

Lesson #13

Accelerating into the 21st Century

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. If we think strictly chronologically, The Reformation could have been labeled the "first" awakening. Next, 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 an exact science.

Acceleration in History

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 repentance from dead works and faith toward God, spanned a period of about 300 years. Then came the First and Second Great Awakenings which lasted about 200 years and restored the doctrines of baptisms (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. For the sake of historical continuity, the table below will help clarify the order in which these labels are typically used and the acceleration that is taking place.

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 and Judgement</i>	2000- ?	?

As we can see, there is a historical acceleration taking place toward the appearing of God's Kingdom on earth. 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 21st Century

In his book, *MegaShift*¹, James Rutz provided 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 stated that in 1960, there were 24 nonbelievers for every believer in the world, but claims that by 2005 there were only six². 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 raised. One ministry operating in southern Mexico has seen over 300 people raised from the dead. They have stopped counting!³

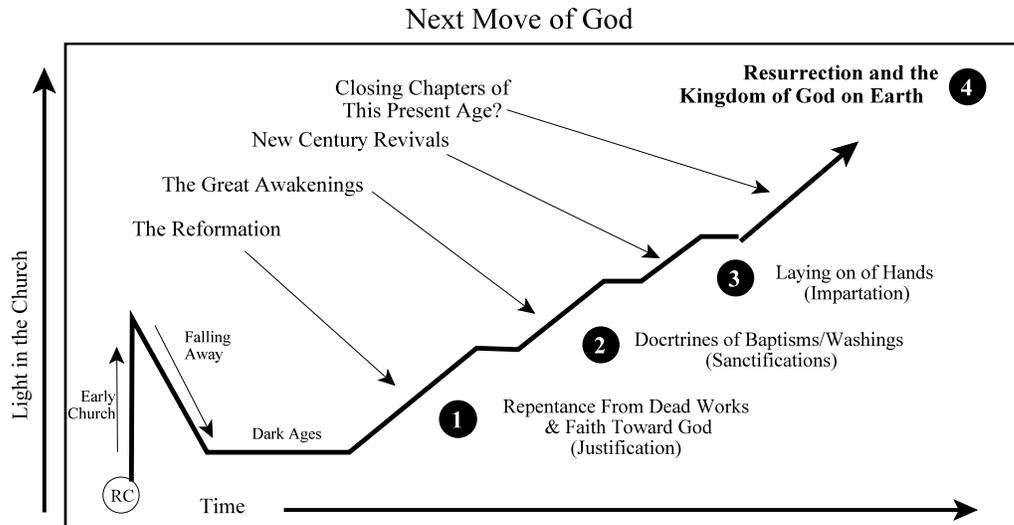
¹ Rutz, *Megashift*, Empowerment Press

² Rutz, *Megashift*, p. 41

³ Rutz, *Megashift*, p. 9

Poised for the Next Move of God

Present circumstances can sometimes give the impression that the Christian cause is failing and the world is headed for complete collapse. Many people fail to see the advancement of Christianity because they lack the “big-picture” view of history, which shows that the advancement and success of God’s strategic plan. Though the influence of the Christianity on the culture has waxed and waned, the general trend is continued progress toward the goal of the Kingdom’s appearing. History teaches us that a plateau or even what seems to be a downward trend is simply a sign that God is poised to move in a great way! The chart below illustrates the steady advancement of God’s strategic plan.



As the 20th 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!

We are living in exciting times! Remember the axiom: *History is the benchmark from which we survey our path to the future.* As we grasp the big picture of God’s plan through history, we become aware that the thin line between history and the future is moving at an increasing pace. For those who are paying attention, the future gets clearer and clearer and we see that we are poised for something great!