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## Evangelical Review of Theology

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# Editorial The Holy Spirit Today

The spirit of our age is the drive for absolute freedom—freedom from limits and without reference to God. This secular spirit which has overtaken the West is now penetrating the very being of Third World societies. Immorality, violence, material greed and corrupt power are on the increase. The biblical account of the Fall is no myth but a daily reality. We look to the Holy Spirit, the paraclete of the risen Christ, to lead us to the truth of God and to empower us to overcome cosmic principalities and powers and their manifestations in society.

Today evangelicals are re-evaluating their theology of the Holy Spirit and are more open to new ways in which the Holy Spirit is at work. The Oslo '85 Consultation on the Work of the Holy Spirit and Evangelism pointed to this new awareness. It would not have been possible ten years ago. The Holy Spirit is the pioneer missionary preparing people to hear and receive the gospel. But as His agents we need to be careful not to manipulate His gifts of grace nor put Him in the straightjacket of our limited knowledge and experience. In the midst of this power encounter we turn in prayer to the living God who alone can save the world from self-destruction and who can renew the Church so that it becomes light and salt in the world. History shows us that revival in the Church is always God's sovereign act but it also shows us that God moves upon his people when they begin to pray.

The Church is a charismatic community, a sign of the present and yet coming Kingdom. The gifts of the Spirit are manifest in the fruit of the Spirit in changed lives and as 'signs and wonders' before a watching world. But the Church is also an institutional community reflecting national cultures and yet transcending it. The Holy Spirit is renewing old structures and creating new ones. House groups and specialist agencies for mission are flourishing. The sacraments of Baptism and the Lord's Supper point to the relationship between the charismatic and the institutional life of the Church. However, the work of the Holy Spirit must not be isolated from the Word of God, for the Christ of Scriptures is the cornerstone of all our theology and practice. He holds all things together. [p. 296](#)

## A Decade of Revival—1900–1910

by J. Edwin Orr

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The worldwide Awakening of the early twentieth century came at the end of forty years of evangelical advance which followed the outpouring of the Spirit far and wide in 1858–59 and the sixties. Thus it did not represent a recovery from a long night of despair caused by rampant infidelity, as was the case in the days of Wesley. It seemed, rather, a blaze of evening glory at the end of the nineteenth century, "the Great Century" in the writings of Latourette.

It was the most extensive evangelical awakening of all time, reviving Anglican, Baptist, Congregational, Disciple, Lutheran, Methodist, Presbyterian and Reformed churches and other evangelical bodies throughout Europe and North America, Australasia and South

Africa, and their daughter churches and missionary causes throughout Asia, Africa and Latin America. More than five million folk were won to an evangelical faith in the two years of greatest impact. In countries experiencing awakening in the wake of the revival, there arose the Pentecostal denominations.

## **THE TIMING OF THE MOVEMENT**

Why did it occur at the time it did? The ways of God are past finding out. One can only surmise. A subtler form of infidelity had arisen, a compromise between Christianity and humanism. And there was rising a more sophisticated interpretation of human conduct, inspired by Freud, who spoke of God as an Illusion.

The prescient wisdom of its Author may also account for the sudden spread of the Revival of 1900–1910. Within ten years, the awful slaughter of World War I had started, and a gentler way of life passed into the twilight of history. The Pax Britannica had ended.

Arnold Toynbee, reminiscing, recalled the trauma of the time, when half his classmates died in battle. The writer was a child when news of the Battle of the Somme threw every family in his native city into mourning for the finest of their fathers, sons and brothers killed in action. [p. 297](#)

Chapman's biographer stated in review: "God in gracious providence was reaping a spiritual harvest before He permitted the outburst of revolutionary forces ... The harvest is gathered before the field is doomed to death."

The early twentieth century Evangelical Awakening was a worldwide movement. It did not begin with the phenomenal Welsh Revival of 1904–05. Rather its sources were in the springs of little prayer meetings which seemed to arise spontaneously all over the world, combining into streams of expectation which became a flood of blessing, in which the Welsh Revival became the greatest cataract.

## **BEGINNINGS IN PRAYER**

Meetings for prayer for revival in evangelical gatherings such as the Moody Bible Institute and the Keswick Convention greeted the new century, not surprisingly. What was most remarkable was that missionaries and national believers in obscure places in India, the Far East, Africa and Latin America seemed moved about the same time to pray for phenomenal revival in their fields and world wide. Most had never seen or heard of phenomenal revival occurring on missionfields, and few of them had witnessed it at home. Their experience was limited to reading of past revivals.

The first manifestation of phenomenal revival occurred simultaneously among Boer prisoners of war in places ten thousand miles apart, as far away as Bermuda and Ceylon. The work was marked by extraordinary praying, by faithful preaching, conviction of sin, confession and repentance and lasting conversion and hundreds of enlistments for mission service. The spirit of revival spread to South Africa in the throes of post-war economic depression.

Not without significance, an Awakening began in 1900 in the churches of Japan that had long suffered from a period of "retarded growth." It started in an unusually effective movement to prayer, followed by an unusually intensive effort of evangelism, matched by an awakening of Japanese urban masses to the claims of Christ, and such ingathering that the total membership of the churches almost doubled within the decade. Why did this Japanese Awakening occur in 1900? It would have been impossible four years later, when the Japanese became involved in momentous war with the Russian Empire.

Significantly also for evangelistic follow-up of general Awakening in 1900, Torrey and Alexander's team found that unusual praying had prepared the way for the most fruitful evangelistic ministry ever known p. 298 in either New Zealand or Australia, and the unprecedented success of the campaigns first launched Torrey and Alexander, later Chapman with Alexander, upon their worldwide evangelistic crusades, run conventionally but accompanied by revival of the churches.

Gipsy Smith experienced much the same kind of response in his mission of peace in war-weary South Africa, success in evangelism provoking an awakening of the population to the Christian faith. Likewise, he extended work worldwide.

Meanwhile, worldwide prayer meetings were intensifying. Undoubtedly, the farthest-felt happening of the decade was the Welsh Revival, which began as a local revival in early 1904, moved the whole of Wales by the end of the year, and raised up Evan Roberts as the mystic leader, while filling simultaneously almost every church in the principality.

## **THE WELSH REVIVAL 1904**

The Welsh Revival was the farthest-reaching of all the movements of the Awakening, for it affected the whole of the evangelical cause in India, Korea and China, renewed the revivals in Japan and South Africa, and sent a wave of awakening over Africa, Latin America and the South Seas.

The story of the Welsh Revival is astounding. Begun with prayer meetings of less than a score of intercessors, when it burst its bounds the churches of Wales were crowded for more than two years. A hundred thousand outsiders were converted and added to the churches, the vast majority remaining true to the end. Drunkenness was immediately cut in half, and many taverns went bankrupt. Crime was so diminished that judges were presented with white gloves attesting that there were no cases of murder, assault, rape or robbery, or the like to consider. Local police became unemployed in many districts. Slowdowns occurred in coal mines, not due to unpleasantness between management and workers, but because so many foulmouthed miners became converted and stopped using foul language that the horses which hauled the coal trucks in the mines could no longer understand what was being said to them, and transportation slowed until the horses learned the language of Canaan.

Time and time again, the writer has been asked why the Welsh Revival did not last. It did last. The most exciting phase lasted two years. There was an inevitable drifting away of some whose interest was superficial, maybe one person in forty of the total membership of p. 299 the churches. Even critics of the movement conceded that 75 per cent of the converts, at least, remained in membership after five years.

But there was a falling away in Wales. Why? It did not happen among converts of the 1904 Revival, other than the minority noted. Converts of the Revival continued to be the choicest segment of church life, even in the 1930s when the writer closely studied the spiritual life of Wales.

Wales was overtaken by disasters. World War I killed a high proportion of a generation revived, converted, or only influenced by the Revival, leaving a dearth of men in the churches; the coal mines of Wales were hit in the 1920s by tragic unemployment, which continued into the 1930s in the Depression; and classes under military age during the war, infants during the Revival, espoused the gospel of Marxism.

There was another reason. These Welsh revivalists took scripture knowledge for granted; indoctrination deemed as superfluous was at a minimum; the Welsh constituency was ill-prepared for a new onslaught of anti-evangelicalism which captured

a generation of otherwise disillusioned or embittered Welshmen. Ulster moved into the place held by the principality of Wales as a land of evangelistic activity.

## AWAKENINGS: EUROPE AND NORTH AMERICA

The story of the Welsh Revival has often been told. Most Christian people, including scholars, have been unaware of the extent of the Awakening in the rest of English-speaking countries, in the United Kingdom, the United States and Canada, South Africa, Australia and faraway New Zealand.

The Archbishop of Canterbury called for a nation-wide day of prayer. Thirty English bishops declared for the Revival after one of their number, deeply moved, told of confirming 950 new converts in a country parish church. The Awakening swept Scotland and Ireland. Under Albert Lunde, also a friend of the researcher in later years, a work began in Norway, described by Bishop Berggrav as the greatest revival of his experience. It affected Sweden, Finland, and Denmark, Lutherans there saying that it was the greatest movement of the Spirit since the Vikings were evangelized. It broke out in Germany, France, and other countries of Europe, marked by prayer and confession.

It is difficult to count converts in the Church of England, but, in the years 1903–1906, the Free Churches gained a total ten per cent, or 300,000. p. 300

When news of the Awakening reached the United States, huge conferences of ministers gathered in New York and Chicago and other cities to discuss what to do when the Awakening began. Soon the Methodists in Philadelphia had 6101 new converts in trial membership; the ministers of Atlantic City proclaimed that only fifty adults remained professedly unconverted in a 60,000 population. Churches in New York City took in hundreds on a single Sunday; in one instance 364 were received into membership, 286 new converts, 217 adults, 134 men, 60 heads of families.

The 1905 Awakening rolled through the South like a tidal wave, packing churches for prayer and confession, adding hundreds to membership rolls. First Baptist in Paducah added a thousand in a couple of months and the old pastor died of overwork. Believers' baptisms among the Southern Baptists rose twenty-five per cent in a single year. Various denominations shared equally in the Awakening.

In the Middle West, churches were suddenly inundated by great crowds of seekers. The "greatest revivals in their history" were reported by Methodists in town after town; Baptists and others gained likewise. Everyone was so busy in Chicago that pastors decided to hold their own meetings and help one another deal with the influx. Every store and factory closed in Burlington, Iowa, to permit employees to attend services of intercession and dedication. The mayor of Denver declared a day of prayer: by 10 a.m., churches were filled; at 11.30, almost every store closed; 12,000 attended prayer meetings in downtown theatres and halls; every school closed; the Colorado Legislature closed. The impact was felt for a year.

In the West, great demonstrations marched through the Los Angeles streets. United meetings attracted attendance of 180,000. The Grand Opera House was filled at midnight with drunks and prostitutes seeking salvation. For several hours a day, business was nearly suspended in Portland, Oregon, bank presidents and bootblacks attending prayer meetings while two hundred major stores in agreements freely signed closed from 11 till 2.

Churches of the various denominations, town and country, were moved from Newfoundland to British Colombia across Canada, in both spontaneous prayer and ardent evangelism, while students eagerly responded as in the States.

Church membership in the United States in seven major Protestant Churches increased by more than two million in five years (870,389 new communicants in 1906) and then continued rising. This did not include the gains of younger denominations of Pentecostal or Holiness dynamic whose rate of increase was considerably greater. p. 301

It is naturally difficult to estimate the gains in the Dutch Reformed Church in South Africa for most converts therein already possessed family affiliation. The Methodist Church increased by thirty per cent in three years of revival. No doubt, the same patterns applied in New Zealand, Australia and South Africa, all stirred by the Welsh Revival.

## **AWAKENINGS IN ASIA, LATIN AMERICA AND AFRICA**

The writer had visited all the States of India, and had addressed more than a million people there, and lectured in a score of the theological colleges and to hundreds of missionaries and national pastors; yet he encountered only one who knew of the extent of the Indian Revival of 1905–06, a retired professor of theology. And yet the Awakening in India moved every province while the Christian population increased by seventy per cent, sixteen times as fast as the Hindu, the Protestant rate of increase being almost double that of the Roman Catholic. In many places, meetings went on for five to ten hours.

In Burma, 1905 “brought an ingathering quite surpassing anything known in the history of the mission”; and the A.B.M.U. baptized 2,000 Karens that year, instead of the 200 average. In a single church, 1340 Shans were baptized in December, in all 3113 being added in the “marvellous ingathering.”

The story of the Korean Revival of 1907 has been told and retold. It is less well-known that the Revival came in three waves, 1903, 1905 and 1907, the membership of the churches quadrupling within a decade, the national Church being created from almost nothing by the movement. Since then, the Korean churches have maintained the impetus in rapid church growth, through revivals and recessions.

The revival campaigns of Jonathan Goforth in Manchuria have been recorded and published, but the extent of the Awakening in China from the Boxer Uprising until the 1911 Revolution has not been apprehended. China’s oldest evangelist, survivor of the China-wide Awakening of 1927, told the writer that he had not even heard of the Awakening (in every province in the 1900s) apart from the post-Boxer revulsion. Yet the number of Protestant communicants in China doubled in a decade to a quarter of a million, to half a million for the total Evangelical community. This was the first great evangelical ingathering in China.

In Indonesia, the number of Evangelicals, 100,000 in 1903, trebled in the decade of general Awakening to 300,000, and in subsequent movements of phenomenal power, the number of believers on one p. 302 little island (Nias) surpassed such a figure, winning two-thirds the population. Also, Protestant membership in Madagascar increased sixty-six per cent in the years of Revival, 1905–1915, while pioneering success was soon achieved in the newly-opened Philippines. Such revival and awakening were reported from other islands, revival in the older fields, awakening in the newer.

The Awakening had limited effect in the Latin American countries: unusual revival in Brazil, phenomenal awakening in Chile, with Evangelical membership in both countries starting to climb, until in our times it passed the number of practising Roman Catholics; pioneering continued in other republics with sparse results but promise of future harvest since realised.

The Edinburgh World Missionary Conference recognized that more progress had been made in Africa in the first decade of the twentieth century than experienced hitherto. The Protestant communicants in the African mission fields increased in 1903–10 from 300,000 to 500,000, there having been many awakenings in various parts of those years; but the full impact of the Welsh Revival was not felt until the war years, when phenomenal revival occurred among the Africans. In the next half century, the rate of increase was double that of the general population.



It was noteworthy that the Awakening of the 1900s was ecumenical in the best sense of the word. It was thoroughly interdenominational. The fuller narratives have provided instances of Anglican, Baptist, Brethren, Congregational, Disciple, Lutheran, Methodist, Presbyterian and Reformed congregations sharing in the Revival, with a total lack of evidence of any response on the part of Roman Catholic or Greek Orthodox communions, but this is not surprising, for it was so in the days of the Puritans, of Wesley, of Finney and of Moody. Only in the mid-twentieth century, when their changing attitude to Scripture had accompanied a changing attitude to dissent, have heretofore non-evangelical church bodies been affected by evangelical movements.

During the Welsh Revival, there occurred charismatic phenomena, uncanny discernment, visions, trances but no glossolalia. There was an outbreak of speaking in tongues in India in the aftermath of the Awakening. In 1906, there was speaking in tongues among converts of the Revival in Los Angeles, from which Pentecostalism spread widely. A glossolalic movement rose from a non-glossolalic revival.

There is no telling what might have happened in society had not the First World War absorbed the energies of the nations in the aftermath of this Edwardian Awakening. The time, talent and treasure of the people were pre-empted in their struggle for national existence, and [p. 303](#) what little was over was devoted to the welfare of the fighting men and victims of war. This was the case in World War I.

## **SOCIAL IMPACT OF THE AWAKENING**

Even so, no one could possibly say that the Awakenings of the 1900s in Britain or the United States were without a social impact. In Britain, there was utter unanimity on the part of observers regarding “the high ethical character” of the movement. The renewed obedience to the four great social commandments reduced crime, promoted honesty, inculcated truthfulness and produced chastity. Drunkenness and gambling were sharply curtailed. It was the same in the United States, for a wave of morality went over the country, producing a revival of righteousness. Corruption in state and civic government encountered a setback which was attributed by observers in church or state to the Great Awakening. For a dozen years, the country was committed in degree to civic and national integrity, until new forces of corruption triumphed again in the 1920s.

In such awakenings, it seems that the individual response is much more immediate than the social response. British church leaders acclaimed “the high ethical character of the movement.” The then largest denomination in the United States declared in review that the public conscience had been revived, overthrowing corrupt officials, crossing the party lines, electing governors, senators, assemblymen, mayors and district attorneys of recognized honesty. The people of Philadelphia “threw the rascals out” and put in a dedicated mayor. Washington Gladden, the “father of the social gospel,” was assured that the general awakening had started a moral revolution in the lives of the people. In other countries, profound impressions were made.

What was the social effect outside western Protestantism? On mission fields, missionaries multiplied their schools and hospitals. In twenty years, pupils in Christian schools in India doubled to 595,725; 90% of nurses were Christian, mostly trained at mission hospitals. In China, missionaries pioneered secondary and higher education and thus laid the foundations of the medical service; beginnings of Africa’s educational systems and medical service were due likewise to the missionary impulse.

Thus, at the beginning of the twentieth century, revivals of New Testament Christianity and awakenings of people in related communities, accomplished not only much growth in the body of believers but also improvement in society.



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Dr. Orr uses 'revival' for the renewal of life among believers and 'awakening' for the coming alive to spirituality of the community. He writes, "Revival is the work of God with the response of the people of God, awakening, the work of God with the response of the unregenerated masses."

Editor p. 304

## The Holy Spirit and the Church

Klaas Runia

*Reprinted from The Holy Spirit Down to Earth, 1977, with permission*

No Christian will deny that there is a close relation between the Holy Spirit and the Church. From the point of view of the *history of salvation* one can say that the New Testament Church came into existence on the day of Pentecost. On purpose we speak of the New Testament Church. If the term 'Church' is used in a wider sense, for instance, as a designation of the people of God, then it must be said that the Church was already in existence in the days of the Old Testament. One can think, for example, of the establishment of the covenant with Abraham and afterwards with Israel as a nation at Sinai. One can even say with the Heidelberg Catechism "that the Son of God, out of the whole human race, *from the beginning to the end of the world*, gathers, defends and preserves for Himself, by his Spirit and Word, in the unity of the true faith, a Church chosen to everlasting life" (Lord's Day 21). On the other hand, it would be possible to say the the New Testament Church came into being during the ministry of Jesus Himself, who as the Messiah gathered a people around Himself. Yet "in the full sense of the Church in vigorous life, redeemed by the cross of Christ, invigorated by the divine power, set forth on the path of work and worship, the Church certainly did not come into existence until that day of Pentecost. The coming of the Spirit upon the little band of disciples galvanized them into action. It constituted them as the Church."<sup>1</sup>

But the relation between the Holy Spirit and the Church is not only of an historical nature. Spirit and Church are also inseparably related from the *theological* point of view. The ancient Church expressed this in its Creeds by incorporating the Church in the 'third' article, the article on the Holy Spirit. "I believe in the Holy Spirit. I believe in the holy,

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<sup>1</sup> Leon Morris, *The Spirit of the Living God*, 1960, 54, 55.