

Americans will miss Awakening unless they acknowledge God as king

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MCALLEN—According to reports from around the world, people are coming to faith in Christ at an amazing rate. For Jim Denison, this is proof that the Fifth Great Awakening is underway, but America could miss it.

Denison, theologian-in-residence at the Baptist General Convention of Texas and president of the Center for Informed Faith, believes the world is becoming more and more Christian on a daily basis.

Jim Denison 

Estimates peg the growth at 82,000 believers per day, which Denison said is the largest number in 20 centuries. He noted movements in Australia and in Central and South America, where Pentecostal/charismatic movements are springing up regularly, as more proof. Cuba has seen 1 million new Christians over the past 10 years, and God is working among Muslims in great ways, particularly through dreams and visions of Jesus, he said.

While the movements are different in some aspects, one thing is constant in the swell of enthusiasm for the gospel, Denison noted—It's not happening in the United States.

“God is on the march. The Holy Spirit is on the move. We're in what I believe is the Fifth Great Awakening in the world, but we're not seeing it

here,” said Denison, addressing a workshop session held during the Baptist General Convention of Texas annual meeting in McAllen. The workshop addressed key elements of the great awakening occurring around the world and Denison’s view on how it came to be.

Denison believes the Fifth Great Awakening can be traced to South Korea in 1958, when the great devastation to the nation moved a pastor named Cho to start a church in a home. From that first gathering of seven, the church now has 1.2 million members, the largest evangelical church in history. South Korea now boasts five of the 10 largest churches in the world and sends more missionaries out than the United States. Denison noted a tailor in his Dallas neighborhood moved to the States to open her business and minister to customers through prayer, Bible verse cards and evangelism.

However, that awakening is not taking place in Western Europe and the United States. In Great Britain, for instance, four times as many Muslims go to mosque on Friday as Christians go to church on Sunday, Denison reported.

Only 23 percent of Americans are in church on Sundays, and the fastest growing religious demographic is the one that claims “no religion,” he said. The shift, he said, comes from the way Americans live.

“We live compartmentalized lives, with our spiritual life separate from our secular life. It’s like transactional religion; you do your part and God does his part,” he said. “Biblical Christianity is all in, 24/7.”

With the demographic shift in Texas, Denison said, churches have a unique opportunity to respond to a culture that embraces family, faith and connectedness if they will just do it. And while the spiritual state of America may look bleak, Denison said there is a solution.

“We most need to make God our king, not our hobby,” he said. “He is our

king to the degree that your obeying his will. Wherever he is king, the awakening is happening.”

Kingship occurs when people first make Jesus their Lord and Savior, then admit that they need his power to accomplish anything, Denison said. When people submit to the Holy Spirit’s leading on a daily basis and keep in conversation with God, he truly is king of their lives, and they are able to live out the words of Acts 1:8, the theme verse for the convention.

“You will only make God your king when you realize you need a king,” Denison said. “We will never experience the Fifth Great Awakening in America until we pray, turn from our wicked ways and seek His face. When we do these things, we will ... see the same things happening in South Korea, China, Africa and the rest of the world.”