

THE *Watchword*

COL 4:2 A CALL TO WATCH AND PRAY FOR REVIVAL NO. 53



ANDREW MURRAY

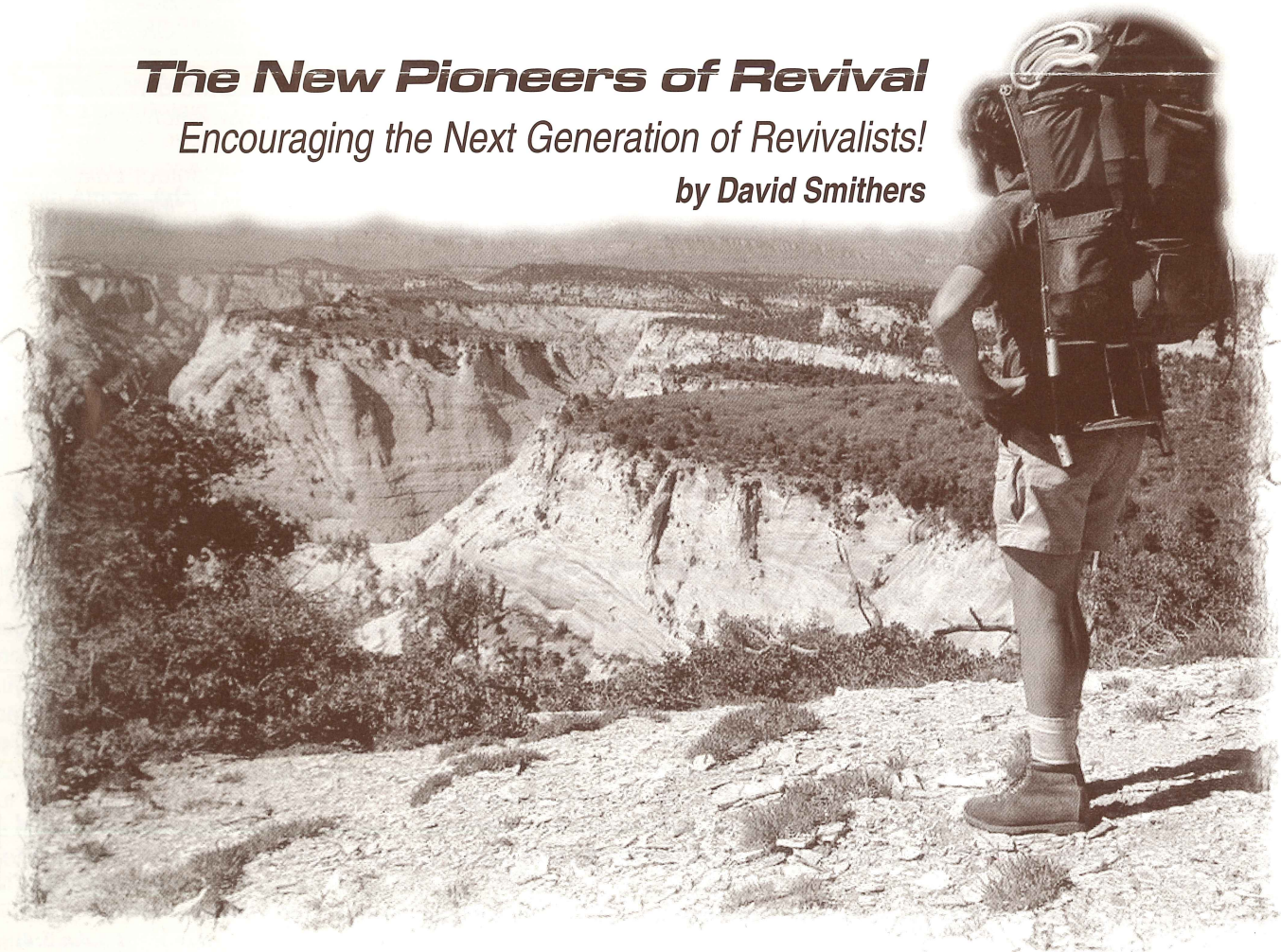
He Almost Stopped a True Revival!

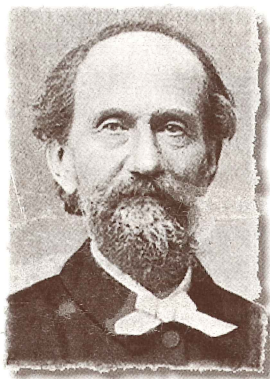
"The revival shook the entire countryside. The young and old, rich and poor, blacks and whites were all equally affected by the revival...even on remote farms, men and women were seized with emotions which they had been utter strangers... People were gripped with intense conviction. Strong men cried out in anguish while others fell to the ground unconscious and had to be carried out of the meetings."

The New Pioneers of Revival

Encouraging the Next Generation of Revivalists!

by David Smithers





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Soon after coming to Christ, I was given two small paperbacks written by Andrew Murray, "The Prayer Life" and "Waiting on God". It seemed with each new chapter came fresh insights and new experiences in prayer. As a young believer, these writings greatly helped me to define

and establish my personal prayer life. The principles conveyed in those little dog-eared books still continue to have a significant influence upon my prayer life and ministry. Almost twenty years later, I am only now beginning to feel that I truly understand the depth of what Andrew Murray was writing about! Most works on prayer direct you to a process of prayer, but Mr. Murray's writings direct you to the person of prayer - JESUS CHRIST.

Birthplace & Home

Andrew Murray was born on May 9th, 1828 in a Dutch Reformed parsonage in Graaff Reinet, South Africa. It was here that his father, the Rev. Andrew Murray, Sr. was ministering to the Dutch settlers. The Murray home was a vibrant and active place filled with the lively sounds of joy, prayer, and worship. Every Friday evening Andrew Murray's father would gather his family together and read them moving accounts of past revivals. He would then retire to his study and pour out his heart in prayer for revival to come to South Africa. This had been his weekly habit since 1822. Young Murray also benefited from several other fine examples of Christian zeal and devotion. Such men as David Livingstone and Robert Moffat frequently passed through their home on their way to the coast.

William C. Burns

In 1838, at the age of ten, Andrew left home with his brother John to study in Scotland. They stayed with their uncle, the Rev. John Murray. In the spring of 1840 the uncle introduced the boys to the revival ministry of William C. Burns. This renowned Scottish revivalist left a deep and lasting impression on the youthful Andrew Murray. The twelve-year-old Murray must have been thrilled when Mr. Burns invited him to carry his Bible and cloak as they walked together to the revival meetings in Aberdeen. Years later, Murray could still vividly recall the power of Burns' godly influence upon his life. His sincerity, fervent praying, and penetrating preaching all helped Andrew Murray define his own personal ministry and calling. The influence of one generation's Spirit-filled ministry often waters the seeds of another generation's harvest.

Pastor Blumhardt

After graduating from Marischal College in 1844, the two brothers went to Utrecht, Holland, for the purpose of further study in theology and the Dutch language. Religious life at this time in the Netherlands was at a low ebb and rationalism had crippled many of the pulpits and seminaries. Much like the Wesley brothers and the Holy Club at Oxford, John and Andrew joined a zealous group at the college called "Sechor Dabar" (Remember the Word). Here they found like-minded brethren, warm fellowship, and true missionary zeal. During a vacation from their classes, the brothers visited Germany, where they had the opportunity to meet Pastor Blumhardt. This remarkable man had been used to bring revival to the Renish province in Germany. This revival was marked by extraordinary manifestations of deliverance and healing the sick through prayer. "Andrew saw firsthand the ongoing work of God's power in his own time."

THE Watchword

The purpose of this publication is to encourage prayer and preparation for a true revival of Apostolic Christianity. The enclosed material is designed to provoke hope, zeal and vision for what the Church could be if we would fervently pray.

SUBSCRIPTION INFORMATION

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REMEMBER!

A truly prayerful and consecrated life unto God can only be established by faith. It is by trusting in the finished work of Christ that we are empowered to produce the fruit of love and righteousness.

"For whatever is born of God overcomes the world; and this is the victory that has overcome the world; our faith."

(1 John 5:4)

The Boy Preacher

The two brothers were ordained at The Hague on Andrew's twentieth birthday, leaving soon afterwards to begin their work in South Africa. Andrew appeared to be barely more than a child when he first returned to Africa. At twenty years old, he looked much younger than his age. An Old Dutch farmer was once heard to say, "Why, they have lent us a girl to preach to us." Nevertheless, in spite of Murray's fragile appearance, there was no end to his endurance and zeal. He would often go out for weeks at a time on horseback to hold meetings for the Boers, (Dutch-speaking South African farmers). These spiritually hungry farmers would come from literally hundreds of miles to listen to this "boy preacher". A temporary church of reeds would be quickly erected and then surrounded by hundreds of big Dutch farm wagons. It was during such ministry ventures, that the young Mr. Murray began to give expression to the fire and fervency so often associated with his classic writings on prayer and the Deeper Life.

Preparation for Revival

In 1860 Andrew Murray accepted a call to pastor the church at Worcester. His induction to the church coincided with a revival and missions conference made up of 374 South African ministers. The conference was planned for the specific purpose of encouraging spiritual revival and recruiting new workers and missionaries for the Dutch Reformed churches of South Africa. At the beginning of the conference a paper was handed out which traced the news of the recent revival in America and Britain. The attending ministers were strongly encouraged to expect and pray for a similar move of God in South Africa. A Dr. Robertson spoke on their great need for revival, followed by a Dr. Adamson who then gave a detailed report on the recent awakening in America. Andrew Murray, Sr. attempted to address the gathering, but was unable, being overcome with brokenness and tears. Overall, the conference was a great success, encouraging fresh hope and prayer among the attending ministers.

Shortly after the conference, a meeting of young people was held at the church on a Sunday evening. It was at this meeting that the Spirit of revival unexpectedly broke out. The meeting moved along as expected, until an unassuming 15-year-old black girl stood up to pray. Mr. Murray's associate, J. C. deVries, was overseeing the prayer meeting and gives us an eyewitness account of these extraordinary events. "On a certain Sunday evening there were gathered in a little hall some sixty young people. I was the leader of the meeting, which began with a hymn and a lesson from God's Word, after which I prayed. Three or four others gave out a verse of a hymn and prayed, as was the custom. Then a colored girl of about fifteen years of age, in service with a nearby farmer, rose at the back of the hall and asked if she too might propose a hymn. At first I hesitated, not knowing what the meeting would think, but better thoughts prevailed, and I replied, 'Yes.' She gave out

her hymn-verse and prayed in moving tones. While she was praying, we heard, as it were, a sound in the distance, which came nearer and nearer, until the hall seemed to be shaken; with one or two exceptions, the whole meeting began to pray, the majority in audible voice, but some in whispers. Nevertheless, the noise made by the concourse was deafening. A feeling, which I cannot describe, took possession of me..."

Offended by Revival

While this meeting was going on, Andrew Murray was preaching in another section of the church. He was not present during the beginning of these events. When his own service was over, an elder passed the door of the prayer meeting, heard the noise, peeked in, and then ran back to get Mr. Murray. J. C. deVries vividly recalls Murray's surprising reaction to the young people's meeting, "Mr. Murray came forward to the table where I knelt praying, touched me, and made me understand that he wanted me to rise. He then asked me what had happened. I related everything to him. Then he walked down the room for some distance and called out as loudly as he could, 'People, silence!' But the praying continued. In the meantime, I kneeled down again. It seemed to me that if the Lord was coming to bless us, I should not be upon my feet but on my knees. Mr. Murray then called loudly again, 'People, I am your minister, sent from God! Silence!' But there was no stopping the noise. No one heard him, but all continued praying and calling on God for mercy and pardon. Mr. Murray then returned to me and told me to start the hymn-verse commencing 'Aid the soul that helpless cries'. I did so. But the emotions were not quieted and the meeting went right on praying. Mr. Murray then prepared to depart, saying, 'God is a God of order, and here everything is confusion!' With that he left the hall."

"The meeting moved along as expected, until an unassuming 15-year-old black girl stood up to pray."

Revival Praying & Power

Prayer meetings were spontaneously organized every evening after that. The order of these meetings was usually the same each time, although no one set it. At the beginning there was generally great silence; no efforts were made to stir up emotions, but after the second or third prayer the gathering would suddenly begin to simultaneously cry out in prayer. This was definitely not the custom of the Dutch Reformed churches at that time, nor did anyone ever teach them to do this. Sometimes the gathering would continue until three in the morning; even then, many wished to stay longer. As the people returned to their homes in the middle of the night they went singing joyously through the streets. The prayer meeting quickly grew and had to be moved to a nearby school building. Eventually, this facility also proved to be far too small for the crowds of God-hungry seekers. "In places where prayer meetings were unknown a year before, now the people complained because meetings ended an hour too soon! Not only weekly but daily prayer meetings were demanded by the people, even three times a

(continued on next page)

day – and even among children.” The revival shook the entire countryside. The young and old, rich and poor, blacks and whites were all equally affected by the revival. “It was quite amazing that the awakening was not confined to the towns and villages, but felt in totally isolated places without outside contacts, even on remote farms, where men and women were suddenly seized with emotions to which they had been utter strangers a few weeks or even days before.” People were frequently gripped with intense conviction. Strong men cried out in anguish while others fell to the ground unconscious and had to be carried out of the meetings.

Learning about Revival

J. C. deVries gives us a further account of Mr. Murray’s difficulty in accepting these manifestations as from God. J. C. deVries writes, “On the first Saturday evening in the larger meeting-house, Mr. Murray was the leader. He read a portion of Scripture, made a few observations on it, engaged in prayer, and then gave others the opportunity to pray. During the prayer, which followed his, we heard again the same sound in the distance. It drew nearer and nearer and then suddenly the whole gathering was praying. That evening a stranger had been standing at the door from the beginning of the meeting, watching the proceedings. Mr. Murray descended from the platform and again moved up and down among the people, trying to quiet them. The stranger then tiptoed forward from the door, touched Mr. Murray gently, and said in English, ‘I think you are the minister of this congregation. Be careful what you do, for it is the Spirit of God that is at work here. I have just come from America, and this is precisely what I witnessed there.’”

Andrew Murray had been offended by the intense outbursts of emotional praying, and sought unsuccessfully to control and calm the meetings. However, after this incident he apparently stopped trying to manhandle the Holy Spirit. He learned to accept these sudden outbursts of prayer and strong emotions as the work of God. His father, Andrew Murray, Sr. also confirmed that these stirrings were genuine, stating, “he blessed God that he lived to witness such a work of the Spirit”. Mr. Murray’s strong reaction seems to stem from the fact that these particular revival manifestations exceeded his own personal experience and sense of propriety. Though he had earnestly prayed for revival, studied reports about revival and even witnessed a measure of revival himself, he still failed to anticipate his own response to the supernatural nature of a revival in his own church.

Revival & Broken Expectations

Mr. Murray’s expectations about proper church order and that of the Holy Spirit’s were obviously quite different. Broken expectations, if left unchecked, can lead to confusion, frustration and even harsh criticism. When the crowd in Jerusalem rushed to observe the miracle of Pentecost, Acts 2: 6 notes that many of the onlookers were “CONFUSED”. These feelings of confusion obviously caused some to become offended, resulting later in them openly ridiculing the work of the Holy Spirit. -(Acts 2:6-13). Mr. Murray’s new revival experiences eventually taught him not to judge every seemingly confusing situa-

tion as the result of a lack of proper order. Often we experience strong feelings of confusion or even frustration when we are suddenly placed in an unexpected or unfamiliar situation. All of us have surely struggled with feelings of confusion or anxiety while trying to find our bearings in an unfamiliar city or country. The source of our confusion was not a lack of proper order, but our own unfamiliarity with our new surroundings and circumstances.

Acts 2:6 is not suggesting that God is the author of disorder and confusion! On the contrary, this verse serves to remind us that our natural sense of protocol and order is sometimes quite different than the divine order of Heaven come down to earth. When we are suddenly surprised or confused by unfamiliar events, we must guard against thoughtlessly rejecting them simply because they are new to our personal experience. Only a PROUD heart rushes in to condemn what it does not understand! We must carefully examine all things according to the Scriptures, rather than by our personal preferences and traditions. Then and only then will we be prepared to hold fast to what is good in the coming days. -(1Thes 5:21).

Revival & the Keswick Convention

The lessons learned during this revival helped prepare Andrew Murray for his future role in the influential Keswick movement. Mr. Murray attended the Keswick Convention for the first time in 1882. In 1895, he was asked to speak at both the Keswick and Northfield Conventions. Murray was warmly received at these conferences and was later responsible for bringing the Keswick movement to South Africa. The Keswick Convention was itself, the indirect fruit of this wonderful season of awakening. The revival touched at least four different continents, bringing with it a renewed faith and vision for personal holiness and the Spirit-filled life. It was this liberating message that soon became synonymous with Andrew Murray’s personal ministry.

The birth of the Keswick Convention united the emerging European Holiness Movement and thereby helped to channel the fire and energy of what became known as the Third Great Awakening. However, the Keswick Convention did much more than merely unify and preserve the remaining fruit of the revival. With a clear call to personal holiness through faith in Christ, the Keswick movement helped to prepare a new generation for the next move of God.



The Keswick Convention Tent

Those attending the conventions were always strongly encouraged to embrace a lifestyle of holiness, unity and prayer. In the 1902 Keswick Convention, five thousand Christians agreed to form home prayer circles for a worldwide outpouring of the Holy Spirit. The fruit of these Keswick praying bands was no doubt realized through the Welsh Revival of 1904. R. B. Jones, Jessie Penn-Lewis, and F. B. Myer all considered the Keswick Convention as one of the hidden springs of the Welsh revival. Through the biblical teaching of men like Andrew Murray, J. Elder Cumming, Evan Hopkins, F. B. Myer and many others, thousands of Christian workers and missionaries were empowered and purified to enter a new millennium of global harvest. James Hudson Taylor, A. T. Pierson, Samuel Zwemer and many other missionary mobilizers regarded the Keswick Convention as one of the finest "hunting grounds" for the best missionary recruits. Here again we find it to be true, that the influence of one generation's Spirit-filled ministry often waters the seeds of another generation's harvest.

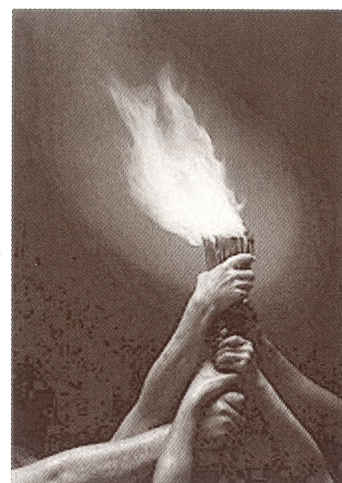
Andrew Murray's Closing Days

On January 18th, 1917, Andrew Murray crossed over into Glory. He entered into Heaven the same way he lived on earth, praying and urging others to pray. Few men have ever impacted more souls for the cause of the Spirit-filled life than Andrew Murray. He was arguably the Church's most prolific writer on the subject of prayer and the Deeper Life, publishing some 240 books between 1858 and 1917. Several of these books have been translated into as many as fifteen different languages. Soon after the Christian Literature Society for China translated Mr. Murray's book, "The Spirit of Christ" into Chinese, revival reportedly broke out in Inland China. Even today his writings are still shaping the way multitudes of hungry Christians think about prayer and the Spirit-filled life.

Learning from our Forefathers!

Andrew Murray unquestionably was a man of rare gifts and deep spiritual insight, yet he almost quenched a genuine revival. He was raised in a home where his father had faithfully prayed for more than 30 years for revival. Nevertheless, for a time he stubbornly opposed the long-awaited answer to his father's prayers. As a boy he had delighted in the revival ministry of William C. Burns and while in Germany he witnessed the miraculous ministry of Pastor Blumhardt. Yet, when personally confronted with revival manifestations in his own church, he opposed them. I do not write these things to dishonor the memory of one of our respected fathers of the faith, but rather to pose an important and timely question. If such a gifted man as Andrew Murray could fail to recognize the Spirit of revival, while in the midst of preparing for revival, how much more are we capable of making the same mistake? This generation of Christians must be willing to learn from the experiences, insights, and errors of our spiritual forefathers if we are to be prepared for the next move of God. Are you willing to LEARN?

Resources Used – The Life of Andrew Murray of South Africa by J. Du Plessis, Andrew Murray and His Message by W. M. Douglas, Andrew Murray: Apostle of Abiding Love by Leona Choy, "THE LIFE OF FAITH, JANUARY 26, 1967" St. Andrew of South Africa by N. L. Cliff, Andrew Murray by Dr. William Linder, Jr. Northfield Echoes Vol. 6 Northfield Conference Addresses for 1899 Edited by Delavan L. Pierson, Evangelical Awakenings in Africa by J. Edwin Orr, The Fervent Prayer: The Worldwide Impact of the Great Awakening of 1858 by J. Edwin Orr, The Holiness Revival of the 19th Century by Melvin Easterday Dieter, The Keswick Convention: Its Message, Its Method and Its Men by C. F. Harford, Keswick from Within by J. B. Figgis, These Sixty Years: The Story of the Keswick Convention by Walter B. Sloan, So Great Salvation: The History & Message of the Keswick Convention by Steven Barabas, Scotland's Keswick by Norman C. Macfarlane, The Forward Movement of the Last Half Century by A. T. Pierson, Revive Us Again by Herbert Lockyer, Rent Heavens: The Revival of 1904 by R. B. Jones, The Awakening in Wales by Jessie Penn-Lewis.



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For more information check
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Samson's Revived Strength

A Word of Caution & Hope for this Generation!

by T. M. Bamber

"Samson's hair began to grow again after it had been shaved."
- Judges 16:22

This is a strange story of a man who possessed tremendous potential. He was mighty in the operations of the Holy Ghost, and equally extraordinary in the grovelling of sensual life. So that when the Philistines heard that Samson was coming, they did not know whether he was coming to carry away the gates of the city, or to defile their daughters. We know very little of the workings of Samson's mind, but we know that his victories were in the realm of the physical, and his perpetual defeats were in the realm of the sexual. A dual personality, he was sometimes inspired by the Spirit of God, but at other times he was smashed and broken by the evil propensities of his own heart. Yet he was a man from whom God wanted so much!

Now look at Delilah. She made a tremendous effort to get his secret. She exercised every art of the voluptuary, in posture, voice, and appeal, until at last she was sure she had discovered the secret of this man's heart - with the result that his eyes were put out. He had to grind corn for the Philistines, and he became a slave to those whom God intended him to conquer. The man who was once their terror became their sport! A triple tragedy: a great purpose in a human life shattered, parents' hearts broken, and the name of God blasphemed!

Is the world catching you? Are you forgetting your purpose? God is planning a task, and you are trifling with the secrets of strength, when you ought to be thinking of what God has called you to, and girding yourself for the task, and bringing discipline to bear, so that whatever the cost, you may carry through that purpose for which God has brought you into the world. One of the appalling things at this hour is the fact that, in the face of world need and world opportunity, young men and women who are destined for something that was comparable with that of Samson, are dallying with minor issues, when God is thinking of China and Africa and India. Countless millions of men and women want the Gospel, and if they do not want it, they need it. In a moment when God has His master plan to reach out to the world with the knowledge of Christ, the Samson's who might be there are dallying with Delilah's!

Are you a young man or a young woman with ability, but the ability, which God has given you, is without achievement. By achievement I mean that complete yielding to the purpose of God whereby He uses a human soul to deliver others out of bondage. Of course, a task like this cannot be undertaken unless a man is disciplined and resolved. This is not the hour for any young man or woman to be dallying with Delilah. This is one of those hours when young men and women must be conscious that God is moving forward with mighty strides, with glorious purpose; and He is calling to such young men and women, who will be disciplined for the mighty hour in which we live. However, there is a word to be said to those whom, like Samson, are broken. Life oftentimes is a disastrous regret, an unspeakable sorrow by reason of the folly of the past. There may be some here with a wife and family to whom the story of Samson has a significant meaning in their own experience. Opportunities of earlier years were flung away; and in contrast with what God planned and what they desired to be, they are blind, in the prison house. They are living monuments to the truth that no man can escape the law of the harvest - we reap what we sow. Delilah in one form or another stole their secret; the precious secret, and spiritual strength has departed.

Whatever may be said of the youth of today, the problem of our churches is that our Samson's - the folk who could have been mighty for God, blindly grope under the domination of the world. They have no joy, no testimony; they live in a world of bitter sorrow and regret. I recently met a man who told me that for thirty years he has been withstanding the truth, and now God has been merciful. God is always merciful and somehow allows the hair to grow again - and that is our hope. The hair will grow again, but not as it did the first time. When the first locks began to grow, Samson was the darling son of a loving father and mother, the center of their home and hearts. The one for whom no consideration was too great. Yet, now as the locks grow again, it is in prison, in daily servitude, and in blindness! God does restore the years that the locust hath eaten, but the ways of restoration are inevitably sad and painful. In such circumstances the hair grows: the spirit is chastened, the lips form themselves in prayer, the heart is humbled before God, and fresh strength is gathered in the consciousness of desperate weakness and uttermost need. God will listen and God will answer.

In this great tent there must be many who are forty, fifty, and even sixty years of age, who need this encouragement - the past Samson's who might have challenged the Philistine paganism in the far-flung world expanse, but whose hearts were perverted by the Delilah world spirit. Here in this Convention new hopes are coming to birth, old desires are aflame again. If only it were possible to arise once more in the power of the Spirit to fulfill something of that purpose God intended, to beat down the Philistine hosts no matter what the cost, even unto death! Be sure God will welcome that desire and that prayer, and God will answer. The hair can grow again; the hair will grow again! Spiritual strength will revive, and you shall yet see your desire upon your enemies, and be accounted at the last among those who were great in faith.

"This is one of those hours when young men and women must be conscious that God is moving forward with mighty strides."

Edited and abridged from "The Keswick Week 1948"



Awakening A Generation

To Their Need & Opportunity!

"Mark well her bulwarks; consider her palaces; that you may tell it to the GENERATION following." - **Ps 48:13**

"You are not here in the world for yourself. You have been sent here for others. The world is waiting for you!" - **Catherine Booth**

"One of the finest things you can give to your generation is a vision. Take time for it. Go up to the mount for it; go into your closet for it; go to God for it. Catch sight of something other men do not see, and that you never saw before. Then tell the vision. Translate into the speech of man this vision of heavenly things." - **Alexander Mackenzie**

"God provides the men and women needed for each generation." - **Mildred Cable**

"My business is with all my might to serve my own generation. In doing so I shall best serve the next generation, should the Lord tarry...I have but one life to live on earth and this one life is but a brief life for sowing in comparison with eternity for reaping." - **George Muller**

"Your days at the most cannot be very long, so use them to the best of your ability for the glory of God and the benefit of your generation." - **General Booth**

"This generation of Christians is responsible for this generation of souls on the earth!" - **Keith Green**

"A generation which wishes for a religion without tears must find it difficult to adjust its beliefs to the teaching of the New Testament and of the facts of life..." - **W. R. Inge**

"The evangelization of the world in this generation depends first of all upon a revival of prayer. Deeper than the need for men; deeper, far, than the need for money; aye, deep down at the bottom of our spiritless life is the need for the forgotten secret of prevailing, world-wide prayer." - **Robert E. Speer**

"God has called us to co-operate with Him in making the Gospel known to our generation." - **J. Stuart Holden**

"I have said that there is nothing in the world or the Church, except it's disobedience, to render the evangelization of the world in this generation an impossibility..." - **Robert E. Speer**

"How long shall this fearful ruin of souls continue? Ought we not to make an effort to save China in this generation? Is God's power limited? Is the efficacy of prayer limited? This grand achievement is in the hands of the Church... We want China emancipated from the thralldom of sin in this generation. It is possible. Our Lord has said, 'According to your faith be it unto you.' The Church of God can do it, if she be only faithful to her great commission." - **Conference of the Protestant Missionaries of China (1877)**

"Are we, the Christians of to-day, awake to these facts and responsive to the claims of this glorious work? Do we understand that this vast responsibility rests upon us? That it is possible now, as never before in the world's history, to preach the Gospel to all the nations? And do we mean; God helping that this work shall be done ere we die? This is the deep significance of the hour to this generation." - **Judson Smith**

"China for Christ in this generation - Why not? In this generation, what doubt is there that China will be swept irresistibly into the stream of the world's competition? The West will not wait till a later generation. Why should the Church wait till a later generation? How splendidly equipped the Church is today to win not China only, but the world for Christ in one generation!" - **J. C. Garritt**

**"You are a chosen
GENERATION,
a royal priesthood, a holy
nation, His own special
people, that you may pro-
claim the praises of Him who
called you out of darkness
into His marvelous light;"
(1 Peter 2:9)**

"It is possible to evangelize the world in this generation, if the Church will but do her duty. The trouble is not with the heathen. A dead Church will prevent it, if it is prevented. Why should it not be accomplished? God will have all men to be saved and come unto the knowledge of the truth. The resources of the Church are boundless. Let the will of the Church be brought into line with the will of God, and nothing will be found to be impossible. May God grant it!" - **Griffith John**

"Some reader may urge - No one generation has been actually evangelized. True; yet that is no proof of its impossibility; and the fact that past generations of Christians failed to accomplish their task, or rather, never tried (except perhaps in the first century, and even that is very doubtful), is no reason why we should shrink from ours." - **Eugene Stock**

"For God is with the generation of the righteous." - **Ps 14:5**

The New Revival **PIONEERS**

Encouraging the Next Generation of Revivalists

by David Smithers



While driving to town the other day I unexpectedly came upon a busy stretch of highway that was under construction. Bumper to bumper, the line of cars ahead of me waited their turn to follow the directions of the brightly colored detour signs. Seemingly, without any thought or hesitation they all quickly sped away from their original course in pursuit of smoother traveling. The road ahead was unquestionably rough and unpaved, but it was still open to traffic and definitely the most direct route to town.

Suddenly I found myself thinking about the state of the modern Church. Many Christians today are being enticed into the well-paved highways of convenient Christianity at the expense of their personal calling and original destination. No doubt just the sight of that rough, unpaved road communicated "RISK" to many of the drivers that day. It threatened all of us with the risk of uncertainty, inconvenience and even the risk of physical danger or loss. As I sat there waiting for my turn to move, something else hit me. "All the well-paved roads in the Church today are only going places that most of us have already been." Those big, flashing church signs too often lead us away from where God's pioneer work is being done. By the time the concrete sets up and the paint is dry, most of the heaven and earth moving is all over!

How long will we continue to travel down the same old, predictable, powerless highways while the promises of God beckon us to enter into a fresh move of the Holy Spirit? There is still so much of the presence and power of Jesus Christ that is readily available and yet untouched. Be assured God is not standing still! He is even now seeking out and raising up a NEW generation in the Church who is willing to take extreme risks to REDISCOVER the highway of holiness and revival power. God is raising up a new generation of revival pioneers!

Go West Young Man!

The call to pursue revival is a call to be a pioneer! A revival pioneer courageously and even sometimes naively seeks to rediscover new and forgotten places in the Spirit. Pioneers instinctively challenge the modern Church to go places she has never been before, places long forgotten and overgrown by decades of man-made traditions and spiritual decline. Pioneers dare others to dream and trust God to do ALL that the Bible plainly promises. Pioneers are not satisfied with superficial reform. They hunger and thirst for spiritual REALITY. Their calling demands that they defy the laws and limitations of man-centered religion. In their pursuit of more of

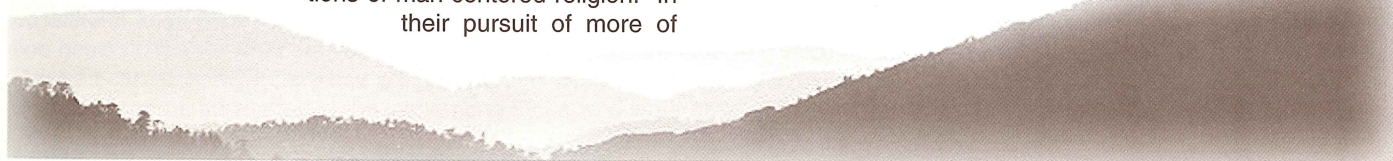
Jesus, they unknowingly challenge the foundations of so-called "NORMAL CHURCH". Like young Joseph in the company of his older brothers, the pioneer's dream of revival often provokes strong reactions from within the established Church. -(Gen. 37:5) The young pioneer is sure to be confronted by giants of intimidation and mountains of unbelief and religious control. At other times they are simply spurned and dismissed as immature extremists and idealists.

All the great pioneers of revival have had to face these same obstacles and hindrances in their zeal to bring Heaven down to Earth! Most of the early American pioneers that moved westward between 1760 and 1850 encountered countless dangers and extreme hardship, because they were not content with what they had already seen. The knowledge that there was still something better beyond the horizon drove them to take extreme risks to improve the quality of their lives. A true pioneer is relentless. He refuses to compromise or substitute the barren plains of lifeless orthodoxy for the living presence of Jesus! No amount of religious rhetoric or decorum will ever satisfy his God-hungry heart. The God-breathed promises of Scripture hound his soul, reminding him over and over again of his destiny and calling. Promises of green forests, fruitful harvests and rushing streams compel him to continue to seek and pray for something MORE. -(Isa. 35:7, Isa 41:18-19, Isa 44:3-4, Isa 51:3).

Forerunners & Mountain Movers

Revival pioneers are ordained of God to violently move Heaven and Earth. The English term "pioneer" was originally derived from a French word meaning PICK AX. Later it was also used to convey the idea of a foot soldier. The Germans use the term "trench digger" to convey the idea of a pioneer. A pioneer during wartime was one who marched before an invading army to prepare and repair the road. They did everything from clearing away barricades to setting mines for destroying the works of the enemy. Pioneers are pathfinders and scouts. Like Jeremiah, a pioneer is one who goes before to remove obstructions for the purpose of preparing the way for others that must soon follow. "See, I have this day set you over the nations and over the kingdoms, to root out and to pull down, to destroy and to throw down, to build and to plant." -(Jer. 1:10)

These prophetic people do



not set mines and level mountains of ungodliness just for the thrill of watching things blow up. No, the revival pioneer understands that it is his job to prepare the way and make it easier for others to enter into the manifest presence of Jesus Christ.

The revival pioneer labors to restore the highway of holiness, removing stumbling blocks, so it will be straight and level again. This work is done not only for the sake of a coming army, but also for the spiritually lame and crippled. The prophet Isaiah repeatedly reminds us of this important truth. He declares, "Strengthen the weak hands, and make firm the feeble knees. Say to those who are fearful-hearted, 'Be strong, do not fear! Behold, your God will come with vengeance, with the recompense of God; He will come and save you.' Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped. Then the lame shall leap like a deer, and the tongue of the dumb sing. For waters shall burst forth in the wilderness, and streams in the desert. The parched ground shall become a pool, and the thirsty land springs of water; in the habitation of jackals, where each lay, there shall be grass with reeds and rushes. A highway shall be there, and a road, and it shall be called the Highway of Holiness..." -(Isa 35:3-8) "And one shall say, 'Heap it up! Heap it up! Prepare the way, take the stumbling block out of the way of My people.' For thus says the High and Lofty One who inhabits eternity, whose name is Holy: 'I dwell in the high and holy place, with him who has a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones'." -(Isa 57:14-15).

The High Peaks of Prayer

The American pioneers moving west were always looking for some high vantage point from which they could catch a glimpse of the path just ahead of them. The pioneers of revival are no different. From the towering heights of bent knees they scan the spiritual horizon for some small token of a coming move of God. These Holy Ghost trailblazers are consistently scaling the mountain peaks of prayer in hopes of spotting even the smallest sign of revival. Revival pioneers cannot afford to live on second hand reports and experimental theories borrowed from books. The divine immensity of the pioneer's vision and calling demands that they hear from God for themselves! They need Heaven's insight and perspective if they are to stay on course and avoid falling short of their eternal destination. Only through regular and extended times in prayer can they maintain their bearings and spiritual compass.

Every true pioneer of revival is well acquainted with the taste of hot tears and heartache. Prayer for the revival pioneer is not only a means of fresh direction, but also a supernatural outlet for the burden of a broken heart. The pioneer is repeatedly tormented by the growing crisis of a powerless Church in the midst of a lost and sin-sick world. Religious wastelands and deep valleys filled with sun bleached bones mock and challenge his hopes and dreams. Yet, strangely enough it is these same bleak and threatening spiritual conditions that keep the pioneers of revival praying and pressing deeper into new frontiers of the Holy Spirit. For them to stay and settle in such places would mean the death of their ministry and vision.

For those truly called to be a pioneer, revival is not merely another church growth trend or some spiritual luxury. Revival is a reason for being, a created purpose and divine destiny. Though at different times many young pioneers try to deny the vision and hope for revival, they can't escape it! The tears and intense longings for revival always return. This passion and burden was part of their spiritual inception and new birth. They have become RUINED for anything less than genuine revival. The pioneer can't rest or give up until God's revival glory is released in the Earth. They would rather die than miss or abort the coming visitation of God. These young pioneers are driven to continue to pray, weep and believe for revival. Though at times, they grow fainthearted and discouraged in their heavenly pursuit, they always finds themselves rising again to cry out for God to rend the heavens and come down.-(Isa. 64:1-4).

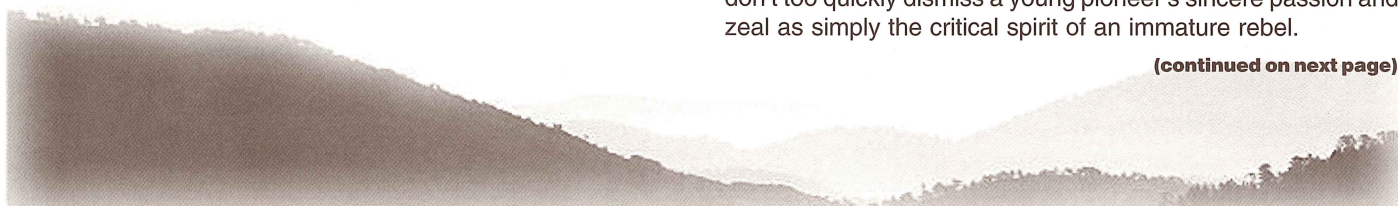
You're NOT Crazy!

Has this divine heartache ever made you wonder if you were going crazy? Many of the early pioneers that pulled up roots and moved west often experienced similar emotions before leaving the safety and comfort of their established homes. In spite of the fact that they enjoyed and valued their property and neighbors around them, they still somehow felt as if they didn't quite fit in and belong. As hard as they tried, they couldn't seem to shake a growing hunger and burden for something more. The pioneer spirit deep within them was driving them to keep moving and looking west. In much the same way, today there are thousands of young revival pioneers who share these same intense and sometimes bewildering feelings. I am talking about something born of the Holy Spirit, a divine discontentment that will not let you settle for anything less than the manifest presence of Jesus Christ.

Unfamiliar with God's revival process, some young pioneers seek to escape the touch of God upon their hearts. Over and over again, they struggle to fit in with the Church's most recent "cutting edge" agenda. Yet, lasting relief seems to never come. Even in the midst of renewed and vibrant fellowships, the young pioneer oftentimes still feels like a spiritual misfit and outsider. While others in the Church seem completely satisfied, the revival pioneer in the exact same setting fights to hold back the tears and hunger for something more. Do these disjointed feelings and uncomfortable emotions sound familiar? Is your hungry heart confused and puzzled over where you fit in the house of God? Perhaps God has not allowed you to "FIT" in!

Often there is not a hearing for the pioneer's prophetic message until after a fresh work of God has begun to be realized. Therefore, young pioneers should not be surprised when they are accused of being idealistic and impractical in their message and methodology. Such criticism and misunderstandings are often a part of God's training process in becoming a spiritual forerunner. These trials help to deepen the work of endurance and humility in the pioneer's heart. Though at times they are slighted and even harshly rejected, the true pioneer learns by trial and error, how to bear it all in meekness, patience and love. Nevertheless, let each pastor and spiritual leader take care that they don't too quickly dismiss a young pioneer's sincere passion and zeal as simply the critical spirit of an immature rebel.

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Young pioneer, be encouraged! These feelings of loneliness and holy dissatisfaction are all part of God's process within you. Pioneers have always gone out in small waves in order to prepare the way for the masses. Nevertheless, beware of letting the uniqueness of your calling be an excuse for fleshly strife and division with other believers. Remember that we will NEVER build the house of revival with Satan's tools of anger and strife! Don't waste your time constantly striving and wrangling with those who don't share your vision and passion for revival. Get in the prayer closet and unburden your broken heart to the Father. Give yourself to fervent prayer and don't stop until the glory comes. Ask the Lord to send people into your life with a similar gift and vision. Read the classic works on the great moves of God. The Father wants you to nurture this passion and vision for something MORE, but you will have to make sacrifices in order to keep it. The larger the vision, the lonelier the path you will have to walk. A GOD size vision ALWAYS requires a great amount of grace, love and humility.

The Law of The Frontier

A person's chances of surviving on the open frontier were often determined by his or her own willingness to cooperate and work with others. One of the unwritten laws of the western frontier was, "be a good neighbor". The constant threat and uncertainty of life on the trail taught the pioneers to appreciate the safety found in numbers. Therefore, most pioneer families, when they set out West, joined several other families who were making the same journey. Typically, what often started as a disjointed band of individuals and small cliques usually grew into a healthy and vibrant traveling community. Serving and considering one another's basic needs became a way of life. Cultivating an atmosphere of forbearance and unity was no longer just a luxury, but a daily NECESSITY! (Eph. 4:14-16)

As we have already seen, a revival pioneer is called to walk a very demanding and lonely path. The pioneer is often misunderstood, rejected and even ridiculed for venturing into what seems to be new and unfamiliar territory. Therefore, he is the last person who can afford to recklessly neglect his covenant relationships. If the revival pioneer is to succeed in his calling, he cannot indulge himself in the slightest trace of stubbornness or an independent spirit. Our differences and diversity are meant to remind us of our great need for one another, not give us an excuse to separate from each other. The persistent revival pioneer inevitably learns this costly lesson of love and self-denial. The process and path of revival is challenging enough without us making it even harder by being willful and uncooperative!

Abandonment & Settling for Less!

It was not uncommon for many of the early pioneers to be abandoned by some of their family and friends during the most difficult parts of the journey. After traveling hundreds of miles, some forsook their dreams and plans of the new frontier. A lack of supplies, fatigue, sickness and even death caused many a band of once zealous pioneers to split up and go their separate ways. Some retreated back to more familiar and less threatening territory. Others abandoned their original vision and settled on the open range. Settling for less was not hard to justify for a family of exhausted and discouraged pioneers.

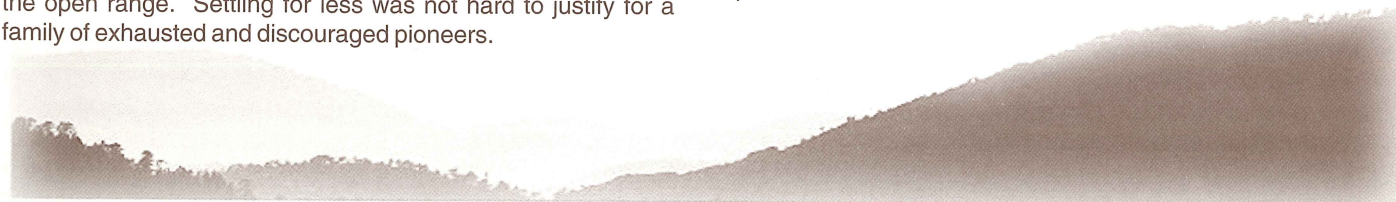
Even while still hundreds of miles away from their original destination, the rich natural resources of the open range usually far exceeded what most people had previously enjoyed back home. This was heartbreaking for those who still felt called to push ahead. Shaken and torn from their loved ones, many pioneers moved forward with the complaints of the weary and fearful ringing in their ears. The same fears that excuse and justify the faint-hearted to abandon God's BEST, are often used by Satan to threaten and discourage the progress of those whom are determined to move forward.

There have been many want-to-be pioneers that have at one time truly sought and prayed for revival, only to turn back to the broken cisterns of so called "GOOD" church. Others have gone further in their pursuit of revival and yet they too have fallen short. They unknowingly became distracted by the spiritual blessings enjoyed during the revival journey. God in His mercy often gives us a foretaste of the blessings to come to encourage us in the path of faith and obedience. However, some are tempted to confuse these mercy drops of refreshing for the reality of revival. Distracted by the appetizers of future grace, some have stopped hungering for the fullness of God's presence. Today many revival hungry souls are in DANGER of making this terrible mistake! Such shortsightedness threatens to rob them of their spiritual destiny, while also misleading countless others along the way. This premature satisfaction calls into question the validity and hope of our vision for a worldwide revival. It belittles and mocks the very character and faithfulness of a covenant keeping God. If what is being experienced today is truly the fullness of God's revival power, then this generation is surely doomed!

Spiritual Foresight & Timing

Every step and decision of the pioneer is to be considered in view of how it contributes or hinders him and other pioneers from their final destination. Every action, plan and opportunity is evaluated in view of the end of the trail. A wise revival pioneer understands what is essential for the journey and what must be left behind. The revival pioneer must discern the difference between the things that are temporal and the things that are eternal. He must be willing to lay aside anything and everything that would potentially weaken his ability to reach his God ordained destination. (Matt. 13:22 & 2 Tim 2:3-6)

A sense of proper timing is a very important part of being a revival pioneer. Depending upon the place of their departure, the early pioneer bands had to leave in time to get over the great western mountain ranges before the first snowfall. Physical strength and abundant resources could not make up for a lack of proper timing and foresight. The pioneers of revival MUST likewise discern the Spiritual seasons correctly if they are to enter into their manifest destiny. The very calling and purpose of a pioneer demands that he GO out early rather than late! He has a farseeing eye and therefore doesn't wait until everything is neatly established and nailed into place. Spiritual procrastination is the pioneer's deadliest enemy. Proper timing often means the difference between becoming a revival participant or merely a religious spectator.



Spiritual Claim Jumpers?

There are some in the Church today that seem to desperately want revival, but reject the pioneer path and call. They want revival, but they want it on their own terms. Their passion for revival fails to include a prayerful endurance and patience with the broken and needy in their own midst. They would rather complain about problems than pour out their heart in prayer. They readily recognize all the needs around them but lack the courage and faith to do anything about it! The very problems that should naturally awaken them to intercessory prayer are twisted and manipulated to justify their wandering from one church to another. These revival claim jumpers want spiritual riches, but they refuse to bend their own back and knees to get them. They covet revival but lack the endurance to dig in and help birth and pioneer something in the Spirit. So they seek out a place where God is already moving while neglecting the deeper disciplines of prayer, loyalty and sacrifice that are necessary to sustain such works. Please don't misunderstand me, I am not saying that it is wrong to visit churches where God is moving. In past seasons of grace, men and women have always been eager to witness a genuine move of God. If at all possible, they took every opportunity to partake of these wonderful events. However, afterwards they went back home to pray and labor in faith for God to do the same things in their own communities! This was often the means by which revivals spread from region to region or even to other continents. God's plan for you is not one long, unending renewal road trip, but an abiding visitation of His glory. He is not content with merely a handful of renewal hot spots! The Lord of the harvest longs to pour out the Spirit of revival over the whole Earth, among every tongue, tribe and nation.

Revival Shortcuts!

Some of the early pioneers never reached their destination because they were too eager to cut corners and take shortcuts. Many of you history lovers will surely remember the tragic story of the Donner Party. In 1846 a group of some 300 pioneers set out along the Oregon Trail determined to reach California. George Donner, hearing of a new and faster route, encouraged his family and fellow pioneers to abandon the trusted Oregon Trail to follow the newly advertised Hastings shortcut. The new route promised to trim 400 miles off their overall journey. Ignoring the warnings of seasoned frontiersmen, the Donner party left the main trail at Fort Bridger. Soon after exhausting most of their supplies in the Utah desert and struggling through tree-choked gorges and riverbeds, they finally acknowledged their error and returned to the established trail. However, by this time they had missed their window of opportunity and suddenly found themselves unable to cross the mountains because of an early snowstorm. Exhausted and inexperienced, most of the Donner party died in the mountains, succumbing to cannibalism, frostbite or starvation. The lure of saving time cost most of them their hopes, families and very lives. It was later learned that Lansford Hastings had promoted this shortcut for his own political advantage and at that time had himself never successfully made the trip to California by this route.

If Satan cannot tempt you to abandon your vision for revival, he will then entice you to reach for the promises of revival with the hand of the flesh. This is perhaps above all else his most deceptive tactic. We must always remember that there are no guarantees once we get out from under the grace-filled direction of God. Like the Donner party, we are capable of resorting to anything when left to our own wisdom! Apart from God's grace we have no idea where we may end up or what we might do. Extreme risks and uncertainties unquestionably mark the pioneer's life. However, the risks that a pioneer is called to take will NEVER fly in the face of the established and unfailing principles of God's word!

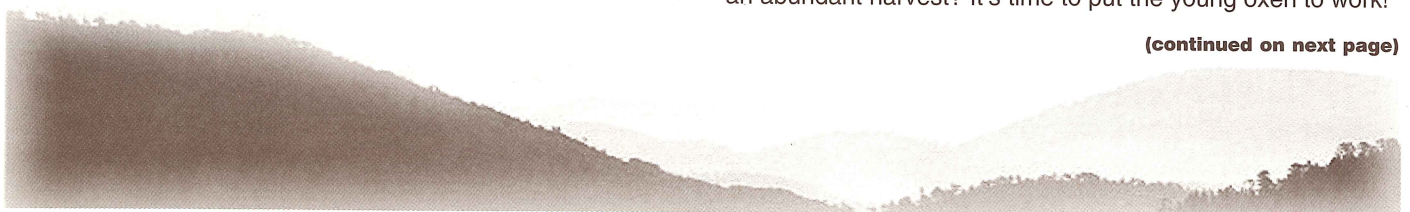
A New Season of Hope & Opportunity!

The early pioneers had an old saying, "all the cowards stayed at home and the weak died along the way." Wherever men and women defy the laws of comfort and convenience, heartaches and casualties are sure to follow. Nevertheless, "beloved, we are confident of far better things concerning you..." None of us need fall short or stay behind in these days of revival hope and opportunity. The LAMB has prevailed. Jesus has provided a sure path into new frontiers of revival blessing and harvest for all those who will trust and obey. We are living in a new season of unprecedented opportunities and possibilities. God is opening up new doors in the Church today that no man can close. Such times require fresh vision and strength. The Church needs every ounce of zeal, vision and power at Her disposal.

Proverbs 20:29 says, "The glory of young men is their vigor and strength..." The zeal and energy of our youth was never meant to be carelessly squandered away on chasing fun and entertainment. With every great gift comes the call to great RESPONSIBILITY! Now is the time for a new generation of Christians to fully surrender to the yoke of Christ and take their rightful place on the pioneer path. God is raising up a new generation in the Church today to rediscover the forgotten frontiers of personal holiness and revival power. He is preparing them to carry the seeds of revival to the very ends of the Earth! The prophet Joel prophesied that God would accomplish great things through such a generation. "I will pour out of My Spirit on all flesh; your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your young men shall see visions". - (Acts 2:17)

Such language will no doubt make some cautious churchmen very uncomfortable. They might quickly remind us of Lam 3:27 - "It is good for a man to bear the yoke in his youth." This is certainly true! However, God's yokes are designed to channel strength, not cripple it. The Lord's yoke is not a fetter of bondage, but a tool for submissive service and labor! It was yoked oxen that pulled the pioneer wagons across rivers and over steep mountains. The strength of yoked oxen plows up the fallow and rocky ground for a coming harvest. Still, some fear the uncertainty and excess that sometimes comes with the zeal and enthusiasm of young oxen. Let's not forget the divine wisdom of Solomon, "Where there is no oxen, the stall is clean, but from the strength of an ox comes an abundant harvest". -(Prov. 14:4) Pastor what would you rather have in your church, a clean and orderly stall or an abundant harvest? It's time to put the young oxen to work!

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A Generation on Fire!

The greatest revivalists of the past were young men and women who dared to believe God for something more for their own generation! George Whitfield, Howell Harris, Count Zinzendorf, Charles G. Finney, Charles Spurgeon, Evan Roberts, Robert Murray M'Cheyne, William C. Burns, Hudson Taylor, C. T. Studd, David Brainerd and countless others were all mightily used of God while still in their twenties. Why then are so many of us still looking to the fruitless institutions of decaying Christendom for the steps to our revival dreams? We will never realize our spiritual potential by imitating the unrevived methods of status quo Christianity. God has not called us to mimic the weak and half-reformed religion around us. Like Abram, we have been called out of the land of barrenness to inherit the harvest-fields of revival fruitfulness for this generation and generations to come. -(Josh 24:2-3)

True spiritual pioneers are the embodiment of URGENCY and ZEAL. They recognize their eternal responsibility for their own generation. The apostle of faith, George Muller once said, "My business is with all my might to serve my own generation. In doing so I shall best serve the next generation, should the Lord tarry...I have but one life to live on Earth and this one life is but a brief life for sowing in comparison with eternity for reaping." General Booth conveyed the same thought with the following lines: "Your days at the most cannot be very long, so use them to the best of your ability for the glory of God and the benefit of your generation." Catherine Booth, the mother of the Salvation Army, daily charged her nine children with something similar,

"You are not here in the world for yourself. You have been sent here for others. The world is waiting for you!" More than once, I heard the late Leonard Ravenhill predict that God was going to raise up a new generation to bring the fires of revival to this sin-sick world. The late Keith Green, echoed these same urgent sentiments. In his final days, he repeatedly unsettled many of us with the following words. "This generation of Christians is responsible for this generation of souls on the Earth!" Have you been awakened to your eternal and personal responsibility for this generation?

A good pioneer is always eager to learn from the insight and experiences of others, but stand still – NEVER! Not while the promises of revival are still unknown in this generation. Not while Christ is still a stranger to countless lost and dying souls around the world. Not while there is still one blind and stubborn heart that refuses to give praise and honor to our King Jesus! Are you willing to break new ground and rediscover some of the forgotten treasures of Jesus Christ? Are you ready to take His manifest presence to the ends of the Earth? Young pioneer, NOW is the time to look to Jesus Christ and dare to dream for something MORE! "The kingdom of heaven suffers violence, and the violent take it by force". – (Matt 11:12)

THE Watchword

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