

FOREWORD BY DR. CAROLYN TENNANT

You can read her input in the ABLAZE book.

CHAPTER 1: THE HEART OF REVIVAL

We serve a mighty God who outrageously loves us. Romans 8:35-39 refreshes the heart every time it revitalizes the remembrance that nothing can separate us from the love of the Father. Jesus died on a cross to redeem you and me for fellowship with God. Oh, the lengths He goes to get our attention to have deep, relational connection. He longs for His children's embrace.

Even in this relationship with God, have you ever wondered why sometimes you feel close to God and other times far away? Where is God when silence answers you? I believe every person goes through seasons of their faith walk. We have times when we feel the presence of God strongly and other times when we wonder if He has forgotten about us. This is normal. We cannot always live on the mountaintop but must come down and live in the valley just as Moses, Peter, James, and John experienced.

What about those seasons where we have pulled back from God, as I know each one of us has at one point or another? It may have been only a small decision, but the slow fade began. How different things become from when we first surrendered or received divine intervention. God answered prayer, and we testified regarding it. The excitement we felt was contagious, and an urgency compelled us to share about Jesus. We wanted others to know what our Savior did for us and what He can do in their lives. These moments thrust us into a deeper walk with God. Then slowly, with the passage of time, the fire dwindled. Life continued and routine developed. Even Paul instructed Timothy to "stir up" the flame (2 Tim 1:6). This is what ABLAZE addresses—the withdrawal of our heart from God and ways to reignite the fire.

Since the beginning of creation in Genesis, human hearts have turned away from God. Whether in the Garden of Eden or in the Promised Land, sin prevailed and people withdrew from a relationship with their Creator. A strong and consistent interconnection with the Lord is not automatic. Repeated patterns throughout the Bible reveal how human hearts shrunk back from God. Once hearts abandoned God, the focus shifted to self and worldly pursuits. In such times,

God used revival to redirect their attention back to Him. Were it not for repeated waves of revival, faith could have died out.

Throughout the Old Testament, we read of God reviving the Israelites and fulfilling every promise to them by conquering the Promised Land. God was faithful in provision, power, and covenant with His people. In the New Testament, we read of the overwhelming love of Jesus that prompted Him to sacrifice His life so we can live in eternity. Jesus was compassionate and merciful to the woman at the well. He was the healer to the blind man and the restorer of the kingdom of God. He redeemed us from hell, made us sons and daughters of the Most High God, and then gave us power and authority to do what He did. The book of Acts explicitly tells of the power, miracles, signs, and wonders of the Spirit working through people. However, within approximately thirty to forty years of the birth of the Church, churches, and some of the Christians in them, were in danger of dying spiritually. Many of these people had witnessed the glory of God, yet their heart devotion to the gospel waned. Are you seeing the pattern? Not only does this occur with you and me, but throughout the Bible.

Churches in Revelations

Letters to seven churches, later compiled into the book of Revelation, were physically carried by a messenger, and delivered on a circuit. These letters were to revive a weakened and backslidden Church. Each church that is mentioned in Revelation teaches us something about what we need to stay strong and alive in God. They warn of various situations which can deplete us, leaving us in a declining state that requires the resuscitation of revival.

The first church addressed was Ephesus (Rev 2:1-7). This church guarded the purity of the gospel, identified false teachers, and remained focused on their walk, but they had lost their first love. The loss of love for Jesus impacted their ability to reveal the heart of God and His love to others. When a heart replaces God with something else as number one, then the self takes over. Life centers on personal needs and wants instead of being led by the Spirit. When we become inwardly focused, we lose the importance and fervency to share the gospel. How will people hear of Jesus if they are never introduced to the Savior (Rom 10:14-15)? Revival redirects our attention back to Jesus and His sacrifice, which compels believers to declare the gospel. Peter evidenced this on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2:14-41).

The second church named in Revelation was in Smyrna (Rev 2:8-11). This church was going through persecution and needed encouragement. They were instructed not to fear mistreatment or compromise what they believed. Just as they were oppressed, every Christian will suffer in some way over his or her lifespan, even if it is not a matter of life and death. Difficult circumstances can force the focus from God onto problems. When this occurs, compromise becomes the easy route. Impatience of waiting on God to intervene can trigger self-reliance and the need to control the situation. In contrast, when we lean into God and accept His will, then strength, endurance, and life abound. Revival accomplishes this.

Pergamum was the next church (Rev 2:12-17). There were two types of believers present in this church: faithful followers and those compromising their faith. Compromise resulted from listening to false teachers who seduced them into committing sexual and spiritual idolatry. Repentance was required. The lack of biblical knowledge today leaves people complacent and silent on issues impacting the church. When biblical literacy is embraced and lived, then the Spirit transforms lives. One outcome of revival is a hunger for the Word of God.

The fourth church was in Thyatira (Rev 2:18-28). This church was condemned for receiving and tolerating the spirit of Jezebel, who was an influence towards sin. Deception had entered the church and enticed them to abandon their faithfulness to Christ. It also leads us to abandon our commitment to the Lord. The enemy has freedom to accuse, buffet, bind, and destroy us. Only when we know and operate in truth will the power of the Spirit defeat the enemy. Revival ushers in truth and breaks strongholds.

The fifth Revelation church was in Sardis (Rev 3:1-6). They thought they were alive but were dead and were instructed to “wake up” out of their lethargy. Their deeds were lacking in quality and inner purity, and they were more concerned with worldly aspects. If they did not wake up and become engaged again, then He would steal what they did possess. The parable of the seed and sower explains this church accurately: “But the worries of this life and the deceitfulness of wealth choke the word, making it unfruitful” (Matt 13:22). The focus shifts from reaching out to others, and instead our lives become entwined with sports, academics, and getting ahead in life. However, revival realigns our pursuits to eternal matters.

The sixth church was in Philadelphia (Rev 3:7-13). The message to this church was to “hold on” to what they have in Christ and not lose it through persecution. Their strength was waning, and

they needed encouragement to remain true. Help comes from the Lord alone (Ps 121:2). We often turn to other coping strategies like alcohol, drugs, people, careers, and worldly possessions instead of crying out to the Lord. The church at Philadelphia reminds believers today of the danger of taking their eyes off God and placing it on anything else. The Lord wants to revive our strength.

The last church is Laodicea (Rev 3:14-22). There were two main sources of water running into the city—a hot spring and a cold spring. The Spirit through John was not expressing the need to be saved or lost, but useful for the kingdom of God like the purposes for the two springs. They were neither useful for a cold, refreshing drink, nor were they useful for the healing spa properties of the mineral water stream. The status of this church was they were useless to Jesus because they were complacent, self-satisfied, and indifferent to faith in Him and of discipleship. The people had become self-sufficient. They needed to realize everything they possessed did not compare to what they had in Jesus. They were to repent and long for spiritual things and cease concentrating on worldly aspects. If they did not repent, they would be destroyed. Jesus was knocking to get the Laodicean church's attention, and He still knocks regarding us. He longs to come in and have fellowship with every repentant person, sharing intimately in their inner lives. Self-sufficiency robs God of the glory, and He is not willing to share it. Once again, complacency surfaces and underscores the need to remain fervent in service to the Lord. We need to know God as our only source, and revival achieves this.

The Revelation letters reveal that God desires to correct and encourage in order to bring new life and restored vitality. Conviction stems from the Spirit and ensues to repentance where the grace and mercy of God washes us clean from all sin. Thus, offering eternal intimacy with Him.

God revealed throughout His word that He wanted to bless His people and give them life. We read about the faithfulness of God in the Psalms, the miraculous provision in Exodus, the protection from enemies in the Promised Land, the love of Jesus in the Gospels, and the healing of the human soul throughout the New Testament. God's grace is unmeasurable. Even when we fail Him, He is quick to forgive and restore the broken relationship that sin creates. What a privilege to be children of God.

The State of the Heart

The progression of a hard heart does not occur all at once. The reason revival is imperative centers on the passing of time. If one's heart is not continually searched and redirected to God alone, then our humanness takes over as it did with people in the Bible. The lessons learned from Scripture assist the Church in recognizing that obedience and a surrendered life displays the favor of God. When people turn away from God and search to have their needs met in other ways, then they lose the presence of the One who created them.

Preparing one's heart is an ongoing, deliberate choice. It does not happen by accident. Could you relate to any one of these churches? Have you withdrawn from the Lord? Are you going through persecution that brought discouragement? Why does contemporary life draw us away from total surrender to God?

We Want Control

First, we like control over our own lives. Who doesn't, right? I know I struggled with surrendering this for years and, at times, must place it back on the altar. The need to control prevents us from giving God everything. Instead of total dependence on God, we move into self-dependence and dictate our own life, thus stifling the Spirit. This stems from multiple areas such as anxieties, fear of the unknown, and pride.

Oh, how the anxious heart creates tension and blocks the peace of Jesus. Worry depletes the presence of God in our lives, and it takes our attention off Him and places it squarely on the problem or circumstance in front of us. We become swallowed up by fear. We justify and rationalize the need to take over and fix problems without waiting on the Lord. This is one of the main reasons people attend counseling. People like to decide what, when, and how they live to avoid feeling uncomfortable or anxious. This need for control limits the ability to humble oneself before the Lord.

Pride, too, may play a part. Such pride may stem from self-reliance, unforgiveness, or not wanting to address hidden sin. Whatever the root cause, pride destroys a person's relationship with God: "Therefore it says, 'God opposes the proud but shows favor to the humble'" (James 4:6). Because of this opposition to God, the person moves further away from Him with a hardened heart. Unforgiveness is a root that pride can enter through, making it essential to

address. Even Jesus said, unless we forgive others, God cannot forgive us (Mark 11:25). This creates enmity between God and us.

Lack of Focus

Another reason we get drawn away from God is a lack of focus. We begin communicating with God through prayer, but then the phone rings or a child bursts through the door. Distractions of life intrude. Time spent with God is overrun with a to-do list, people pleasing behaviors, and day-to-day tasks. If a circumstance arises that demands attention, time spent with God is usually the first activity released. Keeping a prepared heart shifts down the list of importance, and eventually the consequences of this action surface, hindering one's relationship with God. Concerns of the world are closely related to lack of focus. Never-ending daily burdens supplant openness to the Spirit flowing through the day. Opportunities to embrace a move of the Spirit are replaced with over-planning and feelings of being overwhelmed, once again strangling out life in the believer.

Complacent Living

Complacency also hinders the progress of preparing the heart for revival. Among the self-satisfied, the desire to go deeper with the Lord is not worth the investment of time and resources. We become settled with where we are in life, and desperation for God is absent. Fulfillment emerges from family, work, possessions, and entertainment. Life appears to flow smoothly, and routine develops. Cynicism may also prompt complacency. Unanswered prayers, woundedness, or failed goals tend to trigger people to pull back in their relationship with God and to cease seeking Him.

As the parable of the seed and the sower reveals, the deceitfulness of wealth can choke out the Word of God (Matt. 13). Some people come to salvation, but the love of the world grabs their attention and trumps a prepared heart. The lust of the flesh overwhelms the fruit of self-control. Instead of turning away from sin, there is a conscious choice to engage in it. When confronted with this truth, justification and rationalization occur. What a person once called sin; they now embrace. Jeremiah revealed that the heart is deceitful and sick (Jer 17:9). When we trust in our own judgment, we have lost the truth.

Consequently, the above issues result when we do not understand the importance of keeping our heart prepared before the Lord. This preparation sometimes occurs during tragedy or other life-altering circumstances when dependence on God is the only viable option for us. Instead of waiting for this to transpire, choose humility regularly. As Psalm 24:4-5 notes, “The one who has clean hands and a pure heart, who does not trust in an idol or swear by a false god. They will receive blessing from the Lord and vindication from God their Savior.”

Is Revival Needed?

Society darkens spiritually as time progresses. Some even say we are living in the darkest period there has ever been. The depth of sin ranging from pornography to outright blasphemy is startling. In order to restore the kingdom of God on earth, revival must transpire. The church needs to regain its passion and purpose. Does the Church as a whole need revival? The answer is a resounding yes! Society will not change and transform without believers being revived.

The deeper and more personal question remains: do you need revival? I watched a documentary interviewing the underground church in Iran entitled *Sheep Among Wolves II* and two comments by church leaders, who risk their lives daily, keep ringing in my ears. First, a lady shared she had moved to the United States for asylum from persecution in Iran. After being here for only a few months, she told her husband she wanted to return to her home country. To his astonishment, he asked her why. Her answer was she would rather die for her faith than live in a place where her faith was dying because of a “satanic sleepiness” of Christians in the United States. Can you imagine? She would rather die than risk a weakening commitment to Christ. Now that is personal revival.

The second situation in the documentary was from a person (the voice was disguised for protection) who stated, “We are not afraid or upset about being arrested. What is fifty years in prison compared to eternity with Jesus?” I had to rewind the video and listen to that again. The fifty years in prison is potentially full of rape, torture, beatings, and many more unspeakable acts. The commitment to Christ by this person was and is unwavering. The host responded that Christians in the United States focus more on the best life now, whereas the persecuted Christians in Iran focus on their life in eternity. Their first love remains Jesus.

So how can life flow again? How can we stay on fire for Jesus and keep Him as our first love? We must prepare our hearts to receive all that God has for us. Even though our fading commitment seems negative and overwhelming, God has and will always reveal His glory. God is raising up an army to walk in His Spirit and display His power and authority. We are on the verge of a revival that will impact the world. Are you ready to see God's glory? May new life result as we shift from heart preparation to biblical revival.

What do we mean by the word revival? How is it defined?

CHAPTER 2: DEFINITION OF REVIVAL

Have you ever been in a conversation and you had no idea what the other person was talking about? I know I have, and these times left me confused and perplexed. I often walked away without really knowing what just happened. I quickly write it off and move along. I believe this reflects what the Church has done with the term revival. Unless every person is on the same page with the topic and how it is defined, the conversation will never flourish.

This chapter defines revival from a biblical view and its characteristics. While this is not completely exhaustive, it will provide a good working example to accurately ascertain if what is experienced is revival or manmade. As you are probably already aware, identifying true revival is a complicated matter in the contemporary church.

Revive

The actual term revival is not found anywhere in the Bible. Yet, the root word revive is found twenty times in the English Standard Version, nineteen in the Old Testament. The root word revive comes from the Hebrew words *qal* and *piel* from *śûb*, and *hiphil* from *hâyâ*; meaning to give new life, spring to life, recover, and restore vitality.² The New Testament term revive in the English Standard Version is found in Philippians 4:10, and the Greek is *amathállō*, which means

to bloom again.³ If revive is new life or restored vitality, then revival is the response of the person receiving it.

Origin & Definition of the Word Revival

Since its origin in the English language, the word “revival” has grown in meaning and carries different connotations, provoking confusion regarding its definition. To delineate when the term “revival” first began is impossible. Furthermore, to pinpoint a cohesive definition along time span and location becomes convoluted. At some point along the journey of the Church, the word “revival” grew into multiple meanings, sparking controversy. In addition, other terms joined the discussion such as “awakening” and “renewal.” The words “revival” and “awakening” have been used interchangeably at times. Historically, “awakening” was used for a move of God which impacted multiple countries or locations at the same time and “revival” for local outpourings. Some contemporary language references “awakening” for unbelievers and “revival” for only the church. “Renewal” is more of an encouragement and rededication of believers to the Lord without a pouring out of the Spirit.

Even the etymology of the word “revival” in English is interesting. It comes from two Latin words: vivere, which means “to live,” and re-, which means “again.” This indicates that revival is for the Church. Christians are made alive in Christ when they accept Him as their Savior and Lord, but then there is a gradual loss of that full life in Him. The need is pressing for a reinstatement of God’s vitality, thus restoring the person again to the fullness of the Christian life.

Therefore, for this book, “revival” is defined as an outpouring of the Spirit that begins with the church triggering a conviction of sin and a renewal of love for the Lord, prompting a return of focus to spiritual and eternal matters to include evangelism. Revival is imperative for those who call themselves believers when they have backslidden or ceased loving God with all their being (Matt 22:37).

Although revival is a blessed gift from God, it is not really His best choice. That would be retaining the fullness of life He gives us at salvation, maintaining our first love and holy devotion, and serving Him consistently in everyday life. If a person is nearly dead and needs to

be shocked back into life with the paddles of a defibrillator, this is not an ideal situation. Likewise, it would be far better if we did not need to have the shaking awake of revival.

Almost every move of God traced back to its foundation discloses a period of spiritual decline prior to the revival. The culture, society, and church members drifted into moral decay, provoking a person or a few people to long for more of Him. Responding to a spirit of repentance, they cried out to their Father. The Lord responded through His Spirit by changing the hearts of men and women who thereby impacted the landscape of cities and nations.

In addition, revivals are all-inclusive. All classes and ethnicities of people are reached in revival—rich, poor, white, black, Indian, Hispanic, educated, employed, business owners, and laborers. Revivals also tend to be contagious. History reveals that when people heard of what God was doing elsewhere, a hunger erupted in their own spirits as they too wanted more of Him. This hunger had the potential to spark revival in their locations. Characteristics of revival include presence of the Spirit, repentance, evangelism, salvation, hunger for the Word of God, exuberant worship, miraculous signs, and lasting effects such as social justice reformations and development of missionary movements.

The Spirit

Revivals occur when God sends His Spirit to provide new life, boldness of faith, and strength to overcome worldly temptations. This takes on many different characteristics depending on time frame, location, and needs of the people, yet the fundamental points remain the same across all outpourings. What the church today calls “revival” is characterized by first-century, New Testament type activity. Henry Fish reveals the Spirit of Pentecost impacts people the same way in present times: “The effective cause in all true revivals is the life-giving, light-imparting, quickening, regenerating and sanctifying energy of the Holy Spirit, converting the hardened sinner and reclaiming the backslidden and dormant believer.”⁴ The Spirit of the Lord signifies that revival has come.

Revival focuses on the presence of God and the awareness of His Spirit. How the Spirit manifests in each revival varies. In one revival there was solemnity and quietness, while in others weeping, laughing, falling out in the Spirit, feeling of rain inside the building, and outsiders thinking the church was on fire when it was not, to name a few examples.

Elevation of Christ Brings Repentance

In tandem with the awareness of God, the Spirit reveals Christ. A revival will always point to Jesus as Savior and address His love and sacrifice. When a person enters the presence of the most high and holy God, feelings of unworthiness triggers conviction as an understanding of sin comes to light. This brings repentance and a desire for holy living in humility and brokenness. A heart change refocuses priorities to eternal aspects, placing God first. The effects of this encounter extend beyond the person and begins to influence those around them.

Evangelism Leads to Salvations

Winkey Pratney declares how society is changed when believers give priority to the Lord above all else: “Revival may change a person, a church, a city, a nation, or the world, but it accomplishes ‘the reviving of the church...toward the Christian faith, evangelism, teaching, and social action.’”⁵ A life transformed becomes an activated life for Kingdom work, which increases new church plants and missionary work, bringing in the harvest of souls for salvation. Eternity and the Great Commission are no longer discounted but embraced with passion and urgency. The desire to share with others about Jesus presses upon men and women. Testimonies flood the community, which renders advertising unnecessary. Revelation 12:11 says, “They triumphed over him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony; they did not love their lives so much as to shrink from death.” People cannot remain silent or fear rejection from others when a true move of God has come over their lives. Evangelism becomes a natural way of life during revival.

Hunger to Read the Bible

Hunger for the Word of God renews the desire to learn more about Him, resulting in a return to the Bible as the authority for daily living and governance of society. Careless living is turned into a holiness movement. Families are restored, communities transformed, and bondages broken. Due to the return to the Word of God, revival is a divine attack on society. Pratney explains, “Revival is Divine military strategy: first to counteract spiritual decline and then to create spiritual momentum.”⁶ Spiritual formation tools that may have been lax or nonexistent become an everyday discipline.

Exuberant Worship

Furthermore, worship erupts. Worship entails singing and shouts of praise and thanksgiving. It can last for hours and be accompanied with instruments or voices alone. It may consist of hymns or prophetic song. Shouts of praise often come from one person or multiple people. Worship expresses the experience occurring deep within the heart and mind. The intensity is high, and people become motivated to tell the Lord how they love Him. Vibrant worship alone does not entail revival, however.

Gifts of the Spirit

The Spirit is poured out in a move of God, and gifts of the Spirit are observed. This includes baptism of the Holy Spirit, prophecy, words of knowledge, words of wisdom, and other ways of manifestation of the Spirit. Miracles, signs, and wonders are prevalent but not required to classify as a revival. Healing, deliverance, raising the dead, and rapid weight loss are just a few examples. These actions occur so that nonbelievers will witness that God is real, powerful, and alive.

Effects of Revival

The fruit of the revival moves outside of the church walls and impacts the community, changing it in some way. There were stories of drinking establishments and dance halls closing during the Hebridean, Scottish, and Welsh revivals. Families were strengthened as men went home to take care of their wives and children. The conversations of the town during the Welsh revival centered around God, even if the people were not saved.

The best way to assess whether a revival is a true biblical revival resides in the fruit of the move. Genuineness of the Spirit produces results that last for a long period of time such as abolishing slavery, expanding women's rights, people who were living together getting married, paying back debts and items stolen, and the founding of Bible schools and missionary organizations. With an increase in spiritual concerns, churches become mission minded as they focus on serving others. The Early Church members sold all they had and gave to the church to provide for their brethren who lacked (Acts 2:45). Compassion ministries are initiated through revival to address hunger, housing, and medical care.

Three Participants in Revival

Revivals produce momentum to bring in the harvest of souls. Miracles, signs, and wonders prompt attention. However, the origin of these displays needs to be identified. There are three participants in revival— God, the devil, and humans. God’s part has already been discussed. It is the combination of the last two participants (the devil and humans) that can jeopardize every legitimate move of God. Nonetheless, they are present in every revival. As long as the battle between heaven and hell continues, the enemy seeks to discredit any opportunity that draws people to Christ.

Both genuine and counterfeit characteristics should be expected. Confrontation of the counterfeit will determine the legitimacy of the revival. Demonic displays must be dealt with immediately. It is not uncommon for witches, witch doctors, mediums, and other demonic consultants to attend revivals to distract from Jesus. Confusion results when outbursts and demonic distractions are ignored or handled inappropriately, and such actions jeopardize the move by producing doubt and igniting naysayers. Dealing with issues quickly minimizes confusion and increases trust in the leadership among those in attendance.

Multiple aspects from a human perspective impact the legitimacy of revivals. First, the classification of revival remains one source of dissension. Confusion over the term revival has triggered indifference and opposition. This results in individuals ignoring genuine, divine interactions and bypassing the blessings. When attention is drawn to revival, opposition against the leaders has, at times, stemmed from other leaders in prominent positions being insecure and jealous of what God is doing through someone else, just as Saul was jealous of David (1 Sam 18:5-12).

There is another viewpoint motivated by pride—when the revival leaders reject outside input. Such leaders run the risk of becoming enamored by the revival and promoting themselves instead of God’s Kingdom. When confronted on the matter, they dismiss it as jealousy instead of wisdom. This opens the door to strife and allows the enemy entrance into the revival.

Another controversy ensues when religious beliefs do not fit into the current displays observed. Individuals with counter beliefs then deny and hinder the revival. Biblical examples include a lack of faith in miracles and Jesus choosing death and resurrection instead of following the Jews’

desire for Him to overthrow the Roman government. The religious leaders could not see because of their own beliefs of what something should look like. When the devil fights a revival, it tends to grow, but when the church opposes a revival, it ends.

As a result of these scenarios, divisions and doctrinal controversies arise, thus reflecting poorly on revivals in general. When the word revival surfaces in current conversations, it elicits a nervousness in church leaders. Without proper insight into revivals, fears, tradition, and a religious spirit materialize, and a rejection of God's invitation for revival ensues.

The answer to this conflict remains the Spirit. There must be openness on the part of the church and leaders to recognize variety in how God moves. All true revivals originate with God, and He alone determines the characteristics. If sound doctrine is being presented, one should encourage attendance at revival meetings. Even Jesus told His disciples that if people were not against them, then leave them alone (Mark 9:38-39).

In return, the leaders of the revival must be open to correction and willing to listen to outside perspectives. Humility decreases the possibility of division through jealousy and fosters openness to approachability in order that the work might not be hindered.⁷ The Spirit brings revelation knowledge to a revival. Humanly devised doctrine or experience should not dictate what constitutes a revival, but the Word of God takes precedence in all areas, because pride is the greatest threat to revival.

Furthermore, apart from leadership issues, human behavior impacts the legitimacy of revival and includes emotionalism and fanaticism. While the enemy utilizes both methods to exploit what the Spirit is wanting to do, humans have a choice on how to react. Believers are not controlled by the Spirit but participate with Him.

Emotionalism centers on human emotions that are extreme and manifest with bizarre or controversial behaviors. Stories of people moaning in low voices, convulsing, rolling around, and drawing attention to oneself are a few examples. At times, leaders tolerate these behaviors to prevent the hindrance of a move of the Spirit, but experienced leadership interferes and corrects inappropriate behaviors. Human nature is such that extremes appear in revival through enthusiasm and zeal. What might have begun innocently, the enemy turns into something dangerous. The leaders at the Brownsville revival had a policy of "no judgement, no noise."⁸

They removed individuals causing disturbances but would not judge whether the behavior was of God or not. This resulted in a two-fold benefit: the people felt an increased trust in the leadership to deal with situations and the freedom to respond to the move of the Spirit. Revival is a blessing from God to draw all people to Himself and not just an experience. When people seek the experience over life transformation, then emotionalism brews. Fanaticism is dangerous and gives warrant for others to discount a revival.

Fanaticism exists among young, immature, and enthusiastic Christians who are thrust into leadership positions that focus on phenomena and experiences, and who thus treat feeling and excitement as primary.⁹ Fanaticism also results when a person becomes so focused on revival that it is all they think about and talk about, attempting to force others to adopt their same passion.

Another key area to observe is whether holiness and devotion to spiritual things increase. If they do not, it is questionable whether the move is really of God. One must be on guard to consistently test the spirits involved. As Dr. Carolyn Tennant cautions, “One prevailing idea which such believers have deeply imbedded in their minds is that ‘honest seekers after God’ will not be allowed to be deceived. That is Satan’s lie to lure such seekers into a false position of safety.”¹⁰ This is the reason to look for the degree of life transformation occurring. Is the person reading Scripture, praying, worshiping, and focusing on the Lord even more? This should be an outcome of legitimate revival.

Dr. Tennant depicts multiple issues, brought on by humans, that need to cease if they occur during a revival:

1. Any form of hype or manipulation is not biblical. This could include repeating phrases over and over or loud music which works people up.
2. Focusing on spiritual gifts and blessings instead of Christ and repentance.
3. No revival should ever draw people away from the local church.
4. If someone claims they have a new spiritual discovery, they are possibly deceived.
5. Anytime during a revival where selfish ambition presents itself, disorder will be present.
6. Utilizing crowd dynamics for power of suggestion or anticipation is dangerous.¹¹

If any of these characteristics are recognized, leadership needs to intervene to protect the legitimacy of the revival. The Word of God reigns supreme over tradition, experience, and personal preference.

Potential problems emerge whenever the enemy and unruly humans attempt to dominate. Therefore, the legitimacy of a revival resides in the leadership's discernment and ability to confront the ungodly components. Frank Bartleman shares what John Wesley once prayed, "Oh, Lord, send us the old revival, without the defects; but if this cannot be, send it—with all its defects. We must have revival."¹²

Unfortunately, controversial aspects of revivals have plagued the reception of them, but education on biblical characteristics can assist in alleviating division and stirring up hunger for more of God. The word revival has stirred up controversy for those in the religious sector for years. An agreed upon definition appears elusive at times, especially when integrating worldwide cultures. Human contention may hinder revival, but the need for more of God persists. Identifying characteristics assists in describing what revival is and what it does, while pinpointing behaviors of concern sheds light on possible areas of error. The most productive method to address both blessings and concerns is to dissect actual revivals. Therefore, an in-depth look at biblical, historical, and contemporary moves of God proceeds.