

# The Canadian Revival

by Bill McLeod

---

*Bill McLeod recounts the transformative revival in Saskatoon, emphasizing the power of prayer and the Holy Spirit in renewing the church and community.*

**Duration:** 50:47

**Scripture:** Luke 15:20

**Topics:** "Revival History"

---

## Description

In this sermon, the preacher shares a powerful testimony of a man who experienced a profound encounter with God. The man cried out to God, begging for mercy and repenting of his sins. As he did, a fountain of lust and junk from his past life poured out of him. This encounter led to a revival in the church, with an increase in track sales and distribution, as well as testimonies of people being transformed by God. The preacher also shares a story of a 10-year-old boy who preached and called people to repentance, leading to a powerful move of God in the church.

---

## Transcript

The Apostle Peter told us in Acts 3 that times of refreshing or revival would come from the presence of the Lord. There have been hundreds of revivals since. There are some going on today.

What I want to do in this session is to share something of the revival we experienced in 1971 in Saskatoon, Canada, some of the events leading up to the revival, some of the events that happened in the revival, and perhaps a little bit about since. We didn't know until after the revival happened that back in 1968 or 1969, two years prior to the revival itself, in India, a group of men who met weekly to pray, received a burden from God to pray for revival in western Canada. They knew nobody there, had no contacts with western Canada at all, they couldn't even tell how they were able to articulate the phrase, western Canada, but they had this burden to pray.

Then another group in India, and these groups were not connected at all, about the same time they began praying for revival in Saskatoon, in western Canada. And when they heard about the revival coming from a Canadian who was visiting India, and they asked them where they got this name, and they said they didn't know. They couldn't remember where the name came from, but they had been praying for two years for revival in Saskatoon, in western Canada.

I was pastor of a Baptist church. I moved there from Winnipeg in 1962. We had a building that would comfortably seat about 300 people.

We probably didn't have more than 150 resident members, but I don't know how it is here, but in western Canada, if you have 150 members, you probably have 250 people attending. We would always have more people attending than we actually had members in the church, and that's quite common in western Canada. I had a lot of people in the church who were Bible school graduates, and I thought, Boy, we've got a hold of something pretty hot here.

I found out later on it wasn't all that hot, but anyway, we started off. One of the first things I did was divide the whole church into five teams for soul winning, and then Tuesday night was visitation night. I let each people, we published a list on the foyer, the bulletin board, told people to check and find out which team they were in, one, two, three, four, five, then see which to log on the side, which night your team is to come.

I left the door open and said, If you don't feel that you are spiritually able, perhaps not entirely right with God, you don't feel you can do this kind of thing, you may stay home and pray. So they all stayed home and prayed. Nobody showed up.

So then I thought to myself, Well, the real problem is they don't know how to do it. So then we had some, I think we went for 8 weeks, we had a good enrollment and almost 100 percent attendance of those who enrolled, an 8 week study course in how to win souls to Christ. Then after we concluded, I told them the same thing, I said, Tuesday night is visitation night, I expect to see all of you people out now, you know how to do it, we'll see you here Tuesday night, but if you feel you are not spiritually able, feel free to stay home and pray.

So the same thing happened, they all stayed home and prayed. And then I realized we had a deeper problem than I knew, and I began to pray for revival. We had had different evangelists and singing groups come in our church once or twice a year, from 62 to 70, and there was some blessing, I don't know if it was anything outstanding, a few people would find Christ, one or two backsliders come back to God, a few people start tithing that hadn't been tithing before, maybe two people constrained to join the Church.

But a week after these people had left, there was no difference, it was just as if they had never come. And I got so tired of that, pack-a-tube programs and all these programs that the Brethren came with. And I'm not running them down, we had an evangelist, he used to be a nightclub entertainer, he would stand on his hands and tap dance on a board above his head.

Now, that's different. And so we had him come. Now, he didn't do his thing in our church, we were too conservative for that in Canada, but he was a good evangelist, a good preacher, and these people we had, all of them were Bible believers and Christ-lovers.

But nothing seemed to be left behind. And then one of the hardest things for any preacher, any pastor, to realize is that the church he is serving is not his church. I thought it was my church.

So I had to protect my church. If a few of my sheep wandered away to another church, then I had to defend myself, because sure, someone from my church is going to ask me, why did Browns leave and go to the Alliance Church? Now, I didn't dare say to them they found a grass greener over there, I had to say something like this. They are church hoppers and they won't stay there long, they'll hop away from the

Alliance Church.

They might even come back here sometime, who knows? This is how I handled it. You know, you can damn people with faint praise, and I was an expert at doing that. She's a great person, but, he's a great Christian, but he's got this problem.

And God began to deal with me, and because I didn't turn to God, turn at my reproof, God said, if you turn, Proverbs 1.23, I'll pour out my spirit unto you, I'll make known my words unto you. So I had to suffer a little longer than I probably would have had to. We had a recession in the province, 40,000 people left Saskatchewan, moving to other parts of Canada, looking for jobs.

We lost about a hundred people from our congregation moving away, looking for jobs. And I couldn't figure it out. I remember telling God, I said, Lord, why are you taking all my good people and leaving the stinkers behind? I had people in my church that actually prayed, Lord, send them to the Alliance Church, send them to a Pentecostal church and get them out of my hair.

Some of those gals had tongues so long they could use them for windshield wipers, slide them out the side window. And I used to pray about these gals. And I thought in terms of a little progress in the church, I never blamed myself.

It was these gossipers, it was my dead deacons, it was my Sunday school staff, it was my wife. That was never me. And I had to defend myself, and I became an expert.

I could write a book on how to defend yourself in the ministry, so you can always make it look good, so people will think you're a king when you're not even a mouse. I learned how. And God got to me because of this.

And finally, it came to a place where God worked so powerfully in my heart, do you know what I was able to do? When some of my best people moved away, I thanked God. I just praised the Lord. God, it's your church.

I told the Lord one time, I said, Lord, if you want to take all my people, move them across Canada or move them to other churches in the city of Saskatoon, go right ahead and do it. It's your church and I'll praise the Lord. And when I got that far, the pressure was gone.

It was God's church, and he wanted me to know that. Then I took a step which to many preachers would be incredible. One Sunday some people from the Alliance Church in Saskatoon showed up at my congregation.

Some of my people came running up and said, get them in as members. I said, for what? Well, get them in right away. They said, why? Well, we need people here.

Are they Christians? Oh, they're great Christians, yeah. You better try and get them. I said, I didn't come here to do that.

The Alliance Church was preaching the gospel, a good, sound gospel-preaching church. Why should I try and get some of their people? So I came up past them and said, Walter, some of your sheep wandered over into my corral Sunday morning. You'd better check them out.

Well, thanks, Terry, he said. So then some of my sheep wandered over into your corral and he phoned me. Then we began doing telechurches.

I remember one time some people showed up in my church Sunday morning, and we used registration forms every Sunday morning, and people would fill in if they wanted to have a pastoral call, if they wanted to have an offering on works or teach in Sunday school or something, they'd just fill in and this would be checked out from the office. And they filled in on the form if they wanted to join my church. But there were already members of another church on the west side of the city, a long way from where we were, and it was a good gospel-preaching church, so I called on them.

I said, Why do you want to join my church? Oh, they said, We think you're such a great preacher. I said, Now, wait a minute. You signed this form before you even heard me preach, so you're not telling me the truth.

Now, why do you want to join my church? And finally they told me the truth. They said, Our church is in financial problem, we think the ship is going to sink, we don't want to be on it when it goes down. I said, Look, if you people, even one or two more families like me, the ship will sink and go down, you go back and stay with your church, and our church will, I promise you, our church will pray for your church, that God will take care of the problems there.

And the Lord did. They went back, they stayed there, but we just missed a family of six. I'm sure if some of the people in my church knew some of the things I was doing, they would have fired me.

But the Lord and I were just having a great time. If it was somebody from a liberal church, or from a dead fundamental church that hadn't changed for 25 years and had no plans for changing in the future, that was a different story. But if it was a church where they loved God and preached the gospel, I'd say, I've got this one of your churches, you can do what you want with my people because they're not my people, they're your people.

And you know what happened? When the revival broke, the other evangelical pastors in Saskatoon were not afraid to say to their people, get over there and expose yourself to it, because they knew I wouldn't try to steal their people. And we had created an atmosphere in which the Spirit of God could widely work. We didn't realize this at the time, but we saw it later on.

Duncan Campbell, a man God so greatly used in the Hebrides revival in the early 1950s, was in our church in 1969. Nothing remarkable happened. And yet I know that God used him in laying some foundations, trees and so on, in my own heart, in our church, for the revival which came in 1971.

He was a man of very few words as a Scotch afternoon. He never said anything to me about this, but when he got back to Winnipeg, one of my brothers, Keith, is an evangelist, and Keith had invited Duncan Campbell to come to Canada and arranged all these meetings for him. When he got back to Winnipeg, he said to my brother, Revival is coming to Canada and it's going to start in your brother's church.

He said, The other night I was praying and God showed me the whole thing, a fire of revival spreading across Canada, beginning in your brother's church in Saskatoon. But that was in 1969, and very wisely he never told me, and my brother didn't tell me, until after the revival came. I don't know what he saw.

I'm sure it was nothing near in the church, but God showed him that he was going to do this. I was preaching after the revival in the interlake country of Manitoba, and people told us that Duncan Campbell



God did it, God met him. I went down to New Brunswick, a place called Woodstock, there's a Woodstock, New York, Woodstock, Ontario, Woodstock, New Brunswick, Woodstock, South Africa, this is Woodstock, New Brunswick, 5,000 people, I had to stay there for 5 weeks. And God did it down there.

We were speaking to Jesus Christ. Two young people in our church, two young men, they were 18, 19, one played football, the other was not too athletic, he was more the scholastic type. They were good friends, and they were talking on the phone one day, and one of the mothers listened in, mothers shouldn't do that, but she was listening in, and they were shaking each other up.

This is emotionalism, we'll have to go Sunday mornings to keep our parents quiet, but we're not responding. Remember, we're not responding. Sunday morning, the day after they had this phone call, before the meeting was half through, it was Sunday morning in our church, we were in the crusade meetings, those were in the evening, and the people had come forward, and I was counseling in the back room, and suddenly the door burst open, and here's this football player, Phil, with his dad and his uncle, said, Phil wants to get saved.

I didn't know about the phone call then, I found out later on, and so we knelt around my desk there, and the shammas prayed, and said, okay Phil, and he had his hands on my desk, and he kept saying, no way, no way, no way. I said, well Phil, didn't you come to be saved? No way, no way, and I waited. It was an unfinished sentence.

No way can I ever doubt the reality of Jesus Christ today. No way. Then he told us what had happened.

While we were singing the song, he said, the Holy Spirit came, tore my heart wide open, and revealed Jesus Christ to me in a way I can never doubt the reality of God again. His friend went forward that same Sunday morning and found Christ as a saver living in Denver, Colorado now. He's a civil engineer, walking with God.

It was things like this. People made up their minds they wouldn't be saved, psyched themselves up to the ceiling, they weren't going to respond. Many times they wept right in their seat, sometimes turned and knelt in their seat, and called on God.

So we went for seven weeks. When teams began going out, we got an SOS from Colorado, can you send a team down, we have ten churches here, they want this revival and evangelistic message, can you send us a team? We had nobody left, everybody was somewhere else, but we had two revived farmers, and we sent them two revived farmers, and they preached with them for a week, and they had a revival down there. People are tremendous, there's a latent power in our churches that we know very little about.

That's why we desperately need constant outpourings of the Spirit of God. That's why there's coming back to God, discouraged pastors receiving new power from God. One pastor came from Thompson, northern Manitoba, mining town, he said, Bill, Paul, you talk about a sad person, they are pipers.

He said, Bill, if God doesn't do something for me, I will never preach again. He had two other preachers he brought with him, they were all in the same shape. He said, Bill, we'll never preach again.

I can still see Bill there, lying on the carpet at the front of the church. He lay there for hours, battling with God. He finally surrendered, went back to Thompson, almost every week he's been there.

People have found Christ as their personal Savior. God did a new work in his heart. The movement was not charismatic, the charismatics tried to claim it, they had nothing whatever to do with it.

We did not encourage speaking in tongues or anything of this nature. Sometimes in an afterglow, a Pentecostal person who might be there might speak in tongues, we'd ask them to desist. We had no problems with this really at all.

It was not a healing thing. We prayed sometimes for sick people and they were healed. That was not considered to be an important part of the work at all.

The important thing was the Spirit of God was meeting people, his people, getting us out of our sins, out of our coldness. I'd like to tell you about a fellow in our church, he was our head usher, Gordon Bailey. He's a Catlin speculator in Saskatchewan government, he's only got grade 8 education, neither he nor his wife has seen the inside of a Bible school.

They were always in church, they'd been Christians six years, but they never won a soul to Christ. I don't think they ever even tried. After one of those meetings, he got up and said, I need prayer, would you people pray for me? I'm cold, I'm a phony, there's no reality of God in my life, I really need prayer.

He humbled himself. A group of our men prayed with him, and Gordon met God, went home, told his wife, she met God. Then he told me, he said, I did the hardest thing he ever did in all of my life.

He got his family, his wife and his four children, set them on chairs, and he sat here and he asked them to forgive him. For the poor dad and the poor husband, the poor Christian he'd been, the poor example he'd been, got the whole thing straightened up, and he and his wife started soul winning. In the next nine months, they led 30 people to Christ, they started a work in an Indian village south of there, where they had a holding outside of Saskatoon, about six miles out of the city, a couple hundred acres, six miles south there was this Indian reserve, they went down there, they led 35 or 40 Indians to Christ, got a permanent work established there.

He told me that last year there were only three Sundays when he wasn't teaching somewhere else. Never seen the inside of a Bible school? I know of two churches and four Christian organizations now that have offered him a full time paid position as director of evangelism, he won't accept that, he doesn't want to lose his non-professional status. He loves working with men, and in his job as a cattle inspector, he's among men cowboys all the time.

A while ago, a group of Christian ranchers in Alberta, they invited him to come and speak at a rally they were having, and the rally was of this kind, that you couldn't come as a Christian rancher unless you brought an unconverted rancher with you. So there were 100 men there, 50 were converted and 50 were not. Gordon brought the message, gave an invitation, 12 ranchers came forward and got saved.

About two years ago he was asked to speak at an international gathering of cowboys in the Edmonton area, there's a couple of thousand people there, Gordon Bailey brought the message, the consulates are packed with people wanting to be saved who couldn't get any more in. Now he never had his rights of the cross in Solon, but when he got his heart right with God, then it was just a natural, bubbling, overflowing thing. And that's the secret I learned in my church.

You know, before the seven weeks of the revival were over, one Sunday morning I asked my people, I said, how many people would like to get involved in Solon immediately, I had them sign a card, we had

almost 50 names right away. I couldn't get three before. So it wasn't a matter of the mechanics of knowing how, it was having a heart that had a love for God and because of that a love for souls.

So it began in revival, in prayer, the revival began in prayer, carried on by prayer. All those prayer meetings, any time of the day or night, two o'clock in the morning somebody phones up, we're having a prayer meeting, would you like to come? So away they go. Then what about today? That was back in 1971.

We had the Canadian Revival Fellowship, 25 teams, half were American, half were Canadian. I suggested to the brethren we should call it the Camerican Revival Fellowship, and they said, no, let's leave it the way it is. And God is using our teams in revival in Canada, in the States, in foreign countries.

I was in Argentina the first time, I was in Argentina five or six years ago. I spoke 105 times in nine weeks to 15 different interpreters in different parts of the country. They asked me to stay for two years.

I just didn't feel I could do it, but maybe I should have, I don't know. I didn't feel that God wanted me to do it at the time or I would have done it. But speaking to an interpreter, same thing.

Number one case was a youth rally, there were several hundred kids there, and before I finished they started coming forward. To an interpreter, some wanting revival. I think there were seven or eight found Christ as their Savior in that particular meeting.

To an interpreter, the need is the same around the world. And prayer is the way to bring the power of God's Spirit into the work of God. If I was called to be a pastor again, the first thing I would do would be this, I would commit the church to God for revival, and I would believe God until it came.

And I believe it would come. Dick Siple, who is one of our teams, he is a full-time pastor but does a lot of work in our revival crusades. Dick was pastor of a church in Akron, Ohio, heard about the revival in Canada, contacted the area superintendent for the Mission Alliance in Western Canada, Reverend Ortner, and said, what do you know about the revival? He said, I've been in it, it's red hot.

He said, are you coming down to Akron? He said, I'll be there in two weeks. Would you preach for me? Sure, he said, I'll preach for you morning and evening and Sunday. And Dick told us that he was sure that revival was coming, because he had prayed for revival for years.

And Ortner preached, and nothing happened. Nobody came forward, not even one person. So he said to Ortner, Brother Ortner, what went wrong? And Ortner wisely said, Dick, I am not God.

So Dick had to go back to the old way and kept preaching, kept believing God, though. Seven or eight months later, one Sunday morning, Dick was preaching, and a fellow got to his seat, a young man, and began confessing his sins to God, as if there was nobody else in the room but he and the Lord. Well, it was a little disconcerting, trying to preach a guy confessing his sins.

Then there were two of them, then there were eight of them, then there were ten. Dick sat down and quit preaching and just watched it. So the whole congregation was touched by God.

Then he finally gave a low-key invitation, the entire church came forward and knelt at the front, the meeting went on for two and a half hours, people were converted, Christians were revived. Dick never got to preach in the public for three solid weeks, because Christians were coming, sharing what God was

doing. Then he got his church into evangelism.

And not long after, Sir Terry and myself, Dick Siple, we were in a Greek restaurant in Akron, Ohio. A state trooper came in, and he had a fellow with him. Dick said, Hey, that's one of my men.

He's a real foe of that trooper. He's going to try and win that guy to Christ. Let's have a prayer time.

So we had a prayer time, and Dick said, Hey, praise the Lord, there are three of my men, you've got three sinnered women, they're going to try and get them saved. He said, They're doing it all the time now. That was the result of revival.

And that's what we want to see, we long to see, thousands and thousands of Christians in our churches. But half of you are fruitful, half of you are concerned, and you can't talk them into it. Yes, preach the word.

Be instant, urgent, in season, out of season, reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine. That Christians are always liars, evil creatures, lazy gluttons, this witness is true, therefore rebuke them sharply, that they may be sound in the faith. So we do that.

We don't quit working. You keep preaching, you keep doing what you're doing, but praying for revival. Expecting God to pour out the Holy Spirit.

And you know, God had to touch me. I kept telling the Lord, Lord, revive those deacons. Revive my wife.

And the Lord kept saying, What about you? What about you? Well, Lord, I'm the preacher. And the Lord said, Yes, that's the problem. I couldn't see that.

God made me see it. I used to spend hours in my face in my office just crying to God. Many times I told God, I said, Look, God, I feel like a bag of garbage, why don't you dig a hole and bury me and forget I ever lived? And I meant it.

I wouldn't have been surprised if I looked up and there was nothing but earth there. That's all I felt worthy of. Then God showed me Galatians 2.20 about 4 months before the revival, and 5 weeks before the revival, one night God filled me with the Spirit.

I didn't speak in tongues or anything like that, but I knew that God had filled me with the Spirit. And the only evidence I saw of anything was the glory in the prayer meeting. That's all.

Then Ralph and Luke came, a tremendous team, filled with the Spirit of God, sensitive, so sensitive to God. They did unusual things. Sometimes they would say, Hey, Bill, God told us that you were to preach the message tomorrow night.

Have you ever heard him in Evangelist asking the pastor to preach? I mean, that's never done. Or he might ask one of the other pastors, Walter, you're preaching tomorrow. Remember, I wakened one Sunday morning early, and God gave me two brand new messages, and that afternoon Ralph and Luke said, Hey, God told us you were to preach at both the meetings tonight.

I said, I know, the Lord gave me the two messages this morning. But they were so sensitive to the leading of God, and I learned a lot. I owe a lot to Ralph and Lucifer.

Insights and the beautiful spirit they have between themselves and their attitude to people, the acceptance they have no matter what is going on, how deeply people may be in the sin that would not reject them. They dealt with them lovingly. I think I'd better sign off.

I think our time is more than gone. We wanted to share something with you, though, about the revival and perhaps spark an interest under God in your own heart. And it doesn't have to be a big church.

Revival came to churches with 25, 30 members. You've got some tough cases in your church. There's none so tough that God can't deal with them.

We had a fellow in one of our churches in Ontario. He reckoned himself to be your official opposition in the church. That's why he never took a position in the church, because he wanted to be free to oppose everything that came up in the business meetings.

He shot three preachers down in a row. One of them left the ministry. Then revival came, and the Lord got him.

I mean, the Lord just knocked him flat, cramped him, made him into a new person. And a team, including he, they took him down to one of the churches in Ontario where they were having some problems, and they turned him loose for 20 or 25 minutes, and they gave an invitation. I think almost the whole church responded.

I mean, if God can do that for this guy, God can do something for me. And God can. Times of refreshing from the presence of the Lord.

No gimmicks. Ralph and Lou didn't have any gimmicks. Just God.

Believe him. God bless you.

---

Audio: <https://sermonindex1.b-cdn.net/18/SID18380.mp3>

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

# *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](http://www.sermonindex.net)**