

FROM PENTECOST  
TO THE PRESENT



# THE TEN GREATEST REVIVALS EVER



ELMER TOWNS  
DOUGLAS PORTER



# **THE TEN GREATEST REVIVALS EVER**

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By  
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## THE TEN GREATEST REVIVALS EVER

1. The 1904 Revival, Beginning in Wales  
Evan Roberts, Korea, Moravian, Azusa Street
2. The First Great Awakening, 1727-1750  
Zinzendorf, Wesley, Whitefield, Jonathan Edwards
3. The Second Great Awakening 1780-1810  
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5. The Layman's Revival 1857-1861  
Phoebe Palmer, Lanphier, D. L. Moody
6. The World War II Revival 1935-1950  
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7. The Baby Boomer Revival 1965-1970  
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10. Pentecost 30 A.D.  
Peter, Ephesus, Paul

The order of the *Ten Greatest Revivals Ever* was determined by the following who read the manuscript:

Bill Bright; Gerald Brooks; David Yonggi Cho, Robert Coleman; James O. Davis; Lewis Drummond, Dale Galloway, Eddie Gibbs, Jack Hayford, Charles Kelly, Ron Phillips, Alvin Reid, Chuck Smith, Tommy Tenney, C. Peter Wagner and Steve Wingfield.

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by

Elmer L. Towns & Douglas Porter

#### *Introduction*

Revival is defined as “God pouring Himself out on His people. Revival is classified into nine different expression “faces” but no matter what expression each revival takes, all are characterized as a “visitation from God.” This book observes that usually revival breaks out in many places around the world, not just in one place; so each of the “greatest revivals” are not just isolated events. Therefore, the *Ten Greatest Revivals* described in this book are ten epochs or ten different “times of refreshing from the presence of the Lord.”

#### 1 *History's Greatest Revival: The 1904 Revival — 1904*

According to the late Dr. J. Edwin Orr, former professor of Awakenings at Fuller Theological Seminary, history's greatest revival took place in the early years of the Twentieth Century, including the *Welsh Revival*, the *Asuza Street Revival*, the *Korean Pentecost*, the *Manchurian Revival*, and the *Mizo Outpouring*.

#### 2 *The First Great Awakening—1727-1750*

Early in the Eighteenth Century, revival so impacted the church that the movement simply became known as the Great Awakening, but British historians often refer to it as the Evangelical Revival, which includes the *Moravian Revival* at Hernhutt in Germany, the ministry of Jonathon Edwards and the *Surprising Work of God in Northampton* in New England, the *Fetter Lane Watchnight Revival* of England that was the forerunner to the Methodist Church, and the *Crossweeksung Indian Revival* of David Brainerd. These revivals kept England and America from the horrors of the French Revolution.

#### 3 *The Second Great Awakening—1780-1810*

In the *Second Great Awakening* sometimes God poured out His spirit in a quiet way that shaped the lives of those it touched for a generation. On other occasions, revivals were marked with loud and violent manifestations. This chapter includes the stories of *Cornwall's Christmas Revival* of England, the *Yale Revival* under college president Timothy Dwight, the *Cane Ridge Revival* on the frontier of America and later ministry of Peter Cartwright, the revival ministry of Robert Haldane in *Geneva's Second Reformation*, Ashael Nettleton and the *Bridgewater Revival* of Scotland, and the *Amherst College Revival*. Some historians call this the greatest revival, not for what it did for the church, but how it changed the secular world. The *Second Great Awakening*

resulted in the abolition of slavery, the end of child labor, the beginning of the feminist movement, the move for universal literacy, and the reformation of prisons, among its greatest contributions.

4 *The General Awakening—1830-1840*

There appears to have been a significant outpouring of the Holy Spirit in the 1830s and 1840s that is called the General Awakening. This chapter looks at several local manifestations including *Charles Finney's Rochester Revival*, the ministry of Titus Coan in the *Hawaiian Revival*, the *Kilsyth Anniversary Revival*, and the revivalistic outreach associated with the *Mississippi Valley Enterprise* in America evangelized the American frontier and established churches.

5 *The Layman's Prayer Revival—1857-1861*

During the “*Layman's Prayer Revival*” there was no dominant revival leader but the movement grew by lay motivation. This chapter includes the stories of *Hamilton's Wesleyan Methodist Revival* in Canada, the *Fulton Street Prayer Meeting* in New York that grew out of Jeremiah Lanphier's noon hour prayer meetings, the *Ulster Revival* of 1859, the *Jamaican Revival* of 1860, and the revival accompanying *Moody's British Evangelistic Campaigns*.

6 *The World War II Revival—1935-1950*

Many revivals are associated with the beginning or end of military conflict, the World War II Revival touched many parts of the world because of threat from world-wide war. This chapter looks at local manifestations of the *New Zealand Revival*, the rise of Billy Graham following his historic *Los Angeles Crusade*, and the revival ministry of Duncan Campbell in the *Lewis Awakening* of Scotland. A local manifestation of this revival (The *Bonnabella Revival*) resulted in the conversion of one of the authors of this book (Towns).

7 *The Baby Boomer Revival—1965-1975*

The Holy Spirit touched the world during the clash of dreams. Those who fought World War II had their dreams of peace, but their children, i.e., the Baby Boomer generation, rejected their ideals and refused to live out their parents' expectations. This chapter considers the rise of the *Jesus People* in California, and the *Independent Baptist Revival* that reflected the growth of mega churches around the world. The *East Timor Indonesian Revival* alerted the West to what God was doing in the East, the *Asbury College Revival* sparked similar revivals in colleges across America and the *Saskatoon Revival* touched Western Canada. A local manifestation of this revival resulted in one of the authors of this book responding to God's call upon his life for ministry (Porter).

8 *Pre-Reformation European Revivals—1300-1500*

Out of a thousand years of spiritual darkness (the Dark Ages) come the stories of God beginning to work in unusual ways bringing revival to a remnant who longed to experience His presence. These revivals ushered in the world-changing Protestant Reformation movements such as *England's Lollard Revival*, the *Burning of John Hus* at the stake, and *Savonarola's Florence Revival* in Italy.

9 *The Protestant Reformation—1517*

When Martin Luther nailed the 95 theses to the door of Wittenburg Castle, Germany in 1517, it was the most significant religious event of the church from Pentecost to the present day. Luther began the Protestant Reformation that separated forever Protestants from the Roman Catholic Church. Although much of the success of the Protestant Reformation was due in part to the support of political leaders who saw it as a way to break free from Rome's political authority, it would be wrong to not recognize the work of God in the lives of individuals and groups during the reformation era. This chapter looks briefly at the theological contributions of Luther, Zwingli, Calvin and Knox, then consider the *Huguenot Revival* in France, the birth of the *Swiss Brethren* and rise of the Anabaptist movement, the *Brethren of the Common Life* in Germany and rise of Pietism, and the *Communion Revival at Shotts*.

10 *Pentecost, the Beginning of Revival—A.D. 30*

The New Testament began with a new phenomenon of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, and has become the model and basis of all future revivals. While this is the greatest outpouring of God on His people, because everything else rests on Pentecost, it is placed last in the list of ten revivals as the foundation upon which all succeeding revivals rest. This chapter tells the foundational story of the greatest revivals in history including the *Jerusalem Revival* on the Day of Pentecost, and Paul's ministry in that city.

After Thought

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- A. Lessons Learned from the Greatest Revivals
- B. A Selected Bibliography for continued study of each revival
- C. Index

There have been instances in the history of the Church when the telling and retelling of the wonderful works of God have been used to rekindle the expectations of the faithful intercessors and prepare the way for another Awakening.

J. Edwin Orr

## INTRODUCTION

“Pray for revival in America.” I (Elmer Towns) saw this sign in a restaurant in Dallas, Texas, while we were writing this book. I said, “AMEN!” in my spirit, but wondered if they knew what they were praying for.

When most people pray for revival, they are probably asking for a wonderful experience at church next Sunday at 11:00 a.m. But revival is more than a Sunday morning experience. When you pray for revival, you’re asking God for life-shaking experiences that will cost you plenty. It’s agonizing because in revival you become terrorized over your sin and you repent deeply. It’s consuming because in revival you have no time for hobbies . . . for chores around the house . . . for work . . . for sleep.

Revival crashes your Daytimer . . . interrupts TV times . . . demands your full attention . . . and wears you out. Usually when we pray for revival, we’re telling God “sic ‘em” on the bad guys. Little do we realize that revival begins with us, the people of God.

As a matter of fact, we’ve got a suggestion for you who want revival. Don’t pray for revival, just repent of all known sin, do every thing you’re supposed to do, give God all—not part—but all your time, and you’ll experience revival.

When revival came to Liberty University and Thomas Road Baptist Church in the fall of 1973, glory flooded the church auditorium . . . it was atmospheric revival. All normal activities in our lives shut down. Students and business people didn’t want to leave the sanctuary because when they left the building, they were leaving the presence of God. They didn’t want to miss anything that God was doing.

Revival began on Wednesday evening about 10:30 p.m. an hour after prayer meeting was over. It came when students and church members were milling around the front of the sanctuary.



Most of the ushers and pastors had gone home. One student went to the pulpit—weeping—to confess sins. The microphone and pulpit lights were off, but God was there. The student’s passionate repentance captured those who were still in the auditorium. Someone began singing. A pianist ran to play the piano. People dropped to their knees beside the altar and front pews. The piano was playing softly, not interrupting the sacred sound of tears. Shortly, another broken person approached the pulpit to confess sins. After two hours, frantic phone calls went out to the pastor and deacons,

“Revival’s hit the church!”

Church members were awakened in the middle of the night, hurriedly dressed, and drove through the dark streets of Lynchburg. All came back to the church building expecting to experience God. No ties . . . no Sunday morning dresses . . . just believers eager for the touch of God.

They stayed at the church from Wednesday until Saturday morning. Classes were canceled, most didn’t leave for work, some didn’t eat. When drowsiness couldn’t be fought off, students slept in the pews in the back of the auditorium, some slept under the pews. Like the tide that comes and goes, there would be intense times when people were confessing their sins, then soft times of quiet weeping and private prayer around the altar. What stopped the revival? Early Saturday morning one student rose to confess his sins, but he seemed to be bragging about what he did when he sinned; there was no shame, nor brokenness. The Holy Spirit—Who knows the heart—departed the meeting. Within one hour, all knew the revival was over. All left, went home and went back about their daily activities.

This book describes *The Ten Greatest Revivals and Their Influence*. While some may not agree with the authors’ choice of the ten or the sequence of the ten, don’t be too critical; even

the authors disagreed at times. Since we don't have complete records of revival, and no one knows everything that God did in all revivals; only God knows which were the ten greatest revivals. As a matter of fact, there may have been greater revivals than those described in this book, but we don't know anything about it because no one wrote down what happened. But based on our study, these are our choices (Douglas Porter wrote his doctoral dissertation on *An Analysis of Evangelical Revivals with Suggestions for Encouraging and Maximizing the Effects of an Outpouring of the Holy Spirit in Evangelism* and Elmer Towns was the mentor. Towns wrote the book *Rivers of Revival* with Neil Anderson, then wrote books on spirituality, including the topics of fasting, meditation, praying the Lord's prayer, worship and God encounters.)

#### THE TEN GREATEST REVIVALS EVER

1. The Revival of 1904
2. The Great Awakening, 1727-1750
3. The Second Great Awakening, 1780-1810
4. The General Awakening, 1830-1840
5. The Layman's Prayer Revival, 1857-1861
6. The World War II Revival, 1935-1950
7. The Baby Boomer Revival, 1965-1975s
8. The Pre-Reformation Revivals, 1300-1500
9. The Protestant Reformation, 1517
10. Pentecost, the Beginning of Revival, A.D. 30

Note that these are ten revival eras, not just isolated revival places or revival events. It seems when God poured out His Spirit, He did so on "all flesh," meaning the revival sprang up in several places at the same time. Therefore, in this book we identify the ten greatest revivals ever, as the ten greatest periods of time when God manifested Himself around the world. Like a stream that disappears underground to burst to the surface at another location, so in the First Great Awakening, revival sprang up in several places, i.e., in New England (Jonathan Edwards),

in England (Wesley and Whitefield) and in Germany (Herrnhutt). This book doesn't just tell revival stories of isolated events, we have focused on ten world-wide "times of refreshing from the presence of the Lord." We've called them, "*The Ten Greatest Revivals Ever.*"

We've described the strange phenomena associated with revivals, i.e., the jerks, shouting, "slain in the Spirit", speaking in tongues, barking, dancing in the Spirit, etc. Since none of these phenomena appeared in all revivals, we conclude none of these manifestations are mandatory for an awakening and true revival can happen without these extraordinary phenomena. But since most of these unusual phenomena occur more than once, what do we conclude? We agree with several other writers who have concluded, "When the divine is poured into the human, expect the human to react in extraordinary ways." Some of these phenomena are prompted by God, at other times they are just the exuberant expressions of those who are experiencing God's presence. We have a word of caution to you as you read about the different displays of emotions. First, don't seek the extraordinary signs of revival, for these unusual expressions are not what revival is about. Second, don't measure the success of a revival by the intensity or amount of extraordinary signs, for when you do; you've missed the whole purpose of a revival. Third, seek the Lord, because it is God who revives our hearts. Measure a revival by God Himself . . . is God present? . . . what is God doing (not what are people doing) . . . and what did God accomplish?

*Since the days of Pentecost there is no record of the sudden and direct work of the Spirit of God upon the souls of men that has not been accompanied by events more or less abnormal. It is, indeed, on consideration, only natural that it should be so. We cannot expect an abnormal inrush of Divine light and power, so profoundly affecting the emotions and changing the lives of men, without remarkable results. As well expect a hurricane, an earthquake, or a flood, to leave nothing*

*abnormal in its course, as to expect a true Revival that is not accompanied by events quite out of our ordinary experience.*

*A. T. Schofield*

Just as all normal people have the same facial characteristics, yet the characteristics in the faces of all people are arranged differently; these revivals have the same facial characteristics—they reflect God’s presence—yet they have different faces; which means the revivals were expressed in different ways. I (Elmer Towns) wrote *Rivers of Revival*, Regal Books, 1998 with Neil Anderson. In that book, I describe nine faces of revival (see pp. 116-117). These nine “faces” of revival are different manifestations of revival. These nine faces occur throughout history and are found in the times we call the ten greatest revivals ever. Yet, in each of these ten periods of time, the expressions of revival all appeared differently in each revival. These nine faces of revival in the book, *Rivers of Revival*, are:

1. Repentance Revival: emphasis on cleaning up one’s life and society.
2. Evangelism Revival: emphasis on winning souls to Christ.
3. Worship Revival: emphasis on magnifying God.
4. Deeper Life Revival: experiencing God’s indwelling.
5. Spiritual Warfare Revival: battling demons and Satan.
6. Holy Spirit Revival: emphasis on the Spirit’s manifestations.
7. Reconciliation Revival: removing barriers to racial harmony.
8. Liberation revival: freeing from corporate and personal bondage to sin.
9. Prayer Revival: an enormous movement of intercession and prayer.

The authors will use the plural “we” because we wrote together. However, when a reference is made to just Douglas Porter or just Elmer Towns, the text will reference the author impersonally, as in (Elmer Towns, *Fasting For Spiritual Breakthrough*, Regal Books, 1995). If

you wish to correspond with us about revival or comment on this book, contact [www.elmertowns.com](http://www.elmertowns.com) or [porter.palace@sympatico.ca](mailto:porter.palace@sympatico.ca).

## REVIVAL SOUGHT

The eternal quest of mankind is to know and experience God. Some want God to split open the heavens and descend to earth so they can see Him. Others want God to write His message in the sky or on a mountain so they can see it and know for sure what to do. Still others want to hear the actual voice of God yelling like thunder. Still others want God to “zap ‘em” so they’ll quiver on the floor or jump like a kangaroo. Even though most don’t say it, they want God to quit playing hide and seek . . . to come show Himself . . . to visit His people.

A pastor who is a former student at Liberty promises an experience with God as he gives the Invocation in his church each Sunday morning:

I know God, and

Today you can know God.

This week I touched God, and

Today you can touch God.

But more importantly, right here,

Today, God can touch you.

True believers want God to intervene in their humdrum experiences. They want God to manifest Himself to them. But for most, God cannot be felt or touched. Most people feel that God is not with them. They want revival, but don’t know what it is or how to get it. That’s why we wrote this book. Not just to give intellectual information about revivals, but so readers can experience God in their daily lives. Therefore, let’s try to define a revival so you’ll know what it is and how to get it.

*But there have been certain seasons called revivals—when God has “poured His Spirit out on His people.” These times—also called awakenings—occurred when the presence of God is experienced in powerful manifestations of the Holy Spirit.*

*J. Edwin Orr*

"When the day of Pentecost had fully come" (Acts 2:1), God moved in a "remarkable manner" among His people. He continued his miraculous moving as the church was established. In the days since, God has continued moving among His people in these "special seasons" resulting in great blessing both to the church and secular community.

*There are some special seasons wherein God doth in a remarkable manner revive religion among his people.*

*Solomon Stoddard (America's First Revivalist)*

In the early centuries of Christian history, God accomplished a similar work through Gregory "the Illuminator" resulting in the conversion of Armenia, Frumentius in the country of Ethiopia, Ulfilas in his ministry among the Goths, Patrick in Ireland, Clovis among the Franks, Columba as he preached the gospel to the Scottish Picts and Methodius in his ministry among the Slavs. The ministries of reformers like Savonarola, Wycliffe, and Knox reveal a similar supernatural working of God among His people. Places like Hernhutt, Northampton, Fetter Lane and Cane Ridge are still remembered by Christians as places where there was a significant movement of God.

During the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries, many communities experienced an outpouring of the Holy Spirit. This was the era of David Brainerd, Jonathan Edwards, John Wesley, Charles Finney, Jeremiah Lanphier and Dwight Lyman Moody. While these names remain well-

known among contemporary Christians, there were a host of others also whom God used to bring significant revivals to churches and communities. Some of their stories are also included in the pages following,

*No Church that values its own standards can afford to depreciate revivals of religion. The whole history of the Christian Church from its foundation until now is the history of revivals. It should always be born in mind that real revival is something infinitely higher than a mere gale of religious excitement sweeping over the Churches. A genuine revival is a manifestation of supernatural and Divine power.*

*Australian Christian World Editorial (1888)*

Some say that revival is an American phenomenon, a unique cultural experience experienced only south of the Mason-Dixon line. History argues otherwise. Both the Great Awakening and the First Great Awakening began in Europe. The story of this present time is that revival is indeed a global phenomenon. This is the age of Asuza Street, Evan Roberts of the Welsh Revival, the Korean Pentecost, and Jonathan Goforth of the Manchurian Revival. But it is also the age of great revivals in India and East Africa, Los Angeles, California and the Hebrides Islands of Scotland, East Timor, Indonesia and Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, Asbury College and New Zealand. This age has declared God dead, but He has shown Himself very much alive when His people humble themselves, pray, seek His face and turn from their wicked ways.

### CHOOSING THE TEN GREATEST REVIVALS

The authors had a difficult task to choose the ten greatest revivals ever. They began by setting criteria for their choices. Theyz asked five questions of each revival, and the answers helped guide their choices.

### Guidelines to Ranking Revivals

1. Does the experience fit the biblical guidelines of revival?
2. Was there a demonstration of God's presence?
3. Was the larger body of Christ awakened to its New Testament task?
4. Was culture impacted positively by the revival?
5. Are there reliable sources that demonstrate the greatness of the revival?

First, does the experience fit the biblical guidelines of revival? To answer this question, the authors agreed on a common definition of revival. Essentially, an evangelical revival is an extraordinary work of God in which Christians repent of their sins as they become intensely aware of His presence and His extraordinary works, and they manifest a positive response to God in renewed obedience to the known will of God, resulting in both a deepening of their individual and corporate experience with God and an increased concern to win others to Christ.



### *DEFINITION OF REVIVAL*

*Revival is an outpouring of God in His people when Christians:*

*Repent of sin.*

*Renew their love to God.*

*Recommit themselves to God's purposes.*

*Invest extended time in prayer, communion with God, meditation and  
Experience blessings in Christian service.*

This view of revival recognizes several distinctives common to historic revivals: (a) An extraordinary work of God should be differentiated from the more ordinary work of God in the life of the believer, (b) the realization of the unique presence of God during times of revival is consistently reported in the testimonies of the revived, (c) revivals naturally tend to precede a significant evangelistic outreach and harvest of souls in the community touched by the revived church, and (d) while there may be isolated exceptions, these are manifestations connected with the normal experience of an outpouring of the Holy Spirit that were experienced in Scripture.

Second, Was there a demonstration of God's presence? Since revival is God pouring Himself on His people, there is an unusual manifestation of God when revival is poured out. Sometimes this is called *atmospheric revival*, where people give testimony to feeling . . . experiencing . . . sensing . . . that God is present. However, a New Testament revival is never measured by feelings alone; there must be a demonstration of New Testament fruit for an experience to be labeled a New Testament revival.

The significance of the revival experience itself sometimes works to hinder the progress of revival. Some see revival as an end in itself, rather than an opportunity to know God Himself. Remember, the most important thing about a revival is knowing God, not experiencing its

manifestations. When that happens, revivals become inclusive and sectarian, sometimes even falling into the ranks of cultism.

Don't seek the hand of God in miracles,  
Seek the heart of God in intimacy.

Third, Was the larger body of Christ awakened to a New Testament task? While revivals often begin in a small group, church or single denomination, every great revival spills over its natural boundaries. The Moravian Revival began in Hernhutt, but it touched the world. There were fewer than three dozen people at Fetter Lane, but it gave birth to the Methodist Church. Asuza Street was a small church by contemporary standards, but Pentecostalism has become a world-wide movement. Each of the revivals described in this book spilled out of its context into a broad arena.

*It is by revivals of religion that the Church of God makes its most visible advance. When all things seem becalmed, when no breath stirs the air, when the sea is like lead and the sky is low and grey, when all worship seems to have ended but the worship of matter, then it is that the Spirit of God is poured upon the Church, then it is that the Christianity of the apostles and martyrs, not that of the philosophers and liberals, keeps rising - as Vinet says - from the catacombs of oblivion, and appears young and fresh in the midst of the obsolete things of yesterday and the day before.*

*Sir William Robertson Nicoll*

Fourth, Was culture impacted positively by the revival? When a revived church is mobilized to preach the gospel, individual lives (both believers and the unsaved) are transformed by the power of God. When many individuals are brought into conformity to Jesus Christ, the culture is transformed. The First Great Awakening in England resulted in Sunday School and educational

reform, changes to labor and child welfare laws, significant prison reforms, and the abolition of slavery. During the Welsh Revival, the culture was so transformed that new mules had to be secured to work in the coal mines. The old mules would not respond to miners who no longer cursed and abused the animals. Revivals in England, America, and other places have historically shaped those nations into Christian communities.

Fifth, Are there reliable sources that demonstrate the greatness of the revival? The authors have tried where possible to rely on primary sources of eyewitnesses, newspaper accounts, journals, and other written observations of the revivals. When secondary sources were consulted, we tried to eliminate bias accounts where writers had a reason to exaggerate or records that were not objective.

Since this is not a reference book for scholars but was written to touch the hearts of readers to challenge them to revival, we have left out a footnoting system used in scholarly pursuits.

Even though we have used primary sources and direct quotations, we have attributed them to their source as a modern newspaper might present a story. For the scholar seeking further research, consult the Bibliography.

The stories of the revivals revisited in this book are written by men sympathetic to revival. Each is the product of revival. Elmer Towns was converted to Christ during a revival experienced in a Presbyterian Church in Bonnabella, Georgia. Douglas Porter yielded to God's call on his life to preach the gospel during a similar revival experienced during a youth conference. Each prays for God to send "the greatest revival since Pentecost!"

The reader will note the most recent revivals described in this book are over thirty years old. Does that mean the age of revivals has come to an end? That is not the view of the authors. Even as this book was written, the authors received reports of significant revivals around the world. Some revivals, like those in Toronto and Pensacola, have received much attention internationally.

Others tend to be promoted widely in their region but widely unknown beyond their state or national borders. Some revivals appear to be having a profound impact on their country, especially in some Latin American countries like Argentina. Other revivals, such as those recently reported at Wheaton and Cornerstone College, appear to have had a profound impact on a college campus. The authors rejoice in reports of God at work among His people even though they may not be able to endorse everything that happens in these and other revivals.

Some contemporary revivals have not been described because their story has not yet had the time needed to measure their impact on a generation. The dramatic events surrounding the initial outpouring of the Holy Spirit is only part of the story that makes a revival great. The real impact of a revival is realized in the ministry of a revived church in an awakened community. This takes time. In the opinion of the authors, it takes a generation for the story of a revival to unfold. We are better able to evaluate the impact of the Asbury College Revival a generation later than those caught up in the enthusiasm of the revival itself in 1970. It remains the task of the next generation to revisit the revivals of this generation.

*There is a Divine mystery about Revivals. God's sovereignty is in them. I may not live to see it, but the day will come when there will be a great Revival over the whole earth.*

*Alexander Whyte*

The Psalmist wrote, "I will open my mouth in a parable; I will utter dark sayings of old, which we have heard and known, and our fathers have told us. We will not hide them from their children, telling to the generation to come the praises of the LORD, and His strength and His wonderful works that He has done" (Ps. 78:2-4). This is not a history book for scholars, even though we have relied on primary sources and have quoted from them; rather, this is our account of

some of "His wonderful works that He has done." The stories gathered in this volume are included as models of what God has done and is doing in our world. These stories are retold in this book with the hope that they might motivate Christians to prepare their heart and lives for revival.

May God use this book to stir hearts to pray that God one more time, "Will You not revive us again, that Your people may rejoice in You?" (Ps. 85:6).

Elmer L. Towns  
Virginia, United States  
Pentecost 2000

Douglas Porter  
Ontario, Canada  
Pentecost 2000

There is a Divine mystery about Revivals. God's sovereignty is in them. I may not live to see it, but the day will come when there will be a great Revival over the whole earth.

Alexander Whyte

# **Chapter One**

## **The 1904 Revival**

**1904**

According to J. Edward Orr, former professor of Awakenings at Fuller Theological Seminary, history's greatest revival took place at the beginning of the twentieth century, including the Welsh Revival, the Azusa Street Revival, the Korean Pentecost, the Manchurian revival and the Mizo Outpouring.

## **CHAPTER ONE**

### **The 1904 Revival**

"A blaze of evening glory at the end of the Great Century," is the way the revival at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century has been described by J. Edwin Orr and "the most extensive evangelical awakening of all time." Depending upon one's ethnic and evangelical background, aspects of this revival have become legends of one's heritage. It has been estimated more than five million people were won to Christ within a two year period.

Moody Bible Institute in America and the Keswick Convention in England called their respective nations to prayer for revival as their nineteenth century came to a close. The large prayer movement organized by these ministries was matched by an even larger, apparently unconnected movement of prayer world-wide. On mission fields as far away as India, the Far East, Africa and Latin America, missionaries and national churches began praying for revival in their respective lands. Most of those praying had never seen revival on the mission field, many had never experienced revival themselves. They prayed that God might do for them what they had read in the stories of history's great revivals.

In response to this prayer movement, the first manifestations of revival began among Boer prisoners of war in Bermuda and Ceylon. The Prisoner of War Revival was characterized "by extraordinary prayer, by faithful preaching, conviction of sin, confession and repentance with lasting conversions and hundreds of enlistments for missionary service." With the return of the prisoners after the Boer War, revival swept through South Africa during an economic depression.

A Japanese awakening began in 1900 as part of a decade-long intensive evangelistic campaign. Campaign organizers had called the evangelical church to prayer as preparation for the intensive evangelistic effort. This resulted in an awakening among the people living in Japanese

cities. The total membership of the churches almost doubled within the decade, despite the interruption of a war with Russia four years into the campaign.

The Torrey/Alexander evangelistic team was surprised to find a wide-spread prayer movement during their highly successful evangelistic campaign throughout Australia and New Zealand. The campaign produced more converts for the churches than ever before experienced by the churches of that region. When evangelist Wilbur Chapman replaced Torrey, revival continued. Gipsy Smith saw the same results during his mission of peace in South Africa. The South African Awakening under Smith's ministry was so significant that Gipsy extended his ministry in that nation. But the greatest manifestation of the 1904 Revival was yet to come.

A young man felt impressed by God that revival was coming to his native Wales. He told a friend, "I have a vision of all Wales being lifted up to heaven. We are going to see the mightiest revival that Wales has ever known—and the Holy Spirit is coming soon, so we must get ready." He claimed God would give him "a hundred thousand souls" if he would organize a preaching band to travel across the nation during the coming revival. The student gathered together several friends who agreed to be part of his team, but the revival itself began in a meeting conducted by a young evangelist alone.

During a meeting on October 30, 1904, Evan Roberts was impressed to return home for a week of ministry among the youth in his home church. The next day he boarded a train for Loughor. That evening, he conducted his first meeting after the regular prayer meeting. He told the seventeen people gathered of his vision and urged them to declare their faith in Christ publicly. Although the initial response was slow, eventually all present gave their testimony. Throughout the week, Roberts conducted meetings each evening calling the youth to deal with sin, renew their



obedience to God, be filled with the Holy Spirit, and publicly declare their faith in Christ. Meetings typically ran three to five hours.

Within a week, the "youth" meetings had begun to attract parents impressed with the changes they saw in their children and the Moriah Chapel was filled to capacity. On November 9, the English language newspaper in Cardiff announced,

A remarkable religious revival is now taking place in Loughor. For some days, a young man named Evan Roberts, a native of Loughor, has been causing great surprise at Moriah Chapel. The place has been besieged by dense crowds of people unable to obtain admission. Such excitement has prevailed that the road on which the chapel is situated has been lined with people from end to end. . . . His statements have had the most stirring effects upon his listeners. Many who have disbelieved Christianity for years are returning to the fold of their younger days. One night, so great was the enthusiasm invoked by the young revivalist that, after his sermon which lasted two hours, the vast congregation remained praying and singing until two-thirty in the morning. Shopkeepers are closing early in order to get a place in the chapel, and tin and steel workers through the place in working clothes.

Although Roberts became the acknowledged leader of the Welsh Revival, the revival itself extended far beyond his own ministry. Churches were filled for two years across the entire nation. As Roberts had predicted, a hundred thousand converts were added to the church. The use of alcohol in Wales dropped by fifty percent resulting in the bankruptcy of many taverns. Crime was reduced to the point judges in many jurisdictions were presented with white gloves indicating there were no crimes of violence to be tried that day. In various communities, police became unemployed when they were no longer needed. In the coal mines, mules refused to respond to converted miners who began treating the animals with respect and stopped using foul language.

News of the revival encouraged those praying for revival throughout Great Britain to intensify their efforts. The Archbishop of Canterbury called for a national day of prayer. When one bishop told of confirming 950 converts in a single country parish church, thirty others declared their

support for the revival. Outside the Anglican church, Protestants in England increased by ten percent in 1903-1906. Revival also swept through Ireland and Scotland.

Europe also experienced an unusual movement of God in response to news of the Welsh Revival. The revival begun under the ministry of Albert Lunde in Norway was later described by Bishop Berggrav as "the greatest revival of his experience." That revival spread through Sweden, Finland and Denmark. Lutherans described the revival as "the greatest movement of the Spirit since the Vikings were evangelized." Germany, France and other European nations were also touched by the revival.

When news of the Welsh Revival reached America, there was a similar response. Ministers gathered in various conventions to prepare for the coming awakening. In Philadelphia, Methodists soon reported having 6101 new converts in trial membership. The pastors of Atlantic City churches claimed there were only fifty unconverted adults left in that city. On a single Sunday in New York City, 364 were received into membership and 286 converted to Christ.

The revival also swept through the South. First Baptist Church in Paducah, Kentucky, added a thousand people within a couple of months. Across the Southern Baptist Convention, baptisms increased by twenty-five percent in a single year.

In the mid-west, Methodists reported "the greatest revivals in their history." Every store and factory in Burlington, Iowa, closed to allow employees to attend prayer meetings. When the mayor of Denver declared a day of prayer in that city, churches were filled by ten o'clock. At 11:30, virtually every place of business in the city closed as 12,000 gathered for prayer meetings in downtown theatres and halls. Every school in town and the Colorado State Legislature closed for the day.

In the west, united meetings attracted 180,000 people in attendance. By midnight, the Grand Opera House in Los Angeles was filled with drunks and prostitutes seeking salvation. In Portland, Oregon, the entire city virtually shut down between 11:00 a.m. and 2:30 p.m. for noon hour prayer meetings.

A similar movement occurred throughout Canada. Churches of various denominations, both urban and rural, organized prayer meetings and evangelistic campaigns. Thousands gathered nightly during Torrey/Alexander campaigns in major Canadian cities including Winnipeg and Toronto. Among the converts of Torrey's Toronto meetings was a young man named Oswald J. Smith who later became "the greatest missionary statesman of the twentieth century."

News of the Welsh Revival also encouraged those praying for revival in India to increase their efforts. The resulting revival touched every province in that nation. The Christian population increased by seventy percent during the Indian Revival, sixteen times as fast as the Hindu population increased. In many places, meetings lasted five to ten hours.

Missionaries in Burma reported an "ingathering quite surpassing anything known in the history of the mission." Two thousand Karens were baptized in 1905, ten times the usual number. In a single church, 1340 Shans were baptized in December.

Korea experienced three waves of revival in the first decade of the new century, the best known being the 1907 Korean Pentecost. Church membership quadrupled in the decade. One of those touched by the Korean revival was a Canadian missionary serving in China. Jonathan Goforth returned to Manchuria as a carrier of revival. The national awakening which followed doubled the Protestant population of that nation to a quarter of a million people, despite the persecution surrounding both the Boxer Uprising and 1911 Revolution.

Revival swept through the island nations of the Pacific. In Indonesia, 100,000 evangelicals in 1903 became 300,000 strong within the decade. On the island of Nias, two-thirds of the population was converted to Christ. In Malagasia, Protestant church membership increased by sixty-six percent during the revival.

While the revival had limited effect in South America, both Brazil and Chile were exceptions to the rule. The growth of the evangelical church in those nations began during the revival and continued uninterrupted throughout the century. Approximately 100 years later, both nations boasted more evangelicals than Roman Catholics attending church in the Catholic nations.

According to the Edinburgh World Missionary Conference, "more progress had been made in all Africa in the first decade of the twentieth century than experienced hitherto." From 1903 to 1910, Protestants living in the African continent increased from 300,000 to 500,000. Still, the full impact of the Welsh Revival in Africa was not known. As revived missionaries made their way to Africa, the growth rate of the African evangelical church continued to be twice that of the general population for a half century.

As noted earlier, news of the Welsh Revival encouraged many in Southern California praying to intensify their efforts. In 1907, a small church in Los Angeles saw the crowds grow in their meetings until the converted house they met in collapsed. They moved into a vacated Methodist church on Asuza Street. During the revival which followed, people began speaking in tongues. The Asuza Street church quickly became a revival center attracting Christians from around the world. The Pentecostal movement was born and became the largest growing Protestant movement of the century. Religion writers voted the Asuza Revival as one of the 100 most important religious of the Millennium.

The First World War probably robbed the 1904 Awakening from having as full an impact on society as might have otherwise been realized. Still, the revival was not without an impact. It began to shape the morality of a generation. The changed lives of converts resulted in reductions in crime, drunkenness, and gambling, along with increases in honesty, truthfulness and chastity throughout Great Britain.

A wave of morality in America followed the awakening producing a revival of righteousness which culminated with the passing of the Eighteenth Amendment to the United States Constitution that prohibited the sale of alcoholic beverages. Throughout the nation, political reform was effected as corrupt district attorneys, mayors, governors, senators and assemblymen were replaced with those perceived as honest.

Missionaries touched by the revival established schools and hospitals on their various fields. The number of pupils attending Christian schools in India doubled in the two decades following the revival. Ninety percent of all nurses were Christians, most trained at mission hospitals. In China, missionaries laid the foundation of that nations education and medical systems. The same was true in many nations throughout the African continent.

## INFLUENCE OF THE 1904 AWAKENING

1. Founding of Pentecostal denominations.
2. Introduction and spread of modern day tongues movement.
3. Establishment of Bible college/institute movement.
4. The Temperance movement.
5. Impetus to world-wide missionary endeavors.
6. Beginning of interdenominational organizations and strategy.
7. Addition of technology to evangelistic strategy.

In the Year of Our Lord 1904

## THE REVIVAL OF WALES

At the annual gathering of the British Keswick Convention in 1904, there was growing sense that a mighty outpouring of the Holy Spirit was on the horizon. Many Keswick speakers reported Christians were surrendering themselves more deeply to Christ and committing themselves to pray for revival. Among those speakers was Seth Joshua, an evangelist who conducted many of his meetings in neighboring Wales.

Christians in Wales had witnessed the rapid spread of worldliness and humanistic philosophy producing a deadening effect in the churches of that land. A church leader echoed observed, "While the church sleeps, the enemy busily sows tares among the wheat. Nothing short of an outpouring of the Spirit from on high will uproot them, and save our land from becoming prey to atheism and ungodliness."

In response to the conditions around them, Welsh pastors began praying intensely. As they prayed, a small group claimed to experience God's power in their preaching as they challenged their congregations. Among the group was Pastor Joseph Jenkins who pastored a church in New Quay, Cardiganshire.

Pastor Jenkins' New Quay Church was among the first stirred by a touch of revival. The pastor had organized a special conference in January, 1904 where many in his church began experiencing personal revival. The spirit of revival continued under the preaching of Seth Joshua. Later that year, Seth Joshua preached in Blaenannerch. During his meetings at Blaenannerch, students from the nearby Methodist Academy attended.

Evan Roberts was among the Academy students who attended Joshua's meetings. At a pre-breakfast meeting on Thursday, September 29, the evangelist concluded, crying out in Welsh, "Lord, bend us." When Evan Roberts later recalled that morning, he explained, "It was the Spirit that put the emphasis on 'bend us.'"

"That is what you need," said the Spirit to Evan Roberts.

Evans began praying, "O Lord, bend me."

The next meeting that morning was scheduled at nine o'clock. Several students prayed aloud when given the opportunity. Roberts himself knelt with his arms stretched out, perspiration soaked his shirt as he agonized over the committing himself to God. Finally he prayed aloud, "Bend me! Bend me! Bend me!" Later that day, Seth Joshua made an entry in his journal recalling what the young man cried out to God.

Evan Roberts felt himself overwhelmed by the love of God. A verse he had learned immediately came to mind. "But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us" (Rom. 5:8). The motto of the revival in Wales was born out

of Roberts' experience that day. "Bend the church and save the world." Though still in his twenties, Evan Roberts was about to become God's agent to carry the spirit of revival throughout his homeland.

Although he was already twenty-six years old, Evan Roberts had just begun his course of study to train as a minister. As a boy growing up in Loughor, Wales, he had a compelling desire to "honour God in every aspect of his life." He knew God was calling him into the ministry, but he resisted enrolling in a formal course of instruction fearing the training might quench his zeal for souls. His zeal intensified in the spring of 1904 following a unique experience with God. According to Roberts, he had the following experience for three months.

One Friday night last spring, when praying by my bedside before retiring, I was taken up to a great expanse--without time and space. It was communion with God. Before this I had a far-off God. I was frightened that night, but never since. So great was my shivering that I rocked the bed, and my brother, being awakened, took hold of me thinking I was ill. After that experience I was awakened every night a little after one o'clock. This was most strange, for through the years I slept like a rock, and no disturbance in my room would awaken me. From that hour I was taken up into the divine fellowship for about four hours. What it was I cannot tell you, except that it was divine. About five o'clock I was again allowed to sleep on till about nine. At this time I was again taken up into the same experience as in the earlier hours of the morning until about twelve or one o'clock."

Evan Robert's fellowship with God grew following the Blaenannerch Conference. He spent hours engaged in personal Bible study, prayer and worship. The nervousness he had previously experienced in preaching now seemed to pass. Also, Roberts began experiencing visions of large numbers of people coming to Christ. He felt a revival was coming to his native Wales and that he must prepare for ministry. He formed a ministry team with several friends telling them God was sending a revival that would reach a hundred thousand people for Christ.



While Roberts and his team conducted meetings in the area, Roberts viewed them as preparation for something much larger to come. He knew the revival would come soon and when it came he would be busy.

Before it arrived, he felt he needed to return home to gain the support of his family and friends.

At the end of the October, Evan Roberts took the train home to be with his family and conduct a week of meetings among the youth in his home church. From the train, he wrote various friends to tell them what he was doing and solicit their prayer support. When he arrived in Loughor, he went to his pastor to request permission to conduct the meetings. The first meeting was scheduled and he was given permission to speak to any youth who agreed to stay after the usual Monday evening meeting.

At the meeting, Roberts urged that "any who were unwilling to submit to the Holy Spirit" should be free to leave the meeting. As a result, only seventeen remained to hear him. For almost three hours, the zealous evangelist led the group in worship and prayer, calling on God to break down any hardness of heart that might hinder revival.

During the meeting, each of those present, including the evangelist's brother and three sisters, experienced the convicting power of the Holy Spirit, confessed their sins, called on God for mercy, and magnified God in praise.

The results that evening convinced Roberts revival would come in its fullness to Loughor if he would remain faithful. Attendance at the meetings began to increase each night. By Friday, those attending Roberts' meetings included people from several other congregations in town. Although he knew he had commitments as a student, he decided to continue the meetings a second week. Furthermore, he would expand the ministry beyond Loughor to other chapels in

nearby Gorseinon. Without any formal publicity, by Wednesday people had crowded the church and those who arrived late stood in the vestibule to listen through the open doors.

On Thursday evening, a service was held in Brynteg Chapel in Gorseinon. Many people went directly to the church from work to insure they would get a seat. A newspaper reporter wandered into the service two hours after it began. In his report published in the *Western Mail* on Saturday, November 12, the reporter wrote,

The meeting at Brynteg congregational church on Thursday night was attended by those remarkable scenes which have made previous meetings memorable in the life history of so many of the inhabitants of the district. The proceedings commenced at seven o'clock and they lasted without a break until 4.30 o'clock on Friday morning. During the whole of this time the congregation were under the influence of deep religious fervor and exaltation. There were about 400 people present in the chapel when I took my seat at about nine o'clock. The majority of the congregation were females ranging from young misses of twelve to matrons with babies in their arms. Mr. Roberts is a young man of rather striking appearance. He is tall and distinguished looking, with an intellectual air about his clean shaven face. His eyes are piercing in their brightness, and the pallor of his countenance seemed to suggest that those nightly vigils are taking their toll on him. There was however no suggestion of fatigue in his conduct of the meeting. There is nothing theatrical about his preaching. He does not seek to terrify his hearers, and eternal torment finds no place in his theology. Rather does he reason with the people and show them by persuasion a more excellent way. I had not been many minutes in the building before I felt that this was no ordinary gathering. Instead of the set order of proceedings to which we were accustomed at the orthodox religious service, everything here was left to the spontaneous impulse of the moment. The preacher too did not remain in his usual seat. For the most part he walked up and down the aisles, open Bible in hand, exhorting one encouraging another, and kneeling with a third (person) to implore blessing from the throne of grace.

Later in his report, the newsman noted,

At 2.30 o'clock I took a rough note of what was then proceeding. In the gallery a woman was praying and she fainted. Water was offered her, but she refused this, saying the only thing she wanted

was God's forgiveness. A well known resident then rose and said that salvation had come to him. Immediately a thanksgiving hymn was sung, while an English prayer from a new convert broke in upon the singing. The whole congregation then fell upon their knees, prayers ascending from every part of the edifice, while Mr. Roberts gave way to tears at the sight. This state of fervency lasted for about ten minutes. It was followed by an even more impressive five minutes of silence, broken only by the sobs of strong men. A hymn was then started by a woman with a beautiful soprano voice. Finally Mr. Roberts announced the holding of future meetings and at 4:25 o'clock the gathering dispersed. But even at this hour the people did not make their way home. When I left to walk back to Llanelly I left dozens of them about the road still discussing what is now the chief subject of their lives.

The meetings continued that week with evidence of the Holy Spirit moving mightily among those gathered. He wrote to a fellow student telling him of his decision not to return to school. "Perhaps we shall have to go through the whole of Wales," he suggested. "If so, thank Heaven! What a blessed time!"

Two days later, Evan Roberts was invited to preach at Bryn Seion Chapel in Trecynon, Aberdare. He immediately accepted and asked several friends from Loughor to assist him in the campaign. Once again, the Holy Spirit was poured out and the church experienced a significant reviving. By the time the campaign ended, powerful revivals were being reported throughout the nation. Roberts was not the only preacher in the Wales Revival. His friend Sidney Evans and Joseph Jenkins carried the revival to other communities. Seth Joshua also experienced revival in his meetings. In one place, Joshua noted in his journal, "There is a wonderful fire burning here. The ground is very prepared, thank God. . . . Even in the morning a number were led to embrace the Savior. In the afternoon the blessing fell upon scores of young people. . . . Numbers confessed Jesus, but it is impossible to count."

As revival broke out across the nation, pastors saw their churches fill with people coming to Christ. In the village of Egryn, near Harlech, a farmer's wife named Mary Jones led over seventy of her neighbors to personal faith in Christ. The revival continued for over two years, even in places Evan Roberts and others associated with him had not come. Revival historian J. Edwin Orr noted,

Drunkenness was immediately cut in half, and many taverns went bankrupt. Crime was so diminished that judges were presented with white gloves signifying that there were no cases of murder, assault, rape or robbery or the like to consider. The police became unemployed in many districts. Stoppages occurred in coal mines, not due to unpleasantness between management and workers, but because so many foul-mouthed miners became converted and stopped using foul language that the horses which hauled the coal trucks in the mines could no longer understand what was being said to them.

News of the revival was widely published both within and outside Wales. Church leaders came from around the world to see for themselves. Common people were also drawn to the revival by the reports they read. Because of the spontaneous nature of the revival, many began their journey not quite sure about where they were going. One man and his daughter went to the railway station and bought train tickets to attend revival meetings. When they asked the porter at the station how to find the meeting, he responded, "You'll feel it on the train. Go down that road and you'll feel it down there."

The Welsh by nature were a singing people, and they expressed their new joy in the Lord often in song. In many meetings, the people would gather just to sing. During the singing, the Holy Spirit would begin working and revival would come even when there was no preaching.

The emphasis of Evan Roberts' message could be summarized in four principles. First, he insisted Christians must put away any unconfessed sin. Second, he called on them to

renounce any doubtful habit. Third, "You must obey the Spirit promptly." And fourth, he urged people to confess Christ publicly.

J. Edwin Orr describes the revival as "the farthest reaching of the movements of general awakening, for it affected the whole of the evangelical cause in India, Korea and China, renewed revival in Japan and South Africa, and sent a wave of awakenings over Africa, Latin America and the South Seas." Visiting pastors from Norway, Japan, America, India, South Africa and Korea were all deeply moved in the Welsh Revival and became carriers of revival to their nations as they returned home.

In the Year of Our Lord,  
Easter Saturday, April 14, 1906

#### THE AZUSA STREET REVIVAL

When he arrived to preach, the church doors were locked. He had travelled from Texas to Southern California at the invitation of the pastor, but the message he preached caused the pastor to change her mind. The views espoused by this African-American preacher were questionable at best, at least in the pastor's mind. There was no way she would allow that message to be preached in her church. She could not stop Seymour from preaching, but she could and would stop it from being preached in her church.

Still in his mid-thirties, William Joseph Seymour was well acquainted with rejection. He began life as the son of recently freed slaves living in Centreville, Louisiana. The South was in transition following the war, but despite the liberation of slaves, it was a society still steeped in class distinctions in 1870. Receiving a good education was out of the question for an African-American. If Seymour was going to learn how to read and write, he would have to teach himself. The fact that he did so is a commentary on his strength of will and determination. Still, as a young man in his twenties, Seymour had had enough. He left the South and headed north to

Indianapolis. For several years, he waited on tables in a prominent hotel. By the time he was thirty, he was living in Cincinnati.

Early in life, Seymour had been drawn into the holiness movement then sweeping through the South. In Indianapolis, he attended the local Methodist Episcopal Church, a church that emphasized the ministry of Christ indwelling the life of the believer. By the time he was thirty, he had been "saved and sanctified" through the ministry of a revivalistic group called "the Evening Light Saints." This group believed human history was coming to an imminent end and anticipated Christ soon return to establish His kingdom. Just before that happened, the group believed there would be a fresh outpouring of the Holy Spirit, a "latter rain." To prepare for this, the group encouraged Christians to leave existing denominations to become part of a pure and interracial church God was beginning to raise up.

Despite the idealism of the Evening Light Saints, Seymour soon found himself back in the South. In Houston at the turn of the century if you were black and attended church, you attended a black church. It was while attending a black church in Houston that Seymour witnessed something he had never before seen. He heard a woman praying in what seemed like another language. It was widely held by Holiness groups of that day that "speaking in tongues" was a sign that would accompany the arrival of the last days. Seymour sensed this woman had something he longed for but had not yet found. He knew he had to talk with her.

When he met with Lucy Farrow, the woman who had spoken in tongues, he learned she had recently worked as a governess in Topeka, Kansas. Her employer was a man named Charles Fox Parham, a white preacher who ran a holiness Bible school, Bethel College, in the same city. It was not long before Seymour headed to Topeka to seek out Parham. When he found him, he begged to

be admitted into the school. In making his request, Seymour was once again brought face to face with the realities of life in the South at the turn of the century.

While Parham was always looking for students and welcomed the zeal of Seymour, Parham was also a sympathizer of the Ku Klux Klan. He was not sure he was ready to welcome a black student into his school. On the other hand, how could he turn him away. That just didn't seem to be the Christian thing to do either. Finally, he arrived at a compromise. He would allow Seymour to listen to his lectures from a chair outside by an open window. In the event of rain, Seymour would be allowed to move his chair into the hall and the door would be left ajar so he could hear.

Seymour agreed to the terms established and began attending Parham's lectures. Earnestly he sought the "baptism of the Holy Spirit" but without success. He continued preaching at black missions while waiting on God for his own "second blessing." A lady visiting from Los Angeles heard him preach in one of those meetings and recommended him to her pastor back home in California. That recommendation led to an immediate invitation to preach in a little store-front church on Santa Fe Avenue. The church had been started as a split from a local black Baptist church over the doctrine of the second blessing. When the invitation arrived, Seymour saw it as his own Macedonian vision. He borrowed train fare from Parham and made his way west.

At his first meeting, Sister Hutchins, pastor of the church, recognized significant differences between the preaching of Seymour and her own views of the second blessing. She considered Seymour extreme in his doctrine of the Holy Spirit, perhaps even heretical. It was clear the two could not continue to work together. When Seymour arrived at the church to preach at an afternoon meeting, he found the church doors locked. He was no longer welcomed in the little store-front church on Santa Fe Avenue.

Undaunted, Seymour agreed to preach in a home on Bonnie Brae Avenue. Several from Sister Hutchins' church attended the meeting along with others in the shabby neighbourhood north of Temple Street. Most of the congregation was composed of domestic servants and women who took in laundry. As word of the home meetings spread, the crowds grew. People came to hear a preacher who had never spoken in tongues tell how the blessing of God would come soon when all would have this unique gift.

As Seymour was preparing to go to the meeting on April 9, 1906, Edward Lee told him he had received a vision. He claimed the Apostles had come to him and told him how to receive the gift of tongues. Together the men prayed, then made their way to the meeting. That night, "the power fell" on those assembled and several, including William Joseph Seymour himself, began praising God in "unknown tongues."

As news of the outpouring spread through the community, the little home on Bonnie Brae Avenue soon became too small. The weight of the crowd gathered on the porch outside was so great it broke. While there were no serious injuries, everyone knew something had to be done. An abandoned church building at 312 Azusa Street was available, which had most recently been used as a warehouse and livery stable. The building was swept out and Seymour's Apostolic Faith Mission moved to their new home on Easter Saturday, April 14, 1906.

Seymour preached an apocalyptic message assuring his listeners the end of the world was at hand. It was his view that Jesus was coming very soon to judge the world and establish His kingdom on earth. Prior to that coming, there would be a "latter rain" outpouring of the Holy Spirit. The evidence that the Spirit had indeed come would be "speaking in tongues." Everything seemed to be happening just as Seymour had said. Then, on the morning of April 18, 1906, four days after the Apostolic Faith Mission had begun holding services on Azusa Street, nine days after the first



manifestation of tongues in their midst, the earth itself shook. A major earthquake along the San Andreas fault almost completely destroyed the city of San Francisco. Its impact was felt throughout Southern California. And as the ground shook beneath their feet, lives of many who had ignored Seymour's message were shaken also.

Daily services at 312 Azusa Street quickly filled with both blacks and whites seeking both salvation and "the baptism of the Holy Ghost." One white preacher in the South commented, "the colour line was washed away by the blood." As the young church witnessed what they perceived to be evidences of the end of the world, their worship of God was noisy and filled with enthusiasm. A sceptical reporter with the *Los Angeles Times* heard about the meeting and attended. The next day, his report described "wild scenes" and a "weird babble of tongues." He was the first of many to publish negative descriptions of the revival. But not all who investigated the story left as antagonistic. Soon reports were being circulated in Pentecostal circles of those who "came to scorn and stayed to pray."

News of the Azusa Street Revival soon began drawing others from across America and around the world. Seymour himself began publishing an occasional paper describing the progress in the spread of his Pentecostal message. *The Apostolic Faith* soon had readers across America and beyond. In it, Seymour described the doctrines of the movements and published reports of tongue-speaking around the world. As many as three hundred soon crowded into the forty by sixty foot frame building. On occasion, that crowd doubled forcing worshippers to gather in the doorway and around the building outside. Many who came to investigate the revival were themselves touched and received the Azusa Street blessing. They became the pioneers of the Pentecostal movement of the twentieth century.

In its earliest days, the meetings at Azusa Street were multi-racial in character. While Seymour initially taught speaking in tongues was the evidence of the baptism of the Holy Spirit, he felt increasingly uncomfortable with Christians who spoke in tongues, yet still harboured racial attitudes toward people of color. He soon began preaching that the dissolution of racial barriers "was the surest sign of the Spirit's pentecostal presence and the approaching New Jerusalem." Unfortunately, not everyone in the emerging Pentecostal movement agreed.

Charles Parham, Seymour's mentor in his pilgrimage to Pentecost, arrived in Los Angeles in October 1906 to investigate the revival for himself. Seymour welcomed the arrival of his teacher and invited him to preach in his pulpit. For years, Parham had preached about the need for a new dispensation of the Spirit and came to Azusa Street with great expectation, but what he saw there was far different from his own vision of the coming revival. He shuddered to see blacks and whites praying at the same altar. When a white woman "slain in the spirit" fell back into the arms of a black man, he was horrified at what he began to describe as a "darkey revival." When he began preaching, he accused those gathered of practising Animism and rebuked them for their disregard for racial distinction.

The elders of the Azusa Street Mission, both black and white, did not appreciate Parham's condemnation. What Parham considered a work of the devil was perceived by them to be the work of the Holy Spirit. Parham was asked to leave and barred from returning. Unfortunately, he was not the only white holiness preacher sympathetic to the Pentecostal message who was unable to break from the cultural values of the day. Soon after the revival began, Pentecostal denominations began to be formed along racial lines. While they broke with Seymour and his vision of the outworking of Pentecostalism, they did not abandon the Pentecostal experience of speaking in tongues they had seen at Azusa Street.

Several major Pentecostal denominations including the Assemblies of God in Springfield, Missouri, trace their historic roots to the impact of the Azusa Street Revival on their founders. Leaders of a black denomination who called themselves "the Church of God" attended the Azusa Street church for several weeks in June 1907 and returned to transform their entire denomination into what is still the largest black Pentecostal denomination in America. Another Church of God denomination, this one white, became Pentecostal when G. B. Cashwell, an Azusa Street convert described the Azusa Street Revival at the national convention of that denomination. During the meeting, the General Overseer of the group of churches, A. J. Tomlinson, listened attentively. Then suddenly, Tomlinson fell out of his chair and began speaking in tongues at Cashwell's feet. While a few churches left the movement, most embraced the Pentecostal message. By the end of the century, they were the fastest growing white denomination in America.

The influence of the Azusa Street Revival spread far beyond the national boundaries of America. The Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada recognize their spiritual indebtedness to Seymour and the Azusa Street mission, especially in the earliest manifestations of charismatic phenomena in Winnipeg and Toronto. Many of their founding fathers first experienced the Pentecostal blessing under Seymour's preaching, or were mentored by him in their early Pentecostal experience.

The spread of the Pentecostal message to South Africa also grew out of the Azusa Street Revival. John G. Lake visited the Azusa Street Mission prior to taking the Pentecostal message to South Africa in 1908. Within five years he had established five hundred black and a hundred and twenty-five white Pentecostal churches in that nation. Others took the Pentecostal message to Europe and Asia. *The Apostolic Faith* soon reported,

The Pentecost has crossed the water on both sides to the Hawaiian Islands on the west, and England, Norway, Sweden and India on the east. . . . We rejoice to hear that Pentecost has fallen in Calcutta, India. . . . We have letters from China, Germany, Switzerland,

Norway, Sweden, England, Ireland, Australia and other countries from hungry souls that want their Pentecost. . . . In Stockholm, Sweden . . . The first soul came through tonight, receiving the baptism with the Holy Ghost with Bible evidence. . . . In Christiania, Norway—God is wonderfully demonstrating His power.

The Azusa Street Revival continued for about three years. Its views of race relations proved to be too much even for revived Christians at the beginning of the twentieth century. The emphasis on the imminent end of the world also hindered its ability to endure. When Seymour married Jenny Moore, a black leader in his church, some of his strongest supporters objected that marriage was unwise so close to the end of the world. They left to begin a rival group in Portland, Oregon. Seymour himself died in 1922. The Azusa Street church was closed a few years later, demolished to make way for a new plaza. But the influence of the Azusa Street Revival has been felt around the world now for almost a century.

In the Year of Our Lord, 1907

### **THE KOREAN PENTECOST**

Although it was one of the last nations in the Far East to hear the gospel, a series of revivals early in the twentieth century quickly transformed the Korean church into a powerful force for God, both in transforming Korean culture and society, and in reaching beyond its borders to other nations in Asia.

Dr. R. A. Hardie, a Canadian Colleges medical missionary, arrived in Korea in 1890, a nation that was just beginning to hear the gospel from foreign missionaries. In 1898 he associated with the Methodists; about that time, missionaries first began reporting a turning to Christianity on the part of Korean nationals. While missionaries rejoiced in the interest shown, they lamented the fact these new converts showed no evidence of conviction of sin followed by repentance and saving

faith. It appears the first "converts" were entering the church "as interested disciples rather than regenerated members."

In August 1903, seven missionaries gathered in Wonsan for a week of study and prayer. Dr. Hardie confessed he "had not seen any examples of plain, unmistakable, and lasting conversion" in his thirteen years of ministry in Korea. Believing the ministry was being hindered by his own failings, he confessed his faults before both the missionaries and Korean church, with others making similar confessions.

Just a few months later, October 1903, missionary advocate Fredrik Franson arrived in Korea and was invited to preach. The meetings were marked by open confession of sins. Many admitted to theft and offered to make restitution. Church members insisted restitution be made to the Lord rather than themselves. As a result, funds were raised for evangelism in the area. During his stay in Korea, Franson impressed upon Hardie and his fellow workers the necessity of prevailing prayer.

In 1905, Japan's victory over Russia resulted in the Japanese occupation of Korea, resulting in a new Korean nationalistic spirit. Christians looked to the church to organize resistance. Instead, missionary and church leaders preached forgiveness and forbearance. This was followed by a second wave of revival in 1905-1906, described as "a spreading fire" and "a continuing religious awakening." Hundreds were converted, more than any previous year in the history of the Korean mission. In Pyongyang, seven hundred conversions were recorded in a two week period. Still, the best was yet to come.

The blessing of God continued in 1906. In Pyongyang, a new year evangelistic crusade drew four thousand people to the meetings, twenty percent of the city's entire population. A united evangelistic thrust in the nation's capital, Seoul, resulted in a thousand conversions.

As had been their custom in recent years, the missionaries gathered at Pyongyang for a week of prayer and Bible study in August 1906. Dr. Howard Agnew Johnston told Korean missionaries of the Welsh Revival and other awakenings in India. Half of the missionaries then in the nation were Presbyterians and were deeply moved by accounts of revival among Welsh Presbyterians and Presbyterian missionaries in Asia. News of the other revivals motivated missionaries to intensify their praying for a similar outpouring in Korea. Throughout the fall and winter of 1906-1907, missionaries gathered in the church each morning at five o'clock to pour out their heart to God. During their week together, the missionaries studied First John which later became their textbook for revival.

It was the custom of the Korean church leaders to gather at Pyongyang each New Years for a ten day Bible conference. In January 1907, fifteen hundred men gathered together representing the leadership of hundreds of churches. For almost six months, missionaries had been praying for a mighty movement of God among the Korean church and anticipation grew as the meetings began. On Monday afternoon, several missionaries gathered together for prayer. They pleaded with God to move among them. One of their number later testified, "We were bound in spirit and refused to let God go till He blessed us." That night, as they entered the church it seemed the entire building was filled with the presence of God.

After a brief message, Mr. Lee, a Korean leader, took charge of the meeting and called for prayer. So many men wanted to pray that Lee announced, "If you want to pray like that, all pray." Across the church, the whole congregation began praying together. The result was not the confusion one might expect, but rather "a vast harmony of sound and spirit, like the noise of the surf in an ocean of prayer." Later this practice was called a "concert of prayer." In the midst of the

prayer, many of the men became deeply convicted of their sin. One after another began rising to their feet in deep agony to confess their sins and cry out to God for His mercy.

On Tuesday, the missionaries gathered at noon to discuss what had happened the night before. Only a few missionaries had been present at the meeting. One present expressed a personal concern, because it was common knowledge that two church leaders had a hostile relationship. On Monday evening, Mr. Kang had confessed his hatred for Mr. Kim, but Mr. Kim had remained silent. Several missionaries were concerned about Mr. Kim's unwillingness to reconcile. That evening, God answered the prayers of the missionaries in a most unusual way.

As the meeting progressed, Mr. Kim sat with the elders behind the pulpit with his head bowed down. Suddenly he came to the pulpit. Holding it firmly, he confessed, "I have been guilty of fighting against God. I have been guilty of hating not only Kang You-moon, but Pang Mok-sa." Kim's animosity toward Kang was well known, but Pang Mok-sa was the Korean name of the missionary who urged others to pray for him. The revelation of hatred toward the missionary came as a complete surprise to all gathered. Then turning to the missionary, Kim continued. "Can you forgive me?" he asked. "Can you pray for me?"

The missionary stood to pray in Korean. He began, "Apage, Apage" (Father, Father). That was as far as he got. "It seemed as if the roof was lifted from the building and the Spirit of God came down from heaven in a mighty avalanche of power among us," the missionary later reported. "I fell at Kim's side and wept and prayed as I had never prayed before." Across the auditorium, hundreds stood with arms stretched out toward heaven calling on God. Others lay prostrate on the floor. Hundreds cried out to God for mercy.

While they had been praying for revival for months, when it came the missionaries were terrified. Many in the church were in deep mental anguish. Others struggling to resist God were

seen clenching their fists and banging their head against the ground. They feared allowing the meeting to continue would result in some going crazy, yet they knew they dare not interfere with the work of the Holy Spirit. Finally, they agreed to end the meeting at two o'clock in the morning, six hours after it had begun. Throughout the rest of the conference, similar events were repeated daily.

The deep reviving of the Korean church leadership had an immediate impact on both the churches and communities those churches sought to reach. The men returned to their homes as *carriers of revival*. As the story of the Bible conference revival was retold, a similar revival gripped the churches. As the churches were revived, they were gripped by a burning passion to reach the lost in their community. Everywhere, revived churches began to see "drunkards, gamblers, adulterers, murderers, thieves, self-righteous, Confucianists and others" transformed into new creatures in Christ.

The revival had an almost immediate impact in the nation's Christian colleges. Ninety percent of the students at Union Christian College in Pyongyang professed conversion in February 1907. Many also sensed God's call upon their life as evangelists. They also carried the revival beyond the city into village churches throughout Korea.

From 1905 to 1910, the Korean church recorded 79,221 additions in church membership. That was more than the total number of Japanese church members after fifty years of missionary effort. It was also twice the number of Chinese Protestants after eighty years of missionary labors. By 1912, there were about 300,000 Korean church members in a nation of twelve million people.

The Korean Pentecost was quickly recognized as a movement of God by Christian leaders around the world. The Edinburgh Conference of 1910 declared, "The Korean Revival . . . has been a genuine Pentecost, for Korean church membership quadrupled in a decade." The Student Volunteer Movement cited six evidences of "the present day work of the Holy Spirit in Korea" the



same year. These evidences included "(1) the unity and cooperation which prevailed among Christians, (2) the remarkable numerical growth of the churches, (3) the wonderful religious awakening of 1907 which affected 50,000 converts, (4) the noteworthy interest in the Word of God, (5) the dedication of national Christians to service, including generous giving, and (6) the wonderful prayer life of the Korean Church."

Although the Korean church only represented about one percent of the entire population in Korea, its influence in daily life was far greater because of two unique conditions imposed upon new converts. First, missionaries required illiterate Korean adults to learn to read Korean in a simple phonetic alphabet before they could be admitted to membership. Second, Korean patriots viewed Christians as Japanese collaborators because they cut their hair like the missionaries and Japanese rather than the traditional Korean style. To distinguish between collaborators and Christians, the church required Christians to recite chapters from the Bible to prove they were Christians. The result was a hundred percent literacy rate among Christians in a largely illiterate nation. Their ability to read made Christians the natural leaders of the Korean society.

The Korean Revival was born out of intense prayer and prayer remained an integral part of Korean church life throughout the twentieth century. In many churches, "concerts of prayer" is still practised in Sunday morning services, the whole church confessing their sins to God and calling on God for His blessing in unison. Called the "Dawn Meetings," Koreans gathering every morning at their church at five o'clock for prayer. Also Friday nights are devoted to all night prayer meeting. Fasting and prayer is widely practised. Over five thousand "prayer mountains" have been established where Christians go for days or weeks of prayer. The prayer life of the Korean church remains a challenge to Christians around the world. By the Year 2,000 A.D., a third of the Korean population were members of a Christian church.

In the Year of Our Lord  
February, 1908

## **THE MANCHURIAN REVIVAL**

Jonathan Goforth

If there was ever a man whose very life was defined by revival, it was Jonathan Goforth. As a student at Toronto's Knox College in 1887, his life was impacted by a college revival conducted by the American evangelist D. L. Moody. As a missionary in China, news of the Welsh Revival created a deep hunger for a similar movement of God in his own ministry. When he learned of the Korean Pentecost, he travelled to see it for himself. When Goforth returned to China, he became a carrier of revival that brought awakening to Manchuria.

As a young man preparing for ministry, Goforth read Hudson Taylor's book describing missionary work in China. He was already involved in work at an area rescue mission, but was so impressed by what he read that he committed his life to serving God in China. Rather than join Taylor's China Inland Mission, Goforth and his wife Rosalind served under the sponsorship of their Presbyterian church. When they were assigned to serve in Honan province, Goforth contacted Taylor to ask for advice. The China Inland Mission had tried unsuccessfully to establish a work in that province, so Taylor rejoiced to learn another group was bringing the gospel to that part of the Asian nation. Knowing the work would be difficult, Taylor wrote back urging the younger missionary to "go forward on your knees."

Much of Goforth's early ministry in China involved training hundreds of Chinese pastors and evangelists. He and other missionaries served at a time when many European businessmen were exploiting China. An indigenous movement known as "the Boxers" rebelled at the abuse China was suffering from these unethical businessmen. Unfortunately, the Boxer's hatred for foreigners did not distinguish between missionaries and the unethical English businessmen. On

December 31, 1899, the Boxers murdered a British missionary. The Empress of China issued an order that all foreigners should be executed. In the blood bath that followed, over a hundred missionaries were killed. The Goforths were wounded in the uprising, barely escaping with their lives.

The world responded to the Boxer Revolt with military might, capturing Peking and crushing the old order. While the revolt had been directed primarily at foreigners, hundreds of national Christians also lost their lives at the hands of the Boxers. Their bravery in the hour of persecution and martyrdom later bore fruit. As peaceful conditions returned to China, the Chinese people began flocking to church to learn more about Christianity.

According to J. Edwin Orr, the Chinese awakening occurred in three phases. From 1900 through 1905, there was a significant prayer movement in many parts of the nation. These prayer meetings actually preceded the Boxer uprising and many who were involved in the prayer movement became martyrs in the revolt. The next two years (1906-1907) were marked by a widespread awakening as large numbers of Chinese nationals responded to the preaching of the gospel. The third phase of the awakening, an extraordinary revival began in 1908 and continued up to 1911.

In 1907 Goforth made a tour of Korea, something he wanted to do ever since he heard the first reports of the Korean revival. While there, he was deeply moved by what he experienced. He realized the movement in Korea was "no wild gust of religious enthusiasm" but a deep moving work of the Holy Spirit. He was also challenged by the prayer life of the Korean missionaries and national church leaders. Believing God was "no respecter of persons," Goforth began praying for a similar outpouring of the Holy Spirit in China.

On his way back to Honan from Korea, Goforth stopped one evening in Mukden to share what he had seen in Korea with a group of missionaries. They were deeply impressed, they asked Goforth to return that February to conduct a special week of meetings.

When Goforth returned to Mukden for the scheduled meetings, things did not look promising. The evening Goforth arrived, his host took the opportunity to speak critically of a friend of Goforth claiming "his theology is as old as the hills." After the service, Goforth also learned his host's wife was so opposed to having the special meetings she had arranged to visit out of town during the campaign. Also, Goforth learned that no prayer meetings had been organized for the meetings as he had requested. As he prepared to go to bed that evening, he wept and cried out to God.

"What is the use of my coming here?" he asked. "These people are not seeking after Thee. They have no desire for blessing. What can I do?"

No sooner had he began to pray when it seemed as though a voice came back to him saying, "Is it your work or Mine? Can I not do a sovereign work?" Then a verse Goforth had memorized years earlier came to his mind. "Call to Me, and I will answer you, and show you great and mighty things, which you do not know" (Jer. 33:3).

The next morning, one of the elders of the church came to see Goforth before the scheduled morning meeting. As soon as the two were alone, the elder began to weep uncontrollably, telling his story,

In the Boxer year," he began, "I was treasurer of the Church. The Boxers came and destroyed everything, the books included. I knew I could lie with safety. There were certain Church funds in my keeping which I swore I had never received. Since then I've used the money in my business. Yesterday, during your address I was searched as by fire. Last night I couldn't sleep a wink. It has been plain to me that the only way that I can find relief is to confess my sin before the Church and make full restitution.

Following Goforth's message that morning, the elder made his confession. Suddenly a member of the group cried out with a piercing cry, but he wouldn't say anything. However, others moved to tears, one after another, began praying and confessing sin. The conviction continued to spread the next day. An older missionary who had been part of the Scottish Revival of 1859 claimed he was seeing that revival re-enacted in China.

On the fourth day, Goforth concluded his message with his usual invitation for the people to pray as God would lead them. When he did so, a man came to the front of the meeting place with tears flowing down his face. It was the elder who two days earlier had cried out, yet resisted confessing his sin. Now the Spirit of God had broken through earlier barriers. He turned to face the congregation and began his confession.

"I have committed adultery," he confessed. "I have tried three times to poison my wife." Then looking at the bracelets and rings he was wearing, he took them off and placed them in the offering plate. "What have I, an elder of the Church, to do with these baubles?" Then he reached into his pocket and took out his elder's card. He tore it in pieces and scattered them on the floor. "You people have my cards in your home. Kindly tear them up. I have disgraced the holy office. I herewith resign my eldership."

Several others confessed sin and recognized their unworthiness before God. That morning, all the elders and deacons of the church resigned from their office as they confessed sin they felt disqualified them. Then the pastor stood before his congregation. "It is I who am to blame," he insisted. "If I had been what I ought to have been, this congregation would not be where it is today. I'm not fit to be your pastor any longer. I, too, must resign."

With the resignation of their pastor, the church felt it was time to begin a ministry of reconciliation in their midst. From different parts of the congregation came the cry to reappoint the

pastor. It seemed like the whole church was expressing their confidence in their pastor. He was restored to his office. Then the elders were also restored to their offices, as were the deacons.

The revival then spread from the church to the missionaries. During a prayer time the next morning, Goforth's host ran forward in the meeting crying, "Oh, pray for us missionaries; for we need it more than any of you." The man's wife returned early and was also touched by the revival in the final days of the campaign.

On the last day of the meetings, a national pastor addressed the people. "You know how many elders and members of this congregation have drifted away," he began. "Oh! if there were only some way of bringing them back." Then the congregation rose to their feet in unison and began crying out to God for those who had drifted from the church. By year's end, hundreds had returned to the fold. Most confessed they had never been converted.

The meeting at Mukden was the first of several similar meetings conducted by Goforth throughout China. In two years, Goforth completed thirty campaigns in six provinces of China. He never asked anyone to confess publicly, yet public confession of sin was common in the Manchurian Revival. He simply concluded his message with the statement, "You people have an opportunity to pray." In various meetings, that invitation was followed by open confession of sins including idolatry, theft, murder, adultery, gambling, opium smoking, disobedience to parents, hatred, quarrelsomeness, lying, cheating, gambling, fraud, division and misappropriation of funds. The revival led to deep and lasting change in the lives of those touched by it.

The revival also gave missionaries working with the usually stoic Chinese new insights into the people with whom they worked. One British missionary reported, "We know now that Chinese are emotionally susceptible in matters of religion. We know now that 'instantaneous conversions' may be seen in China as was seen in Chicago or London. We know that when people long for the

filling of the Spirit, and they are willing to sacrifice all, God will revive them in Shensi, China, as in Keswick."

The Manchurian Revival also helped establish the indigenous Chinese church. Chang Ling-sheng, a Presbyterian elder active in the Shantung Revival, embraced the Pentecostal experience when missionaries from the Azusa Street revival came to China. He teamed up with two others to establish the True Jesus Church, an indigenous sabbatical Pentecostal denomination. Later, Nee To-sheng, better known outside of China as Watchman Nee, was influenced by a single British missionary years later, Margaret E. Barber. In 1909, she submitted to believer's baptism and left her Anglican mission to become an independent faith worker. She conducted "breaking of bread" meetings similar to those of the Christian Brethren. Nee To-sheng organized the Little Flock, a Brethren-style indigenous Chinese denomination. The True Jesus Church and Little Flock soon had more adherents than all other mission sponsored churches combined. (When elderly Jonathan Goforth visited America, he stayed in the home of godly parents who had a 6-year old child. After breakfast, he laid his hand on the head of the little girl to dedicate her to God's service. That little girl is Ruth Towns, wife of Elmer Towns, who carries on the revival ministry of Jonathan Goforth.)

The Year of Our Lord 1909

## **THE MIZO OUTPOURING**

### **India**

When news of the Welsh Revival of the early nineteenth century reached India, many Christian missionaries began praying for a similar outpouring on their own field of service. As a result, a significant revival broke out in the Khasi Hills which eventually brought an end to paganism in that region. It was news of that indigenous Indian revival that first stimulated interest in revival among the Mizo Christians in Lushai, India.

Early in 1906, ten dedicated young Christians hiked through a mountain jungle for two weeks to get to an outlying district church. When they arrived, they quickly became disappointed, because the entire ministry was in Khasi, a language which none of the Mizo Christians understood. They observed and sensed a strange power at work in the meetings, but with no one to explain what was happening, it had little apparent impact on their own life. They left the meetings to return to their homes, pausing at Chatlang to pray. During that prayer, they "felt their hearts filled with a strange joy." Some regard this as the beginning of the Mizo outpouring.

When they got home, they gathered Christians every night to pray for revival. After a week of intense prayer, nothing had happened. "Perhaps God would not send revival after all," they reasoned. It was easy to assume God would withhold revival blessings because of the widespread paganism in their region.

As the Mizo Christians were saying farewell to three friends, revival came. As the group sang the hymn, *God Be With You Till We Meet Again!*, "the Spirit was poured upon them in a remarkable manner." Others living nearby joined them as they continued in a time of prayer and praise. God had not abandoned them! Revival had come!

The outpouring quickly spread throughout the region "creating extraordinary interest." Missionary D. E. Jones prophesied that revival would break out in Phullen, a large village several days away. A teacher was sent to be a carrier of revival to Phullen. When he arrived, he discovered the revival had already begun. It apparently began about the time of the missionary's prophecy.

This initial Mizo outpouring resulted in an increase in church membership and inquirers. It was primarily marked by conviction of sin among church members and adherents. It also helped prepare the church for difficult days ahead.



Pagan village chiefs responded to the threat from the revival by severely persecuting the church. Christians were awakened at midnight and driven into the jungle by angry neighbors. The 1907 persecution was followed by a "revival of paganism" which mocked the Christian revival with their own pagan hymns and festivals. This anti-revival "spread like wildfire, with demonstrations in every village."

Church leaders despaired as they saw their church decline under intense persecution. Life for the believers in the Hills got worse before it got better. In the winter of 1911-12, the flowering bamboo attracted hordes of rats. The rats devoured their stores of grain and the grain growing in the fields almost overnight. Believers subsisted on roots. Multitudes died of starvation, they poured out of the hills to the plains, looking for something to eat.

Missionaries responded with help. Relief offerings were collected in Wales and distributed throughout the Mizo church. Despite the persecution they had experienced, the Mizo Christians chose to share their food ungrudgingly with their hungry pagan neighbors. These acts of kindness demonstrated in the midst of distress brought an end to the pagan revival and created a renewed interest in the Christian gospel.

In 1913, revival fires were rekindled. The Mizo church was once again energized for evangelistic ministry. Six years later, "an even greater revival broke out," rapidly sweeping through the region and impacting the neighboring states of Tipperah and Manipur.

At the end of the twentieth century, Mizoram (formerly Lushai) is undoubtedly India's most Christian province. Despite its poverty, it is also the most zealously evangelical region in India. This province first visited by missionaries only a hundred years ago now sends out hundreds of its own missionaries to other provinces in India and neighboring nations throughout Asia.

Commenting on the effect of the Mizo outpouring, one observer notes, "The Hill Tribes set forth in indisputable evidence, the power of the gospel to transform a primitive people."

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