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# DECISIONS CRUCIAL FOR REVIVAL

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December 2007.

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While believers often have conflicting opinions when speaking about revival, one thing is certain: revival will not fill an empty church; revival will fill empty people in the church with God Himself. Revival is actually the key to spiritual renewal of the dead church, which today has bowed the knee to the god of humanism and materialism.

Duncan Campbell, a well-known Scottish revival preacher, once said, "Revival is not churches filled with people, but churches filled with God."

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We have so diluted Christianity that believers possess only intellectual faith void of visible transformation. While our modern means of propaganda and technical evangelism continue progressing (i.e. professional websites, television programs, etc.) we fail to see our cities and neighborhoods turned around for Christ, as they did in the great revivals of the past. Rather than seeing the banner of revival, we hear about divisions and disturbance in the church. This is why we desperately need revival, which, I believe, includes specific crucial decisions that need to be visible in order to know that it is authentic.

### ▶ **1. REVIVAL IS GOD'S WORK**

The Psalmist said in **Psalm 85:6**, “*Will You not revive us again, That Your people may rejoice in You?*” The only One who can revive us is God. He is the God of

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revival and we must seek Him to revive us. Although believers are involved in revival it is not the work of people because God is the One who revives.

There was once a well-known leader of the Welsh Revival in 1904, a young miner named Evan Roberts, whose hair was full of mining dust and his fingernails blackened. He was neither well-read nor a skillful speaker, the only book he knew well was the Bible. At one time he was thrown out of his apartment because of what he preached and because he prayed out loud in his room. One day while praying God revealed to Roberts that Wales would come to spiritual revival and that hundreds of thousands of people would be converted to Christ. With this vision Roberts sought the opportunity to preach, yet no one wanted to listen. He asked his pastor to let him preach in the church and finally his pastor agreed (after being constantly appealed to by this young miner) with the words, “Alright, Evan, you can preach following the Wednesday night service, if anyone chooses to stay and listen.” Seventeen people stayed.

Evans boldly shared what the Lord had revealed to him, the message was simple: you must confess your sins to God, you must remove every doubtful habit from your life, you must obey the Holy Spirit's prompting, and you must publically witness for Christ. Although Roberts was not a skilled speaker the pastor and those seventeen people were deeply touched with the fire of God. During the following thirty days 37,000 repented and received Christ. Over the course of five months that number reached 100,000 and the vision was being fulfilled. Many schools were closed as students, singing and praising God, assembled for prayer meetings. Even children, following the example of the adults, began to gather in their own homes and village courtyards. They began to form prayer meetings.

In one town they began prayer meetings under the motto: "Awaken, you who sleep". People prayed long into the night, sometimes the entire night, for God call people to Himself, to awaken them from slumber, and that these would realize their own sin and convert. There are reports of people who were awakened

in the middle of night, came together for prayer and converted to Christ. In one report it is written about a culprit who received Christ in a courtroom after the judge and jury prayed for him.

Just as God revealed to Roberts, he experienced the spread of revival in England. It is estimated that around 2 million people were converted during the course of the revival. The believers prayed and God touched and completely revived them.

Revival is God's work. We cannot impress man with our websites, programs, and advertising; we need a supernatural manifestation of God's presence to see men come to Christ. They need to be assured of the Holy Spirit to surrender their life to God. Revival and renewal is God's Work. This is why the Psalmist said that HE revives us; *"Will You not revive us again" (Psalm 85:7)*

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▶ **2. WHILE REVIVAL IS GOD'S WORK BELIEVERS SHOULD NOT BE PASSIVE, RATHER ACTIVE AND RESPONSIBLE; THEY NEED TO DO THEIR PART.**

*"Will You not revive us again, that Your people may rejoice in You" (Psalm 85:7)*

While God is the God of revival and though He is sovereign it does not mean that our responsibility lessens, because in revival we are mediators through which revival is only possible. Many times I have heard believers say that they cannot do anything in regards to revival, which is actually a misconception.

If we study the life of the first disciples a little closer we can see that their entire being was surrendered to one cause

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– to do their best for God. They did not passively pray and wait, instead they actively shared and were responsible to complete the tasks that God had entrusted to them.

Many believers today simply want to take the path of least resistance; they do not enjoy working hard; even when it's in their interest to do so – such as is the case of studying, dieting and exercise. They often flee from the disciplines that would help them. They do not wish to fast and pray, they do not to work hard and do not want to be responsible. However, those whom God has used have testified of the importance of prayer, fasting and hard work during the time of revival. Although revival is God's work people have done their part.

For example, John and Charles Wesley and their friend George Whitefield regularly prayed and fasted for their studies at Oxford in 1732. John Wesley believed so much in the power of prayer and fasting that he called his congregation to a day of fasting each Wednesday and Friday. In fact, because of his conviction about fasting,

Wesley did not want the Methodist denomination to set forth pastors who rejected this discipline.

It is not enough to simply wait on the Lord to send revival, fill the church, and perhaps awaken a nation, we have to accept our part of the job and be responsible to pray and fast in order to carry on and fulfill God's Word. Only when we fulfill those requirements then we can wait on the Holy Spirit to change our lives.

Revival requires active involvement and God will bring revival only to those who repent and seek His face. Jesus said, *"Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, For they shall be filled."* **(Matthew 5:6)** There is no blessing for the indifferent and disobedient.

▶ **3. WHEN WE PREACH ABOUT REVIVAL WE PREACH ABOUT SANCTIFICATION ALONG WITH THE POWERFUL PRESENCE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT**

In **Acts 4:3b** we read that the disciples began to speak the word of God with boldness.

A good example of this is the message of the Puritan preacher Jonathan Edwards. He preached a sermon in Enfield, Connecticut in June 1741, marking the beginning of a great revival in America. The sermon, *"Sinners in the Hand of an Angry God"* described hell so clearly that many in the church gripped the pews until their knuckles turned white. The comprehension of their sin grew so strong that Edwards had to halt the sermon for a while until the people's cry for salvation grew quieter. One person described this event saying, "It seemed as if he did not have the intention to ingratiate his listeners with some kind of conciliatory gesture or soothing words, rather he aimed at their hearts and consciences in order to show them the

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enormity of their delusions, secret sins, the hypocritical detachment of their religiosity and thwarting their escape into feigned godliness which, in actuality, is not God's strength...his preaching was often intimidating, but promising to the one who earnestly sought the Lord."

John Wesley, whom God used much during the revival in England and America, had a similar approach. Accounts tell us how Wesley progressively developed a message, speaking, first of all, about the love of God to man, then about the test of a person's conscience, and after that about God's holiness and the gospel that brings forgiveness to our lives.

These revivals often accompanied bold, Christ-centered preaching as people literally fell on their knees before God. The revivals in England led by John Wesley and George Whitefield were characterized by the presence of the Holy Spirit and had a strong influence

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on the people. Wesley wrote about George Whitefield in his diary saying that immediately after the call for salvation four people came forward at the same time. One lay immovably on the ground, another shook, a third had powerful convulsions and in tears cried out to God. Wesley and Whitefield considered these situations to be uncommon and sometimes would ask a person to remove them from their assembly. However, one man wrote to Whitefield and counseled him to allow the people to stay in the service. *"Let them cry"*, he wrote, *"It will have a greater effect than your preaching."* Later Wesley wrote in his journal, *"From that moment I believed it needful to allow God to do His own work in the way He chooses."*

In connection with sanctification, which accompanies revival, Charles Finney wrote: *"I don't know how else to describe all that has happened except that I preached with inspiration. Often the theme simply came to my mind. It seemed that I was spontaneous, but I knew what I would need to say in a clear way; it was like the thoughts, words, and illustrations came as quickly as I spoke them."*

Revival brings boldness and manifestations of the Holy Spirit such as signs and wonders, healings, trembling, shrieking, crying or even dancing with joy. All in all the purpose is to draw man to God, not to focus on manifestations. Every manifestation we see in the Bible was to turn people to God, not to turn them to the manifestation or those through whom God was working.

#### ► 4. REVIVAL ALWAYS CHANGES SOCIETIES AND NATIONS

True revival always, without fail, changes the moral climate of a nation in which revived believers live. History testifies that true revival goes far outside the walls of the church. Revival is, nevertheless, more than exciting Sunday services – it drastically changes the nation.

When we look back on the social influence in Wells, we see how in that period of revival crime had all but disappeared – there was no rape, theft, murder, and fraud; the judges had almost no cases to judge. I quote: *“The district chief of police held an emergency meeting to speak about the roles of the police when their positions*

*were generally not needed.”* The rate of alcoholism dropped and in the year following the beginning of the revival illegitimate births in two regions dropped by forty-four percent.

Revival also influenced the future United States of America. After the revival in England, George Whitefield joined Jonathan Edwards in the United Colonies of New England and a thousand people were converted while a prophesy spoke about *“political freedom from the control of England and spiritual freedom from the bonds of sin.”*

While the Holy Spirit was leading people like Edwards and Whitefield, in one territory of around two hundred and fifty thousand people, fifty thousand people were saved. If these new believers were added to the number of believers already existing there would have been enough to settle a future country! God not only used

✦ **What else can we do than seek revival? The key decision is ours, for us as individuals, as a church and as a nation.**



Edwards and Whitefield but other spiritual leaders as well, so that the American Colonies would return to God and accept the Christian principles leading up to the Declaration of Independence.

The Great Revival of Kentucky in 1800 spread across Tennessee, North and South Carolina, and on to the north. From this revival arose many missionary movements, the abolition of slavery, and unbiased education. More than 600 colleges were founded by people who cooperated in this revival.

What else can we do than seek revival?

The key decision is ours, for us as

individuals, as a church and as a nation.

The revival that God has promised begins when in humility we repent, fast, pray, and seek His face as well as turning away from our wicked ways. God has promised that

He will answer with the fire of revival to all who will listen, hear, love, and believe:

*“Will You not revive us again, That Your people may rejoice in You?” (Psalm 85:6)*

**★ God has promised that He will answer with the fire of revival to all who will listen, hear, love, and believe.**



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