

Testimonies of Those Who Were Seekers and Finders in the Hebrides Revival

by Duncan Campbell

Duncan Campbell's sermon recounts the powerful testimonies of individuals transformed during the Hebrides Revival, emphasizing the role of prayer and the Holy Spirit in their conversions.

Scripture: Numbers 23:19, Job 13:15, Psalm 118:19, Isaiah 53:5, Ezekiel 34:11-14, Matthew 7:7, Luke 4:18, Acts 16:30, James 5:16, 1 Peter 2:24

Topics: "Revival", "Seeking God"

Description

Duncan Campbell shares testimonies from the Hebrides Revival, emphasizing the transformative power of prayer and the seeking love of God. He recounts the experiences of individuals who, despite their initial indifference and worldly pursuits, were drawn to Christ through the faithful prayers of believers. The testimonies reveal a deep conviction of sin and a longing for salvation, culminating in a profound encounter with Jesus that changed their lives forever. The revival was marked by a collective awakening, where many found hope and purpose in their faith, leading to a powerful movement of the Holy Spirit across the islands.

Transcript

Testimony of F. Hay (A Young Woman)

It was autumn in the Hebrides, the season of faithfulness and of fulfillment. Simultaneously with the gathering-in of field after field of golden grain was going on the steady ripening of a greater, if unseen, harvest for the Great Reaper -- the Holy Spirit of God.

God's people were praying. Despite the bleak outlook of no change in the longed-for, pleasure-bent, God-forsaking young people, the Lord's laborers did not lose heart. They had a promise from a covenant-keeping God, who is not unrighteous to forget a 'work of faith' and a 'labour of love'. Thus unceasing prayer and unfainting faith continued to await the promised harvest. It is my privilege to relate to His glory how the Lord of the Harvest worked silently, steadily, utterly faithfully, until the time of the thrusting in of the sickle should come.

In 1949 I was in my last year at High School at Stornoway, and drinking to the full of the current teenage pleasures. Life was too sweet and too full for anything but the merest flicker of a thought for God or an

eternity ahead. The only thing that made us different from the restless teenagers of the South was that we had been clearly taught at home, at school and at church, of a better way, and most of us accepted without question the presence of a God 'somewhere in the shadows'. One day we would have to face Him, but not yet. Into this sad and universally-prevalent state of affairs stepped the seeking love of the Son of God. He called upon His people to pray, and to pray prevailingly. He Himself then set to answering these prayers in sovereign grace.

Perhaps Psalm 45, verse 5, best describes my experiences during the months before the Revival: "Thine arrows are sharp in the hearts of the king's enemies; whereby the people fall under thee," says the Word, and so it was -- to the downfall of the citadel of self and sin.

One of the earliest barbed arrows came one evening while a group of us sat together in the fifth-year study. Someone casually threw out the question: "What is a Christian anyway? What happens when folk get converted?" A babel of views followed, but it became obvious that not one of us present had any clear idea of what a Christian really was -- this, despite our very excellent and thorough Scripture knowledge. On one point, however, we were all agreed -- they were good-living, we were not! As far as I was concerned, this revelation of my ignorance of so vital a matter was most disquieting.

A second arrow came unexpectedly during the singing of a hymn. One evening while plowing my unmelodious way through a new hymn, my senses suddenly focused on the words I was so heedlessly repeating. My voice dried up, and tears began to flood the page, as the meaning of those majestic lines reached my consciousness. I had been singing a lie:

"Bearing shame and scoffing rude,

In my place condemned He stood:

Sealed my pardon with His blood.

Hallelujah, what a Saviour!"

It was starkly clear to me now that He was not my Saviour, and so sharp was this arrow that I could not even use His Name ". . . for Jesus' sake, Amen," to wind up my ritual prayer from then on. I had no right to cash in on His merits.

Another shot found its mark when my bosom pal dumbfounded me one day by producing a New Testament from her bag and by telling me she was going to seek for God until she found Him. No more dances, pictures, concerts for her! He wasn't there! What about me? Wouldn't I do the same? Not yet! But then a curious thing began to happen to the dances: while I still enjoyed every minute I spent there I found that the pleasure turned to very ashes in my mouth after I got back to the silence of my own room. What was I getting out of my giddy round? Absolutely nothing of any value! So the Spirit of God moves in answer to prevailing prayer.

It was now November 1949, and outwardly there was nothing to show for the months of countless prayers by the Lord's intercessors. But if God's people could hold on for the last dark hour, victory was at hand. And what a glorious victory that was! I myself was by then truly exercised -- reading my Bible under the bedclothes each evening and gleaning but the one indubitable fact: I was a sinner, and far away from God. I knew it sorely. Each church service now drove this fact home mercilessly. When a preacher would extol the loveliness of Christ, I would weep for sorrow that between us there was a 'great gulf fixed'. A program

of earnest good works did nothing but aggravate the sore, so that by the time Revival came, I had but one heart cry: "What must I do to be saved?" (Acts 16.30).

My seeking friend was one of the very first sheaves gathered on that memorable first break in revival power. When I looked into her eyes I saw that, whatever conversion was, it had happened to her. "You've got it!" I cried. Lovingly she corrected me. "I have found Him," she said, "the Lord Jesus who died for sinners, not for good people." Would I follow her this time? I surely would!

Words cannot describe the kindly welcome this lost one received at Shadar, Barvas. I was smothered in a loving hug by her saintly parents, while a message was sent to their newly-saved neighbor (now a fine minister of Jesus Christ) to come and join them in prayer for the afternoon. So the time was passed until the evening meeting, leaving me with one awareness only -- of my abysmal poverty and their unspeakable riches in the Saviour.

The church was crowded. People sat in the windows and along benches in the passage way, even up the very steps to the pulpit! As we entered late, the words of the Psalm hit my ear like a blow: "O set ye open unto me the gates of righteousness" (Psalm 118.19, met. ver.). My prayer indeed! I doubt if I spared the preacher a passing glance that evening, for God was present, and that to deal with souls. From the very outset of the sermon on Song of Solomon 2.8-12, I had my life minutely and inexorably exposed for the shoddy, selfish, useless thing it was -- worse, for the God-dishonoring, sinful, hell-bound thing it was. Then, when utter despair had been reached, I heard the preacher's words come through like a clarion call: "Who His own self bare our sins in His own body on the tree . . . by whose stripes ye were healed" (1 Peter 2.24). I understood the gospel in a flash. "O fools and slow of heart to believe!" It was the old, old story of Jesus and His love, the story I could have told to any pagan, but could not apply to my own heart's need. "He (Satan) hath blinded their eyes," says the Word truly, but thank God, One came "to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind" (Luke 4.18).

Then followed such a time of singing of birds that it seemed like heaven upon earth -- songs of deliverance as friends were saved, songs of praise for help in testings and trials, songs of penitence as one grieved the Holy Spirit through zeal without knowledge. After such a meeting with the strong Son of God one could not but offer all that one was or hoped to be -- for missionary service if He would require. Nine years later the Lord took me up on this offer, and I have had the privilege and joy of seeking with Himself His lost ones in Central Thailand (as the wife of a missionary doctor). "Hath He said, and shall He not do it?" (Num. 23.19). "I, even I, will both search of My sheep, and seek them out . . . I will feed them in a good pasture . . . there shall they lie in a good fold" (Ezek. 34.11, 14).

F. Hay, C.I.M. Overseas Missionary Fellowship

Testimony of Mary J. Morrison

Charles Finney said we should never testify of our own experience but of the truth of the Word of God. I can never remember a time when I was prejudiced against God's Word; I could not have been, for its truth was not only taught but demonstrated before my eyes from my earliest years. The church, though not strong in membership was strong in influence, because many of its members lived its creed. The word 'godly' aptly described their lives. Stories of such men and their deeds were often related by the fireside by those who sought to encourage one another in the ways of the Lord. Unknown to the story-teller, we

children benefited although we had never read a Christian book apart from Pilgrim's Progress, which was one of our school books.

I attended neither Sunday School nor church, but like all other children brought up in Lewis, I had to learn chapters of Scripture off by heart in the day school, both in English and in Gaelic, the latter being my native language. Family worship and grace at meals were the custom in most homes, yet at the same time drink was the ruin of many of the men, and in seasons of festivity one was accustomed to seeing them helplessly drunk.

When God visited my island home in revival blessing I was in Glasgow. Having escaped from the restraints of home I began to learn what it meant to be free -- so I thought! It was not easy to get away from the influence of home, for at heart we islanders are 'home birds', and the fear of bringing shame to the family is a very real one. As a result I never really got away from a certain measure of restraint. I greatly enjoyed my round of entertainment night by night, but to the grosser sins I never could stoop. I had a real dread of such! That, however, did not prevent me from being unclean in heart. The books I read and the language I used, revealed the hidden nature within -- the heritage of fallen man.

News of revival came as a real blow to me, and my first reaction was that of anger. Though I dared not put it in words, my attitude was, why should God intrude and spoil our enjoyment, just when everything was going so well for us! There was no God before my eyes, and I certainly did not wish Him to intrude at this stage. I was booked to sing at a concert for the Comunn Ghaidhealach, and prospects for the future were bright in that realm.

Just then, God arranged in His providence that I should return to Lewis on account of the illness of my parents. I was not at all happy in making my way home, and felt less so when I arrived to find myself in the midst of an atmosphere of religious expectancy. The circumstances which brought me home were soon over-ruled, and my parents joined the many others who attended the crowded church nightly. I was determined to evade God, and refused to attend. News of the meetings and nightly conversions greatly disturbed me; I wanted to escape from it all, and wished that I had remained in Glasgow. I seemed to be hemmed in, like a bird in a cage, and longed to be set free. My rebellion, however, made no difference to the working of God's Spirit in other lives: God had come!

My parents finally prevailed upon me to attend the meetings, in order to see and hear for myself. I went against my will, and continued so to do. When I saw the enthusiasm of others, I was annoyed with myself, because I was different. What turmoil went on in my heart! My mother's conversion shook me even more and I found myself being solemnly subdued by the things of eternity, while the truths of Scripture kept repeating themselves in my mind. My soul was being awakened from its sleep of death!

The climax came one memorable morning after a cottage meeting had been held, at which two of my friends had sought the Lord. Feeling like a 'fish out of water' I stood listening to the singing of the young converts outside, and as I did so the words of the hymn penetrated my hard heart:

"Take the world, but give me Jesus,

All its joys are but a name."

The arrow went home to its mark, and the truth dawned upon me that here were people who had something I didn't possess, and a deep hunger for that 'something' filled my heart.

Almost four months of conviction and desire followed. It appeared as though all hope of salvation was lost, and I was resigned to living a reformed, but empty life. It seemed that God could not be just and forgive me: I was destined to be lost forever! Still I continued to attend the meetings. In my heart I cried: "Though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him" (Job 13.15). I was acquainted with the warnings from Sinai, but to the promises of Calvary I was still a stranger.

On August 24th 1950, the 'Sun of Righteousness' finally rose 'with healing in His wings', as I sat in the weekly prayer meeting of the church. Through Isaiah 53.5, the truth of Calvary came as a healing balm to my soul. That familiar truth, illumined by the Spirit to my despairing soul, became my anchor for time and eternity. "Then are they glad because they be quiet (calm); so He bringeth them unto their desired haven" (Psalm 107.30). At last I had arrived at my haven, and my soul rejoiced with unspeakable joy. In the peaceful hours of that morning (2 a.m.), while the village slept, my friends and I walked along the shore, singing:

"Now none but Christ can satisfy,

None other name for me!

There's love, and life, and lasting joy,

Lord Jesus, found in Thee!"

One could continue the story from there, relating the precious experiences of God's truth during those days of 'heaven upon earth', but I would conclude this testimony with the words of Charles Wesley:

"My chains fell off, my heart was free;

I rose, went forth, and followed Thee."

All glory be to God for saving this worthless soul, and for leading me into His will for my life.

Mary J. Morrison - The Faith Mission

The Testimony of William Macleod

Someone has rightly said that only eternity will reveal the full record of the mysteries of the Lord's Kingdom. How true! Yet God has often used the printed page as a means of awakening many a soul concerning its eternal need: hence this short testimony.

Like the scribe in the New Testament I was "not far from the Kingdom of God" but far enough away from the Kingdom to be lost.

I was brought up in the village of Barvas, on the Island of Lewis, and since cradle days I was reared and influenced in the atmosphere of a God-fearing people. The solemnity and reality of their prayer life and conversation were genuine marks that the 'secret of the Lord' was with them. I never doubted that the Lord was their portion and that His Word was their daily bread.

With such a faith we came in contact, in church and in home, and yet there was no sign in my life of "repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ." On the other hand there was within my

reach the luring power of sin. There I joined in many a sinful action with the whole consent of my youthful heart. The world had much to give and I could take it all, but after years of frustrating sinful habits and just as many years of ignoring the strivings of the Holy Spirit, I found little satisfaction, but more than enough of inward confusion.

Then at Christmas, 1949, while in my early twenties, I found to my amazement that I was interested in the Lord's gracious movement, as seen in the transformed lives of young men and women. By this time it was evident that "times of refreshing" had "come from the presence of the Lord." For myself, what was once a good influence on my life had now become a saving grace, and like the rejoicing Samaritans in the fourth chapter of John's Gospel I could say: "Now we believe, not because of thy saying: for we have heard Him ourselves, and know that this is indeed the Christ, the Saviour of the world."

If you were to ask me what this saving grace brought about in my life, I would gladly offer you these answers: The first is, that my estimation of myself has diminished down through the years, and I say 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, and lead me in the way everlasting." Secondly, my estimation of my Saviour has steadily increased, and because of His gracious sustenance I am privileged to convey to others the eternal truths of "this grace wherein we stand."

William Macleod. Church of Scotland, Uigen, Lewis

The Testimony of Donald MacPhail

"Remove far from me vanity and lies: give me neither poverty nor riches; feed me with food convenient for me: Lest I be full, and deny Thee, and say, Who is the Lord? or lest I be poor, and steal, and take the name of my God in vain" (Proverbs 30.8-9).

It was in the early spring of 1950, at the age of sixteen, that I found myself really gripped by fundamental thoughts which concerned the eternal welfare of my soul. I just wanted to be alone and contemplate. Often I took a walk across the moorland from our little village of Arnol on the Island of Lewis, and sometimes I caught myself crying as I sat down to watch and listen to the water running and rippling in the burn beside me.

"Why am I alive in this complicated world? Surely there must be a purpose in it all. Something inside me tells me that I am accountable for the life I live, and I am afraid: I cannot bear the thought which convinces me of a life after death." With heaviness, depression, and inward tension, these convictions captivated my simple mind.

At this time the news spread of a spiritual awakening down the coast in the villages of Barvas and Shadar. In the secondary school which I attended, boys and girls from these villages spoke of how a certain wild minister by the name of Duncan Campbell, preached fearlessly and forcibly, hitting and thumping the pulpits, and pointing his finger at people who automatically became infected with the 'coorum' -- a term for conversion that seems to be considered by non-Christians in the Hebrides as a spiritual disease from which you may not recover. The next news I heard was that Mr. Campbell was to conduct a series of meetings in the mission hall at my home.

As far as I could recollect, I had never attended the parish church, and to avoid 'spiritual infection' I had more or less decided I would not be seen within its walls. However, this was a chance not to be missed. Out of curiosity I attended the first meeting in order that I might know for myself whether what I heard was really the truth. That very first night I was gripped by the Word read and preached, and could not stay away the following nights. Perhaps for the first time in my life I became aware of the presence of God, and began to understand something of my need of Christ as my Saviour from sin. From then on there followed days of secret struggle in prayer.

After a week of attending those meetings I could not resist the gospel call any longer. Vividly do I recall that dark Thursday night when the Word of God reiterated with conviction through my enlightened mind: "I call heaven and earth to record this day against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing: therefore choose life that both thou and thy seed may live" (Deut. 30.19). With what clarity I saw and understood the way of salvation in Christ, yet at the same time I was given an insight into the terrible consequences of rejecting Christ, the Lord's provision for my salvation.

After the midnight cottage meeting I endeavored to leave for home, but on looking around, outside the house, I noticed a man praying by the side of the wall. Shouts and heavy sighs were heard from people within, as if crying for help. I could not restrain myself any longer and touched that godly man. In a broken voice I told him that I wanted to get right with God before it would be too late. As he turned, I saw Christ in the very expression on his face. In compassion he took me by the hand and led me into the prayer meeting where nine other villagers were on their knees, seeking the Saviour. That night I was considerably relieved to have made a decision for Christ. At a subsequent prayer meeting, while a godly man from Shadar prayed, I became aware of the peace and joy of the Holy Spirit flooding my soul. I knew without doubt that my sins were forgiven. I confess with honesty that I had never known such deep peace, real joy, and inward liberty and freedom.

With considerable detail I could refer to other incidents which took place during the two following years on the Island of Lewis, of how we knew God's blessing in the meetings and saw many souls deciding for Christ. It was during a communion service conducted by Mr. Campbell at one of those meetings, that I heard God calling me to His service in a real way, through the text preached from Mark 11.1-11, with special reference to verse 3: "Say ye that the Lord hath need of him." With shame I confess that I sought to ignore His call for some five years, and tried to console myself by taking opportunities of witnessing for Christ at my home where I was employed as a Harris Tweed weaver. After a rather hard, sifting experience, I pursued a definite conviction which was confirmed to me by the Lord's guidance, and now, I cannot but rejoice daily in that He has called me by His grace from the paths of sin, and set me apart to bring the glorious message of salvation to small Muslim communities who live under the shadow of spiritual death in the Federal States of South Arabia.

"Not until the loom is silent,

And the shuttles cease to fly,

Will God unroll the canvas

And explain the reason why.

The dark threads are as needful

In the weaver's skillful hand

As the threads of gold and silver

In the pattern He has planned."

Donald Macphail. - Church of Scotland Mission,

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