

Jack Hayford: What's Next With the Charismatic Movement?

Anyone aware of the modern charismatic movement is familiar with Jack Hayford. Even the venerated evangelical magazine *Christianity Today* called him the “Pentecostal Gold Standard.”

He is the founding pastor of The Church on the Way; chancellor of The King's University, author of more than 50 books, composer of hundreds of songs, including “Majesty,” and for about 15 years the senior editorial advisor for *Ministry Today* magazine.

He is also the man Steve and Joy Strang consider their “spiritual father,” so he has worked with the Strangs, the magazines and the entire staff for many years. From this vantage point, we wanted to ask him to opine about the magazine's role over the last four decades, how it relates to other media ministries and the wider body of Christ, and what's next for the Pentecostal/charismatic movement, a modern-day phenomenon that has exploded from only a handful of people a century ago to more than 600 million today.

Here is what Hayford had to say to Shawn A. Akers, the online managing editor who conducted the interview on behalf of *Charisma*.

Charisma: Our cover story features “40 People Who Radically Changed Our World” as a part of the magazine's 40th anniversary. What role has *Charisma* played in the movement over the past four decades?

Hayford: *Charisma* has been a clearinghouse for what's happening globally in the charismatic movement. But foremost its strength has been its stable and straight-forward, level-

headed maintenance of a charismatic passion for the things of God. The magazine has focused on true Spirit-filled experience without yielding to some of the charismatic doctrines (that even if they had aligned it to some degree with Scripture) that stretch credibility. Without being judgmental or critical (other than just heeding to biblical righteousness and morality and fundamental evangelical soundness), *Charisma* has been the foremost uniting voice of the move of God among all charismatic and Pentecostal people globally.

Charisma: How would you describe the impact of the Pentecostal/charismatic movement on the larger body of Christ both in North America and around the world?

Hayford: We need to harken back to more than a decade before *Charisma* began to pick up some of the really pivotal launch points of the movement, which had not yet gained broad recognition. Some of this impact had already taken place before the birth of *Charisma*, but the media failed to report it with consistency. The magazine brought that and continues to do so. *Charisma* not only has been a strong voice in that regard, but it has been constant for a long time in handling matters in ways that are biblically sound without surrendering to passivity toward the Bible's revelation of the life of the Spirit and the manifestations that are consistent with the power of God's presence.

Charisma: You have mentored many Christian leaders over the years. What advice would you have for younger charismatic leaders who are trying to reach millennials with a new level of ministry?

Hayford: I don't know that you can reach a new level of God's grace and workings. As a matter of fact, when you start looking for something "new," that usually generates people falling off the bandwagon of what is sound and steadfast. At the same time, what's sound and steadfast needs to be recast in terms of the methods of communication and generational

nuances of style. So, what is needed is for leaders of the rising generation to gain a deeper understanding of solid, basic, evangelical and historic Pentecostal/charismatic theology. A theological “thinness” has come about in recent years. I don’t say that in a condescending way. But that has become very clear in conversation, within sermons and in written materials. It isn’t simply a matter of being more precise—although that’s important—but keeping to our theological moorings.

Charisma: *Charisma* magazine has evolved into Charisma Media, which publishes many books in English and Spanish, publishes several magazines in print and online and has released a brand new translation of the Bible—the MEV. What do you think will be its lasting legacy?

Hayford: Other publications serve denominations or ministries. They are not necessarily narrow, but their main task is to communicate within their own circles. By its very nature, derivation and continuance, *Charisma* incorporates something of a voice for the entire movement. There is an “in-touchness” with the broad arena of the Pentecostal/charismatic fellowship as well as a healthy sensitivity toward what is going on in the evangelical movement. *Charisma’s* scope is distinct.

The lasting legacy will be that it rose in a season that needed not only a voice, but a stabilizing one, very worthy of note that has been consistently done and maintained. There has been no journalistic arrogance as though it were the magazine’s task to slap the hands of the “naughty” people or to be the fountainhead of all wisdom. It has been a simple, even-handed acknowledgement of what the soundness of New Testament church life is, what the Bible reveals is the nature of whole life in Christ, and richness of the entirety of the Word of God.

This is true not only of the magazine but of all of Charisma Media—to serve the entire body of Christ. That is evident by

the Modern English Version and the interest in bringing out this new translation. The entire organization has maintained “openness” and scope and will endure as long as it does not slide toward trying to be hip by focusing on whatever is the latest thing that is “bright and shiny.”

Charisma: Steve and Joy Strang have said publicly how important your relationship is to them both professionally and personally. How did that develop and what would you say to the Strangs on this 40th anniversary?

Hayford: I remember meeting Steve at a conference nearly 40 years ago. The magazine was just being born there in Orlando. The relationship didn’t deepen until 5 to 10 years later. A turning point came when Jamie Buckingham died in 1992 and Steve asked me to take the senior editorial advisory role for *Ministry Today*. Because of that, I was in the offices with some regularity and I got to know the staff as we planned issues. Gradually we grew closer, probably by reason of my seniority and their acceptance of whatever stability they perceived that my ministry carried. Over the years, Steve and Joy wanted to discuss things that pertained to their overall management or their lives. All leaders face trying times, and you look for a prayer partner. I have been that through the years. It has been a rich relationship and I am very honored by their trust and grateful for the relationship.

Charisma: What advice do you have for the Strangs and for Charisma Media as it enters its fifth decade?

Hayford: There is an old hymn that used to be thundered out by oldtimers. The chorus said, “Hold the fort for I am coming, Jesus signals still.” Today some might say that sounds defensive. The concept for this song in its time was not to hunker down into some defensive mode. It is to withstand the various attacks that come against the truth about the divine order of things. And its social context is constantly under fire and getting worse. But we must do this in ways that you

can win a hearing by reason of the soundness of your approach—because you are not trying to win a battle with tirades but with reason.