

Don't Expect Another Great Awakening in America Until This Happens

There has never been a time when local or regional revivals were not occurring somewhere in America. However, to be designated a "Great Awakening," a revival should have the following three characteristics:

- It is an obvious sovereign work of God in that it has arisen apart from any identifiable human plan, strategy or design.
- It is non-sectarian and touches people of all sects and denominations. No one group, or church, can "own" the revival.
- It is not localized or regional but has an obvious national impact on the nation and its culture.

I have become convinced that there have been at least four Great Awakenings in America's history. Each came at a crucial time in the nation's history and saved her from moral and social ruin. Indeed, the history of America has startling similarities to that of Israel in the time of the Judges—periods of backsliding and apostasy followed by times of repentance, national renewal and God's mighty deliverance of the nation.

The First Great Awakening (1726-70) transformed Colonial America and prepared her for statehood. The Second Great Awakening (1800-1830) saved the fledgling nation from Deism and the negative influences of the French Revolution. The Third Great Awakening, also known as "The Great Prayer Awakening of 1857-58," swept many thousands into the kingdom and released the spiritual and moral resources necessary to carry the nation through a horrible Civil War.

The Charismatic Renewal/Jesus Revival (1967-80), which this author witnessed, was America's Fourth Great Awakening. This revival was two-pronged, with two distinct streams flowing side by side and often overlapping. The Charismatic Renewal impacted and revived the churches of America, while the Jesus Revival impacted the youth/hippie culture, bringing many thousands to Christ.

America's Fourth Great Awakening

The 1960s were a time of moral decline and social upheaval. In 1963, the U.S. Supreme Court, in two separate rulings, banned school-sponsored Bible reading and prayer in the public schools of America. Many were shocked for prayer and Bible reading had been a part of American schools since its founding.

Then on Nov. 22, 1963, President John F. Kennedy was assassinated in Dallas, Texas. His assassination was followed by the assassinations of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. in April of 1968, and Kennedy's brother, Robert F. Kennedy, in June of 1968. Race riots broke out in major cities across America. Protests erupted across the country against the Viet Nam War and often turned violent.

Disillusioned with church and American culture, an entire generation of youth rejected the values of their parents and traditional religion. Their mantra was "turn on" and "tune out." "Turn on" with drugs and sex and "tune out" the old establishment. Out of this mindset the hippie movement was born, characterized by drugs, sex, rock music, horn-rimmed glasses and a simplified lifestyle.

Somebody, however, must have prayed and touched heaven, for in the midst of the chaos, revival broke forth in the churches of America and among the youth of America.

Charismatic Renewal

There had been a powerful Pentecostal revival at the turn of the century, but it had been rejected by the mainline, traditional churches. This had resulted in the forming of thousands of new Pentecostal churches and denominations.

Now, however, a Pentecostal-type revival broke out in Baptist, Methodist, Presbyterian, Lutheran, Episcopal and Catholic churches. Like a prairie fire fanned by the wind, this revival spread rapidly, penetrating most of the historic Protestant denominations and Roman Catholicism.

This revival in the churches came to be called the "Charismatic Renewal." The name is derived from the Greek word for spiritual gift, which is *charisma*, and in its plural form, *charismata*.

Charismatic prayer groups sprang up across the country. In these informal gatherings, participants sang praises, prayed spontaneously and unashamedly spoke and sang in tongues. Much fellowship occurred across denominational lines under the banner of "Jesus is Lord" and the common experience of being filled with the Holy Spirit.

Massive interdenominational conferences were the order of the day. In 1977, 55,000 charismatics gathered in Arrowhead Stadium in Kansas City, Kansas under the banner, "Jesus is Lord." Roman Catholics, Episcopalians, Baptists, Mennonites, Methodists, Pentecostals, Messianic Jews and others sang praises to God and listened to speakers from various Christian denominations and traditions.

At one point, Roman Catholic Cardinal Leon Josef Suenens of Brussels sat on the platform with Tom Zimmerman, General Superintendent of the Assemblies of God, a white Pentecostal denomination; J.O. Patterson, Presiding Bishop of the Church of the God in Christ, a black Pentecostal denomination, and other denominational leaders. It was an amazing demonstration of unity in the Spirit and under the Lordship of Christ.

For decades, the World Council of Churches had been seeking to bring the various churches together in a show of unity with little success. Now, through the power of the Holy Spirit, it was happening in a brief period of time. Suenens referred to this Kansas City gathering as “the most impressive ecumenical manifestation of our time” and declared it to be “epoch making, the realization of an ‘impossible dream” (Hyatt, *America’s Revival Heritage*, 105).

Jesus Revival Among American Youth

At the same time that the Charismatic Renewal was reviving the churches of America and the world, revival was breaking out among the hippies of America. This became known as “The Jesus Revival.” Tens of thousands turned to Christ and became bold witnesses for Him everywhere they went. Their mantra was now, “One way, Jesus!”

In 1971, thousands of Christian youth and converted hippies converged on Dallas, Texas, for an entire week of witnessing, fellowship, prayer and praise. During the day, thousands witnessed on the streets, in restaurants and in places of business. Each night 80,000 filled the Cotton Bowl to pray and listen to a line-up of speakers, including Billy Graham. The closing event of the week was a Christian concert that drew 150,000 to a cleared freeway site near downtown Dallas (Hyatt, *America’s Revival Heritage*, 106).

Life magazine featured the event on its cover, describing it as “a solid week of shouting, singing, praying and praising His name in a mammoth burst of Christian zeal.”

It was during this revival that this author gave his life to Christ, was baptized in the Holy Spirit and called into the ministry.

The Course of the Nation Is Altered

Perhaps the crowning event of this awakening was “Washington

for Jesus,” an all-day prayer gathering on the National Mall in Washington, D.C. Held on April 29, 1980, “Washington for Jesus” was the vision of John Gimenez, a former drug addict, who along with his wife, Anne, founded and pastored the Rock Church in Virginia Beach, Virginia.

Gimenez said that God showed him that going to Washington, D.C., to pray for the nation would be like David striking Goliath a fatal blow in the forehead with a stone. When Gimenez shared the vision with Pat Robertson of CBN, Robertson wondered aloud how they would feed such a crowd. Gimenez replied, “That is easy. We will fast.”

According to Anne Gimenez, 600,000 gathered that day on the Washington Mall to fast and pray for America. Interestingly, the race riots abated, the protests faded, Ronald Reagan was elected the nation’s 38th president that fall, and the nation entered a new era of peace and prosperity.

Will We See Another Great Awakening?

Since that Fourth Great Awakening, America has seen radical moral and social decline, and by 2010 I had given up hope of America ever seeing another Great Awakening that would alter the course of the nation. However, that all changed one summer day when, for seven hours in a once-in-a-lifetime visitation, God flooded my heart and mind with thoughts of hope and faith that America “could” see another great, national spiritual awakening.

The word “could” was highlighted to emphasize our responsibility. There are eternal principles and conditions that must be adhered to and met. God does not change. Styles change. Politicians change. Fads come and go. God, however, does not change.

The principles that brought about former great awakenings are the same principles that will bring another awakening in 2022. There are no shortcuts. We can fake it, but we can’t make it.

Another great awakening will only come when a remnant of believers fulfill the divine conditions that God Himself has laid before us:

“If My people, who are called by My name, will humble themselves and pray, And seek My face and turn from their wicked ways, then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin and will heal their land” (2 Chron. 7:14). {eoa}

This article is derived from Dr. Eddie Hyatt's latest book, America's Revival Heritage (Second Edition) available from Amazon and his website at .

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