

Is Revival Sustainable

Welsh

From an article on Samstorms.com

What were the results of this awakening? During the time of revival the police were left with virtually nothing to do and the courts were empty. Saloons and bars shut down for lack of business. Public drunkenness was almost non-existent. Old debts, many long forgotten, were paid off in full. Traveling theatrical agencies canceled their engagements, as everyone was in church! Profanity disappeared. It was said that horses everywhere were in complete confusion. They had become accustomed to responding to their master's profane shouts and kicks and cursing, virtually all of which had disappeared.

At one rugby match, a pastor said he heard only one man cursing, who thereupon repented. Of the 40,000 present, 10,000 began singing hymns. Relationships were healed and marriages restored. This last description of the revival perhaps sums it up best:

"It was plainly evident now to everybody that God had answered the agonizing prayers of His people and had sent a mighty spiritual upheaval. A sense of the Lord's presence was everywhere. His presence was felt in the homes, on the streets, in the mines, factories and schools and even in the drinking saloons. So great was His Presence felt that even the places of amusement and carousal became places of holy awe. Many were the instances of men entering taverns, ordering drinks and then turning on their heels and leaving them untouched. Wales up to this time was in the grip of football fever when tens of thousands of working-class men thought and talked only of one thing. They gambled also on the result of the games. Now the famous football players themselves got converted and joined the open-air street meetings to testify what glorious things the Lord had done for them. Many of the teams were disbanded as the players got converted and the stadiums were empty."

Azusa St.

From Wikipedia

The revival began on April 9, 1906, and continued until roughly 1915. On the night of April 9, 1906, Seymour and seven men were waiting on God on Bonnie Brae Street, "when suddenly, as though hit by a bolt of lightning, they were knocked from their chairs to the floor," and the other seven men began to speak in tongues and shout out loud praising God.

In a time of racial segregation, this movement brought all races together.

Proud, well-dressed preachers came to "investigate". Soon their high looks were replaced with wonder, then conviction comes, and very often you will find them in a short time wallowing on the dirty floor, asking God to forgive them and make them as little children.

Among first-hand accounts were reports of the blind having their sight restored, diseases cured instantly, and immigrants speaking in German, Yiddish, and Spanish all being spoken to in their native language by uneducated black members, who translated the languages into English by "supernatural ability".

So many missionaries went out from Azusa (some thirty-eight left in October 1906) that within two years the movement had spread to over fifty nations, including Britain, Scandinavia, Germany, Holland, Egypt, Syria, Palestine, South Africa, Hong Kong, China, Ceylon and India. Christian leaders visited from all over the world.

Jesus Movement

In the late 60's and early 70s, when America had lost their hope in their government, when the religious societies looked down on everyone who did not look just like them, when the culture of young people looked to drugs, eastern mysticism, and so called "free love", for answers but came up empty - or dead, this revival hit California and spread so fast and so radically that it shaped the world we live in today.

Thousands of counter-culture hippies were saved and turned from drugs and sex to the one thing that truly satisfies, Jesus Christ. Art exploded from this movement and Christian pop and rock was born.

What can take a person who's been looked down on by the religious leaders, a person who did everything "good church people aren't supposed to do", a person hooked on drugs, and turn them into a radical evangelist of the gospel? Only one thing. An encounter with the very real Jesus.

Asbury today

From a Feb 18 article of Christianity Today

But this past Wednesday was different. After the benediction, the gospel choir began to sing a final chorus—and then something began to happen that defies easy description. Students did not leave. They were struck by what seemed to be a quiet but powerful sense of transcendence, and they did not want to go. They stayed and continued to worship. They are still there.

I teach theology across the street at Asbury Theological Seminary, and when I heard of what was happening, I immediately decided to go to the chapel to see for myself. When I arrived, I saw hundreds of students singing quietly. They were praising and praying earnestly for themselves and their neighbors and our world—expressing repentance and contrition for sin and interceding for healing, wholeness, peace, and justice.

Many people say that in the chapel they hardly even realize how much time has elapsed. It is almost as though time and eternity blur together as heaven and earth meet. Anyone who has witnessed it can agree that something unusual and unscripted is happening.

The earliest revival: Tohu wa Bohu. Emptiness and Chaos
And then

Genesis 4:25 Adam made love to his wife again, and she gave birth to a son and named him Seth, saying, "God has granted me another child in place of Abel, since Cain killed him." 26 Seth also had a son, and he named him Enosh.
At that time people began to call on the name of the Lord.

All of these revivals and many many others started with prayer - a small group or many - often for long periods of time with no excitement. Just a crying out to God for more of Him.

And then in all these cases, He pours out His Spirit, defies our expectations, and does things that cannot be manufactured by humans.

But most of the time, these revivals fade and end over some years.

But can a revival be sustained? Is it God's will that it comes in waves or is it God's will that it be sustained?

When an individual gets saved, they experience a personal revival. They literally feel revived. Born again. Made new. Excited. Full of love and peace and joy. Is that meant only for a season or is it meant to be sustained?

One of the biggest revivals in the old testament was the deliverance of the Israelites out of slavery in Egypt.

Exodus 2:23-25 NIV

The Israelites groaned in their slavery and cried out, and their cry for help because of their slavery went up to God. 24 God heard their groaning and he remembered his covenant with Abraham, with Isaac and with Jacob. 25 So God looked on the Israelites and was concerned about them.

They started in a place of humility and crying out to God.

Matthew 5:3 NLT

"God blesses those who are poor and realize their need for him,

Let's look the purpose of their deliverance. Because the answer to that will help us understand the answer to the question of whether or not revival is meant to be sustainable.

Where the Israelites set free just to be set free?

Galatians 5:1 NLT It is for freedom that Christ has set us free. Stand firm, then, and do not let yourselves be burdened again by a yoke of slavery.

Yes, it is for freedom that Christ set us free. But JUST our freedom?

The afore mentioned covenant that God made with Abraham spells out the purpose of Israel's deliverance - of their great revival.

Gen 12:2 NIV

"I will make you into a great nation,
and I will bless you;
I will make your name great,
and you will be a blessing.[a]

3

I will bless those who bless you,
and whoever curses you I will curse;
and all peoples on earth
will be blessed through you."[b]

Gen 15:13-14 NIV

Then the Lord said to him, "Know for certain that for four hundred years your descendants will be strangers in a country not their own and that they will be enslaved and mistreated there. 14 But I will punish the nation they serve as slaves, and afterward they will come out with great possessions.

Gen 22:17-18

I will surely bless you and make your descendants as numerous as the stars in the sky and as the sand on the seashore. **Your descendants will take possession of the cities of their enemies,** 18 and through your offspring[b] all nations on earth will be blessed,[c] because you have obeyed me."

There's actually 2 purposes for their deliverance. Two purposes for all revival. Everything we just covered is purpose #2: Take enemy territory and bless all nations. Purpose #1 is Know the Lord

Ezekiel 29:21 NLT "And the day will come when I will cause the **ancient glory of Israel to revive**, and then, Ezekiel, your words will be respected. Then **they will know that I am the Lord.**"

Exodus 8:1 NIV

Then the LORD said to Moses, “Go to Pharaoh and say to him, ‘This is what the LORD says: Let my people go, so that they may worship me.

The 2 end goals of Israel’s deliverance and the 2 end goals of all revival are

- 1) To know the Lord
- 2) Bless all the nations of the earth

Which happens to be the 2 great commandments.

Matt 22:37-40 NLT Jesus replied, “‘You must love the Lord your God with all your heart, all your soul, and all your mind.’ 38 This is the first and greatest commandment. 39 A second is equally important: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’40 The entire law and all the demands of the prophets are based on these two commandments.”

Review:

Exodus 2:23-25 NIV

The Israelites groaned in their slavery and cried out, and their cry for help because of their slavery went up to God. 24 God heard their groaning and he remembered his covenant with Abraham, with Isaac and with Jacob. 25 So God looked on the Israelites and was concerned about them.

In desperation, the people’s heart aligned with God’s.

And their salvation would be **unto** the **conquest** of enemy land and the salvation and blessing of the whole world.

Since the cross, who is the real enemy?

How is enemy land brought under the banner of Jesus?

When **hearts** submit to the rule of the True King.

So God responded to the Israelites’ cries with miracles and power and deliverance and blessing.

But was it meant to stop after they got out of Egypt?

No! Their next objective was to walk in revival through the wilderness and into the promised land, where they would raise the banner of the Lord over enemy territory and bless all nations.

Is that what they did?

No. At the first sight of opposition, they gave up.

God seems to use revival to mature us. And it seems to me He does it in 3 steps.

- 1) He requires us to give up our self dependance. That’s the prayer part.

- 2) He pour out His Spirit in a mighty way and brings about miraculous deliverance.
- 3) He calls on us to continue to walk in faith based on the testimony of what He did in the outpouring of the Spirit. This is where we often fail.

When we experience revival, we often try to stay in the unmerited outpouring without doing the next part. Partnership and obedience.

Revival is not meant to be an event. Revival is taking broken things and putting them back together again. It's the world returning to God's created order. It's meant to exist in the home as parents make peanut butter and jelly sandwiches for their kids before school. It's meant to exist as Dad makes a presentation at work. It's meant to exist as teenagers meet new people at the roller rink. But we want to stay at the place where it first broke out. We want to stay on the border of Egypt as the Egyptians are giving us their jewelry.

But we are called to the promised land for the benefit of OTHERS!

To what end did God pour out His Spirit on the day of Pentecost?
Was it that they might "know the Lord" and "bless all nations"
What it all boils down to is RECONCILIATION

Let's read Joshua 5