



# Revival Now?

by Richard A. Bennett

As I cross the threshold of my 80th year, Dorothy and I want to again express our deep concern for revival in our day. The late Dr. Armerding, past President of Wheaton College, once said: “When God sends revival to a country it is generally for one of two purposes. Either to avert judgment that is about to fall, or to prepare His people for national judgment that will soon occur.” We could add a third reason: To purify His people that we would “*not be ashamed before Him at His coming*” 1 John 2:28. Whatever the reason, we encourage you to join us in prayer for a visitation of God resulting in genuine revival.

As one who had himself been deeply affected by the Welsh Revival, it is recorded that Joseph Kemp, previous Pastor of the prestigious Charlotte Chapel in Edinburgh, Scotland, explained: “Revival, strictly speaking, means the reanimating of that which is already living, but in a state of declension . . . To make evangelism a synonym of revivalism is untrue to the teaching of the New Testament. The Church is responsible for evangelism— God in answer to intercession is responsible for revival.” That’s it! When, the hearts of His people are tenderized in the travail of intercessory prayer, God finds a vehicle through whom He can pour out His blessings.

In 2 Chronicles 7:14, God tells us that national restoration begins with: “*My people.*” By way of explanation the verse continues “*If my people . . . shall humble themselves and pray.*” Prayer without humility is like an egg without a yolk—there is nothing to fertilize! However, prayer that

is preceded by humble confession of personal sin and a consequent dependance upon the risen Lord Jesus enables a bold approach to the Throne of Grace. Thus, the Blood of Christ will cleanse our conscience; the Word of God will direct our prayers and, as we pray, the Holy Spirit will minister to us with the faith of anointed humility.

The verse continues, *“If My people . . . seek My face.”* This reminds us that, when the prophet Isaiah *“saw the Lord sitting upon a throne”* (Isaiah 6:1) and heard the Seraphim singing: *“Holy, holy, holy”* (v.3) he cried, *“Woe is me! for I am undone”* (v.5). It is interesting to note that, before Isaiah *“saw the Lord”* he bewailed, *“Woe unto the wicked!”* (Chapter 3:11). However, when Isaiah himself had a personal encounter with the Lord of holiness and glory, he became a broken man. Subsequently, God unveiled to him incredible prophetic truths. Yes! Revival truly is God’s finger pointing at me. So, for our present purpose we will consider five texts in the Bible that trace: (i) The Brokenness of Revival; (ii) The Basis of Revival; (iii) The Blessing of Revival; (iv) The Bounty of Revival; and, (v) The Breadth of Revival. These verses are found in Hosea chapter 14, Psalm 119 and 2 Chronicles chapter 7.

## **The Brokenness of Revival**

*“They shall revive like the grain”* Hosea 14:7. In the book of Hosea we are primarily introduced to Hosea’s unrequited love from his unfaithful wife and of his redemptive restoration of that marriage. This is a prophetic picture of how God will deal with Israel at their final national restoration.

However, chapter 14 also presents us with God's way of restoration and revival for a lukewarm Church. *"Then they . . . shall return; they shall revive like the grain, and grow like the vine . . ."* Hosea 14:7. Revive like grain? You might ask: "What is the significance of connecting revival with grain?" The Lord Jesus explained, *"Except a grain of wheat, fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone; but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit"* John 12:24.

In our humanistic age, where self-centeredness and self-love prevail, the implication of death to self is a foreign concept. But as a grain of wheat the Lord Jesus died to bring forth much fruit, Calvary preceded Pentecost! In our day, death to self prepares the way for the overflow of His Spirit. In the autumn the farmer sows his grain. It is the former rain that causes it to rot and die. At harvest time the latter rain causes the ears of the grain to swell and produce an abundant harvest. So, as we pray for revival in our day, God's order is always that of Death! Burial! Resurrection! Death to all that I am and resurrection to all that Jesus is!

In 1971, Dorothy was laid aside for many months with a life-threatening weakness and intense pain—which severe neuromuscular pain continues to this day. At that time, she was given an ingenious method of growing living food without leaving her apartment. However, the seeds lay dormant in the germinating box for 20 years! Wherever we moved with our household effects, they too traveled many thousands of miles. But in 1991, intrigued to see whether the minuscule horticultural gadget

worked, we read the instructions and accordingly sprinkled water on the encrusted seeds. What a smell! The seeds soon rotted and died! Shortly thereafter little green alfalfa sprouts appeared as a tiny harvest of fresh greenery. Twenty years and long journeys, but no harvest! *“Except a grain of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone, but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit.”*

Does that ring a bell? When we reflect upon all the motion in the Church today are we reminded of Dorothy’s encrusted seeds? Momentum from days of bygone blessings keep traditions going but there is little propulsion of Spirit-anointed dynamism. *“How can ye believe,”* asked the Lord Jesus, *“who receive honor one of another not the honor that cometh from God only?”* John 5:44. In the book *In the Day of His Power*, Arthur Wallis wrote: “Revival is God revealing Himself to man in awful holiness and irresistible power. It is such a manifest working of God that human personalities are overshadowed and human programs abandoned. It is man retreating into the background because God has taken the field. It is the Lord bearing His holy arm and working in extraordinary power in saint and sinner.”

Yes, when the bottom falls out of all our promotional and manipulative schemes, we find ourselves at the foot of the Cross. And if we are too tall for that we are too tall to receive the true revival blessing of God! So, for the person who resists self-humbling, the theme of revival is limited to

that of sterile biblical expression instead of a life-infusing biblical exposition.

## **The Basis of Revival**

*“Revive me according to Thy Word”* Psalm 119:154.

The Word of God can satisfy the mind and stir the emotions but it is of no effect until it stimulates the will and strengthens faith. *“Ye have obeyed [that is the will] from the heart [that is the emotion] the form of doctrine [that is the mind] which was delivered to you”* Romans 6:17. As we read the Bible, the key to a living relationship with God is our willingness to *do* His revealed will. It was after a fruitless night of fishing that Peter responded to the direction of Jesus by saying: ***“At Thy Word I will”*** Luke 5:5. His response involved both faith and obedience. Preach to the mind and you will be appreciated, preach to the emotions and you will be applauded, preach to the will and the Word of God will be assimilated. When our will appropriates the message of our co-crucifixion and co-resurrection with Christ we will be revived: Then the Holy Spirit will glorify Christ in our lives as: —

**First: No more remorse without repentance!** Repentance is much more than being sorry for my sin. When I entered my awkward teenage years, I would sometimes say to my mother, “I’m sorry, Mother!” She would tenderly reply, “Well if you are truly sorry you won’t do it again!” How I thank God for such a wise mother.

But there is a vast difference between legal repentance and evangelical repentance. Legal repentance is based on Law and it becomes works. Evangelical repentance is based on love and it becomes faith. Because God loves so much I want to repent, for *“it is God who worketh in me both to will and to do of His good pleasure”* Philippians 2:13. Both the desire to do and the power to perform are enabled by God. Then the Lord Jesus becomes in me everything that I am not. It is no longer Law! The Law was the schoolmaster to bring me to Christ. Now it is grace, and by faith I can say with the Apostle Paul, *“I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me”* Philippians 4:13.

Today the good news is that Jesus has conquered sin, He has conquered death, He has conquered Satan, and He has carried perfect humanity into heaven. To the believing heart He brings *“life and immortality to light through the Gospel”* 2 Timothy 1:10.

**Second: No more conversions without conviction!** During the happiest week I had ever lived I became increasingly miserable! It was the week I was born again. That week I realized that a guilt complex is not, as some psychologists suggest, the malady of modern man; our problem is real guilt! Knowing this I also discovered that Jesus died to save me from the consequence of real guilt. Hallelujah! What astonishing love!

**Third: No more liberty without Lordship!** *“For where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty”* 2 Corinthians 3:17. In his epic sermon after the Pentecostal effusion, Peter proclaimed the Lordship of Jesus as

demonstrated by His Life, manifest at His death and vindicated at His resurrection (Acts 2:22-24). Peter then concluded: *“God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ.”* Later in his Epistle, Peter wrote: *“Sanctify Christ as Lord in your hearts”* 1 Peter 3:15. That is another basis of revival!

Historians tell us that the nation-shaking revival of the 18th Century saved England from the revolution and bloodshed that France experienced at that time. This revival was accompanied by a widespread and deep conviction of sin and need. Out of that backdrop of soul agony for the horror of sin, the love of God, the mercy of God, the Blood of Christ and the grace of God were deeply cherished and personally appropriated. Multitudes were gloriously saved and the social climate of England was transformed. In the wake of that revival, Christian love and compassion resulted in social action for the vast numbers of poor and suffering people.

Yes, when through the child of God the Holy Spirit moves in power, He will *“reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment”* John 16:8. Accordingly, to be “seeker friendly” does not mean we should compromise truth or overlook sin in the enquiring soul. Sociologists have observed that there is a definite relation between the type of message that is proclaimed and the type of convert that is produced. Preach a superficial doctrine and you will get a superficial Christian. Preach a social Gospel and you get a social church. But when you preach the



uncomfortable message of sin, people first become discomfited in their sin and, as a result, will turn to their only hope—Jesus! It all begins with the vibrant, convicting, humbling, transforming movement of the Holy Spirit. And this results in *“times of refreshing from the presence of the Lord.”*

## **The Blessing of Revival**

*“Revive me according to Thine ordinances”* Psalm 119:156.

An ordinance is defined as an authoritative command. The Lord Jesus, as God, was the Lawgiver. The Lord Jesus as Man was the Law Keeper. As the Law Keeper He had no need to die. But die He did for *“He hath made Him to be sin for us, who knew no sin: that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him”* 2 Corinthians 5:21. What an astonishing demonstration of the love of God!

When taking an extension course from London University to study City Planning there arose an uncomfortable atmosphere among my fellow students. Thanking Bob for his thoughtful offer of a paper clip I politely refused. It was not rightfully mine and it was not rightfully his to give me! Only after that refusal did my colleagues take my testimony for Christ seriously. As a result they ridiculed my new-found faith. However, after the paper clip incident, the Holy Spirit began to convict fellow students of sin and soon the first of my student friends came to know Jesus as his Lord and Savior!

When an overripe democracy dictates the norm of what it considers to be morality, many a conscience becomes so seared that it cannot distinguish between good and evil—between what is right and what is wrong. Listen to the conversations in the work place and you will know that the Bible is right when it talks of *“having the conscience seared with a hot iron”* 1 Timothy 4:2. Today our need is for a heaven-sent conviction of sin which would be the precursor of a spiritual awakening: But this will never happen through a compromised Church. Surely revival is our need!

## **The Bounty of Revival**

*“Revive me according to Thy loving kindness”* Psalm 119:159.

When God reminded the people of Israel of their mighty deliverance from the bondage of Egypt, His plaintive refrain was, *“when Israel was a child I loved him and called My son out of Egypt . . . I drew them with the chords of a man, and with the **bands of love**”* Hosea 11:1,4.

The love of God becomes the more astonishing when we become conscious of His absolute holiness, justice and mercy. It is only when the searching beams of Eternal Light expose our deep recesses of hidden and open sin, that the significance of the atoning Blood of Jesus becomes incredibly precious. God knew what He was doing when, through the Apostle John, He introduced Himself as the God of Light before He introduced Himself as the God of Love.

The Light of God’s holiness shines as sunlight on a dirty window. And when we see the horror of our sin and independent pride, in a new way

the Blood of Jesus becomes “*the precious blood of Jesus.*” Then our guilty conscience is cleansed releasing faith and unbroken fellowship. For “*if we walk in the light, as He is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin*” 1 John 1:7. In such atmospheres of transparent fellowship, we have heard people say: “Love is now flowing knee-deep!”

It is interesting to remember that God not only used Evan Roberts in the historic Welsh Revival of 1904 but another dramatic catalyst of blessing was the testimony of a little girl who had only been converted a few days. In a small prayer meeting at testimony time she rose to her feet and timidly said: “I love the Lord Jesus with all of my heart!” The transparent reality of that simple stuttering testimony was accompanied by a sense of the overwhelming presence of God. Many hours of prayer, brokenness, restoration and intercession followed. Within weeks, the glorious harmony of Welsh voices could be heard singing praise to the Lord down the coal mines and in homes across the Welsh Valleys. We look for big men to do little jobs; God looks for little people to do big jobs!

Seventy five years later when the valleys were again oppressed with Satanism, witchcraft, poverty, gambling and drunkenness, Dorothy and I responded to the invitation of the late Dr. Martin Lloyd-Jones to minister to his ministerial fellowships in those same Welsh Valleys. Indelibly etched in our memory are two Sunday night services, one after the other. They were held in a small basement of a large unused church building.

In the first service eight girls were among the small congregation. Interestingly, a similar number of teenage boys attended the specially convened second meeting for visitors. As I preached the Word in the little room the silence was deafening! It was not a dead silence such as when nobody has anything to say; it was a living silence when nobody dared to speak. In that awesome silence, a church mouse scuffled across the floor but no one stirred! At the conclusion one by one the girls retreated to another room for spiritual help. Both Dorothy and I were amazed to hear their spontaneous prayers. After having come to Christ, each girl prayed for the girl beside and, like a chain reaction, this was repeated until all eight girls were wonderfully born again! Without any suggestion on our part, exactly the same thing happened among the youths after the next meeting. Before I returned for further ministry, the ladies had cleaned the pews, unused for many years, and the large church was packed with people waiting to meet with God. Truly, God does unusual things when the Holy Spirit convicts of sin and exalts the living Lord Jesus Christ in our midst.

The final hymn we sang on that memorable evening in the small basement room (written by G. Charles Wesley in the 18th Century revival) carried Dorothy and me into the very heavenlies. Echoing through that little room, in glorious harmony and with solid theology, the Holy Spirit gave us a foretaste of heaven as we joyfully sang: "Love Divine, all loves excelling, Joy of heaven, to earth come down; Fix in us Thy humble dwelling, All Thy faithful mercies crown: Jesus, Thou art all

compassion, Pure, unbounded love Thou art; Visit us with Thy salvation, Enter every trembling heart.”

## **The Breadth of Revival**

*“If My people, who are called by My name, shall humble themselves and pray, and seek My face, and turn from their wicked ways, then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and **will heal their land**”*

2 Chronicles 7:14.

By: **A new touch of God in my life;**

**A new breath of God in His Church;**

**A new intervention of God in the nation.**

Years ago, our dear friend, the late Dr. J. Edwin Orr and his wife Carol drove Dorothy and me to Ventura to meet Peter, the son of Seth Joshua. It was before the Welsh Revival broke out in 1904 that Seth Joshua travailed in prayer for the multitudes of lost souls in the godless coalmining valleys of South Wales. Peter told us his father had constantly prayed: “Lord, send us a man who is one of us, not an Oxford or a Cambridge graduate; that when the power falls we may know from Whom it comes, and when the praise is given, we may know to Whom the glory goes!” And God did just that: He raised up 27- year-old Evan Roberts, a Welsh collier, as His mighty instrument for revival blessing.

After years of deep concern for God to move in the Welsh Valleys, Evan Roberts met God in a heart-rending way. At a conference he listened to the speaker pray: “Lord bend us.” “That’s it!” thought Roberts and cried,

“Lord bend me! Lord bend me! Lord bend me!” He dramatically described how he fell to his knees only to fall still lower on his face in agony of soul. And again and again pleaded that God would bend him. Did not Ezekiel testify of a similar encounter? He wrote, *“I saw . . . the appearance of the likeness of the glory of the Lord. And when I saw it, I fell on my face, And He said unto me, Son of man, stand on thy feet, and I will speak unto thee”* Ezekiel 1:27,28; 2:1.

Edwin Orr reports that within seven weeks of that amazing start of the Welsh Revival, 30,000 people from the Welsh Valleys had found new life in Christ. Within seven months over 100,000 people had been swept by the Holy Spirit into the Kingdom of God. Research, some ten years later, revealed 80% of the converts had been absorbed into Welsh Chapels and Churches. But Edwin’s eyes twinkled when he told of the effects in the community. His research revealed that Public Houses had to close for lack of customers. Miners descended the mines singing the songs of Zion and even pit donkeys went on strike, they could no longer understand the radical change of vocabulary; cursing had turned to praise! When the Judge attended the assize, where civil and criminal cases had been customarily tried, day after day he would put on white gloves to indicate that no cases were to be tried that day.

Around that time, for two weeks, Pastor Joseph Kemp of Charlotte Chapel in Edinburgh, visited the scene of revival in Wales. Upon his return, revival blessing swept through the congregation. He wrote:

*About five seats from the front a man stood and said, "I want you to pray for me." That man was the first of hundreds who were saved in Charlotte Chapel. The people were now on tip-toe of expectancy for revival. A conference on January 22, 1905, addressed by several workers who had visited Wales, lasted from 3:30 p.m. until midnight. From that day it was felt that the fire of God had fallen. By the end of 1906, the church had been praying for one whole year without so much as a solitary break. Night after night, week after week, month after month, the prayer meetings went on increasing in numbers and intensity. It is impossible to convey any adequate idea of the prayer passion that characterized them. It has given us a most loyal and devoted band of workers, whose aim is the glory of God and the salvation of sinners. It has taught us to pray in a fashion few of us knew before. It has given both young and old a new love for the Bible. Time would fail to tell of the purified lives, changed homes and the brightened outlook of hundreds.*

In conclusion, we invite you to turn to the words of the following hymn: **"Revival Prayer."** Although it was written in 1975, at a time when God graciously attended the ministry with a microcosm of revival blessing, may this be our prayer at this critical hour.

**Oh for such a visitation of God in our day!**

## Revival Prayer

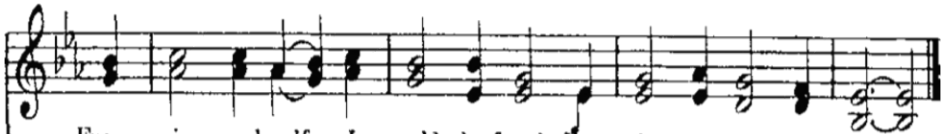
Richard A. Bennett

2 Chronicles 7:14.

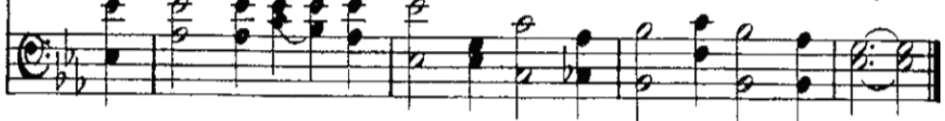
Alfred B. Smith



1. Re - vi - val is my deep - est need. Lord, touch my life, I pray.
2. Your Blood can cleanse my heart from sin; Your Cross can deal with self;
3. Come, Ho - ly Spir - it, bless the Church With Your life - giv - ing pow'r,
4. For on - ly then the world will see The Church to health re - stored,
5. I bow be - fore You, pre - cious Lord, That You may have Your Sway.



From sin and self I would be freed. Ex - alt your name to - day.  
Your Ris - en Power can reign with - in, Re - leas - ing heav'n - ly wealth.  
Cause love to flow and face to glow In this cli - mac - tic hour.  
And on - ly then our God will be Up - lift - ed and a - dored.  
I hum - bly bend, that you may send Re - vi - val in our day.



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(Can also be sung to the tune of "Amazing Grace")



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