

# Revival

by Brian Brodersen

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*Revival is a special season of refreshing when many believers experience a deep Holy Spirit conviction of sin, resulting in their confession and renunciation of sin and a renewal of their dedication to the Lord.*

**Duration:** 38:59

**Scripture:** Psalm 85:6-7, Ezekiel 39:16, Joel 2:28, Matthew 6:33, Romans 9:15, 1 Timothy 4:1

**Topics:** "Spiritual Revival", "National Renewal"

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## Description

In this sermon, the speaker discusses the current state of society and the possibility of revival in the church and a spiritual awakening in the nation. They mention recent events such as the Supreme Court's decision on child pornography and the attacks on the public display of the 10 Commandments. The speaker reflects on the history of America and how bad it has been in the past, but also how God has shown mercy and brought revival in difficult times. They emphasize that God delights in showing mercy and that as believers, we should hope and anticipate for revival.

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## Transcript

Verses six and seven of our psalm are the basis for our message this morning. Wilt thou not revive us again that thy people may rejoice in thee? Show us thy mercy, O Lord, and grant us thy salvation. We want to talk this morning about the subject of revival.

As we look at the events occurring in our nation and around the world, particularly in the Middle East, we wonder, where is it all heading? Are we on the brink of World War III, as some speculate that we could be? Are we about to see the prophecies of Ezekiel 38 and 39 concerning the Islamic invasion of Israel fulfilled? Is the church about to be raptured, ushering in the judgment of the Great Tribulation? From a biblical standpoint, any one or all of these are a possibility. The world certainly does seem ripe for judgment, doesn't it? Our nation certainly does seem ripe for judgment. As we look at the things that go on around us each day, we often wonder, how much longer can it go on? How much worse can it get? It does seem that we could be on the threshold of judgment.

Consider the recent outcry in Britain over the visit of creationist Ken Ham. We're all, I think, familiar with Ken Ham. He's the president of Answers in Genesis Ministry.

And he goes around the country and around the world. He's an Australian. He goes around the world speaking on the subject of creationism and contending with those who are promoting the evolutionary

theory.

Well, he recently made a trip to Britain. And believe it or not, his trip to Britain was covered by every major newspaper in the UK. And boy, they came out of the woodwork to attack Ken Ham and his message.

Listen to some of the quotes from the British newspapers. Here's a quote from an American professor who had to get his shots in. And so he wrote to one of the British papers.

American professor Neil Shanks of East Tennessee State University declared, if the experience in the US is anything to go by, this attempt by assorted Christian fundamentalist Taliban wannabes to turn the clock of science back to the Middle Ages will not stop with biology. The Guardian, one of the leading newspapers in England, stated this, the creation myths are based on nothing but the fantasies of the ignorant who lived long ago. To tell our children that ancient traditions, the dreams of our uneducated forefathers and holy writings, which must not be questioned or impugned for fear of blasphemy, are sources of authority about the world on a par with science is a travesty.

Quoting Richard Dawkins, the professor from Oxford and great opponent of creationism, he stated to the press, any science teacher who denies that the world is billions or even millions of years old is teaching children a preposterous, mind-shrinking falsehood. These men disgrace the honorable profession of teacher. Then one other quote from one of the papers, so long as the antibodies of common sense are all around, early exposure to religion can provide a sort of inoculation.

And I would personally encourage bands of hooded nuns, creepy evangelists, bearded rabbis, and one-eyed imams to tour our primary schools, wailing incantations and scaring the wits out of the kids as a living demonstration of the madness of religion. This is just an example of the rhetoric coming from many of the journalists and many of the key humanistic leaders in Britain. And of course, the outcry in this country, whenever we talk of the subject of creation is very similar.

And as we look at that, it seems to me that boy judgment must be coming. How could the Lord continue to tolerate this sort of thing? As many of you know, this past week, the U.S. Supreme Court voted in a six to three decision to protect under the banner of free speech, certain forms of child pornography. There are presently 20 cases in U.S. courts attacking the public display of the 10 commandments and all around us in our society here in the United States and throughout the world, we see indicators that judgment seems to be very near.

The world does indeed seem ripe for judgment, but there is another possibility. And that's the possibility of revival in the church and a spiritual awakening in the nation. Now, I know it's hard to believe that that might be able to happen at this stage, but this morning we want to take a quick overview of American history and we'll find that as bad as it is right now, it has been bad in the past.

So there is the possibility based on the scriptures and what we know from history that there could be another move of the spirit of God. America in the past has experienced three great awakenings, and they're referred to as great awakenings because they were movements of the spirit of God that impacted the very core of the nation, touched the entire nation and actually altered the course of our history. We've had three great awakenings in the history of our nation and several smaller moves of the spirit of God that have impacted local areas.

But yet some might say, I think we're just too far gone. We've gone too far. America, there's no way that we could see a turn at the place that we're in right now.

And, you know, that might be true. That might be true, but there are a few things that we need to remember when we think about this whole issue of judgment or the possibility of revival. The few things that we need to remember are number one, according to Isaiah 28, 21.

Judgment is the Lord's strange work. Judgment is something that God is reluctant to do. And I think history itself testifies to that.

Think of all of the wickedness that has gone on historically. Think of all the sin and the disregard for God and his laws and how few times God has really intervened in judgment. We see a God who is reluctant to judge.

And according to Isaiah, judgment is God's strange work. It's not something that he delights in doing. It's not something that he longs to do.

As a matter of fact, through the prophets, God said, I take no pleasure in the death of the wicked. When Israel was at the height of their wickedness, God would plead with them and say, oh, turn Israel, turn backsliding daughter. And we see that God is reluctant to judge.

We need to remember that. Secondly, we need to remember that according to Micah 7:18, God delights in showing mercy. That is something that the Lord delights in doing.

He's reluctant to judge, but he delights in showing mercy. And we have an excellent opportunity to see mercy demonstrated. Mercy means not getting what you deserve.

Now, do we deserve to be judged as a nation? Does the world itself deserve judgment? I would say absolutely. But yet, because we deserve it, we cannot finally draw the conclusion that that is what we have in our immediate future. It could be that God would like to show mercy because he delights in showing mercy.

So we've got to remember that it's a strange work to judge. He delights in showing mercy. And we also need to remember history beginning with the history of Israel.

There were many times in the history of the nation of Israel where it seemed that they had come to the end. And of course, as Pastor Chuck is taking us through the history right now, we're seeing how miserably the Israelites failed in their commitment to God. And there are many times, as you study that history, where it seems that they're on the brink of extinction because of their sin.

The book of Judges is a great example. The book of Judges covers approximately a 335 year period of time. And at the end of the book of Judges, you pretty much feel like it's hopeless.

There's nothing that could happen that would alter the course of Israel's history at that point. But yet we find that God wasn't finished with them. And the book of Judges ends with the reign of Samuel as a prophet.

And then ultimately with David coming in as the king and a new day of mercy and grace upon the people. So where it seemed like judgment was inevitable, we see that God had mercy in store for the people. We see the same thing as we follow the history of Judah.

Under the reign of Ahaz, it seemed that things couldn't get any worse. And then God raises up Hezekiah. And there's times of refreshing from the presence of the Lord.

There's a revival that occurs during the reign of Manasseh, 55 year reign of wickedness. Again, it seemed like there was no possibility that anything good could ever come after the reign of Manasseh. But Josiah rises up and through Josiah, God once again brings a time of refreshment.

And then as we follow the history out to the New Testament period, how much darker could things have gotten than Herod being the king over the Jews at the time of the birth of Christ? The lowest point in their history, a non-Jew sitting upon the throne known as the king of the Jews. And yet it was during that dark, dark hour that Jesus Christ came. And following the coming of Jesus Christ, of course, came the day of Pentecost.

And once again, a fresh work of God's spirit among the people. Now, as we follow history from the day of Pentecost up until today, we could take surveys of various regions, various nations, and we could find similar stories as to what we see in the history of the nation of Israel. But we want to concentrate particularly this morning on our own country, the United States of America.

We tend to think that up until modern times, America was a solidly Christian nation with a high moral standard originally established by our founding fathers and only recently undermined by the infiltration of liberals into our culture. This somewhat inaccurate view of history can, I believe, undermine our hope in the possibility of God doing a great work in our day. You see, if we think it's as bad as it's ever been and because it's so bad, nothing good can happen in the future, then we're not going to be looking forward in faith to the possibility of God doing something.

But if we are thinking that way, it's because we don't have a totally accurate view of our history. As we go back in the history of our country, we find that there were times that were in many ways similar to the times that we're living in today. Let me give you some examples.

Americans in the late 1700s were greatly influenced by the writings of Voltaire and Rousseau in France and by Thomas Paine and Ethan Allen here in America. Let me quote to you from the writings of Paine and Allen. Paine, in his book, *Age of Reason*, he said, It is impossible to conceive a story more derogatory to the Almighty, more inconsistent with his wisdom, more contradictory to his power than this story of the Bible is.

He was a very popular writer at the time. Ethan Allen, in his book, *Reason, the Only Oracle of Man*, he said the doctrine of the Trinity is destitute of foundation and tends manifestly to superstition and idolatry. As to the atonement, Allen declared, There could be no justice or goodness in one being suffering for another, nor is it all at all compatible with reason to suppose that God was the contriver of such a propitiation.

And then a man who was more or less the disciple of both of these men, writing a bit later, Elihu Palmer, in his book, *Principles of Nature*, he said this, The simple truth is that their pretended savior is nothing more than an illegitimate Jew, and their hopes of salvation through him rest on no better foundation than that of fornication or adultery. The Bible is a book whose indecency and immorality shock all common sense and common honesty. A big fan of Thomas Paine was Thomas Jefferson.

He was a great admirer of Thomas Paine, and he held to many of the same views. Such was the thinking of the day. That was the thinking of the day.

Let me give you an example of the moral and social conditions at the time. Drunkenness became epidemic. Out of a population of 5,300,000 were confirmed drunkards.

They were burying 15,000 of them each year. Profanity was of the most shocking kind. For the first time in the history of the American settlement, women were afraid to go out at night for fear of assault.

Bank robberies were a daily occurrence. The Chief Justice of the United States, John Marshall, wrote to the Bishop of Virginia, James Madison, that the church was too far gone to ever be redeemed. Voltaire and Paine had declared Christianity will be forgotten in 30 years.

The colleges of the day were bastions of infidelity. Nothing's changed. A poll taken at Harvard had discovered not one believer in the whole student body.

At Princeton, two believers and only five students that didn't belong to the filthy speech movement of the day. Students rioted. They held a mock communion at Williams College, and they put on anti-Christian plays at Dartmouth.

They took a Bible and burned it in a public bonfire. Christians were so few on campuses in the 1790s that they met in secret and kept their minutes in code so that no one would know who they were. The church historian Kenneth Scott Latourette wrote, it seemed that Christianity was about to be ushered out of the affairs of men.

That is part of our history. We don't realize that so often. We live with these assumptions, that all things were so wonderful back then.

What happened to change things? Well, what happened is the second great awakening occurred beginning in the 1790s and going all the way through to about 1840. Let me read you the account. The awakening broke out first in Connecticut, then spread to Massachusetts and all the seaboard states.

A man named James McGreedy, pastor of three small churches in Logan County, Kentucky, wrote in his diary that the winter of 1799 was for the most part weeping and mourning with the people of God. Lawlessness prevailed everywhere. Then in the summer of 1800, the great Kentucky revival came.

11,000 people came to a communion service. Out of the second great awakening came the whole modern missionary movement. Out of it came the abolition of slavery and popular education, Bible societies and Sunday school, along with countless social benefits.

You see, the things that we look back on and tend to use as references to support our idea that we've always been a Christian country. These are things that were the result of the great awakening. It's my position this morning that there is the possibility, although it looks bleak, although it seems that once again, Christianity could be ushered out of the affairs of men.

I believe that it's possible that God might want to once again work in a special way, pouring out his spirit, bringing revival to the church and awakening to those outside the church. And so let's talk now about the subject of revival. What is revival? We hear about it.

Sometimes you're driving down the road and you see a sign out in front of a church says revival this week, 730. Revival is something that does have application to the church, but I don't think it's something that we can plan in that sort of a way. I do think there are things that we can do that will lend themselves to revival.

And next Sunday, we're going to talk about that. But ultimately, I believe that revival is something that is up to the sovereign choice of God. But as we look at history and as we look at where we are today, I believe that.

Although conditions are certainly ripe for judgment, they are also ripe for revival because this is the kind of environment that revival so often occurs in. Let me give you a definition of revival. Revival is a special season of refreshing when many believers simultaneously experience a deep Holy Spirit conviction of sin, resulting in their confession and renunciation of sin and a renewal of their dedication to the Lord.

Revival leads to a new commitment to holiness, a fresh evangelistic zeal and a missionary vision. You see, revival is something that God does for his people. When we have.

Backslidden, maybe not outwardly backslidden, maybe we're still going to church, we're still carrying around our Bibles, we're still going through the motions. But yet in our hearts, we've moved away from that place of intimacy and total commitment to the Lord Jesus Christ. When do revivals come? Revival is usually preceded by a time of spiritual depression, apathy and gross sin in which the majority of nominal Christians are hardly different in any substantive way from the members of secular society.

You see, the big problem in our country today, we talk about how come, you know, things keep going from bad to worse. And what about all the conversions that are taking place and all the churches that are rising up? And we see a lot of activity. But when you start analyzing things closely, you find that although churches are filling up with people, there's not a whole lot of difference between the lifestyle of those in the churches and those outside the churches.

And so, great numbers of people flocking to a place to worship does not necessarily indicate that everything's right. What indicates that everything's right is that we're living lives that are glorifying God. And revival is that time of refreshment, that time when God moves once again and he convicts us and he calls us to put aside things that maybe we've allowed to creep into our lives after being a Christian for some time.

You all know how it is when you first became a Christian. In a sense, you were reckless when it came to your commitment to the Lord and your just casting off of the things of the world. You just didn't want to have anything to do with the world, everything, just throw it out, put it in the rubbish bin, burn it.

But as time goes on, you start to grow a little bit cold and your heart becomes a bit hardened. And then you start slowly bringing those things back into your life. And pretty soon the cares of this life, the deceitfulness of riches, the desire for other things come in and they begin to choke out the word.

It's at those times that we need to be revived. And so revival is primarily for the people of God. Now, awakening is something that comes alongside revival and impacts those outside the church, bringing them to a saving faith in Christ.

And generally speaking, revival and awakening happen simultaneously as God begins to move in his church by his spirit, bringing a fresh conviction of sin and a fresh call to commitment. God also begins to work in the society outside, beginning to convict people of sin. Isn't that the great need in our country

today, that people would come under the conviction of sin? Today, when you talk to people about sin, they dismiss the whole idea.

There's no such thing people say. How can you convince a person who doesn't believe that there's any sort of truth at all? That there is truth and that one of the truths is the issue of sin. We need something more than our ability to argue.

We need the power of the spirit of God. But when God begins to move among his people and to spark revival, he generally also begins to move out in the culture and bring conviction of sin. Awakenings begin in periods of cultural distortion and grave personal stress.

When we lose faith in the legitimacy of our norms, the viability of our institutions and the authority of our leaders in church and state. Does that describe where we're at today? We are ripe for one or the other. We're ripe for judgment, certainly, but we're also ripe for a revival.

We're ripe for an awakening. And I believe that as the people of God, we ought to anticipate that God might indeed show mercy because he delights to do it. And that he might once again work in this sort of way.

Should we hope for revival? I believe that we should. And there are three reasons why I believe that. And I just mentioned the first one, God delights to show mercy.

It's God's delight to show mercy. He takes pleasure in it. He enjoys it.

And, you know, sometimes when I'm praying for the situation and, you know, in my frustration, I'm calling out to God to do something. And many times I'm saying, Lord, judge this place. And and then I think, you know, I have to stop and pause and think I was just like these people.

And many of you, you would say the same thing. I was just like that. I at one time lived my life for myself.

I had no regard for God or the things of God. I wasn't interested. I was living in sin and rebelling against God and frankly, didn't really care about any of this.

And yet God did what he showed mercy on me. And so sometimes as I'm crying out in prayer and as I'm, you know, saying God judge, suddenly my own life flashes before me and I think, oh, maybe I'm praying the wrong thing. And I thank God that people were praying for me, not that God would judge me, that God would save me.

And we as God's people, I believe that because God delights to show mercy, we ought to anticipate that perhaps at this dark hour he might show mercy. Secondly, I believe that we should hope for revival because the scripture speaks of the spirit being poured out in the last days. This is the promise all through the Bible.

In the last days, I will pour out my spirit on all flesh, says the Lord. Now, the closer we get to the second coming of Christ, the further down the road of the last days we go. And so I believe that we can biblically anticipate outpourings of the spirit of God as we get closer and closer to the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ.

And so as we look around the world today and we see so many things that seem to indicate that the coming of Christ is soon. And I'm all for anticipating the rapture. And that certainly would be the most

desirable thing from our perspective.

But at the same time, I want to realize that God might want to do something fresh. God might want to push the pause button for a bit. You know, because our time frame is not necessarily God's time frame.

And God has done that historically. It seems that there are times when it seems that everything is coming unraveled and it's all just about to come to an end. And then the Lord just hits pause.

And things change and God moves by his spirit and he gives a time of refreshment and blessing, and then he hits pause again and we're back rolling and we head further down the road. And who knows, but what God might perhaps hit the pause button in the future. It looks like everything's coming down the wire right this moment, and it could be, but perhaps not.

The third reason why I think we should hope for revival is because, and this is purely subjective, it seems to me that God is moving in that direction. As I personally look at things, it seems to me, although I can look at the international situation, I can look at the Middle East crisis, and there are many things that seem to point in the direction of the second coming. Yet I look at other things and it seems that there's still something that God wants to do.

And I take that from just my own understanding of what God is doing in the ministry of Calvary Chapel and the expansion of the ministry of Calvary Chapel. Not to say that Calvary Chapel is the only ministry God's doing something, and he's doing things through a lot of ministries, and we thank God for that. But I'm not involved in those, so I don't know the details, but I do know the details of what he's doing here.

And as I look at what he's doing through the ministry of Calvary Chapel, I think, Lord, it seems like you're on the move. It seems like you're preparing for something significant in the future. Here we are now as a ministry, we've grown, we've got over a thousand churches affiliated, and weekly we get stacks of applications for affiliation.

People are wanting to join in with what God is doing. New churches are being planted, new men are being raised up to spread the gospel. And if you look at a map of the United States where 10 years ago we had the West Coast and just little, you know, smatterings on the East Coast, we're starting to see the U.S. map filled in with churches throughout the country.

And then if we look on an international level, we're seeing that God is opening the doors internationally. We have the Bible College and the extension campuses where we literally have thousands of young men and women preparing themselves for service to God. And I look at that and I think, okay, Lord, it seems like this is all preparatory for something in the future.

I think of how when I first went into Europe many years ago, there was nothing there. Now we have facilities, we have conference centers, we have Bible colleges, we have churches planted. And we're, you know, going in 10 years ago, there was nothing there.

And we were working with just, you know, small groups of people in homes and things like that. Now I look and I see, Lord, you've laid the groundwork, you've laid a foundation. And it just seems hard for me to believe that God would have laid a foundation to not erect the structure.

I look at the expanding of the radio ministry and the more than 350 radio stations that are part of Calvary Chapel and how we're getting calls every day from people all over the country who are saying, this radio

station has revolutionized my life. And they're going back to their churches, not Calvary Chapel churches necessarily. They're going to their Lutheran church or their Episcopal church or their Presbyterian church or their Baptist church.

And they're going back and saying, man, God's really touched me through this radio station, encouraging people to tune in and God's doing something there. And again, I look at that and I just think, well, Lord, it seems peculiar that you would build all of this stuff up and then just sort of pull the plug. Now, like I said, this is purely subjective.

I could be dead wrong. But as I look at this, it's because of what I see happening in our own ministry that I think we ought to be hoping for revival. Now, is revival guaranteed? Can we say dogmatically, authoritatively, if we do these things and God is obligated to bring revival and absolutely it's going to happen? Is revival guaranteed? Let me quote A. W. Tozer to answer that question.

What God and his sovereignty may yet do on a worldwide scale, I do not claim to know. But what he will do for the plain man or woman who seeks his face, I believe I do know and can tell others. Let any man turn to God in earnest.

Let him begin to exercise himself unto godliness. Let him seek to develop his powers of spiritual receptivity by trust and obedience and humility, and the results will exceed anything he may have hoped in his leaner and weaker days. Is there a worldwide awakening coming? Is there a national revival and awakening coming? I don't know.

But this is what I do know. There can be a personal revival that will come for any man or woman who says, Lord, I want all of you. I want to be sold out.

In some cases, Lord, I want to get back to where I was in those early days as a Christian. I want that passion, that fire. I want you to be the priority in my life once again.

Revival will come for us individually if we seek it. And inevitably, if it comes for us individually, it's going to touch others. You know, as I mentioned, there have been the great awakenings and then there have been lesser moves to the spirit of God that have not necessarily impacted the whole nation or the world, but they've impacted certain regions.

So it's possible that you might have an Orange County revival or an L.A. County revival, a Southern California revival, something like that. But then it's also possible that it could spread across the country and around the world. Personal revival is indeed guaranteed.

And so I close this morning with this. Where does revival start? Well, I think we've already answered it. It starts with us.

It starts with me. And as I mentioned, next Sunday, we're going to look at things that will lend to revival and things that will also hinder revival. And I would really encourage you to be praying this week that God would be preparing your heart for that.

But revival starts with me. It starts with me and my determination to get right with God completely. Here's a good prayer I suggest.

God, if there's anything that's come into my life that's not of you, then I pray you'd remove it. And God, if there's anything lacking from my life that you want to instill in it, God, I pray that you'd bring it. And you know what? You pray that sincerely and God will do it.

And that will begin the revival. The Welsh revival of 1904-1905 began with a young woman publicly proclaiming, I love the Lord Jesus Christ with all my heart. A few months later, 100,000 people from all walks of life were proclaiming the same thing.

But that was the spark. It was one young woman standing up in a meeting in absolute purity and sincerity and just expressing what was happening in her heart that moment. I love the Lord Jesus Christ with all my heart.

And that sparked a fire that changed the course of history for many people and not only for Wales, but for many other nations because it spread out from there to other places. And this is the searching question that I leave you with today. Do you love the Lord Jesus Christ with all your heart? Can you affirm that not around your peers, not to impress anyone publicly, but standing before God? Can you affirm I love the Lord Jesus Christ with all my heart? Can you say honestly, Lord, to the best of my knowledge and the best of my ability, I am completely sold out to you and committed to doing your will.

If you cannot say that today, then I suggest you need revival. You need revival because that's where we need to be. That's where we ought to be.

That's where God's people are called to be. And remember, it all begins with us. We look out at our world and we wonder how bad is it going to get? We have the ability to influence.

You know, we have so much emphasis on political things and we've got to get the right people in office and so forth. And have you ever noticed when we get a good candidate, we can't get him voted in? Why can't we get him voted in? Because people don't agree with what he stands for. How do you change that? Well, people get saved in their worldview changes.

Their priorities change. Their thinking process changes and they change who they vote for. You see, some people emphasize the need for social reform and political involvement and all of those things.

But, you know, those are things that really have proven not to be that effective. And the way change has been brought about. And this is what I think we fail to realize because we don't understand totally our history.

The way things have changed has not been through forcing things in the political realm, but the way things have changed is because the church has been revived. The society has been awakened and that's changed everything from the bottom to the top. And we need a drastic change in our culture today.

The only way it's going to come is if it comes this way. We don't know what God has in store for sure, but I think, as I said, we should hope for revival and allow God to begin it with us. Let's pray.

Lord, we do pray today that revival would begin right here with us, right in our hearts. And as we stand before you today, Lord, like an open book, you know us, you know our down-sitting, our uprising, you know our thoughts are far off. Lord, we pray with the psalmist, search me, O God, and know my heart.

Try me and know my thoughts and see if there be any wicked way in me. Lead me in the way everlasting. Lord, that we might be able to say with an absolute sincerity that we love the Lord Jesus Christ with all of our hearts.

To that end, we pray that you would work by your spirit today. Amen. Let's stand together.

Let God work in your midst. You know, I do believe that there's something stirring. And I know a number of young people right around our church here who a year ago, many of them were into drugs and alcohol.

Some of them were into just, you know, being part of the culture, spending their time, music and movies and just the typical entertainment sort of thing. But something's happening and God's moving. And now they're gathering together.

And instead of being involved in those things, they're coming together. They've got their Bibles out. They're sharing scriptures with each other.

They're worshiping the Lord. They're praying that God would touch their friends. And to me, that's an indicator that God is on the move.

May he do that with all of us, regardless of age. God bless you.

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