

## WHY CULTURE WON'T CHANGE WITHOUT RADICAL REVIVAL

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*By Steve Strang founder of Charisma News and CEO of Charisma Media.*

Genuine revival is the only way we can change the spiritual temperature of our society. Rioting. Racial unrest. Drug abuse ruining a generation. War in the Middle East. Christians under siege from rampant secularism. Does this sound familiar? I'm not describing 2017, although all these exist in today's culture. I'm describing the 1960s, with Americans divided over the Vietnam War, Israel attacked by its Arab neighbours, a youth culture that celebrated drugs and free sex, and racial unrest, including riots after Martin Luther King Jr.'s assassination. Things were so bad, Time magazine's April 8, 1966, cover story asked, "Is God Dead?" Yet amid this terrible time, the Lord stepped in. Fifty years ago, He launched two massive, under-the-radar revivals that I believe changed the course of the world.

In 1967, a group of Duquesne University nuns and college students received the baptism in the Holy Spirit, igniting the widespread Catholic Charismatic Renewal. The other revival, now known as the Jesus Movement, touched hundreds of thousands of hippie-type young people, whose fervour moved from radical rebellion to radical obedience to Christ. Many of today's Christian leaders came to Christ during this period, and the movement also impacted me. During this same era, Israel won the West Bank and, in 1967, reunited Jerusalem in the Six-Day War. I once heard the late Derek Prince explain the parallels between God's activity in Israel and the fresh outpouring of His Spirit on the church. These massive revivals produced a cultural shift. The country became more politically conservative, and the hippie movement disappeared.

Today, we need another genuine revival. Without it, culture will continue its downward spiral. Many Christians recognize this, but many don't. One segment of the evangelical church, alarmed by the marginalization of Christians and increasing public immorality, focuses on electing politicians who seem to share our values. But politics won't change things. A powerful evangelical leader recently visited my office to discuss how we must move our culture, where only a small percentage views the world through a biblical lens, toward a Christian worldview. He wanted my help in motivating apathetic Christians. Of course, I said we'd cooperate. But I also said change toward a Christian worldview won't happen until our country experiences true revival. He looked at me with a blank stare.

My friend seems to think logic and arguments can change minds and attitudes. We must never withdraw from the marketplace of ideas, but we must also remember this: Nonbelievers develop a Christian worldview only through a powerful encounter with the risen Christ via the power of the Holy Spirit. Consider the Pentecostal movement. After the fervour of the early-20th-century charismatic outpouring, Latter Rain Revival died down, Pentecostalism moved into malaise. I remember the older generation praying constantly for revival. Logic persuaded almost no one to embrace the gifts. But when people received the Holy Spirit in a powerful way during a prayer meeting, their theology changed. They saw the Bible with fresh eyes. God answered those prayers for revival in unexpected ways.

Beginning around 1960, the Holy Spirit poured out on more denominations like Episcopalians, Methodists and Catholics. Long-haired, sandal-wearing hippies began showing up in our services, often carrying huge Bibles and sitting cross-legged on the floor at the front of the church. At the same time, God was doing something in Israel and awakening among Spirit-filled Christians an enduring love for this nation. Jews for Jesus sprang up, and Messianic congregations developed. Some Pentecostals remained in their ruts, but most embraced all this as a move of God. Today, Pentecostalism continues to grow. Yet once again, a sense of malaise has arisen. But let's remember: God is still God.

So I challenge my fellow believers to pray as never before. Publicly and in our prayer closets, let's ask God to pour out a mighty revival that sweeps millions into His kingdom. It's the only way culture will be changed-by changing the hearts of a huge segment of the population here and around the world. Our problems will not be solved until people's hearts and lives change.

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