

"Revive Us Again"
Psalm 85:1-7; II Chronicles 7:14
Mililani Community Church
Dr. Rick Bartosik
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Recently we were privileged to have Dr. Robert Coleman in Hawaii to teach a modular graduate course at International College and Graduate School. Dr. Coleman is known around the world as the author of a book entitled The Master Plan of Evangelism. This book has had a tremendous impact on the cause of world evangelization.

Dr. Coleman's course was not on the topic of evangelism. It was on the theme of revival. Diane signed up for the course as a community enrichment student. What she learned in this course was so challenging to me personally, that I decided to study the subject of revival myself, and do a series on revival for our own congregation here at Mililani Community Church.

THE MEANING OF "REVIVAL"

The word 'revival' means "to make fresh and strong again; to bring back to a good condition." One of the keys to the true meaning of the word revival is found in Psalm 85. In the first three verses of Psalm 85, the Psalmist recalls the way God worked so majestically in the past history of Israel: *"You showed favor to your land, O LORD; you restored the fortunes of Jacob. You forgave the iniquity of your people and covered all their sins. You set aside all your wrath and turned from your fierce anger."* Then in the following verses he says, "Do it again God!" Verse 4,6: *"Restore us again O God our Savior ... Will you not revive us again, that your people may rejoice in you?"*

It is the nature of all created things to wear out and to wind down. It is the nature of a fire, to go out; of sheep, to wander; of love, to wax cold; of the church, to drift; and of people, to forget.

As a result we need to be revived and restored to the early devotion we had for becoming loyal disciples of Jesus Christ.

Acts 3:19 is a good definition: *"...times of refreshing from the Lord".*

There is a difference between a revival and an evangelistic campaign. An evangelistic campaign is something the church decides to do.

Revival is something God does. Revival is a work of GOD! (*“Will YOU not revive us again...”*).

Stephen Olford writes: “Revival is the sovereign act of God in which he restores his own backsliding people to repentance, faith and obedience.”

At the same time, a true revival will result in the church having a greater impact in society as Christians become serious about living lives of full devotion to the Lord Jesus Christ before a watching world.

EXAMPLES OF REVIVAL

There have been examples of extraordinary movements of the Spirit of God throughout history.

One example is the tremendous movement of the Spirit of God in Korea (1906-1910) with 80,000 added to the churches. Since the Korean War, 15 million have come to Christ in a nation of just over 40 million.

Another example is China. There were less than one million Christians in China prior to 1950. Primarily in the last 25 years the Spirit of God has added 70-90 million believers in a nation that contains one-fourth of the world’s population

In our nation’s history we have experienced three major revivals:

FIRST: The Great Awakening about 1740 in the time of George Whitfield and Jonathan Edwards. All of society was dramatically affected. Thousands came to Christ. The Great Awakening became probably the major unifying factor among the American colonies at that time. Laid the spiritual foundation for the beginning of our nation.

SECOND: The Second Great Awakening at the beginning of the 19th century. 1785-1820. Taverns were closed, families were reconciled, young people became serious in their pursuit of God. Thousands came to Christ.

Spiritual awakening came to Hawaii during this period. Henry Opukaha’ia was the first Hawaiian Christian. In the late 1700s his entire family was killed during a tribal war on the shores of Kealakakua Bay on the Big Island. He pled with the captain of the Ship Triumph, harbored in the bay, to let him come on board and leave Hawaii.

Eventually he ended up in the home of Timothy Dwight, the President of Yale College and the grandson of Jonathan Edwards. There Henry came to faith in Christ. He also learned Greek and Hebrew and became a scholar and an evangelist with a passion to go back to Hawaii to tell his own people the Good News of salvation in Christ.

But Henry Opukaha'ia died of Typhus fever before fulfilling that vision. Christians on the East Coast of the United States read his memoirs and said, "If Henry can't go, we will go." That led to the arrival of the first missionaries to Hawaii in 1820. Just six months before the missionaries arrived, in God's wonderful providence, the Hawaiian people had overthrown their idol system – because they realized their gods were false and unable to rescue them from the many diseases they were dying of as a result of the foreigners coming into Hawaii at the time – most sailors. For those six months the Hawaiians were a people without a religion. The Chief Kahuna of King Kamehameha the Great prophesied that someone would come to tell them about the true God. Then the missionaries showed up and the rest is history!

The spiritual awakening in Hawaii between 1820 and 1840 is considered to be one of the greatest movements of the Spirit of God in the Western Hemisphere. Thousands of Hawaiians turned to Christ. Titus Coan, an early missionary on the Big Island would baptize 500 converts at a time with a broom! Churches were started all over the islands.

The Hawaiian people were given a written language and taught to read and write. Within 18 years the ENTIRE Bible from Genesis to Revelation was translated and printed (10,000 in the first edition – a copy of this original edition can be viewed at the Mission House Museum Library in Honolulu). Hawaiian churches today celebrate the third Sunday in February as "Henry Opukaha'ia Sunday", recalling how God used his testimony to bring the Gospel to the islands.

THIRD: The third great period of revival in America took place at the beginning of the 20th century. Immigrants were coming to America from all over the world. *"Send me your tired, your poor, your teeming masses yearning to be free .."*

As these immigrants were arriving, God chose to raise up a number of great evangelists like Dwight L. Moody and others to preach the gospel to them. Tens of thousands came to Christ. Beginning of Sunday Schools. Beginning of the American Bible Society. Missionary

societies were formed. Our own EFCA denomination started during this time with Swedes and Norwegians.

AMERICA NEEDS A REVIVAL TODAY!

America is rapidly degenerating into a godless society.

Our democratic form of government was founded on faith in the living God of the Bible. Pull out any coin and look at it: "In God we trust" America flourished in the past when Christianity permeated all aspects of life: including the law, education, culture in general.

But today the most influential people in America have chosen a path of rejecting God and his ways.

Militant secularists will not be satisfied until God is removed from every facet of American life. In a recent battle in our culture wars we saw Chief Justice Moore of Alabama fired for refusing a federal order to remove the Ten Commandments from the Alabama Judicial Building.

Society is fast becoming openly hostile to Christian values.

American laws are being reinterpreted and rewritten to sanction things that are an abomination to God.

1973 the Supreme Court legalized abortion. William Pryor the Attorney General of Alabama recently called the Roe Vs. Wade decision, "the worst abomination of constitutional law in our nation's history." He explained why: Because it has led to the slaughter of millions of innocent unborn babies.

AMERICA IS REAPING THE CONSEQUENCES OF REJECTING GOD

William Bennett in his Index of Leading Cultural Indicators gives the following statistics for the past 30 years.

- Despite increased funding for law enforcement and stricter laws violent crime has increased 500%
- Sex education programs have proliferated and at the same time illegitimate births have increased over 400%
- The divorce rate has quadrupled
- Single parent homes have become the majority
- More than 200% increase in teenage suicide

The Church in America in spite of its many activities and apparent successes has no measurable affect in reversing this downward spiral.

Pollsters tell us, religion is up and morality is down.

Moral decay in the church vividly illustrated by the apostate bishops of the Episcopal church voting to ordain a man who left his wife and kids to move in with a homosexual lover. He is the new bishop of New Hampshire.

Judge Robert Bork in his book Slouching to Gomorrah has said that the forces of evil are so deeply entrenched that any cultural shifts will only be superficial unless they are accompanied by another spiritual awakening.

THERE IS HOPE!

Revival is possible as long as God is God. Jonathan Edwards argued that God grants light when the darkness is the greatest.

It was at just such times that revival occurred in America's history.

When there was disinterest in religion, gross immorality, rampant unbelief, God poured out his undeserved, gracious blessing.

Do it again God!

CONDITIONS FOR REVIVAL ON GOD'S TERMS

1. IF MY PEOPLE WILL HUMBLE THEMSELVES

God has said, *"If my people will humble themselves."* God will visit us when we reach a point of desperation. When we surrender that pride, when we give up the idea that we can do pretty good on our own, and we get down on our knees and admit things are not as they should be, then God will come to His people. God says that the first thing I am looking for in my people is a spirit of humbleness.

David said in Psalm 51:16,17, *"You, O Lord, do not delight in sacrifice or I would bring it; you do not take pleasure in burnt offerings. The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart..."*

Jim Cymbala in Fresh Wind Fresh Fire: "When I was at my lowest, confounded by obstacles, bewildered by the darkness that surrounded

us ... I discovered an astonishing truth: God is attracted to weakness. He can't resist those who humbly and honestly admit how desperately they need him. Our weakness, in fact, makes room for his power."

James 4:6-10 – *"God resists the proud, But gives grace to the humble." 7Therefore submit to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you. 8Draw near to God and He will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners; and purify your hearts, you double-minded. 9Lament and mourn and weep! Let your laughter be turned to mourning and your joy to gloom. 10Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and He will lift you up."*

The next thing we must do to attain revival is that we must pray
2. IF MY PEOPLE WILL PRAY AND SEEK MY FACE

Are you pretty satisfied with the state of the church today – with the devotion to God in your own heart? Revival will not come that way. *"If my people who are called by my name will humble themselves and pray and seek my face."* God never sends revival to those who don't want it enough to even bother asking for it in prayer.

The king in Nineveh said, *"I want you to put on sackcloth and I want you to call URGENTLY on God."* Urgently – that means with a sense of emergency and with intensity. People who pray revival prayers are those people who pray long, hard, intense, and unyielding prayers from the depths of their hearts. One person calls this full-throttle praying.

Jeremiah 29:11-13 says, *"For I know the plans I have for you," declares the Lord, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future. You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart."* That is Full Throttle praying and that is exactly what God is looking for!

One person said, "I prayed for revival in my marriage for a whole week and nothing happened." That's not revival praying. Some say, "I've been praying for a whole month for revival at my church and nothing's happened." That's not revival praying either. Those who pray revival prayers are desperate, whole-hearted, never-ending petitioners of God. They never give up. They never quit.

Dwight L. Moody, that famous evangelist from Chicago went on vacation to England. He wasn't planning to do any preaching; he was on a sabbatical. But he met a pastor there who said, "Mr. Moody

you're so well known, would you come and speak at our church?" So he went to preach the next Sunday morning.

That afternoon Moody wrote in his journal that they were the dearest crowd he had ever seen and that the only thing worse than preaching to those people was that he had promised to go back that night and preach again. But as he preached he noticed that the atmosphere had changed, he did not know just why.

At the close of the meeting, he was led to give an invitation for those who wanted to be saved to stand. Something amazing happened. A great crowd of people stood. He didn't know what to do. So he said, "Maybe you don't understand what I am asking. So when we are dismissed if you believe you are unsaved and you need to be saved come over to this little room and meet with me." When the service was over, he went to the room it was packed!

He left the next day for Dublin Ireland. Shortly after arriving there, he received a telegram from the church to return, "Come back. Revival has broken out." So Moody got back on the train, went back to that church and preached 10 straight nights. And hundreds of people came to Christ.

Not long afterwards, he learned the secret. An invalid lady, who could not attend the church, was praying for a mighty outpouring of the Spirit upon the church. She prayed for months. Once she saw in the papers accounts of some of the Moody meetings in America, and although she had never heard of Mr. Moody before, she began to pray that God would send him to her church in London for a revival.

One Sunday morning, her sister returned from the service and informed her of Moody's presence and his preaching.

She spent the whole afternoon in prayer that God would make that night a night of power. And God did!

Charles Spurgeon – "Whenever God determines to do a great work, he first sets his people to pray."

We need to be like Jacob. Remember when He saw an angel of the Lord at the brook Jabbok, and he wrestled with him all night. The angel in the morning said, "*Let me go.*" What did Jacob say in Genesis 32:26, "*I will not let you go until you bless me.*"

I challenge you to pray that way. I challenge you to pray that God will send revival to Mililani Community Church and to say, "God I'm not going to give up until it comes."

3. IF MY PEOPLE WILL TURN FROM THEIR WICKED WAYS

Repentance is not only for the hardened sinner on Skid Row. Repentance is often required of those of us who have accepted Christ and are inside the church. Our Lord said to the church at Ephesus, *"Remember therefore from where you have fallen; repent and do the first works"* (Revelation 2:5).

Real repentance involves confession of sin and turning away from it.

When Paul preached at Ephesus, the Bible says that *"many came, and confessed, and showed their deeds"* -and not only that, they turned from their sins, and made a bonfire of those things which should not have been in their homes.

Our sins need to be confessed, and if we have wronged another person, we need to confess (like Zaccheus in Luke 19), and make restitution.

If you have spoken unkindly to a brother or sister in the church ... If you stole something from the place where you work--for the sake of honesty and for the sake of a clear conscience, get those things made right! It won't take long.

We need to go to the person who has been wronged and say, "I have sinned; I've done wrongly toward you; I apologize; will you forgive me?" We must never be ashamed to do that.

Jacob was told that he had to put away the idols that were in his household and be clean before the Lord if he wanted to experience the blessing of God and his reviving power (Gen. 35:1-4).

Joshua commanded the nation of Israel that they also had to *"throw away the gods your forefathers worshipped beyond the River and in Egypt, and serve the LORD"* Joshua 24:14.

Isaiah said, *"Take your evil deeds out of my sight! Stop doing wrong, learn to do right!"* (Isaiah 1:16-17).

God wants us to be clean persons, channels through whom his blessings, witness, and interventions in this world can flow.

If we are to be clean we have to renounce all bitterness, wrath, malice, harshness, unforgiving spirits, filthiness, and immorality; in short, anything that would "give the devil a foothold" (Eph. 4:27).

CONCLUSION

Our nation is in desperate need of revival. If God does not intervene we are headed for a terrible time of divine judgment.

What are we to do? We must pray for a revival: "Lord, bring a revival and let it start with me. Let it start at Mililani Community Church."

R. G. Lee describes revival like this:

*If all the sleeping folk will wake up,
 If all the lukewarm folk will fire up,
 If all the dishonest folk will confess up,
 If all the disgruntled folk will cheer up,
 If all the depressed folk will cheer up,
 If all the estranged folk will make up,
 If all the gossipers will shut up,
 If all true soldiers will stand up,
 If all the dry bones will shake up,
 If all the church members will pray up...
 Then we can have a revival!*

--R. G. Lee

But the question is, do we need it? Or maybe more to the point, do we WANT it?

If we want to see the windows of heaven opened, and the blessings of God poured out upon our lives, then all of us who bear the name of Jesus, and in particular those of us at Mililani Community Church, need

to humble ourselves and pray and seek God's face and turn from our wicked ways. These are requirements for revival among the people of God.

My prayer is: Do it again God! Do it again! *“Revive us again, that your people may rejoice in you. Show us your unfailing love, O LORD, and grant us your salvation.”* (Psalm 85:6-7)

May these next three months be days and weeks and months of revival in each of our hearts, in our homes, in our marriages and in Mililani Community Church as a whole, to the glory of God! AMEN.

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