

# Lesson #13

## The Advancing Church

### Sorting Out the Labels

There are differing perspectives and opinions as to which revivals represent the first, second, third, or fourth awakenings, etc. Unless we understand its historical context, the label given to a particular revival or movement doesn't tell us much about its chronological order. It is not the goal of this study to "properly label" these periods, but rather to identify the truths that were restored.

However, if we think strictly chronologically, The Reformation could have been labeled the "first" awakening. What has historically been labeled The First Great Awakening and The Second Great Awakening could have been labeled the second awakening, and so on. We should understand that the labels given to the different revivals or movements are subjective and are often adopted culturally within their contexts without the benefit of the big picture. It is not scientific.

For the sake of historical continuity, the table below will help clarify the order in which these labels are typically used.

Label <i>(as often labeled by historians)</i>	Truth Restored	Corresponding Hebrews 6 Principles	General Time Period	General Length In Years
The Reformation	Justification by Faith	Repentance From Dead Works and Faith Toward God	1400 - 1700	300
First Great Awakening	Sanctification & Holiness	Doctrines of Baptisms (washings)	1700 - 1800	200
Second Great Awakening			1800 - 1900	
New Century Revivals	Impartation of Power/Discipleship	The Laying on of Hands	1900 -2000	100
<i>The Next Great Awakening</i>	<i>The Powers of the Age to Come</i>	<i>Resurrection Judgement</i>	<i>2000- ?</i>	<i>?</i>

### Acceleration

It is interesting to note the general length in years of each truth restored. It is often said that The Reformation started with Martin Luther in 1517, but the seeds for it were planted much earlier by reformers like John Wycliffe and John Huss. Therefore, the Reformation period, which restored justification by faith was spanned a period of about 300 years. Then came the First and Second Great Awakenings which lasted about 200 years and restored the doctrine of sanctification and holiness. Next

we saw the restoration of impartation represented by the principle of laying on of hands being restored in the New Century Revivals which covered a period of about 100 years.

As we can see, there is a historical acceleration taking place. This brings us to the period of time in which we now live. People are already talking about a “great acceleration” that is coming, or that is already underway. The Bible speaks of an acceleration leading to the Lord’s return, calling it a “hastening.”

... what manner of *persons* ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness, looking for and hastening the coming of the day of God,...?”

— 2 Peter 3:11-13 (NKJV)

Also in the chart above, notice the last row which starts with *The Next Great Move of God*. We will develop this further in the following lessons, but many are already claiming this move of God is already underway and are labeling it The Third Great Awakening.

### Accelerating into the 21<sup>st</sup> Century

In his book, *MegaShift*<sup>1</sup>, James Rutz provides an encouraging summary of the dramatic increase of miracles and church growth that has taken place in the latter part of the twentieth century. He states that in 1960, there were 24 nonbelievers for every believer in the world, but claims that by 2005 there were only six<sup>2</sup>. Rutz credits most of this growth to those Christians called “core apostolics” who are not part of the traditional denominational structures.

The growing core of Christianity crosses theological lines and includes 707 million born-again people who are increasing by 8% a year. These “core apostolics” are a powerful mix of Charismatics, Pentecostals, and Evangelicals whose main distinction is that they are in expanding, connected, easily countable networks. The term excludes those groups that are so liberal in theology, so isolated in structure, or so deeply rooted in medieval tradition that they are hardly growing at all.

— Rutz, *MegaShift*, p. 15

Rutz made the point that, at the current rate of growth among these core apostolics, the entire world would be born-again by the year 2032. As he points out, this is not a prediction since straight line projections based on such data should never be made. Nevertheless, it is a fascinating statistic that should cause great excitement in our hearts concerning the accelerating spread of the gospel as we fix our hope on the appearing of Jesus at the resurrection.

The increase of miracles is also quite amazing. Every miracle in recorded in the Bible is happening, including, the multiplication of food, shriveled hands healed, missing limbs restored, and the dead being

---

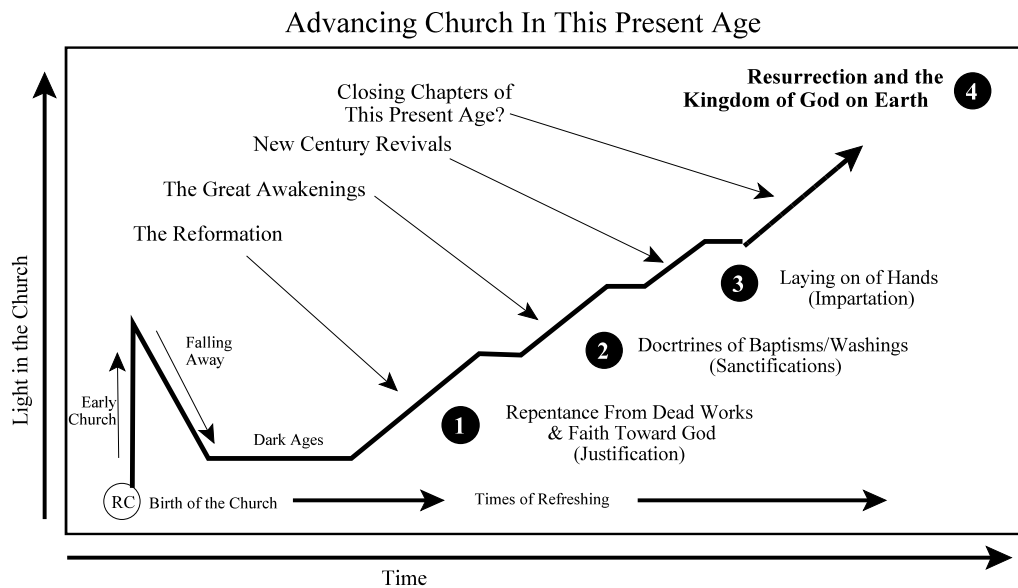
<sup>1</sup> Rutz, *Megashift*, Empowerment Press

<sup>2</sup> Rutz, *Megashift*, p. 41

raised. One ministry operating in southern Mexico has seen over 300 people raised from the dead. They have stopped counting!<sup>3</sup>

### Advancing Church in this Age

Though many view things in the world as getting worse and worse, a “big-picture” view of history in this present age shows that the advancing Church is marching forward with great success. Though the influence of the Church on the culture has waxed and waned, the general trend is continued progress toward the goal of the Kingdom’s appearing. The chart below illustrates a view and an attitude that things are going well.



As the 20<sup>th</sup> century drew to a close and came to a plateau, there was a growing expectation that the next move of God was about to appear. In the next lesson we will look at what is already being called The Third Great Awakening. With the restoration of power and the activation of the five-fold ministry, the stage has been set for the greatest release of ministers and ministry the world has ever seen!

<sup>3</sup> Rutz, *Megashift*, p. 9