

~OUR REVIVAL HERITAGE~

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Thoughts on Revival
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Part 3

“Revival History”

Part of our “Revival Heritage” is the fact that there are recorded histories of revival past. Some are in the Bible about men and women encountering a Holy God. Some accounts are about cities and nations. The common thread would be a desperation and an awareness of the presence of God! Broken to desperate prayer...and then the fire of revival falls.

Men and women praying to be humbled and to acknowledge to God, “We need your help!” Our plans, programs, and personalities only create a “spiritual pep rally”. We need the life-changing power of conviction, repentance, forgiveness, and new desires! John 3:30 declares less of us and more of Him.

These histories and accounts of God working among His people give us hope for today. God doesn't love 1739 or 1905 more than He loves 2011!

God is no respecter of persons! He can and will send revival to this generation. It is not the Lord with a problem. It is us as God's children who have a faith problem.

Read with me the following account of revival by George T.B. Davis. In 1899, Dr. R.A. Torrey was the pastor of Moody Church in Chicago, and he was also the superintendent of the Moody Bible Institute.

The great Moody Church was not only burdened for and invested in Chicago; but in the rest of America and of the world. They saw the great need for people to come to Christ, they saw their part in prayer by faith, and they saw great doors opened to preach the Gospel with their treasures!

They shared their Pastor, Dr. R.A. Torrey, and reaped a mighty harvest in revival fires and thousands birthed into the family of God!

The pen of George T.B. Davis recorded the following:

“HOW THE FIRE FELL”
...when they prayed in faith!

By George T.B. Davis

“Every revival in the history of the Christian Church, from the day of Pentecost down to the present time, has been born and cradled in prayer. Pentecost itself followed ten days of prevailing prayer. It seems to be an unalterable divine law that prayer is the only power that will open the windows of Heaven, and send forth a gracious outpouring of the Spirit of God.

The spiritual awakenings throughout the centuries can be traced, in each case, in large measure, to earnest intercessory prayer. In 1899 Dr. R. A. Torrey was pastor of the Moody Church in Chicago and superintendent of the Moody Bible Institute.

A call came to Dr. Torrey to go to Australia to conduct a simultaneous mission in Melbourne. He asked Mr. Charles M. Alexander to accompany him, and there began the remarkable Torrey-Alexander meetings in Australia, Great Britain, and America, during which fully 100,000 persons professed faith in Christ.

When the evangelists reached Melbourne, they found that 1,700 cottage prayer meetings had been held weekly, for some time previous, to intercede for an outpouring of God's Spirit.

It is little wonder that the fire fell from Heaven. The great Exhibition Hall was too small to contain the crowds that flocked to hear the Gospel, and thousands declared their decision for Christ.

The news of the Melbourne awakening stirred not only Australia, but the Christian world. The evangelists spent about six months holding meetings in Australia, Tasmania, and New Zealand. Everywhere they went marvelous blessing crowned their labors. Even as they traveled by train, crowds would gather at railway stations to listen to a two or three minute address by Dr. Torrey, and a Gospel hymn by Mr. Alexander. The lands of the Southern Cross were quickened to a new spiritual life by the visitation of God's Spirit, and multitudes were swept into the kingdom of God.

After the close of the meetings in Melbourne a woman who had helped to organize the Melbourne groups visited England, and was invited to speak at the well-known Keswick Convention. She told the story of the 1,700 cottage prayer-meetings, and how gloriously the windows of Heaven had been opened in answer to their united intercession. The hearts of the Christian workers at the Keswick Convention were deeply moved by the recital, and they decided to form prayer bands throughout the British Isles to pray for revival.

Ere long Dr. Torrey and Mr. Alexander arrived in Great Britain and began their meetings in the leading cities, which continued for a period of three years. The members of the prayer groups all over the British Isles naturally concentrated their prayers on the Torrey-Alexander meetings. The writer joined the evangelists during their meetings in Great Britain, and Dr. Torrey declared that there were no less than twenty thousand people banded together in these prayer groups interceding for their work.

Again prayer was answered, and the British Isles were moved by the most notable visitation of the Spirit of God since the days of Moody and Sankey. The "Glory Song" swept over the British Empire more rapidly than any other song, sacred or secular, had ever done before. I personally saw ten thousand people waiting in long queues for the doors to open at the Royal Albert Hall. The last night in Liverpool thirteen thousand people were packed in the Tournament Hall, while another thirteen thousand outside vainly clamored for admission. Buses and tram cars resounded with Gospel hymns, and errand boys whistled the revival melodies as they made their round of calls. It was the Spirit of God poured out in Pentecostal blessing in answer to believing prayer.

There is little doubt that these prayer circles for revival, and the influence of the Torrey-Alexander meetings, were responsible in no small measure for the outbreak of the great revival in Wales during 1904 and 1905. In fact, Dr. Torrey and Mr. Alexander conducted revival meetings in Cardiff, Wales, only a month or two before the beginning of the Welsh awakening. It is said that in two months in the Welsh revival some seventy thousand persons professed faith in Christ in those remarkable meetings of prayer and praise and testimony.

No one will question the fact that America and Great Britain and other lands sorely need great outpourings of the Holy Spirit at the present time. Moral and spiritual conditions in English-speaking lands are probably lower than they have been for a century. Everywhere one sees increasing signs of apostasy. Infidelity and atheism are blatant in their propaganda and are sweeping like a tidal wave through our colleges and universities. The mad rush for pleasure increases in momentum each day. Vast multitudes have given up all thought of God and spiritual things.

The vast majority of God's children today are simply playing at prayer for revival.

There is no short cut, no magic formula, that will bring revival. There is only one pathway-that of persevering prayer-that leads to the desired goal. There are increasing signs that the Spirit of God is giving many Christians such a burden for revival that they are willing to take time for private and public intercession.

Will you not begin at once to hold cottage prayer meetings in your home, to pray for revival? Do not wait to form a large group. Begin with a few earnest people who are longing for revival. From three to six, to ten or twelve persons, are quite sufficient for a splendid cottage prayer meeting.

A glorious revival and outpouring of God's Spirit in any section of the Church of Christ will doubtlessly mean the kindling of revival flames in many towns and cities throughout the length and breadth of the land.”

Will you join with me and the church family in prayer for revival? By the way, there are hundreds of people all across our nation with this same burden. A great urgency!

Now is the time. The waters are being troubled by the spirit of God.

Today is our day! It is our watch, and our time to cry aloud! It is our turn to push out of comfort and step into commitment for the cause of Christ.

If not now, when? If not here, where? If not you, who?

It is repent or perish! It is revival or removal!

May God touch our faith and help us to follow the outline for revival in II Chronicles 7:14.

This year, 2011, could be the year God changes your life! This could be the year that God sends conviction to your family member! This could be the year for our church to be changed forever!

Come Oh Breath! Revive us again! We are kneeling together in the prayer of faith for revival!

You are loved,

Pastor Ralph Sexton