



One Shepherd, One Flock

Donna Curtiss

Something is happening. Do you hear it? Do you feel it?

The spiritual awakening unfolding in our world is thinning the veil between the spiritual realm and the natural world.

In a world deeply divided and struggling to endure, a voice is crying out to all who have eyes to see and ears to hear. It is the Holy Spirit touching hearts, minds, and souls with the timeless message of Jesus: Love God, Love One Another.

Do you recall Jesus' reply when He was tested by a Pharisee?

"Teacher, which commandment in the law is the greatest?" He said to him, "You shall love the Lord, your God, with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is the greatest and the first commandment. The second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself. The whole law and the prophets depend on these two commandments." ¹

Jesus did not hesitate; He did not equivocate. His reply was immediate and plainly spoken.

Today, the Holy Spirit has sparked a worldwide revival. Christians everywhere are remembering that Jesus is our salvation and that we, followers of Jesus, are the light of the world. We are called by Jesus to let our light shine before others.

Today, the message that Jesus is our Savior, our salvation, and the key to the Kingdom is everywhere. It is not always the focus of the nightly news, but it is being broadcast on Christian networks, in publications, on social media, and on podcasts. Best of all, people are finding the courage, both privately and publicly, to talk to one another about Christ, about Jesus, Our Savior, Our Shepherd.

The tongues of fire today are represented by those courageously speaking the truth about Jesus.

And the world is listening.

Jesus is calling to each one of us. Jesus' instructions to His Apostles, handed down to us, are clear. Our Savior presented these two commandments and showed us the way to eternal life.

¹ Matthew 22:36–39, NABRE (New American Bible, Revised Edition)

Envision a world where everyone aspires to live by the two commandments Jesus gave us. We know the more we study Jesus and the Bible, the more our hearts long to hear, to understand.

The Apostle Paul tells us: "So, faith, hope, love remain, these three; but the greatest of these is love."² We have not seen Jesus, yet we follow Him. Jesus left us the legacy of love that St. Paul teaches.

Can you imagine a world where we loved one another the way Jesus loves us?

Think about it. Peace on earth would become our reality. Common sense and reason would prevail. We would negotiate, agree to disagree, and move forward when conflicts arise while keeping our eyes on God's Son.

A cradle Catholic, I remain deeply rooted in my faith. At the same time, I am a child of God at home in any environment where Jesus Christ is loved and worshiped.

There have been unifying moments in our country during my lifetime.

One powerful unifying moment in the United States occurred on September 11, 2001, and the days immediately following the attacks on US soil.

In the days following the terrorist attacks, all of our churches were filled to standing-room capacity as frightened and grieving people turned to God.

Nineteen terrorists hijacked four airplanes and carried out a series of attacks on the United States, killing 2,977 people and injuring thousands more. The attacks targeted the World Trade Center and the Pentagon. A fourth aircraft was believed to be headed toward Washington, D.C. Passengers and crew fought the hijackers, and the plane crashed into a field near Shanksville, Pennsylvania, before reaching its intended target.

That evening, members of Congress gathered on the steps of the United States Capitol. Following a moment of silence, they joined together to sing "God Bless America."

The loss of life, however, did not end on September 11. In the years that followed, first responders, rescue and recovery workers, survivors, and others exposed to the toxic dust and debris developed cancers, respiratory diseases, and other serious health conditions. Many have since died, and thousands continue to live with illnesses related to that day. Their enduring sacrifice reminds us that the human cost of September 11 continues to be felt more than two decades later.

Citizens born after the attacks of September 11 will have difficulty imagining Congress today united on any subject, much less standing together and lifting their voices in song. Yet for a brief time, political labels, personal differences, and ideological divisions gave way to a shared

² 1 Corinthians 13:13 NABRE

sense of grief, love of country, and dependence upon God. Americans comforted strangers, honored first responders, filled houses of worship, and searched for meaning amid unimaginable loss.

That unity did not endure. Today's young adults have largely grown up in a nation marked by political hostility, distrust, social unrest, and deepening divisions. They did not create this fractured world, but they have inherited it. Perhaps they are also the generation that will refuse to accept division as inevitable.

We should not need another national tragedy to remember that we belong to one another. The challenge before this generation is not merely to restore the unity of an earlier moment, but to build something deeper—a unity rooted in truth, compassion, mutual respect, and love of God and neighbor.

There have been other attempts at Christian unity in our country.

Spiritual Awakening occurs when God sovereignly pours out His Spirit, impacting an entire culture. That is what happened during the Jesus Revolution.

The Jesus Movement was a spiritual awakening that arose among young people in the late 1960s and early 1970s. It started in California and spread across the United States and into other parts of the world. The movement brought together Christians from different denominations and introduced informal styles of worship. Often called Jesus music, a new and lasting form of contemporary Christian music grew with the awakening.

At the time, the country was experiencing riots, deep racial tensions, opposition to the Vietnam War, fear of nuclear conflict, and a growing sense that the nation was unraveling. People spoke of revolution, and one did take place—but it was not merely political or cultural. It was what *TIME* magazine called a "Jesus Revolution."

The Jesus Movement spread through North America and into parts of Europe, Central America, Australia, and New Zealand. Although it eventually declined as a distinct movement, its influence continues in contemporary Christian worship, evangelical outreach, and the lives of those who encountered Christ through it.

The music of that movement burst forth and continues in contemporary Christian music today. Christian and gospel music is experiencing a massive pop culture breakthrough and emerging as one of the fastest-growing genres in America, driven by streaming gains, viral social media integration, and a young audience.

The top awards programs honoring popular Christian and gospel music today include the GMA Dove Awards, K-LOVE Fan Awards, And The Stellar Gospel Music Awards.

Grammy Awards: Features dedicated categories for Best Gospel Album, Best Contemporary Christian Music Performance/Song, and Best Roots Gospel Album. BMI &

ASCAP Christian Music Awards: Annual industry events that specifically honor the songwriters and publishers behind the year's most-performed Christian songs.³

Jesus' Call for Unity

Jesus' call for unity was inclusive of us when He told His Apostles, "I pray not only for them, but also for those who will believe in me through their word, so that they may all be one, as you, Father, are in me and I in you, that they also may be in us, that the world may believe that you sent me."⁴

Jesus instructed His Apostles in what we call The Great Commission.

"The eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain to which Jesus had ordered them. When they saw him, they worshiped, but they doubted. Then Jesus approached and said to them, "All power in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, until the end of the age."⁵

This passage records the risen Christ's charge to the apostles on a mountain in Galilee.

It is their mission that continues in the Church's witness today.

Jesus promised further, "The Advocate, the holy Spirit that the Father will send in my name—he will teach you everything and remind you of all that [I] told you."⁶

And the Holy Spirit is what we are experiencing in the world today.

Jesus said, "One flock and one shepherd. "I am the good shepherd, and I know mine, and mine know me, just as the Father knows me and I know the Father; and I will lay down my life for the sheep. I have other sheep that do not belong to this fold. These also I must lead, and they will hear my voice, and there will be one flock, one shepherd. This is why the Father loves me, because I lay down my life in order to take it up again. No one takes it from me, but I lay it down on my own. I have power to lay it down, and power to take it up again. This command I have received from my Father." "Have you come to believe because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and have believed."⁷

That brings us full circle – back to what is happening today.

³ Wikipedia, downloaded July 28, 2026, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/56th_GMA_Dove_Awards

⁴ John 17:20-21, NABRE

⁵ Matthew 28:16-20, NABRE

⁶ John 14:26, NABRE

⁷ John 20:29, NABRE

The thought that we Christians, who bear the name of Christ, so often fail to live by the two great commandments Jesus gave us weighs heavily on my heart. Ultimately, I find myself asking a simple but important question: Why can't we all get along?

What Unites Us

Although Christian traditions differ in governance, worship, language, and doctrine, most historic Christian communities share a foundational faith in the Triune God and in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior. We are fragmented in our faith.

Our shared Christian beliefs strengthen our bond, benefit our communities, and enable us to help one another grow in faith. Sharing our faith strengthens it and us.

Christians all agree that Jesus saves. That is such a great place to begin.

Renewed Spiritual Interest and Global Christian Unity

There are encouraging signs of renewed spiritual interest in the world today, both in the United States and globally.

Followers of Jesus span the globe. Across many regions, some people are turning to Jesus Christ, while Christians from different traditions are seeking greater unity through Him.

In the United States, we celebrate a National Day of Prayer. The mission of the National Day of Prayer Task Force is centered on the Lord Jesus Christ. The Task Force exists to mobilize unified public and personal prayers for America.

The first Sunday in October is World Communion Sunday, celebrated by promoting Christian unity and ecumenical cooperation.

- ✚ In 1933, World Communion Sunday began as a denominational practice in the Presbyterian Church.
- ✚ In 1936, churches in other denominations were later invited to join.
- ✚ In 1940, the Department of Evangelism of the Federal Council of Churches (a predecessor of the National Council of Churches) extended the celebration to several churches worldwide, and the practice became widespread. Today, World Communion Sunday, organized by the National Council of Churches, is celebrated worldwide.

The Future of our Faith

Young people will carry our country and our faith into the future, but they should not be asked to carry them alone. They need our witness, our encouragement, our prayers—and our willingness to trust them.

"Let no one have contempt for your youth," St. Paul wrote to Timothy.⁸

⁸ 1 Timothy 4:12, NABRE

His words continue to speak across the centuries. Youth is not a weakness to endure until wisdom arrives. It is a season of courage, energy, imagination, and possibility—qualities desperately needed in our country and in our Church.

We often speak of young people with concern, wondering whether they will preserve *our* values, freedoms, and faith handed down to them. Yet when I look at today's college-age generation, I see uncertainty. I see young men and women searching for truth, longing for purpose, and asking questions that may lead both our country and our faith communities toward renewal.

At the same time, these years can be a season of great vulnerability. Many students arrive on college campuses separated for the first time from the families, churches, and communities that helped shape them. They are eager to belong, to be accepted, and to discover who they are. Surrounded by competing voices, powerful ideologies, social pressures, and a constant stream of information, they may find it difficult to distinguish truth from persuasion or conviction from conformity.

Their questions should not frighten us, and their uncertainty should not cause us to abandon them. They need faithful mentors who will listen without condemnation, answer honestly, and point them toward Jesus—not merely through words, but through lives that reflect His love.

The future of our faith may depend not only upon what young people choose to believe, but also upon whether we have loved them well enough to walk beside them as they search.

College Campuses

That spiritual Awakening has been taking hold on college campuses nationwide as tens of thousands of students gather for worship, prayer, and baptisms.⁹

CBN News has been reporting that widespread revival is sweeping US college campuses, with thousands of students attending events, engaging in worship, and getting baptized. That has included campuses across Texas, but now several more universities in the Lone Star State are also seeing powerful moves of God.

⁹ *Collegiate Day of Prayer Arrives as Revival Sweeps College Campuses*, Paul Petite, February 25, 2025. Downloaded July 27, 2026: <https://cbn.com/news/us/watch-collegiate-day-prayer-arrives-revival-sweeps-college-campuses>

The movement has seen unprecedented attendance and commitments to faith. Cale Matlock, a student at the University of Arkansas, described the experience as powerful. "It was awesome, just having 10,000 people that all love Jesus and are worshipping God," Matlock said.

The organization Unite US has been at the forefront of these gatherings, with events drawing thousands of students. Tonya Prewett, the organization's founder, highlighted the rising participation.

"We started at Auburn University; we had 5,000 students show up, and we had over 200 get baptized," Prewett said. "We next went to FSU—Florida State, the second biggest party school in the nation. We had 4,500 students come, and we had about 350 students get baptized at that event."

The most exciting aspect of the college campus revivals is that Baptism is not the conclusion of a spiritual awakening, but its beginning. With faithful discipleship, supportive Christian communities, and opportunities to grow in prayer and understanding, the renewal taking place on university campuses provides a lasting movement of faith.

In February 2023, a regularly scheduled chapel service at Asbury University in Wilmore, Kentucky developed into an extraordinary period of sustained prayer, worship, repentance, and personal testimony. The gathering lasted 16 days, drawing more than 50,000 visitors to the small Christian university and attracting international attention. Asbury's leaders referred to the event as an "outpouring," allowing time and its spiritual fruits to help determine how history would describe it.¹⁰

Reports of increased Christian activity on other college campuses followed the Asbury gathering. Large student-led worship and evangelistic events have taken place at Christian and public universities across Florida, Tennessee, Alabama, Mississippi, Ohio, Texas, and elsewhere. Organizations such as UniteUS have brought together thousands of students for worship, prayer, preaching, confession, and Baptism. Campus ministries have also reported increased attendance at Bible studies, worship gatherings, and local churches.

These developments are especially significant because they are occurring among members of Generation Z, a generation often described as less connected to institutional religion than earlier generations. Some students point to loneliness, anxiety, social division, and a longing for meaning and authentic community as reasons they have begun exploring faith.

On February 18, 2026, more than 5,000 students gathered at the University of Central Florida for a UniteUS event. The scheduled gathering continued for hours as students remained for worship, responded to altar calls, and requested Baptism. UniteUS founder Tonya Prewett

¹⁰ Asbury University, "The 2023 Outpouring," describing the sixteen days of worship and prayer that began on February 8, 2023, and the more than 50,000 visitors who came to the campus.

reported that 1,600 students made decisions to "go all in with Jesus," while hundreds were baptized. She described the event as evidence that the spiritual Awakening spreading across university campuses is not slowing down.

She posted on Instagram, "Over 5,000 students gathered at the University of Central Florida to lift the name of Jesus. Hundreds of students were baptized, and many who identified as atheists now identify as Christians. What a night! What a God!"

Reports of increased Christian activity on other college campuses followed the Asbury gathering. Large student-led worship and evangelistic events have taken place at both Christian and public universities, including Auburn University and campuses in Florida, Tennessee, Alabama, Mississippi, Ohio, and Texas. Organizations such as *UniteUS* have brought together thousands of students for worship, prayer, preaching, confession, and Baptism.¹¹

Evangelist Jay Lowder, founder of Jay Lowder Harvest Ministries, recently headlined a campus-wide event at Stephen F. Austin State University in Texas, where hundreds of students made decisions for Christ.¹² Additionally, Abilene Christian University just hosted an event attended by 1,000 people, during which more than 80 decisions were made.

"I've been in full-time evangelism for over 20 years," Lowder told CBN News. "College students sometimes can be a difficult group to reach because they're transitional and a lot of times not living in their normal hometown, but we literally had- I'm not exaggerating- we had a packed house every night, standing room only, and we saw over 500 students make different commitments to Christ."

It is still too early to determine whether these campus revivals and expressions of spiritual renewal will develop into a broader spiritual awakening. Revival may begin within individuals, churches, or campus communities, while an awakening reaches beyond existing believers, producing lasting spiritual and cultural change across a wider population.

Pew Research Center's 2023–2024 Religious Landscape Study found that 45 percent of Americans ages eighteen to twenty-nine identified as Christian, compared with 62 percent of American adults overall. Pew also reported that Christianity's decades-long decline in the United States appears to have slowed and may have leveled off in recent years.¹³

¹¹ UniteUS, official reports and campus-event information concerning student worship gatherings that began at Auburn University in September 2023 and later expanded to other universities.

¹² *We Saw Over 500 Make Decisions for Christ*, March 19, 2026, Revival Hits Texas Universities, Charlene Aaron, Downloaded July 27, 2026. <https://cbn.com/news/us/we-saw-over-500-make-decisions-christ-revival-hits-texas-universities>

¹³ Pew Research Center, "Decline of Christianity in the U.S. Has Slowed, May Have Leveled Off," February 26, 2025, based on the 2023–2024 Religious Landscape Study.

In December 2025, Pew found no clear evidence of a nationwide religious revival among young adults. The researchers acknowledged that important changes may be occurring in particular churches, ministries, or communities, but not widespread enough to appear in national surveys. These findings do not diminish the significance of what is happening on individual campuses, but counsel patience. The lasting importance of these gatherings will ultimately be measured not only by attendance at major events, but also by whether students remain rooted in prayer, worship, Christian community, and service long after the gatherings have ended.

These gatherings reveal genuine spiritual openness among at least a portion of today's college students. Christians from different denominations and traditions have prayed, worshiped, served, and publicly professed their faith together. These events do not erase the divisions among Christians, but they demonstrate that believers can unite in prayer, worship, and a shared faith in Jesus Christ. Perhaps such moments offer a glimpse of the unity for which Christ prayed.

The question is what happens next. Where will these young men and women go to practice their faith after graduation? Who will welcome, retain, and mentor them? A powerful worship gathering may awaken faith, but young Christians also need enduring relationships and communities that will help that faith take root and grow.

Churches and campus ministries can respond in practical ways:

- ✚ Pair students and young adults with mature Christians who will pray for them, listen to them, and accompany them in faith.
- ✚ Train young people for meaningful leadership and service.
- ✚ Use visible and engaging social media channels to communicate with them.
- ✚ Host welcoming gatherings in student unions, campus centers, churches, and other accessible spaces.
- ✚ Create opportunities for open and respectful discussion of theological, scientific, cultural, and moral questions.
- ✚ Help students integrate their academic disciplines, future professions, and personal faith.
- ✚ Continue to support and invite graduates after they leave the university.

Ministries on campus provide students with opportunities to attend Mass and other Christian services, to pray, to develop friendships, and to connect with the wider church.

Ministries include the Catholic Newman Centers and other Catholic campus ministries — including Cru, InterVarsity Christian Fellowship, Chi Alpha Campus Ministries, Wesley Foundations, Baptist Collegiate Ministries, the Fellowship of Christian Athletes, and local church-sponsored groups—and also reach students through Bible studies, worship, discipleship, service, and Christian fellowship.

These organizations cannot carry the responsibility alone. Every parish, congregation, Christian family, and individual believer has a part to play. We can welcome young people rather

than merely observe them. We can listen to their questions without dismissing them, invite them into meaningful service, encourage their gifts, and walk beside them as they mature in faith.

Above all, we must pray for them.

Let us pray that the spiritual hunger appearing on college campuses will not fade when the gatherings end or when the students graduate. Let us pray that these young men and women will remain close to Christ, find faithful communities, and become courageous witnesses to the Gospel. They are not only the future of our churches; they are already members of the Body of Christ, with gifts that the Church and the world need today.

Their faith, courage, wisdom, and compassion will help shape the future of Christianity and our country. May God protect them, guide them, deepen their love for Jesus Christ, and make them instruments of healing and unity in a divided world.

And may all who bear the name of Christ learn to walk together—one flock under one Shepherd.

The End

Donna Curtiss

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