

When God Moves, We Must Seize the Moment

I began hearing about the “Pensacola Outpouring” (or, “Brownsville Revival”) several months after it began in June, 1995. Shortly after that, I read an article about the revival in Charisma magazine which quoted evangelist Steve Hill, whom I had known through the saintly revivalist and intercessor Leonard Ravenhill (1907-1994). Steve was asked why he cancelled his preaching engagements around the world to devote himself exclusively to the outpouring in Pensacola. He replied, “The opportunity of a lifetime must be seized during the lifetime of the opportunity.”

This was something I understood well. When real revival finally comes—maybe once in a generation, once in a lifetime, once in a century or once in a millennium, you cannot let it go. You must dive in with both feet and give it your all. You may never have the chance again.

This was something Steve also understood. And so, when the fire of God fell suddenly on Father’s Day of 1995 at the Brownsville Assembly of God and it was clear that revival was breaking out, Steve stayed on for one week, for two weeks, for one month, for two months—ultimately for *five years*.

Still, there was something that intrigued me about Steve’s quote: it sounded like Leonard Ravenhill, best known as the author of “Why Revival Tarries,” a book filled with pithy sayings.

Both Steve and I had the privilege of getting very close to Bro. Len in the last years of his life, and both of us committed to memory some of his little slogans and epigrams, such as, “The man who is intimate with God will never be intimidated by man,” or, “Are the things you are living for

worth Christ dying for?" Still, I had never heard Len say, "The opportunity of a lifetime must be seized during the lifetime of the opportunity."

When Steve and I finally talked by phone in January of 1996, he told me that these were, in fact, Bro. Len's words, spoken to Steve just a few weeks before Len had a serious stroke in September of 1994, from which he never regained consciousness. (He passed away in November of 1994 at the age of 87.)

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Those words stayed with Steve, making a deep imprint on his soul to the point that when the revival began in Pensacola, he knew that *now* was the time to seize that potentially once-in-a-lifetime opportunity. Tomorrow might be too late!

But Steve was not the only one who felt that way. Pastor John Kilpatrick, along with the rest of the church leadership and most of the congregation, also recognized that something sacred was happening. Normal life for the church came to a temporary halt. Revival was in full gear!

How else could services last for five to eight hours every night? How else could people sometimes get home from the evening meeting *as the sun was rising*? (It was early summer when the Spirit fell, so kids were out of school.) How else could the same worship team and the same workers and the same preacher be there to minister week in and week out, night after night, unless a total commitment had been made to revival? Obviously, the outpouring would have come to a premature end if the church had not seized this sacred opportunity while it presented itself.

Yet so often we fail to realize just how sacred the opportunity is. We fail to guard the flame! (See Lev. 6.) We fail to realize how exceedingly precious a supernatural

outpouring really is. We don't grasp how rare and priceless a "sovereign move of God" can be.

How important it is to remember that it's easier to keep a fire burning than to start one from scratch, easier to keep a car moving than to start one that has stalled, easier to keep a rocket in flight than to send one skyward. Revival doesn't just come and go and then come again like waves beating on the seashore. It must be seized while it is near. It may not come again. This is a sobering truth.

So, when God breaks out in your midst in a special way—in a prayer meeting, in a Sunday morning service, in a youth rally—go with Him. Spread your sails high and wide, and let the wind of the Spirit carry you away. And sail on, as long as the wind keeps blowing. It may not gust up again!

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And even if, in the early days of a fresh outpouring, that unusual stirring "interrupts" your service for a matter of a few minutes, let the Spirit know that He is welcome and put other things aside while He is stirring the waters. If we prove faithful in little, we will be entrusted with much.

In the front office of our school of ministry in Pensacola the words of Leonard Ravenhill were inscribed: "The opportunity of a lifetime must be seized during the lifetime of the opportunity."

This motto fueled our fires every day. We were determined not to let this season pass by without getting everything out of it that our heavenly Father had planned. The famine had been great in the land. Now that the rain was falling, we needed to prepare the ground, sow our seed and give ourselves to the harvest. If we didn't, we had only ourselves to blame. We knew that it may not be raining tomorrow.

Because of this, by God's grace and help, a world missions

movement was birthed out of the revival, one that continues strong more than 25 years later. We were able to seize the moment.

That's why, today, as we are in the early stages of a fresh spiritual outpouring in many parts of the nation, we have released the book that I started to write while serving on the leadership team of the Brownsville Revival. It is titled "Seize the Moment: How to Fuel the Fires of Revival," from which I excerpted much of this article here.

Not only does the book urge us to seize this sacred moment when it comes, but it also lays out key principles that will help us deepen and sustain what the Lord is doing, to work with Him rather than against Him when He comes in power.

May we all experience a fresh outpouring of the Spirit in these critical times in which we live!

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Dr. Michael Brown () is the host of the nationally syndicated Line of Fire radio program. His latest book is "Seize the Moment: How to Fuel the Fires of Revival." Connect with him on Facebook, Twitter or YouTube.