

Our 40th Anniversary



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The afterglow of the outpouring—“This is the Lord’s doing; it is marvelous in our eyes” (Ps 118:23)

The Lord’s Doing

Vic Reasoner

John Wesley recorded in his *Journal* for March 23, 1738, that Peter Böhler the Moravian had challenged him. Böhler claimed true faith had two inseparable fruits: “dominion over sin and constant peace from a sense of forgiveness.” Wesley turned to his Greek New Testament “resolving to abide by ‘the law and the testimony,’ and being confident that God would hereby show me ‘whether this doctrine was of God.’”

Two days later he was ready to accept the definition that faith is “a sure trust and confidence which a man hath in God, that through the merits of Christ his sins are forgiven and he reconciled to the favor of God.”

Böhler again challenged John, who could not comprehend Böhler’s teaching of an instantaneous work. “I could not understand how this faith should be given in a moment; how a man could at once be turned from darkness to light, from sin and misery to righteousness and joy in the Holy Ghost.”

Again, Wesley turned to the Scriptures, and, to his surprise, “found scarce any instances there of other than instantaneous conversions.” John then argued that instantaneous conversions ceased after apostolic times. He said, however, he “was beat out of this retreat too, by the concurring evidence of several living witnesses.” They

all concurred that “this faith was the gift, the free gift of God, and that he would surely bestow it upon every soul who earnestly and perseveringly sought it.” John wrote, “I was now thoroughly convinced. And, by the grace of God, I resolved to seek it unto the end.”

Two days later, on April 25, 1738, John preached this new truth. Charles was present and John wrote, “My brother was very angry and told me I did not know what mischief I had done by talking thus. And indeed it did please God then to kindle a fire, which I trust shall never be extinguished.” Charles recorded in his *Journal*:

We fell into a dispute whether conversion was gradual or instantaneous. My brother was very positive for the latter, and very shocking; mentioned some late instances of gross sinners believing in a moment. I was much offended at his worse than unedifying discourse. I insisted a man need not know when first he had faith.

It was three weeks later that Charles discovered Martin Luther’s *Commentary on Galatians*. As he read from it he said he was “astonished I should ever think justification by faith alone is a new doctrine. From this time I endeavored to ground as many of our friends as came in this fundamental truth, salvation by faith alone.” John was born again on May 24, 1738. The “day of Pentecost” for Charles came three days previously.

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A Different Wednesday

Todd Moegerle



Todd is currently serving as a student chaplain for the Wilmore, KY, campus of Asbury Theological Seminary while working on his MDiv. He is preparing for ministry as associate pastor of Vineyard City Church in Redding, CA. In this article, he shares his personal experience of the Asbury Outpouring.

As I have reflected on the realities and surprises of the recent events at Asbury University, I've been reminded that there are times I don't know how hungry I am until I take that first bite of food. Sometimes I don't know how tired I am until, at last, I have the chance to rest. On Wednesday, February 8, 2023, I stepped into Hughes Auditorium and realized, as a profound sense of peace and hope rolled over me, how deeply my soul aches for the tangible presence of God.

I remember growing up hearing stories from my father about the Asbury Revival of the 1970s. There are special words from my childhood and from the few videos I've been able to find of news and personal accounts of that moment in Asbury's history. These words carry a powerful sense of magic to them that is strikingly similar both in tone and implication to words C.S. Lewis once wrote: "Aslan is on the move." That Wednesday afternoon, around 3:00 p.m., a friend and fellow seminarian poked his head into my office in the formation department and spoke those words from my childhood: "Chapel is still going in Hughes." I remember the sense of something within me leaping even as my mind scrambled to process what had just been said. I heard movement in the office next to me and the associate director of Community Formation stepped through the door with a big smile on his face, "Chapel is still going in Hughes." He proclaimed, "Want to go?"

Within a few minutes several members of our department, accompanied by the vice president of Formation were crossing the street of our quiet little town. We moved with almost giddy anticipation. I remember thinking as we made our way onto the green lawn of the iconic semicircle in front of the university how quickly all of this was happening. At the first word that God might be doing something special in our midst, people just moved. It was like a reflex. As we approached the stairs leading up to Hughes, we were joined by many others coming and going, too many for a [normal] Wednesday afternoon. Before we reached the doors the sound of worship hit us. Chapel was still going in Hughes.

I remember much of what followed in little moments spread across two weeks, frozen in time like photographs. I remember vividly the view from the back of the auditorium, standing behind the rearmost row of seats, looking across a sea of people in various states and postures of praise. I remember the worship seemed to flow over the room like gentle waves. It seemed immediately apparent that, though the songs were familiar, the moment was different. This wasn't merely a chapel service, though I'd be hard-pressed to find

a precise explanation for why that seemed so immediately certain. I remember looking for something, for signs of "revival," and I'm a bit embarrassed by what I looked for first. Was anyone running up and down the aisles? No. Was anyone shouting in some unknown language or waving their arms around prophesying in apocalyptic tones? No. I found nothing of the sort in my first sweeps of the room. What I did find was far more subtle and it took a moment to register. What I found was peace.

I've had friends who seem to be able to discern the presence of God in a place, thick or thin. Friends that make statements like "The Spirit is here" or "God is up to something in this place." I believe God reveals himself in that way, but the experience is rare for me. I left the church as a teenager, largely because I grew frustrated with the accounts of those around me, who seemed to be having a more "real" experience of God than I was. God has done wonderful work in that area of my life, but I'm still not usually the one to "sense" God in the room. Wednesday was a different day for me. It wasn't some overwhelming force that threatened to topple me where I stood.

It wasn't that the ceiling opened, and the trumpets of heaven could be heard just beyond radiant clouds as they slowly parted, revealing golden shafts of light. It wasn't a sound or sight. It was the place itself. It was the atmosphere.

There was peace in that room, immediate, tangible, and saturating. And with that peace was something else; a sense I have in recent years begun to attribute to God almost like a fingerprint; a hopeful anticipation not unlike the experience I had as a child on Christmas Eve as I realized there was something under the tree for me. I didn't yet know what it was, but I

knew it was there: something delightful from someone who loved me. That same hopeful anticipation hung in the air with the peace. Something was under the tree, something delightful, but it wasn't just for me. It was for all of us.

I remember the persistent cheer that seemed to rest on the ever-growing crowds. To be sure, there were some moments of friction. After all, reports had it that by the end, our tiny little Wilmore was host to over 10,000 daily visitors. But there were conspicuously few incidents of conflict considering how many people poured in each day. People drove hundreds of miles to wait hours in cold weather. And yet, each time we opened the doors of Estes Chapel or McKenna Chapel to support Hughes as overflow sites, we were greeted with hope-filled eyes and resounding cheers. People were thirsty, deeply yearning for the presence of God and a chance to see what new thing he might do that day. The opening words of the Psalm 42 were a regular contemplation for many of us.

On many of those first nights, as I headed back to my dorm, I found myself asking God, "What happened Wednesday? And why didn't it happen Tuesday instead? Or Monday?" In what I believe may have



Photo by Kim Ball

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The Asbury Outpouring and Gen Z

Brian Hull



Brian Hull is professor of Pastoral and Christian Ministries and Gardner Scholar at Asbury University. Most of his research, writing, speaking, and training is on youth, culture, the Church, theology, and the intersection of those things. In this article, he highlights some of the values we see in this generation of young people and how God directly met them as they sought him.

Thirty young men and women. It all started with thirty young people who were hungry for more of God. “Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled” (Matt 5:6). Thirty young people stayed after chapel, worshiping God while the gospel choir sang. Some went to the altar to pray and repent. God quickly added to their number and what started with thirty grew to well over a thousand by the weekend. More and more people hungry for God came to Hughes Auditorium, and God met them there, outpouring his Spirit. What happened? Why these young people?

While I will not pretend to fully understand the moving of God, I want to help us adults take the posture of learners from this generation. My hope is that this article not only describes in a small way what is happening but also inspires us to keep learning from God’s movement in young people.

GEN Z VALUES

To understand a little bit of why these young people called Gen Z (those born 1995–2012) responded so well to God’s yearning for them, it will be helpful to understand a few of the values of Gen Z. I will highlight four here.

Authenticity. Gen Z has been the object of marketers from the time they were born. They have grown up knowing that they are targets of marketers, retailers, and everyone else. They distrust almost every adult because the adults they know all want something from them. Even the best-intentioned adults in the lives of Gen Z have something to gain from them (coaches keep their job or get a better one if athletes perform well, teachers get more resources and salary if students do well on standardized testing, etc.) They long for authenticity. Gen Z students long for people to set aside their agendas and to be honestly and uniquely who they truly are.

Commonly Uncommon. This is one of my favorite phrases for this generation. It states the heart of Gen Z students to be known and seen as they are uniquely created and gifted. They do not want to be lumped into groupings, categories, or lanes. They want the freedom to be themselves, each in his or her own way.

“We.” This value might seem a bit out of line with the previous two, but one of the things Gen Z values is the voice and heart of their group of friends. Remember that they distrust adults? They do trust each other. While they know they are not perfect, Gen Z young people feel that their own peers know the issues and can work together to find solutions without agenda. One way that this gets

highlighted is in social media where the group helps the whole set values and guides responses.

Whole Health. Many of Gen Z have seen, felt, and lived the consequences of previous generations’ pursuit of “success.” Broken families, broken culture, broken politics, broken businesses, broken churches, broken schools, and a broken earth are all remnants of the “success” pursued by older generations. Not surprisingly, Gen Z desires a more holistic health than those who went before them. While they do not have the answers (yet) to know how to best manage all of this, they know they want to be whole and healthy.

MARKS OF THE OUTPOURING

Understanding these values of Gen Z, let’s look at some of the markers of how God is outpouring himself in ways that connect so well to Gen Z. This is by no means an authoritative list, but these two phrases were used often by those involved in the Outpouring.

Radical Humility. One of the markers from the very beginning of this Outpouring was a radical humility of the students and the



Photo courtesy: Asbury University

emerging leadership to not “perform” their way to God. This searching and hunger for God was authentic. People came before God and were willing to put aside their image, agenda, and preconceived ideas and humbly ask God to show up. Pride and image were set aside as young people were honest, repentant, asked for forgiveness, approached other in reconciliation, and quit “playing games.” Remember how important authenticity is to Gen Z? Here it was on full display—led by young people. As the days went on in the Outpouring and

more people from outside of Asbury and Wilmore showed up, they were led to this radical humility by the young people and leadership. As people individually shared their need, their burden, their calling, and their repentance, they were seen as a valued and loved unique child and friend of God.

Ethnic Unity. Because Gen Z values seeing everyone and caring for everyone as the unique person they are created to be, they desire that all people be represented in their gatherings. A marker of this Outpouring was the diversity of people who led worship, shared messages, and helped to serve. All of them unified in seeking, serving, and praising God. There emerged a “we” of community that was hungry for God and his presence. There emerged a community of praise and worship.

NEXT STEPS

What’s next? What will be the long-term effects of this Outpouring? While it is still too early to know this for sure, here is a small glimpse into what is emerging.

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FAS Announces Election of New President

FAS Board of Directors

The Francis Asbury Society Board of Directors is happy to announce, after a national search, the election of Rev. Willis C. (Bill) Kierce as our next president. “We believe he brings the fullness and anointing of the Spirit, passionate commitment to the Lordship of Jesus Christ, and a special calling to lead FAS into the future God has planned for the Society. With his gifts and graces, Bill is uniquely qualified to help FAS with its mission ‘to spread scriptural holiness’ throughout the world,” says Dr. Chris Bounds, Board chair.

Bill, a native of Alabama, is no stranger to the Francis Asbury Society, currently serving as an evangelist. He also was an FAS evangelist while a student at Asbury Theological Seminary in the 1990s, mentored by our founder, Dr. Dennis F. Kinlaw. “The time spent traveling, preaching, praying, and visiting with Dr. Kinlaw remains one of life’s greatest treasures,” says Bill. “I am humbled to step into his shoes, as well as to follow in the line of outstanding leadership at FAS.”



Bill brings a unique blend of ministry experience as an itinerant evangelist, church planter, pastor, professor, and organizational developer to his role at FAS. Bill is married to the former Kimberly Ann Wood of York, Pennsylvania, and they enjoy three grown children and eight grandchildren.

Dr. John Oswalt, interim president, says this of Bill:

When I knew that the Society would be looking for a new president to replace Dr. Ron Smith, I developed my private list of qualifications for the ideal candidate. I believed we needed someone who had some history with the Society, someone seasoned with some years of service in ministry, someone who knew and loved the message of full salvation, someone with gifts in leadership, someone with a winsome personality, and above all, someone who loved Jesus. I am delighted to say that in Bill Kierce we have found that very man.

Please join the FAS Board of Directors and staff in welcoming Rev. Bill Kierce to his new role with the Society. He will start in this new position on June 1, 2023. Meanwhile, Dr. John Oswalt will continue as interim president, working with Bill to effect a smooth transition. ✨

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First, young people led us to into this Outpouring and I am firmly convinced they will be the ones to lead us into transformed lives that are transforming the world for Christ. My prayer and hope is that the church has the courage and patience to listen to them as they lead us. I believe that they want and need the church to be a part of their lives, but they do not need us to bring our agendas. I pray that the Church sees itself as a resource to help Gen Z respond to God’s faithfulness, love, and outpouring.

Second, Gen Z is demanding that we not rush into this. Whereas my generation would probably have run out right away and tried to do a lot of different things, this generation is preferring to continue to listen to God, to step into healthy rhythms that are grounded in God that will lead to longer term transformation of people not just programs. They have experienced God’s deep love for them and

We Weren’t Ready—But Yet...

Sarah Thomas Baldwin



Sarah Baldwin is vice president of Student Life and dean of students at Asbury University. She had a literal front-row seat to everything happening during the Outpouring. This article is an edited version of her February 25, 2023, Facebook post; used with permission.

Day 18: We are returning to ordinary life—which is just as full of God as the last 17 days—just a bit quieter. I am sure we have a lifetime of journaling, prayer, and deep conversation ahead. As theologians name and debate what it was and wasn’t, what I do know for sure is that people are longing for God.

I don’t want to forget the Latino family—grandpa, dad, uncle, kids, mama—who didn’t even go to their seats. They went immediately to the altar and collapsed in front of it. We saw this again and again.

My heart is broken with the 18 men who piled into a 15-person passenger van for 9 hours to pray at an altar for even 30 minutes.

Who can forget the Brazilians! Their passionate prayers for their country!

As a mom of a daughter with special needs, the families who brought their children for prayer for medical issues just broke my heart.

Trying to communicate thru an app with a couple in Portuguese.

Remembering the pastor couple from Chile who sold their car to be here. And strangers passing on money—“Can you give it to the lady who sold the car?” YES!

So many high schoolers praying for relief from the bondage of pornography. Parents, step in! Take away phones, keep them out of bedrooms. Your children are *desperate*.

I want to remember the Whatsapp thread, 101 notifications at a time—“Water needed in Estes!”, “Is there a prayer volunteer for out in the line?”, “10 people gave their hearts to Jesus here!”, “It’s 30 degrees out here. Heaters are on the way,” “The Sal Army showed up. Thank you, Jesus!”

Mostly, I will remember our relationships between one another on the ground team, the volunteer team, and the ministry team. Revival runs on the track of relationships. As one of our retired professors said, “We were surprised but not unprepared.” We are a small community who loves Jesus deeply.

We weren’t ready but yet we were. God is like that. ✨

want to share that love and rest with others. This will not happen overnight. This cannot happen with a flashy program. This will be more rooted in prayer, Scripture, service to the margins, and spiritual disciplines. This is an authentic lived out holiness grounded in witness to who God is and what he continues to do.

In my thirty years of ministry, God has blessed me with the opportunity to participate in many significant moments in people’s lives. Being able to participate in this Outpouring has left me without many words, a heart full of praise, and eyes full of tears. I hope that this short description helps us see a small part of what God is up to in his beloved people right now. I pray that we in church leadership will prayerfully listen, support, empower, and resource this generation as they continue to lead us into the presence of God. ✨

The Story Behind the Story

Mark R. Elliott



Mark R. Elliott is a retired professor of history and editor emeritus of the East-West Church and Ministry Report (www.eastwestreport.org). In this article, he has assembled some behind-the-scenes accounts of the Asbury Outpouring.

As early as the afternoon of February 8, Asbury University's cabinet realized decisions were going to have to be made—a lot of them and quickly! A handful of administrators and key staff met with President Kevin Brown, at first in a basement hallway of Hughes Auditorium, then in a storage closet behind the platform, and then in a Reasoner Hall classroom connected to Hughes, which came to be dubbed the “Command Center.” As Daniel Silliman of *Christianity Today* reported:

Men and women worked untold hours to make sure that everyone who sought God had food and water and restrooms and everyone was safe. Part of the story behind the story of the revival is the almost invisible work that went into protecting it.

“Administrators, campus ministry staff, and student leaders have been working overtime—sometimes on little sleep—trying to guard the [Asbury] movement’s integrity and focus,” wrote Asbury Seminary Professor Craig Keener on February 16, 2023. To their credit, members of the Asbury University cabinet take their faith seriously, are seasoned veterans in their particular fields of responsibility, and work well with each other. For his part, President Brown, in his position just since 2019, has gained the equivalent of at least a decade’s worth of experience shepherding the university through the uncharted territory of COVID-19 response. He has often remarked he was given no playbook to manage that crisis. Nor was he given a playbook to superintend the spontaneous combustion of a spiritual awakening on Asbury’s campus that social media transformed into a national and international phenomenon.

University retiree Jeanette Davis, who for many hours manned a check-in desk for volunteers, overheard someone remark that Asbury was building a plane while it was on the runway. Mark Whitworth, vice-president for athletics and communication, recalled, “We began getting reports from people seeing stuff on social media about people who were coming, not just from our region, but pretty significant distances. But the focus was on practical things. Like, does the worship team need to rest, and do we have enough prayer support at the altar?”

President Brown observed a volunteer on scene at 8 a.m., and the same person at 1 a.m., and again at 8 a.m. the next morning. Such activity was clearly not sustainable, so the decision was made to seek and accept all manner of assistance from trusted outside parties. To augment public safety and security, the university welcomed protection provided by not only Wilmore police but also many other Bluegrass police departments, including Nicholasville, Lancaster, Danville, Versailles, Woodford County, and Georgetown. A Danville policeman reported that he had been prayed over by Asbury students, which likely was not a lone instance. At the revival’s peak

during the second weekend, February 17–18, even Kentucky State Police lent a hand on U.S. 68, diverting traffic from over-loaded Route 29 to a less-traveled route into Wilmore. Samaritan’s Purse sent fifteen security guards for campus patrol as visitors began wandering into classroom buildings and even dorms. For safety’s sake the university put a limit on Hughes’ capacity, especially limiting numbers in the aisles and balcony.

Asbury Theological Seminary, a strategic partner throughout, provided five overflow worship venues: Estes Chapel, McKenna Chapel, the Cowen Building, and the Sherman Thompson Student Center cafeteria and gymnasium. Several Wilmore pastors also opened their sanctuaries for revival worshipers: Wilmore United Methodist Church/Great Commission Fellowship (the two congregations share worship space) and Mt. Freedom Baptist Church. Other churches provided volunteers, including Wilmore Free Methodist Church and a Lexington megachurch, Southland Christian. Its sister megachurch, Southeastern Christian in Louisville, showed up unannounced with a van full of bottled water just as Asbury University was running low.



Photo by Kim Ball

Loftouse Collective, a Phoenix-based events management company, provided personnel to help coordinate job assignments for an estimated 1,800 volunteers, roughly equaling Asbury’s student body. The Billy Graham Evangelistic Association sent prayer counselors and discipleship materials. The Lexington Salvation Army set up multiple trucks on the semicircle giving out food and water, including 400 sandwiches from the Wilmore Subway restaurant. Chic-Fil-A also donated sandwiches. Seedbed, the Tennessee-based evangelistic ministry affiliated with Asbury Theological Seminary, provided dedicated staff who assisted the university with the critical responsibility of oversight of worship that continued in Hughes day and night for over two weeks.

Seedbed, in conjunction with the university, recruited Mark Swayze, an associate pastor of The Woodlands Methodist Church near Houston, Texas, to help shepherd student worship leaders. His February 16 Facebook post provides a striking record of the behind-the-scenes operation of a committed cadre of “worship stewards”:

For 9 straight days at 2-hour increments, college students have led worship at Hughes Auditorium in Wilmore, KY. That’s been about 100 worship teams thus far. And they don’t seem to be ending anytime soon. So, our Woodlands worship leader, Brenna and I went to serve. The team organizing all of this needed help. Here is what I found behind the scenes: A 24-year-old woman who is a military sergeant. She has organized all of this with a small team of college students and her “servant of a husband.” Their iPhone text group is named the “worship stewards.” They are a force.

Our first morning [in Wilmore] we experienced what seemed to be a military operation. Everyone is physically exhausted but spiritually on absolute fire. They ask Jesus for wisdom in every decision. No decision for worship is human strategy or planning. They pray, ask Jesus, and then discern together. They speak in turn by raising

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When Streams of Living Water Become a Flood: Revival at Asbury University

Suzanne Nicholson



Suzanne Nicholson is professor of New Testament at Asbury University in Wilmore, KY. She is an elder in the Global Methodist Church and serves as assistant lead editor of *Firebrand* magazine. In this article, Suzanne shares her personal experience, some theological reflections, a few practical notes, and then some thoughts on next steps. Originally published on February 21, 2023 at firebrandmag.com; used by permission.

What do you do when the streams of living water suddenly burst into a flood? The spiritual outpouring that began at Asbury University on February 8 was spontaneous and unexpected. After an ordinary chapel service, a number of students felt called to linger and praise God. As students responded, the Spirit brought an immense sense of joy and peace. More students came. The Spirit remained, and so did the students. Worship has continued ever since, and—as a result of social media posts—thousands of Jesus-seekers have poured into the small town of Wilmore, Kentucky.

Asbury is no stranger to revivals; spontaneous worship has broken out multiple times in the past century, although the 1970 revival is perhaps the most well-known. Ever since, alumni and community members have prayed for God to grace the campus once again with a powerful experience of the Holy Spirit. The surprise at this latest outpouring is reminiscent of the shock felt by the disciples upon hearing of Peter's release from prison in Acts 12:1–19: even though they had been praying for this very event, they weren't ready when it happened. When Rhoda answered the door to discover a freed Peter standing before her, she was so overjoyed that she left poor Peter standing at the gate as she ran back to tell the other disciples.

We, too, were shocked and overjoyed at our unexpected—but long hoped for—visitation.

PERSONAL EXPERIENCE

I wasn't in chapel when the revival started. I had been at the dentist's office with my son. I first heard of this outpouring of the Holy Spirit when a student burst into my introductory New Testament class (located underneath the auditorium where worship is taking place) at 1:25 that afternoon and declared, "I'm sorry to interrupt, but I don't know if y'all have heard what is happening upstairs—people are *still* worshipping, even though chapel finished three hours ago! The Holy Spirit is moving! Come join us!"

So what does a Bible professor do in such a situation? I was forced to make a split-second decision: Do I believe this student? Is it really the Holy Spirit or just youthful exuberance? Do I cancel class and send students upstairs? Do I continue teaching? I'm a Bible professor, so I should follow the Spirit... but I am teaching about Jesus in this class, after all!

I responded, "I'll send them upstairs in about 25 minutes." If this truly were a movement of God, I reasoned, then surely it would still be going on at 1:50. And so I continued to teach about the crucifixion narrative. A few students left in the middle of the lecture to head up to the auditorium, but I wasn't going to argue with the Holy Spirit. As class ended, I reminded students that Christ's great sacrifice is exactly why people are worshipping upstairs, and I encouraged them to head up to the auditorium.

As an academic, I tend to be somewhat cynical about emotional displays of spirituality. I've seen enough manipulative emotionalism in churches over the years to be wary. But I also know that the Holy Spirit still moves powerfully among believers today. I confess that I also struggled that first day because I had been carrying some personal burdens, and I was afraid that once God started working on my heart I would be undone, a weeping puddle on the floor of Hughes Auditorium. So that first day I went upstairs for just a few minutes to see what God was doing. It certainly appeared that

God was moving. The praise was genuine, the prayers unforced.

I returned to my office, located on the first floor of Hughes directly underneath the auditorium. The drafty, windowless room located in a building constructed in 1929 is not the most coveted location on campus. But in these last two weeks I have considered this one of the best office locations at Asbury. I can hear the joyous singing as well as the applause when worshipers affirm powerful testimonies. There is something *palpable* about this movement of God. That first day I could

feel joy and peace oozing through my ceiling from upstairs. When I went home that evening, I continued to feel a remarkable spirit of joy and peace. It was so refreshing! As the revival has continued, I often wake up in the middle of the night with the music and lyrics of praise flowing through my head—not my normal nighttime experience.

On the second day of the revival, I went up to the balcony of Hughes Auditorium to let God do the soul work I so desperately needed. When I first entered the balcony, I had a moment where I couldn't breathe—there was a weight in the room, like a barometric pressure difference. It took a moment to adjust. We so often forget that our physical bodies are not separate from our spiritual selves. When God appears in powerful ways, we are physically affected by what is happening in our spirits. As I sat and listened to the worship, I wept as God lifted my burdens, and I rejoiced at the sweet, gentle Spirit of the Lord. This was not what I had expected when I heard students running down the hallway the day before proclaiming, "There's a revival going on upstairs!" Stereotypes of big personalities and manufactured power had filled my mind earlier, but this was so very different. This was a tender and beautiful outpouring of the Spirit.

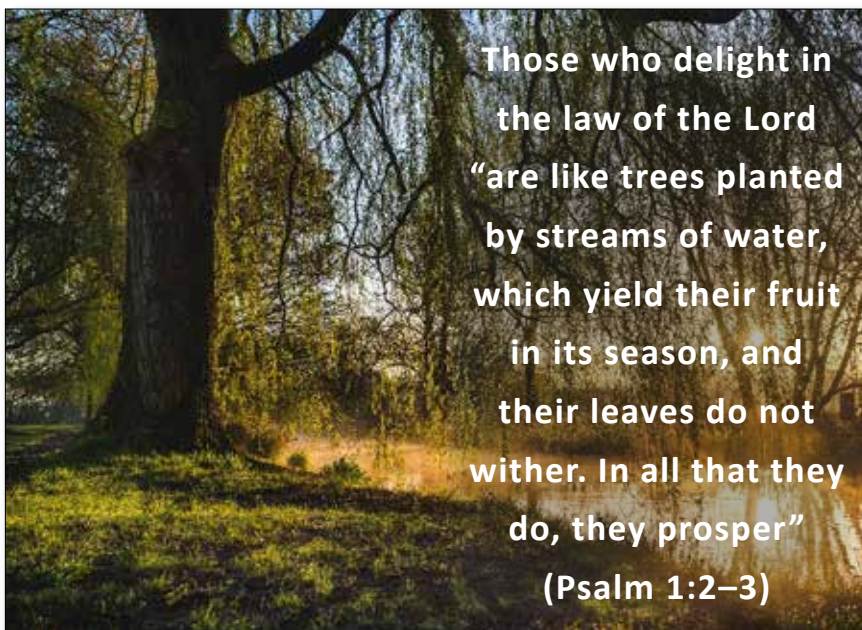


Photo by Alfred Kenneally on Unsplash

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The worship in Hughes has been joyful and unforced. There are no PowerPoints, no set list of hymns. Rather, the worship leaders sing as they feel led, and we join our voices in praise. If we know the lyrics (as we often do), we join in singing. If not, we pray and listen to the movement of God. The musicians—many of whom are my students—seamlessly replace one another on stage to give each other rest breaks. It's like passing the baton in a relay race. I am so proud of them! There is no need for a single leader and no competition to be on stage.

The testimonies have been moving and powerful. We have been led in times of praise, Scripture reading, intercessory prayer, and deep repentance. Students have publicly confessed addictions to pornography, anger at God, bitterness of heart, despair as the result of difficult family situations, and so much more. For some of these students, I know their stories, and through the semesters I have seen their anxiety, depression, and deep wounds. Yet now they proclaim healing, joy, and a deep love of God like they have never before experienced. This is not manufactured emotionalism. This is a powerful, transformative movement of God. Even when Hughes Auditorium has been nearly empty (it has been closed at times for cleaning), the Spirit of God remains palpable. A powerful, deep peace pervades the room. If you want to read more first-person accounts from our students, I encourage you to read the student newspaper or simply scan social media for testimonies.

God is working in stages through this revival. I needed God to do work in my own soul first, but after the refreshing came, God called me to pray for others. Then I felt released to do practical things, often as simple as directing others to the nearest bathroom. God's healing grace is meant not only to show us God's love but also to empower us for service. I have been moved to see how the staff and faculty here have generously served, even on weekends—whether serving as ushers and parking lot attendants or cleaning toilets and mopping the floor of Hughes. The fruit of the Spirit is evident in their patience and kindness amid great disruption. In addition, members of the larger Wilmore community—local pastors and church members—have stepped up to serve on the prayer teams and in many other ways. Asbury Theological Seminary has opened its chapels for overflow worship, as have a few local churches. This is the body of Christ working across institutional lines to support a movement of God. How beautiful is the kingdom of God!

THEOLOGICAL REFLECTIONS

The day before the revival began, my Growth of the New Testament Church class was discussing Peter's speech in Acts 3 after he healed a man in front of the Temple. Peter had described Jesus' death and resurrection and then challenged the audience: "Repent, therefore, and turn to God so that your sins may be wiped out, so that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord and that he may send the Messiah appointed for you, that is, Jesus, who must remain in heaven until the time of universal restoration that God announced long ago through his holy prophets" (3:19–21). Our class had discussed the beauty of the description, "times of refreshing," only to experience that refreshing the very next day!

My students had noticed in Acts several places where—*after* the Spirit's coming at Pentecost—the disciples had been described as being "filled with the Spirit" (e.g., 4:8, 7:55, 13:9). They wanted to know if Luke was simply reminding his readers that the disciples had been filled with the Spirit previously or if this was a new filling. At the time I described it as sort of a turbo-charge: there's always gas in the tank, but sometimes you need an extra burst of power for the task at hand.

As I've been reflecting this week, two other metaphors have come to mind that might be helpful. It's important to remember that the Spirit that is present at Asbury this week is the same God who was present three weeks ago and is the same God who will be here long after the crowds have dispersed. The difference is in the level of communion we are experiencing. God is always feeding us by his Spirit, but some occasions are a bit more special. It's like sitting down to meals three times a day but occasionally indulging in a fantastic Thanksgiving feast, enjoying all the special dishes with the best of ingredients, and sharing the overwhelming spread with anyone who shows up to partake. The Spirit is giving us a feast right now.

My favorite image, however, arises from Psalm 1:3: those who delight in the law of the Lord "are like trees planted by streams of water, which yield their fruit in its season, and their leaves do not wither. In all that they do, they prosper." Believers who regularly commune with the Lord through prayer, Bible study, corporate worship, receiving the Eucharist, and other means of grace are the trees planted by streams of water, receiving their nourishment. But occasionally we need flood waters to spur new growth—not the destructive floods that wipe away homes, but rather the essential spring flooding of the Nile that brought much-needed water and nutrients to agricultural lands in the ancient world. This is where we have found ourselves at Asbury these past two weeks. We are planted by

streams of water, but the dry air of secular culture surrounding us has left us thirsting for more. The thousands of visitors to campus have only demonstrated how much spiritual thirst exists right now. These people are desperate for relief, life, and hope, and they are willing to wait in line for hours to enter the place where the veil between heaven and earth is remarkably thin right now. The Holy Spirit has graciously sent gentle flood waters to revive us, reshape us, and empower us for the work ahead. We are receiving a sort of spiritual Miracle-Gro, a nutrient boost to inspire new growth. We are drinking deeply from this refreshing gift.

Not everyone has found it comfortable to explore this movement of the Holy Spirit. Some students have said they feel pressured to go and join in the revival; others are skeptical or fearful of what they will encounter. Some students are experiencing the refreshing of the Spirit as they pray in their dorm rooms, rather than joining the immense and, for some, intimidating crowd. Some students have stayed in Hughes Auditorium for a few minutes at a time, while others have remained for hours or even days. These different experiences should remind us that we need to be gentle with one another, because what each of us needs from the Holy Spirit may be different. God is gracious enough to meet us where we are, and we are all at varying points in our walk with the Lord.



Photo by Kim Ball

Thoughts on the Asbury Awakening

Timothy Tennent



Dr. Timothy C. Tennent has served as president of Asbury Theological Seminary since 2009. This article was written at the end of the first week of the awakening, so it is a glimpse of what it was like at that moment. Originally published on February 14, 2023, on timothytennent.com; used with permission.

Something special happened last Wednesday in the chapel of Asbury University. The Lord began to move in the lives of a group of students. These embers have now been fanned into flame and there is clearly a definite move of God in our midst. We should not spend too much time looking for human causality, though there have been many praying earnestly for years for this. It is first, last and foremost a tribute to the grace of God to reveal himself and to call a new generation to faithfulness at a time when we most needed it. There comes a point when the people of God become tired of causal prayers and move to that point of desperation which opens us up in fresh ways to God's surprising work. That is what I have experienced most over the past week in my own life.

I have been reticent to write blogs or make a lot of public statements about this outpouring at Asbury because it is always better to stand in awe of something than to talk about something. I have been in Hughes Auditorium or Estes [Chapel], or both, every day and night, and it is like stepping into a flowing spiritual river. You sense the presence and power of God working in people's lives. Since last Wednesday when the outpouring began, I have reflected many times on Jesus' statement about the Spirit when he said, "The wind blows wherever it pleases. You hear its sound, but you cannot tell where it comes from or where it is going. So it is with everyone born of the Spirit" (John 3:8). This is not a time to "manage" this or to try to "shape" it. This is the time to simply receive from God's hand.

Several people have commented on some of the differences between these sacred days and the more well-known outpouring that took place in February of 1970. A lot has been said about the impact of social media in telling the story or about the focus on worship. However, a deeper look at this outpouring reveals that it has the same elements that are found in any authentic revival: people repenting of their sins; people being filled with the Holy Spirit; men and women finding reconciliation with God and their neighbor; people capturing a renewed love for Jesus, the gospel, and the Holy Scriptures. All of the above has been happening here day after day.

Another similarity is that this outpouring has the same inner core and outer core as in 1970. There is the inner work of God in the lives of this younger generation. This is the focus of the outpouring. The leadership has wisely reserved the central, front section of the chapel for the students themselves, because this is *their* space and God choose to begin this work among *them*. The outer core are the hundreds of people pouring in from the outside who are catching this fire and bringing it back to their churches and communities. Both are important.

Another point observed by those who have been a regular part of these services is the solemnity and peace in the various places where this movement has spread around town. Sometimes we envision revivals as times when people hear fiery sermons and there are big outbursts of emotion. This move of God is marked more by quiet weeping than emotive shouting.

Despite the endless coverage in social media and the regular media that is calling this a revival, I think it is wise to see this, at the current phase, as an awakening. Only if we see lasting transformation that shakes the comfortable foundations of the church and truly brings us all to a new and deeper place can we look back in hindsight and say, "yes, this has been a revival." An awakening is where God begins to stir and awaken people up from their spiritual slumber. This is definitely happening not only in Wilmore but also as this move of God spreads to other schools and communities across the nation and even the world. There are many reports that this is what is happening. But we must keep our hearts and eyes fixed on Jesus and ask for him to complete the work he has begun so that, over time, there is a lasting transformation in the lives of those who are being touched by God.



Photo by Kelly Hallahan

This is the reason why both the university and the seminary have not cancelled classes. It is not because we are in a "business as usual" mode. Far from it. There is talk of little else in every chapel, in every classroom, in every hallway conversation, and, I suspect, in every home and apartment in the community. The desire is to "mainstream" renewal into the very fabric of our lives so that we are transformed right where we live, work, and study. We all love mountaintop experiences, but we also know that it must be lived out in all the normal rhythms of life. We have to live into this desperation

for God to do what we cannot do. We have to live into transformed relationships. We have to live into new patterns of life and worship. In short, we must embrace what it means to really live as Christians in the midst of a church culture that has largely domesticated the gospel beyond recognition. We will know that revival has truly come to us when we are truly changed to live more like him at work, at study, at worship, and at witness. David Thomas, who has been greatly used by God to shepherd this awakening, has reminded us daily that we should let God move us to a permanent place of transformation before God and the eyes of the watching world. In that sense, we are seeking to take what is clearly an abnormal move of God and ask how this can become normalized in a deep way.

Someday, we will look back on these days and thank God that he visited us in ways we will talk about for years to come. But, what we are doggedly seeking is not lasting memories, but transformed lives long after the lights go out in Hughes Auditorium or Estes Chapel or all other places that are experiencing this work of grace. In short, it is not about "this place" or "that place" whether Wilmore or any other city. It is about Christ himself. None of us "owns" this awakening. But all of us must own in our own lives his work and his gracious beckoning to that deeper place. Come, Holy Spirit! ✠

Our Hunger for God: Characteristics of the Asbury Revival

Billy Coppedge



Billy Coppedge and his wife Joanna have lived and worked in Uganda for many years with World Gospel Mission. They are passionate about helping people encounter Jesus through God's Word. This article was originally published by the Lausanne Movement on February 27, 2023 (lausanne.org). Used with permission.

A single question runs right from the Garden of Eden through all of human experience: *To whom will I look to satisfy my hunger?*

Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be filled. (Matthew 5:6)

On February 8, 2023, God visited Asbury University in the small town of Wilmore, Kentucky, in a truly unique way. You can imagine the surprise of my family and I as we have suddenly found ourselves witnessing a much bigger story than we could have imagined. What began as a typical Wednesday morning chapel at the university with about nineteen students staying afterwards to pray evolved into a movement of God to such a degree that, at one point, the local police had to close the main road into Wilmore due to the overwhelming traffic of people coming to seek God. Such a movement of God deserves further reflection.

RADICAL HUMILITY

The first characteristic about this revival that has impacted me has been the sincere spirit of humility, which I have seen reflected in numerous ways these last days. From the beginning, there has been a deep brokenness as people have come to the altar of Asbury's Hughes Auditorium, humbling themselves before God and others. Both university students and visitors to Asbury have knelt at the old wooden altar, confessing their sins, declaring their need for God, acknowledging their fears, expressing shame, and admitting deep wounds. My wife and I have had the privilege to pray with people at that altar, and hearing their vulnerability before us as total strangers but also before God has been awesome and deeply moving.

This humility has also been reflected in the Asbury University leadership. When I walked into the auditorium for the first time, I was overwhelmed by the sheer number of people in the room that were all adoring Jesus. One of my earliest thoughts was this could be very advantageous for Asbury. They could profit off of all these visitors and the media attention. Yet what has been remarkable to witness is the university president introducing himself not with a title or degree but with a certain deference: "My name is Kevin and I have the privilege

"God was at work and he seemed very capable without the help of any Christian celebrity."



Photo by Kelly Hallahan

to work here." Furthermore, numerous high-profile Christian leaders have offered to help lead worship or preach, and these kind overtures have been humbly turned down—not because such leaders could not have helped, but because the University leadership did not want there to be any confusion. God was at work and he seemed very capable without the help of any Christian celebrity. Thus, the attitude throughout has not been, "How can we bend this for Asbury's purposes?" but rather, "How do we not touch the glory?"

HUNGER FOR GOD

The second characteristic about this awakening of God that I have experienced is an almost insatiable hunger for God. I have come to the point now that I believe the story of the 2023 Asbury Revival is a story that began with nineteen hungry hearts asking God to fill them with himself and the remarkable reality of God doing just that.

This theme of hunger is familiar in many ways, making up part of every human experience. With more time, we could investigate hunger by looking at numerous strategic passages of Scripture such as Matthew 4, Isaiah 55, Exodus 16, Genesis 25, or even Genesis 3.

But what is apparent is that a question runs right from the Garden of Eden through all human reality: *To whom will I look to satisfy my hunger?* The truth is that all of us hunger for God, and as Jesus reminded us in his desert experience, bread without God will not satisfy. There is no amount of physical or metaphoric bread—whether sex, reputation, achievement, ministry, family, money, beauty, likes, or followers—that will satisfy the hunger in the human heart. The reason is that all those hungers, while perhaps feeling primal at our core at times, are actually secondary witnesses to a priority desire—a hunger for God.

I submit this is the only way that you can explain what has motivated people to do what they have done in these last days. Thousands of people converged on a small backwater town in central Kentucky. A couple from the country of Chile sold their vehicle, bought plane tickets, and flew to Lexington, Kentucky, to come to a small university's auditorium. A celebrated basketball player with an impressive ring on his finger drove an hour and half from Louisville to kneel at the altar in front of fourteen hundred people and ask that God would purify his heart. A thirty-year-old man drove ten hours from New Jersey, fasting and praying, and even lied about his age so that he could sneak into the "twenty-five and younger" session to seek guidance. People travelled from as nearby as Ohio, Indiana, and Tennessee as well as from as far away as Washington, Oregon, and Hawaii. This is not what we classify as normal or typical behavior. So what motivates people to seek God in such a way? They are hungry for God.

It is necessary to acknowledge that while we have witnessed and praised God for physical healings and even deliverances of various kinds, these miraculous manifestations of God's power have not been the revival's focus. Rather, a spirit of repentance, a confession

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Yet we should also keep in mind that there is something powerful about being in community and hearing testimonies of how God is working among the body of Christ. When others publicly repent of their sins, we may be moved to do the same. When others praise Jesus in loud voices, we may experience a similar joy in the Lord. When others intercede in prayer for the nations, we may be urged to follow suit. Witnessing together the movement of God, we are strengthened for our own testimony just as we strengthen those who are giving testimony. Ephesians 4:15–16 reminds us of God’s desire for the body of Christ to be knit together in this way: “speaking the truth in love, we must grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by every joint with which it is equipped, when each part is working properly, makes the body grow so that it builds itself up in love.”

Some have asked how this outpouring of the Holy Spirit came about. How can it be replicated? The simple answer is that this was a spontaneous act of God, a beautiful act of grace. It was not manufactured. Asbury University simply had another average, ordinary chapel service, and God chose to move. We have done nothing ourselves to make this happen.

That’s not entirely correct. People have been praying for revival for years—some, for decades. God *delights* in these kinds of prayers. God responds in his own timing to the cries of his people. But make no mistake: this is not a “work.” The prayers of the people are a response to what God has done previously. God’s grace comes first, the people respond with prayers for more, and God pours out his grace once again.

What is so stunning about this kind of outpouring is that it is *locally focused*. We regularly preach the truth that God who created and sustains the universe is accessible anywhere—whether in foxholes or brothels or athletic fields or beaches or homes or churches. God is available to all who cry out to him. And yet there are times when the Spirit appears profoundly in a particular location. When Moses met God, he saw a burning bush that was not consumed, and he was told to remove his sandals because the place on which he was standing was holy (Ex. 3:1–6). When God led the Israelites through the desert, he did so by a cloud of his presence during the day and by fire at night (Ex. 13:21). God’s glory filled the tabernacle (Ex. 40:34–38). When the Spirit poured forth at Pentecost, it filled a house in Jerusalem where believers had gathered (Acts 2:1). These kinds of manifestations of God’s presence have continued through the centuries as God regularly revives his people. Now God has chosen this season to pour forth abundantly his Spirit at Asbury University. But this does not mean that God is any less accessible in your home church. Pray for the refreshing Spirit of God to bless your community. Be persistent. Wait with longing. Don’t give up hope. And don’t forget that even as you await the flood, you are trees planted by water. Drink deeply of the Spirit who is always present. The flood is no replacement for the daily drinking from the streams of God’s goodness.

A FEW PRACTICAL NOTES

As the Spirit began to move, the leaders have worked hard to keep the emphasis on Jesus. No one leader has emerged, but a large team is working together to make sure the music, the testimonies, the

personal narratives, the discussion of Scripture all focus on glorifying God rather than on individuals in the room.

Repentance has been a large part of what God has prompted among those in attendance. In order for God to revive us, we must confess the ways in which we have followed our own wills rather than the will of God. We must be willing to flee sin and be transformed by a loving God who desires to give us a life of flourishing (2 Chr. 7:14). We have been called to a life of holiness.

Flexibility is an incredibly important part of responding to the Spirit. Our churches and institutions often have policies and procedures—routines that keep the cogs of progress running smoothly. But when the Spirit suddenly shows up in powerful ways, the rule book may need to go out the window. Our administration at Asbury encouraged professors to be flexible with assignment dates and attendance policies for those who have felt called to worship in Hughes Auditorium. Leaders have been creative in addressing unforeseen needs—a snack table outside the back door of the auditorium for those who remain for hours, portable toilets outside for those waiting in line to gain entrance to the packed auditorium, a baby changing table placed outside the restrooms (not your typical equipment here!). In the early church, organization developed over time. At first, the believers simply gathered together and “devoted themselves to

the apostles’ teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers” (Acts 2:42). Later, in Acts 6, deacons were appointed to distribute food to the Hellenistic widows who had been overlooked in the daily food distribution. Structure was introduced to make sure the needs were met. Similarly, here at Asbury systems have developed quickly to meet pressing needs. At first, volunteers simply showed up and asked where they could serve; now, sign-up lists have been created and leaders appointed to organize the needs. Flexible structures are important.



Photo by Kim Ball

Discernment is perhaps one of the greatest needs. How is God moving? How can this gift best be stewarded? Where might people intentionally or unintentionally be leading this community in a different direction than God desires? Constant prayer is an absolute necessity.

Spiritual outpourings today contain an element not foreseen in previous generations: social media. Word about this movement of God has spread like wildfire on Twitter, Facebook, and other social media platforms. In the past, teams of evangelists needed to travel from town to town to spread the word, but now in a matter of days people on the other side of the planet have heard about what is happening in Wilmore, Kentucky. For the first week and a half of this outpouring, Asbury University intentionally chose not to livestream the revival (other than our previously scheduled student chapel services). Some in the crowds, however, have been livestreaming non-stop. We need to be concerned about the potential for abuse. Those who are unaware they are being filmed but are moved by the Spirit to repent publicly of their sins—even if they are in a room of 1,500 people—are not expecting to see later their testimony spread to millions across the globe (including family far away who may

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not appreciate the personal revelations) or that their images may be turned into memes. When we post under these conditions, we should consider posting short snippets of praise and worship so that God may be glorified. But we must be careful not to abuse others in our eagerness to share. Just because we *can* post intimate personal testimonies to social media does not mean that we *should*.

This dynamic is admittedly different when those present are aware that they are being filmed. On Sunday President Brown announced that Asbury will begin livestreaming services during the next week. Believers across the world who cannot physically travel to Wilmore will be able to see how God is moving here. It remains to be seen, however, the ways in which broadcasting will affect the nature and tenor of testimonies and worship. My prayer is that the focus remains on God as our audience and not those watching through their screens.

WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?

As I write this, thousands of strangers are on campus—so many, in fact, that on Sunday police officers had to close access to the main road into Wilmore. The town simply does not have capacity for any more visitors. The crowds have been unsettling to some of our students, who have found their routines significantly disrupted. Yet I am reminded that these newcomers are standing where we were two weeks ago when we drank deeply from the well of the Spirit—thirsty and desperate for a touch from God. We need to be careful, once we have drunk from the flood, not to lose compassion for those who remain thirsty.

Our administrators have done well to support this public longing for God, but they also recognize that this outpouring is not meant to remain here, but to spread. My prayer is that revival will come to you. This refreshing Spirit is not for us alone, and there is plenty to go around. Scripture is full of language describing the abundance of God: “hope does not put us to shame, because God’s love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit that has been given to us” (Rom. 5:5). Already reports are occurring of revivals on other campuses, such as Lee University and Samford University.



Photo courtesy: Asbury University

The challenge will occur, however, after the flood waters recede. We must not forget that we are still streams planted by living water. God is the same yesterday, today, and forever, even if we *experience* God in different ways on different days. We cannot forsake the normal means of grace in search of floodwaters alone. It will be important in the days ahead for local faith communities to disciple those who have found new life as a result of this outpouring. We will need to teach Scripture in depth and provide small-group support and accountability in order to help people make sense of what they have experienced and challenge them toward deeper relationships with Jesus.

This flood we are experiencing today is meant to revive us for a purpose—to share the joy and the love of God with those living in a dark world. As this revival has been occurring, we simultaneously have watched tens of thousands of dead being pulled from the rubble after the earthquake in Turkey and Syria. We have witnessed several more mass shootings, including one on the campus of Michigan State University. We continue to see famine and poverty, addiction and despair, racism and sexism, abuse and ailments across the world and in our homes. We need this refreshing of the Spirit more than ever as a testimony that God has not abandoned this dark world. We have tasted and seen that the Lord is good (Ps. 34:8). This is the hope for a world gone wrong.

Our experience of this hope empowers us to go and preach the good news to the dying and the destitute, not only through our words but also through our actions. God calls us to perfect love of both God and neighbor. If we keep this refreshing Spirit to ourselves, then we have missed the point. God has given us shalom—wholeness and healing and flourishing—so that we can bring the love of God to others. If we proclaim the love of Jesus but do not demonstrate God’s love by helping the poor and destitute, then we are nothing but a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal (1 Cor. 13:1). God forbid that we turn these songs of praise into nothing more than a noisy interruption. ✠

A Different Wednesday continued from page 2

been an answer, I later considered that what happened Wednesday may have been *because* of what happened Tuesday, and Monday, and each week, month, and year since the last revival at Asbury. I don’t know that a revival is ever the product of *people* getting something right. I’m not convinced there is an eight-step system or a secret prayer that can provoke a movement of the Spirit like the one we witnessed. God will move as God is pleased to move. But I do believe we are called upon to be faithful stewards of the Spirit, wherever and however he is pleased to move in our midst. I am certain we are called, as is written in Matthew 25, to stand ever ready, with lanterns full of oil, waiting for the coming of the bridegroom. And I am persuaded that part of what I saw during those two weeks was a community primed for the spark when it came, and a nation and a world responding to a desperate yearning for more of God.

We are thirsty, O Lord. We yearn for the coming of the bridegroom. Fill our lanterns anew with oil. Convict our hearts and sanctify us with your Word. Make us ever ready, faithful, and true. For the glory of the Father, in the name of the Son. Come Holy Spirit, come. ✠

of sin, and a desire for breakthrough with God have been the norm. Thus, in such an environment, the issues that have been on people's hearts have been how to be saved, wanting to pray for full surrender, a desire to break pornography addictions, a confessing of substance abuse, an acknowledging of unforgiveness, a seeking of healing from adultery, grieving infertility, navigating illness-related questions, naming sports idolatry, and admitting jealousy. These are merely the beginning of topics that people have poured out at the feet of Jesus, acknowledging their hurt, questions, sin, brokenness, vulnerability, fear, and shame.

In the midst of so much hunger, what has been remarkable is the faithfulness of God to fill people with himself through the power of the Holy Spirit. Just like Jesus promised in Matthew 5:6, we can give testimony that the hungry are being filled and the thirsty are being satisfied—with God himself.

A "COMING-TO-GO" MINDSET

The third characteristic that we have observed these days at Asbury has been a burden for the world. The nations have come to Wilmore. Men and women from Chile, Canada, South Africa, the United Kingdom, Nigeria, Brazil, South Korea, Russia, Norway, Haiti, Myanmar, and Israel have all come seeking God. But they are not just coming for God to meet them—they want to return to the nations and are asking God to visit their countries as well.

I experienced this "coming-to-go" mindset while I was praying with people at the altar one afternoon. A man came with a flag wrapped around his shoulders. I asked him what God was saying and he told me that he had come from Mexico City. He had traveled via four cities

by plane before getting a vehicle to drive to Wilmore. He had brought a Mexican flag because he wanted God to move in Mexico. Then he pulled out a white T-shirt with his youth group's logo on it and placed it on the altar, saying, "This represents the young people of Mexico. Will you pray with me for the youth of Mexico?"

So Juan and I knelt at the altar in Hughes Auditorium and we cried out for God to come to the nation of Mexico, specifically for God to save the young people of that nation and to anoint Juan in a special way as he returns. It was a sacred and holy moment. Curiously (and convictingly) Juan turned eighteen only about three months ago. What motivates such a young man to pay the price to come to such an out-of-the-way place as Wilmore? I suggest again it's a hunger for God. It is worth reiterating that Juan was not there for himself—he was there because God had given him a burden for his nation.

I am reminded of the end of Scripture where we see representatives from every nation, tribe, people, and language likewise bowing down in worship to God and to the Lamb. Curiously, at the end of the story, the apostle John echoes the now-familiar theme of hunger and thirst:

The Spirit and the Bride say, "Come." And let the one who hears say, "Come." And let the one who is thirsty come; let the one who desires take the water of life without price. (Revelation 22:17)

You may be asking, "So what can I do?" or "How does one get God to do that for my community?"

To that good question, I would only answer, "Pray for a hunger." ✨



Photo by Kelly Hallahan

40 Years

1983–2023

The Francis Asbury Society (FAS) was incorporated in the State of Kentucky on May 24, 1983, two hundred and forty-five years from the date of John Wesley's experience at Aldersgate, with a purpose "to spread the message of Scriptural holiness to the ends of the earth in accordance with the Great Commission." Dr. Dennis F. Kinlaw and Dr. Harold Burgess, our co-founders, initially combined two efforts to create the Francis Asbury Society: publishing and evangelism.

Over the years, hundreds of people have given of themselves to the Society: as staff, volunteers, evangelists, donors, etc. Though there is no way we could possibly list you all here, we still wish to thank all of you for your contributions to the ministry of the Francis Asbury Society that have made these last 40 years possible. Your prayers, your time, and your financial support continue to sustain our ministry, our Society.

Thank you!

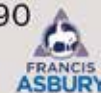
Hosea

God's Unchanging Love



A study with Dr. John Oswalt

Beginning Tuesday August 29, 2023
7 pm at The Francis Asbury Society
1580 Lexington Rd. Wilmore KY 40390



hands and submitting to one another as they make decisions. It is like nothing I have ever seen before.

They have a process for collecting worship teams. Ready for it? The Holy Spirit highlights people in the room. The “worship stewards” then ask those students to lead in a worship band. You will love this next part: This newly formed worship band gets prayed for in the outside hall and then goes to the Consecration Room. Yep. Consecration Room. This is where Spirit-filled hidden “prayer warriors” pray over this newly formed team. This goes on for 30 minutes or more. (This Consecration Room is for any person who will step on the platform, speakers included.) Then the worship team comes back down the stairs, acclimates to the room, and finally after an hour of preparation behind the scenes, switches out with the team on stage that’s been leading. The “worship stewards” do not want any team to lead worship that has not been prepared in this way.

At the outset of Asbury’s February 2023 spiritual renewal, volunteers came forward to help without being asked, saw a need, and set to it. But as word spread and lines lengthened to enter Hughes, coordination of helping hands was a must. President Brown told a *Christianity Today* reporter:

There were 100 people volunteering at any one time [as it turned out, a lowball estimate] just to make these services work on the fly. There was a classroom that got redeployed into almost a command center. If you walked in, there were flowcharts on the wall and the whiteboards were covered with information. There was a volunteer check-in station. It was one of the most impressive technical feats I’ve ever seen.

Early on, without being asked, an Asbury coed put up a tea and coffee table. A Lexington Alliance Church member baked enough banana bread to rejuvenate some 30 teens who had been standing in line for hours. As a labor of love, another woman from Indianapolis baked chocolate chip cookies for a full day and delivered them to Asbury herself. Other women made purchases at Costco and drove a loaded van to Wilmore to feed staff and pilgrims. Others donated pizza, barbeque, soup, and cakes. Hospitality “miracle workers,” some known and some unknown, purchased every bottle of water in Lexington’s two Sam’s Clubs for the benefit of spiritual pilgrims to Wilmore. Volunteer Jeannette Davis said the “miracle of provisions” reminded her of Jesus feeding the 5,000 with a handful of loaves and fishes.

Volunteer roles were diverse to say the least. An unknown number of Wilmore residents took in house guests on short notice, including Sam and Rachel Powdrill who hosted 25 overnight, none of whom spoke English, and widow Bette Crouse housed 32 sojourners over a span of two weeks, including an NBC reporter. Former Ichthus (the Wilmore-based Christian rock music festival) tech veterans came forward to assist Asbury University IT staff, who were completely maxed out. An Asbury Theological Seminary student volunteer who was a Methodist youth pastor from Zimbabwe found he could serve

by directing those new to Wilmore to restrooms and the 36 portable toilets placed beside Kinlaw Library and in the Asbury University semicircle. Another volunteer set up a baby changing station outside a restroom in Hughes.

From Wilmore Free Methodist Church alone came remote parking van drivers, at least half a dozen altar counselors, and Keith Madill, a retired school administrator, cleaning bathrooms in Hughes. When asked what the highlight of the revival was for him, this retiree said, “I am just thrilled to be here to help.” Free Methodist Senior Pastor Daryl Diddle and his wife Annette could be found doing baggage checks on the steps of Hughes, and Associate Pastor Dwight Winter volunteered as a shuttle bus driver. One Wilmore Free Methodist regular attendee is Dr. Jonathan Raymond, retired president of British Columbia’s Trinity Western University. At the start of the spiritual awakening, he focused on intercessory prayer in his home, but “I could not stay away.” He spent some time in Hughes, but more often he walked the hundreds-yard-long line of visitors, offering encouragement to those waiting to enter the auditorium. On one occasion he talked with a mother and son who had arrived from



Photo by Kim Ball

Indiana at 11 a.m. and were just about to enter Hughes at 8 p.m. On another occasion in the seminary gymnasium overflow venue, he prayed with an Hispanic family dealing with serious father-son frictions, a family that experienced a degree of healing and restitution through this retired president’s prayer.

[Revival was] unplanned and unexpected—the absolute absence of human leadership. [It] occupies everybody and all our wakeful hours. Unusual, profound conviction pervades the assembly. The entire chapel is an altar. I haven’t told half the story. It cannot be told in human words. I wish I could portray its grandeur, its glory, and its graciousness.

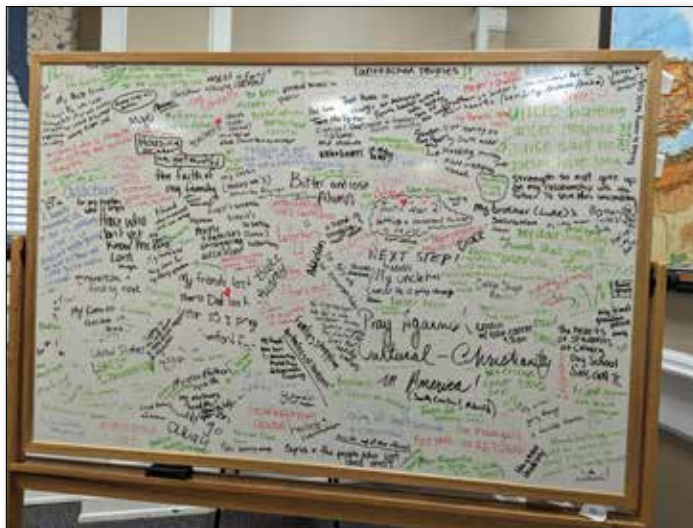


Photo courtesy: Asbury University

So wrote Asbury College President B. F. Haynes—not in 2023, but in 1905, about the very revival that propelled E. Stanley Jones to missionary service in India and beyond. What is fascinating is how well Haynes’ description fits 2023 as well as 1905. “Whatever this is or has become,” wrote Professor Rich Manieri in the February 24th *Asbury Collegian*,

Let’s remember that it began with a small group of students who lingered after chapel. This is pure, unplanned, organic. No big-name speakers or musicians, no pyrotechnics. This is not a performance. It is, however, a chorus of forgiven sinners crying out

in thanksgiving to an almighty God. It is, as Asbury President Kevin Brown called it, “a beautiful, historic moment of spiritual renewal.”

Like previous Asbury revivals, this spiritual renewal will be discussed and debated for years, but what remains true of them all is that, for one divine moment, God poured his Spirit into welcoming hearts and transformed their lives. ✨

Editor’s Note: Elliott’s account, *Taken by Surprise: The Asbury Spiritual Outpouring of 2023* is forthcoming from Seedbed Publishers.

Martin Luther's *Preface* to the book of Romans was read at a Moravian Society meeting at Aldersgate Street in London on May 24, 1738. Luther wrote:

Faith is a living, daring confidence in God's grace, so sure and certain that the believer would stake his life on it a thousand times. This knowledge of and confidence in God's grace makes men glad and bold and happy in dealing with God and with all creatures. And this is the work which the Holy Spirit performs in faith. Because of it, without compulsion, a person is ready and glad to do good to everyone, to serve everyone, to suffer everything, out of love and praise to God who has shown him this grace. Thus it is impossible to separate works from faith, quite as impossible as to separate heat and light from fire. Beware, therefore, of your own false notions and of idle talkers who imagine themselves wise enough to make decisions about faith and good works, and yet are the greatest fools. Pray God that he may work faith in you. Otherwise, you will surely remain forever without faith, regardless of what you may think or do.

John Wesley was present and testified that about a quarter before nine, while he was describing the change which God works in the heart through faith in Christ, "I felt my heart strangely warmed. I felt I did trust in Christ, Christ alone for salvation, and an assurance was given me that he had taken away my sins, even mine, and saved me from the law of sin and death."



Photo by Sarah Thomas Baldwin

The evangelical conversions of John and Charles Wesley ignited the eighteenth-century Methodist Revival, which never completely died. J. Edwin Orr claimed a great move of God has come to every generation since 1727. This includes the first and second great awakenings in America, the Mid-Century Revival—which swept Great Britain and many other nations of the world—the Welsh Revival of the early 1900s, and the awakenings in the Hebrides, Indonesia, Africa, and Korea in the 1950s—six in all.

Orr's reference to 1727 was to the awakening in the Moravian community under Zinzendorf. It was Peter Böhler, the Moravian, who taught John Wesley that salvation is by faith. Wesley visited this community in August 1738 shortly after Aldersgate.

Wesley expressed hope that the Methodist Revival would not die. "No; I trust this is only the beginning of a far greater work—the

dawn of 'the latter day glory.'" Wesley then expressed his belief that God "will carry it on in the same manner as he has begun." Thus, he expected the "latter day glory" to arrive gradually as the gospel was preached and all classes of people would be converted and enter the kingdom of God. He described this as "the grand Pentecost" fully come. Wesley wrote:

Some people say, when my head is laid, all this work will come to nothing. So it might, if it were the work of man. But it is not the work of man: it is the work of God; and it will spread more and more till the knowledge of the Lord shall cover the earth as the waters cover the sea.

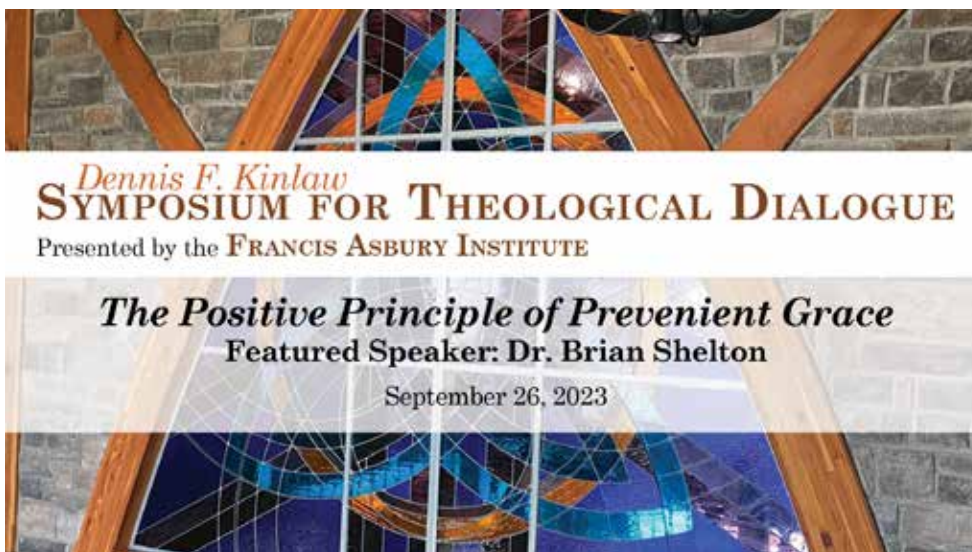
The Francis Asbury Society was intentionally formed on May 24, 1983, two hundred and forty-five years from the date of John Wesley's

experience at Aldersgate, with a purpose "to spread the message of Scriptural holiness to the ends of the earth in accordance with the Great Commission." Dr. Dennis F. Kinlaw and Dr. Harold Burgess, our co-founders, initially combined two efforts to create the Francis Asbury Society: publishing and evangelism.

While we could commemorate our accomplishments over the last forty years, we choose to mark this forty-year anniversary by reporting on something for which no one can take credit. What began as a normal chapel on February 8 at Asbury University turned into multi-day services

that would host approximately 50,000 guests over a two-week period. There were over 100 million views of #AsburyRevival online. The university hosted visitors from nearly 270 colleges and universities representing 39 states. We watched both domestic and international travelers desperate and eager to get to Hughes Auditorium.

Few people, however, are aware that the first outpouring on the Asbury University campus was in 1905 and that this more recent outpouring is the ninth such work of the Holy Spirit in that location. As the Spirit continues to move on campuses and around the world, this issue of *The High Calling* is devoted to testimonies and descriptions of this most recent gift from heaven. It will take years to tabulate and analyze all that has happened, but at this point we say with David, "This is the Lord's doing; it is marvelous in our eyes" (Ps 118:23). ✠



Dennis F. Kinlaw
SYMPOSIUM FOR THEOLOGICAL DIALOGUE
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Colin Williams concluded that Wesley's emphasis on preliminary grace enabled him to break "the chain of logical necessity" that seemed to be the inevitable consequence of original sin. But does Scripture teach this concept? Dr. Brian Shelton, makes a case for original sin, conditional election, prevenient grace, and the universal opportunity for all to believe.

Our panel of speakers include Dr. Chris Bounds, Dr. Kenneth J. Collins, Dr. Suzanne Nicholson, and Dr. Brian Shelton. Find more information at:

www.francisasburysociety.com/event

God's Divine Coincidence

Wayne Atcheson



Wayne Atcheson is senior ambassador and historian of the Billy Graham Library in Charlotte, NC. He is also the author of *The Asbury Revival*, which traces the amazing move of God from the 1970 Asbury Revival to its 50th reunion in early 2020. This article is a brief excerpt of Wayne's reflections and observations from Jesus's latest divine visit to the campus of Asbury University.

Dr. Wesley Duewel, a former president of One Mission Society, once said, "Probably no major campus in America has experienced revival more frequently than Asbury College [now University]." Asbury revivals seem to be part of the school's DNA. Bill Bright, founder of Campus Crusade for Christ (now CRU), once said, "If we reach the campus, we reach the world."

During the Second Great Awakening (1790–1845), the Collegiate Day of Prayer (originally called the Concert of Prayer for Colleges) was established. It is now celebrated on the last Thursday of February. In May 2022, the leadership of Collegiate Day of Prayer (CDOP) chose Asbury University for its 200th anniversary celebration on February 23, 2023, a decision made ten months before the revival began.

Only in God's divine providence would an Asbury revival coincide with the planned two-hour CDOP service in Hughes Auditorium! Though the service had already been planned to be live-streamed, because of the revival, the Christian networks of TBN, CBN, and numerous other outlets carried the service live to millions across the globe. CDOP leadership coordinated with Asbury University students and leadership to make the service a continuation of the revival, scrapping its original program agenda.

Asbury University President Kevin Brown welcomed the packed Hughes Auditorium and global audiences. A university praise band provided the music and several spiritual leaders provided brief messages. Students were selected to share their revival experiences and commitments they had made. Others came forth with moving prayers and Scripture readings.

One coed said, "We had no idea that the world was about to know God better. We had no idea that our campus was about to become a mission field. We had no idea what God was about to do, but hundreds have come to know Christ for the first time, and thousands came to recommit their hearts and lives to the Christian faith."

The final challenge came from Bill Elliff, a product of the 1970 Asbury Revival who is now a Christian revival leader. "Over the past 360 hours, you have been overwhelmed by the loving kindness and holiness of God. You have been given a precious gift of his manifest presence. I can promise you—as one who experienced this as a student from the 1970 Asbury Revival that came to my college in Arkansas—that you will never ever, ever be the same. You will never again live a selfish life because you have encountered Christ. If you have him, you have everything you need. You will never be satisfied again with anything less than Jesus."

The Asbury Revival of 2023 will forever be historic in the annals of our nation's revival history. It will live in the hearts of all Asbury students, faculty, and staff for the rest of their lives. Millions had an opportunity to witness the presence of God's glory. The greatest part was those who invited Jesus into their hearts to be their Lord and Savior. Countless lives will never be the same because they experienced the presence and power of Jesus—joy unspeakable! Once again, Jesus made a divine visit to the Asbury University campus, and he wants to visit every campus. May it be so, Lord! ✠

Supporting the Francis Asbury Society

Charlie Fiskeaux, Special Assistant to the President for Financial Affairs

There are a couple of vital ways to support the Francis Asbury Society. The first means is prayer. As a spiritual ministry, every part of FAS is critically dependent upon your consistent and direct prayer support, including President John Oswald, presidential transition, Board of Directors, employees, speaker-evangelists, conferencing, publishing, *The High Calling*, discipleship, Ministry Center activities, volunteers, and the network of covenant-supporters.

Secondly, FAS is a tangible ministry that requires financial support to be viable. Each FAS ministry is made possible by contributions from donors. However, every ministry of FAS also receives a base of support provided through the Ministry Center involving office space, gift processing, computer and information systems, mail processing, publications oversight, and organizing and hosting various events such as retreats and discipleship studies. This base of support for all ministries is possible because of the *General Fund*, which is identified as "General" because it supports every individual ministry in some measure.

Presently, we are seeking persons who will commit to a "Leadership 100" level of giving, which is \$100 per month in support of the General Fund. However, if your family budget will not accommodate that level, then we will be grateful for your gifts of any amount or schedule, as the Lord leads you. Your regular support enables us to proclaim the gospel message that we can be "wholly devoted to God" with an undivided heart. Thank you for your participation in FAS with both prayers and gifts. Details for various methods of giving to the ministries of the Francis Asbury Society are available on our website: www.francisasburysociety.com/support. ✠

Deadly Sins 7 Cardinal Virtues

A STUDY OF CONTRASTS

Pride	Humility
Greed	Charity
Lust	Chastity
Envy	Patience
Gluttony	Temperance
Wrath	Kindness
Sloth	Diligence

Started January 24, 2023

Yesterday, Today, and Forever

By Gareth Lee Cockerill



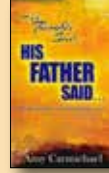
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By Amy Carmichael

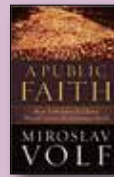


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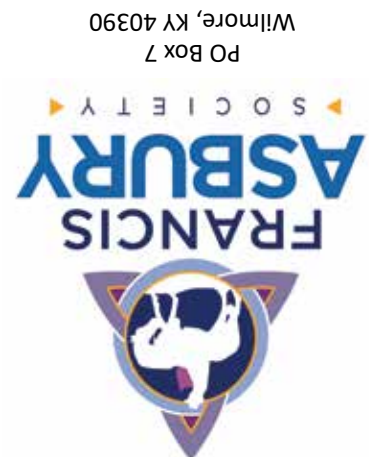
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The High Calling—May–June 2023

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.

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The High Calling

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