

Where Is Global Revival Headed?

In the early 1990s, after months of praying and fasting, St. Louis pastor Randy Clark was touched deeply by the Holy Spirit. Soon afterward, on Jan. 20, 1994, he began the first session of a planned four-day retreat at the Toronto Airport Vineyard, where he'd been invited to speak by the church's pastors, John and Carol Arnott. During that first meeting, the small storefront church exploded with a dramatic outpouring of the Holy Spirit and almost overnight was transformed into ground zero for the revival now well-known as the Toronto Blessing.

Today Clark continues his ministry as a speaker and tenacious healing minister known for dedicating sometimes hours of prayer to one person. Yet the revival fires he witnessed in Toronto 18 years ago continue to spread across the world. As part of our ongoing series highlighting the "12 Communities of Charisma," we asked Clark to speak on behalf of the revivalist community about what this move of the Holy Spirit means for the church today.

I am often asked the question, "Where do you believe the current revival is going?" I will respond to the question first with a general answer, then discuss one key aspect of my answer.

In general, I believe the revival is going to MEET HIM. This is an acronym for the current move of the Holy Spirit. God is touching **M**issions, **E**cumenism, **E**schatology, **T**heology, **H**oliness, **I**ntercession and **M**ercy Ministry. Let's look briefly at each of these components.

Missions. From the beginning, the Holy Spirit's outpouring in Toronto in 1994 and the subsequent revival that spread from it

have had a strong missions focus. Like the Azusa Street Revival did, the Toronto Blessing has had a major impact on missions.

I made missions one of the four main teachings of my ministry during the Toronto outpouring. The first week in Toronto, when I heard the song “Let Your Glory Fall”—especially the phrase, “Let it go forth from here to the nations”—I knew what God was doing there would be connected to spreading the gospel globally.

Ecumenism. I believe that the ecumenical movement in the body of Christ is very important to God. This is revealed in Jesus’ prayer in John 17:20-23, that His church would be one. Oddly, revival brings division; but the divisiveness is caused by human rejection of God’s season of visitation. The Holy Spirit isn’t the cause of the division. He wants revival and unity. This unity comes when the Holy Spirit reveals the Father’s heart to His people—a heart to see more love and grace among His children for one another. The Spirit leads us to cross our denominational lines with love and humility.

Eschatology. This study of last things is also important to revival. I believe we are going to see a turning from a doom-and-gloom view of the end times, in which we expect the church to be lukewarm, to an end-times view of hope, purpose, victory and great revival. I believe we will move into a more biblical view that is based on understanding that the kingdom of God is ever-increasing and ever-expanding. This characteristic of the kingdom is seen in Jesus’ parables in Matthew 13: the mustard seed growing and the yeast affecting the entire lump of dough.

Theology. I agree with missionary Rolland Baker, who believes that revivals are hindered by bad theology, and good theology is important to revival. Baker and his wife, Heidi, lead Iris Ministries in Mozambique and see great healings and miracles there. Since being touched by God in Toronto during the revival there, they have led about 1 million people to the

Lord. They have started 10,000 churches, have compiled testimonies from about 450 people who've been raised from the dead, and are affecting their culture as they minister to the poor, the orphans and the widows.

Theologically, they have reconnected the gospel in Mozambique. It was separated by a Modernist-Fundamentalist split over the evangelistic emphasis on leading people to salvation and the social emphasis on ministering to the poor.

The Bakers conduct their ministry on the basis of faith and model it after the ministry of Rolland's grandfather, H.A. Baker, who patterned his ministry after that of George Müller, the English evangelist known in part for his faith and reliance on God to provide for thousands of orphans under his care.

Rolland and Heidi don't appeal for help or communicate their needs publicly. They instead trust God by faith and pray for their needs to be met. They even believe God for the supply required to feed 10,000 children a day through their ministry.

The miracles, healings and resurrections that occur in their ministry, combined with their service of compassion, open the hearts of the indigenous people. Currently, their ministry is focused on the Macoua tribe of 2 million, who resisted gospel outreach for years and were listed as an unreachable people group. Now in almost every village in Mozambique, including those of the Macoua tribe, there is an Iris church.

As the Bakers' ministry illustrates so well, we must more clearly articulate in this current move of God that the issues of revival are not peripheral but central to the biblical message. I believe the move of God must deepen its theological roots.

Holiness. This is God's original intention for making a man and a woman in His image. I believe that His plan wasn't limited to giving mankind a legal position, or only "imputed"

righteousness or holiness. I believe it was meant to be experiential righteousness and holiness. The revival led by John Wesley was strongly related to this emphasis, and we need a restoration of this truth in revival today.

Intercession. Prayer was a major focus in the church during the 1980s and 1990s. There were massive prayer movements and calls to 40-day fasts. The emphasis on prayer launched by Mike Bickle in May 1999 at the International House of Prayer in Kansas City, Mo.—which continues today—has been part of the Spirit's working to prepare the ground for His outpouring.

Mercy Ministry. These are works of compassion, and they express God's heart for people. Revival is about renewing our first love for God, and when that happens to us our hearts beat in unison with His. His heart beats for the poor, the oppressed, the forgotten, the unseen and the marginalized. In fact, revivals often have started among the poor.

The Value of a Good Education

Now I want to look more closely at one of the directions the current global revival is taking. It involves theology—or more precisely, theological education.

I believe that one obstacle to revival is inadequate theological education. Liberalism, cessationism and dispensationalism all hinder revival. Why? Because they cause people not to expect revival, not to believe in the power of God and the gifts of God that often reoccur in periods of revival, and to focus on escaping the world rather than having an impact on it.

Inadequate theology in the form of dispensationalism was one of the major flaws that had a negative impact upon those who were saved during the Jesus Movement of the late 1960s and early 1970s. We were taught a theology of defeat rather than victory. We were more focused on the Antichrist than the mission of Christ.

No one taught on influencing the seven mountains of culture (Church, Business, Government, Media, Education, Arts and Entertainment, Family) as is happening today. No, instead we rejected culture and were waiting to be taken from this world that was in such a mess.

God can use theological education to prepare His church for a new reformation or for a new revival. More than once, revivals have come as a result of a rediscovery of biblical truth. I believe we'll see more unity as well as more openness to God's Spirit as a result of both new biblical studies and the insights gained from historical theology.

Studies based on how the Scriptures emphasize key biblical terms are helping the church rediscover the role of the kingdom of God in the New Testament. It's hard to believe how we missed the main emphases of the Bible for so many years.

For example, the word *faith* has traditionally been understood as "believing the correct doctrinal positions about Jesus." He is the incarnation of God; in Him is the fullness of God; He is the second person of the Trinity; He died for our sins; He was raised from the dead, glorified, ascended to heaven and lives to intercede for us. I believe all these things. I believe they are important.

However, in the Bible these things are not the emphasis of the word *faith*. Instead, faith as Scripture emphasizes it is most often understood as "receiving a word of revelation from God, believing the word that calls for some act of obedience, and persevering in obedience to the word even when it is challenged by trials and tribulations."

This emphasis on faith is seldom taught in our theological education.

The Bible's Role in Revival

When asked how "emphasis" is determined in theology, Jon

Ruthven, professor emeritus of systematic and practical theology at Regent University, gives us an answer in his forthcoming book, *What's Wrong With Protestant Theology*. He explains that "the central *emphasis* of Scripture involves the *process* of the (prophetic) 'word' of God coming to mankind, directly and immediately into his heart."

"The central point," he writes, "is that Protestant theology, with its *emphasis* on 'salvation,' emphasizing repentance and baptism, suggests a *theology of preparation*. But 'preparation' for what?

"By contrast, the Bible emphasizes *the goal of the Christian life*. ... We agree that the ultimate goal is intimacy and relationship with God, but what is ignored—even denied—in traditional theology is *the process* (direct, immediate, prophetic communication with God) of getting there.

"The real message and goal of the Bible, then, centrally includes *the process of the Spirit of God revealing God's will (instruction/wisdom) directly into one's heart*. In other words, *the reception or immersion into the Holy Spirit, whose main purpose is to reveal and empower*. This is given for the *ultimate goal* of intimacy with God himself and his glory.

"Protestant theology primarily *prepares* us for this gift of the Spirit of prophecy and revelation—a theology that *essentially stops at the first half of the message of John the Baptist* (the preparation of repentance and baptism, based on the sacrifice of Christ, the 'Lamb of God').

"Beyond that, Protestant theology effectively *denies* John's explicit, central New Testament mission of Jesus: 'He will baptize you in the Holy Spirit' (a concept tightly correlated with prophecy and spiritual gifts), since in Protestantism, the only role for the Spirit *now* is to enhance the stages of the *ordo salutis*—preparation for heaven."

When we return to the Bible and study its emphasis, instead of

developing doctrine by looking for proof texts to prove what we have already developed as a doctrine, then we will truly be standing on *sola scriptura*—which means “by Scripture alone” and is the firm belief that the Bible contains all knowledge necessary for salvation and holiness.

I believe this focus on biblical emphasis is important to building unity within the church among its various denominations; it will provide a platform for constructing a greater unity among believers.

This is also where historical theology can be helpful: Through it we can understand the historical context of a doctrinal position that has much more to do with the doctrine itself than the scriptural basis upon which the doctrine is *supposed* to be based. This approach helps us divest ourselves of biblical interpretations that have come from historical conflicts in the church and let the Bible’s own emphasis dictate doctrine.

This approach, which is truly *sola scriptura*, will help us differentiate between the most important doctrines and the ones that, biblically speaking, do not have a biblical emphasis. I believe we can find unity by rediscovering the unifying emphasis of the Bible.

Why is this important? Because greater unity will bring greater anointing of God’s presence, and His presence is characteristic of periods of revival. It is the authority of the Bible *and its emphasis* that most of the church is willing to submit to, and thereby find a basis for unity and understanding instead of division and accusation.

To summarize: Revival will be more powerful, have more impact and last longer when the church is emphasizing what the Bible emphasizes; and where the church is walking in greater unity it will also experience greater power.

Therefore, let us pursue His truth in His love, and let us

walk in faith, power and love as we learn to listen to His Spirit and His Word as recorded in the Bible. Rediscovering the biblical emphasis will help us focus on the other aspects needed to release and sustain revival.

I believe God is leading us to MEET HIM—in Missions, Ecumenism, Eschatology, Theology, Holiness, Intercession, and Mercy Ministry.

*Since his life-changing night in Toronto on Jan. 20, 1994, **Randy Clark** has traveled to more than 40 countries to fulfill God's mandate for him to teach others what God has taught him about revival. He's a co-author of "The Essential Guide to Healing" as well as "Power, Holiness and Evangelism" and numerous other books. He lives in Mechanicsburg, Pa., with his wife, DeAnne, and they have four children.*