

Without holiness none shall see revival!

by Captain Andrew Bale

“A Church that is sanctified and transformed, that teaches and lives holiness, will be used of God to bring about the biggest revival the world has known, and to prepare the way for the coming of the Lord. That revival is prophesied by Joel and is surely coming. But it will have to be a revival of holiness. Any other revival will be spurious and short-lived.” (Allister Smith)

“It is not want of numbers, but want of holiness that hinders the church.” (Anon)

Primitive Salvationists and all sincere followers of Christ are seeking revival. No true warrior of God can ever be satisfied with the ‘trickle ministry’ wrung out by much of western contemporary Christianity. Whilst some would argue that small is beautiful and say that we must never judge the work of God by statistics – the bible believing Christian tries hard to plant God’s seed in ‘good soil’ and therefore expects to “produce a crop—thirty, sixty or even a hundred times what was sown!”

The call for revival and indeed the expectation of its imminent arrival is growing on a daily basis. Soldiers have begun to identify those inconsistencies between faith and action that may be encouraging God to withhold his blessing. Groups have sprung up all over the western world where believers regularly meet together to fast, pray and repent in a spirit inspired attempt to address this concern.

Prophetic words have gone out encouraging the faithful to prayerfully cross examine themselves and participate in personal and identificational repentance for themselves and for the Army and the wider church. Revival has been promised by God, predicted by prophets and is expected by his people.

However, I believe, that a little like the rich young ruler whilst we ‘are very close to the kingdom’ we still lack ‘one thing’.

Repentance and renunciation, necessary though they are, are but precursors to that final condition which must be paid by all disciples wishing to follow Christ. Repentance and renunciation may deal with our sin but what are we to do with what is left, what is the proper biblical response to the mercy of God?

“With eyes wide open to the mercies of God, I beg you, my brothers, as an act of intelligent worship, to give him your bodies, as a living sacrifice, consecrated to him and acceptable by him.” (Romans 12 J B Phillips)

God is always at the heart of revival; he inspires it, empowers it, controls it and sustains it. The writer to the Hebrews reminds us that complete consecration is essential to the Christian experience – “without holiness no one will see the Lord.”

Without the Lord and a spirit inspired ability to 'see' as well as hear him there can be no revival. To put it simply holiness must (and will Hallelujah!) precede revival.

Holiness delivers - or demands - 4 things which are critical components within any revival.

Love:

Without love there can be no revival. The greatest commandment (indeed the only commandment which has any legal implication for the Christian) directs us first to love God and then outwards to love the lost.

John Allen, one of William Booth's greatest personal friends and an early Christian Mission convert and evangelist, often (according to his wife) would leap from his bed at all hours and dive into impassioned prayer for the lost. Commissioner Railton often fell to his knees upon first meeting an individual and immediately prayed for their Salvation (with a remarkable success rate too!) so great was his love for the lost.

The need for salvation remains as great as ever, the gates of hell have never been more crowded than they are today, God's commitment to the lost remains constant – the world is ripe for revival but what it needs now (as the old song says) "is love sweet love, it's the only thing that there's just too little off"

*"O is not the Christ 'midst the crowd of today
Whose questioning cries do not cease?
And will he not show to the hearts that would know
The things that belong to their peace?
But how shall they hear if the preacher forbear
Or lack in compassionate zeal?
Or how shall hearts move with the Master's own love,
Without his anointing and seal?" (SASB 527 Osborn)*

Sacrifice:

Love and sacrifice always go hand in hand, where there are people in need love will always strive to pay the going rate required to deliver them - whatever the personal cost.

When questioned as to the reasons behind her success in France; La Marechale, Kate Booth, answered ""First, it is love; second, love; third, love. And if you ask me how to get it, I answer first, by sacrifice; second, by sacrifice; third, by sacrifice."

Holiness delivers the desire and the ability to take up our cross. To someone outside the embrace of holiness, self denial is a dour self inflicted discipline that cannot be sustained and produces a cold legalistic impersonation of Christianity. Whereas

holiness consummates personal crucifixion and delivers a form of self denial that is not a duty but a fruit. A life of holiness by default will always be a life of self denial.

Resources:

I have always argued that Salvationists don't properly understand the cost which will be inflicted upon us, in terms of time and resources, if God deigns to bless us with revival. The following quote from 'Heathen England' by Railton describes what kind of resources revival will require:

"YES; every day! That is it! The wild whirl of city life is daily carrying the multitude on its thousand eddies to the awful rush and boom of death's terrible waves and to the dark depths of eternity. No day must be lost if anything effective is to be done for the poor dying souls. There are a thousand objects all around to catch every eye and to fill up every mind. The Son of Man cannot be lifted up too often if we are really anxious to have all men drawn unto Him. And once a man is laid hold of he must not be let go for an evening. A hundred public-house doors must be passed ere he gets home from his work. His home may have little attraction at any time. Since his conversion it may have become a very nest of hornets to him. If you want to make it possible for such a man to get established in the ways of God, you must not leave him one leisure evening unprovided for."

Something productive for the new convert every night of the week in a world where many Corps only meet once a week - Are we ready for this? Are we prepared to put in the hours that revival will demand? Holiness will make such commitment a natural joy. There is no holding back the holy – they live for Christ. God doesn't need lots of people to bring about revival he just needs 100% from those he already has.

One more quote from the same book...

"The Army having found out the need of the people has: therefore, from the first laid down the law. "An open-air service and an indoor service - at least one of each at every station, every night, if possible." Of course, it is not always possible to hold an open-air service; and it is not always possible to hold one open to the public indoors, seeing that meetings of a more private kind must occupy the only building we have to use. Of course, every officer employed by the Army has not had the strength needed for so many services- some, alas! have not had the diligence either. These last have soon found that, as there was a way into the Army, there was also a way out!"

Evangelism and discipling in the midst of a revival is tough work and not for the lazy, worldly or faint-hearted – holiness will turn us into the resources that God needs.

Righteousness:

One of my favourite SA songs is number 821 (William Pearson) I especially like the final verse:

*"We're an Army saved, by blood and fire made strong;
And with righteousness we mean to conquer wrong;*

*This shall be our universal battle song:
There's salvation for the world."*

We will not conquer the world with anything less than 'righteousness' and every soldier will find that holiness delivers consistent daily victory over temptation and full deliverance from sin.

In song 407 Charles Wesley reminds us that:

*"The most impossible of all
Is that I e'er from sin should cease;
Yet shall it be; I know it shall;
Jesus, look to thy faithfulness
If nothing is too hard for thee,
All things are possible to me!"*

We cannot bind up demons that are running free in our own communities if there are still demons running free in our own hearts. The believer who is outside the blessing of holiness will find almost all of their time is taken up resisting the tempter. Holiness breaks the 'power of cancelled sin and set's the prisoner free'

Revival does not allow the believer the time to be caught up in the traditional loop of sin, followed by forgiveness, followed by more sin – revival will only happen when we break free from such time consuming self obsession so that we can turn our attention towards breaking the chains of others.

It is a simple matter of fact that anyone seeking revival without holiness will be disappointed and that anyone caught up in a revival without holiness will be overwhelmed –without holiness revival is impossible.

In his book Love Slaves (p72) Commissioner Samuel Logan Brengle writes as the ripples of that great revival which birthed the Salvation Army are beginning to peter out. He recognises that holiness was both the cause and the ongoing fuel of revival and without holiness he rightly predicts that we will lose our God given mandate to be militant soldiers for Christ.

"It is this holiness that we Salvationists must maintain, otherwise we shall betray our trust; we shall lose our birthright; we shall cease to be a spiritual power in the earth; we shall have a name to live and yet be dead; our glory will depart; and we, like Samson, shorn of his locks, shall become as other men; the souls with whom we are entrusted will grope in darkness, or go elsewhere for soul nourishment and guidance; and while we may still have titles and ranks, which will have become vainglorious, to bestow upon our children, we shall have no heritage to bequeath them of martyr-like sacrifice, or spiritual power, or dare-devil faith, of pure, deep joy, of burning love, of holy triumph."

Quite simply 'without holiness none shall see' revival!

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