

## **Chapter 5. Conclusions and Recommendations**

My thesis in this project is that an increased awareness of God's works of revival throughout church history will contribute to the emergence of a fresh revival in our generation. In order to test this thesis, it would be necessary to gauge more incremental progress, which could be assumed to lead to revival. I have taken these more measurable steps from 2 Chronicles 7:13-14 (New International Version), which states,

When I shut up the heavens so that there is no rain, or command locusts to devour the land or send a plague among my people, if my people, who are called by my name, will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then will I hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and will heal their land.

These principles appear to be consistent through Biblical history as well as church history. Revival is God's response to his people humbling themselves, praying and seeking God's face, and repenting of their sin.

In the Old Testament, this often included recognizing that their dire circumstances were due to their breaking the relationship they had with God, crying to God for help and changing their lives to comply with God's law. In the New Testament, a type of revival came on the Day of Pentecost after an intense time of prayer and seeking God. The Holy Spirit descended and filled the believers, empowering them to live faithful and influential lives. My study of church history has revealed that repentance and prayer are two key elements that seem to precede and accompany each revival movement.

I also believe there are several changes of attitudes and beliefs that may be necessary to help today's Christian take the necessary steps to become compliant with God's conditions for revival. These are:

- 1) A holy dissatisfaction with the status quo.
- 2) An increased expectation for the possibility of revival.
- 3) An urgent desire to seek and fulfill God's conditions for revival.

My own study of the Biblical teachings on revival and historical accounts of revivals impacted me in each of these three ways. It was anticipated that the class would have a similar impact on the class participants. My questionnaires were designed to determine how the class impacted the students in these various ways.

### **Results of the Class**

I taught the class on Sunday evenings at Christ Wesleyan Church in Winston-Salem, North Carolina during the fall of 2005. There were approximately twenty participants in the class. While the setting of the class led to the inclusion of more committed Christians, there were several relatively new Christians in the class as well.

The most tangible results were demonstrated most clearly through the results of the questionnaires. There were fifteen students who completed the questionnaire at both the beginning and the end of the class. These are the only questionnaires I tabulated since they were best able to show the change in attitudes and behaviors for the same group of people. There have also been anecdotal responses from students. One participant wrote,

I recognized from the very beginning some areas of my life that needed to change in order for God to be able to begin to work in my own life: my time with God, my prayer life. I need to pray specifically for revival to occur in my life. As I listened to how God worked in past revivals it seemed to me that He worked first in the lives of individuals, but it was with people who were actively seeking Him. Then it began to spread and grow in the church and then to the community and even further.

I believe for myself that if I will earnestly seek God and be honest about myself and my weaknesses that I too will experience a personal revival. I believe this could be true for not just individuals but our congregation and community. I think God is looking for people to be open to the work he wants to do in us and through us.

***1. Rate the general effectiveness of the church in impacting the community with the gospel of Jesus Christ.***

<i>Class average</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>4</i>	<i>5</i>	<i>6</i>	<i>7</i>	<i>8</i>	<i>9</i>	<i>10</i>	<i>11</i>	<i>12</i>	<i>13</i>	<i>14</i>	<i>15</i>		
Initial	<b>5.50</b>	5	5	5	5	5	7	6	7	6	4	7	7	5	5	5	<i>Your Local Church</i>
Final	<b>7.45</b>	8	8	10	8	7	9	7	8	5	4.5	9	5	4	6	8	
<i>change</i>	<b>1.95</b>	3	3	5	3	2	2	1	1	-1	0.5	2	-2	-1	1	3	
Initial	<b>4.90</b>	5	4	4	5	4	7	5	5	4	6	5	5	5	5	5	<i>The Christian Churches in Your Community</i>
Final	<b>5.45</b>	5	7	6	5	5	8	6	6	3	3.5	7	5	3	6	6	
<i>change</i>	<b>0.55</b>	0	3	2	0	1	1	1	1	-1	-3	2	0	-2	1	1	
Initial	<b>3.30</b>	5	3	3	4	3	5	3	3	1	3	6	3	5	4	3	<i>The Christian Churches in the United States</i>
Final	<b>5.10</b>	5	6	6	5	5	8	4	6	4	2	8	5	2	4	3	
<i>change</i>	<b>1.80</b>	0	3	3	1	2	3	1	3	3	-1	2	2	-3	0	0	
Extremely Ineffective			0 . 1 . 2 . 3 .			4 . 5 . 6 . 7 .			8 . 9 . 10			Extremely Effective					

In this first series of questions, I was attempting to gauge the students’ assessment of the church’s effectiveness at different levels. I expected that the study of historical revival movements would give the student a lower estimation of how we were doing in the present. The thinking behind this was that they would compare today’s church to revived churches and judge us more harshly in comparison.

The results, however, reveal that the participants’ assessment of the church’s

effectiveness went up across the board. The most significant increase was in their assessment of the local church’s effectiveness, followed closely by their assessment of the churches throughout the nation. Though unexpected, this indicates that the study of revival may cause Christians to be more optimistic about the effectiveness of the church today.

The reasons for this are unclear. Perhaps, because they were investing more into the church through their prayers, they were looking for more positive signs within the church. Perhaps their prayers had recently been answered resulting in a more encouraging view of God’s work in the church. I will be interested to see if these type of responses continue in future classes.

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

<i>Class average</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>4</i>	<i>5</i>	<i>6</i>	<i>7</i>	<i>8</i>	<i>9</i>	<i>10</i>	<i>11</i>	<i>12</i>	<i>13</i>	<i>14</i>	<i>15</i>	
<i>Initial</i>	<b>2.30</b>	4	3	2	2	1	2	2	2	3	2	1	3	4	1	1
<i>Final</i>	<b>3.20</b>	4	4	3	3	1	4	3	3	4	3	3	3	4	2	2
<i>change</i>	<b>0.90</b>	0	1	1	1	0	2	1	1	1	1	2	0	0	1	1
<i>0=Never; 1=Rarely; 2=Occasionally; 3=Frequently; 4=Daily; 5=More than once a day</i>																

This question was intended to gauge the person’s practice for praying specifically for revival. The average for the class was 2.3 at the beginning of the class. This would be considered “Occasionally,” which I defined as at least once a month. None of the students indicated that they never prayed for revival. Only two students indicated that they were praying “daily” for revival.

The increase was significant from the beginning to the end of the class. The average increased to 3.2, which would be considered “frequently.” I defined

“frequently” to mean weekly. Eleven students increased the frequency of their prayers for revival. The number who indicated they were praying “daily” increased from two to five.

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

Class average	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15		
Initial	<b>6.60</b>	5	8	6	6	6	7	8	10	5	5	8	6	5	10	4	<i>Revival in Your Local Church</i>
Final	<b>8.70</b>	10	9	8	8	8	10	9	8	7	10	10	7	4	8	8	
Change	<b>2.10</b>	5	1	2	2	2	3	1	-2	2	5	2	1	-1	-2	4	
Initial	<b>5.20</b>	5	6	4	5	5	6	5	7	4	5	8	5	5	9	3	<i>Revival Throughout Your Community</i>
Final	<b>7.90</b>	10	9	6	7	8	10	8	7	6	8	8	6	3	6	6	
Change	<b>2.70</b>	5	3	2	2	3	4	3	0	2	3	0	1	-2	-3	3	
Initial	<b>4.70</b>	5	6	3	5	3	5	2	5	4	9	8	3	5	10	1	<i>Revival Throughout the United States</i>
Final	<b>7.90</b>	10	8	4	7	8	10	8	8	6	10	8	6	2	6	5	
Change	<b>3.20</b>	5	2	1	2	5	5	6	3	2	1	0	3	-3	-4	4	
<i>Could Not Happen</i>																<i>0 . 1 . 2 . 3 . 4 . 5 . 6 . 7 . 8 . 9 . 10</i>	<i>Will Definitely</i>

This question sought to gauge the student’s expectation that a revival could occur within his or her lifetime. My assumption is that the greater the expectation for revival, the greater a person’s willingness to make the changes God requires for revival. It seems that there is a fairly low expectation within the church that a significant revival will occur within our lifetime. The preliminary scores show an average that would indicate that it is perceived that revival is equally as likely to occur as not.

The class had a marked increase in the students’ expectation of revival in each of the three categories. Though there was initially a greater expectation of revival within

the local church, the greatest increase was in the expectation of a national revival (an increase of 3.2 on a scale of 0-10). I believe the class broadened their understanding of revival. Whereas many initially thought of revival as an emotional experience within the church, they were challenged to consider the possibility of transformation of the character of our entire nation.

***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?***

<i>Class average</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>4</i>	<i>5</i>	<i>6</i>	<i>7</i>	<i>8</i>	<i>9</i>	<i>10</i>	<i>11</i>	<i>12</i>	<i>13</i>	<i>14</i>	<i>15</i>	
Initial	<b>8.20</b>	10	7	7	6	10	8	10	10	9	5	7	8	10	10	8
Final	<b>9.20</b>	10	9	8	8	10	10	10	9	8	10	10	9	10	8	5
<i>change</i>	<b>1.00</b>	0	2	1	2	0	2	0	-1	-1	5	3	1	0	-2	-3
<i>I would not sacrifice at all 0 . 1 . 2 . 3 . 4 . 5 . 6 . 7 . 8 . 9 .10 I would do whatever it</i>																

This question, though vague, was intended to measure the willingness of the student to make a significant personal change for the promotion of revival. Whether it is repenting of sinful practices that are prohibiting God from blessing an individual or congregation, or committing to get up earlier to pray for revival. There must first be a willingness to do whatever is necessary, in obedience to God.

Charles Finney wrote of the church, "You see why you have not a revival. It is only because you do not want one. Because you are neither praying for it, nor feeling anxious for it, nor putting forth efforts for it."<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Charles G. Finney, Lecture II, "When a Revival Is To Be Expected" in Lectures on Revivals of Religion, ed. William G. McLoughlin (Cambridge, Massachusetts: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1960), 36.

Though there was a fairly high indication of willingness to change (8.2 on a scale of 0 – 10) the experience of the class did increase that number by 10% to 9.2. This is much easier to indicate on a questionnaire than it is to put into practice. People tend to come up with excuses when the significant changes are defined more specifically and they feel called to give up something cherished.

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

<i>Class average</i>		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	
Initial	<b>6.50</b>	5	8	7	7	8	5	6	8	6	5	8	7	5	8	9	<i>Your Local Church</i>
Final	<b>8.00</b>	10	9	9	8	9	9	8	8	6	4	10	7	4	10	9	
Change	<b>1.50</b>	5	1	2	1	1	4	2	0	0	-1	2	0	-1	2	0	
Initial	<b>4.90</b>	5	6	4	6	6	4	4	6	3	5	5	5	5	8	7	<i>The Christian Church in Your Community</i>
Final	<b>5.80</b>	6	8	7	6	7	7	6	6	2	3	9	5	3	5	6	
Change	<b>0.90</b>	1	2	3	0	1	3	2	0	-1	-2	4	0	-2	-3	-1	
Initial	<b>3.30</b>	5	4	3	5	3	3	3	3	1	3	5	3	5	4	5	<i>The Christian Church in the United States</i>
Final	<b>4.50</b>	6	6	4	6	6	7	4	3	2	1	8	4	2	3	5	
Change	<b>1.20</b>	1	2	1	1	3	4	1	0	1	-2	3	1	-3	-1	0	
<i>Extremely Dissatisfied 0 . 1 . 2 . 3 . 4 . 5 . 6 . 7 . 8 . 9 . 10 Extremely Satisfied</i>																	

This question, like question #1 was intended to determine if the class caused the students to be any more dissatisfied with the status quo of the church. I am not sure why the class seemed to have a positive effect on the student’s satisfaction, but I am still convinced that the church will not accept significant change until the impetus for change is greater.

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

<i>Class Total</i>		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	
Initial	<b>14</b>	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	<i>. . . for you to experience a personal renewal in your relationship with God</i>
Final	<b>15</b>	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	
change	<b>1</b>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	
Initial	<b>9</b>	1	1	1	0	0	1	0	1	1	1	0	0	1	0	1	<i>. . . for your local church to experience a revival of spiritual power and fervor</i>
Final	<b>13</b>	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	
change	<b>4</b>	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	
Initial	<b>5</b>	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	<i>. . . for revival to make a significant impact on your community</i>
Final	<b>10</b>	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	0	1	0	1	0	0	
change	<b>5</b>	0	1	0	1	0	1	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	
Initial	<b>5</b>	1	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	<i>. . . for revival to make a significant impact on our nation</i>
Final	<b>8</b>	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	1	1	0	0	
change	<b>3</b>	0	1	0	1	0	0	-1	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	
<i>0 = not checked; 1 = checked</i>																	

These results may be the most significant, for they demonstrate in a very concrete way whether or not the student is praying for different aspects of revival within the past week. The initial questionnaire revealed that the student’s prayers were focused on personal revivals (93% of the participants) and revival in the local church (60%). However only 33% of the students had prayed for revival within our community or nation within the past week.

The impact of the class was significant across the board, but a larger increase was experienced in prayer for revival in our community. The portion of students praying for this type of revival doubled, going from one-third of the class to two-thirds.



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

<i>Class average</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>4</i>	<i>5</i>	<i>6</i>	<i>7</i>	<i>8</i>	<i>9</i>	<i>10</i>	<i>11</i>	<i>12</i>	<i>13</i>	<i>14</i>	<i>15</i>	
Initial	<b>144.00</b>	260	150	100	75	140	60	60	180	140	210	140	60	500	40	45
Final	<b>172.67</b>	210	200	90	60	140	105	60	180	220	420	315	90	420	50	30
<i>change</i>	<b>28.67</b>	-50	50	-10	-15	0	45	0	0	80	210	175	30	-80	10	-15

This question is helpful in that it quantifies the amount of time spent in prayer. Otherwise, one could spend several minutes going through a list of prayer requests yet not demonstrate a fervency of prayer. The disadvantage of this type of question is that it is simply an estimation that could be exaggerated by the students in order to impress the teacher. Nonetheless, the change from the beginning of the class to the end could on average demonstrate if the course had a marked effect on the students' prayer lives.

The difference indicated an increase of just more than 28 minutes per week, or just over 4 minutes per day. This is an increase of 19% in the amount of time spent daily in prayer. It is obvious that the amount varies widely. One-third of the students indicated that their prayer time had actually decreased. It can also be asked, "how much time should be expected in prayer?" Charles Finney wrote in his *Lectures on Revivals of Religion*,

"If you mean to pray effectually, you must pray a great deal. It was said of the Apostle James that after he was dead it was found that his knees were callous, like a camel's knees, by praying so much. Ah, here was the secret of the success of those primitive ministers! They had callous knees!"<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Ibid., Lecture IV, "Prevailing Prayer", 63.

**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>Class average</i>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
Initial	<b>8.93</b>	10	8	7	7	10	10	10	9	10	6	7	10	10	10
Final	<b>9.67</b>	10	10	9	9	10	10	10	9	9	10	10	9	10	10
<i>change</i>	<b>0.73</b>	0	2	2	2	0	0	0	0	-1	4	3	-1	0	0
<i>Would not change 0 . 1 . 2 . 3 . 4 . 5 . 6 . 7 . 8 . 9 . 10 Very likely to</i>															

This last question, like question # 4, was designed to measure the students’ willingness to do whatever God directed them to do to bring about revival. The Bible says that we must repent of our wicked ways. Sometimes we must confess our sins and repent. Perhaps the action would be to increase one’s prayer life, or to work toward resolving a social issue. It is important that we are completely available to do whatever God asks us to do.

From these results, it appears the class began at a fairly high score (the highest initial and final score on any of the 0-10 questions). The increase was 7.3% from 8.93 to 9.67. If this accurately depicts the student’s level of commitment (two-thirds of the class indicated the highest score), this would be one of the best indications that we are prepared to receive God’s work of revival. My prayer is that God would continue to direct us as to how he would have us to promote revival.

**Final Recommendations**

I consider the class effective in what it set out to do, and these results are very encouraging. There are, however several ways in which it could be even more effective. I found that the classes that used multi-media (videos & pictures) seemed to have the

greatest impact. I will try to find pictures and dramatizations of these historical revivals and incorporate them in future classes.

I plan to continue offering the class to my congregation so more people can take it. The class reached those who already had some interest in revival. If it is offered multiple times within the congregation, it could have the potential to impact those who were involved in another class or ministry during the class.

It has also been suggested that I incorporate the class into a Sunday morning sermon series. Some adaptations would need to take place, but this would allow me to reach the greatest percentage of the congregation.

As mentioned earlier, I would also like to be able to teach this course at colleges. Again adaptations would need to be made. For one, I would spend more class time focusing on campus revivals. As this class would primarily target those who are preparing for the ministry, I would also give more emphasis on guiding the congregation through the changes which would promote revival. I would hope to equip each student to lead such a class in their congregations.