

The 1857-1862 Revival

When God comes

Compiled by Bennie Mostert

Jericho Walls Publication

Order from:



Jericho Walls International Prayer Network
Private bag X22
Lynnwood Ridge
0040
South Africa

Tel.: +27 12 365 3213

Fax: +27 12 365 3214

E-mail: info@jwipn.com

Website: www.jwipn.com

Introduction

2010 marks the 150th anniversary of the 1857-1861 revival in South Africa. Over the past couple of years I have become aware of the fact that very few people know about this revival. It was for instance through this revival, among other things, that in 1867, the Dutch Reformed Church introduced their yearly 10 days of prayer leading up to Pentecost. The revival started in 1860 in Montagu and spread to Worcester, Paarl, Wellington and many other places in our country. The first stirrings of revival were already felt in 1857 in KwaZulu-Natal and became noticeable among the Xhosas in 1858-1859 in the Eastern Cape, but its full power was only experienced countrywide in 1860.

When one reads the story of the 1857-1862 revival, one sees the power of revival. It simply sweeps all godlessness out of the way. We see God at work in His omnipotence. We see the Holy Spirit wiping everything out of His way like a wind-storm (Ex.14:21; 15:10). We see that God's fury will fall on His enemies and they will be driven away by His Spirit who will come like a flood tide (Isa.59:18-19).

Two of the greatest misconceptions around revival are (1) that revival concerns *only* the salvation of people and (2) that it is something that happens in the church but makes precious little difference in the community outside. Fact is that every revival, also the 1857-1862 revival, had an enormous social impact. For instance, few people know that in many countries schools and universities were established as a direct result of this revival. The thousands of missionaries who went out to the unreached followed a holistic approach towards mission work. Consequently, wherever they went, they started hospitals and schools, promoted agriculture and even contributed towards public administration. People who were touched by the revival started addressing every form of human need in their communities; feeding schemes were started for the needy, housing was provided for the homeless and unmarried mothers; rehabilitation centres for alcoholics and prostitutes, orphanages and psychiatric institutions were established, and societies for the protection of animals were founded. The rights of workers were negotiated and

slave trade was counteracted by legislation. In many cases Christians initiated legislation to have child labour declared illegal, to protect juvenile delinquents and also various others forms of legislation for the restriction of different forms of violence and exploitation of people who were powerless to fight for themselves.

It is generally accepted that New York is the place where the 1857-1862 worldwide revival began. The *Laymen's Prayer Revival* or *The Fourth Great Awakening* started in New York in 1857 and spread all over the world to many countries, also South Africa. Many descriptions are given of the revival in New York, Wales, Ireland and Scotland. What God did in South Africa in 1860 was against the backdrop of this revival.

The information in this book is compiled and adapted from the books listed in the Bibliography at the end. Books written on these revivals mostly make use of the same basic sources. I lay no claim to original research.

Most importantly: don't read this book like an interesting piece of church history – there is a very important question that each of us needs to ask ourselves, namely: Can God do it again? Can God give revival in South Africa again, or has His power diminished? Or, as someone put it: Where is the God of Elijah? The answer to this question is obvious. To this day, God is where He has always been: On the throne. Hear what the Spirit is saying to *you*.

Chapter 1

New York 1857-1858

The 1857-1858 revival was one of the biggest revivals in American history. Some call it the *Fourth Great Awakening* of America. Others refer to it as the *Laymen's Prayer Revival* because many of its leaders were ordinary church members and businessmen.

The condition of America in 1857

After the Second and Third Great Awakening (revival periods) in the USA (1789-1835), the spiritual condition of the church deteriorated drastically. Church attendance continued to decrease steadily and the number of conversions kept on dwindling.

Just prior to the start of the revival in 1857-1858, there was a collapse of the banking system in America that also spread to Europe. Due to the long, hard winter of 1856-1857, transportation and trade transactions were delayed. The spring of 1857 brought some relief, but by the end of summer, businesses had begun to collapse. People started panicking when the Ohio Life Insurance and Trust Company of Cincinnati, as well as a branch in New York City closed down just before September 1857. Many banks did not do any business at all, including eighteen of New York City's leading banks. On 14 October, 1857, the extensive banking system of the United States collapsed, which led to the financial ruin of hundreds of thousands of people in New York, Philadelphia, Boston and the industrial areas of America. Mass hysteria followed and caused rich people to go broke literally overnight. Suicide and murder increased. Demoralised and destitute people roamed the streets of the cities.

Historian, James Edwin Orr summarised the state of America as follows:

1. Gain, gambling and greed were rampant. There was spectacular wealth, but also misery and utter poverty at the other end of the scale, and the gap between

rich and poor was growing. This was accompanied by a rapid increase in violent crime.

2. There was an alarming increase of occult activity because the disappointment of many people with the church made them turn to other options.
3. Immorality, a playboy type of philosophy of free love, was advocated and accepted by many.
4. Economical and political corruption increased – bribery and illegal business practices flourished and national laws still endorsed slavery.
5. Atheism, agnosticism, apathy, indifference to God and the mocking of God were the order of the day.

The decline was fivefold: social, moral, political, spiritual and economic.

The influence of Finney and the Palmers on the 1857-1858 revival

Charles Finney was one of the preachers who paved the way for the 1857-1858 revival. Finney's books and lectures on revival, amongst others the *Memoirs of Rev. Charles G. Finney*, were powerfully used by God in preparing the way for the 1857-1858 revival. During 1851 Finney had meetings in Syracuse and people started getting converted. At some stage someone wrote that it seemed as if the whole city was going to be converted. Some 100,000 conversions were related in one way or another to these meetings. In 1856 revival broke out in Rochester while Finney was preaching there. This revival is described by historians of the time as the "biggest revival ever in the history of the church" and its influence on New York is undisputed. That same year God also used Finney in Boston, where he preached mainly in Park Street Church. Hundreds of church leaders all over the United States came to listen to Finney during 1857. That helped to prepare many pastors for the coming revival.

Walter and (especially) Phoebe Palmer were also powerfully used by God to prepare people for the 1857-1858 revival – in many places their ministry led to revival. Their

camp meetings in Ontario and Quebec during the summer of 1857 drew up to 6,000 people. Revival broke out in the fall of 1857 in Hamilton and Ontario and had all the characteristics of the revival wave that hit New York a few weeks later. It was widely reported in newspapers across America and the news started spreading in Methodist churches. Many pastors yearned for revival and soon there were reports on local awakenings all over the United States.

An increase in prayer before the 1857-1858 revival in New York

It was the prayer meeting in the Fulton Street Dutch Reformed Church that sparked the revival which consequently broke out all over the country, and also internationally. This prayer meeting was not just a bolt from the blue. For close on 15 years prayer meetings were held all over New York and Boston. In 1840, Park Street Church in Boston started to pray for revival and an immediate change was seen in the congregation. Suddenly there was an exceptional increase in membership, but after about four years the prayer meetings stopped.

Two years later however, the Old South Church in Boston began to pray seriously for revival and more and more people joined in the times of prayer. In 1856 they started with quarterly days of prayer and fasting. Eventually hundreds and often thousands of people all over the city would meet five days a week at 08:00 in the morning to pray for revival and the salvation of the lost. For eight years people in Old South Church in Boston prayed for revival. According to historians, the prayers became remarkably urgent in 1857 as hopefulness rose and people's confidence in God was strengthened.

Thus, when Jeremiah Lanphier called for a prayer meeting from 12:00-13:00 on Wednesday 23 September 1857, the ground had been prepared. In a certain sense it was just another prayer meeting of business people and other New Yorkers with a passion for change in the social, spiritual and economic situation in New York and America. However, this specific prayer opportunity was the spark that kindled the 1857 revival. Yet it

is important to understand that this revival did not come as a result of a single prayer meeting.

Noonday prayer meetings in New York

Jeremiah Lanphier, a newly appointed city missionary was concerned about the spiritual state of the church and the people of New York. So he decided to start noonday prayer meetings from 12:00-13:00 because it was the lunch hour of large numbers of businessmen and factory workers in the city. He had pamphlets printed inviting people to the prayer meetings – the first one was on 23 September 1857 on the third floor of the consistory of the Old Dutch Reformed Church on Fulton Street. Only six people turned up. The second week 20 people came to pray, the third week 40, and the next week 100. Within a few weeks the church was packed, and people came together daily to pray during the noonday meeting. After a while, prayer meetings were also scheduled at other times. Some meetings were attended by up to 5,000 people. Before the end of 1857 there were already hundreds of established prayer meetings in many areas, and attendance grew daily. By January 1858, newspapers sent reporters to cover the meetings. “The Progress of the Revival” became a standing news report and revival spread all over the United States.

An eyewitness account of a typical noonday prayer meeting

The prayer meetings were usually held for exactly one hour: 12:00-13:00. Many factories would blow their whistle at 11:55 to remind people of the day’s prayer meetings, and the whistle was blown again at 13:05 as a signal for people that it was time to start work again.

The following eyewitness account of a typical 1857 prayer meeting captures something of the atmosphere, solemnness and simplicity of these 1857 meetings. Keep in mind that it is described against an archaic backdrop; don’t allow this to prevent you from seeing

God working in a powerful manner.

"We take our seats in the middle room, ten minutes before 12 o'clock. A few ladies are seated in the corner, and some businessmen are also already present. Five minutes to twelve, the room begins to fill up rapidly. Two minutes to twelve, the leader walks in, and takes his seat at the table. At 12 noon, punctual to the moment, at the first stroke of the clock announcing the noonday hour, the leader arises and commences the meeting by reading two or three verses of a hymn. A hymn book has been placed on each person's seat; all sing with heart and voice. The leader offers a prayer – short, purposeful, to the point. Then he reads a brief portion from Scripture. Ten minutes have now passed. In the meantime, prayer requests in sealed envelopes have been going up to the table.

A deep, solemn silence settles upon our meeting. It is holy ground. The leader stands with the requests on slips of paper in his hand. He announces: 'This meeting is now open for prayer. Brethren from a distance are specially invited to take part. All will observe the rules.'

All is now breathless attention. A tender solicitude spreads over all those upturned faces. The leader reads a request: 'A son in North Carolina desires the fervent prayers of the righteous of this congregation for the speedy conversion of his mother in Connecticut ...'

In an instant a father rises: 'I wish to ask for prayer for two sons and a daughter.' He sits down and bursts into tears, laying his head down on the railing of the seat before him, sobbing like a broken-hearted child.

A few brief remarks follow. The leader continues reading the requests in his hand: 'A praying sister who attends our meetings requests prayer for two unconverted brothers in Detroit; that they be converted, and become true disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ.'

Another request follows: ‘Prayer is requested for a young theologian who is going astray
...’

Two very fervent earnest prayers follow in quick succession. And others who rise to pray at the same time sit down again when they find themselves preceded by the voices already engaged in prayer. Then arises from all hearts a beautiful hymn:

*There is a fountain filled with blood
Drawn from Immanuel’s veins,
And sinners plunged beneath that flood
Lose all their guilty stains.*

Then someone prays earnestly for all who have already been prayed for; for all sinners present; for the perishing thousands in the city and for revival all over the land and world.

It is now a quarter to one o’clock. Time has fled on silver wings.

Then arises a sailor who daily intercedes for other sailors. He was converted on board a man-of-war (warship), and knows how hard it is for a converted sailor to stand up, firm against the storm of jeers and reproaches and taunts of a ship’s crew. ‘I am here,’ he says, ‘to represent one who has requested me to ask your prayers for a converted sailor this day gone to sea. I parted from him a little time ago and his great fear is that he may dishonour the cause of the Redeemer. Will you pray for this sailor?’ People start praying immediately that God will keep and guide him.”

Then follow the closing hymn and benediction. They part for the following twenty-four hours.

Revival Stories

Stirring stories are told of people who met God during the revival in New York.

The owner of a hardware store in New York challenged businessmen at the Fulton Street prayer meeting to run their businesses with integrity and set a holy example at all times. A well-known factory owner then followed him to his store and confessed that he had been dishonest in his business dealings with him for years and wanted to pay him back that debt.

The news spread that the unsaved were welcome at the daily prayer meetings. Thousands turned up. They were prayed for and many were saved, among them hardened criminals. A notorious criminal nicknamed “Awful Gardiner” surprised everyone when he became converted during one of the prayer meetings. (He was just one of thousands that came to God in this way.)

A mother, who prayed fervently for the salvation of her six unconverted children died. Soon afterwards, during a prayer meeting, a man stood up and testified that he was the last of that mother’s six children to be saved!

Hundreds of people who had previously spent their nights in clubs and pubs now started attending the evening prayer meetings. Literally thousands gave up their lives of crime and became devoted followers of Christ. The wealthy started helping the poor, especially those now regarded as brothers and sisters.

Even the crew of ships anchored in New York harbour experienced the power of God’s presence. It is said that when ships came near New York, it was as if they entered a zone where there was a divine presence. On one ship a captain and thirty crew members were converted to Christ even before the ship docked! Revival also broke out on a battleship, the *North Carolina*. Four sailors started to meet for prayer down in the depths of the

ship. One evening they started singing under the guidance of the Holy Spirit and a group of their ungodly shipmates came running down to mock them, but God's presence was so strongly felt that just there on the spot, they humbly fell to their knees in repentance. (The spiritual need on some of the ships was so great at times, that ministers from harbour cities were asked to help on the ships.)

In March 1858 the *Prayer Journal* reported that the large cities and towns from Maine to California were part of this tremendous prayer movement and revival. There was hardly an area or village where signs and testimonies of an extraordinary divine power were not evident.

For example, in Chicago 2,000 men regularly met at noon for prayer in the city hall. In the Jayne Hall in Philadelphia, 4,000 people met regularly. An elderly ethnologist named John Crozer wrote in his diary: I have never, I think, been present at a more stirring and edifying prayer meeting. The room was full, and the unmistakable presence of God was manifest.

In December of 1857, attendance at the weekly united prayer meeting in Utica, New York, increased so rapidly that by the third meeting the ground floor and balcony of the First Presbyterian Church were packed with people who had been touched by the Holy Spirit. Morning prayer meetings were started shortly afterwards.

After a specific prayer meeting in the Anson Street Presbyterian Church in Charleston was dismissed, no one left the church. The congregation stayed until midnight and the Lord worked powerful miracles.

Eight weeks of daily evening meetings followed. The crowds attending the meetings grew, until 1,500 to 2,000 people gathered for prayer daily.

The newspaper *The New York Observer* published a report from Waco, Texas: The

church meetings are overflowing with people, night and day ... Never before in Texas have we seen a whole community so powerfully under God's influence ... totally regenerated.

There was new reverence for God. The Bible became the standard for every aspect of people's lives. Any form of business that was detrimental to the community was regarded as evil and wrong. Business people started living honest and trustworthy lives.

At least three thousand people in Newark, New Jersey accepted Jesus as Saviour. In many smaller towns very few unconverted people remained. In Haverhill, Massachusetts, the Spirit of God worked powerfully among the crowds who attended the daily prayer meetings. Often half of the assembly started weeping, burdened by the awareness of their sin. One pastor testified that at least one person in every home in his congregation was deeply concerned about his or her relationship with God.

A man went to the prayer meetings on Fulton Street in New York hoping someone would help him to become converted. One day he heard that a mother had submitted a written request for prayer for her son's salvation. He discovered that it was *his* mother who wrote the note! Shortly afterwards he accepted Jesus as Saviour.

In Kalamazoo, Michigan, a woman requested prayer for her husband's salvation. A man responded, "Pray for me. I'm that man." Four other men did exactly the same. A wealthy young New Yorker was born again during such a noon prayer meeting. Back home he started reading from the Bible and fervently interceded for his wife and sister, whereupon they knelt beside him and also received Christ!

One man disowned his daughter when she started confessing Christ. When he fell seriously ill however, he sent for her and asked forgiveness. Within three days her testimony had led her father, mother, two brothers, and a sister to the Lord.

In New Hampshire there was a place called Hell Corner. These people had practically no contact with the outside world. They were known for their profanity, foul language and gambling. One day when they were again swearing, drinking and carrying on in a wicked and ungodly way, a woman who didn't know the Lord either, tried to stop them but they ridiculed and mocked her. Someone sarcastically suggested that they start a prayer meeting in *her* house. A backslidden Christian tried to 'lead' in prayer and mocked God, but he broke down while praying and repented. After this the meetings continued under the leadership of a man from a neighbouring town, and four or five hundred men were convicted of sin and accepted Christ. Many in Hell Corner became dedicated praying people. The Spirit of God simply took over and people were saved without any preaching or outside influence.

Elsewhere, a young sailor that had recently been converted was getting ready to leave on his next voyage. His landlord was trying to convince him to drink rum with him. But the sailor turned to a fellow boarder who was a missionary and said to him, "I would rather take your prayers to sea with me than all the rum in the world."

In 1858 in Louisville, Kentucky an average of 1,000 people were attending the daily prayer meetings, some of them prominent businessmen. A writer remarked that the Spirit of God seemed to be brooding over their city which led to an unusual degree of brokenness and solemnity in people from all walks of life. An amazing work of grace was busy changing the city.

The same was happening in Boston. A great number of people who had lived wicked lives attended the meetings. One writer said, "Publicans and sinners are awakened, and are entering the prayer meetings of their own accord. Some of them are manifesting signs of sincere repentance."

In summary

James Edwin Orr estimated that during the two years from 1857 to 1858, about one million people became converted and that about another million Christians had a new meeting with God and started serving Him wholeheartedly again. At the time the entire population of the United States was 30 million. Calculations show that during 1858 there were at least *50,000 conversions per week*. In New England for instance, 50,000 out of a population of 250,000 became church members. The majority of these people were converted without them having heard a single sermon, because there was very little preaching.

Secondly most of the prayer meetings were led by laymen, not pastors. Pastors did attend the meetings however, and their preaching had a strong influence. Thirdly, there were no ‘famous names’ or advertising to draw people. They simply asked where the prayer meetings were being held and attended them. Thousands of unsaved who came to these meetings were struck by the simplicity of the gospel and were saved.

One eyewitness (a historian) remarked that people basically prayed God’s Word back to Him and that they prayed as if they were convinced that God heard them and *would answer*.

A wonderful result of this 1857-1861 revival period is that people once more opened up their hearts to missionary work: Established missionary organisations started working with new zeal and new ones like the *China Inland Mission* and the *Student Volunteer* were founded. This led to many mission outreaches and missionaries were sent out to countries all over the world.

The revival that started in New York in 1957, spread to Wales, Scotland, Ireland, Britain, Germany (where a 30-year period of revival followed), India, South Africa, Indonesia, the West Indies and the Netherlands. Sweden, for instance, reported that as a result

of the revival, some 200,000 people out of a total population of 3 million were converted.

In conclusion: It is clear that this revival that took place practically worldwide was *not* the work of human beings.

Chapter 2

Ulster, Northern Ireland and the 1859 revival

When the church in Ireland heard about the revival in New York and other places in the USA, many ministers and Christians felt a deep hunger for God and began to pray with new earnestness about it. For example, at the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Synod in Dublin in 1858, two of the sessions were devoted to revival! More than 2,000 people were present and they listened in great earnest. Two men were appointed to go to New York and report back on what was busy happening there. The feedback of the two men resulted in an even greater hunger for revival.

The ‘beginning’ of the revival in Ulster can be traced back to four young men who committed themselves to pray specifically for revival. They were James McQuilkin, John Wallace, Robert Carlisle and Jeremiah Meneely). McQuilkin read the biography of George Müller ‘by chance’ and gave it to his friends to read. Apparently three books influenced them: George Müller’s *Life of Trust*, *The life of Murry McCheyne* and Charles Finney’s *Lectures on Revival*. Reports of the New York revival also reached them.

In September 1857 they started praying together and by the end of the year converts in Ulster started to increase. In the winter of 1858/1859 prayer groups and prayer meetings started growing. It is said that by the time the revival came to Ulster, there were 104 prayer groups all over the city.

On 14 March 1859, McQuilkin organised a prayer meeting. About 3,000 people turned up and stood listening in the rain and mud, gripped by the power of the Holy Spirit. A lay-preacher began to preach and about 100 people fell to their knees in the mud, surrendering their lives to Jesus Christ. This revival was characterised by a supernatural conviction of sin. Professor William Gibson wrote the following: “Even strong men have staggered and fallen down under the wounds of their conscience. Great bodily

weakness followed ... With tears streaming down their faces and looks of unutterable anguish, they confessed their sins, appealing to the Lord for mercy with piercing cries ... I have never heard such cries before: ‘Lord Jesus, have mercy upon my sinful soul; Lord Jesus come to my burning heart; Lord, pardon my sins; O come and lift me from these flames of hell.’”

The revival spread like wildfire to other places in the district. People were meeting in kitchens, barns, churches, schoolhouses, fields and on roadsides. There were all-night meetings of prayer and weeping. People set aside farm work and business and crowded into meetings.

In April 1859, during a busy market day in the town Ballymena, a man in his thirties suddenly fell to the ground and, for about ten minutes, kept on calling out, “Unclean, unclean ... Lord have mercy on me, a sinner!” A holy fear of God came over the people. By 17 May the whole town was in the grip of the Holy Spirit’s convicting power. Men who didn’t care before broke down and sobbed like children. Churches were overcrowded, families prayed together, while people from all classes and ages were seeking the Lord. Prayer meetings sometimes carried on all through the night. There were strong physical manifestations which led to the salvation of many people.

Hundreds of people called on ministers to come and help them. And when they broke through the burden of sin and were set free, their faces beamed with such joy that these newly saved were easily recognisable.

Boroughshane, Ballymena, Ballycarry

At Boroughshane, workers in a spinning factory were suddenly inexplicably seized by the Holy Spirit’s conviction of sin. Within an hour 20 people were lying prostrate on the floor, crying out to God. The factory had to close for two days so that people could get their lives right with God!

People of all ages, Protestant and Roman Catholic, attended meetings and were converted. Family worship was restored. Drunkenness and swearing, quarrelling and fighting disappeared. In one place even a fair ended in a prayer meeting with 5,000 people attending. Not everybody was positive however. Some Roman Catholic priests gave their members ‘holy water’ to protect them against the ‘revival plague’. Not all spiritual leaders were positive about the revival, but they were in the minority by far.

Also here, (as in New York) people passing those regions by ship experienced the presence of God and many sailors came under conviction of sin. The revival spread all over the country. In Belfast a large distillery was closed down and the whisky trade started deteriorating. Pubs closed down. Race courses drew fewer people. Crime was tremendously reduced. Throughout Ulster, judges often had no cases to try and sometimes there was not a single prisoner in custody.

Revival came to Ballymena ‘suddenly’. Crying and prayers were heard in the streets and also came from many homes. Some, under deep conviction of sin, could sometimes not sleep for many nights in a row. Here also, large mid-day prayer meetings were held and attended by people from all denominations. They were meeting even in gravel pits: on one occasion 5,000 met for prayer in a quarry. Children 10-12 years of age were saved and filled with the great power of the Holy Spirit, and they prayed for unsaved adults. People were amazed at the prayers of these children. Sometimes children even organised their own prayer meetings. Young businessmen took leave from their jobs to support and further the revival. People came from England, Scotland and other parts of Ireland to see the work of God.

After the revival broke out at Ballycarry, meetings continued for forty-two nights. Prayer meetings often continued through the night.

Belfast

Revival broke out in Belfast in June 1859. Crowds began to gather nightly in Episcopal, Presbyterian, Wesleyan, Independent and Baptist churches. The Spirit inspired ordinary laymen to start preaching and day and night they visited people who were convicted of sin. On 29 June there was a very large open-air meeting in the Botanic Gardens in Belfast: 40,000 people attended. Children even climbed into the trees so that they could see and hear. The Moderator of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church led the service and asked the people not to resist or grieve the Holy Spirit, but to ask unceasingly, urgently and expectantly that He would descend on them so that many people would be converted. Deep conviction of sin caused many people to literally fall down on their faces and beg for God's grace. Children started forming groups and prayed for the crowds. Many of these children were from the poorer section of society.

After this meeting, church services were packed daily. Often it was impossible to dismiss services and people only went home in the early hours of the morning. A pastor described how some people "felt the pains of hell" as they were convicted by the Holy Spirit. That was followed with great joy and outpourings of love as the Holy Spirit gave assurance of salvation and many cried out, "How I wish I could tell you about Jesus' love. I would take sinners in my arms, if I could, and lay them at His feet." Also here there were conversions of people across the boundary lines of society. Learned people and wealthy business people experienced the same conviction of sin that farmers and ordinary labourers did.

In one church one hundred people were saved at one meeting. Twenty prayer meetings started in this one church and four hundred people were converted. Some schools closed because revival broke out amongst the children in the classrooms. Hardened men wept as they heard the children's prayers and how earnestly they prayed.

In July another large open-air meeting followed, with some fifteen thousand in atten-

dance. Ministers prayed with people under conviction of sin up until 3 o'clock that morning. At another occasion a meeting was attended by 20,000 people. All over Belfast meetings were held for both children and adults. One church reported that 40 prayer meetings had been started amongst their members.

People's lives began to change: There was a drastic decrease in prostitution as many prostitutes were saved. People started working responsibly with their money and began saving again. Political protest demonstrations ceased for the time being. Many factories closed temporarily so that workers convicted of sin could deal with that, because they could not continue working in any case. People were starting to grow and mature spiritually and answers to prayer were reported every day. There were spiritual bands and singing groups all over. Pastors ministered to crowds gathering in the streets.

In Coleriane a boy came under such conviction of sin that the principal of the school sent him home, together with another boy. On their way they passed an empty house and went inside to pray. After the young boy became certain of his salvation he immediately said, "I must go and tell Mr. X." As he entered the school grounds, he said to this teacher, "Sir, I am so happy; I have the Lord Jesus in my heart." The whole school heard what had happened to him – suddenly one boy after the other excused themselves from the classroom. Very soon scores of young boys were kneeling all over the playground, wrestling with God. The young boy that was converted first went to these boys and started praying with them. Heartrending cries were heard as the boys were convicted of their sins and asked for forgiveness. Children in the classrooms heard this and went down on their knees, also starting to cry for mercy. The girls in the girls' school nearby heard the boys crying out to God and also started crying out to Him, confessing their sins. Adults hearing the crying children rushed to the school, where many of them were convicted of their own sins and found salvation.

The result was that some 100,000 people joined churches in 1859.

Chapter 3

The 1859 revival in Wales

Wales experienced many revivals during the past 300 years. There were powerful revivals in 1739, “the great revival” in 1760 as well as in 1791, 1817, 1840 and 1848. During the 1850s the church again felt the urgent need for revival. People started praying for revival in private prayer, family worship and congregational meetings. When the revival eventually came in 1859, it was like the 1857-1858 revival in America; a revival resulting from united prayer.

God used especially two ministers to ignite the flame of revival through their preaching: They were Humphrey Jones and David Morgan. Jones came from America where he was greatly influenced by the writings of Charles Finney. For six months God used him in a very special way. Even at 05:00 in the morning people were crowding the chapel in Tre'r-ddol where he preached. The streets were lined more than a kilometre in all directions with people coming to listen. Prayer meetings were held each night. And as he went from one town to another, revival broke out.

Humphrey Jones’ ministry and preaching impacted and encouraged David Morgan very strongly, and God touched David Morgan in a very special way. For three months Morgan and Jones ministered together and then Jones faded from the picture. Wherever David Morgan went, God poured out His Spirit and people were converted. Revival spread from church to church and among all denominations, from village to village, from district to district. Notorious sinners came to church in their hundreds. It is important to take note that, in spite of powerful preaching (especially that of David Morgan), people agree that the revival in Wales was not so much the result of preaching, but the fruit of intense prayer.

Often people left the churches under deep conviction of sin, and then returned because

they could proceed no further without giving their lives to the Lord. Children started their own prayer meetings and prayed fervently. Sinners experienced the power of God's presence. In one village it was reported that only six people could not profess their personal salvation.

In four counties churches held a day of prayer for the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. In February 1859 the Spirit broke through in mighty power: People were saved daily and literally jumped for joy at being converted. Daily prayer meetings started. One minister reported that 650 new converts had been added to his congregation.

In some of the districts revival came only after a year of intense, persevering prayer. In one town, revival came during a house prayer meeting while the people were singing. As they were singing, other people heard them and the revival spread like wildfire. Children began to sing and pray for hours and held prayer meetings from house to house. In one Baptist church people prayed for four months before revival broke out there. In some districts revival broke out in different towns at the same time on the same night. It was especially the prayers of the children and young people that astonished everybody. They met to pray everywhere: In houses, classrooms and even along the roads.

Revival also broke out in forty coal mines.

This revival changed the entire spiritual climate in Wales. Churches once again did the work they were called for: The poor were cared for, the unsaved were reached by the gospel and missionaries took the light of the gospel to the nations. Over and over history has proved that when the children of God persevere in united prayer according to His command, when they humble themselves and when His Word is preached powerfully and with authority, the Holy Spirit comes and changes whole communities with His overwhelming power.

Chapter 4

The 1860 revival in Scotland

When the news of the American revival (1857-1859) reached Scotland, the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland came together to give thanks to God for what was happening across the ocean and to plead with God for a similar outpouring of His Spirit on Scotland. The second Sunday in July 1860 was set aside as a day of prayer for revival. Among the Presbyterians only, 40,000 members started weekly prayer meetings all over Scotland, praying for revival. Apart from the 1,205 existing prayer meetings, 129 new interdenominational prayer meetings per week were also started. The prayer burden deepened when the Scottish people heard that God had visited Ulster in Northern Ireland with revival. Crowds of up to 20,000 came to listen to speakers telling of the revival in other countries. The subject on everyone's lips was revival. In many places the crowds were so big that the churches were too small. The number of conversions started growing. In some places as many as 500 people stayed behind to be helped. There were no great or well-known preachers, no advertising of services and no official organising.

The revival also spread to the Orkney Islands and Shetland.

Five years later, the Presbyterian Church reported that the revival was still continuing. Many 'good Christians' realised that 'goodness' is not enough, and gave themselves to Jesus Christ anew. Others turned from living openly sinful lives and became devoted Christians.

Of all the countries, the revival in Scotland had the greatest long-term effect: In the Scottish church itself, but also on world mission as a result of the immense influence that the Scottish church had afterwards on missionary work all over the world.

Chapter 5

The 1857-62 revival in South Africa

Early stirrings

Many people are of the opinion that the 1860 revival started in the Western Cape, but revival had already begun in 1857 in KwaZulu-Natal and in 1858-1859 in the Eastern Cape, in Grahamstown, among other places. It is interesting that the revival among the Zulus in 1857 started at precisely the same time as the revival in New York. There is no way that the missionaries among the Zulus could have had any knowledge of the revival in New York. Stories of the New York revival reached South Africa only in 1858, and a deeper hunger for a countrywide revival was felt.

Missionaries who experienced the 1857 revival in New York came back to South Africa to resume their work in Zululand and amongst the Xhosas. Alan Grout wrote from Zululand, “We are witnessing a shaking of the ‘dry bones’ in the Esdumbini Valley … several young men came to say … your preaching has touched our hearts, we have decided to abandon heathendom and serve the Living God.” Joseph Jackson, a Methodist reverend testified: “…the Spirit of God fell upon them in such an overpowering manner that they could not depart, but continued in prayer till the break of day.”

The revival amongst the Zulus resulted in exceptional praying, tremendous conviction of sin, drastic conversions and an enthusiastic outreach to others.

In 1856, a 12-year-old Xhosa girl started to prophesy that all animals and food must be destroyed or eaten. She also prophesied that on 18 February 1857 a miracle would happen: cattle would come out of the ground, food pots would suddenly be filled, dead warriors would arise and all the tribes of Africa would drive the Europeans into the sea. The Xhosas believed these prophecies and acted on them, but the result was mass starvation

and many died. Families killed one another for food and entire tribes consisting of thousands of people were completely wiped out.

This tragedy created an openness for the gospel among Xhosas. During this period of time, revival broke out in Grahamstown. All churches and people of all races were involved. Large crowds came to church every night and the whole area up to Port Elizabeth and East London were affected. If there was not a building available, people met in the open. Missionaries in the Transkei reported that thousands of Xhosas were converted. One mission station reported 600 new members within one month and said that church meetings were overcrowded.

God used the evangelist William Taylor in the 1858 revival amongst the Xhosas and the Zulus. Many became converted. Taylor was born in 1821 in Virginia (USA) and came to South Africa in 1858. He based his ministry style on that of John Wesley and travelled on horseback from town to town. Wherever he went God granted revival. William Taylor used a Xhosa interpreter by the name of Charles Palma and travelled through the Transkei and Zululand to preach the gospel. When Taylor left, Palma took those sermons and preached them from kraal to kraal. As a result, revival came also to those regions, especially amongst the Xhosas. As the news spread, thousands of people flocked to the meetings. Many came under deep conviction of sin and started praising God when they broke through in deliverance and assurance of salvation. There was no manipulation in these meetings. Under the preaching, people would spontaneously fall on their faces in the meetings and start to cry out for grace.

One of the results of this revival was a strong interest in missions. Missionaries travelled as far as former Rhodesia and also Zambia to preach the gospel and revival also broke out in Botswana.

Dutch Reformed Church conference in Worcester, April 1860

The church in South Africa heard about the revival that started in New York (1857-1858) and a deep hunger for revival started to grow in the hearts of many ministers. A booklet with the title *De Kracht des Gebeds* (The Power of Prayer) was written and widely distributed. This book helped to create a spirit of prayer in many congregations and towns. In April 1860 the Dutch Reformed Church held a conference in Worcester with revival as the main theme. The conference was attended by 374 ministers and lay-preachers. There were ministers from the Dutch Reformed and Methodist Church at the conference, as well as leaders from the Scotch Presbyterian Church and the Wesleyan and Rhenish Mission Societies. Accounts were given of the revival in New York. Just 50 days later, the churches that sent delegates to the conference started experiencing the Holy Spirit moving anew.

Dr. Robertson, one of the speakers at the conference, said later that the revival started at the exact point when Dr. Andrew Murray Jnr. stood up to pray. Something supernatural happened and God's Spirit broke through at that specific moment.

After this conference in 1860, there were also stirrings of revival in the Southern and Western Cape, especially in Montagu. James Cameron, the Methodist minister in Montagu, wrote a report in the *Wesleyan Methodist Magazine* in 1860: Oh sir, what can I write? The Lord is doing wonders here ... the Spirit of God is among us ... prayer meetings every day and every night of the week ... people who never prayed publicly are now praying openly. Last Sunday I asked those who were seeking God to come to the church early for prayer ... they came in large numbers, very early ... 3 o'clock in the morning; on Thursday a poor farm girl began to pray. Her words were of the Spirit; we all cried, "God is here." Young and old began crying out for mercy ... and kept on until about 12 noon ... the Dutch Reformed people came out of their prayer meetings and joined us ... the place was so crowded that a number had to pray outside.

For many weeks the awakening at Montagu was marked by intense conviction of sin. Strong men cried out to God in anguish and repentance. Montagu underwent a complete transformation. The visibly transformed lives of new believers caused unbelievers to ask the way of salvation. A community previously noted for its complete indifference, suddenly became serious about God. Meetings were held at homes, and families of all races met together to pray and worship the Lord. All culture groups, even on remote farms, experienced conversions. On a specific farm a farmer heard someone call out loudly one morning and found his wife's domestic help where she was pleading for forgiveness of her sins. Soon people of all population groups in the vicinity experienced many similar conversions. Six prayer meetings were started. People were pleading with God not to pass them by.

Revival also broke out in Worcester in the congregation where Dr. Andrew Murray (Jnr.) and Jan de Vries worked. One evening 60 young people gathered for prayer and worship. They were led in devotions by Jan de Vries. They would normally stand up and ask that a specific hymn be sung, or someone would commence with prayer. During one of these prayer meetings, a 15-year-old coloured girl got up and simply said, "O, how I love Jesus," and asked for a song to be sung. All the people present suddenly heard a sound like distant rumbling – it came closer and closer and the building started to shake. Everybody started praying simultaneously. God's presence filled the place. Each one was so burdened by his or her own sin that they continued to call upon God for forgiveness and pleaded with Him that he would cleanse them. Everyone continued praying simultaneously. Dr. Andrew Murray, the pastor of that congregation was urgently sent for. What he found there seemed very disorderly to him and he tried to quieten the people down, saying, "Silence please, this is chaos. I am your minister sent from God ... Be quiet!" However, no one took any notice of him, but simply carried on praying. Each one was aware only of his own burden of sin and kept on crying out to God for forgiveness, but the weight of guilt, shame and sin just became more intolerable. Murray tried in vain to get them to sing a hymn – with no effect. The Spirit of God was moving with the power of revival and no one could stop it.

Night after night people continued to pray into the early hours of the morning. Later on, someone who had been an eyewitness of the revival in New York cautioned Andrew Murray, because the things happening in Worcester were the same things he saw happening in the revival in New York. Andrew Murray heeded the warning and then fully supported the revival movement.

The revival spread

Revival spread to other parts of the Cape and the rest of South Africa. For weeks prayer meetings for revival were held in Wellington. All over, these prayer meetings multiplied. Some venues could not hold all the people coming to pray. Church leaders reported that more happened in a few weeks than in all previous history of the church in Wellington!

Revival broke out in Heidelberg in 1860, and again in 1868, 1870 and 1884! Congregation after congregation in South Africa experienced repeated revivals for half a century. The revival spread from town to town: Swellendam, Tulbagh, Ceres, Robertson, Villiers and many more. Many of the English denominations also experienced revival.

In Calvinia, a town in a rural area, there was no minister at the time, and for several years ministers had tried in vain to start prayer meetings there. Without there being any contact with towns in the Western and Southern Cape, where revival had already broken out, revival came to Calvinia. Suddenly several prayer meetings started, even on remote farms. Often one group didn't know about the other, yet they all shared the blessing of revival.

In Paarl, Rev. Van der Linde and his congregation had a deep desire for revival. Here and there, at the beginning of 1861, there were some stirrings of the Holy Spirit in the congregation. More and more people started to attend the prayer meetings. Then, just before Pentecost Sunday in 1861, Rev. Van der Linde called his congregation to 10 days of prayer, just like the early church prayed – awaiting the ‘gift’ that the Lord Jesus

promised: The outpouring of the Holy Spirit. Many people attended these prayer meetings. On Pentecost Sunday there was a great expectancy, everybody had a feeling that something was about to happen. They were not disappointed. During the afternoon service, while Rev. Van der Linde was praying, the Spirit of God started moving in a powerful way and a remarkable revival broke out.

In the Murraysburg district, one reverend called it a ‘shaking awake’ of the people. There were hundreds of conversions. According to him probably no more than 50 unconverted people were left in the Little Karoo. In Beaufort West the revival came with great force, from 6-13 January 1861, about four months after it started in Worcester. Prayer meetings often lasted all day and were held four times a week. On Sundays meetings were held also in houses, under trees and farm houses because the churches were too small to accommodate everyone.

In 1861 revival also broke out in Prince Albert, Graaff-Reinet and Richmond. Revival spread all over the country and reports of revival also came from the Free State and the Transvaal. These revivals were characterised by powerful outpourings of the Holy Spirit, deep conviction of sin and a great number of conversions.

In 1867 the Dutch Reformed Church Synod decided to encourage churches to observe 10 days of prayer before Pentecost Sunday as a yearly practice. This practice led to much blessing and spiritual fruit over the next 150 years in the Dutch Reformed Church.

After the 1860-1861 revival there were several other periods of revival that followed in the next 60 years, for example in 1868, the 1870s, 1889, 1897, 1901-1905, 1923 and 1927.

The influence of the revival on South Africa

Before the 1858-1862 revival, spiritual life was lukewarm and at a very low level in

many churches and on the mission fields. God was worshipped in a strictly formal manner, prayer meetings were poorly attended and sin abounded in communities.

But when the revival came, everything changed – not only the church changed but the whole community turned around. People's behaviour changed: Their relationship with God became a priority – in many cases, something that was not part of their lives before the revival.

In basically every place where revival broke out, there was deep conviction of sin, in most cases accompanied by strong emotion. Hardened men were crying out to God and wept about their sins. Notorious criminals repented in a powerful manner. Communities once again had a deep reverence for and holy fear of God. Large numbers of people got converted in every community. Heart-rending testimonies of conversion were heard. Visions were seen and many people had terrifying dreams. In some cases people got converted in their own homes, in other cases behind bushes and rocks, on mountains and in ravines. Men, women, the elderly, children, gentlemen and slaves – all bowed the knee before the King of kings, pleading for His grace. The changed lives of the previously unsaved bore witness to the fact that the events were not just an emotional experience. The converts from the revival were lasting converts. There was a very low incidence of backsliding over the next decades.

People who would not have considered it earlier, started to attend prayer meetings, often into the early hours of the morning. (Especially in Worcester, Montagu, Wellington and Stellenbosch people prayed deep into the night.) A new joy and freedom were present in the lives of the new converts and they were suddenly concerned about the spiritual state of the lost and started to pray in earnest for the salvation of others. Church attendance grew drastically.

There was a remarkable unity amongst leaders of different churches and also among believers of different denominations. Financially, people were also much more generous.

Everywhere people were talking about God, even non-Christians. In many towns there was an unexplainable ‘presence’ of the Lord and people got converted daily. People were not ashamed to testify about their salvation or to say that they were Christians.

The most glorious result of the 1860 revival was the post-revival enthusiasm for missions. Suddenly there was a new concern for the lost and an upsurge of people who wanted to go to the mission field. Missionaries travelled as far as Zambia and the former Rhodesia to preach the gospel and establish mission stations. The Holy Spirit encouraged people to become aware of their Christian responsibility towards their domestic servants and farm workers, and they responded by contributing towards outreach programmes. Per capita, South African Christians gave more to missions than any other country in the world in that specific period. Within ten years, twelve mission stations were established beyond the Cape Colony: In Zimbabwe (formerly Rhodesia), Botswana, Malawi, and up to as far as the Sudan.

The behaviour of people changed; not only that of new believers. People started to live holy lives. Family relationships were restored. Men assumed their role as fathers in the household and the Biblical order in families was restored.

There are stories of long-standing quarrels being settled. People living with hatred and an inability to forgive were reconciled – family members with each other, neighbours and also tough businessmen. People in the business world stopped unlawful practices and started doing business with integrity. Working conditions and the quality of work improved.

People from different cultures were reconciled; they worshipped the Lord together and accepted one another in love. Bad debts were settled. Juvenile delinquency, sexual immorality, alcohol abuse and cursing declined drastically. Slowly prisons emptied because criminals were converted.

In Stellenbosch, a church bulletin announced: The whole of society has been changed, yes, turned literally upside down!

In summary

The 1860 revival was the biggest and most powerful revival in the history of South Africa. It paved the way for several revivals which followed. It laid the groundwork for a strong missionary organisation. Especially the Dutch Reformed Church had the strongest missionary drives in the next 150 years. Although the revival had an effect on the Zulus and Xhosas, the influence of the revival was especially visible among white and coloured people in the Western and Southern Cape.

The road ahead

When we read these stories, we are made aware of the power of the Holy Spirit. We live in a time where the powerlessness of the church is seen as perfectly ‘normal’ because we have become so used to it. We try to do the work of God in the kingdom of God and to breathe new life into the church by means of courses and programmes. While there is nothing wrong with courses and programmes, these could never replace the power and indwelling of, and the anointing with the Holy Spirit.

We need something other than, and more than just ‘renewal’. New structures and the use of new technology (like the Internet, Face Book, Twitter, etc.) cannot fill the place of the power of the Holy Spirit. And unfortunately that is exactly what people often think.

The purpose of this short description of the worldwide revival of 1857-1862 is to remind us of the fact that God can do more than we could ever pray or think. When we read eyewitness accounts of this revival, it is clear that people in those times were completely awestruck by the power of God. Today we do not really experience this at all, because, amongst other things, we have started accepting that the unnatural state of the church is in fact normal.

May a *holy discontentment* take hold of us that will cry out to God with whom nothing is impossible: that He will come again as in the past, and fill the church with His presence and with the power of the Holy Spirit.

One thing I know: When God starts pouring out His Spirit (as in Acts 4:29-31 and during the revival of 1860), no church building in this country will be big enough to accommodate all the people that will come. The power of sin will be broken and the unsaved will come to God in their multitudes; they will come with or without preaching, with or without programmes, with or without the help of new technology, the understanding of new trends, the wearing of special T-shirts, or the backing of the music of

the generation of the time!

Take another look at the 1857-1862 revival and then consider the condition that the different countries were in before the revival broke out:

- Take note of the spiritual condition of America, Scotland, Wales, Ireland and South Africa. The spiritual and social welfare in a country does not limit the power of God and neither what He can and will do in such circumstances.
- Take note of the role and place of prayer in this revival.
- Take note of the deep conviction of sin when God starts working. Compare it to what is described as revival today.
- Take note of the fruit of this revival – conditions of social welfare in the country changed radically for the better; power and life entered the church again, and the church started obeying its command and working on its basic mandate once more: missions, reaching out to the need of the poor and preparing the believers for their service.

It is not difficult to draw a comparison between the spiritual condition of the church today and the spiritual condition in the churches before the revival broke out 150 years ago. The problems are basically the same, the solution too.

What now?

1. Your own relationship with God

Each individual must make sure on a personal level where he or she stands with God.

The following are a few basic questions each of us should ask ourselves:

- Is there unconfessed sin in my life?
- Are there any doubtful things or practices in my life?
- Are there any direct commands in Scripture that I ignore?
- Am I prepared to unashamedly confess Jesus?
- Does my conduct at work reflect Biblical ethics?
- Am I filled with the Holy Spirit, and do I live in obedience to the Holy Spirit?
- Do I long with all my heart for revival in this country?
- When will I take my place as watchman on the wall for this country?

2. Start praying

All revivals in the past can be traced back to between one and eight people praying together. God gave revival in answer to those prayers. In many cases it was mainly young people who started to pray. So don't underestimate yourself because you are young.

Start by making time at least twice or three times a week to pray for revival. Set aside 20-30 minutes for this. Start a prayer group. Start one at work, at school or university or in your church. Call on God for spiritual revival in your congregation, the community, at work, at university or at school.

Contact a few other congregations to pray with you regularly for revival and that God will pour out his Spirit on the church. Consider a 24/7 prayer watch. (Every congregation can take one day a week to pray the full 24 hours. Once a month or once every two

months, all the congregations can take a full week of 7 days to pray for revival night and day.)

3. Share the message

Motivate others to read about revival and talk to your friends about it. Give them this book to read as well as other books on revival.

4. Read the Word

Read the Word and seek the Lord's face to hear what is in His heart and then do whatever He tells you to do as you understand it.

5. Preaching

There have been practically no revivals without the powerful preaching of the Word of God. Be an unmistakable and radical witness for Jesus Christ. Stand on the principles of the Word. Pray for preachers and encourage them to preach the Word of God radically and fearlessly.

Bibliography

- The Ten Greatest Revivals Ever, Elmer Towns & Douglas Porter, Vine Books, 2000
- Revival Fire, Wesley Duewel, Zondervan Publishing House, 1995
- The Fervent Prayer, James Edwin Orr, Moody Press, 1974
- The Power of Extraordinary Prayer, Robert O. Bakke, Crossway Books, 2000
- The New York City Noon Prayer Meeting, Talbot W. Chambers, Wagner Publications, 2002
- Oliver Price, International Revival Network: www.openheaven.com
- Evangelical Awakenings in Africa, J. Edwin Orr, Bethany House Publishers, 1975
- Breath from Heaven, Ken Terhoven, Struik Christian Books, 1989
- South Africa's Forgotten Revival, Olea Nel, Xulon Press, 2008
- Die Wonder van Herlewing, Dr. M.W. Retief, Hart-Uitgewers, 1976
- Great Revivals, Colin Whittaker, Victor (Kingsway Publications), 2005
- Revival comes to Wales, Eifion Evans, Evangelical Press of Wales, 1995