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Reformation
& **REVIVAL**
JOURNAL

**REFORMATION
IN REVIVAL**

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1. To encourage *reformation* in local Christian churches worldwide.
2. To promote the cause of *revival* and spiritual awakening through prayer and the provision of resources to aid Christian leaders.

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The conviction of the staff and editors of the *Reformation & Revival Journal* is that awakening, of the kind seen in the First Great Awakening in America, wedded to the doctrinal concerns of the historic Protestant Reformation as expressed in the terms *sola scriptura*, *sola gratia*, and *sola fide*, is needed in our generation.

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REFORMATION IN REVIVAL

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INTRODUCTION



John H. Armstrong

The response I receive to the subject of revival is generally mixed. Some think that a wide-scaled, culture changing revival is the only solution to the present problems that plague the church in North America. Others think the last thing we need is another revival movement since history reveals that some revivals have produced little that remained over time.

The truth of the matter is this—revival, without real reformation, will result in temporary showers without a significant alteration of life and practice in the church. Let me illustrate. In the late 1960s a movement of the Spirit began in California. It was quickly called “The Jesus Movement.” A segment of my own generation experienced a real visitation of the Spirit. (A friend, who is a serious historian, is presently writing a definitive history of this period.) I think it is safe to conclude, looking back upon these few years between 1967 and 1971, that God really *did* do something quite remarkable in the church in America. There was a brief shower of blessing, an enduement of the Spirit, a real revival. But there was very little reformation as a result of this shower. Existing churches, in general, resisted the movement. New churches embraced it and embarked upon a direction that was unable to sustain the original visitation with any measure of credibility. What was

really needed, I believe, was revival in reformation. We needed it then, and we need it even more now—a revival which gives fresh power and blessing to the people of God, producing a significant number of real conversions, and resulting in a church that is equipped to embrace historic biblical Christianity. We need a reformation that results in obedience to the “great commandment” of our Lord Jesus Christ.

You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the first and great commandment. And a second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself. On these two commandments depend all the Law and the Prophets (Matthew 22:37-40).

Reformation brings back the study of God, not as a doctrine per se, but as an end to love God with the mind. Revival in reformation engages the heart, the soul *and* the mind. It leads the church to pursue the truth as it is in Jesus Christ. It is both Christological and doxological!

In a very real sense we do not need revival, at least the way many define it in our time. We need Christ. We need the Spirit to reveal Christ to our hearts joined with the power to obey the commandments of Jesus with fresh ardor and joy. We need to restore integrity to the church and recover classical pastoral ministry (“shepherds” not CEOs) as modeled in church history and Scripture. Only then will we have real reformation flowing from revival and a revival that results in real reformation. When all is said and done we need to recover the proper balance and place of Word and Spirit. How can any that love the church of Jesus Christ not work and labor for such a blessing in our time?