

# Chapel of the Air - Update on Revival

by J. Edwin Orr

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*The sermon emphasizes the importance of dynamic and vision in bringing about revival, and the need to turn to God for these things rather than relying on technique or organization.*

**Duration:** 12:52

**Scripture:** Psalm 85:6, Isaiah 44:3, Joel 2:28-29, Matthew 28:19-20, Mark 16:15, Luke 24:47, Acts 2:37-38

**Topics:** "Interview"

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## Description

In this sermon, the speaker discusses the growth of Christianity in different regions of the world. He highlights the significant increase of Christianity in Africa since 1910, which has outpaced the population explosion. The speaker emphasizes the need for an outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon the masses to make them aware of their need for God. He also mentions the importance of keeping reports of God's workings past and present before believers to inspire a vision of what God can do. The sermon concludes by mentioning the potential for revival in America and the importance of learning techniques to effectively reach people in their own culture.

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## Transcript

Is revival occurring on a wide scale anywhere in the world? This is the Chapel of the Air, coming to you from Wheaton, Illinois, and in a moment you'll hear a leading authority on revival survey what is happening among evangelicals around the world. I'm Ted Seeley, and at the request of John D. Jess and David Maines, your usual hosts on these chapel visits, I recorded three interviews with our special guest, Dr. J. Edwin Orr. He was in Oxford, England at Regents Park College, directing a conference on evangelical awakenings.

Dr. Orr has written a series of books surveying evangelical awakenings in different regions of the world, in Africa, in Latin America, in Southern Asia, in Eastern Asia, and in the South Seas. I asked him if, in writing these books, he was able to travel to these various places. I have visited about 150 of the world's 160 countries anyway.

And, of course, I haven't visited all these countries since I started writing this series of books on the awakenings in these different parts of the world. But it's given me enough contacts with them from visits in the past and contacts with my friends. Now, I would say that these books do, right up to date, it depends on when I finish the book.

The early ones you mentioned were finished about 1970, and the details of the narratives went up to 1970, whereas the latest book I've finished is Latin America, and that takes us right up to 1975. Let's get a thumbnail sketch of these different areas. Could you briefly tell us what God is doing in Africa, in Asia, in Latin America, and in the South Seas? Let's consider Africa for a start.

David Barrett, who runs the computers for the World Christian Handbook, has pointed out that since 1910, the increase of Christianity in Africa has been many times that of the population explosion. Why did he say 1910? 1910 was roughly when the effects of the Welsh Revival reached Black Africa. And since that time, there have been series of revivals.

Even when the tide seemed to be out in the English-speaking countries in the Western world, there were great movements in the Congo, Nigeria, and other places. Even today, we heard a discussion of the East African Revival that began in the 1930s and is still going on. In fact, it's enabled the African Christians in Uganda to stand up against the persecution of President Idi Amin.

Throughout Africa, of course, there's turmoil. There are many people who are not Christians. There are some non-Christians that don't adorn the doctrine.

But the Christian churches are growing in Africa. Some places, there is revival. Some places, there was revival.

And some places, there has not been revival. As far as the Far East is concerned, China has been occupied by the Communists. There was great revival in China from 1927 to 1939.

I know because I saw the tail end of that movement. Wonderful, indigenous Chinese movement. Now, there are good opportunities in Taiwan, Hong Kong, and where the Chinese are dispersed.

It's very hard to get hard and fast details from the mainland of China. But the latest I heard at the Kazakh convention from someone well equipped to give an opinion is that the number of evangelical Christians in China proper has doubled in this past few years. My understanding is mostly in house churches rather than congregations.

In Korea, of course, there was great revival in 1907 and great revival in 1947. And I would say that Korea is in a post-revival stage. But the churches are bursting at the seams.

Billy Green didn't have his biggest meetings in New York or San Francisco. His biggest meetings were in Seoul. And Jung Dong Kim, a graduate of Fuller Seminary and back to Korea, greatly enamored of Bill Bright's ideas of layman's institutes and had them around.

And over 300,000 people signed up for the layman's institute in Seoul, Korea, two summers ago. The evening meetings, the police reported tens over a million each night. That's Korea.

In India, it's so easy to get a congregation. I've preached to 50,000 there. And in spite of the fact that the Indian government is not at all encouraging missionaries to come, the Indian Christians have certainly got wonderful opportunity.

But they face desperate poverty. And they have their own problems, too. Now, those are two areas we've mentioned, Africa and Eastern Asia and Southern Asia.

That's three areas. Latin America is wonderful for opportunity. Remarkable, in fact.

You think, for instance, of Julio Cesar Reba. A Bolivian, normally Roman Catholic, got a scholarship to Pasadena, was converted there, went back to Bolivia, began holding meetings in the homes of his friends, was invited to hold meetings in some Roman Catholic youth centers, even preached in a Roman Catholic church until he was inhibited. But they say that the life of the president was helped in one of his meetings.

The result was that President Hugo Banzer gave him the youth of the National Stadium. He was preaching to 40,000. At the moment, he's studying at Malton Homes School of the Bible.

Take Luis Palau's crusades in Latin America. He's preached to 20,000. What's more, been invited back.

And the best news I've heard for some time is that since his Rosario campaign in Argentina, the number of inquirers now joined the church is 57%. That's very encouraging, to say the least. You mentioned Luis Palau.

He's due here in the British Isles soon for some meetings. How do you think they'll go? He's going to Cardiff where there's a tradition of revival. Unfortunately, some people who do pray for revival in Wales have very little use for mass evangelism.

They have a hyper-Calvinistic view, which makes things a little difficult. In fact, I know of one prominent man who teaches that not only have the offices of apostle and prophet been lost, but that of evangelist. Now we have only pastors and teachers.

Which most other Christians would say we have, at least evangelist pastors and teachers. Now these people are godly people, people of prayer, and people who study the word, but they don't seem to have an evangelistic outreach. They would be probably against giving an evangelistic invitation.

I don't know how Luis Palau will be received in Cardiff. I know there are many people who cooperate with him. But I will say this, if the Lord outpours blessing there, it's very likely that a lot of undecided people will get on the bandwagon.

Let's talk now about the South Seas. I think this is your latest book in this series of Evangelical Awakenings. Give us a thumbnail report of things there.

I find that young people in Australia and New Zealand are showing more interest than they were before. But Australia and New Zealand rather reflect the British Isles rather than the United States as far as church attendance is concerned. In Madagascar, you'll find a land of revivals, recurring revivals in Madagascar.

Most people know nothing about that island. But ever since the martyrs of Madagascar, Madagascar is as much a country of revival as Norway or Wales. As far as Indonesia is concerned, it's very hard to speak of Indonesia as a unit.

I notice that Dr. George Peters talks about revival in Indonesia, and I focus on Timor, because undoubtedly there was a great movement in Timor, although some reports of it were grossly exaggerated. Yet there has been a definite movement there. The last time I was in Indonesia was 1967.

There has been revival in eastern Java, in Sumatra, in Timor, and on Kalimantan, which we call Borneo. The most remarkable revival in the Malaysian part of Borneo was all the signs of historic classical revival. What can we Americans learn from this? I think we assume that if anything is ever to be done, we know

how to do it, or perhaps the other side of that, something may work somewhere else, but it won't work here.

Now, what can we learn of what God is doing in the South Seas or in Latin America or in Africa? I think that it's part of the national temperament to be more concerned in America with technique rather than dynamic. I think dynamic is the more important thing. In 1973, there was a worthy effort, Key 73.

Some people thought it would secure an awakening. Awakenings are not secured that way. The churches that put a lot into their evangelism at that time got something out of it.

But as far as an outpouring of the Holy Spirit is concerned, it's not something that can be organized. It's not for us to know the times or the seasons. The wind, as the Lord Jesus said, blows where it listeth.

We can't tell where it's coming from, where it's going, and so it is with the ways of the Holy Spirit. If we were but to realize that what we call revival or what Americans call real revival, what we call a great awakening, is the work of the Holy Spirit and not a matter of organization, then we ought to turn to God for dynamic rather than trying to study the latest technique. Now, don't misunderstand.

I believe that a man who knows some techniques is better equipped to deal with the opportunities that come in revival. I had a chaplain's assistant during World War II who thought if he shouted English loudly enough at the natives, they would understand. That doesn't work.

We've got to study people's ways. We've got to speak them in our own culture. We've got to reach them where they are.

So there are techniques to learn. We've got to deal with people as individuals, not merely as go scalp hunting, as it were. But I think the great need in America today is dynamic.

What about this matter of contagion? As one group hears of God's work in another area, it's like fire being taken from one place where it's hot and burning to tinder. Is this something that happens? There are two, perhaps, words we can use in this connection. One is that true revival can come by contagion.

People hear about it and pray for the same end. And second, we would say that there are spontaneous, simultaneous movements with blessing outpoured different places not related at all. The point I would make is this.

I teach in a theological seminary. If that seminary experienced a revival such as Asbury College had in 1970, no doubt the students would go out to their Sunday assignments and tell what the Lord had done. No doubt there'd be little fires kindled in various churches.

But I don't think the population of the city would roll in and say, what must I do to be saved? There'd be an item in the paper simply saying, have an interesting revival at the theological seminary. That's all. There are other people not interested.

We need more than a revival of Christian life. We need an outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon the masses to make them hungry, to make them aware of their need. Then they can be reached.

David Maines of our chapel staff feels that one reason we've not witnessed revival recently in our own land is because people lack a vision of what God can do when allowed the freedom to move among his people. David feels it's important that reports concerning the workings of God, both past and present, be kept

before believers. Therefore, we thank you very much, Dr. Orr, for giving us this thumbnail sketch of what God is doing around the world.

Tomorrow we'll be talking about the possibility of revival in America, and if it comes, what it will be like.

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