

Encountering the Power of the Holy Spirit

This month marks 45 years since the first issue of Charisma came off the press. Over the years, we've done something special for our big anniversaries. Five years ago, for example, we wrote about the "Charisma 40"—the charismatic ministries we felt had the most impact in the previous 40 years. This year, there is no big celebration—only my reflection on how Charisma fits into current events.

Much has happened in the church, culture and publishing business since 1975. But after all these years, Charisma is still serving the Spirit-filled church. The Charisma Media motto is still "inspiring people to encounter the power of the Holy Spirit." We see our mission as encouraging the church to stand for righteousness and biblical truth in a world that seems more hostile toward the Christian message every day.

As Christian journalists and publishers, we cover news of what the Lord is doing that other media either ignore or cover from a biased point of view. And we want to teach and encourage believers to dive into the deep things of the Lord and to stand strong in these troubled times.

Today, there are many persecuted Christians dying for their faith in various parts of the world. In America, we have enjoyed First Amendment religious freedom for more than two centuries. In fact, our country has been built on a Judeo-Christian base, but that base has been eroding. Now with protests, national unrest and the coronavirus pandemic, these are especially difficult times for America. But in times such as these, it is even more important for Christians to stand strong as a light in darkness. It may sound like a cliché, but it's true: Light shines brightest in the darkest places.

When I was in college, I felt I should prepare to be a secular journalist. Back then, the media was somewhat liberal, but nothing like today. I didn't realize it then, but God was preparing me for what lay ahead as He led me to start a small Christian magazine. The charismatic renewal and the Jesus movement were at their zenith. Hundreds of thousands of people received the baptism of the Holy Spirit, and many churches exploded. All that has changed. Times of revival ebb and flow, but the work of the Holy Spirit continues.

Yet in spite of all that seems out of control in the world, we sense a new awakening is occurring. I wrote about this in my new book, *God, Trump and COVID-19*. (It's a sequel to my January 2020 release, *God, Trump and the 2020 Election*.) My article from earlier in this issue, "The Spiritual Reality," is an excerpt from that book. Another part of the same book specifically deals with what the prophets are saying. I open the book with a quote from the late David Wilkerson, which he gave privately to my friend Mike Evans in the mid-1980s: "I see a plague coming on the world and the bars, churches and government shut down. The plague will hit New York City and shake it like it has never been shaken. The plague is going to force prayerless believers into radical prayer, into their Bibles, and repentance will be the cry from true men of God in the pulpit. And out of it will come a third Great Awakening that will sweep America and the world."

Often it is desperation that causes people to turn to God. Even during the COVID-19 shutdown, multitudes of people who never go to church tuned in to church services via live streaming. It will take more than that for America to turn to God, and there are many ministries and leaders calling for repentance in America and the world.

One I'm supporting is "The Return," which will be held in Washington, D.C., during the last weekend in September. It's led by Rabbi Jonathan Cahn, author of *The Harbinger*. We can only pray that America turns to God as individual Americans

repent of sin, ushering in the beginning of the great awakening we need—not only in America but the world.

Only time will tell if this happens. None of us could have imagined a few years ago that the current chaos would occur. But as believers, we know God is still in control, and the Bible tells us He has a plan for the end of time. As long as the Lord gives us grace, we will be reporting on what is happening spiritually, not only in *Charisma* but through all the materials we publish. That is our calling and our vision—the same as it's been for the past 45 years—to inspire people to encounter the power of the Holy Spirit.

Stephen Strang is founder of *Charisma*. He believes God, Trump and the 2020 Election (*Charisma House*), available wherever Christian books are sold, is his most important book. Listen to his new podcast by the same name on the *Charisma Podcast Network*.

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