

EPILOGUE

Some Lessons Learned

Will you not revive us again, that Your people may rejoice in You?

PSALM 85:6

What lessons can we learn from the ten greatest revivals? Of the many we could note, perhaps these are the most important:

1. *Revival can come at any time, at anyplace, to any people.* God pours himself out on people for his glory whenever he pleases and wherever he pleases.

2. *Revival comes when God's people meet the conditions of 2 Chronicles 7.14.* "If My people, who are called by My name, will humble themselves, and pray and seek My face, and turn from their wicked ways ..." The greatest example of this principle is the way in which the prayers of God's people in the Laymen's Prayer Revival of 1859 led to awakening.

3. *Revival expresses itself with "several faces" as God's people demonstrate his presence in different ways in different lives.* Under Billy Graham, revival was experienced by great evangelism; under Martin Luther, revival was a return to biblical doctrine. The Canadian Prairie Revival brought great confession of sin, and the Welsh Revival led a society to clean itself up in repentance. In still other revivals, people spoke in tongues, had the "jerks," and were "slain in the Spirit."

4. *Revival begins with both the unsaved who repent (as in the Jesus People Revival) and the godly who spend extended times in prayer, searching for God's power (as with Livingstone, Roberts, and Savonarola).*

5. *Revival can be released when one person encounters God in a deep experience* (as with Billy Graham at Forest Home) or when many people constantly live for God and seek his face (as in the Moravian Revival).

6. *Revival is not limited by the doctrinal position of leaders.* It came to the Calvinistic Jonathan Edwards and the Arminian Charles Finney.

7. *Revival is not limited by denominational allegiance.* It came through the Methodist circuit riders of the Cane Ridge Revival, the Congregationalist pastors of New England, the Moravians of Germany, the Anglican Wesley brothers, and the founder of the Lutherans.

8. *Revival can be instigated by a crisis* (as when the banks collapsed before the Laymen's Prayer Revival) or it can come in peaceful times (as with the 1904 Revival and the General Awakening.)

9. *While one method may give impetus to a particular revival, all methods are not found in every revival, and revivals can exist without them.* There's a difference between the principles and the methods expressed in revival.

A *principle* is an eternal rule that governs the conditions God will bless and the ways he'll respond in all revivals, such as prayer, repentance, seeking God, and being filled with the Holy Spirit. A *method*, on the other hand, is much more narrow, being limited by time and culture. A method is the application of an eternal rule to a certain situation. It might be the school buses used in the Independent Baptist Revival or the Christian commune houses used in the Jesus People Revival.

We must remember the oft-quoted adage: *Methods are many; principles are few. Methods may change, but principles never do.*

10. *Some methods are "anointed" by God for use at particular times in a revival.* For example, Charles Finney wrote the book *Lectures on Revival*, which described the methods he used effectively in the 1800s. Some of these methods have been fruitful in later revivals, while others have not. Just as people can lose the "touch of God," so some revival methods come to a place where they are no longer useful. In the Second Great Awakening, the camp meeting was effective, but it doesn't have the same import today. Billy Graham used media and organizational techniques that weren't available to previous generations.

11. *People express their emotions and fervency in different ways in different revivals.* In the Cane Ridge Revival, emotional frenzies were common: the jerks, running the aisle, roaring like a lion, barking like a dog, dropping "dead-like" to the floor. But in the Protestant Reformation, there seem to have been no frenzied outward displays of emotions, nor did they occur in Geneva's Second Reformation, the Korean Revival, or the Laymen's Prayer Revival.

12. *Revivals aren't always limited to an established church or a local church.* Some aspects of the Jesus People Revival seemed to be a transdenominational movement apart

from the established church, even though Chuck Smith involved his followers in the Calvary Chapel movement.

13. *Some revivals seem to flow through extraordinary leaders* (such as Martin Luther, John Hus, or Savonarola), *while others are simply poured out on average believers* (as in the Laymen's Prayer Revival).

14. *Some revivals are not attached to evangelism* (such as the Thomas Road Baptist Church Revival).

15. *Some revivals seem to be geographically localized* (such as the Asbury College Revival and Thomas Road Baptist Church Revival), while others are poured out over a large geographical area (such as the Welsh Revival).

16. *Some revivals are poured out only on the denominational churches of an area* (such as the Independent Baptist Revival and the Wesleyan Methodist Revival of Hamilton), while other revivals jump denominational boundaries (such as the Cane Ridge Revival).

In short, we should put few limits on how God chooses to send revival. History demonstrates clearly that he acts sovereignly in a variety of circumstances.

Will There Be Another Worldwide Revival?

On several occasions since the close of the Baby Boomer Revival in 1975, God has poured himself out on his people. Any time God does a work, his people should celebrate the awakening and reviving of the church. Will there be another revival as great as past revivals? Is there anything happening today that could be a candidate as the eleventh greatest revival in history?

First, we'd suggest there are some evidences of revival in the ongoing work of God in South Korea, as illustrated by the emergence of the largest congregation in the history of the church: the Full Gospel Church of Seoul, South Korea, under the leadership of David Yonggi Cho. That church, and the current nationwide Korean prayer movement, reflect evidences of revival.

Second, we'd draw attention to the praise music revival that began in the 1980s. It's centered in The Church on the Way, in Van Nuys, California, and has spread throughout churches worldwide—both charismatic and non-charismatic—under the influence of that congregation's senior pastor, Jack Hayford. The use of praise worship music seems still to bring revival to churches that use it properly.

Third, we'd note the 1980s revivals in Argentina that have continued since the War of the Malvinas (Falkland) Islands in 1982. The various leaders of those revivals are listed in the book by C. Peter Wagner, *The Rising Revival* (Renew Books, 1998).

Fourth, we observe some evidences of revival in two churches in the 1990s, along with the awakening associated with each. First is the Toronto Airport Christian Fellowship

and the work of the Holy Spirit called “The Toronto Blessing.” Second is the “Pensacola Revival” at the Brownsville Assembly of God in Pensacola, Florida.

Any of the above awakenings might well be added in the future to the list of the greatest revivals ever. However, since the extent of God’s work is measured in depth and time, we don’t yet have enough perspective to determine whether these are indeed the great revivals of our day.

We aren’t of the opinion that the earth can’t have another revival because the evil days characterizing the end of time are upon us. As a matter of fact, we believe the opposite: The greatest revival since Pentecost can still sweep the earth before Jesus comes.

God can still do anything.

There is no sin so great that God’s presence can’t revive his church. God’s promises are still applicable: “If My people who are called by My name will humble themselves, and pray and seek My face, and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin and heal their land” (2 Chron. 7:14).

1-1-2000

The Ten Greatest Revivals Ever: from Pentecost to the Present

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