

Passing of Giants

The passing of the giants means it's time for us to take the baton.

The charismatic community suffered a tremendous loss in September when two spiritual giants went home to be with the Lord. Kenneth E. Hagin Sr., who has been called the father of the modern Faith Movement, died in Tulsa, Oklahoma, on September 19, and Derek Prince, one of the most respected teachers in the charismatic movement, died on September 24 in Jerusalem.

The passing of these two giants was sad for me personally because early in my spiritual journey I learned much from hearing them speak, reading their books and listening to their tapes. In later years I had the privilege of knowing both men.

Though they were dissimilar in gifts, calling and sphere of influence, each of them greatly influenced the wider charismatic community. Each was a man of integrity never tainted by moral scandal. Each left thousands of disciples who were molded by what he taught. And I believe each was way ahead of his time in bringing to the body of Christ spiritual truths that were later widely accepted.

More than 8,000 people attended Hagin's funeral in Tulsa, including most of the well-known leaders in the Faith Movement. Yet the four-hour memorial service focused not on Hagin's role in Christendom but on his role as a family man and on the humility he maintained in spite of enormous success.

Hagin was a simple Texas preacher who preached about faith and

healing long before it was popular. In the early years he spoke at Full Gospel Business Men's conferences and at whatever churches would have him, often driving long distances or taking the bus.

His son, Kenneth Hagin Jr., said that even when Hagin rode the bus because his car was broken down, he continued to preach that God wanted to prosper his people. In the early days when his bills piled up, he'd say, "This is just another way to prove God is faithful."

At the memorial service Ken Jr. asked those who had been influenced by his father's ministry to stand. Then he held out to those who responded a large baton and urged us to take hold of it and do what God had called his father to do—"to teach My people faith."

I was reminded that a large part of the story of Charisma's growth in the early years revolved around my believing God to fulfill the vision He had given me. In those years many of Brother Hagin's tapes encouraged me when I was tempted to quit.

Derek Prince, who passed away several days after Hagin, was a man ahead of his time. Born in India, he was educated at Eton College and at King's College, Cambridge University, in England. He wrote more than 45 books on subjects ranging from the Holy Spirit to prayer and fasting to Israel. He was also known for his support of deliverance ministry and in the late '60s and '70s was involved in the Discipleship Movement, which, in view of its excesses, he later helped to dismantle.

Prince was in Israel after World II and saw the Jewish people

returning to their homeland. He was among the first to teach that Christians owe the Jewish people an enormous debt. He wrote: "Without them, the church would have no patriarchs, no prophets, no apostles, no Bible and no Savior. My most precious possession in life is my Bible, and I owe it to the Jewish people."

His life and work has influenced the Christian world like that of few others. But now he and "Papa" Hagin are gone.

What does the passing of these giants mean to us? I believe it means that it's time for us to take the baton. We must ensure that the revelation they brought to the body of Christ continues to be shared through their books and tapes and through the lives of those they touched. By passing on their messages and following their godly example, we can make a difference in the world.

In an era in which many are in ministry for what they can get out of it, we can be pillars of integrity. We can model what a man or woman of God should be: a person who is devoted to the Word, willing to take risks, willing to change, and willing to follow the call of God on his or her life. And in a day when divorce is increasingly common, we can remain faithful to our spouses, as these two giants did. Let's commit to passing on their legacy through our lives.

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