

## **Chapter 1. Introduction**

### **Heart-Cry for Revival**

Because of an unusually vivid sense of love, joy, peace, and the presence of God, people don't want to leave, and they often remain for incredibly long periods of time, sometimes day and night. Many people describe the experience as heaven upon earth, and time seems to pass exceedingly quickly.<sup>1</sup>

This is one historian's description of a worship service that had been transformed from routine into an amazing encounter with the presence of God. As a pastor of a small, growing church in North Carolina, I have developed a deep yearning for "church life" to move beyond the ordinary. I have a passion to see the Christian church thrive in powerful, effective ministry. In this thesis, I will suggest that the American church desperately needs to be reinvigorated with a genuine spiritual power. If we are to fulfill the mission that Jesus gave us before he ascended to heaven, we must be endued with His supernatural power.

Throughout church history, God has transformed the church through dramatic periods of renewal. During these times, people were drawn to Christ and genuinely and radically transformed. The experience became more than an emotion-filled worship service. Even the skeptics documented miraculous and inexplicable occurrences. In several cases, the season of renewal grew to the extent that the church had a significant positive effect on its community and occasionally even on its national culture.

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<sup>1</sup> "Narratives of Revivals of Religion in Scotland, Ireland and Wales" (Philadelphia: Presbyterian Board of Publication, 1842) pt. 11, pp. 185-198 in A Survey of 20<sup>th</sup> Century Revival Movements in North America, Richard M. Riss (Peabody, Massachusetts: Hendrickson Publishers, 1988), 4.

Another way of describing these occurrences is that the church has periodically been restored to a state similar to the church we see reflected in the writings of the New Testament. Luke described the first few days and weeks of the early church as filled with great love and a sense of awe.

Those who accepted his message were baptized, and about three thousand were added to their number that day. They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. Everyone was filled with awe, and many wonders and miraculous signs were done by the apostles. All the believers were together and had everything in common.<sup>2</sup>

My yearning for renewal has been inspired by these wonderful Biblical descriptions of the early church and then further encouraged by the historical accounts of magnificent transformations within the church. The more I have read about them, the more attractive these periods of church history have become to me. As I have pursued this study further, it appears that God is giving this heart-cry for revival to a growing number of leaders within the church. Amazingly, as I have studied the times leading up to several key revivals, I have discovered that before God initiates a significant renewal movement, he typically instills this type of yearning for renewal in the hearts of pastors, men and women of prayer, and/or some other devout disciples in the church. My hope is that God is even now preparing his church for another major revival movement.

It is my desire and fervent prayer for the church today, throughout our country to experience this type of revival. I am lovingly dissatisfied with the current status of the

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<sup>2</sup> Acts 2:41-44 (New International Version)

church. I believe God is calling us to seek a continual state of spiritual power that could accomplish his purposes on earth until Jesus Christ returns. If God is calling his church to a special season of preparation, it is my prayer that we would respond with obedience and diligence. May God bless our generation with just such a transformation.

### **Definition of Revival**

Though no word perfectly expresses this experience, I have chosen to use the word “revival” to describe this supernatural infusion of spiritual power into the hearts of a group of Christian disciples. This word has come to hold a variety of meanings to various groups. It is most often used in the American church to refer to an extended series of church meetings, usually with a guest preacher or evangelist. While I support churches continuing to hold such meetings, they are best utilized to encourage a congregation to seek God for genuine revival.

There are several key points I have considered in developing a working definition for revival. First, it must convey that it is God doing the work and not a human experience that would be possible without God’s hand. It is not our responsibility to plan or organize this type of revival. I believe we can and should make every effort to prepare for revival. But it must be emphasized that this is initially and ultimately a work of God.

Second, the primary recipient of this work of God is the church. True revival will always expand to a scope beyond the church, but the initial change is always within a body of believers. Some have sought to differentiate between an awakening and a revival. J. Edwin Orr writes, “the logic of words suggests ‘revival’ for revitalizing of a body of Christian believers, and ‘awakening’ for the stirring of interest in the Christian

faith in the related community of nominal Christians or unbelievers.”<sup>3</sup> In my understanding, an awakening, or a large number of people seeking God’s salvation, is a key aspect of a powerful revival. If this were to happen in a church that had not experienced other aspects of revival, it would be ill-equipped to handle the large number of seekers.

Third, true revival must be multifaceted and extraordinary. God often works within individual believers’ lives to make them more obedient and victorious. He frequently stirs within local congregations to make them more effective. Revivals, however, are extraordinary events, in which God takes the church from a state of spiritual death or sickness to life and vitality.

There are many insightful definitions by Christian writers on the subject:

Revival is that sovereign work of God in which He visits His own people, restoring and releasing them into the fullness of His blessing.

- Robert Coleman

Revival is a reanimating of those who already possess life. Revival in the strict sense of the word has to do with God’s people. It revives spiritual life which is in a state of declension.

- C. E. Autrey<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> J. Edwin Orr, The Flaming Tongue (Chicago: Moody Press, 1975), ix.

<sup>4</sup> C. E. Autrey, Revivals of the Old Testament (Grand Rapids, Zondervan, 1960), 13.

Revival is an invasion from heaven that brings a conscious awareness of God.

- Stephen Olford.

. . . an extraordinary movement of the Holy Spirit producing extraordinary results.

- Richard Owen Roberts<sup>5</sup>

The definition I will use for this project is as follows:

**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.**

There are several key aspects of revival which both have been observed in previous movements and which the church today needs to experience in order to live up to its mandate.

***A) An Awakening of Nominal Christians***

There are many people who regularly attend church who think of themselves as Christians, but who show no fruit of a transformed life. They tragically deceive themselves by assuming they will receive eternal life. They weaken the influence and reputation of the church as they continue in their sin with no sign of repentance.

The Lausanne Committee for World Evangelism has estimated that there could be hundreds of millions of nominal Christians among Protestants around the world. In a

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<sup>5</sup> Richard Owen Roberts, Revival (Wheaton, Illinois: Richard Owen Roberts, Publishers, 1997), 16.

paper addressing this problem within the church, they listed five types of people, each of which could be considered nominal Christians:

1. One who attends church regularly and worships devoutly, but who has no vital personal relationship with Jesus as Savior and Lord.
2. One who attends church regularly, but for cultural reasons only.
3. One who attends church only for major church festivals (Christmas, Easter, etc.) and ceremonies (weddings, baptisms, funerals).
4. One who hardly ever attends church, but maintains a church relationship for reasons of security, emotional or family ties, or tradition.
5. One who has no relationship to any specific church and who never attends but yet considers himself a believer in God (in a Protestant traditional sense).<sup>6</sup>

There may be a large portion of a congregation that needs to wake up and take seriously the gospel they are confronted with each week. A true revival must bring about an awakening among these who are Christians in name only. They need to realize their spiritual emptiness so they can experience a personal encounter with Jesus resulting in a deep spiritual commitment.

### ***B) A Renewed Focus on Evangelism***

Another aspect of revival is an increase in the believers' awareness of those who are not being reached by the church and in their desire for them to experience a

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<sup>6</sup> Christian Witness to Nominal Christians Among Protestants [on-line essay], Lausanne Occasional Paper #23, Lausanne Committee for World Evangelism, Pattaya, Thailand June 16-27, 1980; available from <http://www.lausanne.org/Brix?pageID=14733>; Internet: accessed 7 September 2005.

spiritually transformed life. The church can easily become focused on itself, and its goals can become the perpetuation of an institution with its traditions. In this condition, churches become satisfied with moderate growth, or even simply maintaining the status quo. Christians need to be concerned that there are thousands of people surrounding the church living and dying without an adequate knowledge of Christ. The prayer of a revived church is in part a pleading with God to see the unevangelized within our communities spiritually renewed and brought into the church.

As the church becomes concerned for the people around them who have not been reached, God often draws persons into the church inexplicably. Sometimes this is through the more normal means in which Christians witness and invite unchurched persons to their church. There have also been reports of unbelievers coming to a service to ridicule it, but experiencing a genuine spirit of revival and repentance.

### ***C) Sanctification***

Spiritual power is evident in many ways in addition to the transformation of conversion. The church desperately needs the power to enable believers to live obedient and holy lives. The Bible addresses this often as we are reminded that Christ freed us from our captivity to sin. Jesus calls his disciples to be “perfect (Greek word *tellios*, meaning perfect or mature) therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect.”<sup>7</sup> The church’s message does not end with the forgiveness of sins. We are called to work together to serve each other “so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole

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<sup>7</sup> Matthew 5:48 (New International Version)

measure of the fullness of Christ.”<sup>8</sup> We as believers never get to the point where cannot improve to become more like Christ, but the power of the Holy Spirit can enable us to be obedient and victorious over any temptation.

Sanctification may be the least visible of the aspects of revival, but the most important. Patterns of sin that have gone unchallenged for decades become apparent in the glorious presence of God’s Spirit. Sins of prejudice, divisiveness, hidden immorality and others will be confessed and repented of. The good news is that “if we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.”<sup>9</sup>

#### ***D) Community Transformation***

A fourth aspect of genuine revival is the empowering of the church to make a significant positive impact on the culture surrounding it. Some have often criticized the church today being more influenced by the world around it than it influences the culture surrounding it. Jesus taught his disciples to be salt and light to the world around them. Salt that has lost its saltiness is useless. A church that is not improving its community has similarly failed in its role in God’s redemptive plan.

It is fascinating to read accounts of various revivals and the surprising impact they have had on the community. Some of the most colorful accounts are from the Welsh Revival of 1904. The revival had so transformed the various communities around Wales that crime was apparently nonexistent. Magistrates were presented with white gloves

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<sup>8</sup> Ephesians 4:12-13 (New International Version)

<sup>9</sup> 1 John 1:9 (New International Version)

signifying that they had no cases to try. One official from the town of Bethesda declared, “The policemen tell me that the public houses are nearly empty, the streets are quiet, and swearing is rarely heard. Things are easy for the policemen here now - I hope they have a glorious holiday, and the district is quite prepared to support them henceforth - for doing nothing!”<sup>10</sup>

True revival that transforms the church to live holy lives and draws sinners to repentance will eventually make a significant impact on the community in which these disciples live. There may never be 100% of the population brought to faith, but some local revivals have come close. One report of the revival that spread across America after the Welsh revival, claims that out of a population of 50,000 only fifty unconverted adults remained in Atlantic City, New Jersey.<sup>11</sup> Even with less saturation than this, significant changes would be evident in the ethical and moral character of the culture.

### **Thesis Statement**

With this understanding of revival and my stated desire to see this come upon the church today, the key question becomes, “What can be done to accomplish this?” There appear to be conditions for revival that are taught in scripture. These conditions require sacrifices, including repenting from sin and devoting time to prayer. In my experience, few are willing to make the sacrifices that God requires. It would seem this is why we

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<sup>10</sup> Eifion Evans, The Welsh Revival of 1904 (Bryntirion Press, 1987), 110.

<sup>11</sup> Oliver W. Price, Prayer Spreads Revival Fires [essay on-line]; available from <http://bpf.gospelcom.net/prayerspreads.html>; Internet: accessed 13 April 2006.

are not experiencing revival. God's expectations are not going to be lowered. The next question then becomes, "What can be done to encourage the church to be willing to meet God's conditions for revival?" My thesis for this project is this:

**An increased awareness of God's works of revival throughout church history will contribute to the emergence of a fresh revival in our generation.**

The philosopher George Santayana said, "Those who do not learn from history are doomed to repeat it." Our knowledge of the past has a direct impact on the outcome of our future. If we go through a tragic period in history, such as a civil war, the people who experience the tragedy learn lessons, which in the short term prevent them from returning to war. If future generations were to forget the lessons learned in the midst of that tragedy, they would become more likely to repeat the war. Learning from history connects one generation to the lessons of previous generations. I believe the same is also true of periods of great blessing in church history. If we fail to learn from the keys to past prosperity, then we will be prevented from experiencing the same blessing in our generation.

Therefore connecting the current generation, through the study of church history, to the lessons learned by leaders of great revivals, will enable the church today to become better prepared to receive a revival from God in this generation. Increased awareness may seem to be only a step toward such a great goal. The increased awareness, however, is beneficial only to the degree to which this knowledge prompts us to change our actions and attitudes. Specifically, it is hypothesized in this thesis that an exposure to inspiring accounts of great revivals will have three immediate responses that it is assumed

contribute to the emergence of revival:

- 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.

### ***A Holy Dissatisfaction with the Status Quo***

The transition from summer to winter is slow and comes gradually as the temperature ebbs and flows. If it were not for concrete measurements of temperature and the length of the days, the change would be so gradual as to be almost imperceptible until the first snow falls. If this cycle were to slow down to change by the decade or even by century, there would be some who would only know the winter and the vast majority would never detect the change. If one were to introduce to this winter culture a video portraying the warmth of summer, this winter generation would be astonished at the contrast and many would yearn for the comforts of warmer days.

Similarly, without exposure to God's reviving works in previous generations, the church is prone to become complacent. We constantly measure our vitality against the standard of others within our own circle of exposure. In a community where most churches are declining in membership, a young pastor may feel that his church is doing exceptionally well to simply hold onto the members in his church. At least he is able to keep the church doors open and continue preaching the gospel. As long as his church is doing better than the other churches in his small community, that young pastor would settle for far less than God intended.

If we were to expose that pastor to conferences and magazines that described how a variety of churches was succeeding or struggling, he would be able to compare his

church's performance with the broader experience of congregations beyond his immediate community. If other churches were continually reaching new Christians and growing, he would feel compelled to examine his church's health in this new light. He might even look to the most dynamic church in his denomination or region as a standard to be attained. Rather than settling for mere survival, this pastor would be challenged with a new vision of his church growing and advancing God's Kingdom within its community.

Further, if we add to this mix an awareness of what God has enabled churches to do throughout Christian history, we would see higher goals and have greater expectations. With the insight of history, we not only compare our effectiveness with churches around our nation in the present, but with churches throughout the centuries. Certainly, there were difficult eras when the church struggled, even more than it does now. But we would discover that there were times when the church was filled with the glory and power of God. Seeing this, I believe this young pastor would consequently have loftier goals and expanded faith. He would never again settle for the church simply surviving. He would aim for his church to thrive.

### ***An Increased Expectation for the Possibility of Revival***

Expectations are a difficult element to measure. Our expectations have much to do with what we pour our lives into. If people expect the stock market to rise, they will sacrifice to invest as much as they can. If they expect to enter a war, they will conserve and even make doomsday preparations. Many believers, who have seen the church gradually wane in influence in our society, are discouraged and generally pessimistic about the future of the church. Their expectations direct them to bunker down in order to

survive until Jesus returns. However Jesus said to Peter, “On this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not overcome it.”<sup>12</sup>

I am in no way skeptical about the value of the church. I firmly believe that there is nothing else in our society that comes close to the church in terms of offering hope for a dramatic transformation of a community and a culture. Even though the church is not what it should be, it is and always will be God’s intended vehicle for reaching our world. I am extremely optimistic that the church that actively seeks God will abound until Christ returns.

In order for the church to be eager to make great sacrifices to meet God’s conditions for revival, it is beneficial for it to have a reasonable expectation that revival is possible in its generation. It is also likely that the more Christians know of how God has worked in past generations, the more likely they will consider the possibility that God will do this again. This greater prospect will then result in a changed heart and a willingness to change to comply with God’s will for the church.

An interesting characteristic of many revivals is the way in which they spread as reports of them travel from town to town. When a revival broke out on the campus of Asbury College in 1970, students from Asbury traveled to other college campuses and churches throughout the nation. In most places where they shared, a spirit of revival broke out there as well. It was almost as if revival were a type of contagious disease in which students carried the infection to new areas. Admittedly, there are dynamics at work that may be greater than we can understand. It may be that as believers in other

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<sup>12</sup> Matthew 16:18 (New International Version)

places heard what had occurred at Asbury, their expectations as well as their faith increased, so that they believed that God could and would work the same way for them.

There are even accounts of revivals breaking out as a result of stories being read of previous revivals. In the *Narratives of Revivals of Religion in Scotland*, one historian records, “Perhaps the most powerful revival of this period in Scotland, however, began on July 23, 1839, at Kilsyth, Scotland, where William Chalmers Burns touched off an awakening by retelling the story of the Kirk of Shotts.”<sup>13</sup> The Kirk o’ Shots Revival occurred when Jonathan Livingstone had been invited to preach in Shotts, Scotland on June 21, 1630. In an extended communion service, 500 people turned to God for salvation. More than two hundred years later, that story sparked a new revival.<sup>14</sup>

#### ***An Urgent Desire to Seek and Fulfill God’s Conditions for Revival***

I am proposing that exposure to historical accounts of revivals will create a dissatisfaction with the *status quo* and an increased faith expectation that God could bring about another revival today. These two factors alone accomplish nothing. If people, however, follow this by earnestly turning to God and allowing him to shape their lives, we will see the emergence of a fresh revival in our generation. God often asks for and waits upon our contribution before working in His sovereign ways. God is asking and waiting for us to diligently seek Him for revival and to live obediently to His commands.

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<sup>13</sup> Riss, *A Survey of 20<sup>th</sup> Century Revival Movements in North America*, 14.

<sup>14</sup> John Gillies and Horatius Bonar, *Historical Collections Relating To Remarkable Periods Of The Success Of The Gospel* (London: James Nisbet & Co., 1845), 556-557.

This is comparable to the boy who offered five small barley loaves and two small fish to Jesus and saw more than five thousand people miraculously fed. God could have fed them without anyone sacrificing their own lunch, but he asked for whatever was available. This leads to the question, “What are our loaves and fish?” The passage in scripture which best addresses this issue is the Old Testament passage where God is speaking to Solomon following the dedication of the temple. Solomon knows that if Israel turns away from Him, there will be severe consequences. Thus he pleads with God that if they are humbled in their punishment and turn back to God, will God hear their prayer of repentance and revive their land? God responded to Solomon while he was alone one night:

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.<sup>15</sup>

Applying this scripture to the church today, these are the conditions that must be met:

- They must humble themselves before God.
- They must increase their practice of prayer.
- They must earnestly seek the face of God.
- They must turn from their wicked ways.

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<sup>15</sup> 2 Chronicles 7:13-14 (New International Version)

These four issues of humility, prayer, priority and repentance are critical to allowing God to make the church into what it ought to be.

#### **Four Assumptions**

This thesis, 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, is based on the following assumptions:

1. The church is not currently living up to the level of power and influence that God created it to have.
2. It is God's will or plan to transform his church so that it may exist in a state of profound power and influence.
3. This work of church transformation or revival can only be accomplished by God.
4. God desires for us to do something in order to receive this transforming work.

#### ***1. The Church Is Not Currently Living up to the Level of Power and Influence Which God Created it to Have.***

It is assumed that the church in America is not living up to its potential and therefore stands in need of revival. The Christian Church is undoubtedly the best organization in the world today for fulfilling God's tasks and continuing the ministry of Jesus. Yet, when compared to the New Testament church of Peter and Paul's day, we must truthfully admit that we do not measure up favorably.

There are individual signs of Christian maturity that can only be attributed to the power of the Holy Spirit. The Church nationwide is even growing, although at a rate that does not keep up with the growth of the overall population. The church is by no means

dead, but it is weak and needs a radical transformation.

Paul warned Timothy about a group within the church who had a form of godliness, but denied its power.<sup>16</sup> This could be an apt description of the church at the beginning of the twenty-first century. We read the Bible and develop an ideal for a congregation and become disillusioned when we don't see our church living up to this ideal. We espouse scriptural ideals; yet devise a variety of theories to rationalize why the church does not live up to the biblical standards one would expect.

One is hard pressed to find a congregation that is not hindered in its mission by conflict from within. We need to be united in love, purified from secret sins, and emboldened with faith to attempt what would only be possible if God were working. The American church desperately needs to be restored to a condition of spiritual power and impact comparable to that which we see reflected in the writings of the New Testament.

If we knew of no other, we would be content to believe that the church is as good as is possible in the midst of a difficult and evil environment. A study of the history of the church, however, shows periods of greatness that lift our expectations of what the church can be. This glimpse of the past reveals that the church not only should be a more dynamic force in our society, but it often has displayed this power. One would conclude that it has the potential to be such today.

## ***2. God Desires for the Church to Exist in a State of Profound Power and Influence.***

Though this may sound trite, this is a significant assumption for this thesis. If it were not God's will for the church to experience a state of profound power, then nothing

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<sup>16</sup> 2 Timothy 2:4 (New International Version)

we can do will bring it about, nor should we desire it. However, if it is God's will for the church to be vigorous, then we must examine ourselves and the church to determine if we may be hindering God's plan from being carried out as he desires.

Scripture can support the assumption that it is God's will for the church to be healthy. Jesus told his disciples before he ascended into heaven, "you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."<sup>17</sup> Paul writes to the church in Ephesus, "His intent was that now, through the church, the manifold wisdom of God should be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly realms, according to his eternal purpose which he accomplished in Christ Jesus our Lord."<sup>18</sup> Just a few verses later, he adds, "Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever! Amen."<sup>19</sup>

The church was designed to be a mighty instrument of God's work on earth. As such, it is an heir of his power and authority to accomplish God's mission. It is as if the church is to carry on the type of ministry that Jesus would do if he were physically manifest in each community. In fact, Jesus said, "I tell you the truth, anyone who has faith in me will do what I have been doing. He will do even greater things than these,

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<sup>17</sup> Acts 1:8 (New International Version)

<sup>18</sup> Ephesians 3:10-11 (New International Version)

<sup>19</sup> Ephesians 3:20-21 (New International Version)

because I am going to the Father.”<sup>20</sup> We should not be concerned about power for self-glorifying displays. In pursuit of Christ’s kingdom, however, we can do all things through him who strengthens the church.

### ***3. Only God Can Bestow this Power and Influence upon the Church***

The genuine revival needs to be differentiated from human efforts to enlarge a church. There are many methods and practices we can learn to make the church grow. Most of them are based on biblical principles or at least do not contradict a Christian ethic. Yet they are primarily dependent on method to accomplish results, and not on the power of God.

The prophet Zechariah wrote, “‘Not by might nor by power, but by my Spirit,’ says the LORD Almighty.”<sup>21</sup> What the church today ultimately needs is not a solution that can be accomplished by human strength or ability. We need a work of the Holy Spirit of God. Despite the catalytic influence that the church may have on the process, it is a divine work that is needed. If a person believed he could bring this about through some clever plan and produce this “revival” wherever he wanted, there would be a lack of dependence on God’s Spirit, and at least the potential for pride.

### ***4. There Is Something We Can Do to Receive this Transforming Work of God***

For this work, it is assumed that God’s works of revival are in some ways responsive to certain human activity. Some teach that there is nothing we could do which would affect the coming of a revival in any way. In this view, revival would be like a

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<sup>20</sup> John 14:12 (New International Version)

<sup>21</sup>Zechariah 4:6 (New International Version)

meteor that is headed toward earth on an inalterable path. It will be assumed for the purpose of this project that if we genuinely humble ourselves, if we diligently pray for God to bring revival, if we earnestly seek the face of God, and turn from our wicked ways, then we will have our sails up, waiting for the wind of God's Spirit to propel us into genuine revival.

### **Research Questions & Methodology**

It is hoped that this study will contribute to the pool of knowledge that will help the church prepare for revival. One aspect of this preparation, which presumably could be measured, is the changes that are assumed to contribute to the emergence of revival. If an exposure to inspiring accounts of revival could be demonstrated to make a marked difference in a select group's attitudes and actions, then this project would have accomplished as much as could be hoped for. This thesis-project will attempt to answer the following research questions:

**RQ1** - Does a study of the history of revivals contribute to a greater dissatisfaction with the current state of the church?

**RQ2** - Does dissatisfaction with the current state of the church contribute to an increased level of seeking revival?

**RQ3** - Does a study of the history of revivals contribute to an increased expectation for the possibility of revival?

**RQ4** - Does an increased expectation for the possibility of revival contribute to an increased level of seeking revival?

**RQ5** - Does a study of the history of revivals contribute to an urgent desire to seek and fulfill God's conditions for revival?

**RQ6** - Does an urgent desire to seek and fulfill God's conditions for revival translate into changed behavior as measured by time spent in prayer for revival and willingness to repent of known sins?

It is proposed that as part of this thesis-project, I develop a 10-session class on the History and Principles of Revivals. The class will be taught at my church in the Fall of 2005. At the beginning of the class I will have the students fill out an initial questionnaire to measure a base score. The questions will seek to measure the anticipated effects of an increased exposure to revival history:

- 1) A sense of dissatisfaction with the status quo of the church.
- 2) An increased and expanded discipline of prayer for revival.
- 3) A greater expectation for the emergence of revival.
- 4) A willingness to conform their lives according to God's conditions for revival.

Following the initial questionnaire, I will then teach a class which exposes them to various accounts of revival, as well as biblical teaching on revival. At the end of this class, I will ask the students who completed the first questionnaire and studied these revival movements to fill out the same questionnaire in order to measure the differences in behavior and attitudes related to revival. More important than the particular answers to either questionnaire will be the changes from the first questionnaire to the second. From the changes reflected in the two questionnaires, I will draw my conclusions and

recommendations.

It is my hope that this brief exposure will in some small way serve to prepare these students for revival. But an even greater desire is that this will encourage others to develop other ways to expose the church to the reviving works of God throughout history.