

The Secret Ingredient Behind Every Revival

Every revival starts with a turning to or a return back to the power of the Holy Spirit. In the 1900s on Azusa Street, there were many churches but very little presence of the Holy Spirit. However, in Topeka, Kansas, at that time, the leader of a small Bible school approached 40 students and challenged them, "You have one week to find the Bible evidence of being filled with the Holy Spirit."

They began searching out words, studying the Bible and at the end of the week all 40 came to the same conclusion. According to the Bible, speaking with tongues was the evidence of being filled with the Holy Spirit.

After the students shared their findings with the leader of the school, he asked them, "Do you speak with tongues?" They responded, "No." He then asked them, "Do you think it's still for today?" They answered, "From what we've studied, it is. There's no time limit on it." He then asked them, "Do you want to be filled with the Spirit?"

They did, and those 40 students were filled with the Holy Spirit and a revival broke out in that school in Topeka, Kansas. It grew so much, people began traveling from Texas and other places to be touched by the revival taking place in Kansas.

A man from Houston traveled to Kansas to learn about the Holy Spirit and what was happening. He returned to his home church, preached about the infilling of the Holy Spirit, and revival began in Houston.

While he was there, a minister from Los Angeles was visiting, heard it and was filled. He went back to his church in LA at Azusa and revival broke out in California. We often refer to

the Azusa Revival, but it began in Topeka. Many Pentecostal denominations came from that revival. Many decades later the healing revivals of the '40s broke out.

Between the 1900s and the 1940s there was a great departure from the Holy Spirit. Typically this departure begins when Christians become embarrassed about the manifestation of tongues or the gifts of the Holy Spirit. They are hesitant to invite visitors because they are afraid the usual sister will speak in tongues and then the brother who usually screams out the interpretation will do it. They are embarrassed about the Holy Spirit, the third member of the Godhead, who moves supernaturally in our church.

The Power Behind Evangelism

The purpose of the gifts of the Spirit, and especially being filled with the Spirit, is power for evangelism. The Bible says speaking with tongues can cause the sinner to say, "Of a truth, God is in this place!"

What some Christians feel is embarrassing about the manifestation of the Holy Spirit is the very power of God that draws people in. "You shall receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you. And you shall be My witnesses in Jerusalem" (Acts 1:8). The ultimate purpose of speaking in other tongues is to bring us into God's power to lead people to Jesus; the main purpose of the Holy Spirit is to empower evangelism.

Around the world the churches where the greatest number of people are being drawn and receiving Jesus Christ have Christians who speak with tongues and believe in the power of God, the 24 gifts of the Spirit and healing. The point in time at which revival begins to diminish is when Christians begin leaving the truth of the baptism in the Holy Spirit, slow at first but increasingly over time. When an individual or group of believers then becomes hungry for the Spirit again, revival is not far away.

Today, our more liberal churches have taken us further and further away from the Holy Spirit. I believe the spiritual atmosphere in our nation is similar to what it was in the early 1900s before the healing revivals of the 1940s. The same atmosphere was present before the charismatic movement of the late 1960s and 1970s.

No two revivals are the same. Yet all of them began the same, as believers turned to and returned to the baptism of the Holy Spirit and the power of God for the supernatural. {eo}

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Adapted from Bob Yandian's article, "The Anatomy of Revival."