

## **Chapter 4. Design of the Study**

For this project, I designed a ten-week class entitled, “What the Church Needs to Know About Revival.” The class will be taught at my church to those who elect to take this Sunday evening course. I will have those who sign up for the class fill out a questionnaire at the beginning of the course to measure the participants’ attitudes and actions which my study has indicated contributes could lead to revival. Another questionnaire will be submitted at the conclusion of the course to gauge the impact the course had on each participant.

My hope and prayer is that, as I continue to teach on revival, our church would become more responsive to God’s work of revival in a way which would ignite a genuine revival within our congregation. It is my further desire that this revival would overflow into the surrounding community. I am, however, operating on the assumption that the role of human activity is limited to a catalytic influence on the emergence of revival. The final determination of when and where a revival occurs is in the hands of God.

Therefore, the primary purpose of this project is to change measurable attitudes and behaviors. I am hoping to enlighten the students of my class to the key principles of revival and expose them to the historical accounts of revivals. It is hoped that from this study, there would be measurable changes in the students’ attitudes and actions toward revival. This study is designed to measure the effects of such a study on the class.

### **Goals and Objectives**

It is my hope that a thorough exposure to accounts of historical revivals and Biblical teaching on revival will produce significant change in both perception and behavior. As far as perception, I would like to see the students broaden their

understanding of what revival can be. Too often the perception of revival is that it is simply an emotion-filled series of worship services. I hope to broaden this to include community and even national transformation.

I would also like to see the students' expectation of the potential of revival to increase. It is my belief that as a person's expectation of the possibility of revival increases, they become more willing to make any changes that would be required for God to bring revival.

As far as a change in behavior, I would specifically like to see an increase in the amount of time each participant spends in prayer, particularly prayer for revival. Scripture and revival accounts unanimously teach us that prayer is a necessary component in revival. Without specifying how many people need to be praying, or how frequently they need to pray, I would like to see a marked increase in the students' practice of prayer. There are other behavioral changes I would like to see made, but these are broader and may be different for each person. The best way to measure this would be a willingness to make necessary changes.

### **Initial and Final Questionnaires**

As stated above, the project will study the change in behaviors and attitudes as measured by two questionnaires. The first will be given at the beginning of the first session and the final questionnaire will be given at the conclusion of the last session. I will ask eight questions and each question will be identical on the initial and final questionnaires. The actual questionnaires are included in Appendix A and are listed below as follows:

1. Rate the general effectiveness of the church in impacting the community with

the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Your Local Church

The Christian Churches in Your Community

The Christian Churches in the United States

2. Approximately how frequently do you personally pray for revival?

3. How would you rate your expectation that you will see a revival within the church in your lifetime?

Revival in Your Local Church

Revival Throughout Your Community

Revival Throughout the United States

4. If revival required you to make a significant change in your life, how much would you be willing to sacrifice for the emergence of revival in the church?

5. How would you rate your satisfaction with the church as it is now?

Your Local Church

The Christian Church in Your Community

The Christian Church in the United States

6. In your prayers in the last week, have you prayed for:

For you to experience a personal renewal in your relationship with God?

For your local church to experience a revival of spiritual power and fervor?

For revival to make a significant impact on your community?

For revival to make a significant impact on our nation?

7. Estimate how many minutes you spend in prayer in an average week.

8. If you believed that a personal action or omission were hindering God from bringing a revival in your church, how likely would it be that you would change to promote revival?

I will ask each student to place his/her name at the top of each questionnaire so I can pair his/her initial and final questionnaires together. On the initial questionnaire, I will also place a commitment statement where the student agrees to attend each of the sessions and to complete the final questionnaire. On the final questionnaire, I will give students a place to make suggestions that could make the class better the next time I teach it.

### **Ten Classes on Revival**

The class will be taught in ten sessions. In each session, I will share either a historical account of a major revival movement, an account of a biblical revival, or a biblical lesson that applies to revival. The class will incorporate discussion, lecture, and multimedia presentations. Below is a brief summary of each session.

#### ***Session 1: A Definition of “Revival”***

In this session, I distribute the initial questionnaire and have the students complete it in class. I then give my working definition of revival and explain the different elements involved in the following definition:

A revival is an extraordinary work of God upon the Christian Church, which results in a spiritual renewal among nominal Christians, a renewed focus on evangelism, an emphasis on sanctification, and the transformation of the community surrounding the church.

The discussion questions that follow seek the students' input as to what other elements they think should accompany revival. The session concludes with a study of the cycle of revival delineated in Judges 2:1-18. I define the various stages of the cycle and show how it is repeated several times in the book of Judges.

### ***Session 2: The Influence of Prayer***

This second session begins with discussion questions relating to how a revival is initiated. After several subjective answers are given, I change the discussion to how we would find an authoritative answer to the question. Three primary sources are considered: personal experience, historical studies, and Biblical teachings. I emphasize that while the first two can provide valuable insights, the primary and authoritative source of truth must be the Biblical teachings.

This leads into a study of Acts 2 and the renewal at Pentecost as a type of revival. This revival is used to illustrate the facets of revival listed in the first session. I emphasize the disciples' obedience to Jesus' instructions and the time they spent praying leading up to the revival. The session concludes with a study of the 1858 Prayer Revival, which began through Jeremiah Lamphier, who led a series of noon prayer meetings in New York City.

### ***Session 3: The Roles of Scripture and Key Leaders***

This session begins with a study of Hezekiah's revival in 2 Chronicles 28-31. The emphasis of this study is the key role of following "the word of the LORD<sup>1</sup>" in

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<sup>1</sup>This phrase is used several times in this book, including 2 Chronicles 29:15; 30:12.

Hezekiah's reform. Paul's affirmation that "all Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness"<sup>2</sup> is tied in with this concept. I also point out the key role of the leader in this revival and note how the reform began with Hezekiah and worked its way out to the people.

This is followed by the historical account of the Moravian revival in Herrnhut in 1727. The key role of Zinzendorf in this revival is noted. I also describe the "sifting" years in the Moravian church when the church erred by becoming too emotional and was in need of the objectivity of Scripture.

#### ***Session 4: Jonathan Edwards and the Great Awakening***

Prior to this session, I assign the class to read a portion of Edwards' "Personal Narrative". I begin the session by discussing the different phases of Edwards' spiritual development. I then ask the students to think about which phase they are in their spiritual development. I give an account of the revival in Northampton, beginning in 1733-1735. I then move into a broader account of the Great Awakening, beginning around 1740, including biographical information on George Whitefield. We cover the impact the Great Awakening had on the founders of our country.

The session ends with a discussion on the sovereignty of God. This teaching presents some various views on the doctrine of God's sovereignty. Edwards' teaching, as presented in his sermon, "God's Sovereignty," defines sovereignty as God's "absolute, independent right of disposing of all creatures according to His own pleasure."<sup>3</sup> I also

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<sup>2</sup> Timothy 3:16-17 (New International Version).

<sup>3</sup>Jonathan Edwards, "God's Sovereignty in the Salvation of Men" [sermon online]; available from <http://www.jonathanedwards.com/sermons/Doctrine/gssm.htm>; Internet: accessed 04 March 2006.

discuss the concept of free will as it related to God's sovereignty.

### ***Session 5: The Methodist Revival & Small Groups***

The material for this session focuses on the life of John Wesley and the revival that began in England around 1738. The group of Oxford students, known as the "Holy Club," connects Whitefield with the Wesleys. I incorporate a discussion on the importance of spiritual accountability and the Scripture, "Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another--and all the more as you see the Day approaching."<sup>4</sup> Detailed attention is given to the personal struggle John Wesley had which led to his Aldersgate experience and the influence of the Moravians. One of the keys to this Methodist revival's longevity was the organizing of its converts into small groups. I conclude the session with a discussion of how we can incorporate small groups or accountability groups into our spiritual development.

### ***Session 6: Revival and Social Reform***

This session begins with a discussion on the ultimate purpose of revival. It is more than just the salvation of more people. It is the transformation of the society in a way that addresses many of the evils that are ruining many lives around us. It is one of my goals to broaden the class' understanding of revival so that their prayers and efforts are working towards renewal within the Christian community.

I conclude that the goal of revival is the advancement of Christ's Kingdom with broad applications. The historical study is on the life of William Wilberforce, beginning

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<sup>4</sup> Hebrews 10:25 (New International Version).

with his connections with John Wesley and the Methodist revival. I then describe his extended fight against the slave trade in England. Several Scripture passages are discussed, including the revival in Ephesus found in Acts 19:17-20, and Jesus' teaching on being salt and light in Matthew 5:13-16. The session concludes with a discussion of what impact a revival today would have on some of our controversial social issues.

### ***Session 7: Charles Finney and How Revivals Are Promoted***

I begin this session with the discussion question: "How much can a revival be planned?" This discussion incorporates some of the theological issues of God's sovereignty and man's free will. I then cover a detailed account of the life of Charles Finney. I begin with his conversion and early revivals. I then cover his *Lectures on Revivals of Religion*, and conclude with his ministry at Oberlin College.

One of the most powerful aspects of this narrative is the role of Finney's prayer partners in his early revivals. Finney's emphasis on prayer is necessary to understanding some of his bolder statements about how a revival could be promoted in any town if they would follow his teachings. Finney's position is exaggerated, in that it seems to take the timing of a revival out of God's hands. Yet Finney had a strong faith that if we do what God asks us to do, God is faithful and will always respond to our fervent prayers.

### ***Session 8: Campus Revivals***

The eighth session focuses specifically on the revivals that have occurred on college campuses. I hope to offer this course to college students in the future and wanted to highlight this unique setting for revival.



Churches that had experienced revival in the Great Awakening founded most of the prestigious colleges in the United States. Examples of colleges that began as seminaries to train clergy include Harvard, Princeton, and Yale. Most of these universities have drifted away from their mission and many today have little or no religious association.

One of the first college revivals was in 1795 at Yale under President Timothy Dwight. I give a brief account of several campus revivals leading up to the revival at Asbury College in 1970. In this session, I show a video on the Asbury Revival with a firsthand account given by Dr. Dennis Kinlaw, then the president of Asbury College. In the video, Dr. Kinlaw described the revival being like sparks that flew out of the fire and started new fires throughout the country.

### ***Session 9: Twentieth Century Revival Movements***

This session is focused on revivals that have occurred since 1900. I show a video on Evan Roberts and the Welsh Revival. I then move into a brief description of the Azusa Street Revival that began the Pentecostal Movement. I lead a discussion on the gift of tongues and the emphasis on the gifts of the Spirit by the pentecostal and charismatic churches.

I then describe two international revivals that have occurred in the past fifty years. A significant movement was begun in Korea under David Yonggi Cho when he established the Yoido Full Gospel Church in 1958. That church has now grown to minister to 700,000 people. Not only has the church in Korea grown, but there is a strong commitment among its people to pray and fast.

The other international movement I cover is the church in Uganda. Following the

devastation under the reign of Idi Amin, the church has grown and dramatically transformed the Ugandan society. I use a short segment from a video entitled “Transformations,” which documents the renewal movement in Uganda.

### ***Session 10: Overview and Review***

In this final session, I summarize each of the revivals we have discussed and place them on a time line so the students can see how they are ordered chronologically. I also study the key Scripture passage for this study, 2 Chronicles 7:13-15 and summarize the conditions that God expects from us. I leave time at the end of the session for the students to complete the final questionnaire.

Though this class will be taught once in my church for this project. I intend to teach it on a regular basis, continuing to develop and update the class material. I also believe it would be beneficial to teach this class to college students, especially to those students who are preparing for pastoral ministry.