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# If My People Will Pray

America may be in crisis, but there is hope: God is stirring hearts to seek Him—even beyond a September prayer gathering in Philadelphia

BY STEPHEN STRANG

**T**hirty-two years ago America was at crossroads. The nation was in moral decline with recently legalized abortion and a drug culture left over from the hippie era, while Americans were still reeling from the aftermath of Watergate and the Vietnam War. Not only that, but communism was a real threat worldwide, terrorists held American hostages in Tehran, the U.S. economy was in the tank and a weak president's policies seemed to make matters worse.

At that time God put on John Gimenez's heart to call America to prayer. He wasn't well-known, but he persuaded leaders such as Demos Shakarian of the Full Gospel Business Men's Fellowship International, Bill Bright of Campus Crusade and CBN Founder Pat Robertson to join him in calling believers to pray on the mall in front of the nation's Capitol. They called it Washington for Jesus, and many believe it was a spiritual turning point that helped move our nation in the right direction. We elected a new president, the economy rebounded and communism fell a decade later.

Yet not all was right in the world. The entertainment industry continued to go downhill from a moral point of view. The threat of Islamic terrorism continued to grow. What is now called the "gay agenda" was articulated for the first time. And the church reeled from one scandal after another.

## From Bad to Worse

Today the problems of the 1980s seem mild to what is an all-out attack on our Christian values in the culture and even in government. We now have a president who seems to be moving toward some form of European socialism. He has embraced the concept of "same-sex marriage" and enacted laws that force religious organizations to provide abortion services against their will.

There is a feeling that things are bad and getting worse.

How else do you explain the huge outcry a few months ago against Chick-fil-A President Dan Cathy, who mentioned in an interview that he supports traditional marriage? Many in the media called that "hate speech" simply because he doesn't support the radical homosexual agenda.

Thankfully, the public responded. A mass of people showed Chick-fil-A their appreciation and gave them record sales, while a gay activist boycott fizzled. But responding to the culture war involves more than rallying around one of our own who is under attack. More important is what we do in the spiritual realm through prayer. We are in a critical time in which we must seek God and pray that America will turn back to Him.

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## Beyond Philadelphia

Many are responding. All over the nation God is raising up ministries, prayer initiatives and events that are focused on interceding for the nation and are calling America back to God. One of these focal points is the America for Jesus solemn assembly held Sept. 28-29 in front of Independence Hall in Philadelphia. It's the vision of Anne Gimenez, who is carrying the mantle originally shared with her late husband, John.

When I heard about this gathering my heart leapt. I knew I had to be



*It's time to fulfill our prophetic destiny to intercede for this nation.*

involved. I remembered the significance of the earlier Washington for Jesus and America for Jesus rallies. And I believe this is needed now more than ever before.

One of the ways we got involved was to dedicate this entire issue not to America for Jesus per se, but to the themes it is emphasizing. We cleared the entire issue so that our quarter-of-a-million readers who cannot attend the gathering in Philadelphia can also be inspired to pray.

When Anne Gimenez heard about this, she suggested we have extra copies in Philadelphia and bind in the printed program for those who attend. That way this special issue and the articles by Jonathan Cahn, Jentezen Franklin and others could go home as a souvenir of the event.

But we know this is far more

important than just an event or special issue. This is a time when believers must hear from God and call the body of Christ to its prophetic destiny to intercede for this nation.

## Rescue Plan

That's exactly what America for Jesus is doing. In fact, the focus beginning on Sept. 28 will be to jump-start a nation into 40 days of fasting and prayer. My friend Rick Scarborough, the fiery Baptist preacher from Houston, says it's "40 Days to Save America" and has launched an initiative by the same name that calls the nation to prayer, fasting and repentance for the 40 days prior to Election Day on Nov. 6. I think it's so important I asked Rick if I could include some of his vision here:

Our nation was established upon a strong religious foundation. Our freedoms, which today are everywhere imperiled, are God-given as expressly stated in the words of what might be called our "National Mission Statement," the Declaration of Independence: "We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are

endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness." They can be sustained only with His mercy.

During the American Revolution, in the darkest days of the Civil War, at the outset of our involvement in World War II, leaders as different as George Washington, Abraham Lincoln and Franklin Delano Roosevelt declared national seasons of prayer, fasting and repentance.

Today, our nation faces multiple crises—pending economic collapse, moral disintegration and international terrorism—but all have spiritual underpinnings. Together, they are even more daunting than those Americans confronted in 1776, 1863, and 1941.

Now as then, our national survival is

at stake. Now as then, our destiny rests in God's hands. The crises are beyond the power of human beings to resolve without divine guidance. *Nothing short of a Third Great Awakening can save us.*

That's why the 40 Days to Save America project is so vitally important.

Though voting is both a civic duty and a biblical responsibility, which must be approached with solemnity and due deliberation, something else must happen first if we are to see our nation saved. We must begin by asking God's forgiveness for our national and individual transgressions, and for His guidance in the task of selecting our leaders at all levels of government and, thus, charting our nation's future.

Starting on Sept. 28 and continuing through Nov. 6, we are calling for a Great Religious Awakening through 40 days of prayer, fasting and repentance. This is not a political effort. The political problems that beset us are symptoms of a deeper spiritual malaise.

The place to start isn't with primaries, platforms and conventions, but rather through prayer, fasting and repentance.

» We are calling for pastors, priests and rabbis to open their churches and synagogues throughout America for 40 days for prayer and fasting, each person seeking their own level of unselfish sacrifice as we corporately and individually seek God for His intervention in our beloved nation.

» We are calling for Christian and Jewish voters to make informed choices, voting not as Republicans or Democrats, but as followers of the living God.

» We are calling for our leaders to have the wisdom and discernment to act according to His will and not based on personal or partisan considerations.

I'm joining Rick and the countless others calling upon God during these 40 days. I hope you will too. May we once again change the future of America. ◀

**STEPHEN STRANG** *founded Charisma magazine in 1975. He hosts a Strang Report podcast live on YouTube and Rumble at 4 p.m. EST every Tuesday and Thursday. His important new book Spirit-Led Living in an Upside-World is available wherever fine Christian books are sold including online at [mycharismashop.com](http://mycharismashop.com).*