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The Need for Revival

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Hindson, Edward and Dobson, Ed, "The Need for Revival" (1982). *Faculty Publications and Presentations.* Paper 144.
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Holy Terror
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for what it really is — a bitter diatribe against religion! "We cannot live as machines," the authors say, "programmed by Scriptures . . . surrendered to Christ and computers" (p. 347). At least one Catholic leader, Monsignor George Higgins, is reported (*Charleston Daily Mail*, Sept. 28, 1982) to have resigned from the People for the American Way because of Lear's sponsorship of *Holy Terror*, with its "simplistic . . . almost fanatical abhorrence of any and all forms of religious fundamentalism." The monsignor has called upon theological liberals to take seriously the New Right's concerns about the breakdown of moral values in American society.

Fundamental Christianity has always had to make its own way. We did not have the financial support and endowments of the main-line denominations. Therefore, we have always had to survive in the free marketplace of ideas. Contrary to the opinion of the authors (p. 203), we have always had to appeal to the rational and volitional response of people to believe the gospel. It is precisely here that liberal Christianity has failed. Thinking people do not want a religion based on myths and fables. If the Bible is not true — throw it out! If Jesus is not risen from the dead, we have no message of hope to give the world. Liberal Christianity is in trouble, not because of the rise of fundamentalism, but because of its failure to answer man's questions and meet his needs. In this sense Conway and Siegelman are right. The real option is one between supernatural Christianity and antisupernatural secularism.

There is much that we who name Christ as Savior can learn from *Holy Terror*. The authors delight in citing extreme examples from the "lunatic fringe" of Christianity: those who keep setting dates for the second coming of Christ; those who fanatically use any and every means to make converts; those who make extreme and ridiculous statements in the name of God, etc. True Fundamentalists must reject and denounce such extremists as not representative of biblical Christianity. We must be careful to say only what the Word of God says and no more. Also, we must pledge ourselves to be fair and accurate in the way we treat secular humanists, in spite of their ridiculous and prejudiced treatment of us. Millions of people freely attend our churches every week, not out of cultic constraint, but because of their deep personal commitment to Christ. Fundamentalism represents an ever-widening spectrum of American society.

The authors keep complaining throughout their book that they couldn't find anyone to interview in Lynchburg, Virginia. All I can say is they did not look very hard! We have nearly 200 teachers at Liberty Baptist College. These highly qualified faculty members hold graduate degrees and doctorates from more than one hundred schools, including Cornell, Rutgers, Boston, Chicago, Purdue, Johns Hopkins, Michigan, Indiana, Virginia, Iowa, Illinois, Minnesota, U.C.L.A., Southern California, Manchester, and London. Surely, one of them would have granted an interview!

Since it is so obvious that Conway and Siegelman do not know what fundamentalism really is, I am personally sending them a subscription to the *Fundamentalist Journal!* Perhaps a firsthand reading of what Fundamentalists are saying about themselves will help them know who and what they are talking about. These authors think we Christians are duped by religion. The tragedy is that they are duped — by the "religion" of secularism which they espouse with uncritically blind faith. *Holy Terror* is wholly error when it comes to understanding fundamental Christianity. A better title for this misinformed volume would be *Secular Sarcasm: The Humanistic War on America's Freedoms in Religion, Politics, and Our Private Lives!* ☐

FUNDAMENTALISM TODAY

The Need for Revival

by Ed Dobson and Ed Hindson

A famous Scottish theologian remarked that no one living in the English-speaking world and born after World War I, has ever witnessed a genuine revival. Although God visited America with revival in both the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, there has been no such nationwide outpouring in the twentieth century. Yet, this is the era of bigger churches and mass communication systems that flash the message of Christ around the world. This is a nation with deeply embedded Christian roots. According to the Gallup Poll, 31 million Americans consider themselves evangelical, 69 million people eighteen and over hope to go to heaven because of their personal faith in Jesus Christ, and 84 percent of Americans believe that the Ten Commandments are valid for today. These are encouraging signs, but the strongest need of this hour is a third great awakening.

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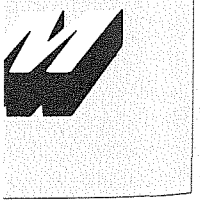

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Can We Have Revival Today?

There are prophets of doom within the church today who say there will never be another real revival. They say it is too late for America, for we are in the "Laodicean Church Age." God cannot revive an apostate church, and we are in the "age of apostasy." Thus, they rationalize away all hope for revival. Man is an unusual creature.

History has proven that those groups which opposed revival in the past were always bypassed by the working of God in His church.

Whenever he has not seen something happen and cannot seem to make it happen, he will always conclude that "it cannot happen." This same attitude said man would never get to the moon. When the astronauts landed, some still refused to believe it!

There are great dangers in saying there will never be another revival. Throughout church history, every religious group (denomination or faction) who took this view ended up opposing real revival when it did come. History has proven that those groups which opposed revival in the past were always bypassed by the working of God in His church. They lapsed into apostasy!

Also the assumption that it is too late for revival to come to America is based upon a false interpretation of Revelation 3:14-19. This false premise is that the Laodicean Church is the church of the last period of church history and is, therefore, the twentieth-century church. This conjecture remains to be proven, as does the entire "system" of identifying the seven churches of Revelation with the "periods" of church history.

Notice that the Laodicean Church was a specific local church in Asia Minor. It was not an apostate church. It still had a "candlestick," and Jesus said of this church: "As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent" (Rev. 3:19). In fact, the description of this church sounds like a lot of today's fundamental churches! "Thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked" (Rev. 3:17).

Secondly, notice the instruction given to this lukewarm church which Jesus (though grieved) still loved. "I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear; and anoint thine eyes with eyesalve, that thou mayest see" (Rev. 3:18). The instruction here, though symbolized, is obvious. Each depicts righteousness: gold, righteousness of character; white raiment, righteousness of life; eyesalve, righteousness of vision.

What is the message to the Laodicean Church? "Be zealous therefore, and repent" (Rev. 3:19). This is always the message of Christ to the unrevived church. Dead orthodoxy always results in lukewarm practice. Nowhere in this passage is this church reprimanded for heresy, but for spiritual poverty. If there is a modern Laodicean Church, it is the fundamental church with its self-sufficient, self-righteous complacency! Begin to preach righteousness and repentance to this church, and revival will result! This is not the liberal and apostate church, for they have no candlestick! Begin to preach that your church is in danger of becoming the Laodicean Church, and see what God does!

Thirdly, the attitude that revival cannot come in our time is contrary to this very statement in Ephesians: "Unto him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen" (Eph. 3:21). It is the purpose of God to bring glory into the church in every age. Twentieth-century revival is a reality in the church in other lands, and it can be in America and England as well.

Since revival has been so long awaited by the twentieth-century church, many people do not understand the nature of true revival.

God's principles for revival are universal to all generations and all situations. They provide a rainbow of hope to all Christians everywhere who desire to experience an outpouring of God's power. God has promised: "If my people, which 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 Chron. 7:14).

The Nature of True Revival

Since revival has been so long awaited by the twentieth-century church, and since we have experienced such a dearth of genuine Christian commitment and life in the latter part of this century, many people do not understand the nature of true revival. Therefore, many false concepts of revival exist today. Often one will drive past a church advertising "revival services," but the services are not revival services at all! They are, rather, evangelistic services or "Christian-life" services. The tag of "revival" has been placed on many extraneous activities of twentieth-century "churchianity" to the point that many have often failed to catch even a glimpse of genuine heaven-sent revival. There are some definite qualities found in a true revival.

Genuine revival is not mere emotionalism, nor is it mere intellectualism. Revival of God's people must come through the simple and honest prescriptions of the Word of God.

First, revival comes by scriptural means. God has given us His Word not only as a rule of faith, but also of practice. In the same proportion that we adhere to it, we have a right to expect His blessing; and in the same proportion that we depart from it, we have a reason to expect His frown. God will always honor His Word (Isa. 55:11). When the proclamation of the gospel and the practice of Christian living are consistently in line with the principles of the Word of God, one can expect genuine revival. Such revival cannot come by unscriptural means, although, in our day, tremendous excitement,

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Revival
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religious zeal, and interest have been produced by unscriptural doctrines and unscriptural means.

Because religious leaders often face a desperate lack of spiritual power and a lack of revival, they will always be tempted to substitute a mass of machinery designed to psychologically affect the passions of man. When this happens, Christianity loses its qualities of genuine repentance, faith, and holiness; it retreats into an emotional experience where people fall, groan, and shout. Genuine revival is not mere emotionalism, nor is it mere intellectualism. Revival of God's people must come through the simple and honest prescriptions of the Word of God for their lives (1 John 3:22). When one has proclaimed the truth contained in the Word of God and practiced His teachings, he can reasonably expect his ministry to be characterized by the genuine work of the Holy Spirit.

Secondly, revival comes with conviction of sin. Remorse, contrition, and confession of sin are the results of the work of the Holy Spirit. While the unsaved should sincerely be offered the gospel, they must understand and accept genuine separation from worldliness as the core of Christian living. A deepening conviction of sin must first begin in the lives of reborn Christians. When they have surrendered their selfishness and sinfulness through confession, God will begin to move on them (2 Chron. 7:14). The world waits to see whether professed Christians are really serious about their relationship to the living God.

Revival, if it is to be judged as coming from God, must result in substantial and abiding fruit.

Although preaching repentance has always held an important position in the Scriptures, it has been neglected in our time. This neglect is the major reason why believers, as well as unbelievers, have no conviction about the reality of sin. "For godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation" (2 Chron. 7:10). Genuine revival results in thorough conviction when people are truly distressed over their sin. Sorrow for sin precedes complete repentance.

The Word of God, with its laws and standards, must confront the sinner with the reality of his offense and the severity of God's anger which he deserves for his sin. A glimpse of this awful truth brings the kind of sorrow that results in repentance and salvation.

Genuine revival will come only when there is genuine conviction of sin. The entertainment-oriented evangelism of the twentieth century has fallen short of revival at this very point!

Thirdly, revival results in substantial and abiding fruit. In First Corinthians 14:24,25, we read of God's ultimate form of evangelism in the church: "But if all prophesy, and there come in one that believeth not, or one unlearned, he is convinced of all, he is judged of all: and thus are the secrets of his heart made manifest; and so falling down on his face he will worship God, and report that God is in you of a truth." The proclamation of the gospel must be accompanied by the sincere and serious lives of godly people. Their very lives reinforce the testimony of the message. They are living examples of God's truth.

The apostle Paul makes it clear in this passage that godly, fruit-bearing Christians are used by the Holy Spirit to convince the unbeliever of his sin. Many churches, however, are at such a point of spiritual despair that the unsaved feel comfortable and "at home" in them. Many churches revolve around a program and personnel so worldly that the unbeliever could not possibly see God at work in their lives.

When one's conversion is produced by the regeneration of the Holy Spirit, his life will automatically produce spiritual fruit (John 15:16). The nine fruits of the Spirit, listed in Galatians 5:22,23, are not given as mere options for the Christian life. They are the immediate product of a new life (2 Cor. 5:17). Jesus made it clear that some believers would produce fruit "some an hundredfold, some sixtyfold, some thirtyfold" (Matt. 13:8). Notice, however, that He gave none the choice of whether to produce fruit or not. No fruit? No life!

When many who profess to have been converted during a "revival" meeting return to the world and to careless and ungodly living, they give evidence of the shallowness and weakness of that so-called "revival." Their conduct proves that it was a revival produced by men, not by God. If the revival genuinely came from the Spirit of God, the virtues and graces of Christlikeness should adorn the lives of those who profess to be converted.

The fruit of vegetation is the result of plant germination. The fruit of human reproduction is the result of marriage. Notice carefully the words of Romans 7:4, "Wherefore, my brethren, ye also are become dead to the law by the body of Christ; that ye should be married to another, even to him who is raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit unto God." Union with Christ results in a new and fruitful life. Revival, if it is to be judged as coming from God, must result in substantial and abiding fruit.

Ingredients for Revival

Jesus foresaw the church as militant, aggressive, and always attacking the gates of hell (Matt. 16:18). He never saw His church as a weak and defenseless organization cowering under the threat of Satan and the ungodly world system in which it had to exist. Instead, He saw the church literally attacking the very gates of hell, which would not be able to stand up against the onslaught of the church. Today much of this concept has changed. Instead of genuinely singing, "Onward, Christian soldiers, marching as to war," all too often we act as if we are saying: "Walk softly, Christian soldier, step in doubt and fear, with the cross of Jesus dragging up the rear!" Instead of marching out of our churches with a renewed zeal and desire to reach a world that needs the Savior, we march off to the local restaurant and fill our stomachs with an excessive amount of food. We become sleepy, lazy, indifferent, and go home to our affluence, and bathe in the indifference of materialism.

C.H. Spurgeon once called his nation to a revival of:

1. Powerful preaching

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8. How did they associate the star with Christ?

There are several possibilities. In the fourteenth century, B.C., a prophet from their area named Balaam had spoken of his star (Num. 24:17). They also had the writings of Daniel, who had been prime minister of both Babylon and Persia some six centuries before Christ. Daniel, of course, wrote much about the Second Coming.

9. Why did they come?

These men were doubtless acquainted with the various religions of the East and knew the emptiness of them all. It would seem they followed this star to find peace and purpose for their lives.

10. When did they arrive in Bethlehem?

It was perhaps not until some two years after the angels announced His birth to the shepherds. He is referred to as "the young child" (Matt. 2:9, 11, 13, 14) and is not a tiny babe at this time. When Herod later attempted to destroy this unknown Babe, he had all children in the Bethlehem area two years and under slain (Matt. 2:16).

11. How many wise men came?

There is absolutely no evidence that there were three. On the contrary, the group may have numbered from two to several hundred or more.

12. Was the star a regular star?

Perhaps it was a special heavenly light created by God for this specific purpose and not some remote fiery globe of gas a million light years removed from our earth. ☐

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2. Old-fashioned doctrine
3. Fervent prayer
4. Personal godliness
5. Domestic (family) devotions
6. Genuine love

The opportunity for revival is before us if we will heed the call.

1. *Powerful preaching*

One of the visible deficiencies of the church today is that of Spirit-anointed biblical preaching. First, there must be a revival of Christ-centered preaching. The death, burial, and resurrection of Christ must be the core of the gospel message. Those who proclaim the Word of God often preach on various side issues which never come to the central message of the gospel — the Person of Jesus Christ. These preaching tangents may include extreme emphasis upon the Bible and science, the dispensations, Bible prophecy, future events, preaching against liberalism, communism, and so forth. These issues have a valid place in the total preaching of the gospel, but when they become the major thrust of the minister's sermon, he has lost the gospel message itself.

2. *Old-fashioned doctrine*

Revival is the result of the convicting ministry of the Holy Spirit through the distinctive doctrines of the revival preachers. There is depth and power in this type of preaching. As Fundamentalists, we have been faithful to the historic doctrines of the inspiration of Scripture, the deity of Christ, His virgin birth, His vicarious atonement for sin, and His literal second coming. However, we have severely neglected the doctrine of repentance. In every great revival era there was always a strong emphasis on repentance.

3. *Fervent prayer*

Someone has said that nothing of eternal consequence happens apart from prayer. During the famous Welsh Revival (1904-05) more than 100,000 people were converted within five months. Evan Roberts, used so greatly of God during that revival, had prayed for revival daily for thirteen years. In the modern church we have substituted programs for prayer. God will only move in revival power when His people move Him through revival prayer.

4. *Personal godliness*

One cannot serve God and the world at the same time. God demands that we be holy "in all manner of conversation." That means *life*. Separation from the world and separation unto God is imperative if we are to experience genuine revival.

5. *Domestic (family) devotions*

In an age of soaring divorce rates and fractured families, we need a revival of family devotions. The priorities of many Christians leave little time for their family. The church will never grow beyond the stability of the families within it.

6. *Genuine love*

Christ reminded His disciples that this quality would be the distinguishing feature of all Christians. The church today is a loose aggregate of polarized groups and subgroups who often appear in direct competition with each other. May God baptize us with His divine love until all the world recognizes us as His disciples.

The only eras of church history that can really be studied with satisfaction are those periods when the church was in revival. The highlights of the Christian church are its revival movements. When we stop patting ourselves on the back, as if we alone are righteous and faithful, and we begin to see ourselves as God sees us, we will have revival. We have fought the enemy effectively. Let us stop fighting with the "friends of the gospel" and pray for the manifestation of God's glory within the true church. ☐

Coming Next Issue in the Fundamentalist Journal

Substitutionary Atonement
The Illusion of Sex Education
Slaughter of the Innocents
Robert Ketcham