

Prayer Revivals and the Third Great Awakening

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THE CALL FOR A spiritual revival of God's people can be found as far back as biblical times. This call is reflected in the soul-felt cry: 'Revive us, and we will call on your name.'¹ In the 18th century, 'concerts of prayer' were promoted by the American theologian Jonathan Edwards and members of the Scottish clergy. Their purpose was to call the church to pray that God would bring a true, heaven-sent revival. Edwards wrote: 'this prophecy [Zech. 8:20-22] parallels many other prophecies that speak of an extraordinary spirit of prayer preceding that glorious day of revival and advancement of the Church's peace and prosperity.'² The

revivals of the Third Great Awakening provide strong evidence that prayer is the key to any true revival. These were revivals birthed in prayer and international in scope. While not well-remembered one hundred fifty years later, the number of people and church institutions impacted remains enormous.

1. Foundations in North America

The residual effects of the Second Great Awakening in North America laid the groundwork for the Revival of 1857-1860. The preaching of Charles Finney was still in the memory of Americans in the mid-1850s. In those years, the then future leader of the Fulton Street prayer meetings, Jeremiah Lanphier, came to Christ under Finney's preaching. Finney's preaching also strongly influenced Humphrey Jones, a Welsh expatriate living in America, who would later return to Wales to preach there.

The Second Great Awakening also gave birth to the Holiness Movement. It was founded on John Wesley's theology of entire sanctification which held

1 Ps. 80:18 NIV

2 Jonathan Edwards, *An Humble Attempt To Promote Explicit Agreement and Visible Union of God's People in Extraordinary Prayer*, <http://www.reformed.org/eschaton/ha_page_s/humble_attempt_part1.html> accessed 4 August, 2006.

to the belief in 'the complete orientation of the heart toward God and away from sinning'.³ As early as 1840, Phoebe Palmer of New York City was a recognized leader of the movement. Along with her husband Walter, Phoebe preached in numerous holiness revival meetings in the United States and Canada.

2. America at the start of the 1857 Revival

In Deut. 8:10-18, God warned Israel not to forget him once they had settled in the Promised Land and enjoyed its material prosperity. Similarly, mid-1850s America enjoyed a booming economy. They too had slowly drifted from God in their material prosperity as Israel did.⁴ In addition, the citizenry grew polarized and divided over the politics and morality of slavery. The United States was in desperate need of revival. The start of the American revival is often traced to Jeremiah Lanphier, who in July, 1857, was commissioned by the Dutch North Church in New York City as a lay missionary. He immediately sought the Lord's guidance on how to reach the lost souls of New York. He settled upon the idea of a weekly prayer meeting to be held at the Dutch North Church at Fulton and William Streets, only ten blocks from the then-future site of the World Trade Centre. In his journal, he wrote:

One day, as I was walking along

the streets, the idea was suggested to my mind that an hour of prayer, from twelve to one o'clock, would be beneficial to business men, who usually, in great numbers, take that hour for rest and refreshment.⁵

Lanphier distributed handbills which announced a weekly prayer meeting to be held at the North Dutch Church. It would begin at noon on 23 September, 1857, and last one hour. At that first meeting, he was the only one in attendance for the first half hour. When the meeting ended, six others had joined him. At the next meeting, 20 people attended. The following week, the attendance was between 30 to 40 individuals. Starting 8 October, 1857, the Fulton Street prayer meetings were held daily. A stock market crash two days later boosted attendance at the prayer meetings. The available rooms of the church had filled. Within months, thousands attended prayer meetings all over the city. The noonday meetings overflowed into prayer meetings held morning, noon and night.

A March, 1858 account of the New York revival indicated its scope. Prayer meetings were still occurring at the Dutch North Church. On March 19th, news arrived of a Virginia man who organized noon time prayer in Richmond after attending the Fulton Street meetings. In several Indiana towns 'the progress of the revival was distinctly marked'.⁶ Revival was occurring in Boston, Springfield, Hoboken,

3 *Christian History & Biography*, Issue 82 (Carol Stream: Christianity Today International, 2004), p. 2.

4 The drift began with Israel's first generation in the Promised Land (Jud. 2:10).

5 Journal of Jeremiah Lanphier, found in Peter Marshall & David Manuel, *Sounding Forth the Trumpet* (Fleming H. Revell, Grand Rapids, 1997), p. 417.

6 *New York Times*, 20 March, 1858, p. 5.

and numerous cities throughout America. Evidence of the revival could be found from the Atlantic to the Pacific coasts. Converts were numbered in the tens of thousands.

With the growing interest in the revival, church buildings were no longer the only sites of the prayer meetings. *The New York Times* reported: 'Churches are crowded; bank-directors rooms become oratories; school houses are turned into chapels.' Places associated with worldliness became sites of prayer. One example was Burton's Theatre in New York. The *Times*' account stated: 'Instead of noisy laughter, excited by play-actors, in low comedy and farce, those present listen quietly and seriously to earnest words from earnest men on the most solemn and earnest of themes.'⁷

3. News of the Revival Crosses the Atlantic Ocean

News of the revival in the United States soon reached across the Atlantic. Charles Spurgeon mentioned the revival during a sermon in June, 1858, making reference to the noon prayer services in Philadelphia. He observed:

...this great work in America has been manifestly caused by the outpouring of the Spirit, for no one minister has been a leader in it. All the ministers of the gospel have co-operated in it, but none of them have stood in the van. God himself has been the leader of his own

hosts. It began with a desire for prayer. God's people began to pray;⁹

Spurgeon desired similar revival in England. He reminded his hearers that 'the Holy Spirit will not come to us as a church, unless we seek him'. He noted that morning and evening prayer had started in Norwich and other towns. Of them, Spurgeon commented: 'The Lord hath put prayer into their hearts and therefore they were willing to come.'

In 1859, Dr. B. Evans delivered a lecture in Scarborough, England, entitled 'The American Revivals'. It recounted the details of the revival in the United States. Evans observed: 'The work originated with, and has been sustained by, prayer. This is its universal characteristic; and the fact admits of no doubt.'¹⁰ He asked his audience to ponder several questions. First, he asked: 'Do we need such a revival, such manifest and manifold tokens of the power of the Divine Spirit?''¹¹ His implicit answer was 'yes'. He pointed to opportunities to spread the gospel in previously closed lands such as China, Japan and the 'wilds of Africa'. Yet, English society had devolved into ignorance and indifference. Evans painfully noted:

9 Charles Spurgeon, *The Outpouring of the Holy Spirit*, 20 June, 1858, <<http://www.spurgeon.org/sermons/0201.htm>> accessed 1 July, 2006.

10 B. Evans, *The American Revivals*, <<http://www.revival-library.org/index.html?http://www.revival-library.org/catalogues/world4/evans/title.htm>> accessed 3 July, 2006.

7 *New York Times*, 20 March, 1858, p. 5.

8 *New York Times*, 20 March, 1858, p. 5.

11 B. Evans, *American Revivals*.

Upon millions in this land of ours religious truth has exerted no saving influence.... Glance for a moment at the majority in our congregations, gradually ripening for perdition under the ministry of the Word, perishing amidst the atmosphere of prayer, and dying within sight of the fountain of healing and eternal life!

Evans further asked: 'If a revival is needed, the second question I would ask is not less vital and thrilling in its interest—can we have one?' He answered his question with another: 'Why not?' He reminded his hearers that God is not the God of America only. His shower of revival blessings was not exhausted upon America and Canada. His third and final question: 'Will you seek one [revival]?' He challenged his audience to adopt the thinking that 'Holier and higher motives must prompt our actions, and mould our character'. Evans' concluding advice was not to 'force the great work. Let God appear.' It could not be done through human effort. It should not be impeded by pride, selfishness and vanity. For it to be true revival, it must be God's work.

4. The Revival in Other Countries

Ireland

In the Irish town of Ballymena in November, 1856, James McQuilken¹²

¹² *The Ulster Revival of 1859* by William Henry Harding, lists McQuilken's first name as Jeremiah.

accidentally overheard a conversation between two women. The first one had a reputation for discussing predestination. As she steered the conversation toward predestination, the other woman, Mrs Colville of Gateshead, knew about this woman. Colville replied: 'You have never known the Lord Jesus.'¹³ The effect of those words on the first woman is unknown. However, the words strongly convicted McQuilken. He was a professing Christian. Yet, he believed Colville's rebuke applied to him too. After two weeks, he found peace in Christ. Over the next year, James McQuilken studied the Bible and read the writings of the famous prayer warrior, George Müller. McQuilken had also heard of the revival in the United States. All these factors prompted him to ask: 'Why may we not have such a blessed work here, seeing that God did such great things for Mr. Müller, simply in answer to prayer.'¹⁴

McQuilken prayed that God would have him meet with those liked-minded about prayer. Through McQuilken's influence, Jeremiah Meneely became a Christian. These two men along with John Wallace and Robert Carlisle (the 'Kells Four') began to pray together every Friday night at the Kells Antrim

¹³ William Henry Harding, *The Ulster Revival of 1859*, Chapter 1 <<http://www.revival-library.org/index.html?http://www.revival-library.org/catalogues/maincat.htm>> accessed 30 June, 2006.

¹⁴ Arthur T. Pierson, *George Müller of Bristol and His Witness to a Prayer Hearing God*, Chapter 23. *God's Witness To The Work* (Old Tappan: Fleming H. Revell, 1899) <http://www.biblebelievers.com/george_muller/g-m_ch23.html> accessed 13 August, 2006.

Schoolhouse, in the parish of Connor, in the autumn of 1857. At their fellowship meetings, they engaged 'in reading of the Scriptures, prayer, and mutual exhortation'.¹⁵ During this time, the number of local converts grew steadily.

In early 1859, James McQuilken and Jeremiah Meneely conducted prayer meetings at Presbyterian churches in Ahoghill, Ballymena and Belfast. Soon, prayer meetings could not be confined to church buildings. Meetings took place where the people could physically gather. It might be an inside location such as a barn or school. It might be an outside location such as a highway, quarry or open field. The revival spread throughout Ireland. Over the next few years, Ulster, Londonderry, Coleraine, Bellaghy and Ballyclare felt its effects. Prayer meetings would often go on all night. At Belfast's Botanic Garden, twenty thousand had gathered, with Bibles and hymnbooks in hand. A minister at Ballymena recognized an irony. Once, it had been difficult to get people in the church. The difficulty now was in getting them out.

The revival generated a change in Ireland's moral character. In one place after another, people became convicted of their sinfulness. They cried out to Christ for mercy. They rejoiced in the burden of sin lifted from them in Christ. In Broughshane, an individual who had lived a life of alcohol abuse for over fifty years experienced conversion. He testified:

My heavy and enormous sin is all gone, the Lord Jesus took it all

away, and I stand before you this day not as a pattern of profligacy, but a monument of the perfect grace of God. I stand here to tell you that God's work on Calvary is perfect. Yes, I have proved it. His work is perfect.¹⁶

Some Irish clerics challenged the legitimacy of the revival, referring to it as a delusion of Satan. One convert responded that it must then be the work of a new devil as the old devil wouldn't do anything like this. Another convert wryly observed: 'Certainly, it was not Satan who took me away from whiskey drinking.'¹⁷

Wales

News of the American revival was the impetus for many in Wales to pray that God would bring revival to them. Humphrey Jones, a Welsh-born preacher, ministered to Welsh settlers in America. While there, he saw the effects of revival and wanted it for his homeland. Jones returned to his native village of Tre'rddol to begin preaching. He partnered with Calvinistic Methodist minister David Morgan. At first, Morgan did not agree with Jones' direct approach to prayer and the gospel. They agreed that they could not 'do much harm by keeping prayer-meetings'.¹⁸ They started nightly meetings, alternating between the Wes-

16 Harding, *Ulster Revival*, Chapter 2.

17 Harding, *Ulster Revival*, Chapter 2.

18 J. B. Johnston, *The prayer-meeting, and its history: as identified with the life and power of godliness, and the revival of religion* (Pittsburgh: United Presbyterian Board of Publication, 1870), p. 272.

15 Pierson, *Witness*.

leyan and Calvinistic Methodist churches. David Morgan eventually assumed leadership responsibilities. Humphrey Jones had begun prophesying a date-specific visible return of the Holy Spirit and start of the Millennium.¹⁹ Along with a failed prophecy, Jones' preaching regimen damaged his health. Thus, Morgan was forced into a more prominent role in the revival.

News of the revival in America also prompted the Methodist annual assembly of 1858 held in Aberdeen to set aside Sunday, 1 August, 1858 'by all the churches and congregations of our association, to pray unitedly and earnestly for the outpouring of God's Spirit'.²⁰ The weekly prayer meetings became daily in February, 1859. Like the American and Irish revivals, trans-denominational cooperation was a hallmark of the Welsh revival. William Griffiths recorded: 'All religious denominations are cordially united in social prayer-meetings.'²¹ A distinct aspect of the Welsh revival was a loud, sounding forth of praise to God. On the night of 3 September, 1859, a correspondent for the *Welsh Standard* noted: 'After the meetings had passed away, loud praises were heard in the surrounding fields till midnight—one of the most wonderful things we ever witnessed.'²²

Scotland and England

The *Scottish Guardian* in August, 1859

indicated that the winds of revival had reached the Glasgow region. It reported:

The Holy Spirit has been manifesting His gracious power in a remarkable manner in this neighbourhood during the last few days. Our readers are aware that ever since the news of the great revival in America reached Scotland, *prayer-meetings* for the purpose of imploring a similar blessing, have been held in Glasgow, as well as in other places.²³

The United Presbyterian Church reported 25 per cent of their communicants were involved in private prayer meetings.²⁴ During Scotland's Free Church General Assembly of May, 1861, the clergy were polled. Of 169 ministers/probationers polled, 86 reported revival activity. They noted that past revivals were regional. Yet the revival in progress seemed to be spreading throughout Scotland.

The revival which C. H. Spurgeon prayed for arrived in England. He preached on revival several times in those years. He visited Ireland in January, 1860 to witness the revival there. He told his Exeter Hall congregation:

It has been my lot these last six years to preach to crowded congregations, and to see many, many souls brought to Christ; but this

19 Eifon Evans, *Fire in the Thatch* (Bryntirion, Bridgend, Wales: Evangelical Press of Wales, 1996), p. 200.

20 Johnston, *The prayer-meeting*, p. 273.

21 Johnston, *The prayer-meeting*, p. 274.

22 Johnston, *The prayer-meeting*, p. 275.

23 Johnston, *The prayer-meeting*, p. 266.

24 J Edwin Orr, *The Awakening of 1859 in Britain and Elsewhere*. (audio sermon) <<http://www.sermonindex.net/modules/mydownloads/viewcat.php?cid=11&min=60&orderby=titleA&show=20>> accessed 20 July, 2006.

week I have seen what mine eyes have never before beheld, used as I am to extraordinary things...God is about to send times of surprising fertility to his Church.²⁵

Other English ministers and lay persons visited Ireland to study and observe the revival. In London, this led to increased numbers of prayer meetings and instructional meetings to reach the spiritually lost of London. London's experience was similar to New York's regarding the use of buildings for the prayer meetings. Robert Lescelius tells us:

Great crowds gathered for prayer and evangelistic preaching in such places as St. Paul's Cathedral and Westminster Abbey (100,000 aggregate in the latter). Theaters were used to house the crowds, such meetings being convened both by the Church of England and the Free Churches.²⁶

Several English ministers became famous for their role in the revival. William Haslam ministered at St. John's, Hayle during the height of the revival. He was converted by his own 1851 sermon on conversion. It must be remembered that some of the clergy did not support the revival. This caused Haslam's dismissal from his post at Hayle immediately after a successful period of evangelism. His rec-

tor, suspicious of the revival's validity, believed that those converted were 'no [real] churchmen'.²⁷ William Booth preached in Gateshead. He conducted prayer meetings, preached three times each Sunday and four times on weekdays. His chapel, attended by two thousand, developed the nickname: 'The Converting Shop'. Booth also preached at outdoor revival meetings.

Australia

The revival in Australia followed similar patterns to those in the United Kingdom. Religious publications spread the news about the revival. News of the American revival arrived by June 1858. *The Christian Advocate and Wesleyan Record* contained a detailed account of the New York revival. These newspaper reports, as well as personal observations by British immigrants, brought accounts of the American and British revivals to Australia. Though news of the revivals was already six months old, there was a growing sense among the faithful in Australia to ask God to bring revival to their land. As in America, Ireland and Wales, inter-denominational prayer meetings for revival were held in numerous cities across Australia.²⁸

Though the call for revival crossed

25 Charles Spurgeon, *A Revival Sermon*, 26 January, 1860. <<http://www.spurgeon.org/sermons/0296.htm>> accessed 20 July, 2006.

26 Robert Lescelius, *Spurgeon and Revival* <http://theresurgence.com/robert_lescelius_1994-04_spurgeon_and_revival> accessed 4 August, 2006.

27 William Haslam, *From Death Unto Life*, <<http://www.gutenberg.org/files/14578/14578.txt>> accessed on 25 July, 2006.

28 Robert Evans, *Early Evangelical Revivals in Australia* (Open Book: Adelaide, 2001). <<http://www.chr.org.au/fpbooks/Early%20Evangelical%20Revivals%20in%20%20Australia/Early%20Evangelicals%20Revivals%20in%20Australia%201%20to%205.doc>> accessed 22 July, 2006.

denominational lines, the infrastructure of the Methodist 'circuits' played a large role in how the prayer meetings were conducted. Unlike the United States, where the prayer meetings quickly outgrew the church buildings, Australian prayer meetings were typically held in churches. Some were held in other facilities, such as school rooms and meeting halls of organizations such as the Young Men's Christian Association.

Revivals occurred in a number of locations across Australia. Newtown, Sydney, Botany Bay, Parramatta, Windsor, the Turon Gold Fields and the Manning River were only a handful of the locations which experienced revival. Not all aspects of the revival in Australia were documented in the newspapers of the time, either secular or religious. The situation was similar to the chronicling of the American revivals. Contemporary accounts found in the major New York newspapers as well as books such as Samuel Prime's *The Power of Prayer*, became the publicly-known 'de-facto' history of the movement. It eventually became clear that other accounts and perspectives of the revivals were preserved in media such as personal journals. Kathryn Long points to this in referring to the historical glimpses which come 'from diaries, memoirs, and other accounts'.²⁹ Gaps in reporting did exist. *The Christian Advocate and Wesleyan Record*, was not published between January 1862 and March 1864, leaving

a void of over two years in their record of the revival.

In the Australian revivals, the clergy played a larger role than in America or Ireland. John Watsford preached in revival services before 1859. So did Tom Brown, a former prize fighter who experienced his own revival after a post-conversion struggle with alcohol. William 'California' Taylor preached revival services across Australia during the 1860s (Taylor was from the California Circuit which earned him his nickname). In the course of preaching along a circuit, Taylor was known to stay in one location for extended periods, an innovation on John Wesley's approach of preaching only once or twice at a location.

The revival spread to other areas as well. Historical records indicate signs of awakening in Germany, Norway, Sweden, India, Jamaica and South Africa. Paris was the sight of a revival which started among its English-speaking residents.³⁰ The South African revivals involved Andrew Murray, who would go on to greater recognition in the Holiness Movement, as well as 'California' Taylor (who had preached in the Australian revival).

5. A Quieter Revival Led by Clergy and Laity

The Third Great Awakening reflected a large degree of lay leadership. Jeremiah Lanphier was a lay missionary. James McQuilken, the Kells Four and Phoebe Palmer were lay leaders. Despite resistance from some of the

29 Kathryn Teresa Long, *The Revival of 1857-58: Interpreting an American Religious Awakening* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), p. 46.

30 Johnston, *The prayer-meeting*, pp. 280-281.

clergy (i.e. Roman Catholic in Ireland, high-church Anglican clergy in England), there was remarkable cooperation between clergy and laity during this revival. Lay persons were often prayer meeting leaders. Ministers would often preach at the prayer meetings. The large number of people involved required this level of cooperation. The Irish clergy, for example, relied on the help of the laity as the number of people seeking salvation in Christ was in the thousands.

Another feature of the revivals was their quiet demeanour. In Ireland, there were those who openly cried out to God as they became convinced of their sinfulness. Sorrow for their sin stopped them in their tracks. When Jonathan Edwards gave his famous sermon, 'Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God', a similar reaction was observed. During that service in July, 1741, there were loud cries to God by those begging his mercy and forgiveness.

However, the 1740s American revival and several others in American history (i.e. Cane Ridge in 1801, Brownsville in 1995) had those who manifested barking, roaring and uncontrolled laughter. These phenomena were absent from the 1857 revivals. *The New York Times* reported: 'All this great movement goes on moreover quietly; there is but little nervous excitement or extravagance so far as we have heard.'³¹

Two unusual incidents in Australia will be examined here. One may reflect a level of fanaticism. The other may bear the mark of the supernatural.

Robert Evans noted:

During the revival which took place at Jerriwa Creek in the year 1858, or '59, there was considerable excitement and more noise than commended itself to some critics. In defence of these manifestations of the Holy Spirit's workings, he [revival preacher Old Tom Brown] preached a memorable sermon on 'The Valley of the Dry Bones'. His text was Ezekiel 37:7. He said in effect, where there is life there will be noise, and so when the breath of God's Spirit moved upon the slain, and bone came to his bone, there was clattering and noise enough; and so, when the Spirit of the Lord moves upon men who are spiritually dead, and arouses them to a new life, there will be some noise and outward manifestations of the new life within.³²

The other incident concerned a dream of Mrs McDonald of Sydney. She prayed and fasted for a revival in Sydney. In a dream, she saw a messenger from God riding above the city in a chariot without horses. He was 'sowing seed broadcast, and proclaiming in the name of the Lord'.³³ In her dream, she was careful to remember the messenger's face. She believed that this would be the man God was sending in response to her prayer. She later recounted this to 'California' Taylor, when he came to York Street Wesleyan Church. She said: 'As soon as I entered the door and saw you standing by the pulpit I recognised you at a glance as

31 *New York Times*, 20 March, 1858, p. 4.

32 R. Evans, *Revivals in Australia*.

33 R. Evans, *Revivals in Australia*.

the man I had seen in the Gospel chariot three months ago.'³⁴

6. Christian Unity and Expansion

This set of revivals was marked by strong unity of Christian believers in the arranging and organizing of the prayer meetings. The demonstration of unity was primarily among the Protestant groups. Yet, the working together of Methodists (Wesleyan and Calvinist), Presbyterians, Baptists and others in these revivals was evidence that more than human ingenuity was at work. Such unity was seen as evidence of the Holy Spirit's influence. Denominational differences were not ignored or obliterated. Often, compromises were arranged to continue a prayer meeting (i.e. the alternating control of some London prayer meetings by Anglican and Free Church clergy). Denominational differences were considered important but secondary to the purpose of seeking God's face in prayer.

One might expect the model of the revival's spread to be like a lightning strike in a forest. In this model, a single bolt sets one tree ablaze with surrounding trees catching fire afterward. Such a model accounts for some but not all of the aspects of the 1857 revivals. While there is a definite spread of the revival from the Fulton Street meetings in New York, the foundations for the other revivals were already being laid. In some cases, revivals had occurred shortly before (i.e. Australian revivals in 1854-1857)

or happened simultaneously and independent of Fulton Street. The Canadian revivals in Toronto and Hamilton led by the Palmers in the summer and autumn of 1857 were independent of the New York revival. There were calls to prayer for revival in Ireland as early as 1855. The Fulton Street revival was a catalyst for the revivals which happened across the world. History is clear that God had already prepared other nations for revival by calls to prayer or through local revivals.

7. Technology and the Media

The technology of the 1850s played a major role in the spread of the revival. The telegraph, already in use for over a decade, allowed news of the revival to travel at the speed of electrons through a copper wire. In the United States, news items concerning revival events in New York or Philadelphia were relayed to cities further west via the telegraph, possibly on the same day they occurred. Those holding prayer meetings at Philadelphia's Jayne's Hall and those holding meetings in three New York City locations were in daily telegraphic communication to keep each other informed of the news of the revival.³⁵

The impact of the telegraph on Christianity in America was enormous. The widespread use of the Internet and electronic mail during the 1990s provides some degree of contemporary comparison. The telegraph's perceived potential for real-time communication across vast distances was understood in millennial terms. In 1850, a writer

34 R. Evans, *Revivals in Australia*.

35 *New York Times*, 20 March, 1858, p. 5.

for a women's Methodist magazine said:

This noble invention is to be the means of extending civilization, republicanism and Christianity over the earth... Then will wrong and injustice be forever banished. Every yoke shall be broken, and the oppressed go free... Then shall come to pass the millennium³⁶

In 1858, Trans-Atlantic telegraph service was about to begin. The potential for real-time communication across the Atlantic Ocean was mind-boggling. In August, cable operations began. They included congratulatory greetings between Queen Victoria and U.S. President James Buchanan. When news of the start of Trans-Atlantic telegraph service reached an assembly at Andover Seminary, a chorus was sung: 'Jesus shall reign where e'er the sun.'³⁷ Unfortunately, the potential of the Trans-Atlantic telegraph to spread news of the revival was short-lived. The cable overloaded and stopped working less than a month later.

Newspapers were another means by which revival information spread. Numerous American newspapers covered the revivals. The New York papers started their coverage in February, 1858. While the secular newspapers aided the spread of the revival in the United States, they were not the earliest catalysts. Thousands were already attending noon prayer meetings in New York before any of the city's major

newspapers began coverage. Religious newspapers assisted the spread of the revival too. These publications not only helped to inform other Christians of the revivals but also inspired them to pray that similar graces would be visited upon them. They also served to provide patterns of how the organization of prayer meetings could be imitated.

Technology played a role in how the news of revival crossed the oceans. With the rise of the steamship, passage across the Atlantic could be made in less than two weeks. It no longer took three or more months when ships depended on winds and current to make the same passage. The news of revival was still fresh when it reached the other shore.

Lastly, the news spread from person to person. The history of these revivals is replete with accounts of those who attended prayer meetings in one city and transferred that news and desire to another city or country (i.e. Humphrey Jones). The revival movement was regarded at the time as a type of 19th century Pentecost.³⁸ In the Pentecost account of Acts 2, Jewish pilgrims visiting Jerusalem heard the gospel and carried it to the reaches of the Roman Empire. In the same way, over eighteen centuries later, the gospel of Christ and revival were also carried to the nations by personal contact.

8. Lasting Effects

The Third Great Awakening had many enduring effects. Church membership dramatically increased, especially in

36 James H. Moorhead, *The Millennium and the Media*, found in *Communication and Change in American Religious History* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1993), p. 222.

37 Moorhead, *Media*, p. 222.

38 Johnston, *The prayer-meeting*, p. 274.

the United States.³⁹ The Holiness Movement, birthed before the 1857 revivals, played a significant role in those revivals and did so well into the 19th century. Phoebe Palmer, who led the Canadian revivals of 1857 also preached in the British Isles in 1859. The Holiness Movement spread throughout America and into Britain. The Keswick Movement, established in 1875, was a British development of the Holiness Movement. Its stated purpose was to be a 'Convention for the Promotion of Practical Holiness'.⁴⁰

Many of those who preached during the revivals continued to make an impact on the world. Andrew Murray, who preached in the South African revival, became a part of the Keswick Movement. William Booth, who preached in the English revival, founded the Salvation Army in 1878. Dwight L. Moody, who began his preaching career during the American revivals, continued to evangelize throughout the United States, Canada, England, Scotland and Ireland to the end of the 19th century.

9. Prayer Revivals of the Past

A call to prayer, as well as ongoing prayer itself, has often preceded numerous occurrences of God-given revival. Robert Evans observes: 'There is one great lesson which the revivals of the past seem to teach us all. It is this, that a spirit of expectation and desire has often preceded a great out-

pouring of the Spirit of God.'⁴¹

In 1723, Herrnhut was founded where the borders of current day Germany, Poland and the Czech Republic converge. Herrnhut, (German for 'The Watch of the Lord'), provided a haven for outcast evangelical believers to practise their faith unhindered by political impediments. In late August, 1727, 24 men and 24 women of Herrnhut covenanted to maintain an 'hourly intercession' in which prayer would be offered during every hour of the day. They understood their prayers as an offering rising to the Lord on an altar whose fire should not go out.⁴² The number of those involved in hourly intercessions grew. These prayers continued for over a century.

Within fifteen years, Herrnhut sent missionaries to North America, Turkey, the Virgin Islands and other sites at a time when Protestant missions had not fully begun. The calm of their missionaries in the midst of a storm during an ocean voyage attracted John Wesley's attention. Their theology and practice were instrumental in changing Wesley into the powerful preacher who ministered to England as a circuit rider for the next fifty years.

10. The Call for Revivals in 1857 and in the Present

Prior to the Fulton Street Revival in New York, there were calls for awakening among the Baptist and

39 Long, *Revival of 1857*, pp. 144-150.

40 J. Robertson McQuilken, 'The Keswick Perspective' found in *Five Views of Sanctification* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1987), p. 153.

41 R. Evans, *Revivals in Australia*.

42 The Herrnhut community view Leviticus 6:8-13 as a biblical pattern for such round the clock prayer.

Methodist clergy in America. During a revival which occurred in mid 1857, the congregation of Anson Street Presbyterian Church of Charleston, South Carolina prayed for spiritual awakening. The Presbyterian Church in the United States of America recorded in the minutes of their 1857 General Assembly:

This longing for revivals we cannot but consider a cheering indication of the noblest life. Next to a state of actual revival is the sense of its need, and the struggle to attain it at any sacrifice of treasure, toil, or time. We trust that the period is not distant, when this state of actual, general, glorious revival shall be ours.⁴³

Dr. A. T. Pierson's words apply here: 'There has never been a spiritual awakening in any country or locality that did not begin in united prayer.'⁴⁴

In our time, similar calls to prayer have been issued. In the United States, organizations such as Intercessors for America have been rallying Christians in America to pray for revival as well as providing information about key individuals and events needing prayer. In England, the London Prayer Net <<http://www.londonprayer.net/>> uses the Internet to coordinate round the clock prayer for the city of London. A

third instance is that of the 24/7 Prayer Movement. Its origins in England in 1999 have been chronicled in *Red Moon Rising*. This movement is linked by print literature and the Internet <<http://www.24-7prayer.com/>>. It promotes the development of 24/7 Prayer Rooms with the understanding that 'when thousands of people all over the world spontaneously develop such a longing for God's presence that they will rise in the night and sacrifice food, such a hunger comes from God alone'.⁴⁵

The revivals of the Third Great Awakening as well as other known revivals in church history are more than items for mere historical or theological study. In the late 1850s, those who heard about the revivals did not respond with indifference. They desired that God would grant them the same blessing. As we read these accounts, may our attitudes toward this subject be more than merely historical or theological. He who was God in 1857 is also God in 2007. May we pray that in our time and our nations God would visit us in revival as he did our ancestors of one-hundred fifty years ago. The world has changed dramatically in one-hundred fifty years. The human need to know and relate to God in prayer has not. 'Will you not revive us again, that your people may rejoice in you? Show us your unfailing love, O LORD, and grant us your salvation.'⁴⁶

43 *Minutes of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of the United States of America* (New York: Presbyterian Church of the United States of America, 1857), p. 418.

44 J. Edwin Orr, 'Prayer and Revival' in *Renewal Journal* #1 (Brisbane, Australia: Christian Heritage College, 1993), p. 13.

45 Pete Greig & Dave Roberts, *Red Moon Rising* (Lake Mary, Florida: Relevant Books, 2003), p. 251.

46 Ps. 85:6-7 NIV.