

Let's Talk About It

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Revival!?! What About the Family?

Everybody is talking about revival. However, I am not sure if everyone knows what revival is all about. For the past five decades countless books have been written on the topic, mostly emphasizing a spiritual or church revival. In fact, when the word "revival" is used, it is most often used in the context of church members becoming "filled with the spirit" so that the church can be more effective in the community. Is this what's needed in our country today? Isn't it funny that even businesses are talking about revival. There is revival in the music, clothing, kitchen cabinet, and DVD industry. Even health and beauty aids, and tools and hardware are having revivals. What else is not in need of a rejuvenation today? Revival is now an "in word" meaning let's do something different to make an impression.

MEANING OF REVIVAL

The word revival can have several shades of meaning. It can mean an evangelistic meeting or mass rally. Revival can also mean rehabilitation, renewal, recovery and adjustment. The important factor about all true spiritual revivals is that it is not just an event, it is a process. Therefore, revival takes time and energy and a willingness to change. I asked the question in the first paragraph "Is it a spiritual revival that's needed in our country today, or is it a family or social revival? Some may ask can we separate the two? It is my opinion that the real revival that needed is in our families. A pastor can preach and preach until his neck turns blue, but until families learn how to adjust, forgive, love, and cherish each other, church spiritual revivals are just events, not a process

True revival is not in a gigantic, mass rally event, although this is needed. It is not in a one-week of "Holy Ghost, feet-stumping, hand-clapping, fiery preaching--although that might be good. True revival is first in the privacy of a person's heart. For total rehabilitation (from drugs, alcohol, or prostitution) to take place someone has to personally internalize all the knowledge taught during the time in rehabilitation--that's revival.

For centuries Scotland has been known for its many revivals and outstanding preachers. Duncan Campbell (1898-1972), one of the great Scottish Evangelists, wrote some inspiring words about the meaning of revival. "An evangelistic campaign or special meeting is not revival. In a successful evangelistic campaign or crusade, there will be hundreds or even thousands of people making decisions for Jesus Christ, but the community remains untouched, and the churches continue much the same as before the outreach. In revival, God moves in the district. Suddenly, the community becomes God conscious. The Spirit of God grips men and women in such a way that even work is given up as people give themselves to waiting upon God."

REVIVAL IS A HEART MESSAGE

During one of Scotland's great revivals in the early eighteen hundreds, a tourist visited to see

what the revival was all about. The news about what was happening in Scotland spread far and wide. Upon arriving off the boat, the tourist started looking for the gigantic revival meetings. He went to the churches, but they were closed. "Where is the great revival," he asked someone while passing? With a sincere look in his eye, and pointing with his finger to his heart, the man responding to the question said "It's in here." The tourist could not find the revival at street meetings, or large rallies. Instead, the revival could be only be seen in the daily lives of the people. Their attitudes, habits, and lifestyles.

FAMILY REVIVAL

Personal (not church) revival is what is needed to take to place to change the world. The personal revival will then influence the most important ministry on earth—the family. When revival is in the family, changes are transforming and permanent. Harrold Richards writes about the subject with these words: "The family is the first unit that God created, right after He created Adam, and well before government or even church. It is logical that revival must move from the personal to the family level. The ones we live with on a daily basis know us best and will sense what is happening in our lives. What a natural environment for further development of revival! I must assume that by now you have begun the process of personal revival that must precede anything done with the family. Remember, in revival far more is caught than is taught. In other words, your family will learn more from your example than from your exhortations."

We need our religious ministers to preach more about family revival from their pulpits. To curtail the level of crime in the community, church leaders must shake off the shackles of traditionalism, which has held us back for decades, and begin renewing their minds with healthy, life-changing and rejuvenating principles. What are these principles?

1. God made everyone unique, complete, and with a purpose. We are all fearfully and wonderfully made. Both men and women are made in God's image and they work together to create one of the most powerful forces of earth—love. Too many preachers are missing this most profound principle. Instead, their teachings are encouraging competition between the sexes and not harmony and cooperation. When we teach all family members to treat each other as they would treat themselves—compassionately—families and the society will be different.
2. Christ is the center of the home. Much too much emphasis is being placed on the man being in charge of the home. Far too little is being preached about Christ as the head or center of the family. If preachers of the gospel would focus more on Christ-centered homes, we would have a healthier society. The headship concept in family life is inherently corrupting. It engenders power struggles and diminishes healthy self-worth.
3. Love is the power of discipline. Too many preachers misunderstand the meaning of discipline. The emphasis is on punishment rather than redemptive discipline. Redemptive discipline is correcting a child's bad behavior in such a way that it produces positive healing results. Preachers must let it ring out from their pulpits that "Rules without relationship breeds chaos."
4. Time is a friend to families. Unfortunately, too many preachers are making their

members feel that if they do not come out to all church services or activities, then they would be neglecting their spiritual needs. The church is encroaching on family time. If preachers can remember that family TIME together is far more important than church meetings and parades, we will have healthier families and society.

If these four principles are carried out, I am certain our society will be different. There will be a revival in our families first and our communities will feel the heat. Let's have a family revival, that's when nations are changed. Send your questions to P.O. Box N-896, or call 393 2818, or email: encouragement@coralwave.com, or visit the web site www.soencouragement.org