



## Reform and Revive

By Stan Key

Ezekiel's vision of the valley of dry bones is the most definitive description of revival in the entire Bible. Rather than outlining an abstract theological explanation or telling the story of one specific historical event, Ezekiel 37:1-14 paints for us a picture. This is a vision given by God himself of what revival looks like. No other text gives a more optimistic presentation of God's ability to restore, renew, reform, and revive his people than this.

Ministering in the sixth century BC, Ezekiel faced a dismal and depressing situation. The moral order had collapsed, barbarians were at the gates, the government was impotent, God's people were scattered, and the temple was in ruins. The remnant summarized their situation by saying; "We have become old, dry bones—all hope is gone" (v. 11 NLT). But God stepped into the despairing hopelessness of the situation and did the impossible! Sending a Great Awakening to a cemetery, he reformed and revived his people so that they became "an exceedingly great army" (v. 10).

Today, as we look at our nation and the church, we may be tempted to conclude that, like the ancient Israelites, we have passed the point of no return. A global pandemic, violence in the streets, racial tensions, moral confusion, sexuality gone wild, political chaos, and a divided, dysfunctional church characterize our situation. Scattered

### In this Issue

- 2 *Begin at My Sanctuary*  
(Nancy DeMoss Wolgemuth)
- 3 *The Coming World Revival*  
(Robert E. Coleman)
- 4 *The Sanctification Gap*  
(Richard Lovelace)
- 5 *Subversives in Babylon*  
(Brian J. Walsh)
- 6 *Praying for Revival*  
(Martyn Lloyd-Jones)
- 7 *The Message and the Method* (Lesslie Newbigin)
- 8 *When Church Itself Is the Problem* (Soren Kierkegaard)
- 9 *Continuous Revival*  
(Norman Grubb)

"Son of man, can these bones live?"  
(Ezekiel 37:3)

groups of believers are praying for revival, but do they understand what they are praying for? Do any of us even know what true revival looks like and what conditions must be met for God to pour out his Spirit? Ezekiel 37 can help us answer these questions. Here we see the divine pattern for revival, a model for the next Great Awakening that can both inspire our faith and inform our prayers. In this passage, we discover four indispensable elements that help prepare the way for a God-sent revival.

### SEEING THE VALLEY

The hand of the Lord led Ezekiel on a personal tour of the valley. He wanted the prophet to see the situation for what it truly was: a vast plain filled with many, scattered bones that were very dry (v. 2). Revival only comes when someone has the moral courage to make an honest assessment of the true spiritual condition of God's people. This reminds me of the opening paragraph of Charles Dickens' *A Christmas Carol*:

*Marley was dead, to begin with. There is no doubt whatever about that. The register of his burial was signed by the clergyman, the clerk, and the undertaker... Old Marley was dead as a doornail.*

*Continued on page 11*

# Begin at My Sanctuary

By Nancy DeMoss Wolgemuth



Nancy DeMoss Wolgemuth (also known as Nancy Leigh DeMoss) is an author and radio host known for her promotion of revival. This article, abridged and slightly edited, is a transcript of a message she gave at a prayer conference in 1996 in St. Louis, Missouri. It is taken from *Spirit of Revival* magazine (Life Action Ministries, March 2001) from an article entitled “Begin at My Sanctuary” (13-17). Used with permission.

**W**e would all be quick to agree about the need for repentance outside these walls. But are we as quick to recognize our own need for repentance? We can readily identify the sins of the White House. But have we become blind to the corruption in our own house? We decry the sin of our world. But have we not tolerated virtually all the same sins in the Church?

Today we face a danger of feeling that the problem is somewhere “out there”—in Washington, San Francisco, or Hollywood, or our college campuses, or among nominal



church members. But as we read the Scripture, we see that the sternest words of reproof were issued, not to the pagan world, but to the people of God.

Over and over again I have been gripped by the account in Ezekiel 8 and 9, where God takes his servant in a vision to the temple in Jerusalem. No less than ten times in the eighth chapter, God says to Ezekiel: “Look! See! Do you see what’s going on in there? Look at the detestable things taking place right in the middle of my temple!”

I have been asking God to help me see what he sees when his all-knowing eyes examine the church in America. The picture is not a pretty one, and the truth is painful to admit. But we have got to get honest if we ever hope to get God’s attention.

The truth is, we not only have flirted but actually fornicated with the world. When it comes to how we live, how we think, how we look, how we sound, and how we

“do ministry,” we have become virtually indistinguishable from the world outside the church. We have bought into the world’s philosophies and practices. Whereas the church used to tell the world how to live, now the world is telling the church how to live.

Thus, church and ministry have become big business—we are more familiar with management and marketing principles than with the principles of humility, purity, faith, and prayer. Many pastors and Christian leaders have become CEOs rather than spiritual shepherds. We have built our ministries on pragmatism—“whatever works”—without stopping to evaluate if the means we are using are in accordance with the ways and Word of God. In an effort to convince the world that Christianity is fun, we have entertained and amused ourselves to death. Why do Christian celebrities and comedians perform to sell-out crowds, while scarcely a few attend the prayer meetings?

Whatever happened to the power of God? Have we become more dependent on methods, techniques,

strategies, programs, and technology than on prayer and the Holy Spirit? Have we lost confidence in the power of the Word to convict, the gospel to convert, and the Spirit to draw men to Christ?

In our seeker-driven mindset, we are more worried about offending visitors than offending God. We are more concerned about people “feeling good” than about their “being right.” We are so afraid of seeming intolerant or unloving that we tiptoe around crucial issues of the Word of God. Today, anyone who dares to call sin by name, or to point out doctrinal error is likely to be branded as divisive, unloving, or “legalistic.” In an effort to make Christianity palatable to our soft, self-centered generation, we have preached a diluted message that

sidesteps the issue of sin, eliminates the demands of the cross, and overlooks the need for conviction and repentance. In an effort to make our message “relevant,” we have ended up preaching “another gospel” that is no gospel at all. We have preached Christianity as a way to find fulfillment rather than a calling to take up the cross and follow Jesus.

Inside the church itself, we have failed to live by the Scripture. We are a community of the forgiven who refuse to forgive. We have ignored or rejected biblical standards for spiritual leadership. We brush known sin under the carpet. We have lost our ability to grieve and weep over sin. At the heart of our problem is that subtle, deadly sin of pride—insidious, cancerous, blinding pride. We are proud of our doctrinal correctness, proud of our spiritual accomplishments, proud of our statistics, proud of our stand on moral issues.

*Continued on page 10*



# The Coming World Revival

By Robert E. Coleman



As we pray and work for reform and revival in the church, we remember that the next Great Awakening may be the final opportunity to repent and get right with God. In his book *The Spark that Ignites* (World Wide Publications, 1989), Robert Coleman reminds us of the great harvest of souls that is promised at the end of the age. Abridged and slightly edited, this article

is taken from chapter 8: "The Hope of a Coming World Revival" (125-34). Used with permission.

Scripture points to some kind of climactic spiritual conflagration in the last days. How one anticipates this coming world revival will certainly be impacted by one's understanding of the return of Israel, the millennium, the tribulation, and the rapture. Let us admit that the complexity of the biblical prophecies makes any conclusion tentative. Yet, recognizing that we now only see through the glass darkly, it is possible to discern an outline of a future movement of revival that will make anything seen thus far pale by comparison.

## A UNIVERSAL OUTPOURING OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

The day is envisioned when the church in all parts of the world will know the overflow of God's presence. No one will be excluded. Joel prophesied, "And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh..." (Joel 2:28-29). Peter associated the promise with the coming of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost (Acts 2:16-17). Yet the universal dimension of the prophecy of Joel was not experienced fully, in that the Spirit did not then come upon God's people from all over the world. A spiritual awakening around the world would be in keeping with the all-embracing love of God (Jn. 3:16). In a dramatic way, it would give notice of the gospel mandate to reach "the uttermost part of the earth" (Acts 1:8), fulfilling at last the promise to Abraham that in him all people on the earth shall be blessed (Gen. 12:3).

## STRANGE DEMONSTRATIONS OF POWER

In describing the Spirit's outpouring, Joel foretells "wonders in the heavens and in the earth, blood, and fire, and pillars of smoke. The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood..." (Joel 2:30-31). Yet these phenomena are not mentioned as happening in the account of the first Pentecost, so apparently, they are yet to occur. Jesus spoke of days immediately "after the tribulation" in similar terms, adding that "the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken" (Matt. 24:29). Adding to the spectacle, some persons will have the power to perform wondrous deeds, such as turning water to blood (Rev. 11:6). We are warned of "false Christs" and "false prophets" of this time who will show "great signs and wonders" to deceive the elect (Matt. 24:24).

## UNPRECEDENTED TROUBLE

Those fearful conditions of the last days described in Matthew 24 and intermittently in Revelation 6 to 17 also

seem to characterize this period. Things will get worse as the end approaches (cf. 2 Tim. 3:12; 2 Thess. 2:1-3). Famines, pestilence, and earthquakes of staggering proportions will occur. Wars and intrigue will fill the earth. Hate will blind the hearts of men. No one will feel secure. As moral integrity breaks down, apostasy in the church will increase. Those who do not conform to the spirit of the age will be hard pressed, and many will be martyred. Clearly, the cost of discipleship will be high. Yet amid this terrible adversity, Scripture indicates that revival will sweep across the earth. When God's "judgments are in the earth, the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness" (Isa. 26:9). Dreadful calamities will mingle with awesome displays of salvation—the terrors will actually create an environment for earnest heart searching.

## CLEANSING OF THE CHURCH

Through the purging of revival, God's people will be brought to the true beauty of holiness. Our Lord expects to present his bride unto himself "a radiant church, without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish, but holy and blameless" (Eph. 5:27). The trials of the last days will serve



as fires to refine the gold of Christian character. A purified church will be able to receive unhindered the power of the outpoured Spirit, and thereby more boldly enter into the mission of Christ.

## TREMENDOUS INGATHERING OF SOULS

The coming world revival will naturally result in multitudes calling upon the name of the Lord for salvation (Joel 2:32; Acts 2:21). Significantly, Jesus said that the fulfillment of his preaching mission would precede his return: "This gospel of the kingdom will be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come" (Matt. 24:14). That the gospel will eventually penetrate "every nation, tribe, people and language" is clear from the description of the innumerable multitude of the white-robed saints gathered around the throne of God in heaven (Rev. 7:9). The Great Commission will finally be fulfilled.

*Continued on page 10*

# The Sanctification Gap

By Richard Lovelace (1930–2020)



For many years Richard Lovelace served as professor of Church History at Gordon-Conwell Seminary, where he focused on church and cultural renewal. Like his hero Jonathan Edwards, Lovelace embraced a postmillennial optimism about the glorious advance of the gospel in the world. In his magnum opus, *Dynamics of the Spiritual Life* (InterVarsity Press, 1979), he

shares his reformed perspective on what is missing in much evangelical emphasis on revival. Taken from chapter seven, this article is abridged and slightly edited (229–37).

In seminary and graduate school, I studied the history of Christian experience beginning with the Puritans and moving on through the great streams of evangelical revival springing from Puritanism and German Pietism, especially the greatest of all

Protestant theologians of the spiritual life, Jonathan Edwards. I was amazed to find that most Protestants were ignorant of the body of tradition which seemed to me to be the living heart of the Reformation heritage. There was not even a name among Protestants for the sort of thing I wanted to study. Catholics had one—spiritual theology—but Protestant scholars, except in the heart of the firestorms of revival, did not seem aware that there was something else to the faith besides catalogs of doctrines and institutions.

What was true among scholars seemed doubly true in the life of the church. There seemed to be a sanctification gap among Evangelicals, a peculiar conspiracy somehow to mislay the Protestant tradition of spiritual growth and to concentrate instead on frantic witnessing activity, sermons on John 3:16 and theological arguments over eschatological subtleties. Not that the gap was not being filled in some quarters. Enclaves of “deeper life” teaching in various conferences sought to hang on to the revival tradition. Pentecostalism and later the Charismatic movement offered models of the vital Christian life through which many satisfied their hunger for communion with God.

If the sanctification gap does exist within Protestantism, why has such a thing developed? This can be answered simply by saying that there is always a conspiracy against spiritual power in the church on the part of the world, the flesh, and the devil. Cotton Mather saw this conspiracy as the underlying cause of the process which prompted Francis Bacon’s observation that all that is weighty in history sinks to the bottom of the river where it cannot

be seen, while straw and stubble rise to the top. But it is also true that the historical development of Protestant Evangelicalism has predisposed it to lose sight of the central importance of sanctification.

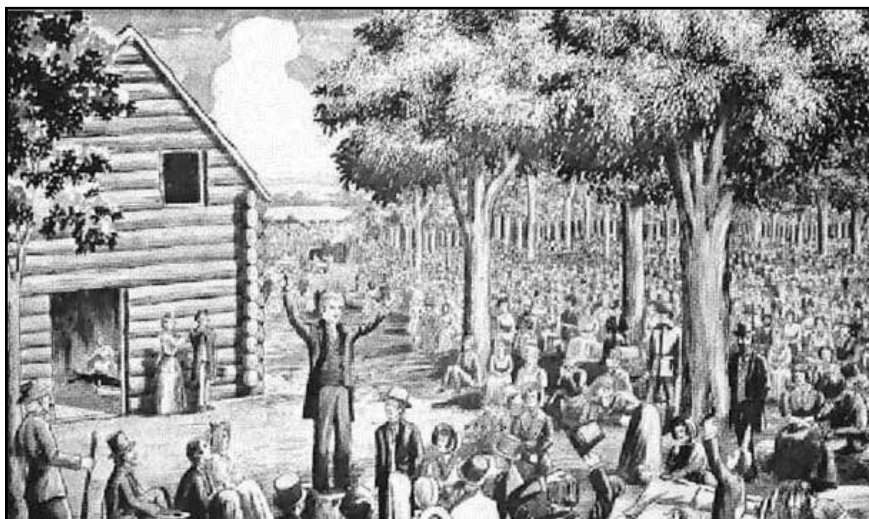
The English Puritans, concerned that the Reformation had been only a “half-Reformation,” introduced into Protestantism a tremendous stress on initial conversion. Their object was to counter dead orthodoxy, mere “notional” or historical faith, by the doctrine of regeneration. Unfortunately, as the result of a rational manipulation of Reformed doctrine which went far beyond Calvin into hyper-Calvinism, they loaded into the conversion experience so much of the developed content of Christian growth that in effect they required believers to become practicing mystics before they could

be counted Christian. Many Puritans insisted on telling the subjects of their evangelism that they were unable to turn to God without the sensible assistance of grace and that the sovereign God might well refuse the nonelect entrance no matter how hard they sought.

This approach to evangelism, which might keep the potential convert striving for months in a maze of subjective difficulties before reaching assurance, produced some great saints, men and women who were in a sense “presanctified.” But while this net caught a few whales, it must have discouraged thousands of smaller fish. The popular jingle summed up the perplexities of

hyper-Calvinism fairly well: “You can, but you can’t; you will, but you won’t; you’re damned if you do, and damned if you don’t.”

The nineteenth-century heirs of the revival tradition modified the Puritan system by allowing easier standards of initial conversion. The ultimate simplification, of course, was Charles Finney’s call for instantaneous commitment and instantaneous conversion with no waiting period to allow election to set in. Many of these nineteenth-century revival leaders disconnected sanctification from conversion and made it easy for men to enter the kingdom on the basis of simple faith and initial repentance. Having unloaded conversion, however, they failed to reinsert sanctification in its proper place in the development of the Christian life and left the engine with no power train at all. The divorce from Puritanism was effected, and the sanctification gap was born.



**“Many of these nineteenth-century revival leaders disconnected sanctification from conversion and made it easy for men to enter the kingdom on the basis of simple faith and initial repentance.”**

*Continued on page 8*



# Subversives in Babylon

By Brian J. Walsh



Reformation and revival never happen in a vacuum. There is always a cultural context that must be understood so that the revolutionary implications of the gospel will be fully felt. Author, campus minister, and theology professor, Brian Walsh urges Christians to see their situation today as analogous to that of the exiled Jews living in Babylon in the sixth-century BC. This article, abridged and slightly edited, is taken from the book *Subversive Christianity: Imaging God in a Dangerous Time* (Wipf and Stock, 2014: 13-17, 24, 119-124).

If someone were to ask you to characterize the place of Christianity in Western culture, I wonder whether “subversive” would be the first word to come to your mind. But Christianity is not only subversive in a culture such as ours; it is also deeply offensive. This offence is related to what the Bible calls “the offence of the cross.” A Christian worldview, a Christian lifestyle lived in the light of the events of Easter, proclaims that the true lord of history is the crucified and risen one—the one who proclaimed that the kingdom of God is at hand. And that kingdom, that rule, undermines all other pretentious kingdoms and all other cultural experiments that are not rooted in the kingdom of God.

It seems to me that our experience is in many ways not unlike the experience of exile for the Jews in the sixth-century BC. We live in Babylon. Babylonian definitions of reality, Babylonian patterns of life, Babylonian views of labor and Babylonian economic structures dominate our waking and our sleeping. And like the exiled Jews, we find it very tempting to think that all of this is normal. This is the way life basically should be. Western materialistic affluence coupled with two thirds world poverty is normal. A proliferation of cheap and useless consumer goods is normal. Environmental collapse is normal. Dedicating one’s life to economic growth is normal. People living for the weekend is normal. Deficit financing is normal.

If our presence in this culture is to be *Christian*, we must recognize with Christian insight the profound abnormality of it all. This means that we must not allow the Babylonian worldview so to captivate our imaginations that its patterns, its views, and its priorities become normal for us. If we do not see ourselves as subversives, then I fear that we will become comfortable in exile, comfortable with Babylonian definitions of reality, and with Babylonian gods.

We find ourselves, I think, somewhere at the interface of Psalm 139 and Jeremiah 29. The interface of sorrow and hope. What do you do in Babylon? Sit and weep, sings the psalmist in Psalm 139. Build houses, plant gardens,

get married, and have children, writes the prophet in Jeremiah 29.

The psalmist sings this blues song with a pathos that is palpable:

*By the waters of Babylon,  
there we sat down and wept,  
when we remembered Zion.  
On the willows there we hung up our lyres.  
For there our captors required of us songs,  
and our tormentors, mirth, saying,  
“Sing us one of the songs of Zion!” (Ps. 139:1-3)*

How about a little Israelite folk tune? How about a little cultural diversity here? How about a little entertainment?

*How shall we sing the Lord’s song  
in a foreign land?  
If I forget you, O Jerusalem,  
let my right hand forget its skill!  
Let my tongue stick to the roof of my mouth,  
if I do not remember you,  
if I do not set Jerusalem above my  
highest joy! (Ps. 139:4-6)*

These are songs of remembering, but reducing them to entertainment and singing them as a cover up of deep grief amounts to devastating forgetfulness. The psalmist will sing, but he will not sing the songs of that happy, sentimental, and emotionally manipulative “worship set” at the beginning of the service. No, the only song that can be on his lips in captivity will be the hard edge, bent and broken dissonance of the blues.

Such emotional rawness would have been no stranger to Jeremiah. And yet he will offer another path of response. Acknowledging that history will take a long time and that the time of captivity will not be short, he writes a letter to those in exile. “Thus says the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel, to all the exiles whom I have sent into exile from Jerusalem to Babylon...” (Jer. 29:4). While not denying the ruthlessness of the historical agency of the Babylonians

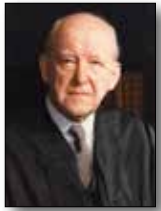
*Continued on page 10*



**“We must recognize with Christian insight  
the profound *abnormality* of it all.”**

# Praying for Revival

By Martyn Lloyd-Jones (1899–1981)



One of the most influential treatments of revival in the twentieth century is Martyn Lloyd-Jones' book *Revival* (Crossway Books, 1987). The book is a series of messages given in Westminster Chapel, London, marking the one-hundredth anniversary of the Great Revival of 1859 in Great Britain and the United States. Far more than an academic presentation of the subject, the book is a plea for God to come and revive his church once again. This article, abridged and slightly edited, is taken from the last chapter (304–16).

As we come to the end of our studies on this great subject of revival, we turn to the prayer of Isaiah the prophet: "Oh that you would rend the heavens and come down, that the mountains might quake at your presence (Isa. 64:1)." The prophet offers this prayer at a time in the life and history of his people when they are forsaken and desolate. Having seen the desperate condition of the nation, he decides to pray, to give God no rest until he "establishes Jerusalem and makes it a praise in the earth" (Isa. 62:7). This man knows how to pray!

Notice the first word "Oh." I would remind you again that true praying is always characterized by the use of that word, "Oh"—"Oh that you would rend the heavens." There is no word that is more expressive of longing than that word. It expresses the thirst of deep desire, it is the cry of a man at the end of his resources, waiting, looking, longing for God.

Real prayer means taking hold of God and not letting go. Like Jacob wrestling all night long with the angel: "I will not let you go unless you bless me" (Gen. 32:26). So here we have Isaiah's final great petition—"Oh that you would rend the heavens and come down." I do not hesitate to assert that that is the ultimate prayer in connection with a revival. There is no term that better expresses this ultimate petition than does that phrase in Cowper's hymn:

*Oh rend the heavens, come quickly down,  
And make a thousand hearts thine own.*

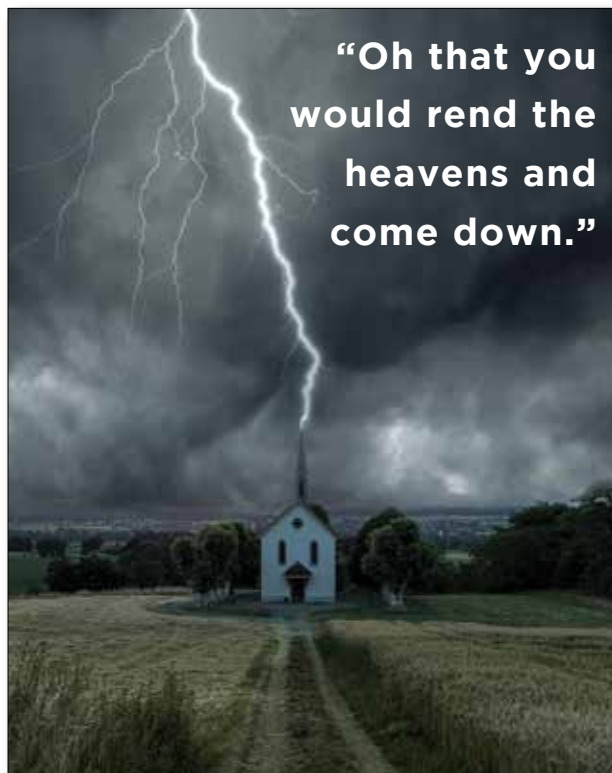
We do not often see a thousand hearts turning to God in Christ, do we? But that is what happens in revival. This is a prayer for something unusual, something quite exceptional. I must quote again a statement found in the Journals of George Whitefield about an occasion when he was preaching at Cheltenham. He says that, suddenly, during his sermon, "God, the Lord, came down amongst us." That is what I am talking about.

What does this mean? Well, we can describe it like this. It is a consciousness of the presence of God the Holy Spirit literally in the midst of the people. Suddenly those present in the meeting become aware that someone has come among them; they are aware of a glory, of a presence.

They cannot define it; they just know that they have never known anything like this before. Time no longer has any meaning for them. They are in a spiritual realm.

But more than presence, there is also power. "Oh that you would rend the heavens." There is a tearing process. When he comes "the mountains quake" at his presence. Have we forgotten the power of God? Our God is a God who can rend the very heavens and cause the mountains to flow and the sea to boil. Isaiah is praying that the glory and the power of God may be made manifest. Are we praying that prayer?

And why is the prophet praying this prayer? The reason is this: "to make your name known to your adversaries, and that the nations might tremble at your presence" (Isa. 64:2). The world does not know God. And the world will never be interested in the Christian message until it has some knowledge of God. So the first reason for praying that God should come down is that his name should be known and recognized among those who do not know him.



Let us consider the encouragements there are for us to pray like this. The first encouragement is what God has done in the past. Isaiah says, "When you did awesome things that we did not look for, you came down, the mountains quaked at your presence" (Isa. 64:3). It is as if he were saying, "I am not asking the impossible. I am simply asking you to do what you have done before." Yes, the greatest tonic to a drooping spirit is to read the history of the Church. Go back, my friends, and read the story and consider all that God has done in ages past. There is nothing so stimulating to prayer as that.

But there is another encouragement which the prophet gives. He reminds the people of the possibilities that are created when they pray to God. "From of old no one has heard or perceived by the ear, no eye has seen a God besides you, who acts for those who wait for him" (Isa. 64:4). My dear friend, there is no limit to what you should pray for, no limit at all. God can do "far more abundantly than all that we ask or think" (Eph. 3:20).

*Thou art coming to a King;  
Large petitions with thee bring;  
For his grace and power are such  
None can ever ask too much. (John Newton)*

Shame on us for our puny prayers, for putting our limits to God's illimitable power!

Yes, God's displeasure is upon the church because of her sin, apostasy, and rebellion, but if she truly repents and really seeks him, he will yet meet with her and show her

*Continued on page 10*



# The Message and the Method

By Lesslie Newbigin (1909–1987)

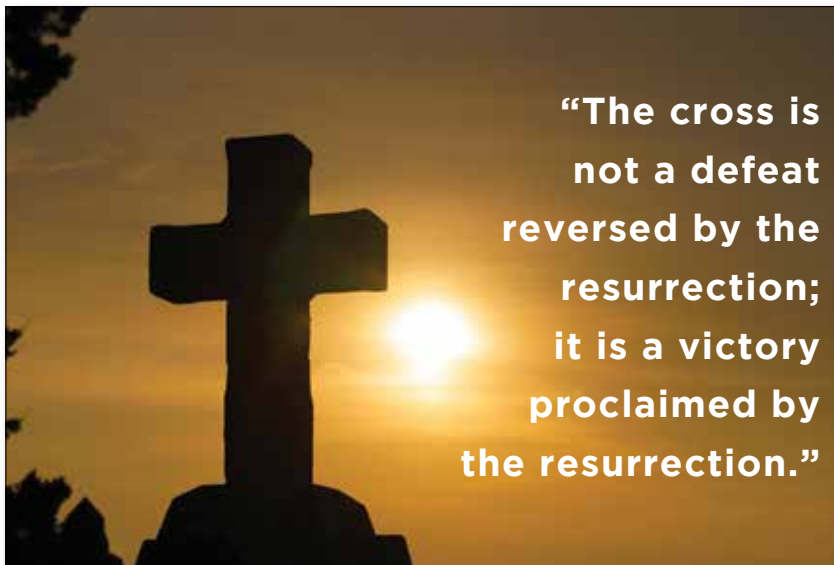


If we are to see the church reformed and revived, we must make sure that our message (the Gospel) and our methods (be witnesses) are right. It seems that the American church has gone astray on both counts! Do we even understand what the Gospel is? And do we know how to share it with the world? In this article, abridged and slightly edited, missiologist Lesslie Newbigin reminds us of our most basic biblical mandate. Taken from *Mission in Christ's Way* (Friendship Press, 1987: 1-14).

According to the fourth gospel, Jesus sent his disciples out on their mission with the words: "As the Father sent me, so I send you" (John 20:21). This must determine the way we think about and carry out the mission. Our mission must be founded and modelled upon his. We are not authorized to do it in any other way.

What was, and is, the way? *How* did the Father send the Son? To begin to answer that question, we turn to "the beginning of the gospel" according to Mark:

*Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the gospel of God, and saying: "The time is fulfilled and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the gospel." And passing along by the Sea of Galilee, he saw Simon and Andrew... And Jesus said to them, "Follow me, and I will make you become fishers of men." And immediately they left their nets and followed him. (Mark 1:14-18)*



Here is where we begin our inquiry about Christ's way in mission. I invite you to notice six points about this record:

1. It is the announcement of a fact. It is not the launching of a program. It is not the promulgation of a new doctrine. It is not a call to moral or religious reformation. It is, strictly speaking, a newsflash. Something has happened. There is a new fact to be reckoned with. The kingdom, the reign of God, has come near.
2. The announcement is not about what we call "religion." If you read one of the news magazines like *Time* or *Newsweek*, you know how the news is divided, with the big section on "World Affairs" at the beginning and then a number of smaller sections. You will usually find "Religion" in a little slot between "Drama" and "Sports." This announcement, however, is not about "religion"; it is "world affairs." It is about the sovereign rule of God, and therefore it is about the whole of life and the whole of creation. One might even call it "cosmic affairs."
3. But in what sense is it news? The fact that God reigns, that God is king, was not news to a devout Israelite. One might say that it was the centerpiece of their faith. What, then, is new? It is just this: the reign of God,

the kingdom of God, is no longer merely a doctrine in theology; it is no longer something in another world; it is no longer something in the distant future. It has come upon you. It is now. You have to make a decision about it. It confronts you now. That is what is new.

4. But you don't see it because you are facing the wrong way. You have to turn around, do a U-turn—the literal meaning of the Greek *metanoia*, "repent." The TEV translation gives a misleading impression by translating it: "Turn away from your sins." That makes it sound like a call for moral reformation. That is not the point. There is nothing about sins in the text. The point is: "The reign of God has drawn near, but you can't see it because you are looking the wrong way, expecting the wrong thing. What you think is 'God' isn't God at all. You have to go through a total mental revolution; otherwise, the reign of God will be totally hidden from you."
5. So the call is to turn round and believe the gospel—that is to say, believe the good news that I am telling

you, namely that the reign of God has drawn near. You will not see it, but it will be possible for you to believe it.

6. But this believing is not a simple possibility for everybody. It is not something I can do on my own; it has to be his work. He takes the initiative. He calls whom he will—Peter, Andrew, James, John. It is his choice. As he was to tell them later: "You did not choose me; I chose you and appointed you to go and bear fruit" (John 15:14).

Here, then, is "the beginning of the gospel." This is how the Father sent the Son.

And yet the reign of God does not seem to be appearing. The Roman soldiers are still patrolling the streets. The tax collectors, agents of the imperial power, are still exploiting the people. So where in all this is the kingdom of God, the rule of God? What *is* the kingdom of God anyway?

As the crowds evaporate in disappointment and confusion, Jesus is more and more alone. Even the chosen twelve begin to waver. Finally, Jesus is alone. In the Garden of Gethsemane, he prays this prayer: *Your will be done*. There is where we learn what is mission in Christ's way.

And so, he goes to the cross, the place where God's power and wisdom is both hidden and revealed. To those who are called to be its witnesses, it will be revealed by the resurrection; to the rest, it is nonsense and a scandal, a blasphemous caricature of God's kingdom. How can a man crucified as a rebel and a heretic be the embodiment of the wisdom and the power of God?

But it is there, on Calvary, that the kingdom, the kingly rule of God, won its decisive victory over all the powers that

*Continued on page 9*

Something, of course, had to be done to make the converts grow; some explanation had to be given as to why the new believers, no longer presanctified, often proved so fruitless. Finney, who had experienced a post-conversion “baptism of the Holy Spirit” empowering him for service, adapted the two-stage model of the Christian life proposed by John Wesley in his theory of Christian perfection. If being born again would not entirely equip the convert, a second experience would surely solve the problem. D. L. Moody fell in with the same two-stage theory, and he and R. A. Torrey wrote pamphlets urging “the baptism” on ordinary Christians. Meanwhile, in England, the Keswick Conference was developing principles of continuous sanctification, and this “deeper life” tradition ultimately captured a prominent place in American Evangelicalism.

Beginning in 1901, however, a more spectacular development of the Finney-Moody concept of the baptism of the Spirit began to flower into modern Pentecostalism. This left some of the American church filling the sanctification gap with a Pentecostal experience and some of it adhering to the strain of progressive sanctification developed in the deeper life movements. But in far too many of the Evangelical churches, little emphasis on sanctification remained at all, except in terms of adherence to a cultic legal code of “separation” inherited from the Puritans.

It is hard to overestimate the damage done through this traumatic loss of bearings in the Evangelical tradition. One effect was the division of sensibility in the churches since the time of Moody, in which socially concerned church members have found themselves pitted against Fundamentalists concerned mainly for conversion and code moralism. It is too much to say that this rift would not have occurred had there been no sanctification gap.

But at least there would have been less excuse for it if the Evangelical church had been pursuing sanctification, rooting out pride, race prejudice, covetous immersion in affluence and all the deeper forms of sin which easily hide beneath a cover of pharisaic respectability. After all, the major argument many Protestant liberals have against “supernatural conversion experiences” is the distinctly natural lives led by many “born again” congregations.

What can be done about the sanctification gap? The first thing is simply to see that it is there. Evangelicals can retool, tune up and debug their tradition endlessly in pursuit of doing things better; but unless there is a deepening in the heart of their faith, new methods and new masks are not going to help much.

A second step must be the forging of a valid biblical model of spiritual life for contemporary Christians. My own theology predisposes me to believe along the lines of the Reformed doctrine of progressive sanctification. I like John Owen’s emphasis on “the mortification of sin.” The vitality of true revival preaching has always come from its keenness in penetrating defense mechanisms, uncovering hidden sin, and leading people—Christians and unbelievers alike—to repentance. It is this kind of prophetic preaching and counseling which can bring revival again today.

A third step involves a reclaiming by contemporary Evangelicals of the explosive heritage of spiritual renewal which lies behind them in the eras of revival. Compared to Zinzendorf, the Log College, Edwards, Whitefield, Wesley and the others, modern Evangelicalism is in danger of becoming a tame lecture circuit, a kind of sanctified show business. It is unlikely that we can close the sanctification gap until we approach our mission in this dangerous age with the same fear and trembling, the same prayer to be endowed with power from on high, that characterized the first apostles. ✠

## When Church Itself Is the Problem

By Søren Kierkegaard (1813–1855)

Søren Kierkegaard was a Danish philosopher who clearly discerned the toxicity in the Lutheran State Church of his day. His book *Attack Upon Christendom* (1854–1855) was a scathing exposé that showed how the church itself was the problem. For reformation and revival to come to the land, the church must first take a hard look at itself. Judgment always begins at the household of God (1 Pet. 4:17). This article is abridged and lightly edited (Princeton University Press, 1944: 139–40).



Think of a hospital. The patients are dying like flies. Every method is tried to make things better. It’s no use. Where does the sickness come from? It comes from the building; the whole building is full of poison. That the patients are registered as dead, one of this disease, and that one of another, is not true; for they are all dead from the poison that is in the building.

So it is in the religious sphere. That the religious situation is lamentable, that religiously men are in a pitiable state, nothing is more certain. One man thinks that it would help if we got a new hymnal, another a new altar-book, another a musical service, and so on. In vain—for it comes from the building.

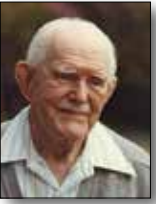
This whole pile of lumber of an established church, which from time immemorial has not been ventilated, spiritually speaking—the air confined in this lumber room has developed poison. And for this reason, the religious life is sick or has died out. Let it collapse, this pile of lumber. Get rid of it. Put all these religious functionaries out of commission, for they are quacks. ✠





# Continuous Revival

By Norman Grubb (1895–1993)



British missionary, evangelist, and author Norman Grubb was a proponent of revival as an ongoing reality, not just a momentary event. He learned this concept from his personal experience of the East Africa Revival (1930s–1950s). This article, abridged and slightly edited, is taken from his book *Continuous Revival* (Christian Literature Crusade, 1997: 7–21).

I came to the startling discovery of a misconception that I had carried for years—that revival could come only in great soul-shaking outpourings of the Spirit. Thank God for such torrents when they do come; they have been the great and precious hurricanes of the Spirit in the history of the Church. But I saw the defeatism and almost hopelessness that so many of us had fallen into by thinking that we could do nothing about revival except pray and wait until the heavens opened and God came down. But now I see that “revival” in its truest sense is an everyday affair right down within the reach of everyday folk—to be experienced each day in our hearts, homes, churches, and fields of service.

The truth is that revival is really *the Reviver in action*, and he came two thousand years ago at Pentecost. Revival is not so much a vertical outpouring from heaven (for the Reviver is *already* here in his temple, the bodies of the redeemed) as it is a horizontal outmoving of the Reviver through these temples into the world. It is a *horizontal* rather than a *vertical* movement.

Now to go into the matter point by point. I learned first a wholly new emphasis on the **walk** of the Christian. I learned that in our rightful zeal to bring sinners to the crisis of the new birth, and to lead the saints on to further crises of consecration, sanctification, the baptism of the Holy Spirit, or whatever might be the special emphasis of our various Christian communities, we have often made too much of the spiritual *crises* and too little of the *walk*.

But the Scriptures leave us in no doubt of their emphasis. In almost every epistle, the Holy Spirit leads us on *through* the crises—the way into Christ—to the *walk* with him. Now to walk is a step-by-step activity. Given the main destination, all that matters is the next step. Christian living is concerned, therefore, with the *present* moment, not with past or future. We make too much of past happenings but too little of the present walk. Let us remember that all we are asked to do is to walk with Jesus, and that means simple concentration on things as they are with me just this moment... then the next... then the next... and so on.

The next point is **brokenness**. “Broken” is a key word, indeed *the* key word, in continuous revival. It is not a word that is found a great deal in Scripture, but it occurs frequently enough to show that it is a picturesque as well as true way of describing the sinner’s only and constant relationship to his Savior.

We first learn that salvation is only possible through a *broken* Savior: “This is my body which is *broken* for you.” In Gethsemane Christ had a broken will and on Calvary a broken fellowship even with his father. But each of us must also be “broken.” We must see our sinful condition and “break” at the foot of the cross. The proud, self-justifying, self-reliant, self-seeking self must come simply

as a lost, undone sinner, whose only hope is a justifying Savior. David said it well in Psalm 51:17, “The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart, O God, you will not despise.”

This attitude of brokenness is a two-way activity, towards God and towards man. Let me put it this way. We can liken a man to a house. It has a roof and walls. So also man in his fallen state has a roof on top of his sins, coming between him and God, and he also has walls up between him and his neighbor. But at salvation, when broken at the cross, not only does the roof come off through faith in Christ but also the walls fall down flat, and the man’s true condition as a sinner-saved-by-grace is confessed before all men.

Unfortunately, the trouble soon begins again after conversion—and here lies the basic hindrance to continued revival. Continued revival is continued brokenness; but brokenness is two-way, and that means walls kept down as well as roof off. But man’s most deep-rooted sin is the subtle sin of pride: self-esteem and self-respect. Though hardly realizing it, while we are careful to keep the roof off between ourselves and God through repentance and faith, we soon let those walls of respectability creep up again between ourselves and our brethren. We don’t mind our brethren knowing about the successes we have in our Christian living. But where we fail, in those many, many areas of our daily lives—that is a different question! ✎

## *The Message and the Method* continued from page 7

contradict it. There, as Jesus said, the ruler of this world was cast out (John 12:32). For the cross is not a defeat reversed by the resurrection; it is a victory proclaimed by the resurrection. And so, the risen Lord gathers together his defeated and despairing disciples and sends them out to be the witnesses of the victory of the kingdom, to embody and to proclaim the rule of God.

To separate Jesus from the kingdom, to preach Jesus without the kingdom, or to preach the kingdom without Jesus, is to betray our generation and it is to divide and destroy the church. The gospel is this: that in the man Jesus the kingdom has actually come among us in judgment and blessing. It is now the reality with which we have to deal—whether in our most private devotions or in our most public actions in the life of society.

Let us never forget that in its first and mightiest conflict against the powers of this world, represented in the imperial might of Rome, the victory of the gospel was won not by the cleverness of its preachers and theologians, and certainly not by its programs for social justice, but by the blood of the martyrs.

Success in the sense of growth in the number of committed Christians is not in our hands. What is required of us is faithfulness in word and deed, at whatever cost. There are situations where the word is easy and the deed is costly; there are situations where the deed is easy and the word is costly. Whether in word or in deed, what is required in every situation is that we be faithful to him who said to his disciples: “As the Father sent me, so I send you,” and he showed them his hands and his side. ✎

*Begin at My Sanctuary* continued from page 2

Yet even as we list these sins, some of us may feel that we have not rejected the ways and the Word of God. Then could I ask you some of the questions God has been asking me in recent days? If we are so close to God, where is the passion? Where is the compulsion, the unction, the fire? Where are the tears? Why are our eyes dry and our hearts dull?

Having shown Ezekiel the abominations taking place in the inner court of the temple, God sends forth into the holy city a man with a marking pen. He is told: "Go throughout the city of Jerusalem and put a mark on the foreheads of those who grieve and lament over all the detestable things that are done in it" (Ezek. 9:4). The executioners are sent into the city with instructions to slaughter all who do not have the intercessor's mark on their forehead. Then the Lord says, "Begin at my sanctuary" (Ezek. 9:6).

In this passage, as in this auditorium tonight, there are only two groups of people: those who are the cause of the problem, and those who grieve and mourn with repentant hearts. There is no middle ground.

If our hearts are not broken over what breaks the heart of God, if we are not part of the remnant that grieves and groans over the detestable things that are going on in the temple of God, then we are part of the problem. So tonight, God calls us to repent. First, we need to weep and mourn over our own sin. For he will not hear or heed our prayers for our nation, as sincere as they may be, until we have first humbled ourselves and repented of our own wicked ways. "It is time for judgment to begin at the household of God" (1 Pet. 4:17). ✠

*The Coming World Revival* continued from page 3

**PREPARING FOR CHRIST'S RETURN**

The massive turning to Christ by people from the four corners of the earth will prepare the way for the coming of the King. Our Lord's return may be waiting now on this spiritual revolution. The fact that our Lord has not already returned to establish his kingdom is evidence of his desire to see the church perfected and the gospel presented to every person for whom he died. God is "patient toward you, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance" (Pet. 3:9). Anticipation of our Lord's return is a summons to action. World evangelization now is the responsibility around which our lives should be centered. Whatever our gifts, we are all needed in the witness of the gospel.

**UNITING IN PRAYER**

As we anticipate the coming world revival, prayer is our greatest resource. Surely it is time to "seek the Lord, till he come and rain righteousness" upon us (Hosea 10:12). There is no other way to bring life to the church and hope to the barren fields of the world. All of us should join in this prayer. Something great is on the horizon. You can almost feel it in the air. Though forces of evil are becoming more sinister and aggressive, there is a corresponding cry for spiritual awakening. Across the world never has there been more yearning by more people for spiritual reality, nor has the church ever had the means it now has to take the glad tidings of salvation to the lost, unreached peoples of the earth. What a day to be alive!

This is not a time for despair. The King's coming is certain. And in preparation for his return, we may be the very generation that will see the greatest movement of revival since the beginning of time. ✠

*Praying for Revival* continued from page 6

mercy. "You will seek the Lord and you will find him, if you search after him with all your heart" (Deut. 4:29).

Seek him, stir yourself up to call upon his name. Take hold upon him, plead with him as your Father, your Maker, your Potter, your Guide, your God. Plead his own promises. Cry unto him, and say:

*Oh rend the heavens, come quickly down,  
And make a thousand hearts thine  
own. (W. Cowper) ✠*

*Subversives in Babylon* continued from page 5

in this crisis, Jeremiah begins by saying that this exile is ultimately God's work, not the king of Babylon's.

*Build houses and live in them; plant gardens and eat their produce. Take wives and have sons and daughters; take wives for your sons, and give your daughters in marriage, that they may bear sons and daughters; multiply there, and do not decrease. (Jer. 29:5-6)*

The prophet who was called to "pluck up and to pull down, to destroy and to overthrow," is now finally able to fulfill his call "to build and to plant" (Jer. 1:10).

What do you do in exile, in imperial captivity? Get on with everyday, normal life. But how on earth could we have the heart and energy to build houses and plant gardens when we can't muster up the strength to pick up our harps and sing a couple of the old hymns?

Jeremiah's advice to the exiles begins to sound like a counsel of passivity and quietude. But that would miss the political realism, biblical depth, and missional responsibility of his words. Jeremiah refuses to give easy answers that will evade the devastating reality Judah faces at the end of her history. Exile is for real. There will be no quick resolution, no cheap optimism. This is Jeremiah's political realism, and the church needs such open-eyed realism today.

Jeremiah is calling the exiles to live out their creational and covenantal calling even in Babylon. Babylon does not define reality for you. Babylonian stories do not shape your imagination. Engage in culture-forming as you were always called to do, subject not to the demanding and ultimately deadly worldview of Babylon, but subject to your calling by the God of Israel, the God of all creation.

"Seek the shalom of the city where I have sent you into exile, and pray to the Lord on its behalf, for in its shalom you will find your shalom" (Jer. 29:7). Israel is called to be a blessing and a light to the nations, including Babylon. As impossible as it might seem in the midst of such a violent and bloodthirsty empire, as counter-intuitive as it sounds in a world of exploitation and oppression, give your lives to the shalom of the empire.

Build houses in a culture of homelessness. Plant gardens in polluted and contested soil. Get married in a culture of sexual consumerism. Make commitments in a world where we want to always keep our options open. Multiply in a world of debt. Have children at the end of history. Seek shalom in a violent world of geo-political conflict and economic disparity. This is Jeremiah's word to the exiles. This is Jeremiah's subversive word to us. And in this vision, we just might see, with Jeremiah, "a future with hope" (Jer. 29:11). ✠



What a great way to begin a delightful story about the true meaning of Christmas! Dickens is writing about hope, joy, life, and transformation, not despair and death. But he sets the stage by letting the reader know that, first and foremost, “Marley was dead.” So it is with the story of Ezekiel and dry bones. There will be no Great Awakening in Israel until someone has the courage to speak the truth about the condition of God’s people. And there can be no revival in the contemporary church, until we face the honest, terrifying truth about ourselves. Like the church in Sardis, many churches in America have the reputation of being alive, but in reality, they are dead (see Rev. 3:1).

There’s a problem, a *big* problem! Dead people don’t know they are dead! People who need revival don’t know they need revival. How do you speak the truth to those who can’t hear?

### PREACHING THE WORD

God told the prophet preach to the bones! Though Ezekiel had preached several dramatic sermons during his ministry, it is doubtful that he ever felt more foolish than when he preached in the cemetery: “O dry bones, hear the word of the Lord” (v. 4).

Note it well that the prophet did not preach his opinions. He proclaimed the Word of the Lord. When things are falling apart and all seems hopeless, the only thing that matters is a sure and certain Word from God. At the dawn of creation, God spoke into what was formless and empty. And his Word brought order, fullness, and beauty. “Let there be light!” And it was so.

So it was in Ezekiel’s cemetery. The Word of God, spoken into the disordered chaos of scattered bones, brought about a Great Awakening, a re-creation. It was as if the prophet had shouted, “Awake, O sleeper, rise up from the dead, and Christ will give you light” (Eph. 5:14). And the Word of God brought about a miracle. Spoken with authority, God’s Word has the power to bring order out of chaos, hope out of despair, beauty out of ashes. The church today will never experience revival until the pure Word of God is preached with power.

### RE-FORMING THE BONES

Before God poured out his life-giving Spirit, he first needed to organize the bones into skeletons and cover those skeletons with flesh. The text emphasizes this structural aspect of the Great Awakening by describing what happened when Ezekiel began to preach:

*There was a sound, and behold, a rattling, and the bones came together, bone to its bone. And I looked, and behold, there were sinews on them, and flesh had come upon them, and skin had covered them. But there was no breath in them. (vv. 7-8)*

The old Negro Spiritual “Dem Bones” describes this part of Ezekiel’s revival when it sings, “the toe bone connected to the foot bone; the foot bone connected to the heel bone; the heel bone connected to...” What may be cute when sung is actually the description of something very

important, something that is often overlooked by those who pray for revival. In reconnecting the bones, God is dealing with structure, organization. First, he re-forms the bones; then, he revives the body. Re-formation precedes revival. Luther comes before Wesley. Only after the bones are restructured, reshaped, and covered with flesh does God pour out his life-giving Spirit.

Allow me to make a personal confession. In recent years, I have stopped praying for revival. I know that sounds unspiritual, but it’s true. I began to ask myself, “Do I really want God to breathe new life into the old patterns of doing church so that we can be more successful at doing what we’ve always done?” That question caused me to pause and ask the Spirit to help me pray with more discernment. Now, I pray something like this:

*Lord, reshape your church. Re-form the way we understand salvation, worship, holiness, and evangelism. Reshape the way we read our Bibles, say our prayers, love our neighbors, and live out our faith at work. Enable us to re-imagine our tired, broken, unbiblical, ineffective structures! Give us a new skeletal framework, and then, send revival! Yes, Lord, then pour out your life-giving Spirit so that we can serve you in power. Amen.*

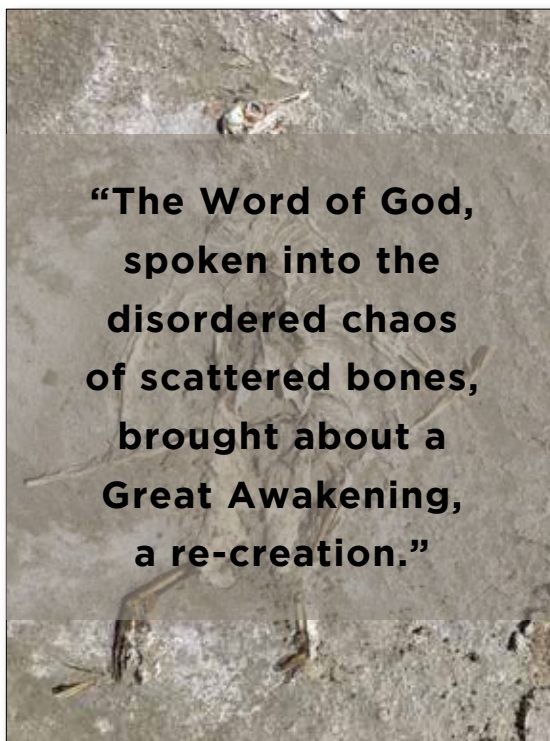
Richard F. Lovelace, in his classic book on revival, astutely observes that we need *both* reformation and revival: “Concentration on reformation without revival leads to skins without wine; concentration on revival without reformation soon loses the wine for want of skins” (*Dynamics of Spiritual Life*, InterVarsity Press, 1979: 16).

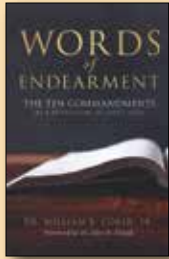
### RECEIVING THE BREATH OF HEAVEN

After preaching to the bones so that they are re-formed, God gives his prophet a new assignment. “Prophecy to the breath... and say to the breath... O breath, breathe on these slain, that they may live” (v. 9). The Hebrew term for “breath” can also be translated “wind,” or “Spirit.”

The preaching of the Word had produced a miracle; the scattered bones were now connected and covered with flesh; a valley full of cadavers. This was a huge improvement! But I’m grateful the story did not end there. The Wind of God, like a Breath from heaven, began to blow across that valley, and those corpses came to life. They stood on their feet, a mighty army. It was as if the whole church of God, standing at attention in full battle dress, saluted their Commander and said in unison, “Here we are, Sir; reporting for duty!”

This issue of *The High Calling* is devoted to revival. More specifically, it is a call first to *re-form* the church so that the Lord can then revive it! As you read the articles, I’m praying that the hand of the Lord will be upon you so that you can see the true condition of your “valley.” And then, I pray you will hear him ask you the same question he asked Ezekiel so many years ago, “Can these bones live?” (v. 3). And I’m praying that you won’t put the magazine down until you have answered God’s question! ✠





## Words of Endearment

By Dr. William B. Coker Sr.

**\$12.95 (paperback; 253 pages)**

**T**he Ten Commandments: the ultimate list of “thou shalt nots,” or an expression of divine love?

While Jews and Christians alike have revered the Ten Commandments for millennia, secularists and agnostics have tried to remove them from the public square. Some Christians wonder if they are still relevant in this age of grace, while others approach them as a checklist for earning God’s favor. But what if these ten “words of endearment” from God actually reveal the loving heart of a Father seeking to guide and guard His cherished children?

After exploring well-honed insights about each of the Ten Commandments, Bill concludes each chapter with thought-provoking questions and practical action steps to help you apply the truths you are learning about to your daily life. These ten “words” are far from a historic code or a legal obligation. They give amazing insight into the heart of God for His people and how to build a life based on His values, character, and goodness. If you are ready to grow in God’s plan for you, delve into *Words of Endearment: The Ten Commandments as a Revelation of God’s Love*. These teachings bring fresh understanding and renewed respect to the awe-inspiring, relevant truth of these ancient words. ✨

Sign up to receive our companion e-newsletter, *Ministry Matters*, at [www.francisasburysociety.com](http://www.francisasburysociety.com)

## More than a Story

By Charlie Fiskeaux, Special Assistant to the President for Financial Affairs

**I**t is said that “everyone has a story;” that is, everyone has significant events and times in their past that are formative for the present. For sure, our past informs much of where we are at present. But most of us readily recognize that it is typically not helpful to live in the past. Moving from the past through the present, we need to focus on the future.

Organizations, like people, have a story. The Francis Asbury Society (FAS) has a story of its founding and historical events that bring FAS to its present position. But FAS is more than just a story of its past and present. To the point, FAS is forward looking, “leaning into the wind.” At present, FAS is pursuing strategically significant ministry and administrative ventures that will energize, expand, and stabilize our future. These ventures include international ministry and discipleship reaching new territories, academic theological pursuits, marketing, and fundraising.

Do you want to participate in a spiritual ministry that is more than a story; that is, in fact, pursuing its future with vitality? The Francis Asbury Society purposes to be such an organization, by energetically proclaiming to people everywhere the message of Scriptural holiness that persons can be transformed to live wholly devoted to God.

Details for various methods of giving to the ministries of the Francis Asbury Society are available on the website <http://www.francisasburysociety.com/support>. ✨

**The High Calling—September–October 2021**

*The High Calling* is a bimonthly publication of The Francis Asbury Society to serve as a link between FAS and its constituents, building loyalty and awareness so that the teaching and experience of Christian holiness may continue to be lived and proclaimed throughout the world.

The Francis Asbury Society  
 PO Box 7 | Wilmore, KY 40390 | 859-858-4222  
 fas@francisasburysociety.com  
 www.francisasburysociety.com

Managing Editor: Stan Key  
 Editing/Design/Layout: Jennie Lovell



PO Box 7  
Wilmore, KY 40390

# The High Calling

PRSR STD  
AUTO  
U.S. POSTAGE  
PAID  
SHOALS, IN  
PERMIT NO 18