

Why Thousands of Charismatic Christians Will Gather in Jerusalem on Pentecost

Thousands of charismatic Christians are set to gather in Jerusalem this year during Pentecost weekend for Empowered21's Jerusalem2020. The event is sure to give people from around the world the opportunity to encounter the Holy Spirit and be equipped to make a real difference in their communities.

I recently had the honor of interviewing Dr. George O. Wood on my *Strang Report* podcast. Wood was the general superintendent for the Assemblies of God for 10 years. He continues to be chairman for the World Assemblies of God Fellowship, a coalition of commitment for worldwide Assemblies of God national councils of equal standing.

During our interview, Wood shared some exciting news about Empowered21. At this event, Pentecostals from around the world gather to encounter the Holy Spirit. Empowered21 (E21) started 10 years ago. Every five years, they meet in Jerusalem, and during all the other years, they meet in different parts of the world.

Wood, who is co-chair of E21 with Oral Roberts University President Dr. Billy Wilson, says that around 5,000 to 7,000 Christians will attend the event in Jerusalem, and thousands more will be watching online or on television.

"Empowered21 really brings together a wide variety of people across the charismatic and Pentecostal movements," Wood says. "I've so appreciated getting to know leaders from around the world. ... Delegations come from Latin America, from Asia, from Africa, from North America, Australia, New Zealand, all around the world."

The event will start on May 31 on the southern steps of the Temple Mount. That's the spot where worshippers entered and exited during Jesus' day. During that service, several people will give their testimonies of what God has done through the Spirit in their lives.

"We have outstanding charismatic and Pentecostal speakers from all around the world who will be speaking, great worship, great time for seeing the richness of variety in the body of Christ," Wood says.

I had the privilege of attending E21 in 2015, which was the last time it was in Jerusalem. I remember they had a prayer tunnel, which isn't something you often see in churches. They also assigned different leaders in various parts of the arena. I was in the Chinese section, and even though there was a language barrier, it didn't bother me. I could still sense the Spirit praying through those men and women of God. It was one of the most powerful experiences of my life.

When you encounter the Spirit like this, you realize why the Pentecostal movement is continuing to grow worldwide, even in countries like the U.S., where many denominations are declining. Wood says the Assemblies of God has around 370,000 churches around the world with close to 70 million believers as members.

Wood says there are several underlying reasons for this stable growth. First of all, each church is sovereign in the sense that it elects its own leadership and owns its property—so long as it agrees with the AG's doctrine and mission. Second, the AG is incredibly flexible on the nonessentials. This could include style of worship, flow of the service and methods of outreach. As long as the church abides by truth as laid out in Scripture, the AG provides a lot of flexibility.

Because of this, AG churches are successful at adapting to the surrounding culture without compromising biblical values.

“Our churches are wonderfully representative of the tapestry of cultures that are in their community,” Wood says. “... We’ve also placed a lot of emphasis upon church revitalization. Over 2,000 of our churches have been through a yearlong revitalization program, which was directed out of our national office.”

But most of all, Wood attributes the AG’s growth to “the Lord’s favor and the Lord’s blessing, because He’s the one who builds the church.”

I encourage you to consider attending E21. You can learn more information and register at [. And make sure you listen to my interview with Wood as he sheds light on why charismatics continue to grow in a culture that gets increasingly darker.](#)