

Confrontation and Cleansing

A year of humiliation has brought us to a moment of truth.

In the timetable of God, 2008 is slated to be a year of new beginnings and resurrection in the church. We're due for a season of renewal! The Lord is bringing us joy in proportion to our former pain. He is replacing our years of hardship with years of blessing and preparing us to prosper in places that have been difficult in the past (see Ps. 90:15-17, NLT). Wonderful times are ahead, but something important needs to happen first: It's time for some confrontation and cleansing.

2007 was a year of embarrassing defeats for charismatics. We began the year steeped in the news of fallen leadership. Late-night comedians made jokes about ministers, gay prostitutes and drugs, but it wasn't funny to us.

When summer arrived, things got worse. Allegations of perversion in a well-known Atlanta-area ministry resurfaced, and a famous prophetess reported being beaten by her bishop-husband.

As fall approached, we faced more mega-ministry divorces, allegations of ethical misconduct in a charismatic university and a senate investigation of six television ministries. It's been a brutal year—but if we'll listen to what the Holy Spirit is saying, God can turn it around.

The life of David contains a message for the church in this hour. David was a man after God's heart, but his family was wracked with the kinds of scandals that are all-too familiar today.

After his own moral failure, God honored David's repentant heart and blessed him. But David's sons were disappointing: Amnon was a rapist (see 2 Sam. 13), Absalom was a traitor (see 2 Sam. 18), Adonijah was a self-promoter (see 1 Kin. 1) and Solomon, though wise, was self-indulgent and excessive (see 1 Kin. 11:1-10).

How could such a great leader produce such dysfunctional sons? David was charismatic, but he struggled with confrontation (see 1 Kin. 1:6).

The charismatic church is a lot like David. We're passionate about worship, prayer and God's power, but we have a dangerous blind spot: Like David, we're too slow to confront our own. A lack of true spiritual fathering has produced dysfunction and outrageous scandals.

I love the charismatic church, but we have issues. Our sexual sins, self-promotion and self-indulgence need to be addressed. If we don't get it together, we may lose our ability to influence the lost.

Confrontation is uncomfortable, but it's essential. We need the spirit of the 81 brave priests who confronted King Uzziah with his sin. They could have kept silent for fear of his authority, but their passion for God and His house required them to speak the truth and stop his madness (see 2 Chr. 26:16-18).

God is exposing what we have failed to face up to, and unless we clean house, things won't get easier. Any structure that celebrates charisma but is soft on truth and character is a house of cards. It's time to challenge the root issues that are rotting the charismatic family tree. We can't have the power of Pentecost unless we are immersed in holiness and

cleansed by the fear of the Lord.

Our hope lies in another son of David who stands ready to cleanse and restore us. Jesus loves the church and gave His life to have a glorious bride without spot or wrinkle (see Eph. 5:26-27). He's ready to remove our shame and cleanse us in this season. If we'll respond, the renewal we need will come: "'A fountain will be opened to the house of David ... to cleanse them from sin and impurity'" (Zech. 13:1, NIV).

Many are prophesying that 2008 will be better than 2007, and I'm convinced they're right-on—if we'll get tough on sin and start telling one another the truth.

David Cannistraci pastors GateWay City Church in San Jose, California, and ministers internationally. He is also an author and a frequent contributor to Charisma and Ministry Today. To learn more, visit .