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Review: Revive Us Again: Biblical Insights for Encouraging Spiritual Renewal

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Revive Us Again: Biblical Insights for Encouraging Spiritual Renewal, by Walter C. Kaiser, Jr. Nashville: Broadman and Holman, 1999. Pp. 260.

Kaiser's foreword by Robert Coleman explains the purpose and scope of the text. Coleman, as do most evangelicals, believes that America needs spiritual awakening. Revival can occur "if the people of God will meet the conditions for revival" (p. x). Kaiser's work has merit because it "can help us focus on the issue and make the appropriate response" (p. x).

Kaiser is well known and respected in Old Testament studies. *Revive Us Again* reflects his fondness for and expertise in the Old Testament. Twelve of the sixteen chapters examine Old Testament passages. All but one of the Old Testament revivals were previously studied in *Quest for Renewal: Personal Revival in the Old Testament*. The revision also adds eighteen study guides covering the introduction, epilogue, and each chapter. The study guide questions prompt additional thought on the reader's part. The questions bridge the distance from the biblical setting to contemporary culture and enables the reader to have a solid grasp of the biblical view of revival and its application.

Kaiser's text adds to the understanding of revival because it is one of few (the reviewer found only six) works that actually studies biblical revivals. Another benefit of *Revive Us Again* is Kaiser's discussion of revival. He writes that revival "is one of the church's most abused terms" (p. 2). Many evangelical churches refer to their annual protracted meetings with the term "revival." Kaiser recognizes the confusion surrounding revival in evangelical circles and notes that the term is "a synonym for mass evangelism," "bizarre happenings in church meetings," and "theatrical feats of showmanship on the part of both the subjects of revival and the revivalists themselves" (p. 2). Kaiser uses 2 Chr. 7:14 for definition of revival as an activity involving the body of believers. He follows his definition with a defense of his use of the verse. He refers to numerous Old and New Testament verses supporting the promise's applicability to the modern church. Kaiser's signs of the need for revival are similar to Jonathan Edwards', as is his theology of revival. He states, "I conclude that there can be no revival without the Lord's initiating it and carrying it out" (p. 18). However, he nowhere dismisses the church's culpability in the lack of revival in our land.

In recent years there has been an emphasis on worship styles. Some popular models promote a non-confrontational presentation of "the claims of Christ." Kaiser debunks such an approach stating, "Every revival in the Old Testament rested solidly on a new and powerful proclamation of the Word of God" (p. 11). At a time when many are chasing quick fixes revamping the externals, Kaiser returns the minister to the real issue. "The great corrective needed for most current complaints about worship lies primarily not in the area of form, setting, or even substance, but in every area of a new reviving work of the incomparably great God" (p. 12).

One question that arises while reading Kaiser's book is his choice of chapter topics. Some of the titles and topics clearly match the selected Scriptures,

while others are not as well connected. Chapter 9, "It Is Time to Humble Ourselves Before the Lord," which lists 2 Chr. 34:1-33 as its corresponding Scripture, which records the revival under Josiah, is an example of an arbitrary selection. The content of the chapter is insightful, yet little of the chapter's study of humility and revival deals with 2 Chronicles 34. Kaiser discusses many passages including 2 Chr. 7:14, 2 Chronicles 12, Proverbs, Psalms, Romans, and 1 Corinthians, among others. Other chapters deal with aspects of revival, and while each is informative and thorough, many times they span a vast range of Scriptures which causes the reader to question why Kaiser attempted to tie the theme to one revival passage in the chapter title.

Revive Us Again is a needed text. Its contribution to the study of revival compensates for the criticisms noted above. In fact, the wide ranging scriptural references for the studies strengthen the reader's biblical understanding of God's methods and has practical relevance for issues of worship, evangelism, and revival.

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Should God Get Tenure? Essays on Religion and Higher Education, edited by David W. Gill. Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1997. Pp. 245.

Models for Christian Higher Education: Strategies for Survival and Success in the Twenty-First Century, edited by Richard T. Hughes and William B. Adrian. Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1997. Pp. 461.

Both of these books on Christian education are collections of essays that address specific topics. The first contains seventeen short essays, and the second carries twenty-four longer contributions. Both books are edited by scholars at Christian colleges and universities, and both come from a publisher long associated with evangelical literature and scholarship. However, in content they are very different. Hughes and Adrian, from Pepperdine University, have assembled examinations of the educational philosophy and history of various Christian colleges. Gill's provocatively titled volume addresses conceptual, theoretical, and foundational questions fundamental to establishing the proper worldview in which to conduct a Christian education institution. Hughes and Adrian have put together essays of quality, breadth, and valuable historical vision. The material is interesting and insightful but sometimes deeply disturbing and aggravating. In contrast the components of Gill's effort are uneven in quality, disparate in themes