# Preliminary Comments

## Why this series?

The church and the U.S. are slowly moving from bad to worse.

Human effort is utterly impotent to arrest this slide.

* Humanity’s problem is a broken corrupt heart
* Man cannot change his own heart

God’s people attempt to solve the human predicament with programs or human effort. (Moral Majority, Donald Trump, Culture Wars)

**But, the manifest presence of God is the solution to every individual and social need.**

Because we know little of God’s past deeds, we have little expectation of a visitation of God’s “manifest presence. We, God’s people, are ignorant of church history. History matters because God reveals himself three ways.

* God reveals Himself in Creation fallibly and generally (General Revelation).
* God reveals Himself in the Bible infallibly and specifically (Special Revelation).
* God reveals Himself in History fallibly but importantly.

These lectures are an attempt to stir up dissatisfaction with the status quo. They are my attempt to create a new expectation for what God might do.

A.W. Tozer: “What is the worst enemy facing the church today?…The treacherous enemy facing the church of Jesus Christ today is the dictatorship of the routine, when the routine becomes ‘lord’ in the life of the church. Programs are organized and the prevailing conditions are accepted as normal. Anyone can predict next Sunday’s service and what will happen. This seems to be the most deadly threat in the church today.”[[1]](#footnote-1)

Two errors:

* No expectation of revival.
* Rejecting God’s normal work during times of non-revival.

## Revival Defined:

### What Revival isn’t

* It isn’t something we plan. It isn’t a season of organized evangelism (The effect of Finney on this teaching).
* It isn’t something we deserve
* It’s not something we can control

Duncan Campbell: “First, let me tell you what I mean by revival. An evangelistic campaign or special meeting is not revival. In a successful evangelistic campaign or crusade, there will be hundreds or even thousands of people making decisions for Jesus Christ, but the community remains untouched, and the churches continue much the same as before the outreach.”[[2]](#footnote-2)

### What Revival is:

Arthur Wallis, “Revival is Divine intervention in the normal course of spiritual things. It is God revealing Himself to man in awesome holiness and irresistible power. It is such a manifest working of God that human personalities are overshadowed, and human programs abandoned. It is man retiring into the background because God has taken the field. It is the Lord ... working in extraordinary power on saint and sinner.”

Brian Edwards: “A true Revival is a remarkable increase in the spiritual life of a large number of God’s people, accompanied by an awesome awareness of the presence of God, intensity of prayer and praise, a deep conviction of sin with a passionate longing for holiness and unusual effectiveness in evangelism, leading to the salvation of many unbelievers. Revival is remarkable, large, effective and, above all, it is something that God brings about.”

Duncan Campbell “Revival is a people saturated with God.”

## Seven characteristics of Revival

### The sovereignty of God

* No pattern can explain it. Sometimes preceded by prayer sometimes not.
* It is Sudden. “And suddenly there came from heaven the sound of a mighty rushing wind” (Acts 2:1).

Brian Edward: “In 1858 John Girardeau was leading an evening service at his church in Charleston, N.C. , when ‘He received a sensation as if a bolt of electricity had struck his head and diffused itself through his whole body. For a little while he stood speechless under the strange physical feeling. Then he said: ‘The Holy Spirit has come; we will begin preaching tomorrow evening.’ He closed the service with a hymn, dismissed the congregation…but no one left. The whole congregation had quietly resumed their seat…he began exhorting them to accept the Gospel. They began to sob, softly, like the falling of rain; then with deeper emotion, to weep bitterly, or to rejoice loudly, according their circumstances. It was midnight before he could dismiss his congregation...The meeting went on night and day for eight weeks.” *Revival,* pg. 11,12

* The story of the Revival at Asbury College in 1970.
* Usually in various places around the world at the same time. (Wales 1904-05, Azusa

### The manifest presence of God

Duncan Campbell: “In revival, God moves in the district. Suddenly, the community becomes God conscious. The Spirit of God grips men and women in such a way that even work is given up as people give themselves to waiting upon God. In the midst of the Lewis Awakening, the parish minister at Barvas wrote, "The Spirit of the Lord was resting wonderfully on the different townships of the region. His Presence was in the homes of the people, on meadow and moorland, and even on the public roads." This presence of God is the supreme characteristic of a God-sent revival. Of the hundreds who found Jesus Christ during this time fully seventy-five per cent were saved before they came near a meeting or heard a sermon by myself or any other ministers in the parish. The power of God, the Spirit of God, was moving in operation, and the fear of God gripped the souls of men - this is God-sent revival as distinct from special efforts in the field of evangelism.”

Fish: “The Most High…comes in his great power. Seriousness settles on a community. Anxious inquiry and earnest prayer spread among the people with the rapidity of an electric shock. Every eye is open, every ear attentive, every conscience awake, every heart alive to the engrossing interest. Dissipation ceases; amusement is forgotten…They very atmosphere of the community seems charged with Divinity. Eternity is near. The world for the time is nothing. The soul is all. The invisible is seen. Spiritual things, before shadowy and distant, are real, and near, and urgent. It is as if the boundaries of earth and heaven were broken, and the veil of flesh removed,—as if earth and seas had fled, and men were already standing before the throne of God.”[[3]](#footnote-3)

### Intense Awareness of Eternal Things

* Terrible conviction of sin Deep and profound repentance. Crying out. Weeping. Prostration.

Wigger: “Hundreds of the believers were so overcome with the power of God that they fell down, and lay helpless on the floor, or the ground; and some of them continued in that helpless condition for a considerable time.” Jones’s chapel couldn’t hold all of the people, so the next day some of the preachers held meetings in the surrounding woods. As they took turns preaching, “the power of the Lord was felt among the people in such a manner that they roared and screamed so loud that the preacher could not be heard, and he was compelled to stop.”

B. Edwards pg. 117

* “Joy inexpressible and full of glory” (1 Peter 1:8).

Brian Edwards: “When God comes in revival, whole communities are aware that there is a God and that eternal issues really matter. Not everyone will believe, but everyone will be made to think.” *Revival,* pg. 43

Time stops or disappears: Asbury College 1970;

The Hebrides Islands in 1948-50

### Rapid Growth of the Church

Mel Tari and Timor: 300,000 Muslims converted in 12 months.

Wigger: “By 1775, the revival in southern Virginia was, in Jarratt’s words, “as great as perhaps was ever known, in country places, in so short a time,” spreading to Prince George, Lunenburg, Mecklenburg, and Amelia counties. Methodist membership in the region grew from 291 in 1774 to 955 in 1775 to 4,379 in 1776, including nearby circuits in North Carolina…It was quite common for sinner to be seized with trembling and shaking, and from that to fall down on the floor as if dead.”[[4]](#footnote-4)

From 1740-42 most New England churches doubled or tripled in size.

### Unusual spiritual phenomenon:

* The Jerks in Kentucky Fish pg 19,
* Crying out and falling to the ground in the Great Awakening,
* Profuse weeping, Screaming, Yelling, Demonic manifestations.
* Some from evil spirits, Some from the flesh, Some from God.

### Spiritual warfare:

* Confusion
* False conversions
* Distracted by the unimportant but spectacular spiritual phenomenon.
* Edwards Vs. Chauncy and *Religious Affections*

### Flesh: Attempts to reproduce God’s power with human methods

## What we can learn from Revival.

Programs are not the answer. The presence of God is the answer to every human problem

Supernatural power is our great need. That is why Paul prayed this prayer for Christians.

“For this reason I bow my knees before the Father, from whom every family in heaven and on earth is named, that according to the riches of his glory he may grant you to be strengthened with power through his Spirit in your inner being, so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith—that you, being rooted and grounded in love, may have strength to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled with all the fullness of God. Now to him who is able to do far more abundantly than all that we ask or think, according to the power at work within us, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, forever and ever. Amen." (Ephesians 3:14–21).

## Conclusion:

B. Edwards: “Today we run our training courses in evangelism, telling people just what to say and how to present the gospel. These are all very necessary simply because we have no passion for evangelism. When we call for door-to-door team in the church few come. When we say ‘we are going down the mark-place to do some witnessing’ only a handful follow. That is one test of our churches. But when revival comes everybody follows. Everybody will be down in the market”, and the prayer meeting will be overflowing. *Revival,* pg. 152

Packer: “We may list as marks of revival *an awesome sense of the presence of God and the truth of the gospel*; a profound awareness of sin, leading to deep repentance and heartfelt embrace of the glorified, loving, pardoning Christ; an uninhibited witness to the power and glory of Christ, with a mighty freedom of speech expressing a mighty freedom of spirit; joy in the Lord, love for his people, and fear of sinning…men are struck down by the word and transformed by the Spirit in short order, making it appropriate pastorally as well as theologically to baptize adult converts straight after they have professed faith.” *In Quest of Godliness,* pg. 36

# Revival In the Bible

1. A.W. Tozer, *Rut, Rot, or Revival*, pg. 4-5 [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. From a website titled “Duncan Campbell on Revival in the Hebrides” [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. H.C. Fish, D.D., *Hnadbook On Revival,* (Harrisonburg: Sprinkle, Orig. pub 1874, Repub. 1988) pg. 111-12 [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Wigger, John. American Saint: Francis Asbury and the Methodists (p. 77). Oxford University Press. Kindle Edition. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)