

Church as Usual Is Coming to an End—and Prophetic Churches Must Emerge to Fill the Void

Editor's Note: This is part 1 of a two-part series.

Everywhere I go, I hear people desperately crying out for the end of church as we know it. They can't deny that the Spirit of God is creating a disturbance, a dissatisfaction and a yearning for brand new wine.

Pastors, please hear me. The Spirit-driven remnant that God is uniquely awakening to an end-times role will not be able to function in anything less than a raging furnace of intercession and extreme Holy Spirit activity in the church. No longer can you silence the zealots or smirk at the eccentric. These are your emerging end-times warriors.

I have people write me from all around the world, pleading for assistance in finding this type of church where they live. They have been aggressively searching for vibrant churches marked by supernatural revelation. Church as usual not only disappoints them, but it deeply disturbs them.

Marks of Revelation-Driven Churches

Distinctly Prophetic

Pastors will be given to insane amounts of prayer throughout the week, and they will be supernaturally alert night and day. The result will be leadership that's marked by the incense of the Holy Spirit. Every decision, every service and every message will be branded by the active, *rhema* revelation of the Spirit of God.

Dreams and visions will be normal among the church staff and members alike. The entire culture of the church will be driven

by this critical communication of God.

Fueled by Intercession

The only way to develop and sustain a revelation-driven church is to first develop and sustain a furnace of intercession. A large portion of the teaching must be devoted to supernatural, prophetic prayer. People tend to blank out when they are presented with the call to prayer, and the way to meet that reaction is by teaching continually on prayer.

People need to understand how to pray, why to pray, how to yield to the Holy Spirit, how to receive the baptism in the Holy Spirit, the power of praying in tongues, how to steward prophetic revelation, how to pray the Scriptures, how to develop intimacy with Jesus, governing with authority and much, much more.

Then, a culture of raging, expressive, authoritative night and day prayer must overtake the whole of the church. People who don't pray as a primary call must be challenged and given continual opportunities to jump on board and legislate in the Spirit as God has called them to. A governmental body like this will wield great weapons against the spirit of the age and will walk in extremely powerful authority.

Understand, this culture must flow from the primary Sunday service. There is absolutely no way to develop a culture of prayer if it's relegated to off nights in a side room. It's time for hours of prophetic prayer to flood the Sunday-morning sanctuaries week after week. Those who aren't interested in such a relationship with Jesus will leave—and your remnant will be revealed.

Unpredictable and Spontaneous

The days of predictable, scheduled, ordered church services must come to an end. We have become so enamored with human order in the church that Holy Spirit, biblical order is

completely rejected.

When the primary service becomes a prayer meeting, with other expressions following, you simply cannot maintain an order of service. Any attempt to do so is laughable.

Revelation-driven church services will commence with a roar of supernatural intercession as anointed, prayer-fueled musicians and singers play and sing over the people. It won't be unusual for this to last for an hour or two—or more. It will be common to turn the screens that display the lyrics off, as the people shift to mostly praying and singing in the Spirit. The Christian karaoke will come to an end.

From this furnace of worship and intercession, leadership will release oracles and give prophetic messages that will be right in step with what the Holy Spirit is doing in that moment. There will be a Holy Spirit orchestrated “dance” where prayer, worship, decrees, declarations, instruction, healing, deliverance and prophetic revelation will fill the room.

It will be impossible for any human to keep up, or to give any leadership whatsoever, if they aren't wildly devoted to holiness and a life of never-ending intercession. They won't be able to discern or keep up with what God is doing in the room, and they will attempt to grab the reigns and to do what is naturally familiar to them, quenching the Holy Spirit in the process.

Regionally/Nationally Focused

I believe many would admit there is a deep grieving in their spirits when churches become focused and driven to grow the church numerically. Understand, numeric growth, when done rightly, can be healthy. We see in Scripture that God added to the church daily. However, the compromise that has overtaken the church in order to see this type of growth is truly grieving.

Instead of locking in on the growth of their local church, pastors and leaders who are embracing the revelation driven church model will be mostly interested in what God is doing regionally and nationally.

Their passion will be to see the church of the city become marked by the Spirit of God and for the new wine of the Holy Spirit to be poured out. They won't care one bit if the outpouring happens in another local church in the city. They will lead the people under their care out from their local expression of the city church right into the place where the pillar of fire and the cloud of God's glory have manifested.

Further, their energies will be devoted to confronting the national crisis and in standing as a governmental authority. They will train the people and equip for battle against the deadly, raging spirit of the age that's destroying our nation.

If their local church grows or shrinks numerically, their gaze and their assignment will not change. They are locked in, obediently advancing the cause of revival in their city and in the nation.

Everybody Participating

Everyone will be governing and impacting the atmosphere through Spirit-fueled prayer. Rapid-fire prayer is one great way to facilitate this, giving everybody a chance to release decrees and declarations in a meeting. Invite them up to pray with passion on the microphone for 10 to 20 seconds.

As the service continues, include additional rapid-fire prayer sessions and provide a way for people to share prophetic revelation in the meeting. White boards can line the walls, giving people a place to write down prophetic words, to share dreams and visions or to draw prophetic art that God has impressed upon them.

Pastors, don't try to "find jobs" for everybody, hoping that

keeping them busy and engaged is the answer to keeping them interested in the church. That's honestly a bit condescending. While everybody isn't ready for leadership in the church, most everyone should be given opportunities to pray, prophesy and release declarations of Scripture. We've muzzled people for too long.

Prophetic Assignments

When you successfully steward a deeply prophetic culture in the church, God will be talking—a lot. This prophetic data must be rightly responded to. Prophetic assignments will emerge and the intercessors will have a non-stop job to keep them covered.

You will find yourself heading out on prayer walks, making decrees over your city, researching the spiritual history of the land, engaging in high-level spiritual warfare, starting prayer movements, challenging systems, developing strategies and journaling it all.

You will see the body dynamically moving from season to season, assignment to assignment. Everybody will have a part to play as you advance as a unified army into the darkness and toward revival. You will regularly be uniting with other pastors and leaders in the region as you'll quickly discover you only have a part of the bigger picture. The city church will awaken to its comprehensive assignment.

Believers Meetings

Church services are not to be seeker sensitive. The days of focusing on drawing the lost in as a primary goal are coming to an end. The New Testament church is a movement of believers who are praying continually and governing with great authority in the region.

Of course, the lost can and will come in, but the focus of the meeting will not change. The extreme activity of the Holy

Spirit will be maintained and those who decide to say yes to Jesus will meet him in a way that could never be done in a dry, dusty, seeker environment.

These believers meetings will be white-hot, supernatural and other-worldly. The roar of intercession, the groans, the cries and the military-level strategic advance will produce saints who are ready and equipped for battle.

Focused on Spiritual Growth

The goal is obedience, impact and responding rightly to the instructions of the Holy Spirit, not numeric growth. As I said previously, growth can and will happen, but it's not an automatic indicator of health or success. I propose many churches must be pruned as they develop into a revelation driven church.

It's a rare person who will sign up to be part of this new wine, revelation driven church, so small numbers should be expected. The goal is to go deep and grow spiritually. The challenge of such a church will be rejected by many. The compromise of yesterday to get them into the seats must come to an end. Invite them to leave if they aren't interested in going deep and locking arms with the rest of the well-diggers.

Deep, Challenging Teaching

Teaching will be doused by revelation, and the tired Sunday-school lessons of old will finally come to an end. You can tell when a preacher has been pierced with the message they are preaching—and when they are merely regurgitating information.

The messages of heaven will originate in the culture of fiery prayer and will absolutely rock everyone who hears them. Many will reject such an anointing as it demands a costly response, but those who respond will become sharp, full of fire and a mighty weapon in the hands of God. {eoa}

Stay tuned for Part 2!