

The Canadian Revival - Part 1

by Bill McLeod

Bill McLeod discusses the true meaning of revival and shares his experiences leading a church towards spiritual awakening through prayer and community involvement.

Duration: 8:15

Scripture: 2 Chronicles 7:14, Psalm 85:6, Ezekiel 37:5, Joel 2:28, Zechariah 12:10, Matthew 18:19-20, Acts 1:14, Romans 8:26, Colossians 4:2, James 5:16

Topics: "Spiritual Revival", "Holy Spirit"

Description

This sermon delves into the concept of revival, emphasizing the transformation of Christians from a state of spiritual deadness to vibrant life through the outpouring of God's Spirit. It narrates a journey of prayer, preparation, and anticipation for revival within a church congregation, highlighting the importance of cultivating a spirit of prayer and unity in seeking God's intervention and awakening.

Transcript

I would like, first of all, to talk about the meaning of the word revival. It means different things to different people. To some, it's just a time of religious excitement to be frowned on.

To others, it's a series of evangelistic meetings. I recall reading about a Christian worker. He was driving, and he saw a sign in front of a church, and the sign said, Revival every night but Friday.

And he went about 50 miles, and he saw another church, and they had a sign in front saying, Revival every Friday night. So he thought if they could get together, they could have revival seven days a week. But it shows that people don't really understand, at least some do not understand what is meant by the word revival.

Actually, revival has to do with Christians, Christian people who are perhaps truly saved, walking with God to some extent, but more or less dead. In a time of revival, when God pours his spirit on his people, they come alive. They begin witnessing living holy lives, excited about God in a good way, in a good sense.

In 1962, I moved from Winnipeg, Canada, to Saskatoon in Saskatchewan, a distance of 500 miles, and I became pastor of what in Canada would be considered a fairly good church, size church, 175 members. That would not seem like a large church in the United States. I was happy to be there.

It was a good church. We had numbers of people in the congregation who were graduates of Bible schools, a bar across the school, or perhaps Three Hills, and others from other places, mostly young married couples. And they all loved God, they all loved evangelism, they all loved mission, but nobody did it.

And I wondered how to get this church on the road. So to begin with, after I'd been there about a year, I figured I knew the congregation fairly well, so I divided the congregation into five groups. I did this all on my own.

And then I gave each group a name or a number, and then I let the congregation know what I had done, and I said, now Monday night, and I had a list on the bulletin board, check it out, see which team you're on, then you'll know once in every five weeks you and your team will be going out, door calling, trying to win people to Christ. So I thought that was pretty neat. And Monday came and went, nobody showed up.

I told them, if you don't feel capable of doing this, stay home and pray. So everybody stayed home and prayed. Nobody came.

So I thought, well, now the problem is they really don't know how to do it, so I'll have classes. So I had classes for eight weeks on how to win people to Christ. Then I did the same thing.

I had a good attendance, almost 100%. I mean, people had signed up. They were there every night for eight weeks.

And I said, now Monday night is evangelism night. I expect to see you all here. We'll go out and talk to people about Jesus Christ.

But if you don't feel quite ready for that, you stay home and pray. And it happened again. Two people showed up, both them shaking in their shoes.

And then it dawned on me they never had a heart for it. They didn't really want to do that. They didn't have a heart for it.

They weren't excited about God. They weren't really filled with the Spirit of God. So I began praying for revival.

Five years before the revival, which began in 1971, I talked to my deacons. I had ten deacons in the congregation. I asked them to meet with me every Saturday night at 9 o'clock for a half hour just to pray for revival.

They agreed with that. Then the Wednesday night prayer meeting, I used to tell the people the most important meeting of the week is the prayer meeting. So if you have to miss Sunday morning, that's okay.

If you have to miss Sunday evening, that's okay. But don't ever miss the prayer meeting unless you're dead. And I really pushed the prayer meeting.

And it grew from 25 to 50 to 75 to 100 to 125 to 150. It got up as high as 170. And it became the most exciting meeting of the week.

It wasn't revival, but it was certainly a path to revival. And people began sharing answers to prayer they were having, and people would share personal needs in the prayer meeting. Then we started having

children's prayer meetings in connection with the Wednesday night prayer meeting.

So finally we had 30 or 40 children attending, and we divided them into two groups and had an adult with each group in a different room. And they trained the children to run their own prayer meetings, and the kids just loved it. This meant more people could come to the prayer meeting because the kids were in prayer meetings.

And then we ended every Sunday evening service with a half hour of prayer. And I explained to the people, it will not be longer than 30 minutes. We just want to meet and pray for revival in our church.

So 30 or 40, 50 people may even want to stay behind to pray. Then we had a prayer wheel and a bulletin board of the church divided into pie-shaped wedges, 15-minute wedges. And each person was to pray about it and then sign his or her name in the slot that they would take the time, day or night, to pray 15 minutes for revival every day of the year.

Pretty soon we had the whole 24 hours taken up and sometimes more than one name in a time slot. And then I suggested, see, if I had done all this at once, it wouldn't have been too heavy a burden. The people couldn't have carried it.

But as we did one thing, they got more of a spirit of prayer. And then there's a verse in the Bible that speaks about God in Zechariah pouring on his people a spirit of grace and supplication. One translation says, a spirit of grace to supplicate.

That is, there is such a thing as a spirit of prayer. Now Phinney, the evangelist, said that if he ever lost a spirit of prayer, he could not converse effectively with individuals or congregations either. He made much of this spirit of prayer, which he looked on as being a gift from God, to enable God's children to pray.

And that happened to us. People began telling me, you know, last night God waked me. I prayed for 45 minutes.

Well, I used to be prayed out in five minutes. Not anymore. And we began hearing reports like this.

And this went on. And then we had cottage prayer meetings. And we just emphasized, we used to tell people, don't worry about the food getting cold.

When you're asking a blessing over the meal, if you feel like praying for revival, pray for revival. And so people began doing that as well. So there was a real spirit of prayer all through the congregation.

And we had invited Ralph and Lucitara to come from Mansfield, Ohio. That's where they lived then. And they arrived.

And we started on a Wednesday night. We were planning to go for a week and a half. We had to go for seven weeks.

Meetings every night, moving from one auditorium to larger buildings to accommodate the crowds. But I remember that first meeting, the church would seat about 300. And probably the first meeting we had, maybe 125 or something there.

And five people responded. And God began working in that first meeting. Two ladies who had been warring got together and straightened things out.

And that was a harbinger of what was to come. By Saturday, we couldn't accommodate the crowds. The church was packed to the doors.

There was an Anglican church just three blocks away. They could seat about 500 or 600. I contacted the pastor.

He said, We never have any evening meetings at all. You can have the church as long as you want. So we moved there.

I think it was on Monday. And we were packed. We had about 100 people.

We didn't know what to do with. So we asked all the young people in the meeting to come and sit on the platform. They had a huge platform.

Just sit on the floor so the kids like that, you know. And they were sitting all over the platform.

Video: <https://sermonindex2.b-cdn.net/K-HJFtQvlec.mp4>

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/bill-mcleod/the-canadian-revival-part-1/>

Grow in Your Walk with Christ

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

www.sermonindex.net