

# Wednesday #1 Revival in America - Mid 1800's

by J. Edwin Orr

---

*J. Edwin Orr's sermon explores the profound impact of the mid-19th century revival in America, emphasizing the role of prayer and community engagement in spiritual awakening.*

**Duration:** 43:59

**Scripture:** Luke 15:10, John 4:35, Acts 2:2-4, Acts 2:41, Acts 4:31, Acts 9:3-6, Acts 10:44-46

**Topics:** "Revival History"

---

## Description

In this sermon transcript, the speaker describes a packed meeting where he reads scripture, offers commentary, and leads prayer. He shares a story of someone telling him that people are initially disappointed when they see him, but then realize that only God could use him. The speaker explains that each evening they follow a pattern of sharing God's wonderful works in the country. He mentions a prayer meeting in Chicago during a boom time in the United States, where thousands of men gathered to pray. The speaker also mentions revivals happening in Pittsburgh and other places.

---

## Transcript

I was telling a group of ministers today that one day in New Zealand, a man came to me and said, you know, Mr. Rohr, it must be a benefit to your ministry that people are so disappointed when they see you first. I wasn't sure what I should say. Then he said, I'm sorry, I didn't mean to put it that way.

I mean that after people have read your books or heard about you, then they see you for the first time, they realize that only God could use you. So that's the kind of start that I get in life. For those who are for the first time in this series, I should explain that each evening we follow a certain pattern.

I take the first 15 or 20 minutes allotted to me to tell someone of God's wonderful works in this country. That's a scriptural commandment. We should tell our children's children what God has done, that they might set their hope in God and forget not his commandments.

Then later in the evening, I bring a message from the word related to this subject of revival and awakening. It had been my hope to deal each evening with a different awakening in the United States. But because there are only these weeknights, I'm not going to be able to cover them all.

So tonight, instead of dealing with the great revival of 1830, which lasted about 12 years, we'll skip that movement and move on to the one in the mid-century. Now, I've been asked the question, I was asked

today, why do these revivals not last? Well, of course they do last. I remember when I was last preaching in Wales, I asked the pastor of the Mount Pleasant Baptist Church in Swansea, how long did the Welsh revival last here? Well, said he, we were bringing in extra chairs for 20 years.

That's fair. You say, well then why isn't the revival in Wales today? All those people who were revived are dead and gone. There could scarcely be a convert of the Welsh revival who's not over 90 years of age.

I was speaking at a campus crusade summer staff meeting about college revivals, when a young student, not converted very long, said, why don't these college revivals last? I said, you have a point. I said, 20 miles across the mountains there is a place called Forest Home. In 1947 and in 1949, there were visitations of the Holy Spirit at that place.

Now, if you were to drive up to Forest Home and say, where's the revival? They'd look at you. Just as if you were to drive to Asbury College today and say, where's the revival? They'd say, are you referring to the revival of 1970? All those students have gone. There's still a warm memory among the faculty.

But I said, in one sense the revival continues. I said there was a young man, a Presbyterian minister, deeply moved at Forest Home. But why didn't he stay with it? Today he's chairman of World Vision.

He's the director of the presidential prayer breakfasts. I preached for him a couple of years ago when he was minister of Fourth Presbyterian Church. He's chaplain of the United States Senate.

Richard Halverson. Well, why didn't it last with him? It did last. There's another young fellow revived at Forest Home, among so many.

He got some idea of reaching students on Campus for Christ. He started an organization called Campus Crusade for Christ. His name was Bill Bright.

Why didn't it last? Well, I saw him the other day. He's still on the ball. I remember in Forest Home, 1949, a young evangelist came to talk to me at one o'clock in the morning about the filling of the Holy Spirit.

He said he felt a lack in his life. He went off into the woods to pray. He came back again.

He told me he had met with God in a new way. Now, why didn't it last? His name was Billy Graham. Do you see that these times of spiritual excitement are the times the Holy Spirit recruits people for a lifetime? Human nature being what it is, we need to be stirred up sometimes.

Otherwise, we never get doing anything. Well, we'll skip 1830. And I'm going to deal with the mid-century, the mid-19th century awaiting, to my mind, the most wholesome revival that this country ever experienced.

This is the 125th anniversary this year. More than a million people were converted and added to the churches out of a population of 30 million. Now, perhaps another million were converted who were already church members.

When a man who's a member of a church gets converted, he doesn't resign and join again, so it doesn't show in the statistics. But one million outsiders were converted and added to the churches in 1858. The Protestant Episcopal Bishop of Ohio, Charles McElwain, said of the 1858 revival, it is a work so extensive, so remarkable in its rise and progress and influence, I have no doubt whence it cometh, it is the Lord's doing.

You'll find the majority of Christians in the United States shared that opinion. But of course, today we live in the age of debunking. People love to debunk anything that's held sacred.

I find varied opinions today, expressed by people, of course, who were not alive at that time, and who seem to select what facts please them. There was a brilliant professor in Harvard called Perry Miller. He made no profession of faith.

Someone told me he was an atheist. Another man said no, he was a seeker. But he was very objective as an historian.

He wrote an excellent book on the Puritans that surprised people. His widow published, after he died, *The Life of the Mind in America*, a very sophisticated book dealing with the development of intellectualism in this country. And in that magnum opus, he has a whole section dealing with the 1858 revival, which he entitled *The Event of the Century*.

On the other hand, there's a professor at Brown University who writes the articles on revivalism in the *Encyclopedia Britannica*, an author of a book called *Modern Revivalism*, and he called the revival of 1858 the religious excitement that scarcely deserved to be called an awakening, a revival organized by panic-stricken businessmen. Now, I wrote to him. I said, D. L. Moody died 1899, one of the world's greatest evangelists.

He was shrewd, he was objective, he was in touch with the whole Christian world. He wrote just before he died, I would like, before I go hence, to see the whole Church of God quickened as it was in 1857, and a wave going from Maine to California that will sweep thousands into the kingdom of God. Now, I said, I think it's fair to deduce from that last prayer of Moody that in forty years of superb evangelism, he had seen nothing to equal what he saw during that revival.

Most historians would say that Moody's greatest year of evangelism was 1893, when for six months he had a great campaign at the Chicago World Exposition. He brought men from Germany, from Australia, from all over the world, and a great team of evangelists presented the gospel there throughout the whole of that exposition. But Moody didn't say, I would like, before I go hence, to see the whole Church of Christ quickened as it was in 1893.

He said 1857. That was the revival in which he served his apprenticeship. So I think if you examine the opinions of people who were alive at that time, there is general agreement that it was the greatest spiritual revival since the days of the apostles.

Now you might say, what about the Reformation? The Reformation was not only a reviving of spirituality, but a great political movement too, and chiefly the reform of the Church. Among evangelicals, those who speak well of the 1858 revival, they tell it in a simple way. There was a man called Jeremiah Lanthier who started a prayer meeting in Manhattan.

He used the upper room of the Dutch Reformed Church, the corner of Fulton and Williams Streets, close to Wall Street and Broadway. They met on a Wednesday, 23 September, out of a population of a million in New York and Brooklyn. Nobody showed up except Jeremiah Lanthier himself, until at half past twelve he heard a step on the stairs, and at twenty-five to one there were six men who prayed turnabout and then round again until one o'clock.

That was the beginning of the remarkable Fulton Street prayer meeting. Now in October there came a bank crash, probably the most severe in American history except the bank failures of 1929. The banking system of the United States collapsed and every bank in the country was closed for two months.

Now if you heard there was going to be a run in the bank, you'd go and try to get your money out. But if everyone did it at the same time, that would cause a panic. Now we have the Federal Reserve System whereby savings are guaranteed by the government.

That was designed to prevent this sort of thing happening. But on the fourteenth of October, the banking system of the United States collapsed. By that time the six had become twenty, and then the next week forty, and then on the day all the banks closed, one hundred men met in prayer.

Dr. McLaughlin, whom I mentioned already, says that this was the bank panic revival. The implication was that people lost their money and got hysterical and started to pray in prayer meetings. But I would say a hundred people out of a million is not a panic.

They grew rather steadily for about four months, and it wasn't until late in February of the next year they overflowed the premises. They filled the upper room and the basement of the church and overflowed the John Street Methodist Church. That was the beginning of a great widespread multiplication of prayer meetings for businessmen.

Most people trace the widespread revival of 1858 to the Fulton Street prayer meeting. I decided to do some research on my own since November last year, and I made some remarkable discoveries. First of all, before the American bank panic, the first touch of revival power was felt in Hamilton, Ontario, in what was then called Canada West.

Not affected by the American banking system at all. Canadians didn't put their money in American banks. Nobody lost any money in Hamilton.

But there was such a revival that the mayor of Hamilton was converted, doctors and lawyers converted, drunkards and prostitutes converted, the whole town shaken. And a series of revivals spread over Canada. Now, if I were to ask you in the United States itself, which was the class of people who would be least affected by a bank panic, what would you say? Well, think of it for a moment.

The slaves. Not one of them had a dime in a bank. Not one.

But by October 1857, there were vast movements of revival in Virginia and the Carolinas, beginning among the dispossessed, the blacks. For instance, I read that in Virginia the churches were too small to hold the crowds, so they took over the tobacco factories and warehouses. The overseers in those places presided over the meetings.

Hundreds converted. The second largest church in the world was the African Church in Richmond, Virginia. But it was passed that year by a Baptist church in Beaufort, South Carolina.

The Carolinians call that Beaufort. It's Beaufort. That's a single Baptist church that baptized 428 believers, of whom 422 were black.

They baptized 556 people that year, the largest number of any single Baptist church in the country. And it made the Baptist church in Beaufort the world's largest Baptist church. At the same time, a remarkable

revival broke out in Charleston, South Carolina, in the Anson Street Presbyterian Church.

The pastor was the Reverend John Gerardo. By the way, in that church the black communicants outnumbered white 5 to 1. John Gerardo was so concerned about the need of revival in the country, he called together what he designated a protracted prayer meeting, not a protracted preaching service. He said, we'll pray, we'll do nothing but pray night after night until God visits us.

One night he was sitting in his chair leading the meeting, the prayer meeting, when suddenly it was as if he was struck by an electric bolt. This was a rather uncommon experience for Presbyterian ministers. He was staggered.

Finally he got up. He had told them, no preaching until the Lord visits us. He got up and said, we will start preaching tomorrow night.

I believe the Holy Spirit has come in power. He announced the hymn, pronounced the benediction, but nobody moved. They all sat down again.

They noticed some were sobbing. It suddenly struck him, the Lord has touched them too. He wasn't prepared to preach, but he started exhorting them in the name of the Lord, and the power of God fell in that meeting.

For 15 weeks he was preaching between 1,500 and 2,000 people in that church. Converts in large numbers, by the hundreds, white and black, were converted and went back to their churches, so that the whole Presbytery, not only the Presbytery, but the Baptists and the Methodists in Charleston, all enjoyed this great time of revival. By the way, I take it you saw the program Roots, Alex Haley's production, when they showed the cruel way that black slaves were treated and worshipped, they were not exaggerating.

But there were one or two impressions there that I find were not quite historical. The impression was given that most plantation owners denied religion to their black slaves, whereas I find this isn't true. Every time a Great Awakening came in the States, multitudes of black people were converted.

For example, the Methodists were always good at keeping statistics. In 1798, there were about seven times as many white Methodists in South Carolina as black Methodists. But by 1838, after a whole generation of revivals, the numbers were practically equal, about 24,000 white Methodists and 23,997 black Methodists.

By 1858, there were more blacks who were Methodists in South Carolina than whites. And I find that during the 1858 revival, I've gone over the statistics very carefully, about 100,000 Negro converts were added to the memberships of the churches. In the meantime, the prayer meeting in Fulton Street was going on, but they weren't the only ones praying.

The synods of western Pennsylvania, eastern Ohio, and Wheeling, West Virginia--four synods got together in Pittsburgh, December 1, 1857, for three days of prayer for revival. Every church sent its minister and one elder. Not only so, but the Baptists in New York set aside one day a month for all Baptists to gather to pray for revival.

The Methodists, the Congregationalists, all did the same. And I find that in the fall of 1857, each one of those denominations reporting extraordinary local revivals. Now, I'm not using the word revival in the sense of just holding meetings.

I'm using the word revival in the sense that Americans use the word real revival, a visitation of God's Spirit. For instance, the Baptist Watchmen in Boston and the Methodist Christian Advocate in New York cited unusual numbers of revivals breaking out. And on the 28th of January, 1858, the Methodist Christian Advocate--now, the Methodists were the largest denomination in the states at that time.

They said this revival seems to be quite different to all previous ones. First of all, few sermons need to be preached. Second, the laymen are taking such a part in it.

Third, seekers come easily. Then almost all who come are blessed. The experiences seem to remain clear.

Converts witness boldly, and religion is talked of all over time. Family alters strengthened, and seriousness prevailed. All this happened before the great climax in New York City at the end of February.

Now, I can tell you, not only of things like this happening among Methodists and Baptist congregations, but I was up at Gettysburg Lutheran Seminary two days ago, and I found that the same thing was being reported by the Lutherans. There is a town close by Frederick called Middletown. An extraordinary revival broke out in the Lutheran church there.

One of the ministers this morning told me, there is a huge Lutheran church there now. But they were reporting revivals as far west as Iowa. That was very far west in those days.

Now, there were two leading editors in New York in 1858. One was a man called James Gordon Bennett, who had a very skeptical attitude towards religion. When he heard of these businessmen's prayer meetings, he began writing little editorials that were sarcastic.

His main rival was Horace Greeley, editor of the New York Tribune. Horace Greeley was a man that coined the phrase, go west, young man. Everyone has heard of Horace Greeley.

There is a town in Colorado called Greeley, named after Horace Greeley. Somebody must have taken his advice and gone west. Now, whenever Gordon Bennett began ridiculing the revival, Horace Greeley decided to support it.

He sent a reporter with horse and buggy racing around the businessmen's prayer meetings at the end of February. In one hour he could only visit twelve. I suppose he just simply rushed into John Street, counted the number of men present, rushed out again and sent his horse to a gallop and went off to the Plymouth church and counted the number of men praying there, and off to the YMCA, and so on.

He counted 6,110 in one hour. Horace Greeley saw there was news in this. He put it in his front news page, and this caused a landslide of interest.

They began filling up not only every church, but they took over the biggest theaters, Burton's Theater on Chamber Street in New York. Five thousand people, packed. A minister got up in one of these prayer meetings and said, I was here until three o'clock yesterday dealing with people who wished to find Christ as Savior.

I'm sure there must be many more, but you have to go back to work. It's hard to get a job these days. So I would like to announce that my church will be open from tonight onwards indefinitely for the preaching of the gospel.

And soon every church in New York was opened and filled. You see, every church, even the Roman Catholic churches were affected, because the Catholics were excited when their workmates got excited about religion. They didn't think they should go to a Protestant service, so they went to their own church.

The churches sometimes had to send for special preachers from the monastery in Pennsylvania that belonged to the Passionist Order. They'd come and hold preaching services. Of course, they didn't call for conversions the way Protestants do, they just called them to confession.

They had attendances of up to five thousand in some parish churches. The hierarchy was not in favor of the revival, but this is what was happening just the same. The leading boxer of that day was a man called Orville Gardner, better known as Awful Gardner.

Wonderfully converted, that caused a sensation among certain people in town. That revival spread up into New England. At that time Charles Finney was holding meetings in Park Street, Boston.

But he says in his autobiography that the revival that swept the city became, quote, too general to keep any account at all of the number of converts. All over New England the church bells were ringing several times a day to bring people to six-thirty morning prayer meetings, twelve noon prayer meetings, six-thirty evening prayer meetings. In Newark, New Jersey, a population of only seventy thousand, but in the first two months two thousand seven hundred and eighty-five converts were added to the churches, and the minister said, most of them heads of families.

It was a usual thing to see a sign that said, Closed. We'll reopen at the close of the prayer meeting. In sixty smaller towns there were six thousand converts enrolled in the first two months.

The same sort of revival swept Pennsylvania. They had a businessmen's prayer meeting. It didn't start until about the twenty-third of November.

They met in the Methodist church, but they never got more than thirty people. They seemed to have difficulty keeping it going. But in March they moved to Chestnut Street, downtown Philadelphia, and took a committee room in Jane's Theater, a big hall.

Then a flood of interest came. They filled the downstairs of the theater, then the next day they took away the partitions, filled the platform, then they filled the first gallery, then the second gallery. One of the leaders was an Episcopal rector called Dudley King, a godly man.

He had a farm out in the country, and his gown got caught in a threshing machine, pulled his arm in and mangled it. He died. He told one of his friends, George Duffield, a Presbyterian minister, Tell the men in Jane's Hall to stand up for Jesus.

So George Duffield wrote a hymn, Stand up, stand up for Jesus, ye soldiers of the cross. I would love to have heard three thousand men sing that for the first time. This prayer meeting began in November, but the great flood of interest was four months after the bank panic, and so I don't think you can say it was caused by businessmen.

Great revival in Pittsburgh, great revival all over the place. I know you must be interested in Maryland and Washington, and I happen to have the notes I'm making at the present time here, so I'll just give you one or two little points. Before very long there were reporting revivals as far away as Nashville and New Orleans, Mobile, Savannah, Augusta, Columbia, South Carolina, and Raleigh, North Carolina.

It said it was rendered morally fragrant by the shower of grace. South of the Mason-Dixon line, the revival began in December 1857. Sixty conversions reported in a town called Havre-de-Grâce.

Then more than a hundred people converted in the Monroe Circuit in Baltimore. In 1853 the Methodists in Baltimore numbered 73,101. Four years later, 73,622.

That means in four years they increased by 521. That's .1 percent per year, one-tenth of one percent a year. But in 1858 the Baltimore Conferences reported a gain of 6,587 one year, as compared to 521 in four years.

They had 13,102 on trial. When a man got converted in the Methodist churches in those days, he was put on probation before he was received into full membership. The same thing was happening among the Baptists.

In Fredericksburg, Maryland, there was an Episcopal rector called J. P. McGuire. He kept preaching continuously to the people, not only his own church, but he stirred up the Episcopalians in Spotsylvania, Stafford, Essex, Carolina, Culpeper, and Orange Counties, speaking with biblical authority. I read the biography of a bishop that mentioned that once in Carolina, with the Rev. J. W. Cook and John P. McGuire, about 1,400 people gathered on Sunday, crowding the church and filling the churchyard.

Great feeling was shown and many tears were shed and souls were saved. In Baltimore, in the spring of 1858, following the New York meetings, they started a daily prayer meeting, started by the YMCA. By the end of April they were turning 2,000 away from the prayer meeting.

Revival in all parts of the state. There was revival in Wilmington, in Delaware. But what about the District of Columbia? They had five daily prayer meetings.

The population of Washington at that time was only 57,000. But they had five daily prayer meetings starting at 6.30 in the morning, 10 in the morning, 5 p.m., and 7 p.m., with the YMCA and the churches sponsoring the efforts. The National Intelligence--that was the biggest Washington daily--described the meetings as still and solemn.

On the first of April they said editorially, the religious excitement in the city is unabated. Five thousand people attending the prayer services in the Academy of Music Hall. They also had prayer meetings in the United States Congress chambers.

And as late as October, the interest was still evident. Since I came to Washington, I went down to Wesley Seminary and got a hold of the copies of the Methodist Protestant newspaper, in which they said, there is no doubt there has been an outpouring of the Holy Spirit on all the churches of Washington. So that happened in the nation's capital.

But one of the debunkers, a man called Russell Francis, wrote a dissertation for the University of Pennsylvania, and he said Washington appeared forsaken in the revival. The Lord wouldn't have anything to do with the politicians. Something like that.

But that was just his opinion. Charles Finney, the great evangelist, stated of the South that throughout the southern states there was very little touch of revival. He said because the people there were so addicted to their peculiar institution, meaning slavery, there was no place for the Holy Spirit in their hearts.

Finney was trained as a lawyer. Lawyers are supposed to sift evidence. Finney apparently didn't seem to realize that revival was sweeping the South from Richmond, Virginia to Waco in Texas.

Sweeping the whole of the South. Why did he say that? He was such an ardent abolitionist, he just couldn't believe God could bless those people down there. The revival went over the Alleghenies, down the line of the Ohio.

First of all, it went up the Hudson, down the Mohawk. The Baptists in the Mohawk cities had so many candidates for believers' baptism, they couldn't get them into their churches. For instance, connected they went down to the river, cut the big square hole in the ice, baptized them in the cold water.

And as I've said before, when Baptists do that, they really are on fire. In Kalamazoo in Michigan, an Episcopal layman convened the first businessmen's prayer meeting in the town hall. He called upon the Episcopal Rector to read the scripture and the Methodist minister to lead in prayer.

Then he said, there are so many people packing this hall, you won't have a chance to pray, so would you write your request in a slip of paper, pass it up to me, I'll read it, someone will pray for you. The purpose of this meeting is prayer. The first request was, a praying woman asked the prayers of this company for the conversion of her husband who is far from God.

Immediately, a blacksmith stood and said, my wife prays for me, I know I'm far from God, would somebody help me? A lawyer stood up and said, I think it was my wife that wrote that note, because I'm far from God. Somebody else stood up, six husbands converted immediately. In evangelism, the evangelist seeks the sinner.

In these times of revival, the sinners come running to God. Chicago had a population of 100,000 at the time. It was the boomtown of the United States.

Yet, there are 2,000 men meeting for prayer in what is now the Loop in the Metropolitan Hall. First Baptist Church had prayer meetings at 6.30 in the morning, 12.00 noon, and 6.30 in the evening, and then they had all days of prayer. They said that many people came to Chicago in business and forgot what they'd come for.

They were so caught up in this movement of God. A young shoe salesman went to the superintendent of a Sunday school on the near north side of Chicago and said he'd like to teach Sunday school. The superintendent said, I'm sorry, young fellow, we've got 16 teachers and only 12 pupils.

Well, he said, what am I supposed to do? He said, we'll put you on the waiting list, unless you'd like to start a class. How would I start a class? He said, get some boys, take them out for a while, get control of them first, then bring them here. So he brought 17 urchins to that place.

And other teachers said, could I take them? So he went out and got another school. That was the beginning of the life work of Dwight Lyman Moody. That's how Moody got started.

The same revival swept California. I told you, out of a population of 30 million, there were 1 million converts. I have the figures.

I'm not quite sure what the last figure I came up with, because I'm still adding to it. 1,108,785. Outsiders added to the major denominations.

That revival swept the country, 1857, 1858, 1859. I always supposed it died away then, but to my amazement recently I found that these sort of revivals were continuing even during the Civil War. And what is hardest of all to understand is, in the Army of Northern Virginia, the Confederate Army, Robert E. Lee's command, more than 150,000 Confederate soldiers were converted in 1862-63.

After the Civil War was ended, revivals broke out. For instance, in 1864, the Presbyterians reported revivals in 72 out of 92 Presbyteries. Now the effect of this revival was for 40 years.

It lasted until the end of the century. It jumped the Atlantic and broke out in Northern Ireland. My grandfather and grandmother converted the same year, 1859.

In 1959, I was invited by all the churches of Ireland to come and help celebrate that movement. I even preached in St. Patrick's Cathedral in Dublin. It still felt 1859-1959.

It jumped the North Channel and broke out in Scotland. Out of the 3 million population of Scotland, 300,000 converts, including James Chalmers, the modern missionary of the South Seas, Mary Schleser, Calabar, John McNeill, the great evangelist. The same revival broke out in Wales.

The same revival swept England. Out of it came the China Inland Mission. Out of it came the Salvation Army.

The same revival was felt in Australia, all of 1959. It didn't break out in South Africa until 1860. Some American missionaries who belonged to the American board came from Boston late in 1858, early 1859, and told the South Africans of the revival in America.

They weren't very impressed. They said, anything can happen in America. A lot of people say that about the States.

Anything can happen over there. But when they heard that the Church of Scotland was having revival, they were deeply impressed. I direct a conference at Oxford University every summer, and we had a very ardent American fundamentalist attending, and he told us when he was up in Scotland, he thought to himself, I wonder how they worship in these big churches.

So he went to St. Giles Cathedral. That's John Knox Kirk. The true Presbyterians won't call it the cathedral, but most people call it St. Giles Cathedral.

He said the service was very formal, but the preacher preached such an evangelical message the American couldn't help but he shouted, Praise the Lord! A Scottish elder appeared at his shoulder, tapped him on the shoulder and said, well don't praise the Lord in this church. But the Church of Scotland in General Assembly for five years running passed a vote of confidence, a vote of thanks to Almighty God for the mighty blessings upon Scotland. Do you know that the Bishop of London and the Dean of Westminster and friendly competition ran evangelistic meetings every Sunday night for five years in St. Paul's Cathedral and Westminster Abbey for the upper classes? Where did the poor go? They filled all the great theatres, Sadler's Wells, Covent Garden, the Garrick Theatre, the old Victoria, packed out every Sunday with people hearing the gospel.

Spurgeon built his tabernacle during that revival. There's a book called Spurgeon's Revival Sermons published that year. That revival, well I was telling you about South Africa and I didn't finish what I was saying.

Three hundred and seventy-four ministers came together at Worcester, a hundred miles up from Cape Town to discuss the revival at Easter 1860. Seven weeks later at Whitsuntide the young people in the Dutch Reformed Church were having their youth meeting in their own youth hall. The leader was a young man called Jan Christian de Vries.

There was a Fingo girl there, that meant a black girl who spoke the Xhosa language. She asked if she might speak. They gave her permission.

It was a meeting for Europeans. She spoke so sweetly there was a sense of the presence of God. Dead silence.

Then de Vries said he heard what sounded like an approaching tornado. He thought the whole building shook. All those young Dutch people began praying aloud simultaneously.

There was an elder called Jan Rabbe walking by. He peeped in and didn't like this, rushed up to the parsonage to tell the minister. He came down with a silk hat and frock coat, the way they dressed in those days for Sunday service.

He came in and said to de Vries, what is going on? He murmured something about the presence of God. The minister said, I hold you responsible. So he lifted his voice and said in Dutch, Mensa blijst du.

Everyone be quiet. Nobody took any notice. He said, I am your minister appointed by Presbytery.

He was a new minister, just recently inducted. The Dutch Reformed have a respect for their dominees, but they didn't even see him. He went back to de Vries and said, start a hymn.

The two men started singing in Dutch. Nobody joined them. The minister walked out and said, God is a God of order.

This is nothing but confusion. He went back and told his wife, we prayed for revival. Is this revival? In the meantime, prayer meetings multiplied like wildfire over the Wagamakers Valley.

The minister decided he must do something about it to assert his authority. So he announced a united prayer meeting Saturday night in the schoolhouse which seated a thousand. The place was packed, hundreds standing outside.

He read the scripture, gave a short commentary, offered prayer, and then making eye contact with all his congregation, said the meeting is now open for prayer. Dead silence. Then he heard the sound of a rushing wind, and they were all praying aloud again.

An outsider pushed his way in, touched him on the shoulder, and said in English, are you the minister of this congregation? He said, I am. He said, be careful what you do. This is the outpouring of the Spirit.

The name of that minister was Andrew Murray. I never met Andrew Murray. I knew his grandsons, but Opa Douglas, who wrote his biography, told me when Andrew Murray was a mellow old saint, three times moderate of the Dutch Reformed Church, famous in the United States as well as the United Kingdom, around the world, still famous today by his books on absolute surrender and so on.

When he was an old man, his friends used to tease him and say, Dr. Murray, tell us how you tried to stop the revival. And he always smiled. That revival was felt everywhere in the world that there was an

evangelical cause.

Why couldn't God do something like that again?

---

Audio: <https://sermonindex1.b-cdn.net/0/SID0161.mp3>

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/j-edwin-orr/wednesday-1-revival-in-america-mid-1800s/>

# *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)**