

OVERVIEW OF REVIVAL – 2

20th Century – The Century of the Spirit

INTRODUCTION

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The 20th century proved to be the greatest century of revival in the history of the world – even surpassing the glory and level experienced in even the early church. We can only report on the major waves of revival in this talk.

The scene was set, lessons had been learned and the church was ready to enter into ‘the glory of the latter house.’ They had learned of the value of prayer, personal holiness and the need of the fulness of the Holy spirit. There were sporadic revivals from 1900 in South Africa and Australia but a huge wave was about to crash on Wales

THE WELSH REVIVAL

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Evan Roberts was born in 1878 and raised in a Welsh Calvinist Methodist family in Loughor. As a boy he was unusually serious and very diligent in his Christian life. While still a child he began to develop a heart for a visitation from God. As a teenager he spent hours in communion with God, praying for a revival in Wales. Sometimes he and a friend would sit up for hours and hours at night talking about a revival, and when not talking he would be reading about revivals.

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The turning point in his life was when he visited a meeting where Seth Joshua was preaching. He was the most powerful preacher in Wales at the time and was holding evangelistic and consecration meetings everywhere. In one meeting he heard the evangelist pray “*Lord, bend us*” and the words stuck to his heart and mind. *The Holy Spirit said to Evan, “That’s what you need”*. He knew he had to consecrate himself to God before the Spirit would come.

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The next day he felt as if he was bursting inside in the chapel meeting.

“I felt a living power pervading my bosom. It took my breath away and my legs trembled exceedingly. This living power became stronger and stronger as each one prayed, until I felt it would tear me apart. My whole bosom was a turmoil and if I had not prayed it would have burst.... I fell on my knees with my arms over the seat in front of me. My face was bathed in perspiration, and the tears flowed in streams. I cried out “Bend me, bend me!!” It was God’s commending love which bent me... what a wave of peace flooded my bosom.... I was filled with compassion for those who must bend at the judgement, and I wept. Following that, the salvation of the human soul was solemnly impressed on me. I felt ablaze with the desire to go through the length and breadth of Wales to tell of the saviour”.

Evan began praying more seriously and one night asked his friend Sydney if he thought God could give them a **hundred thousand souls**. They agreed together that he could and began praying for it.

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Visions

Little did they know that within 9 months that desire would be fulfilled Evan claimed to have seen the Saviour hand His Father a cheque with this figure and that he was ready to honour its payment.

In another vision he saw a lighted candle and behind it the rising sun. He felt the interpretation was that the present blessings were only as a lighted candle compared with the blazing glory of the sun that was to come. Later all Wales would be flooded with revival glory.

Distressed by the what he saw as the failure of the church he prayed and prayed for God to come in revival power. There then began a series of divine encounters. Each night he would wake up out of his sleep and so experience the presence of God that he was filled with unspeakable joy and holy. For the space of four hours he spoke face to face with God as a man speaks face to face with a friend. Then around 5.a.m things would return to normal and he'd go back to sleep.

This went on for three or four months. Then he had another vision in a chapel service.

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He saw the schoolroom in Loughor with himself addressing the young people of the church. He heard a voice in his inward ear saying, 'Go and speak to these people.' At first he resisted, then he said, 'Lord, if it is Thy will, I will go.' Then instantly the vision vanished, and the whole chapel became filled with light so dazzling that he could faintly see the minister in the pulpit, and between him and me the glory as of the light of the sun in Heaven."

He shared this with his pastor who agreed to let him hold a meeting with the young people. The few came and it was exactly as in the vision. He spoke about consecration and slowly 12 re-dedicated themselves to God. The meetings slowly increased in numbers and powerful waves of intercession swept over those present.

During those meetings the Holy Spirit gave Evan four requirements that were later to be used throughout the coming revival:

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1. Confession of all known sin – if there is any unconfessed sin we cannot receive the Spirit
2. Repentance and restitution – If there is anything doubtful in our lives it must be removed
3. Obedience and surrender to the Holy Spirit – an entire giving up of ourselves to the Spirit is necessary
4. Public confession of Christ – is a requirement of the Spirit.

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The Spirit began to be outpoured. There was weeping, shouting, crying out, joy and brokenness. God's presence seemed to fill the air. Many were prostrated with conviction, others cried for mercy and many were so filled with the Spirit they pleaded with the Lord to stay His hand. Some would shout out, "*No more, Lord Jesus, or I'll die*".

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This was the beginning of the Welsh Revival. Within a few weeks had spread to all parts of Wales like a prairie fire. People began to flock to the chapels and churches. Sometimes all the churches in one town would be filled with people, for anything up to 24 hours a day. In some places there was preaching, in others their was just singing and testimonies, in others just people being led to pray out loud, either in thanksgiving or in intercession for friends and family to be saved, many of whom were sitting in the same building. Christians would be on bended knee passionately pleading with the lost to commit their lives to Christ.

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Everywhere the atmosphere seemed charged with spiritual power. There was intense emotion, sometimes much crying sobbing, and sometimes gleefully smiling faces and joyful laughter. At other times there was deep devotion to Christ for his felt love.

Some examples of things that happened:

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Services were held hundreds of feet under the earth. Sometimes 300 would gather to here the read the Bible and pray. The pit ponies, used to blasphemy and swearing, refused to obey commands because they couldn't understand the new controlled behavior and language!

Crime was reduced drastically. Courts had no cases to try. Theatres were shut, pubs were closed, betting shops went out of business and old debts were paid. In the space of 6 months 70,000 people were saved and after 9 months the figure leapt to around a 100,000 new converts.

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And then the flame leapt across the nations of the world. Europe was first, revival fires reaching everywhere including the Balkans and Russia. The United States felt the after-shock in almost every place. India, Korea and China, renewed revival in Japan and South Africa, and sent a wave of awakening over Africa, Latin America, and the South Seas. Prayer, conviction and conversion spontaneously occurred, resulting in unusual church growth.

THE PENTECOSTAL REVIVAL

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In America the fire fell on dry tinder. Many were seeking the power of the Holy Spirit. One was Charles Parham. In 1898 Parham opened his divine healing home in Topeka, Kansas and though he found success in healing and evangelism crusades he knew there was more to come.

THE BIBLE SCHOOL AT TOPEKA

He was able to secure a new property for a Bible school called Stone's Folly, a great mansion patterned after an English castle.

In December of 1900 Parham set the forty students an assignment to determine the Biblical evidence of the baptism in the Holy Spirit and report on their findings in three days, while he was away in Kansas City. He returned on the morning preceding the watch night service 1900-1901.

Parham was astonished when the students reported their findings that, while there were different things that occurred when the Pentecostal blessing fell, the indisputable proof on each occasion was that they spoke in other tongues.

About seventy five people (probably locals) gathered with the forty students for the watch-night service and there was an intense power of the Lord present.

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It was here that a student, Agnes Ozman, (later LaBerge) asked that hands might be laid upon her to receive the baptism of the Holy Spirit. She believed she was called to the mission field and wanted to be equipped accordingly. At first Parham refused, as he himself never had the experience. Nevertheless, she persisted and Parham laid his hands upon her head. She immediately began to speak in tongues, continuing for three days!

Within a few days about half the student body had received the Holy Spirit with the evidence of tongues.

Soon Stone's Folly was besieged by newspaper reporters, language professors, foreigners and government interpreters. They could not deny that the students were speaking in authentic languages, with the proper accent and intonation. The newspapers headlines were "Pentecost! Pentecost!" Newsboys shouted, "Read about the Pentecost!"

Parham then began another Bible school at Houston to train young ministers and evangelists. William J. Seymour, a black Holiness evangelist was one of those students. Seymour became convinced that Parham's teaching on the baptism of the Holy Spirit, with the initial evidence of tongues, was soundly Biblical and added it to his well-established Wesleyan-Holiness theological system.

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William Seymour arrives in Los Angeles

He moved to Los Angeles on February 22nd, 1906 in his first meeting at a small church plant boldly preached on Acts 2:4, preaching that 'tongues' were the evidence of the true baptism with the Holy Spirit. Without this 'evidence' no one could claim that he or she had been baptised in the Spirit. Unfortunately this was not part of the accepted teachings of the holiness movement, which generally taught that sanctification and the baptism with the Holy Spirit were the same experience, an experience that most of them claimed to have had. Seymour's teaching challenged one of the most distinctive and cherished doctrines of the holiness church. When Seymour returned for the evening service he found the doors padlocked.

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Meetings at Bonnie Brae Street

Richard and Ruth Asberry at 214, North Bonnie Brae Street offered him accommodation and he spent much time here in private prayer and fasting. Soon he was invited to lead a small house-group attended by mainly 'Negro washwomen' and a few of their husbands.

He preached on the BITS and tongues and boldly declared it would soon come – and he was not mistaken.

On the evening of Monday, April 9, 1906, Seymour, on the way to his home-group, he prayed with Edward Lee for healing. Lee, related a vision he had had the night before in which the twelve apostles came to him and explained how to speak in tongues. Lee immediately received and began speaking in other tongues. This was the first occasion of anyone receiving the baptism with the Holy Spirit when Seymour prayed for them.

Later at the homemeeting at the Asberry home, Seymour related what had just happened to brother Lee to the packed meeting. Lee then lifted up his hands and began to speak in other tongues. Spontaneous and passionate prayer for the baptism with the Holy Spirit broke out throughout the house. Soon their prayers were answered when "Seymour and seven others fell to the floor in a religious ecstasy, speaking with other tongues" as they received the Holy Spirit baptism.

Jennie Evans Moore, who would one day become Seymour's wife, began to play beautiful music on an old upright piano, and to sing in what people said was Hebrew. Up until this time she had never played the piano, and although she never took a lesson, she was able to play the instrument for the rest of her life. The phenomenon of tongues and the dynamic message of a personal Pentecost was so exciting that the next night even larger crowds gathered in the street in front of the house to hear Seymour preach from a homemade pulpit on the front porch.

News travelled fast. They could hardly keep what had happened a secret neither did they have any desire to do so. God came in great waves of power and refreshing. The people came from

everywhere. As people came in they would fall under God's power, receive the gift of the Holy Spirit with the evidence of tongues.

Within one week it became necessary to find a larger location to house the growing numbers of seekers, hungry for God.

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The Apostolic Faith Mission, 312 Azusa Street

A suitable place was soon found and rented at 312, Azusa Street, and the mission was begun. It was an abandoned two-story building located in the old downtown industrial district, which had been most recently been used as a stable on the ground floor with rooms for rent upstairs.

Amazing revival scenes were witnessed here. Visitors began to arrive from all over the city. Within months crowds had reached staggering numbers, often into the thousands. Every day trains unloaded visitors from all over the continent. News accounts of the meeting spread over the nation in both the secular and religious press, attracting hundreds of thirsty believers from around the globe.

In the meetings the Spirit would regularly fall upon the congregation. Many would fall all over the house, like the slain in battle. There was a continual crying out to God, sometimes for power, sometimes for mercy, sometimes for loved ones, sometimes for national needs, for the church. Hecklers were convicted and converted in minutes. Though there was no music spontaneous singing in tongues would regularly break out. Multitudes had their spiritual thirst quenched by meeting with God.

One man at Azusa said, "I would have rather lived six months at that time than fifty years of ordinary life."

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Scores of people were seen dropping into a prostrate position in the streets before they ever reached the mission. Then many would get up, speaking in tongues without any influence from the Azusa people. Some were baptised in the Holy Spirit in their lodgings.

Other eyewitnesses reported seeing a holy glow emanating from the building that could be seen from streets away. Onlookers called the Fire Department out on several occasions when a blaze or explosion was reported at the mission building.

Results of the mission's ministry

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Thousands had their spiritual thirst quenched by meeting with God. New 'Pentecostal' churches were spawned in the city and across the nation. A host of passionate missionaries, newly baptized in the Holy Spirit, who were dispatched around the world and the Pentecostal Church was born – today indisputably the most powerful and advancing branch of Christendom . Almost every nation, on each continent, received new power from heaven, a new passion for prayer and for the lost. Hundreds of thousands came to the Lord.

BRITISH PENTECOSTAL BEGINNINGS

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When the Pentecostal Revival was in full swing in California, Thomas B. Barratt received the Holy almost 3000 miles away in New York, while he was alone in a hotel room. Barratt was actually

English but his father emigrated to Norway when Thomas was 4. After a good Christian upbringing, success as a local Methodist preacher and elder, he founded the Oslo City Mission and in 1906 was commissioned to tour America to raise funds for a large central mission in the city of Christiania (now Oslo). On October 7th, 1906. He was in New York waiting for a boat home, probably reduced to a sense of failure, when a supernatural light was seen like a cloven tongue of was seen over his head and he received the Spirit. He later wrote a vivid account, affirming "I began to shout as loud as I could in a foreign language. I must have spoken in seven or eight languages, to judge from the various sounds and forms of speech used. I stood erect at times, preaching in one foreign tongue after another, and knew from the strength of my voice that 10,000 might easily have heard all I said. The most wonderful moment was when I burst into a beautiful baritone solo, using one of the most pure and delightful languages that I have ever heard." (He had formerly studied under the famous Norwegian composer, Grieg.) He sailed for Norway on December 8th and thereafter a Pentecostal Movement began in Scandinavia that spread like fire.

He travelled abroad carrying his Pentecostal flame to believers in India, Sweden, Finland, Poland, Estonia, Iceland and Denmark.

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Alexander A. Boddy, vicar of All Saints', Sunderland, heard of what was happening in Norway, and travelled there to investigate. He was immediately convinced that it was from God and persuaded the already overworked Barratt to visit his church in northern England. He came for two exciting weeks at the beginning of September, 1907. Thirsty souls were soon filled with the Holy Spirit and the Pentecostal Revival had begun in England. The gift of tongues attracted the attention of the secular press and no further advertisement was needed!

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At Whitsun 1908 Alexander Boddy began annual conventions at Sunderland which continued at All Saint's Church until 1914. Each year men and women went up to this great convention, get filled with the Holy Spirit and return to their hometowns to spread the message. Their were men like:

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Smith Wigglesworth – He went to Boddy in October 1907 specifically to receive the HS. Until then he had a successful evangelistic ministry and had recently been having some success praying for the sick. He was there for several days and feeling a little disappointed until Mrs Boddy offered to pray for him. It was then he received the BITS with tongues and his ministry took off. Soon he was travelling the world with his message of salvation, healing, and BITS. His healing ministry has been unsurpassed as authentic, well documented and contributing to the world-wide outpouring of the HS until his death in 1947. His wife dies in 1914, but in that year God sent him to America and Mexico where he witnessed extraordinary outpourings of the Spirit. New Zealand saw a huge revival with astonishing numbers saved and healed. Ceylon, Sweden, Switzerland, Norway and other places were rocked by the ministry of this simple man of faith.

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George and Stephen Jeffreys - Both were converted in the Welsh Revival on Nov. 20th 1904, and after hearing of the BITS with tongues from Stephen's son Edward, began to seek God until they received a mighty BITS in 1911. George became a regular attendee at Sunderland. His incredible eloquence and evangelistic ability soon became evident and he received invitations to preach across Britain. In 1916 he pioneered a church in Belfast, then began planting churches in England in 1921. The Elim Pentecostal Church was born. These are scenes from some of those meetings.

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Stephen was an equally successful evangelist who saw the power of God – Llanelly Baptist Church , face of a Lamb.

THE HEALING REVIVAL

Let's go back to USA for the next and final (today!)

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William Branham

'The story of the Life of William Branham,' wrote his friend and biographer, Gordon Lindsay, 'is so out of this world and beyond the ordinary that were there not available a host of infallible proofs which document and attest its authenticity, one might well be excused from considering it far fetched and incredible.'

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It all began in May 7th 1946 when he received an angelic visitation which was destined to thrust him to the forefront of the coming revival.

"I must tell you of the angel and the coming of the Gift..... while walking around the house under a maple tree, it seemed that the whole top of the tree let loose. It seemed that something came down through that tree like a great rushing wind... they ran to me... That afternoon I went away to a secret place to pray and read the Bible. I became deep in prayer; it seemed that my whole soul would tear from me. I cried before God I laid my face to the ground I looked up to God and cried, "If you will forgive me for the way that I have done, I'll try to do better I'm sorry that I've been so neglectful all these years in doing the work you wanted me to do Will you speak to me someday, God? If you don't help me, I can't go on.

In the night he saw a light and coming through the light he saw the feet of a man coming towards him, clothed in a white robe. He said, "Fear not. I am sent from the presence of Almighty God to tell you that your peculiar life and your misunderstood ways have been to indicate that God has sent you to take a gift of divine healing to the peoples of the world. IF YOU WILL BE SINCERE, AND CAN GET THE PEOPLE TO BELIEVE YOU, NOTHING SHALL STAND BEFORE YOUR PRAYER, NOT EVEN CANCER." Words cannot express how I felt. He told me many things, which I do not have space to record here. He told me how I would be able to detect diseases by vibrations on my hand. He went away, but I have seen him several times since then. He has appeared to me perhaps once or twice within the space of six months and has spoken with me. A few times he has appeared visibly in the presence of others. I do not know who he is. I only know that he is the messenger of God to me." He was promised healing power and a revelation that he would be standing before thousands in packed auditoriums.

This was the turning point in his ministry.

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He received a request from St. Louis to pray for a minister friend's sick daughter. He went, the child was healed and Branham was invited to return to conduct a healing/evangelism 'revival.' His reputation spread rapidly and soon he was conducting a revival in Jonesboro, Arkansas where it was reported that some 25,000 people gathered from 28 states.

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There then followed an outstanding ministry which got bigger and more powerful as it travelled across America. The miraculous was common-place. Phenomenal healings took place. The lame walked, the blind saw and the deaf heard. In one place a woman was raised from the dead.

Most notable was the gift of the 'Word of Knowledge' that was used throughout his ministry. He would often tell people their names, their addresses, doctors name and address, other information about them – presumably to help encourage their faith to trust God for a miracle – and then he would name the illness, before praying for them or declaring them healed. Thousands were healed in this manner.

In Zurich, Switzerland the Pentecostal scholar Walter J. Hollenweger translated for him and stated that he was not aware of any cases in which he was mistaken in the often detailed statements he made. The Canadian song leader and teacher, Ern Baxter who accompanied him 4-8 months every year from 1947-1953 said he never heard his discernment inaccurate even once.

The healing revival actually birthed around 70 healing evangelists who criss-crossed America and travelled around the world. The most well-known was

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Oral Roberts

He spent seven months prior to May 1947 'fasting and praying and seeking God's plan for (my) life.' He resigned his pastorate, moved to Tulsa and in an evangelistic crusade in the autumn of that year he prayed for a young lad with polio, then removed his leg braces to the astonishment of all. He was healed. There began the flow of healing that ran through his ministry. In November he began his own periodical called 'Healing Waters'.

In Jan 1948 he announced that he had ordered a tent cathedral to seat 2,000. In 1951 he got a new tent seating 7,500 and public demand necessitated a 12,500 seater in 1953. In 1947 he calculated that he had prayed for 50,000 sick people and seen 7,000 saved. In one 1950 campaign alone there were 13,500 altar call responses. In eleven tent campaigns in 1952, attended by 1,500,000 people, he recorded 66,000 people prayed for in the healing lines and 38,457 conversions.

In 1951 he began a television ministry which reaped a further harvest of conversion and healing testimonies. Many would say that Roberts 'increasingly dominated the revival' (Harrell 36) In 1945,

T. L. Osborn

Tommy Osborn's ministry began in the summer of 1947 when he visited some William Branham meetings. Osborne was challenged firstly by what Branham said and then by the demonstration of the healing of the sick. He witnessed Branham deliver a little deaf-mute girl from an evil spirit and said that he seemed to hear a thousand voices speaking to him at once telling him that he could do the same thing. He began to fast and pray for the ministry of a healing evangelist.

He had formerly been a missionary in India and his major burden was always for the nations. In his first five years he conducted crusades in 11 countries and preached to millions. In 1950 he reported over 18,000 conversions in twelve days in Puerto Rico and in January 1951, 50,000 in Camaguey, Cuba. In Chile as many as 100,000 persons packed the stadium in each meeting. Another 50,000 were saved in Guatemala City during February and March of 1953.

A. A. Allen

His popularity was enormous. Unparalleled showmanship, powerful preaching and compelling stage presence coupled with a daring boldness of faith which produced sensational miracles, gathered the crowds in increasing numbers. 'He preached an old-time Pentecostal message with consummate skill.' His harsh condemnations of immorality endeared him to those reared in the Pentecostalism of the depression and his stage antics made religion good entertainment.

There were some sensational healings reported. Like a metal plate in a persons leg dissolving in a moment, or the lady who was reduced from 500lbs to 300lbs instantly when Allen laid hands on her. The audience testified to seeing her shrink before their eyes (every woman's dream!)

It is no wonder that he was called 'The Miracle Man.'

Of course there were others: **Kathryn Kuhlman, Tommy Hicks, Franklin Hall, David Nunn, W. V. Grant, Morris Cerullo are probably the most notable.**

We have omitted many of the revivals of the 20th century but have included those I believe were the most influential and which shaped the burgeoning Pentecostal movement across the world. There were scores of local revivals which were not Pentecostal but none that have been as influential and effective as those with a Pentecostal or Charismatic element.

Revival visitations ignite millions of people in the world today. Amid growing darkness, the light shines. The cross is still the power of God for salvation to all who believe. The risen Lord empowers his people with his Spirit, which was his final promise:

'You shall receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you and you shall be my witnesses ... to the ends of the earth.'