

God Has Pushed a Great Big Reset Button

Put on your seat belt. What we are experiencing is so much more than an economic recession.

Unless you are Rip Van Winkle and have been asleep for years, I'm sure you feel the daily convulsions that are rocking our world. Change is hitting America right between the eyes. Everything that can be shaken is being shaken—from banks and insurance companies to car manufacturers and media empires.

Trusted brands, including Chrysler and United Airlines, may go out of business within months. Newspapers are laying off employees in droves as readers go digital; bookstores like Borders can't compete with . Pontiac is officially dead, and the city of Detroit—once the proud global headquarters of the auto industry—is rusting and jobless.

"Please don't fight the changes God wants to bring in your life. As you hold on to His unchangeable love, allow Him to push the reset button."

What we are experiencing today is more than an economic recession. The upheaval is affecting us politically, socially, technologically and spiritually. It feels as if God has pushed a giant red reset button in heaven. Change is being forced on us.

Meanwhile there is a big problem in the church: We Christians don't have a great track record when it comes to embracing change. We are slow adapters. Often we insist on doing church exactly like Grandpa did, and then when we realize we are outdated it's too late.

For a few months I've been pondering the changes happening in charismatic churches and praying about our future as a movement. I've been asking hard questions and wrestling with

my own fears of change. And I've reached some uncomfortable conclusions:

1. The charismatic movement as we know it has ended. I celebrate what God did in recent years to bring the Holy Spirit's renewal to the church. My life was totally changed by it. But the cloud is moving, and we cannot pitch our tents around the revivals of the past. While we embrace the eternal things He gave us in those days, we must discard the styles and methods that are no longer fruitful so we can advance.

That doesn't mean we throw the baby out with the bathwater. We cling to what is good. But we must leave behind the excesses, extremes and flaky doctrines that give us a bad name. The one-man show is over. The prosperity circus was a failure. We must abandon the deceptive hype of the past. People today are craving authenticity—not shallow words and empty promises.

2. A "new generation" church is emerging. I visit two or three churches every month in this country. Those that are healthy and growing have developed new paradigms. Though they embrace the power of the Holy Spirit, they also place high value on evangelism, small-group discipleship, social justice and world missions. They are extravagant in giving to outreach. They are relational, not event-driven. And they demand character from leaders rather than simply celebrating a man or woman's spiritual anointing.

No one has coined a term for this movement yet, but it is growing—and it represents the future of Christianity in our country. These new generation churches embrace healthy leadership and don't tolerate the kind of ministry monkey business that has embarrassed us in recent years. These churches love sinners and preach grace, but they draw the lines necessary to enforce biblical standards.

New generation churches are also connected in a healthy,

relational way to other churches, yet they are not denominational in a restrictive sense. They refuse labels. Rather than wearing the cumbersome armor of a religious structure, they are free to pray, dream and be creative about how they should reach the children, high school students, business leaders, drug addicts, immigrants, homeless people, twenty-somethings and church dropouts in their communities.

3. God is tearing down the walls that divide us. For too long we've been content to congregate in our comfortable tribal groups. But the essence of Pentecost involves the Holy Spirit's outpouring "on all mankind" (Acts 2:17, NASB). This means true Pentecostals cannot harbor racism.

God's agenda in this next season of revival will involve tearing down racist structures—and this will occur not only in white churches but in black and Hispanic ones as well. It also means that church leaders from China, India, the Middle East, Africa and Latin America will have a greater platform to speak into our lives here in the United States. Western Christians must accept the fact that we don't have all the answers!

4. We face an unprecedented global opportunity for evangelism. I've never been the first to try new gadgets. I still like to hold my newspaper and read it on the back porch—and I don't watch TV shows on an iPhone. But regardless of my creature habits, I can't stand in the way of today's technological revolution.

Jesus commanded us to preach the gospel to the ends of the earth—and that requires us to use every means possible. God is in a hurry to reach places like Uzbekistan, Niger and Yemen—and He will likely use podcasts, Blackberries and Facebook to do it. We should claim all new media so that every person on this planet can hear that Jesus died to save us.

Please don't fight the changes God wants to bring in your

life. As you hold on to His unchangeable love, allow Him to push the reset button. Then buckle your seat belt and hold on. We are in for the ride of our lives!

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