

“THIS THING WE CALL REVIVAL”

The term *Revival* has most assuredly been the focus of exhilarating, and at times rabid debate among preachers for many years. The warring schools of thought have fought ferociously, often leaving a decimated battlefield of death and destruction, and fallen opponents on both sides litter the sacred grounds of *Christendom*. The only *Victor* is a demon called *Apathy*. And the losers are the modern-day Apostolic Church!

The tirades of flying insults and innuendo never end from one side to the other. It seems that among mankind we are forever bound by the *pendulum effect* of extremism, that continually changes the worlds’ value system. When there is an extreme overemphasis on a certain issue, we often tend to overcorrect. Case in point, would be the arrival of the *Latter-Rain* and all of its hocus-pocus and neo-charismatic ideas which eventually brought about a strong rebuttal and attack from great men of God. This was absolutely necessary and needed. Yet it did cause an overreaction in a lot of Oneness churches. What began as a defense of order and decorum in our services, escalated to the shutting down of outward worship and demonstration of the Gifts. It developed an entire generation of churches throughout America with almost no outward demonstration of worship, and the Gifts of the Spirit were thought to be feared rather than to be desired.

Then came along men like Elder Verbal Bean, Elder Joe Duke, and many others, and made a much-needed correction again. This affected churches all across America, from the Deep South to the West Coast. So, it seems apparent that we’re constantly on this seesaw of up and down, or we’re hanging on to the proverbial swinging pendulum which sways from one extreme side to the other, every so many

years—until the term *Revival* has become unpopular, and a bone of contention with many conservative Apostolic churches.

I realize that there are some preachers that you can never hold a normal conversation with, without every other word being an exaggerated *Hooked On Phonics* lesson—pronouncing the word *revival* as***** *reee-viiiii-val!*—I would say it is "Quite annoying" to say the least. These groups of men run around the country preaching and promoting what they call revival, and really have never experienced revival themselves. They wouldn't know a move of God if it hit them in the face. What they call revival is nothing more than a religious stage show of performing actors. They tend to interpret *singspirations* and *crusades* as Revival. Then they try to intimidate and accuse many of not believing in church growth or revival, if you don't do it their way. Imagine all the new *Gurus* of Revival who host great platforms of *famous men*, although they themselves have never had a move in their own ministries. They have all the acronyms in place, declaring "Revival and Evangelism" yet their own churches don't reflect what they are declaring. This has caused some of these "Well- Sayers" to feel like they are *The Martyrs of Revival*, because of his or her super-sensitivity of feeling rejected when everybody doesn't jump on his or her bandwagon.

Then add to the list the Ego-Eccentrics, who think nothing of intimidating and humiliating good men at conferences and meetings around the country for not doing it the way they do it. There is nothing more demoralizing for them to go to a conference on a shoestring budget or on borrowed money, being weary and tired from working jobs and holding a small congregation together just to hear, "If you really believed in Revival, you too would have the tremendous results that I'm having!" Or at the very least, they sit there and endure the marked criticisms of how they are doing nothing or doing it all wrong. While many who are doing all the hooting have assumed the pastorate of well-established churches or are living in

parts of the country to where everybody is moving, it's so easy to become arrogant and all knowing when you're growing. But you let a dearth hit your area or church, and all of a sudden, you're crying out for help, and now willing suddenly to listen to any pastor. It's this type of arrogant hard hitting that has turned many a man into a defense mode. So, the "Well-Sayers" have passed through the land and have done as much against the evangelism cause as the devil himself.

How many times have I also been discouraged at these hype meetings of the egotistic while trying to do a work for God? I have been the subject of these opportunists. One renowned conference speaker got up at a meeting I was attending and screamed that he was weary with all the whining he was hearing from home mission pastors about revival. He said that if they would come by his office, he'd like fifteen minutes with them, and he would tell them what revival was really about and how to do it. By the way, he took a church of 250 people that was approximately sixty-five years old. They had also cleaned out all the other smaller churches in the vicinity. I went by and saw for myself the "great revival" he was having. I observed wedding rings, cut hair, splits, short sleeves, and many other of what they call (tolerances). This is an abhorring transgression of great destructive magnitude, which infinitely marks other good men who do believe in revival not of that caliber. This has caused many to make an overcorrection mode to take effect.

I think many have forgotten it's not the *method* that saves; it's *the God* of the method. As with many others, I too have sat and listened to the exaggerated reports from the *mathematically challenged*. They report thousands receiving the Holy Ghost in a single meeting. They spoke of great numbers of people packed out in their churches, which actually can hold a fraction at best of what was reported. Later we hear someone say they were at their church to witness only twenty-five people in the entire congregation. Such men are indigenious to corporate America mentality, and not the work of God. They are literally obnoxious with the constant

diatribe of *Revival This, or Revival That* and can never hold a normal conversation without driving you crazy. What a sad disgrace it is, all the false hype we've endured in the last ten to thirty years, from the *Blab It and Grab It* crowd to the *Mathematically Challenged*. They've literally obliterated the word *Revival* until you can hardly believe anything, and then you find yourself questioning even the reasonable. Somebody said, "If we would be balanced, then we could take a little from both sides, and have a happy medium." Well, that sounds a little too much like compromise to me. If one would just be biblically correct, then one would be balanced.

The debate rages over the term that is really a misnomer to most. *Revival* to some is having an evangelist in and winning new souls. And with others, new souls don't necessarily mean new converts, it means growth at the expense of another church and proselyting. The word *Revival* in its literal definition, expresses nothing of the sort. *Revival* literally means to *revive* that which is comatose, unconscious, or dead. So, *Revival* doesn't necessarily mean that your number has grown. It is really a concept, or a way of renewed thinking. I think the term "evangelism" would be a more appropriate word for what we are trying to accomplish. Yet for the sake of a term we are all familiar with, we won't use the word *Revival* in its archaic definition, but in its more modern usage. Since the intention of the Lord is for us to evangelize the world, or have revival, then we definitely need to change our thinking.

Consider if you would Matthew 28:18-19. It declares the *Great Commission* to the church. I'm sure that this passage wasn't just for the disciples and followers of that day, but was most definitely for all the Church Age that was and is to come! Notice if you will; Matthew 28:19, "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." He did say "Go ye." And I really can't believe that meant just send money to the mission field with a

handful of men and women. But it would most definitely have to mean *all encompassing* as in the entire globe including our own communities. Furthermore, Jesus went on to say, inclusive of you and me, to not only go, but also teach and then apply the Salvation Plan. Now someone will have to educate me regarding *who is exempt from this commandment?* Has the original plan or commandment in interpretation, become archaic? Has it gained new meaning and definition only applicable by modernistic vernacular? Has the term, *all nations* been fulfilled, and now all that's left to do is a maintenance program of perpetual perfection of the church? Let me ask, *Are we beyond correction?*

The problem that I often have is that because of my position as pastor, and the constant need to think and make decisions on my feet and knees, for those whom God has placed under my watch, it's often hard to deactivate this mechanism long enough to listen to another preacher that might be challenging my *modus operandi*. Though to be clear, I am not speaking of doctrinal Bible issues that are clearly established among Oneness Holiness Churches. Yet I am speaking concerning of what Paul wrote about in Corinthians as “differences of administration” or “operation” yet the same Spirit. Too often we immediately dismiss one another based on that. Of course, it goes without saying, if one is in false doctrine, you nor I want anything to do with him, even if he tries to disguise it under the terms “Administration or Operation.” *Some things are just biblical error!* And some things need to be inspected for their motive, whether it is *honorable* or just *ambition*. So, I'm saying please be careful not to write everything off that is not familiar to you, nor birthed out of your school of up bringing. Surely, we all learn some things that are different from one generation to another along with the mistakes, as it will be with the coming generation, which will certainly eclipse you and me.

Truly, I go to most meetings praying that God will *add* something to me. And more often than not, He has—many times, through men who approach the word of God

from a completely different facet. Remember we have neither learned nor come up under the same ministries. Even the apostles differed greatly. Their occupations varied from fishermen to tax collectors. Some were highly trained with great talent and educated speech. Modern day preachers also vary in talent and abilities. Some that have preached to me have had small congregations and some have large. But it's not the size of their church that makes the difference, neither is it their popularity among men. But it's the measure of their walk with God that makes the difference to me.

Consider if you would, King Josiah. Was it not a *revival* of sorts when the priest Hilkiah found the law in the book and went and read it to the king? Josiah, then upon hearing the words of the book went and rent his clothes and was tender toward its words. Remember, he had *never* heard them before. Yet he responded with contrition. Thus, God spared him at least for his day, the judgment of the words of that book. I know it is easier to see the errors of those in the past. But don't you think that we might also be subject to like passions and mistakes? Some say, "Well, the Holy Ghost will prevent us from those." Unfortunately, the human influence in us doesn't always allow for this. For example, Annanias and Sapphira, and six of the seven churches of Asia to whom God wrote. The church because of its make up of *humanity* has always needed re-correcting from time to time. The Bible did say, "*For the perfecting of the church.*" Could it be we as modern-day church members, have slipped or strayed from some of the *original commissions* the Lord had intended for us? Is it possible that our calibration is off slightly in some of our situations? Could it be that we have become in a very humanly way, obsessed with certain areas and need correction? Or are we so protective of our churches and comfort zones that we will at all cost protect ourselves from any change or the challenge to change, even if it is contrary Holy Writ?

The story of the talents amplifies a *principle* of God. When the great master said,

“Don’t you know that I reap in fields that I have not sown in” He was expressing a principle. The principle being that, if you would have taken what I had given you and worked with it, there would have been an increase. Does it go back to the method or the God of the method? He did write that no flesh shall glory in my presence. I take that to mean that neither the works of the flesh, nor by the flesh. If at any time the method gets credit or glory that belongs to the Master, then it is wrong! And I’ve literally seen God allow a method that seemed profitable to the kingdom, cease to be effective, because men started marketing the method instead of God. It is God that gives the increase. How can we think we have the secret formula for every church when the Bible clearly states that we can’t add a cubit to our height, neither can we save ourselves?

Not everything that men do in churches across the land is even possible for every church to do. And in no way should they be condemning of anyone who doesn’t do it just like them. *But because they do it and you don’t, it doesn’t make it foolish and ridiculous*, as a long as it’s not contrary to biblical teaching. On the other hand, I’ve seen some that have a great talent and propensity for justifying inactivity by wresting scripture. Remember there are differences of administrations and operations and they’re all in the church.

Please allow me to share with you something the Lord has done for me on more than one occasion. Of course, I am no way insinuating that this is a mandate for others, but only that God used this to help my faith during a certain time in our church. I felt led one day to get our church together to pass out flyers in order to invite folks to church. I told the church that if we would pass out 2,000 flyers, there would be visitors Sunday morning and none of them would be from the flyers. At the time, I was not sure what made me say such a statement. But I do feel that it was God. During this time, we hadn’t been having hardly a single visitor. So, we passed the flyers out, and on Sunday morning, we got up from prayer and the house had

visitors throughout. Now I was amazed because there were at least twenty-five or more first time visitors. And later I found out that none of them were a result from the flyers. I had the church look around at the beginning of the service and they also were amazed. Now what happened? I believe it was God showing me first that “No flesh (or methods) shall glory in my presence.” Secondly, He really does reap in fields that he has not sown. So, what am I trying say? That it’s not so much *what you do*, for or towards *evangelism* or outreach, but it is imperative that *we do something!* Whether it’s home Bible studies or visitation, street meetings, park services, convalescent homes, Sunday school contests, buses, or on the job witnessing. I could go on and on; the list would be exhaustive.

Somebody said, “You need to establish people before you save anymore.” Why can’t a church do both- concurrently running side-by-side? Remember the scripture teaches, preach the Gospel! What is the Gospel? It’s the Good News! What Good News? The Good News is that you don’t have to die in your sins. It’s the message of Jesus Christ, the death, burial, and resurrection. This being true, then we must keep preaching to a lost and dying world as we teach those converted to observe all things whatsoever He commanded; Matthew 28:19.

I had a preacher tell me personally that he was frustrated over his church bringing too many visitors to church, He told me that he announced to his church, “Don’t bring visitors to church and mess up my Bible class again!” I’m sorry, but I can’t identify with this kind of mentality. This denies the purpose of the church, hence, the heart of revival. Aren’t we commanded not to hide it under a bushel?

I know of very few preachers that wouldn’t love to have hungry visitors in their services. As a matter of fact, some wouldn’t mind having any kind of warm body in church, hungry or not. What then is our answer to this polarizing dilemma? How then can these two opposing sides ever come together in agreement? They more

than likely will never. I know I sound like a fatalist, but yet it is most likely the outcome. Nothing I've said I'm sure will bring about this union. Yet I do hope that it will at the very least, bring about a peace over the battlefield, and possibly reveal how some of us really feel. *Not vicious, just passionate.* How then you may be asking, can I really believe what I believe and not be at war? Simply put it is found in the book of Romans:

Rom 14:3-4

3 Let not him that eateth despise him that eateth not; and let not him which eateth not judge him that eateth: for God hath received him.

4 Who art thou that judgest another man's servant? to his own master he standeth or falleth. Yea, he shall be holden up: for God is able to make him stand.

I am not all together ignorant of what is being written here, yet I do see an application of *principle*. We all understand that Paul was writing to the church at Rome, not to the unbeliever. So, with that in mind, we know that he was not condoning sin. That was not the issue here. It wasn't sin, it was the contention over eating meat offered up to idols. It was about a principle concerning the *Despising* and *Judging*. It was someone who did not ascribe to their way of doing things. Consider if you would *the principle*. It appears as though in verse 3 that the one who has the liberty and is doing what is stated here should not despise the one who cannot and will not participate along with this individual. This it seems is a common humanistic problem. Many are normally happy as long as you are doing what they are doing. Or some are happy as long as you're dancing to their tune. And when you are not, and do not, then they tend to ridicule and intimidate. This is the cause of division and strife. So, if I understand *the principle* here being taught, it's don't impose on, and despise others who don't matriculate to your personal school of thinking or liberty. He said to those who did not believe in doing the certain liberties or practices here mentioned, and yet apparently felt passionate against doing them,

that they are not to condemn and judge those who do them. This seems to be a very human characteristic. That is, to judge those who *don't abstain* from what condemns you as being somewhat less holy or informed as you are. Then he wraps this one certain thought here up with verse 4 by saying don't judge another man's servant in either the *To Do* or the *Not To Do* schools. They need to leave them alone and stop trying to make disciples out of another master's servant, for it is God that will hold them up and make them stand. How and why? Because as long as they are not sinning (anything contrary to the laws of God) and it is a matter of weakness and strength, then God ultimately regards the obedience to their authority, over and above the bone of contention. So, in no way should we ever mark any man of God who is truly called and anointed as being weak or contemptible. What should we say then concerning these divisions and contentions on *revival or evangelism*? Do whatever your pastor teaches and be *his disciple*. This article is only meant to expose the weakness or liberty, depending on how you view it, as our passion and not all out war. We can all continue in the peace of God no matter what school you're out of. For then in the same chapter here in Romans in verse 19 it instructs: *Let us therefore follow after the things which make for peace, and things wherewith one may edify another.*

Is this not what ought to be done, rather than the rancor directed at opposing schools of thought and interpretation of revival or evangelism? And quite possibly we might all have contributions in our own way, concerning this body we call the church. I want to edify not vilify one another. Frankly I need a preacher, and I need to let him preach to me. I want a move of God in our church, call it revival, evangelism or whatever. *I desire to fulfill His will in our lives*, and be a witness at all times and not just in a formulated time period of a weekend or once a year. And have sweet communion with the brethren and not war over *this thing we call Revival!*

