and excavators to destroy the Golden Lampstand Church, which has a congregation of more than 50,000, in the city of Linfen in Shanxi province, .

The newspaper reports that ChinaAid, a US-based Christian advocacy group, said local authorities planted explosives in an underground worship hall to demolish the building following, constructed with nearly \$ (£) in contributions from

local worshippers in one of China's poorest regions.

The church had faced "repeated persecution" by the Chinese government, said ChinaAid. Hundreds of police and hired thugs smashed the building and seized Bibles in an earlier crackdown in 2009 that ended with the arrest of church leaders.

Those church leaders were given prison sentences of up to seven years for charges of illegally occupying farmland and disturbing traffic order, according to state media.

There are an estimated 60 million Christians in China, many of whom worship in independent congregations like the Golden Lampstand. Millions of Christians, Buddhists and Muslims also worship in state-sanctioned assemblies.

But the surging popularity of non-state-approved churches has raised the ire of authorities, wary of any threats to the officially atheist Communist Party's rigid political and social control.

Freedom of religion is guaranteed under China's constitution, so local authorities are often seen as using technicalities to attack unregistered churches. Charges of land or building violations and disturbing the peace are among the most common.

The state-run *Global Times* newspaper reported the official reason for the demolition was the building did not hold the necessary permits.

"A Christian offered his farmland to a local Christian association, and they secretly built a church using the cover of building a warehouse," a government department official was quoted as saying.

Religious groups must register with local religious affairs authorities under Chinese law, the report said, adding the church was illegally constructed nearly a decade ago in violation of building codes.

Pictures distributed by ChinaAid showed the church's steeple and cross toppled in a large pile of rubble.

"The repeated persecution of Golden Lampstand Church demonstrates that the Chinese government has no respect for religious freedom or human rights," said ChinaAid president and founder Bob Fu.

He added: "ChinaAid calls on the international community to openly condemn the bombing of this church building and urge the Chinese government to fairly compensate the Christians who paid for it and immediately cease these alarming demolitions of churches."

A pastor at a nearby church, who spoke on condition of anonymity, said he saw large numbers of paramilitary police on Tuesday surrounding the area around the church, which was being taken apart by heavy machinery. He later heard a loud explosion.

The Golden Lampstand Church was built by husband and wife evangelists Wang Xiaoguang and Yang Rongli as a permanent home for their followers.

The couple had been preaching around Linfen since 1992, establishing congregations in improvised spaces such as factory dormitories and greenhouses.

Though authorities did not block the church's construction, they later cracked down on it, and the couple and other church leaders were sent to prison.

ChinaAid said authorities also demolished a Catholic church in Xi'an, the capital of Shaanxi province, on Dec. 27. Officials smashed crosses and confiscated statues, the Eucharistic altar and other religious artifacts as they demolished the building with heavy machinery, the organization said.

The demolition prompted more 100 church members to protest in

front of government offices this week. {eoa}

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## **Radical Islamists Slaughter at Least 40 Christians in Latest Attacks**

Fulani herdsmen have killed at least 32 people in an attack on a Christian area of north-central Nigeria on Feb. 26, sources said.

The early morning assault on villages in and around Maro, in Kajuru County of Kaduna state, came after a Feb. 10 herdsmen attack on Angwan Barde, in the same county that killed 10 Catholic Christians along with an unborn child.

In the attack in Maro, the Fulani herdsmen also damaged church buildings and property, and the Evangelical Church Winning All (ECWA) reported that many of its missionaries working among the area Adara (known as Kadara by the Hausa) and Katari ethnic groups have been displaced.

A boarding school for the missionaries' children in Kufana town has been closed, said the Rev. Bakari Ibrahim, director of the ECWA's Evangelical Missionary Society (EMS).

"Please pray for peace in Kaduna state—hundreds have been displaced and hundreds killed by the Fulani jihadists," he told Morning Star News in a text message. "We evacuated about hundred EMS kids from Kufana for safety. Many of our missionaries working among the Kadara tribe and some in Katari

areas have been displaced. Please keep praying for our nation.”

A women’s fellowship leader of the ECWA congregation in Maro who requested anonymity told Morning Star News that women were meeting at the church building when the herdsmen invaded.

“We ran out of the church building as the shooting was going on,” she said on Tuesday (Feb. 26). “Many have been killed, and I have not seen my family members since morning. I have escaped out of the area.”

Other messages to Morning Star News reflected similar alarm. “The armed herdsmen are shooting anyone they see and are setting fire on houses and church buildings,” one Christian who requested anonymity said by phone.

Another survivor wrote in a text message, “There is an outbreak of violent attacks ongoing at Maro in Kajuru LG [Local Government Area] of Kaduna state. The people are in serious distress right now.”

Area resident Mordecai Funom Ibrahim wrote in a text message that about 400 armed Fulanis attacked villages around Maro at about 6 a.m. Another resident pleaded, “Can the governor of Kaduna state send security personnel to Karamai in Maro of Kajuru Local Government Area, there’s an ongoing attack by Fulani gunmen on Christians.”

Blogger Mercy Musa Swanta of Kaduna state wrote on Facebook that local residents offered some defense.

“The villagers stood against the Fulani who came fully clothed in military uniform,” she wrote. “But they had to withdraw due to high number and superior firepower of the Fulani. Mobile policemen came but also retreated, one operation Yaki [police] vehicle burnt. Military now engaging the Fulani. Battle still going on. Casualties unknown but could be high.”

At least 32 bodies had reportedly been buried at this writing, including that of a policeman, with many Christian residents still unaccounted for.

A spokesman for the governor said the government was saddened by the attack and that security agencies were working to contain the aggression in Kajuru and neighboring Kachia County.

### **Attack in Angwan Barde**

The Feb. 10 Muslim Fulani herdsmen attack on Angwan Barde that killed 11 people wounded five others, residents said.

Survivors told Morning Star News that armed herdsmen in large numbers surrounded the village at about 11 p.m. that Sunday night. Area resident Ja'afaru Samaila, 21, said by phone that the herdsmen killed five members of his family.

"We heard gun shots, and this forced me and my family to remain in our bedrooms as it was difficult for us to run out of the house," he told Morning Star News. "The Fulani gunmen surrounded our house and were shooting and shouting, '*Allahu akbar* [God is greater].' They killed my father, mother, two brothers and one of my sisters-in-law."

The village head of Angwan Barde, Daniel Audu, 48, told Morning Star News by phone that the attack came as a surprise as they've never had any problems with the herdsmen.

"We have never had any misunderstanding with the Fulani herdsmen, so I don't know why they attacked our village," Audu said. "Ten members of my community, including a pregnant woman, were killed during the attack, thus making the unborn child to be the 11th victim."

He identified those killed as John Abbah, Moses Kabiru, Philemon Gomna, Samaila Jonathan, Maria Abbah, Ladi Samaila, Mairo Daniel, Marvelous Daniel, John Samaila and Joseph

Samaila, along with the unborn baby.

Christians make up 51.3 percent of Nigeria's population, while Muslims living primarily in the North and Middle Belt account for 45 percent.

Nigeria ranked 12th on Open Doors' 2019 World Watch List of countries where Christians suffer the most persecution. {eoa}

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## **2 Things to Consider If You've Received This Common Prophetic Word**

If God promotes you, you better be ready for what's coming your way.

"Humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time" (1 Pet. 5:6).

One of the most common prophetic words in the various prophetic streams (whether real or fabricated) has to be, "Your promotion is coming!" It's probably as popular as, "This is your season of open doors!"

I believe God does plan promotion for all who are truly humble and surrendered. Yet, the promotion may not be what a particular human heart desires. There are many who crave promotion onto the platform, while God's assignment is promotion into the prayer room. Others desire promotion unto notoriety. God may desire to promote them unto obscurity as

part of a nameless, faceless generation.

It's critical we handle spiritual advance with wisdom and care. Promotion is all about God's will for our lives and not our own.

I'd like to do two things regarding your passion for promotion in the spirit:

1. Encourage you
2. Caution you

## **Be Encouraged!**

Several years ago, I was in an exciting and very active season of ministry in the Detroit area. I had planted a prophetic and prayer-focused ministry there, and I was contending for revival corporately and also for personal growth so I could be ready and equipped to lead with strength.

Whenever I have an opportunity to step away from the pulpit and get refreshed at a conference or another church service, I typically like to find a place in the back to let God minister to me during worship and the teaching. Some friends from my church and I decided to check out The River, a church led by Marlin Reid, a revival-minded pastor in the region. He was hosting Jeff Jansen, whom I had never had the opportunity to see minister.

As I sat on the floor in the back of the conference center at the Southfield Westin Hotel, God and I had an interesting dialogue. He had impressed on my heart that promotion was coming, and I probed Him with questions about just how something like that happens. What was my responsibility? How should I prepare? Was I doing anything wrong? What was the timing? What exactly is the purpose of a promotion anyway? As I sat there enjoying both the service and the conversation the Lord and I were having, God spoke very simply, yet very clearly: "I am going to show you how easy and how quickly

promotion will come." I was intrigued.

At the end of the service, several hundred people were stirring around, and I headed for the door to go home. Pastor Marlin, whom I had met only briefly at the beginning of the service, called out to me before I could leave the building. He wanted to introduce me to Jeff Jansen before I left. Leaving three or four hundred people behind, Marlin led me into the hallway and then into an elevator. Next in were Jeff Jansen and two others. Pastor Marlin said his goodbyes and returned to the conference room as the four of us shot up to the top floor of the Westin. We entered Jeff's suite, where there was a chef and a spread of food ready for us.

We sat at the table, and Jeff immediately started prophesying over me. His accuracy was stunning as he saw me writing books and ministering powerfully through articles and other writings. Remember, we had never met, and he had no idea I had written several books. He then took some heavy gem stones out of his pocket and put them into my hands. He revealed that they were the stones that famously and miraculously manifested as the glory of God came down during some previous meetings.

Suddenly, in the midst of this remarkable setting, God spoke to me. He reminded me that he told me mere minutes ago that he was going to show just how easy and quick promotion can come.

Just moments ago, I was about to walk into the parking lot to drive home. I was suddenly diverted and out of at least a few hundred people, I was chosen along with two others to meet with the man of God. I was "promoted" to the top floor of the hotel in mere seconds, was seated at an exclusive table and had my ministry confirmed in powerful ways. That encounter was a real-life object lesson that God used to encourage me. When it's time for promotion, it will come.

Since then, I've written over two hundred articles for Charisma Media, have written a total of 10 books and continue

to see doors open like the Elijah List and other media outlets. Favor truly follows this ministry, and I'm humbled.

Of course, the promotion is not simply a natural one. It's spiritual. I've watched God work wonders in our ministry, and I'm eager to continue to be available as a vessel. Our God is amazing, and we have barely begun to see what he has prepared for us!

## **Use Caution!**

*Now when the Philistines heard that David had been anointed king over all Israel, all the Philistines went up to seek out David, but David heard and went out to them (1 Chron. 14:8).*

The moment you are anointed, promoted into your next position in the Spirit, the enemy is sure to be alerted. The purpose of this segment on using caution is not to instill fear in you, but rather to cause you to understand the weight of what comes with promotion. It's laughable to think pastors and leaders have an easy, favored life on the platform. The assaults that come with promotion and leadership in the church are beyond the scope of what most could understand.

If pastors and leaders were honest, many would admit to being hunted and haunted by a very real demonic horde. Many experience emotional disturbances, mental disorientation and spiritual desperation. Curses are strategically directed at them both by the world and the church. The arrows that stick in their backs are sharp and difficult to remove, yet they power on, devoted to the call God has on their lives.

Your passion for promotion very well may have been deposited into your spirit by God, and if it was, you can be sure that the Holy Spirit will lead you and guide you, even though the journey will often be very painful and lonely. You absolutely must use caution in the process. Getting ahead of God or lingering behind would be bad ideas.

For those who are simply enamored by the supposed glamour and glory of ministry, pursuing promotion is absolutely a bad idea. You have no clue what you are asking for. It would be much better for you to step back, seek the Lord and learn to enjoy the position he has assigned you to. Leadership in God's kingdom comes with an extreme price, and unless you are truly called of God to assume that position, you will be assaulted by an otherworldly fury that you cannot defend.

If you are assigned by God, get ready. You must use great wisdom as you navigate the battleground God is leading you into. Above, I shared the first part of 1 Chronicles 14:8. There's a little more to that verse, and in it we see the spirit of a warrior:

*Now when the Philistines heard that David had been anointed king over all Israel, all the Philistines went up to seek out David, but David heard and went out to them.*

David heard about it and went out to meet his enemies. He was ready and full of faith. This is where we can first see the difference between those who are truly called and the pretenders. Those who crave promotion but are not called will not be anointed or empowered by God to advance against the enemy. Fear will keep them away, while God's promoted and anointed leaders will run to the battle! David is quite famous for this:

"When the Philistine arose and came near to meet David, David hurried and ran toward the battle line to meet the Philistine" (1 Sam. 17:48).

Now, it's important, again, that caution is heeded. When we as leaders advance, we can't be presumptive or casual. We must continually seek God for direction, wisdom, revelation and clarity. David did just this.

*So the Philistines came and raided the Valley of Rephaim.*

*Then David inquired of the Lord, saying, "Should I go up against the Philistines? Will You give them into my hand?"*

*The Lord answered, "Go up against them, and I will give them into your hand (1 Chron. 14:9-10).*

David inquired of the Lord and received an affirmative response. Yes, it's time to advance. His obedience in both hearing God and in responding rightly resulted in victory.

*And they went up to Baal Perazim, and David struck them down there. Then David said, "God broke through my enemies by my hand as the breaking through of waters." Therefore they named that place Baal Perazim. They abandoned their gods there, and David said that they should be burned with fire (1 Chron. 14:11-12).*

Yet, we see God's answer is different at the next provocation of the enemy.

*Now the Philistines raided the valley once more. And David again inquired of God, and God answered him: "Do not go up after them, but turn around behind them and come to them in front of the balsam trees. Whenever you hear the sound of marching in the tops of the balsam trees, you will advance the battle, for God has gone out before you to strike the camp of the Philistines." David did just as God commanded him, and they struck the camp of the Philistines from Gibeon as far as Gezer (1 Chron. 14:13-16).*

This time God had different and more precise commands. David responded rightly, and another promotion came.

"So the fame of David went out in all the lands, and the Lord put the dread of him on all the nations" (1 Chron. 14:17).

## **Trust God's Plan for Your Life**

Promotion as we see in David's life is a very serious thing indeed. We can't casually, lightly pray for promotion to come. When we do, demons will catch the scent and will pursue you with vengeance. If God is with you, and you are responding to His directives, you will still have to fight, and the war will be intense, but the victory will be yours.

If your promotion results from selfish ambition, look out. It's not God who has elevated you, but you have propped yourself up—perfectly in line of sight of the enemy.

If I were you, I'd duck.

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## **The Spirit Told Me, 'My Baptism of Fire Was Never Meant to Stop'**

There's nothing like a quick spiritual trip down memory lane where, years ago, you had an encounter with God that you tucked deep into the recesses of your heart. I have one of my own that I would like to share with you.

I sat, completely soaked with bubbling, hot water surrounding me, physically unable to get up. In actuality, I didn't want to move at all, nor did our deacons, the married couple sitting across from me. We were all sitting in a hot tub—our makeshift baptismal tank—located in the corner of the small church that I pastored.

What started out as a Sunday baptismal service ended later that day with a baptism of fire. During the baptismal, we

began to immerse a heavyset man, one of us on each side of the tub to support him, when he was instantly hit by the power of God. It was like a live electrical wire was plugged into the bottom of the hot tub. My other deacon tried to pull the man up out of the water, and he got pummeled by the power of God! Into the tub he went—as “drunk” as one could get. I jumped into this little four-person hot tub to save them both, and I got struck by the power of God too.

There we were, the three of us under the heaviness of the Spirit in a hot tub on a day that was supposed to be a normal Sunday baptismal service. Other people began to feel led to be re-baptized while the fire of God was present, and by the end of the day, my wife was in the water along with other church members, as “drunk in the Holy Ghost” as you can imagine. I specifically remember one man who jumped up out of the pew in their Sunday best, kicked off his shoes and practically dove into the tank. The Spirit of God began to move over this man, and he wept as his body was shaking under the power of God. Hours passed, and with carpet soaked and mounds of wet towels all over the church sanctuary, the Spirit of God was still dousing us with His power while we were driving home—completely amazed at what we had just experienced.

“John answered them all, ‘I indeed baptize you with water. But One mightier than I is coming, the strings of whose shoes I am not worthy to untie. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire’” (Luke 3:16).

Fast forward to a few days ago:

I heard of the recent tornadoes that ripped through Alabama and Georgia, killing several on its way. (Our hearts and prayers go out to those who lost loved ones in those storms.) I have pastor friends in both states, so I texted some of them. My good friend, evangelist Johnny Taylor, responded, and this is how our conversation went:

My text: Johnny. You OK? Tornadoes in GA?

Johnny's Text: Just left speaking and awesome service. Was in baptismal pool until 5:20 am this morning ...

It was about 6 a.m. when we were texting back and forth. The Spirit of God was dealing with me as I looked at Johnny's text, recalling 20 years ago when I was in a baptism tank under the glory of God, unable to get up. At the moment God's Spirit whispered to me, "My baptism of fire was *never* supposed to stop!"

Johnny had been speaking at the North Georgia Revival when this happened and, according to the pastor, this water baptism outpouring began in the beginning of 2018 through a 21-day fast. This pastor had been praying and walking through the sanctuary when he saw an open vision of fire burning on the water of the baptism tank, like gasoline on top of water. At that moment, God spoke to him saying, "I'm going to baptize people with Holy Spirit fire." The fire came into the church building, and two and a half months later, they started spontaneous baptism. At the time of writing this article, they have baptized over 5,000 people, along with several documented cases of healing.

As I was on the phone with this pastor, he shared story after story of divine healings that had just been reported to him over the past several weeks. This is how it is supposed to be. The fire was never supposed to stop! This baptism of fire is supposed to be a normal walk of life for every Christian believer.

"But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you. And you shall be My witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth" (Acts 1:8).

This word power is from the word "*dunamis*," which is where we get the word "dynamite." Dynamite is designed to blast away heavy rock in order to unearth large sections of mountain or

ground. Dynamite, however, isn't what Jesus was intending here. He wasn't referring to you receiving "dynamite power" when the Spirit comes upon you. Instead, He was referring to you receiving "locomotive power" when His Spirit rests on you. This is an ever-increasing, consistently growing, Spirit of the living God who transforms us from the inside out. It is this locomotive power, an enduring spiritual strength that starts out slow and consistently matures and grows in the supernatural to transform someone forever. It's not a dynamite type of blast that leaves a crater in the ground, just a memory or feel-good moment of our past. No. His fire is supposed to increase in power so the next generation can experience it themselves.

God never called us to live spiritually dry lives. He never asked His church to go through extended seasons of spiritual dehydration. He is longing for the days of fire to rest upon His people. He is whispering sounds of refreshing all over the earth right now. God is calling His remnant forward, never to turn back. He is leading people into fresh baptisms of fire. Once touched by these flames, you will never want to go back!  
{eoa}

**Andy Sanders** *has been speaking for 25 years. He has traveled extensively around the U.S. and other parts of the world. He is a prolific writer who carries both a prophetic and leadership-type message to the church. Sanders has a B.A. from Central Bible College and a master's and doctorate in Christian education from Freedom Seminary, graduating with honors. He is married to Cathy, and their family resides in Syracuse, New York.*

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# How Holy-Spirit Baptism Lets You See Like Jesus Sees

We previously explored the revelation that in the Garden of Eden, Adam and Eve were able to see into the supernatural world naturally. They walked with God in the cool of the day and could easily interact with spiritual beings in the spiritual realm (see Gen. 3).

However, as a consequence of the fall and sin, as Adam and Eve's descendants we have been born into the illusion that the confines of this four-dimensional matrix are actually a limit to us. We wrongly conclude that our world is only made up of what our natural eyes see and our physical ears hear, and therefore mistakenly assume we can no longer engage the supernatural realm as Adam and Eve did.

If the story ended there, it would be fairly depressing. Thankfully, we can fast forward through the timeline of history and find the one other human being in all of Scripture who had a similar long-ranging conversation with the devil, just like Eve had. Jesus is the one who escaped the matrix, and He showed us how to break free too.

We all know about Jesus' temptation in the wilderness. His back-and-forth dialogue with the devil was essentially a repeat of the Garden of Eden's temptation. This in itself is significant. But the question I want to address right now is this: How could Jesus see Satan so well? Nobody had seen into the Spirit like that since Adam and Eve cut themselves off from the supernatural realm by choosing self and sin over the Spirit.

## Who Jesus Was Waiting For

To discover our answer, we must look at what happened right before Jesus and the devil's interaction. What made it

possible for Him to see into the spirit realm?

This is the cool part. We find the secret in Mark 1:9 where we learn that Jesus had just been baptized by Holy Spirit. Wow! Scripture clearly explains the unfolding of events in that as soon as Jesus was baptized by the Spirit, *then* He saw the heavens opening and He saw the Spirit (Mark 1:10). This is the first time in any of the gospels we have a record of Jesus seeing anything come from heaven.

And not only was He seeing things from the spirit realm, He was now hearing them too. In verse 11 it says that Jesus "a voice came from heaven, saying, 'You are My beloved Son in whom I am well pleased.'" Again, this is *the first time* we have a record in any of the Gospels of Jesus hearing His Father's voice.

In a way, we can imagine it to be something like night-vision goggles which enable you to see things you otherwise wouldn't be able to. That is a simple picture of what Holy Spirit's baptism did for Jesus. It reversed what happened in Eden. In Eden, their eyes had been opened to the natural realm and closed to the spirit realm, but now through the Holy Spirit, the eyes of His heart were opened and He could see clearly into the supernatural world.

Jesus was not only hearing things in the spirit and seeing things in the spirit, but He was now able to be led by the Spirit too. The very next verse tells us He was compelled by the Spirit to go into the wilderness (Mark 1:12).

And how do we know for sure that the supernatural world was now accessible to Him? How do we know that He was truly seeing in the spirit and experiencing that realm? Because Jesus then proceeded to have His long-ranging back and forth conversation with the devil (see Matt. 4:1-11). Not only that, but He was then ministered to by angels as well (Mark 1:13).

Fallen angels, faithful angels, His Father's voice, the

heavens opening—Jesus was made aware of all of these things. It is as if a switch were flipped as the eyes of His heart were enlightened and He was now able to see clearly what had been there all along.

And when did this happen? How did this happen? The supernatural realm was opened to Jesus when He was baptized by Holy Spirit.

## **Back to Eden**

We know from Scripture that this is what He was waiting on. Because immediately after that is when Jesus—after 30 years of doing not much of anything we know of—is finally ready for ministry. *This* is what He had been waiting for. We're back to the Garden of Eden! We're connected to the spirit world again!

We can almost feel the excitement in Jesus' powerful declaration, recorded in the very next verses of that passage (Mark 1:14-15). "Game on, guys! I'm ready! I'm seeing in the supernatural realm, I'm hearing from heaven, I'm being led by the Spirit. This can only mean one thing ...

"The kingdom of God is at hand!" {eoa}

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# Decorated Olympian Kelly Clark Opens Up About Her Walk With God in New Interview

Professional snowboarder Kelly Clark hadn't kicked around a soccer ball since high school. Yet on a hot August day in Zambia, dust and laughter filled the air as she played with the children.

"It was really fun, and I loved the aspect of looking around at all of us adults and having the kids run circles around us," she says. "We all enjoyed it and enjoyed the final score as well—we didn't even have a chance."

Kelly, 35, has been on the U.S. snowboard team for 20 years, and her professional accomplishments include three Olympic medals across five Olympic Games, 14 X Games medals and 22 World Cup podium appearances. On top of all that, she was the first woman to land a 1080 in competition and is still one of only a few women who can do the trick.

Despite her athletic accomplishments, Kelly's faith fuels a desire to help others, so she found herself "getting ruined by a bunch of 9-year-olds" in Zambia, where she traveled in August 2018 with World Vision to visit her sponsored child, Naomi.

"I brought her a soccer ball, a soccer pump and some Polaroid photos of my dog and me, which is my current family situation," Kelly says. "I've been really impressed by how easy World Vision makes it for you to engage with your sponsored child."

She was able to witness World Vision's work up close, which is something she plans to become more involved with since announcing her retirement from professional snowboarding.

World Vision spoke with Kelly about her experience visiting Africa and what's next after snowboarding. This interview has been edited for grammar and clarity.

### **What was it like visiting World Vision's work in Zambia?**

*It's incredible when you walk up to the village and you see women carrying their life source (water) on their heads with these 5-gallon buckets and hearing the stories of how many problems the simplicity of clean water can solve—from hygiene to nourishment.*

*The most impactful part of the clean water story was knowing that at a certain age, the young women would have to choose between continuing to get water for their family and getting an education—and knowing that doesn't have to be a choice anymore is the most powerful revelation I had about how important it is. When would we ever think, I'm going to choose between having clean water and going to school? That's so far from our paradigm that we don't realize the real benefit a well can make in a community.*

*Hats off to them—no pun intended. I tried it, and trying to carry water on your head is quite a learned skill. I need to spend some more time with it, and I don't even think my bucket was half full. It's a different culture, but it was amazing to be part of it and participate in it a little bit and hear their stories.*

### **How did these stories impact your mindset?**

*After being there and seeing how transformative the programming is for these communities, I was amazed at how easy it was to make a difference in someone's life. You can make a difference and see the difference you're making through the interaction with your child and even making a simple donation on the [World Vision] website.*

*I was on a walk with a friend when I returned, and I was sharing about my trip, and she said, "I home-school my girls, and for Giving Tuesday, we always pick a charity because we want to help them learn, invest and donate to something good." Even in looking at the Gift Catalog website, I said, "Oh, this is for you—the girls are going to be able to learn and see the impact they're making because the website is so interactive and engaging. It helps anyone engage with the child they sponsor, even though we're thousands of miles away." For my friend's kids, they can't travel to Africa, but they can learn what a difference giving a goat to someone is going to make.*

**Why were you interested in seeing World Vision's work in Zambia?**

*I've been chasing winter around the world probably the last 15 years. Most of my summers are spent training for winter. I head to the Southern Hemisphere every North American summer and find winter and train for a few months. Even in the fall, the whole snowboard team went to Switzerland to get on a glacier for six weeks before the North American winter flies. I can't describe how full my schedule is with dry-land training and on-snow training.*

*So the timing seemed perfect for me to do this type of trip because I've never had time in my schedule for something like this. If I was in a training season of life, this trip would have been out of the question. When the opportunity came up to go to Zambia, I was in a transition season after my last Olympic Games, and I was looking to engage parts of my heart I haven't engaged before, and I thought, What a cool opportunity for me to get outside my box and experience something I've never experienced.*

**Do you hope to do more things like that in your retirement?**

*Yes. I've done passion really well. I've had the privilege of pursuing my dreams, and I've found a lot of fulfillment, and I've found a lot of great moments of walking out my Christian life with the Lord. In those moments of pursuing all that's in my heart, I've found that it's not what's in your heart—God just wants your heart.*

*But I began asking myself, beyond passion, what am I compassionate about? Without being too religious, passion can be self-serving, and compassion has a lot more to do with serving other people. I'm in a transition in my life that as I approach retirement from one career, I'm asking myself, what am I compassionate about? What does pull on my heart? What can I give my life to that goes beyond myself? Even in my snowboarding career, I've always had a value to leave the sport better than it was. I've approached it with a desire to contribute instead of just take, and make sure snowboarding was better because I was part of it.*

*It's not like it's a totally new concept for me, but I am in the process of trying to figure out what compassion looks like for me. What does God's heart of compassion look like for people? When this trip came up, I jumped at it because it's a great opportunity to catch a glimpse into God's heart for people.*

**You also caught a glimpse into your sponsored child's world. What was it like to meet her?**

*A lot of people have the opportunity to sponsor a child and do a lot of really great work, and they never get the opportunity to have that face-to-face moment. I was grateful to be able to put a face and experience to a name I see and donate to.*

*One of the most moving parts of the trip for me was hearing a mother say, "There aren't enough ways to say thank you for what you've done." It was overwhelming.*

*To see Naomi, her family, school and community—you don't think you have an opportunity to make a difference—and by sponsoring her and meeting her, I can see [and say], "Wow, I get to make a difference in at least one person's life and one family's life." If nothing else, I can feel like I'm making a difference, and I'm stewarding what I have really well, and I get to change someone's life for the better.*

**When you say stewardship, what does that mean to you?**

*I'm in a performance culture where people are always trying to be successful. I compete for a living. I'm at a contest every weekend fighting for the top spot on the podium. On some level, whether it's at the Olympics or in a business, we're all in a performance culture and striving to be successful in our own ways. I've always found that a good definition of success is simply being faithful, and that's what I look to for stewardship.*

*I say, "What have I been given, what have I invested that in, and what am I going to be faithful with?" Stewardship for me is being faithful with what I've been given, and if I've been given resources, given opportunity and given a platform, I want to look back and say, "Wow, I didn't invest it in things that won't produce results—I invested in something that's going to matter, that will outlast my ability to perform, that will outlast my ability to be on this earth." I want to make sure I'm doing something with what I've been given and not just sitting on it, not just protecting it, not just investing it in myself.*

**You've had a chance to inspire so many people for two decades. As you transition into retirement, how do you feel God wants to use you moving forward?**

*I've had it in my heart to write for a long time. A few years back, I finally met the right people who could help*

*facilitate that dream. I spent a few years investing in this writing project for this book that I just released—called *Inspired: Pursuit of Progress*—and I like to believe it's the first of many writing projects for me.*

### **Can you tell us more about your book?**

*It's not an autobiography, but I call it autobiographical. It's not a faith-based book—I wanted to make it approachable, so if people didn't think like me, look like me, believe in the same things as me, they could read my book and still receive from it. It's super transparent. It's vulnerable to some degree, but it's also liberating to some degree because I can finally say, after all the interviews, after all the TV shows, after all the times you've seen me compete, "This is how I operate. This is how I'm motivated. This is what makes up all the things and all the accomplishments you've seen."*

*I set out to define success in a healthy way. In the book, I tried to put my life on display—the successes, the failures, the things I've learned, the things I've overcome—so I navigated success and disappointment and overcame life instead of having life overcome me. I felt like I've been in the public for a long time as far as the spotlight goes, and I've done countless interviews, movie projects and different things over the years, but I've never really let people in like I was in this writing project.*

### **How are you letting people in through the book?**

*I tell stories from throughout my snowboarding career of how I learned different lessons. I learned things that helped me be successful and have a fulfilling, sustainable and long career. I wanted to give that away. I wanted to help other people hit their potential. I used that vein of inspiration that I've been able to operate in through my snowboarding career as a vehicle in the book to capture that and put my*

*life on display like I never had. It's been incredible. Writing a book is vulnerable.*

*And along the same lines of my personal core beliefs, I want to be faithful in what I've been given. If I've learned things that will help other people learn them quicker—I always say I want my own personal ceiling to be the next generation's floor—then they don't have to spend 20 years trying to figure out how to learn the life lessons I did. They can start where I finish, and that's what I capture. I want to set people up to be successful and go further than I ever could in the snowboarding world and beyond. It's not a sports-specific book by any means either.*

**You've been able to be a professional longer than most people because of your discipline. Do you have parallels with your personal life and spiritual growth?**

*There's a lot of crossover between the natural and the spiritual. Discipline is something you learn as an athlete that's helpful in anyone's spiritual journey, but the thing that has really spurred me on to grow spiritually—and in snowboarding—is to figure out that you never really figure it out. You never really master it, and it's continuing to be teachable and willing to learn and being willing to go back to the things that seem basic and never trying to arrive in life—as a snowboarder or in my walk with God. You have to allow yourself to evaluate and continue to grow. You never have it figured it out. That's something that's really spurred me on in my snowboarding and in my walk with the Lord.*

*I also think you get out what you put in. As successful as I've been as a snowboarder, I've never stopped working, I've never stopped investing, whether it's in my fitness routine or my willingness to learn something new. It's like that in your walk with the Lord. If you want to grow in your faith,*

*spend time with the Lord. You get out what you put in. The more you invest, the more fruit you're going to see from it in the natural and in the spiritual.*

Like Kelly, you can make a difference in the life of a child by sponsoring a child today.

Listen to the podcasts below to hear about World Vision's work in Rwanda.