

MESSENGERS OF H O P E

*BECOMING AGENTS OF REVIVAL
FOR THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY*

DAVID BRYANT

FOREWORD BY DR. JOHN M. PERKINS

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To John and Lois Kyle

As a spiritual covering on my life, you have been God's message
from Christ to me, filling the years with unstoppable hope

FOREWORD



Back in the late 1960s, one of the few white churches to get behind our emerging Voice of Calvary ministry in Jackson, Mississippi, was pastored by a twentysomething young man named David Bryant. Now, nearly thirty years later, I have the privilege of commending to you wholeheartedly his latest book, *Messengers of Hope*.

Let me say right up front, I share with David an increasing hope that a genuine biblical revival is about to unfold in our nation. As we've discussed at National Prayer Committee meetings (which David chairs and on which I serve), the Spirit of God is obviously at work to that end. Already early stages of this revival can be seen in national stirrings among Christian teens, in renewal initiatives like the great Promise Keepers men's events, in new expressions of commitment toward racial reconciliation and healing in the church, in the creative urban ministries for Christ taking shape in our major cities, and in widespread movements of united prayer for revival and spiritual awakening.

David Bryant has been in the thick of these developments for nearly twenty years. Truly, he is what this book is titled: a Messenger of Hope. More specifically, through his Concerts of Prayer International, David and his team have made a significant difference. The most exciting urban ministries I see today are based on and nourished by Concerts of Prayer gatherings and united prayer events. For example, David and his staff have focused for years on New York City, helping the prayer movement there become a model for others who want to seek God for the four great spiritual needs of our cities: revival in the church, reconciliation among the races, reformation of society, and reaching the lost.

But as David writes, one such “messenger” is not enough. I agree with him: “The time has come to flood our nation with Messengers of Hope.” Many, both clergy and laypeople—reconciled across race and denomination—must help spread the news of God’s great promises to us in Christ for spiritual awakening in our land. To be sure, the Holy Spirit is the primary Agent of Revival. But in every one of America’s great awakenings in the past three hundred years, he has been pleased to use men and women who gave themselves to join the Holy Spirit as his agents of revival.

In fact, one of the unique contributions of *Messengers of Hope* is David’s acknowledged indebtedness (as a White author) to the historic African-American church as a rich depository of God-centered hope and a message of hope. As you’ll discover, he begins each chapter by quoting extensively from Black Christian leaders over the past two hundred years, who again and again reassure us that biblical hope empowers, enriches, and transforms any generation. There’s no doubt that many African-American believers today are poised to be agents of revival for the whole body of Christ. What an incentive to keep working at racial reconciliation.

Following on the heels of its companion volume (*The Hope at Hand: National and World Revival for the Twenty-First Century*), *Messengers of Hope* lifts up the vision for revival, lays out the biblical rationale for being messengers of this hope, and inspires all of us to take strong initiatives, under Christ, to be God’s agents of revival. But David gives us more. The second half of his book spells out, in the most practical ways, how every Christian can fulfill his or her calling to be such an agent in a variety of settings. There’s something here for everyone.

It is my hope and prayer that I will yet see, with my own eyes, the full spiritual awakening for which many of us have labored for decades. I firmly believe I will! But it will not come without hope-filled messengers. Daily I seek to be one of them. And *you* can be one of them too. David Bryant will show you how.

Dr. John M. Perkins
President, Foundation for Reconciliation and Development

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS



In a sense this volume was already written two years ago. It was in my heart even as I penned *The Hope at Hand*. To be honest, I was tempted to shoehorn it into that book. But better sense prevailed. The topic deserved a thorough treatment by itself. Now, here it is. I want to thank Baker Book House, and especially senior editor Dan Van't Kerkhoff, for their enthusiastic backing of my effort to turn one book into two. What a terrific publisher Baker is in every way!

I'm also indebted to many "messengers of hope" who have enriched my life during the past three years of my teaching on this topic. Because of them I now have so much more to say. I've met thousands of them in major prayer events (like fasting and prayer convocations and youth concerts of prayer), in Promise Keepers rallies, at clergy training conferences, and through the multitude of daily contacts at Concerts of Prayer International.

My deep appreciation to the board of directors, my ministry team (scattered between Chicago and New York), our National Board of Advocates, and countless intercessors and supporters—all dedicated to the vision of Concerts of Prayer International. With me they share the mission of fostering united prayer movements worldwide and flooding the body of Christ with messengers of the hope of revival.

Special gratitude goes to my family—to my three dear ones (Adam, Bethany, Benjamin) who give me reason to hope every day, and to my precious wife, Robyne, who not only did all the entry and helpful editing on this book, but who has learned with me to "abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit" (Rom. 15:13 NRSV) for nearly thirty years.

All of these people join with me in offering this book up to our Lord, Jesus Christ, the one who *is* the Messenger of Hope, *the* promise-filled agent of revival for the twenty-first century.