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# **IT'S REVIVAL WE NEED**

By

*C. William Fisher*

*“Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without  
which no man shall see the Lord” Heb 12:14*

**Spreading Scriptural Holiness to the World**

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# **IT'S REVIVAL WE NEED!**

Address delivered at the  
Conference on Evangelism  
at Kansas City, Missouri  
January 12, 1966

by

**C. William Fisher**

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## **BACK COVER TEXT**

The Conference on Evangelism held in the Music Hall of Kansas City's Municipal Auditorium, January 11-13, 1966, was a memorable event whose impact throughout the church eternity alone will be able to measure. A highlight of the conference was the address by Evangelist C. William Fisher which forms the content of this book. It was an electrifying message but at the same time probing and soul-disturbing. It will bear reading again and again, for we all need its warning and its challenge.

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## FOREWORD

The beloved veteran evangelist wrote to his young friend, "... reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine" (II Tim. 4:2). Here is an accurate description of the message given to the 1966 Mid-quadrennial Conference on Evangelism by Evangelist C. William Fisher on "The Place of Revival in Evangelism." This address from the burdened heart of one who for more than twenty-five years has continuously served God and the church as an evangelist was a signal feature of a conference which was unique in its genuine spirit of expectancy and its freedom from the offering of vague generalizations.

This book, which is an elaboration of the above-mentioned address, is written with the warm evangelistic fervor characteristic of the author's preaching. He spoke, and now writes, with candor, coming to grips with the basic issues of our day.

None escaped the searching, convicting truth always mingled with prayer and passion. Here is no mere theory discussed by a speaker or penned by a writer but a mighty experience of divine truth wrought from the burdened heart of a prophetic evangelist. Certainly what Dr. Fisher says here with such pungent urgency has more than a passing interest and value. This is our unchanging message with particular emphasis and significance for these anxious days.

In response to so many requests, it goes forth in this convenient and permanent form with the prayer that even in cold type the words may produce the silence, the emotion, the quickening, and the heart cry for REVIVAL NOW in our church that all who heard the message that memorable Wednesday night felt. If so, the impact of both book and message could precipitate revival in our Zion. God grant it may be so!

Edward Lawlor  
Executive Secretary  
Department of Evangelism

# IT'S REVIVAL WE NEED!

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## **PREFACE**

The reason for this book is a growing and deepening conviction that we, in the Church of the Nazarene, are approaching a profound and inevitable crisis in our evangelism.

We have not taken the wrong road yet, but there are voices here and there -- not a swelling tide, but voices that are rising in prominence and influence and volume -- telling us that our revivalistic phase is over, that evangelists are becoming an anachronism, that our evangelism, as we have known it, is a spent force. They would tell us that if evangelism is to have validity and relevance for our times it must become more sophisticated in methods, more institutional in its objectives, and more diluted -- and muted -- in its demands.

May this book be a warning that if we listen to those smooth and seductive voices we will be led down the irrevocable road away from revival, away from that vital holiness evangelism that called us into existence -- and toward a sterile evangelism that sees no sinners saved, no believers sanctified, no churches rejuvenated. The end of that road is a stifling formalism that will be the death of our redemptive mission in the world. And history knows of no denomination that ever embarked on that way that ever recovered its initial thrust or recaptured its original mission.

In his preface to Dr. Timothy Smith's book, *Called unto Holiness*, Dr. Hugh C. Benner gave this warning: "It takes but one generation, ignoring or distorting the spirit and basic issues, to change for all the future the course of any spiritual enterprise."

Everything I have to say in this book will revolve around that potential danger -- and the urgent conviction that the only solution there is to the problems that confront us in our evangelism is a revived, renewed, and Spirit-filled church.

**C. William Fisher**

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## **ACKNOWLEDGMENTS**

In a manuscript prepared for public address, documentation of quoted material is not essential, but when this same manuscript comes out in printed form there is an obligation to acknowledge at least the major references from copyrighted works. Of necessity this has been hastily done, but the publishers have very graciously responded to our requests for permission to reprint as follows: [Quotations that the publishers reprinted by permission have been omitted from this digital publication. -- DVM]

Of all others quoted we beg indulgence, and express our sincere appreciation for the use of the many smaller references throughout the book.

The Publishers

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O Lord, revive [margin -- "preserve alive"] thy work in the midst of the years, in the midst of the years make known; in wrath remember mercy.

-- Habakkuk 3:2 --

# IT'S REVIVAL WE NEED!

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## **Chapter One** **REVIVAL AND EVANGELISM**

The need to more carefully define what we mean by the words revival and evangelism was never more urgent than now. It has been observed that both words have become ecclesiastical ragbags into which we have crammed all sorts of religious activities until they have lost their shape and their distinctive meanings.

The words revival and evangelism have been used interchangeably by so many for so long that their real distinctions have become blurred. And out of this confusion have come misunderstandings, disillusionment, and a growing disenchantment that expresses itself in questions like, "Do revivals pay?" and, "What's wrong with our evangelism?"

While all the confusion and cynicism cannot be explained by semantic differences, yet a clear understanding of the meaning, objectives, limitations, and potentials of what these words symbolize would, in itself, go a long way towards clearing the atmosphere that is so heavy with criticism, questioning, uncertainty, and disillusionment concerning much of our evangelism today. For both words, on their way from Jerusalem to Jericho, have been beaten and robbed, and not only have the priests and the Levites gone by "on the other side"; they have often been the very ones wielding the clubs.

Even a brief glance at a dictionary would help one to see that revival means to reanimate, to renew, to awaken, to reinvigorate, to restore to new life that which is dying or dead. Evangelism, on the other hand, means announcing, with the purpose of persuasion, the good news of the gospel.

Revival is what the church experiences. Evangelism is what the church engages in.

Revival is spiritual renewal of God's people. Evangelism is confronting those without with the claims of Christ.

Revival is God crying to lethargic Christians: "Wake up -- and get to work." Evangelism is an awakened church crying to sinners: "Repent -- and be saved."

Revival is getting one's own heart warmed. Evangelism is setting other hearts on fire.

Revival is periodic. Evangelism is continuous.

Those who understand the difference between revival and evangelism never say, "Oh, we didn't have much of a revival -- just a lot of church members warmed over!"

But that is revival.



Revival is experienced by the church; evangelism is what a revived church does about its renewal.

Those of insight and penetration have always distinguished between revival and evangelism. For instance, Dr. Paul Rees has said that "revival and evangelism, although closely linked, are not to be confounded. Revival is an experience in the church; evangelism is an expression of the church."

In an editorial in Christianity Today, April 9, 1965, under the title "What the Church Needs Most," were these words: "Revival and evangelism are not identical, although the word 'revival' is frequently used to designate soul-winning efforts directed toward unbelievers ... Revival will revitalize God's people ... But revival is not always welcome. For many its price is too high. There is no 'cheap grace' in revival. It entails repudiation of self-satisfied complacency, of easy preference of the good to the best, and of idols. Revival turns careless living into vital concern. It replaces conformity to the world with obedience to Jesus Christ. It exchanges self-indulgence for self-denial. Yet revival is not a miraculous visitation falling upon an unprepared people like a bolt out of the blue. It comes when God's people earnestly want revival and are willing to pay the price."

Over a hundred years ago Charles G. Finney said that "revival is nothing else than a new beginning of obedience to God." Fifty years ago Bishop Edwin Holt Hughes was saying that "by evangelism we mean any sustained effort to bring men and women to Christ." Twenty years ago J. D. Drysdale was saying that "revival is not a great ingathering of the lost, but a quickening of the saved." And ten years ago Arthur Wallis was saying, "Revival is necessary to counteract spiritual decline and to create spiritual momentum ... In revival the church dormant becomes the church militant." And about the same time, George Sweazey was saying in his book *Effective Evangelism*: "Evangelism is every possible way of reaching outside the Church to bring people to faith in Christ and membership in His Church"; while Lin D. Cartwright said in his book, *Evangelism for Today*, "The older members need constant re-motivation. Herein is the chief value of the revival meeting."

James Burns, writing in 1909 in his book *Revivals, Their Laws and Leaders*, indicated what revival means in the church when he wrote: "To the church a revival means humiliation, a bitter knowledge of unworthiness, and an open and humiliating confession of sin on the part of her ministers and people. It is not the easy and glowing thing many think it to be, who imagine that it fills the pews, and reinstates the church in power and authority. It comes to scorch before it heals; it comes to condemn ministers and people for their unfaithful witness, for their selfish living, for their neglect of the cross, and to call them to daily renunciation, to an evangelical poverty, and to a deep and daily consecration.

"This is why," Burns continues, "a revival has ever been unpopular with large numbers within the church. Because it says nothing to them of power such as they have learned to love, or of ease, or of success; it accuses them of sin, it tells them that they are dead, it calls them to awake, to renounce the world, and to follow Christ."

It is Burns, also, who emphasized what he termed the "periodicity" of revivals, and how by their very nature they were limited in duration and how absurd it was to speak of "continuous revival." As modern a writer as Martin Marty says that "the very word revival carries with it a tone of the transitory." And D. E. Halteman distinguishes between revival and evangelism as follows: "Let us

carefully distinguish between revival and the conversion of sinners. A revival belongs exclusively to the church. It is a season of intensified Christian activity in religion. The conversion of sinners is the result of this condition in the church."

But our own men have been saying the same things for a long time. Dr. Chapman, in an editorial in the *Herald of Holiness* of February 1, 1922, in discussing the difference between revival and evangelism, said that "a perpetual revival is a contradiction in terms. The church should always be engaged in evangelism, but a revival, by its very nature is periodic."

In an article in the *Herald of Holiness* of November 23, 1921, C. Warren Jones said: "When the church is thoroughly aroused and able to carry a burden, the revival will be completed in that sinners will be saved. In many places the most difficult thing to do is to awaken the church. The awakening must come first. Keep things in their proper order. Leading the world to Jesus Christ is the last thing and is the natural outgrowth of quickened believers and an awakened church."

"The first and greatest task of the evangelist," said C. W. Ruth in the *Herald* of July 30, 1924, "is to produce a revival atmosphere. Warnings and exhortations do but little to win the unsaved until the church is moved and warmed and ready."

"Our Master said that, 'when he the Spirit of truth is come, he will reprove the world,' and the context shows that He means when the Holy Spirit has come to the church sinners will be convicted of sin."

"There must be genuine heart burden," Ruth continues. "There must be unfeigned soul travail for lost men. There must be the breaking up and melting away of pride and indifference and self-sufficiency. There must be an outpouring of the Holy Spirit."

Dr. D. Shelby Corlett said in an editorial in the *Herald* of October 22, 1938: "A revival is the quickening of the Church into greater and more aggressive spiritual activities ... Indifferent and lukewarm Christians cannot bring a revival -- they need one ... We are becoming too formal, too professional, too denominational, to precipitate much spiritual blessing upon the people of this generation. Only a genuine spiritual revival will meet the need."

And the present editor of the *Herald of Holiness*, Dr. W. T. Purkiser, said in an editorial in May 10, 1961: "Revival concerns Christians who have drifted out of contact with the battle for souls. Revival is the breath of God's Spirit fanning the glowing coals into white-hot flame. Revival is the awakening of deep concern for the lost and spiritually needy. Revival is the renewal of personal involvement in the spiritual aspects of God's work in the world."

"Evangelism," Dr. Purkiser concludes, "is the overflow of revival, and the salvation of the unsaved and sanctification of believers is its end result."

And more recently, Dr. Mendell Taylor, in his book *Exploring Evangelism*, says: "Revival is the Lord at work in the church; evangelism is the church at work for the Lord."

But farther back, and far more important than these human insights and distinctions, is the Word of God. That is the ultimate Authority for any list of priorities.

David gives the true sequence of revival and evangelism when he cries: "Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me ... Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation; and uphold me with thy free spirit. Then will I teach transgressors thy ways; and sinners shall be converted unto thee."

Notice that sequence: first, restoration and renewal -- that is revival; then outreach -- that is evangelism.

It is Jesus who gave the commands: "Tarry ye," and, "Go ye." "Tarry ye" -- that is revival. "Go ye" -- that is evangelism. And it must ever be in that sequence. Effective evangelism waits on revival. The disciples found it so on the Day of Pentecost, and Christians have found it so ever since. Without the tarrying, the going is ineffective and fruitless and frustrating. But when the heart is truly revived, renewed, and filled by His Spirit, effective evangelism is a natural and inevitable consequence. Most of the confusion surrounding our evangelism today is the result of our wanting evangelistic results without being willing to pay revival prices. Forgetting, or neglecting, the divine sequence: revival first, then evangelism, we too often engage in evangelism when we should have experienced revival.

The solution to the problems of evangelism in any day, in any church, and in any denomination is revival. A revived church never asks, "Do revival meetings pay?" -- it's too busy having them. A vigorously spiritual church never asks, "What's wrong with our evangelism?" -- it's too busy evangelizing.

It is Dr. Ralph Sockman who reminds us that "revival is not going down the street with a great big drum; revival is going back to Calvary with a great big sob."

But that's just it; we'd rather strut than sob.

Of course it's cheaper, and more fun, to strut. But after we have called attention to our beautiful new buildings and our increased finances and our rising respectability just so long, there begins to be an uneasiness, a certain gnawing sensation at the edges of our minds and hearts and we begin to ask, "Is this really why we've come to the Kingdom -- to compete with others on the basis of bigness and respectability? Is this really why we're here? Is this really what it's all about?" And a painful reevaluation begins. And this, I submit, is where we are.

I suggest that for myself, and for all of us, it's time we quit strutting and began sobbing.

If revival means renewal of right relationship with God and others, if it means a quickening of the Spirit in the hearts of Christians, if it means a new sensitivity to the needs of others -- then how absurd to ask: "Do revivals pay?" Of course they pay! They couldn't help but pay! And, I may ask, is there anything else that pays so much?

Do we say, because indifferent Nazarenes do not attend prayer meetings, that we should do away with prayer meetings? Do we say, because cold-hearted Nazarenes do not attend Sunday night services, that we should do away with Sunday night services? Do we say, because backslidden Nazarenes run off to the beaches or to the mountains or to the lakes instead of attending Sunday school on Sunday morning, that we should do away with Sunday school?

If we used the same yardstick on all religious activities that we sometimes use on our special meetings, we might stop altogether.

Many forms of evangelistic activity may not pay, but revivals always pay. They always have, from Old Testament times on, and they always will.

If these distinctions between revival and evangelism are valid, our slogans are not always true to the priorities. If by "Evangelism First" we mean priority of activity, then it is absolutely correct. If, however, it means priority of need, then the slogan should be "Revival First." For it is only revived, renewed, Spirit-filled hearts that can make any evangelism spiritually effective.

If evangelism, then, is not the cause but the result of a spiritual church, how true the title: IT'S REVIVAL WE NEED!

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## **Chapter Two** **THE PLACE OF REVIVAL IN NAZARENE EVANGELISM**

If we can agree, then, that revival is spiritual renewal in the hearts of Christians, and that evangelism is the natural and inevitable response and expression of that renewal, we may discuss more knowingly, I trust, the place of revival in Nazarene evangelism.

No one, surely, could read anyone's history of the Church of the Nazarene without realizing that revival has been the central thrust of Nazarene evangelism from the very beginning of the church.

As has often been said, the Church of the Nazarene was born in revival fires; and from the time Dr. Bresee organized the first Church of the Nazarene in Los Angeles in 1895, it was a place of revival fire and evangelistic zeal. The story of the Church of the Nazarene in its finest conquests and victories is the story of its repeated revivals and its dynamic evangelism. And, thank God, the church has never lacked for men to remind it of its origin and its destiny.

B. F. Haynes, for instance, the first editor of the Herald of Holiness, said in one of his early editorials in 1913 "To preach and testify and push the work of holiness, so that men and women are sanctified wholly, is the work to which the Pentecostal Church of the Nazarene is called ... To do simply the ordinary routine of forms and ceremonies does not demand this movement ... A professed Church of the Nazarene which is just beating time had as well be wiped off the face of the earth. We come to bring fire ... This is our calling."

It was Dr. R. T. Williams who said: "We were born in a revival atmosphere and we must continue to live in such an atmosphere if we hope to live at all. It is a genuine holiness evangelism that brought the church into existence and the same type of evangelism is essential to our existence and success. Let there be no tendency to substitute programs and sentimentalism for old-fashioned, Holy Ghost, God-sent revivals."

Dr. J. B. Chapman, in editorials, in sermons, and in books, repeatedly brought the church face-to-face with the primacy of revivals in its evangelism. "Our principal business," he said, "is to promote revivals. The one striking feature of the Nazarene movement is intense revival fire." And in an editorial in the Preacher's Magazine of March, 1940, he asked, "What is the proper program of the church?" and he answered: "The program of the church is a revival program ... The direct fruitage consists of saved souls, but in the process of saving souls, the church itself is saved."

And who could ever forget the memory or the influence of this same man, eighteen years a general superintendent, standing in Kansas City in January of 1946, pleading with the leaders of the church, and through them with Nazarenes everywhere, to go "all out for souls"? Listen to those words that still scorch our complacency and pride: "Let us get off our high horses and pay the price for revival ... A revival that, like a summer shower, will purify the atmosphere of our churches everywhere, and

which will awaken dormant forces of our people young and old ... A revival that will make this namby-pamby, soft-handed, compromising, cringing sort of holiness as obsolete as Phariseeism was on the Day of Pentecost ... I want that kind of revival because it takes that kind to really revive me."

In the general superintendents' address to the General Assembly of 1936 were these words: "It is not enough for any generation to be told about the great revivals of the past. There must be a fresh baptism with fire for the sons and daughters, and the atmosphere of revival must prevail in every new day until the Son of Man shall come."

And in the General Assembly of 1940, the general superintendents said: "It was genuine holiness evangelism that brought the church into existence and the same type of evangelism is essential to our existence and success ... We want more than protracted meetings. We want revivals -- revivals that stir our people to the depths of their souls."

No one could possibly read the history of the formative period of the Church of the Nazarene without coming to the inescapable conclusion that revival, real Holy Ghost revival, was absolutely central and primary in the Nazarene evangelism of yesterday.

But that was yesterday. And yesterday is history. And even though the exploits of yesterday thrill us, and the passionate commitments of those who shaped that day inspire us, we cannot turn to that church today, for that was the church that was.

But today is our day, and while we can determine better where we are by knowing where we've been -- for churches, like persons, are never wholly independent of their origins -- yet we live and work in the church that is.

While I know of the evangelism of yesterday only by hearsay and reading, I speak of our evangelism today out of experience, because my entire ministry has been during the years of the early forties to the present time. I am now (1966) in my twenty-fifth year of continuous evangelism and have conducted over six hundred revival meetings around the world.

Nazarenes today are asking in varying degrees of criticism or concern, "What is wrong with our evangelism?" or, "Whom can I get for an evangelist?" There seems to be the implication that three hundred evangelists wholly determine the state of evangelism in the entire church. Forgotten is the fact that there are over eight thousand other Nazarene preachers, and over four hundred thousand Nazarene church members, everyone of whom either helps or hinders the cause of evangelism in the church.

But the question is not new. For years now there have been those who have asked sincerely, and with a spirit of earnest quest, why Nazarene evangelism was not more effective, and how it could be made so.

Dr. D. Shelby Corlett, for instance, in an editorial in the Herald of Holiness of January 2, 1937 -- or twenty-nine years ago -- asked, "Are our evangelistic efforts successful? Are we reaping the largest possible results from our evangelistic meetings? These questions are being asked by pastors

and laymen." And in an editorial entitled "Are We Reaching the Unsaved?" which appeared in the Herald of December 28, 1942, he said: "Not long since, an evangelist said that during a ten-day evangelistic meeting there were six services when every person present professed entire sanctification -- not an unsaved, unsanctified or backslidden person present in sixty percent of the meetings ... This situation is causing many to question the advisability of conducting evangelistic meetings." And that was twenty-four years ago!

In the Preacher's Magazine for March of 1938, Dr. Chapman wrote: "I realize that there are many who say that the time of revivals is past." And that was twenty-eight years ago! And even farther back, in an article by B. T. Flanery in the Herald for February 9, 1921, under the title "Are the Days of Mighty Revivals Past?" his opening sentence was, "We are often met with the statement, You cannot have an old-time revival in these days." And that was forty-five years ago!

"It is hard work to get a crowd," said E. O. Chalfant in an article in the Herald of February, 1941; "it never was easy, generally speaking. I know it has been for fifty years. There has always been the remnant of the faithful few, but to get the unsaved even to listen has always been a difficult task." And that was twenty-five years ago!

And in March of the same year, 1941, A. S. London wrote: "We have discovered that our revivals are very unsatisfactory. It is estimated that we are having five thousand revival efforts each year in our denomination. They are reaching but few new people. It is a warming over of the same six and half dozen in too many instances ... General leaders, pastors, evangelists and laymen are discontented with our average revival." And please remember that those words appeared in the Herald twenty-five years ago!

And as for evangelists and their prestige and image, P[ascal]. P[erry]. Belew had an article in the Herald of Holiness, September 23, 1931, under the title "Shall We Abandon the Revival Meeting?" in which he said: "For several years the writer has observed a growing tendency to depreciate the office and work of the evangelist. At conferences and assemblies he seldom gets more than a passing recognition while at preachers' meetings he is most unfavorably discussed. The evangelist has long been considered a 'necessary evil,' but is coming to be considered an evil that is unnecessary." And that was thirty-five years ago!

But perhaps the most revealing example of the persistence of these questions is found in Dr. D. Shelby Corlett's message to the first evangelism conference ever held in the Church of the Nazarene -- held in Kansas City in January of 1947. In that message Dr. Corlett said: "It has been an apparent fact that for some time we have been reaching few new people in our revival meetings. We need a revival!

"Primarily, we need a revival among all of us: superintendents, general church executives, our college men, our evangelists, our pastors, our missionaries -- all of us need to have a fresh outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon us.

"We know our problem. We pretty well know what it will take to pay the price to find a solution. The question is, will we pay that price?" ...

[A portion of the text here, containing quotations used by permission, is omitted from this digital publication. -- DVM]

While there has been much criticism of evangelism in general, and revival in particular, among writers and leaders of many denominations, the Church of the Nazarene has been committed to holiness evangelism and revival as a central agency of that commitment through its history. And one need go no farther back than the last General Assembly to substantiate that commitment.

Yet there are disturbing differences in the questions concerning revivals and evangelism in the church today. For one thing, the questioning seems to be more widespread than ever before. And for another, there is a new note of cynicism in the asking. Indeed, some are not so much asking the questions; they are already convinced in their own minds -- and are trying to convince others -- that evangelism -- except their own brand -- is a spent force; and that evangelists are no longer needed in the church.

Anyone who thinks these are extreme statements simply doesn't get around and hear people talk -- even some preachers. Those who make periodic surveys are amazed and disturbed at the intensity of the feeling. And, of course, evangelists come in for more than their share of the criticism. But far more disturbing than the criticism of evangelists is the criticism of evangelism, especially in regard to revivals.

Let me cite a few examples, and I don't mention names because this is not a discussion of personalities, but principles. The principle is this: A disparagement or neglect of revival is always a spiritual problem.

A Nazarene layman, a professional man, was asked by his pastor why he was not attending the revival. "Well," he said, "just to be honest with you, as far as I'm concerned, revival-time is not the Church of the Nazarene at its best." Some months later, however, this man was reclaimed and confessed before the church that he had been backslidden for years. Now, reports his pastor, that man is in Sunday night services, prayer meetings -- and attends faithfully all services of revivals, unless he is called out by emergencies.

When I am told that certain people do not attend week-night revival services, I usually ask, "Do they attend Sunday night services and prayer meetings? Do they participate in calling programs?" And with but few exceptions, for reasons of health or demands of shift work, the pattern is the same: the very ones who do not attend revival services are careless about attending Sunday night services and prayer meetings. Those who neglect revivals will also neglect anything else that makes spiritual demands upon them.

There are those who hesitate to invite influential friends to revival services because they do not want their friends to have that "image" of the church. And yet dedicated Nazarenes, whether ministers or laymen, have through the years felt that revival-time was the image the church should build and maintain -- if the Church of the Nazarene was to justify its existence and do the work God had called it to do.



When members of the staff of a large Nazarene church urged their pastor to have a revival, citing several indications that revival was certainly needed, the pastor replied: "We don't want or need that emotional flag-waving around here." But, since that time that pastor has stood in his own pulpit, and before his ministerial friends, and confessed that he had not been spiritually what he should have been and had become so busy with other things that he had neglected his primary responsibilities.

Another pastor, defending his criticism of revivals, said, "All right. If revivals are so important, how is it that Church took in thirty-one members on profession of faith last year and they haven't even tried to have a revival in eighteen months?" It was suggested to him that the reason was a dedicated Nazarene laywoman still true to her convictions and the urgencies of her faith and witnessing who was out there day after day, calling on people, praying with them in their homes, and talking to them about joining the church.

The neglect and disparagement of revivals also produce a distortion of emphasis that may take years to correct -- if it is ever corrected.

A young assistant pastor said to his father, who was an evangelist: "Dad, what you're doing is obsolete; it's passe'."

When that father told me that I said, "Isn't that interesting? I have quotes from two Methodist bishops whose books were published in 1898 and 1900, who used those exact words in describing the need for new evangelistic methods. The old methods, which had been used with marvelous spiritual success throughout their history, were now obsolete, they said. That was in 1900. And yet we Nazarenes came along in 1908 and picked up those very same methods of evangelism and have used them effectively in our greatest and finest spiritual conquests."

Have we really outgrown our methods, or have we outrun our spirituality? Have our methods become stale, or have we? Are our methods obsolete, or are we too depleted spiritually to use them effectively?

Whether for a layman, a preacher, a local church, a college zone, or a denomination, the neglect and disparagement of revival meetings is a spiritual problem. For revival is always appreciated by the spiritual, tolerated by the lukewarm, and detested by the backslidden.

But this idea that we can get along quite well, thank you, without revivals, or that our methods of evangelism are hopelessly outmoded, obsolete, and passe', has infected too many of our people. To be sure, they are not a majority, thank God, but even one is one too many. And whoever he is, on whatever level he operates, any Nazarene who disparages revival is an enemy of the Church of the Nazarene. He is tampering with the very God-blest agency that has given dynamic and thrust to holiness evangelism, which alone made our existence necessary, and which alone makes our continued existence meaningful.

When I hear those who say we need to change our methods, I ask them just what methods they'd like to change. Do they mean that we no longer need the altar call? Do they mean that we no longer

need to preach for a verdict? Do they mean we no longer need times of reviving, or renewing, or coming to new levels of commitment and involvement?

If that's what they mean, other churches have already traveled that road. I attended a conference on evangelism in San Francisco. Throughout the conference, speakers were quoting one of their leaders as saying they had lost something vital at the heart of their denomination. After the bishop, who was at that time chairman of the Board of Evangelism, had given a talk on methods, he opened the meeting for discussion. One pastor asked, "Bishop, should we ever give an altar call?" The bishop looked at the floor for a while, then answered: "Well, once in a great while, perhaps -- if you know how to use real wisdom." During the discussion the pastor of one of the largest churches said, "We all know there was a time when the altar call was vital, but we also know that that time is past. We simply cannot appeal to the intelligent people of our congregations today through the means of an altar call."

As I went away from that session I thought, Here they are saying they have lost something vital, and now they're saying the altar call is no longer vital. Is it the altar call that is no longer vital, or is it that they have lost the spiritual vitality that made it vital?

They did away with the anxious seat because no one was anxious anymore.

They gave up the mourners' bench because their preaching made no mourners.

They gave up the inquiry room because no one was inquiring about the salvation of his soul anymore.

They gave up the altar call because their preaching produced no conviction for sin and there were no seekers.

They quit proclaiming the gospel of a crucified and risen Lord and began quoting Tillich and Niebuhr and Sartre. But no one was ever convicted of sin by quoting to him Tillich or Niebuhr or Sartre. It is still the gospel, and only the gospel, that is the "power of God unto salvation."

I submit that if that is the end of the road that some would have us travel, then we should know it now. And if we are going to be nothing more than a second-rate edition of some old-line denomination, then there is no need or excuse whatever for our existence. We justify our existence only by being Nazarene churches, true to our mission of holiness evangelism.

David could do nothing in Saul's armor, and neither can we. And before we make fun of the slingshots and the stones, let's make sure we're killing Goliaths with our fancier weapons. Before we make fun of the crude, heavy nets that others have used to catch boatloads of fish, let's make sure we're able to land a few with the flimsy, gossamer nets spun out of our psuedo intellectualism and phony sophistication.

This is no plea for what was, merely because it was. But until we come up with something better, let us remember that change is not necessarily progress. I doubt very seriously that anyone is going

to come up soon, if at all, with something that will make unnecessary the very methods which have been used in our finest spiritual and evangelistic conquests.

But that's just it: if these who are crying new methods -- and ridiculing, sometimes subtly, sometimes openly, the old -- were producing in the salvation of souls and sanctification of believers and the real fervor in their congregations that which characterized the old-time methods, then we could afford to listen to them.

But the sad truth is they aren't producing those results. In one area of the church a survey revealed that almost one-fourth of the churches had not scheduled a revival meeting during the entire year. Almost a third of the churches had not had a single seeker in the altar during the entire year. Is it any wonder that there was a decrease in church members, a decrease in Sunday school attendance and enrollment, and a decrease in General Budget giving for the year? In one of our larger churches it took 35 members and \$4,622 to get one member on profession of faith last year. In another it took 75 members and \$22,132 to get one member on profession of faith, and the church showed no gain at all in members for the entire year. In still another it took 68 members and \$10,071 to get one member on profession of faith last year. And in another church, of medium size, it took 91 members and \$19,070 to get each of the 3 new members it took in on profession of faith last year. In fact 4 churches with a combined membership of 3,350 took in only 63 members on profession of faith last year.

Contrast this with a survey another district superintendent made in which he found that the 7 most productive churches on his district had had at least three revivals last year, and one of them, a church of less than 50 members, had 4 revivals -- and that church took in 18 members on profession of faith.

The facts may be unpleasant, but they are clear facts, and they prove that those churches that are most faithful in running a distinctly Nazarene program are the most productive of solid spiritual results; while those churches which are trying to ape the older and more formal churches and are, by design or default, getting away from the distinctive Nazarene emphasis of Holy Ghost revivals, are the least productive and least fruitful of our entire church.

There are any number of other churches doing everything else we are doing -- except having holiness revivals -- and are often doing it better.

Building buildings? Other churches are building bigger and fancier ones than we can put up. But when has any dead man, or any dead church, been revived by placing it in a fancier and more expensive casket?

Gaining in social prestige? Other churches have had more than we'll have in the foreseeable future, and they have had it for years.

Getting bigger and more professional choirs and staffs? Others have bigger and more professional ones and they have had them for years.

Everything we're doing, you see, except having holiness revivals, the other churches are doing, and often doing it better. It is interesting to know -- and should be disturbing to contemplate -- that these older denominations have made their biggest membership gains, have built their biggest buildings, have had their biggest increase in finances, have gained their highest social acceptance and prestige -- after they lost their mission.

Some Methodist bishops were saying in 1900 that they needed new methods in evangelism -- and they got them. Then in the 1930's another bishop, Edwin Holt Hughes, was saying, "During the past thirty or forty years a marked change has been taking place in Methodism ... Not only have revival meetings been going out of vogue but the evangelistic spirit has been subsiding."

Then in the 1960's another bishop, Gerald Kennedy, said at a conference in Denver: "We have lost our mood for evangelism, and we no longer have an evangelistic expectancy."

I submit that this is an inevitable progression. Whenever any church -- no matter whether it be Methodist or Nazarene -- begins to disparage and discredit the very dynamic which made it vital and necessary, that church is on the way to losing its vision and its mission.

First, a church loses its passion and abandons its methods. Then it loses its message. Then it loses its mission. And flashier statistics do not compensate or hide that loss.

To quote statistics about increases in finances and members and churches as proof of the blessing of God can be as absurd as the president of General Motors getting up before the stockholders and saying, "Friends, God has certainly blessed us this year. We have had the biggest volume, the biggest net, the largest increase in dealerships at home and overseas, and the highest public acceptance in our history. It is truly wonderful what the Lord has done."

We need to listen well to those who warn us against the danger of using godly labels on things that are not necessarily God's. And statistics, alone, whether for a local church or a denomination, do not necessarily mean that God is blessing or that the organization is keeping true to its mission. And the greatest tragedy that can come to men, or movements, is to lose sight of their destinies.

Let me repeat: This danger is only an incipient one for us today. The great majority of our people -- preachers and laymen -- still believe in revivals and vital holiness evangelism. But it is too late to cry, "Fire!" when the house has burned to the ground. It is too late to call the termite exterminators when the building is crumbling. The time to warn and to speak and to act is when the danger first appears on the horizon.

The need is so great and the urgencies of our times are so demanding that we need all the methods we can think of. My plea is that we should not give up that which has been tried and proved productive until we've come up with something better. The doctors didn't throw away aspirin when they discovered penicillin. They didn't throw away their scalpels when they discovered Xray. And the greatest argument for revival is that no one -- repeat -- no one has ever found an adequate substitute for it. And those men and churches which feel the least need of revival are the very ones that need it most.

If we allow the fire of revivals to go out, there is no other flame to take its place.

# IT'S REVIVAL WE NEED!

By  
C. William Fisher

## **Chapter Three** **THE CRISIS -- IT IS INEVITABLE**

I said in my introduction that we were approaching a profound and inevitable crisis in our evangelism. I have mentioned a few of the reasons why the crisis is profound and have suggested a few dimensions of the crisis.

Now to the reasons why the crisis is inevitable.

Most of those reasons would be included in the economic, social, and spiritual changes inherent in a people completing the cycle from sect to church, from movement to institution.

"In all religious movements," says a religious historian, "there is a period of danger. It comes when the first passionate enthusiasm begins to die down, and the statesmen are called in to regulate and organize."

It is Lord Acton who lists the three stages in the development of institutions: first, there is the cause; then there is the institution which arises to promote the cause; then there is the subtle shift of allegiance from cause to institution. Where we are in that progression is not within the scope of this discussion except as it applies to our evangelism. But one of the most attested facts of church history is the prevalence of the economic and social pressures exerted at each stage in that transition.

Wesley saw that a revival movement carried within it the seeds of its own declension unless there were adequate correctives to these economic and social pressures. "I do not see," Wesley said, "how it is possible in the nature of things for any revival of religion to continue long. For religion must necessarily produce industry and frugality, and these cannot but produce riches. But as riches increase so will pride, anger and the love of the world in all its branches."

Richard Niebuhr, the sociologist, has said that a sect-type organization, by its very nature, is valid for one generation only, as the forces that brought it into existence would be largely dissipated by the second and third generation. The wife of General William Booth saw in her own lifetime the Salvation Army become a respected institution with positions and places of preferment, and on her deathbed she said to her daughter: "Katie, why is it that God can't keep a thing pure for more than one generation?" That is, admittedly, pessimistic; for there have been churches which remained true to their doctrines and evangelistic commitments for several generations.

But we are living in accelerated times. And these economic and social pressures are more quickly and more devastatingly felt today. With our increased affluence and social acceptance there is too often a corresponding lessening of the spiritual intensity, with a decreasing concern for souls -- and an increasing concern about our image and our denominational profile.

William Warren Sweet, writing in 1944, placed the Nazarenes among the churches of "the disinherited," or "the churches of the underprivileged." I wonder what he would say if he were writing today. We certainly are no longer "disinherited" and most certainly are no longer "underprivileged." An evangelistic singer told me that the song "Zion's Hill" no longer brought shouts, and the words, "A tent or a cottage, why should I care?" brought mostly boredom. But we do care -- terribly! All of us do. And the implications of that more substantial investment in the status quo, economic and social and religious, give substantiation to the inevitability of the crisis in our evangelism.

Dr. Eric E. Jorden, writing in the Preacher's Magazine of May-June, 1952, in an article under the title "Problems in the Growth of a Sect into a Church," wrote these words: "The spiritual need and economic forces which in one generation drew the sect out of the church turn about to transform the sect into a church. The last century witnessed the completion of the process in the case of Methodism. The Church of the Nazarene is now in the period of transformation.

"A sect may be further distinguished from the church in that the sect is a conflict group, whereas the church is an accommodated group. A sect is a religious organization that is at war with the existing mores. It seeks to cultivate a state of mind and establish a code of morals different from that of the world about it, and for this it claims divine authority. A sect in its final form may be described as a movement of social reform and regeneration that has become institutionalized. Eventually, when it has succeeded in accommodating itself to other rival organizations, when it has become tolerant and is tolerated, it tends to assume the form of a denomination.

"We may as well face fact," Dr. Jorden concludes, "the Church of the Nazarene has reached such a place."

It is Elmer Clark who states that all denominations began as sects, and the sect is born out of a combination of spiritual need and economic forces.

"The sects themselves," Clark affirms in his *Small Sects in America*, "do not recognize the economic factor in their history, though it stands out plainly in their protest against the elements which only wealth can secure -- fine churches, organs, costly raiment, indulgence in worldly amusement, etc. It is the growth in wealth and culture that brings about departures from what the sects feel as primitive Christianity. Increase in wealth eliminates the frontier simplicity and creates an atmosphere of affluence uncongenial to simple souls. Fine edifices appear in which well-dressed and bejeweled congregations worship to the accompaniment of instrumental music and salaried choirs. Class distinctions emerge, and social life within the church partakes of the spirit of 'the world.' The favorite taboos of the poor against the theater going and similar exercises weaken; the difference between the 'saved' and the 'unsaved' becomes less apparent. In the minds of the conservative element the church has become apostate and worldly. Revolt ensues, and a sect is born."

Clark sounds like he is writing a sequel to "the formative years" of any church. "Then as a church increases in wealth," he continues, "there accompanies it an advance in education. A sect starts out with a ministry by and large untrained except in the leadership of the Holy Ghost. Bible colleges develop into colleges of liberal arts. And the advance in education has an inevitable effect upon

doctrinal emphases, modes of religious expression, and methods of propaganda within the church. Among the students of theology there comes a divergence of opinion concerning traditional theology. This modification in belief is accompanied by the gradual elimination of emotional expression, less emphasis on radical conversion experiences, the lessening of the revival method of adding members to the church. Advance in the educational life of the church inevitably is followed by a growing emphasis on religious education; thus the frontier religion dear to thousands of souls is gradually eliminated."

Liston Pope, in his book, *Millhands and Preachers*, gives essentially the same analysis of the economic and social pressures exerted on a people in transition from movement to institution. He lists these stages in that development:

- from economic poverty to economic wealth, as disclosed especially in the value of church property and the salary paid to ministers.
- from a psychology of persecution to a psychology of success and dominance.
- from emphasis on evangelism and conversion to emphasis on religious education.
- from a high degree of congregational participation in the services and administration of the religious group to delegation of responsibility to a comparatively small percentage of membership.
- from fervor in worship service to restraint; from positive action to passive listening.
- from reliance on spontaneous "leadings of the Spirit" in religious services to administration procedure.

Who is there to say definitely just exactly where we are in that transition -- but who is there so blind that he cannot see the possibilities of that pattern emerging?

And how does all this relate to revivals and evangelism? Most directly and inescapably! For whatever affects the spirituality of a church affects vitally its evangelism and, as we have seen again and again in this study, effective evangelism is the result of revived and renewed and Spirit-filled people. When there is a secular sag in the hearts of the people, there will be a spiritual sag in the life of the church; and unless that spiritual sag is corrected by revival and renewal, there can be no effective evangelism.

A secular-minded, materialistically oriented church may talk much about evangelism, and even engage in it; but it will be a sterile evangelism, powerless to produce spiritual results and a mockery of its former glory. As Samuel Chadwick said of that kind of evangelism: "There may be noise; there may be crowds; there may be high emotion; but there is no Shekinah."

It is inevitable that any church will have problems with its evangelism when it becomes more concerned about status than about souls.



It is inevitable that every phase of a church's life and outreach will be affected when its people are moving from underprivileged to affluent, from Fords to Cadillacs, from three-thousand-dollar homes to thirty-thousand-dollar ones, from "glory barns" to million-dollar edifices, from grade-school diplomas to university degrees, from unskilled laborers to professional men, from the wrong side of the tracks to suburbia.

It is inevitable that any church, Nazarene or otherwise, undergoing such changes, will find its evangelism affected and will need to guard against the cooling of revival fervor and the erosion of its mood for evangelism.

Although it is inevitable that these economic and social pressures that have come to every church should come to the Church of the Nazarene -- and they are upon us -- it is not inevitable that we should be swamped by them, or swerved from our original mission because of them.

The crisis is inevitable, yes; that we come to a crossroads in our evangelism is inevitable, yes -- but that we take the wrong road in this time of crisis is not inevitable! Therein are the hope and the challenge.

# IT'S REVIVAL WE NEED!

By  
C. William Fisher

## **Chapter Four** **ALTERNATIVES TO REVIVAL**

One of the most frequent questions asked me these days is this: "What changes do you see in our evangelism today from what it was when you went into the field twenty-five years ago?"

There are several changes that should be obvious to even a casual observer. For one thing, there is a percentage decrease in the number of people who will come to pray with seekers. There are still numbers who will come down and kneel around the altar during the altar service, but too often they will yawn or look through their fingers, or will get up and sit on the front seats after they have "said a few words." The percentage of those who will really get under the load and pray until real victory comes gets smaller.

And, in some cases, why not? How often are pastors shaking hands and visiting while seekers are praying in the altar? It is hard for the laymen to feel burdened at the altar when their pastor is just visiting at the door.

Another change is the increasing difficulty in creating an evangelistic atmosphere. Many things have contributed to this, not the least of which is the type of building some of our churches have put up. It is almost impossible to create a sense of rapport, of audience participation, of "closeness" necessary to Nazarene-type services when there are a hundred and fifty people in an auditorium seating eight hundred. It is not just weeknight revival services that are affected; the same difficulty exists in regular Sunday night services and in prayer meetings. Some of the buildings we're building are absolutely destructive to what we say we're trying to do. One Nazarene church built a sanctuary seating almost nine hundred, and even on the night of their dedication, with a general superintendent preaching, there were 180 present.

Another change, not as definable but just as observable, is the lessening mood for personal involvement. An increasing percentage of people will attend rather faithfully, will listen attentively, will be very gracious socially, but are not willing to get involved in the hard, sweaty business of the actual work of the church. Any number of people are willing to sit in the grandstands and cheer, but fewer and fewer are willing to get down in the arena and grapple and bleed and agonize over souls and the real spiritual problems and potentials of the church.

Some might mention small week-night attendance. But it has always taken promotion and planning and effort to get even an appreciable number of outsiders. And why expect the outsiders when it is impossible to get many of the members to attend?

I have talked with those who were very active in the field of evangelism during the twenties and thirties and, while the reports varied from less than half to more than the Sunday school attendance, the consensus seemed to be that if they had an average week-night attendance of from one-half to

three-fourths of the average Sunday school attendance in that church they felt they weren't doing too badly.

Even in the big city-wide campaigns, with hundreds of churches participating, it has always taken tremendous planning and publicity and promotion and prayer to have crowds. In his Detroit campaign, Billy Sunday decided to do away with the "special nights," but after the third night the crowds had fallen off so terribly that he told his staff to go back to promoting the special nights. The Graham crusades today depend heavily upon special nights and special delegations and unprecedented outlays for publicity.

But these changes are not the most important or the most disturbing. I would like to suggest four major trends in our evangelism today that, in my opinion, are important and are disturbing.

Dr. Harold W. Reed did his doctoral dissertation on the forces that shape churches, and I asked him once if in his research he discovered any church, in which the trends away from its original mission had become pronounced, that had ever swung back. His answer was significant: "No," he said, "but I did come to the conclusion that if we knew the steps down we could deliberately refuse to take those steps."

The four trends that I mention are, in my opinion, steps down and away from real revival. Any one of them, if used exclusively, or as a substitute for revival, will eventually drain the dynamic and urgency from holiness evangelism in any church.

1. The first is the trend toward preaching-mission or convention-type meetings.

These are usually prestige meetings with general or district leaders as workers. No one could, or would even desire to, imply that much good is not accomplished in many of these meetings. Besides the spiritual good accomplished, it is beneficial for the church to be in close contact with the leaders of the church and to catch their vision and concern for the work of the entire church.

There is no objection here to these men holding meetings because of limiting the work available to evangelists. In fact it would be better if our general men, especially, would hold more revivals in local churches instead of saving themselves for the college revivals and the camp meetings and the union meetings -- none of which is a normal evangelistic situation. For in each case there is a captive audience with practically a built-in response. The true picture of evangelism in the church cannot be accurately evaluated in such situations. It is only in the local church revival that one sees the true picture of evangelism in the church, for there and only there can one see Nazarenes at their most concerned, or their most complacent.

Along with this trend is the increasing practice of pastors exchanging meetings. And again, these meetings can occasionally be profitable to all concerned. But the motivation is not always the best. For meetings are exchanged for all sorts of reasons -- from paying a wife's doctor bills, to getting a free hunting trip, to paying back a friend for a favor -- or providing the obligation for one. Dr. Richard Taylor told in one of his splendid editorials in the Nazarene Preacher of the pastor who

canceled a meeting on an evangelist so that he could have one of his pastor friends hold the meeting -- because the friend needed money to make a car payment!

"I see happening in the Nazarene church," said a retired Methodist preacher, "just what happened in my church -- the increasing use of connectional men and exchange of pastors for meetings. And while there was some good done in all those meetings, there was not the same urgency and all-out effort that had characterized our revivals of the past, until our laymen began to say, 'Why have revivals? -- we have the same kind of preaching in our regular services -- and sometimes it's better; we have good crowds on Sunday morning, but hardly any interest or crowds during the week.' So finally we quit even trying to have special meetings in the old revival sense."

There is no meeting, undertaken in Christ's name, but what accomplishes some good. But the pattern is clear: When the church is no longer vital enough to have revivals, or even to see the need for one, it resorts to all sorts of substitutes and it goes in for "Deeper Life Crusades," "Preaching Missions," "Exercises in Evangelism," etc. What's in a name? Nothing -- when the words are drained of their spiritual vitality! As has often been said, it does no harm, or good, to change labels on empty bottles. Of one of these "revivals," it was agreed all around that the folk had had a "nice little meeting."

May God forgive us for prostituting the cause of revival on the altars of our own selfishness or ambition or pride, and trying to hide the loss of our revival dynamic under the flimsy cloak of evangelistic "dignity" or "expediency."

2. Another trend that is a step down and away from genuine revival is the Nazarene union meeting.

That this type of meeting is used occasionally to great profit is readily admitted. But to make it the exclusive mass evangelistic thrust in a city is to weaken the revival emphasis and involvement in each of the churches participating.

Merger is not always a sign of strength; it is sometimes an indication of weakness. And in some cases the union meeting is resorted to in an abject admission of failure to have genuine revivals in local churches.

There are advantages to an occasional union meeting sponsored by Nazarene churches such as: pooled advertising, the chance to make a larger "impression" upon the community, the image of unity among the pastors and people of the various churches, the genuine development of fellowship among the Nazarenes in the community. All of these results are good and would be sufficient to merit an occasional union meeting.

But there are at least two distinct disadvantages of making this type of meeting the exclusive means of mass evangelism in a town or city:

a. The illusion that because of the larger crowds more good is being done. The man in charge of counting the crowds at one Nazarene union meeting of 7 churches said that the average crowd for

the seven nights was 356 -- in other words, an average of 50 per night per church attending the meeting. If the 7 churches had engaged in simultaneous meetings, and had averaged only 50 per night in each church, they would have considered it a failure; but because they had averaged 356 per night with 7 churches, they considered it a "success." One of those churches participating, when it went in for real revivals, had averaged over 200 per night in week-night attendance. But in the union meeting it took 7 churches to average 356. Is that progress?

b. Another disadvantage of the Nazarene union meeting is that some of the smaller churches participating in the union meeting simply cannot pay their budget for the union meeting and then be able to afford a revival in their own church. All of this tends to reduce the necessity for personal involvement in the matter of soul winning. And anything that reduces that sense of personal involvement and commitment and responsibility is ultimately harmful to the total evangelistic task of the church and is a step down and away from real revival -- which, by its very nature, is a renewal of the sense of personal involvement in the evangelism of the church.

I attended a breakfast with a group of pastors one month after they had closed such a union meeting. Not all of the participating pastors were there but there were ten present, and not one had, up to that time, received one new member as a direct result of the union meeting. The meeting had cost over five thousand dollars, and three of the churches were not having a revival in their own church that spring because of the expense of the union meeting. If the same amount of time and planning and money and prayer had gone into simultaneous meetings, there would have been more personal involvement on the part of the members, which, had there not been even one "outside" seeker at the altar, would have been beneficial.

"It is at the local church level," says Martin Marty in his book *The New Shape of American Religion*, "where the church's encounter with the world can be most violent, and most productive -- and where opposition from worldly Christians can become most intense ... [And while] the church revival, being on a more personal basis and challenge, does affect the morality and attitudes of fewer people, [it] affects them at greater depth."

And Marty continues with this analysis: "The local church is the front line. It is the cutting edge against the world. If that cutting edge is thought of as an institution that circles the globe, it will be impossible to hone or sharpen. But a local church can be honed, it can be sharpened, it can become more effective -- and if enough local churches are honed, or revived, then it will make a more effective contribution to the total task by being more effective in its local task."

The occasional use of the union meeting has merit, but to sacrifice the revival in the local church to the union meeting is a step down and away from that revival emphasis that has been the central thrust of the most effective Nazarene evangelism.

3. Another trend in our evangelism, and definitely a step down and away from real revival, is the one toward shorter meetings.

It is not surprising that many pastors and churches like this idea of shorter meetings. For one thing, it is cheaper; and for another, the normal life of the church is not, as they say, "disrupted" for as long.

It is also not surprising that evangelists find this arrangement more financially profitable. For almost any two one-week meetings will pay more than the average two-week meeting. And if there are books or records to sell, the shorter meetings mean just that many more "exposures."

But if the church is looking for the cheapest way out, it should dispense with special meetings altogether. And if evangelists are in the field merely for the money, they're in the wrong field.

No one will deny that one can usually see as many results in the altar in a one-week meeting as in a longer one. But, for that matter, in certain circumstances one can see as many seekers in a weekend, or even in a Sunday service, as in a longer meeting. But are numbers in the altar all we're after? Is this all that a revival should mean to a church? Revival, remember, is exclusively an experience of the church; evangelism is what the church does about its reviving. Are these shorter meetings really long enough to "let the plow down," and allow the Holy Spirit to do His work until there is genuine sense of need, of neglect, of coldness and leanness and growing indifference -- with the resultant cry for renewal and reviving and fresh warmth and movement of the Spirit within the hearts of the church members? Is the church really revived and renewed spiritually enough to conserve whatever evangelistic results may have been seen in the altar? Are the shorter meetings really revival? -- or just bits of evangelism? Of course a longer meeting is not always a revival either, but at least there is more opportunity for its becoming one.

We are creating many of our own problems and frustrations. For as shorter meetings produce less and less real change in the spiritual tone of the churches, increasing numbers of pastors and laymen are asking, "Why have revival meetings at all?" But that's just it: these meetings may not be revivals at all. They may be just bits of evangelistic activity -- and like one man said about aspirin: They don't cost much; they don't do much; and they're not worth much.

It is real revival that we need if our evangelism is to be meaningful and the fruits of it conserved. It is when Zion travails that souls are born. And travail can't be turned on and off like a spigot. Real spiritual births are a result of this travail. We can have religious "abortions" without it, but there can be no spiritual birth without it. The conversion of sinners -- not just people in the altar, but genuine conversion of sinners -- is a result of the revived condition of the church. It is precisely because we do not go in for real revival as often as we should that we have so much frustration and sense of futility in much of our evangelistic activities.

There are discount houses where one can buy merchandise; there are dealers who will sell cars for practically wholesale; but no one -- absolutely no one can cut the price of revival. There are no markdowns on the price tag of revival -- and when we think we've found a "bargain" in revival, we may find out that all we bought was a shoddy substitute.

Dr. Chapman once said that if Finney were alive very few Nazarene pastors would call him for meetings, because he didn't go in for quick results. It was a fundamental conviction with Finney that

the church first had to be revived before there could be any worthwhile evangelistic results. He would labor for days to produce a revival in the church, and when the church was revived then sinners would come crying, "What must I do to be saved?"

But we want quick results. Let's see something happen quickly -- no matter whether it lasts; let's get action. Our insistence on something happening quickly might be because we are afraid that if we tarried beyond the frenzy and the hubbub we might get down to our real needs and have our real shams exposed and be confronted with our real selves. And when that began to happen, we might lose part of our crowd. But would that be a tragedy?

In those ten days preceding Pentecost, the disciples began to lose their crowd until it got down to 120. Think of it -- three-fourths of the crowd had left! If some of us had been there we would have said, "Let's get a quartet in here, or a Hollywood singer -- we're losing our crowd. Let's at least get somebody in here to crack a few jokes and liven things up a bit. Let's get this show on the road."

But the 120, renewed and filled, did more in one day than they had done before in three years. And it is conceivable that one-fourth of our church members, if truly revived and filled, would accomplish far more than the over four hundred thousand Nazarenes we have on the rolls.

General Superintendent Walker said once that it was "possible to have a revival of God's work and have fewer in the church when the revival was over than when it began," and then he quoted John Wesley as saying, when he visited a society and found it "not strong": "We dismissed thirty members. Glory be to God."

Martin Marty suggests that "a willingness to step off the statistical treadmill for a moment, to lose status among the families of competing denominations, may be the better mark of stewardship and evangelism in the present moment."

There is no such thing as instant revival. And there is no such thing as instant evangelism. Revival is hard, sweaty business. And those who are interested in quick results are never interested in paying that kind of price. It is so much easier, and more sophisticated, to go around asking, "Do revivals pay?" or, "What's wrong with our evangelism?" than it is to get down on our knees before God and pray and agonize and cry and fast until revival comes.

A short meeting can be profitable occasionally, but when it becomes a steady diet it fails to nourish the church and is a step down and away from real revival.

4. The last trend I will mention is not as widespread as yet, but if resorted to exclusively, or as a substitute for revival, is definitely a step down -- and that is the substitution of visitation or personal evangelism for revivals.

But one is never a substitute for the other. Genuine revival, in fact, will make personal evangelism far more productive and necessary than any talk or series of talks about the advantages or methods of personal evangelism. Our people need not only the know-how; they need the wherewithal -- and revival can be the time of that motivation and dynamic.

It is a growing conviction that if our meetings are going to justify the time and expense and effort put into them, they simply must be times of reviving and renewal of the church members, with the inevitable increase in the effectiveness of visitation and personal evangelism after the revival. Most calling programs, in fact, would receive greater support and would produce more spiritual fruit if promoted after the revival rather than preceding it. It is not enough for us to be an evangelistic church -- we are that, thank God -- but we must be an evangelizing church. And what's the difference? An evangelistic church is one in which the pastor preaches evangelistically occasionally and promotes two or three evangelistic meetings a year. But an evangelizing church is a church filled with men and women who are so alive with the reality of Christ and so alert to their soul-winning opportunities that they will go day after day from house to house, or from heart to heart, and witness effectively to the reality of Christ in their hearts and lives. And the major task of every preacher -- whether pastor or evangelist or superintendent -- is to produce, with God's help, an evangelizing church. Real revivals are times of refreshing from the Lord, and those experiencing that refreshing not only see the need to witness -- they have a want-to in their hearts. All the knowledge about "ought to" and "how to" will not make any person a soul winner -- unless his heart is warmed and filled with God's Spirit.

We can, of course, knock on doors and invite to Sunday school and church without that renewing and refreshing from the Lord. And it is better to do that than to do nothing. But Fuller Brush salesmen or Avon callers can, and do, knock on doors and "witness" to the desirability of their product. And if we are to be anything more than religious peddlers we must have our hearts warmed and stirred and refreshed and filled periodically -- if our witness is to be spiritually productive. "Ye shall receive power" -- when? -- when we knock on doors? When we hand out Heralds? When we invite our friends? No. "Ye shall receive power" when the Holy Spirit comes upon you. Then whatever form your witnessing takes, God will make it spiritually meaningful and your evangelistic activity will advance His cause.

"Ye shall receive power ... and ye shall be witnesses unto me" everywhere you go. We can be witnesses without that power. We can be witnesses to a certain doctrine or a certain standard or to a certain church or to a certain preacher or teacher, or to the beauty or adequacy of a church plant -- we can be witnesses to all of these without any help at all from God. But if our witnessing does not find its center in Christ, we are off center. And to be an effective witness unto Christ takes more than knowledge, takes more than signing a calling pledge, takes more than human enthusiasm; it takes warm and full hearts -- warmed and filled by the fresh movement of His presence and power.

We evangelists are no Johnny-come-latelies to this idea of personal evangelism. Every evangelist I know emphasizes its importance. One of the most practical helps in personal witnessing that we have had is a little book called *Win Them*, written by Dr. Jarrette Aycock -- and he wrote it as an evangelist.

In my own meager attempts at writing, my first article in the *Herald of Holiness*, which appeared in August of 1942, was titled "Evangelism in a Changing World," and it was primarily a plea for personal evangelism, in which I said, "If an individual is really a follower of Christ he will soon realize that all of his religious work cannot be done in the church. Instead he will find himself bragging on Jesus and witnessing for Christ, wherever he goes -- in the home, in the shop, in the



store, on the street -- in such a way that others will see Him and want Him and accept Him as their personal Lord and Saviour!"

I am just as convinced that that is the only effective method of evangelism that really meets the challenge of a changing world as I was when I wrote those words twenty-four years ago. But I am more convinced now than I was then that we must have revival, real revival, if all our witnessing and going is to be meaningful and spiritually productive. Every book that I have tried to write except one has emphasized this truth, and three of them have been exclusively about personal involvement in soul winning.

And yet there are some today who feel they are springing something new on the church when they advocate personal evangelism. But as long ago as 1932 the Young People's Society adopted this as its primary emphasis, and in 1948 the entire church launched its "Crusade for Souls," which had as its primary emphasis this matter of personal soul winning.

So the Church of the Nazarene has been busy promoting personal evangelism long before some of those who are advocating it as a substitute for revival were even born. And the method didn't start with us; it started on the Day of Pentecost. But then, as now, it was not a substitute for but a supplement to the public proclamation of the gospel. All those who think they are suggesting something new should remember that every discovery in evangelism is a recovery.

Each of these evangelistic emphases can be profitable in its place, but whenever any one of them is promoted as a substitute for genuine revival it is a step down and away from that revival emphasis which has been the central agency of our most effective evangelism from the very beginning of our church. And if we fail to recognize the danger and insist on taking those steps down, then we will be led down that well-travelled road that leads to an evangelism wherein, as one put it, "the conference table replaces the mourners' bench, the planning session replaces the prayer meeting, the organizers replace the agonizers, and the promoters replace the passion-filled."

That may be evangelism, but that is a juiceless, tearless, powerless, emasculated evangelism that is a mockery and a denial of that vigorous and effective evangelism the church engaged in when the tides of revival were running strong.

# IT'S REVIVAL WE NEED!

By  
C. William Fisher

## Chapter Five IT'S REVIVAL WE NEED!

If revival is renewal of right relationship with God and man, if revival is quickening of the Spirit in the hearts of Christians, if revival is replenishing the passion for the lost, if revival is refreshing from the Lord -- then what need could possibly be more urgent than the need for revival?

### 1. We need revival to maintain our doctrines.

When our hearts are warm, there is a definite intensity in the way we feel about the things we say we believe. When there is a decline in piety, in warmth, in devotion, there is a corresponding decline in emphasis upon doctrine.

Something always happens in the heart first before it happens in the head. For with the heart man believes. If there is a leakage of love from the heart, there will be a loss of commitment to the doctrine. The real reason some Nazarenes are not as committed to the doctrines of the church as once they were is not that they have more in their heads but that they have less in their hearts.

Some Nazarenes whose parents and grandparents paid a terrific price for their beliefs are willing to sell those beliefs today for the cheap pottage of popularity and social respectability. Some Nazarenes whose parents suffered persecution for their beliefs are not even willing to suffer embarrassment over their own. It isn't that we have outgrown our doctrines; it is simply that some of us have grown too soft and flabby of hand and soul to hold on to them.

A preacher who was once wonderfully used of God in the Church of the Nazarene is today out of the ministry completely and it is because he no longer believes the doctrines he once believed and preached. He not only does not believe in holiness, or in crisis conversion, or in the deity of Christ -- he makes fun of those who do. His decline in faith and effectiveness corresponded with his decline in devotion. When his heart cooled towards Christ, his commitment cooled towards the doctrines of the church.

Dr. Donald Metz warned of just such a tragedy when he wrote in the Preacher's Magazine for May-June of 1950 under the title "Prophet, Priest, or Promoter." "The most tragic thing that can happen to a preacher," said Dr. Metz, "is gradually to lose the prophetic fire, to drift into formalism, and then swing into a religious huckster with nothing to sell except himself and his own cheap personality. He becomes a promoter and politician. The message of salvation is merely a screen to camouflage his selfish aspirations for an easy and profitable way of life."

James Burns, in his book on Revivals, warned of the same dilution and distortion when he said, "Every revival, when it appears, discovers to the church its spiritual decay, its worldliness, and the insincerity of its witness ... The first tendency [of this spiritual decay] is for the doctrine of the

church to lose its power of converting the conscience, convincing the mind, or moving the heart." And then he continues, "In dead and unspiritual times, preachers continue to use the old words once so full of convincing and converting power, but now devitalized, partly because the age has drifted from them, partly because to those who use them they have become the mere jargon of the pulpit. They mumble out their shibboleths, but they fail to strike home to the conscience, or to gain response from the heart, for they themselves have ceased to be moved by them ... At such a time the priesthood degenerates; those who minister in holy things become worldly; the love of wealth, of ease, and of power -- the three deadly sins of those who occupy this high vocation -- appear; they give the sanction of an evil example to the worldly, and become the object of scorn to the skeptical and indifferent."

There are few sights more pathetic than to see a man -- preacher or layman -- trying to evoke an emotion he no longer feels, or repeating words he no longer believes.

We need a revival all right -- a revival of doctrinal emphasis so warm and emphatic and convincing that those Nazarenes who give lip service to the doctrines of the church but in their hearts no longer believe them will be won back to God and become so revived that these doctrines will once again become a living, radiant reality in their lives.

Cold logic will never do that. Fancy phrasing will never do it. Little snippets of Tillich or Freud or Ferre' will never do it. Any number of socials and suppers and showers will never win them back to a real commitment to the doctrine of holiness. But a revival in which men and women and young people are getting back to God and surrendering anew their lives to Christ will see a renewed commitment to the doctrines of the church. A holiness revival creates a climate in which Nazarenes can again talk about and witness to holiness without embarrassment and without apology.

May God give us more men and women and young people who are Nazarenes, not because of the size of the buildings or the popularity of the preacher or the music program or the youth program or because of family tradition or friends within the church, but because they believe 100 percent in the doctrines of the church!

That kind of total belief and commitment is not merely a matter of the head, but is primarily a matter of the heart, for the "heart has reasons that reason does not know." And when the heart is renewed and refired and revived, those reasons of the heart are given fresh force and validity and thrust. As W. A. Powers said, "The experience of holiness in the individual heart and the work of revival in the church, are closely associated. God has joined them together, and no man should attempt to put them asunder."

2. But then again, we need revivals to maintain our standards.

Dr. Timothy Smith, in his book *Called unto Holiness*, said that the early Nazarenes and their leaders "set out to produce by means both human and divine revivals of sufficient power to overcome all the attractions which a worldly life held for young people. Then, between revivals they could shelter them in church schools and youth programs from polluting contact with evil."

And this is the best safeguard ever found for the encroachments of worldliness into the lives of people of any age. Those whose hearts are freshly warmed and revived are never bothered too much by the attractions of the world. It is when a leanness comes into the soul that a person looks with longing upon the amusements and pleasures and practices of the worldly people about him.

That is why a person starts asking, "What's wrong with the dance -- or the show, or a smoke, or a social drink, or ... ?" -- and the list goes on and on. When any person find himself beginning to ask such questions he should immediately get on his knees and move up close to Christ and allow the Holy Spirit to come afresh upon his soul. If he does, those questions will fade away.

I have stood many times replying to questions that had been written on slips of paper, and invariably the majority of those questions dealt with worldly amusements or pleasures. And invariably those putting up the strongest defense for those things were those who were "out at the edge" spiritually. Spiritual people, young or old, do not find the things of the world alluring. It is when the realities begin to slip, when the fervor dies down, when the vision of Christ gets dim, when the heart gets cold, when the devotional life is neglected, when the things of God no longer have a pull and tug at the heart -- then it is that people begin to ask, "What's wrong with ... ?" or to say, "Well, I don't see anything wrong with that."

We may perhaps give reasonable replies to their questions but those replies will never change their basic desires. Our replies may satisfy their minds, but if their hearts are cold and empty, whatever we say is not going to make much difference. It is the heart that needs to be satisfied -- and only Christ can do that.

There are those who think that this problem of worldliness is an instructional problem, but it is basically a spiritual problem. Replies to honest questions are always in order and can be helpful. But if we spent half the time praying with those with the questions as we do trying to answer their questions with our fancy arguments, suggesting that, well, the Manual doesn't mean "exactly" that, we would have less problems and fewer people seeing how near to the world they can get instead of how near to Christ they can live.

Worldliness is never solved by instruction; it is never solved by advice; it is never solved by compromise. The problem of worldliness is solved only in the heart. When the heart is right there is no problem. To tell a person he has to quit this or that because the church says so, or because it's in the Manual, usually leaves him cold. There's no romance to that. But to pray with a person until he really prays through to a vital relationship with Christ, until he has fallen in love with Christ, and Christ has become real in his life -- there is thrill to that. There is romance in that. And as that love grows in the heart, his attitude will be that Christ means more to him than the things of the world ever meant and he won't spend his time, or other people's time, asking, "What's wrong with that?" He will be too busy singing, "Take this world with all its pleasures; take them, take them, one and all. Give me Christ, my blessed Saviour; He is sweeter than them all."

Christ and Christ alone is the Antidote to worldliness. And with the intense and manifold pressures of a secular age constantly crowding us, constantly probing for our weaknesses, constantly

tempting us -- how desperately we need those times of refreshing from the Lord, those times of renewal of commitment, those times of revival!

May God give us more men and women and young people who will turn a deaf ear to the smooth voices or siren songs of the world, not because the Manual says so, or because their companions say so, or because their parents say so, or because the church says so -- but because their hearts are so warmed by His presence and the thrill of His will is so real that the attractions of the world no longer allure them, no longer bother them, no longer even interest them.

If revival means renewal of relationship and commitment, if it means a fresh vision of Christ and how wonderful life can be if lived in His will, if it means reinforcing the reasons of the heart -- then holiness revivals are absolutely necessary if we expect to maintain our holiness standards.

3. But most important of all, we need revival if our evangelism is to be effective and spiritually productive.

The Church of the Nazarene was born in the fires of revival. But we can die in the smoke of evangelism -- the smoke of an educational evangelism that knows no heart passion, the smoke of a visitation evangelism that is nothing but recruitment for church members. We can die in the smoke of a passionless, powerless evangelism that requires no tears, no agony, no sweat -- and sees no conviction, no repentance, no restitution -- and hears no shouts of the newborn or the fully sanctified.

Without revival, the very word evangelism is drained of its ruggedness, its vigor, its historic meaning.

Religious leaders talk about "evangelism" being their "main business" still, but what does that kind of "evangelism" mean? The word is still spelled the same; it still sounds the same; but is it the same? Would Wesley recognize it as "evangelism"? Would Asbury? Would Bresee? Would H. C. Morrison? Do we?

The Communists take words like liberty and freedom and democracy, suck all the meaning out of them, pump in their half-truths, their distortions, their denials, and then go on pronouncing and proclaiming the words. But those words no longer mean what once they meant. They are still spelled the same; they still look the same and are pronounced the same -- but they no longer mean the same.

And so it is with religious words like revival and evangelism. There are those who drain all the vitality out of the word revival until it means nothing more than a preaching mission or convention. There are those who suck all the spiritual meaning out of the word evangelism until it means nothing more than visitation, recruitment for Sunday school or church members, religious exercises that have no spiritual value or meaning or challenge whatever. They can say, as one pastor said, "Everything we do is of evangelizing significance." Since that church sponsored dances and movies and bridge and pool parties, they would undoubtedly consider those activities of "evangelizing significance."

As mentioned earlier, "Evangelism, on its way from Jerusalem to Jericho, has been beaten and robbed and left half dead." And I submit that some Samaritan or some Nazarene or someone needs

to rescue the word, and wipe off the mud that has been slung on it in derision, and bind up the wounds that have been inflicted even by its so-called friends, and take it to a prayer meeting or to a real revival some place where it can be restored to its original meaning and vigor and spiritual health.

There are those, of course, who believe that vital evangelism is out of place in intelligent and sophisticated circles; so instead of paying a revival price to meet the demands of the word, they cheapen the word and drag it down to the level of their own pseudo intellectualism and stifling formalism. It is W. E. Sangster who said, "The snobbish idea spread that culture and hot evangelism did not go together -- and Methodists were terribly anxious to be known as cultured." Could the word be changed to "Nazarene" without affecting the meaning? "The recurring sin of the Christian Church," Sangster continues, "is to leave her evangelism to those whose gifts are of the heart, rather than the head, and God, in His longing to redeem, makes use of whoever He can. But what mighty things He does when He has both! All the great figures in the evangelical succession -- Paul, Augustine, Luther, and Wesley -- were intellectuals, and three of them had spent years in lecturing. There is no necessary divorce between a keen mind and a hot gospel."

And yet there are Nazarenes, here and there, who apparently feel that warm-hearted evangelism is not compatible with their blinding brilliance. A young preacher once wrote Dr. Chapman that, since he was of the intellectual type instead of the emotional type, he found it difficult to prepare and deliver evangelistic sermons. I appreciated Dr. Chapman even more when he answered that young preacher in the pages of the Preacher's Magazine by saying that there was no conflict between real intellect and evangelism and that he himself always found it easier to be evangelistic when he had experienced a fresh movement of God's Spirit upon his own heart.

Was Paul deficient in intellect? -- and yet he burned his way across his world with the fire of his evangelistic zeal.

Was Wesley deficient in intellect? -- and yet he saved England from revolution with his evangelistic preaching and passion and gave to the world a church that for many years was a marvelously effective redemptive agency.

Was Finney intellectually deficient? -- and yet he changed the moral climate of entire cities by the passion of his evangelism.

Was Bresee intellectually deficient? -- and yet his evangelistic zeal made his wooden tabernacle in Los Angeles a "glory barn" filled with the Shekinah of God's presence, and out of that revivalistic fire the Church of the Nazarene was born.

Was Dr. R. T. Williams intellectually deficient? -- and yet my first recollection of him is in a revival service he conducted, and the impression is still vivid of seeing him standing there at the edge of the platform giving the altar call and with tears running freely down his face pleading with men and women to come to Christ. He was more than an ecclesiastic; he was an evangelist.

Was Dr. J. B. Chapman intellectually deficient? -- and yet, read again his articles, his books, his editorials and feel the throb of evangelistic passion that pulsated through all his works -- and look again at him stand in Kansas City before the assembled leaders of the church and sob out of a heart of evangelistic concern: "All out for souls!"

Let's have done with all these self-appointed "geniuses" who look down from the lofty heights of a sterile ministry and imply that revival passion and evangelistic zeal are a little beneath their brilliance and dignity and that the ability to give an altar call is God's gift to the handicapped.

Their attitude and their snide remarks are no reflection upon the validity of real evangelism; they are but reflections upon the paucity of their own thinking and the coldness of their own hearts. Let them sputter out their cynicisms in those religious groups that are too cold to care and too dead to object, but as Nazarenes still committed to vital holiness evangelism, let us let them know we are too busy to listen to their cutting witticisms or to be affected by their cynical criticisms.

In his book *Evangelism in the Home Church*, Andrew W. Blackwood warns of the drift away from revival and evangelism by calling attention to the fact that when Henry Ward Beecher delivered the first three series of the Lyman Beecher Lectures on preaching at Yale he devoted considerable time to the subject of revivals. Later speakers spoke of evangelism. But still later the emphasis was upon social problems, and since 1918 there has been little emphasis upon evangelism in the lectures.

This same pattern of drift and dilution can be observed, not only in successive generations, but in individual churches and in individual lives. Whenever the talk is more on evangelism than on revival -- watch out! -- the drift is on. Whenever revival is neglected, evangelism becomes impotent and marginal, and the final result is a loss of mission and effectiveness and, as one said, instead of the children being willing to dig out the old wells, they go wild-catting in all sorts of strange places and ways to try to recover the old power and the old effectiveness. Churches, like people, do not lose their passion or their mission by revolution but by dilution.

Instead of "wild-catting" for new methods and new gimmicks, isn't it time we were willing to pay the price to dig out the wells of real revival until they begin gushing again with the streams of vital and effective evangelism?

Even the reports of our "successes" should drive us to our knees in prayer for real revival.

When there is a district in the Church of the Nazarene that had nineteen churches last year which reported not one member taken in on profession of faith -- isn't it time for revival?

When there is another district in which eighteen of its churches did not take in one member last year on profession of faith -- isn't it time for revival?

When on still another district twenty-four churches did not take in one member on profession of faith last year -- isn't it time for revival?

When on another district of over sixty churches, nineteen of those churches did not have a single seeker at their altars all one year -- isn't it time for revival? And, worse still, when thirteen of those churches did not even attempt to have a revival all that year -- isn't it time for revival?

When in one of our larger cities we have two fewer churches than we had ten years ago, and the total gain in membership in that ten-year period is exactly fifty-seven -- isn't it time for revival?

When in a church of over four hundred Sunday school attendance there were fifteen Sunday school teachers who did not attend a single week-night revival service -- isn't it time for revival?

When in one of our fastest growing states the population growth over the past ten years has been 46 percent while the increase in Nazarene church membership has been only 42 percent -- isn't it time for revival?

When the growth rate of the Church of the Nazarene for 1965 was 1.88 percent while the world population increase was 2.2 percent -- isn't it time for revival?

Isn't it time that we listened more carefully to E. Stanley Jones as he says, "Before we can go farther, we must first go deeper"? We have gone about as far as we're going to go on the momentum of the original thrust. What we do evangelistically from here on in we will have to pay the price for out of our own blood and tears and sweat. And the price for effective evangelism, for any church, is revival.

Surveying the future as best he could, John Wesley said, "I am not afraid that the people called Methodists should ever cease to exist in Europe and America, but I am afraid lest they should only exist as a dead sect having the form of religion without the power."

And in 1847, Bishop Edmund S. Janes warned this same church of what might happen to their mission, in these words: "Drawing our proof from past dispensations, we say to the Methodist Church that, if she proves recreant to her important trust -- if she fails to fulfill the end for which she was raised up, 'to spread Scriptural holiness over the land' and over the world -- God will give her stewardship to another. He will raise up a people who will perform His gracious pleasure, and receive the glorious reward."

We Nazarenes believe deeply that we were raised up to be inheritors of that tradition and that commitment. Will there ever come a day when others will say that they are inheritors of our mission?

That there will cease to be a Church of the Nazarene is unthinkable. We will continue to grow. We will continue to increase in membership and finances and social prestige and denominational respectability. We will continue to speak about and emphasize evangelism. But that we may do all that and still lose our mission is not only possible and probable; it is inevitable -- unless we are willing to pay the price for a fresh infilling of the Holy Spirit!

It is inevitable that we lose our mission -- unless all of us -- superintendents, pastors, evangelists, professors, laymen, all of us from center to circumference, from top to bottom -- get on our knees



and ask God's forgiveness for our complacency, our pride, our insistence on seeing evangelistic results without paying revival prices, for our spending our time patting each other on the back and saying what a great job we're doing when our whole world is on its way to hell and is already wrapped in the flames of its racial tensions, its rampant nationalism, its lust, its greed, its hatreds, its sins.

It is inevitable that we lose our mission -- unless every one of us gets on his face before God and pays the price for that measure of the Holy Spirit's power that alone will enable us to withstand the terrific pressures of a godless age and the secular sag that saps our spirituality and robs us of our vision and dilutes our message and drains away our dynamic.

It is inevitable that we lose our mission of holiness evangelism -- unless we pay the price for real Holy Ghost revival!

The phrase of this quadrennium, "In the Power of the Spirit," is more than a slogan. It is the most urgent need we have for the survival of our mission. The power of the Holy Spirit is the only adequate corrective there is to the pressures that would arrest the cleansing tides of real revival. The power of the Holy Spirit is the only adequate corrective there is to the influence of those who would shift us from our primary emphasis and blunt the thrust of vital evangelism. The power of the Holy Spirit is the only corrective there is to the drift and dilution of our day. We can survive as a religious institution without it, but we cannot be true to our mission of holiness evangelism without it.

"To run an organization needs no God," said Samuel Chadwick. "Man can supply the energy, enterprise, and enthusiasm for things human. The real work of the church depends upon the Power of the Spirit ... The energy of the flesh cannot do the work of the Spirit."

Or listen to our founder, Dr. Bresee, as he says: "Without the manifest presence of the Holy Ghost any church is a failure. It may be a great machine, wheels within wheels, but it is without life and power. Such an organization bears the same relation to the Church of Christ that a dead body bears to the man. A dead body is organized matter; it is in the form, and has the appearance of a man, but for all purposes for which a man was created it is a useless thing. So with a church. It is organized humanity; in many respects it looks like the real thing, but for the purposes for which the Church was called into being, it is utterly useless. It may amuse, entertain, instruct men, but to lift men out of their sins and take sin out of them it is powerless to do so."

If we do not have the power of the Holy Spirit, what do we have that other churches do not have?

We have fine buildings -- so do they; we have fine choirs -- so do they; we have fine youth program -- so do they; we have promotional know-how -- so do they; we have able administrators -- so do they. If we lack, then, the power of the Holy Spirit, we are no different from any other church; we have nothing distinctive to offer; we have no excuse for existence.

And yet writers like Martin Marty speak of the Church of the Nazarene and others as the "third force," and he suggests that one of the bulwarks against what he calls "religion in general," this "watered-down peace-of-mind, success saints, adapting to your environment emphasis" is a church

like the Church of the Nazarene -- "the third force penetration, who do not fit in." We are, he says, "the square pegs in the smooth round holes of the new evangelism."

If this is true, then our responsibility to pay the price for revival so that our evangelism will be vital and effective is larger than merely to save our own mission. It is to be a leading edge to the penetration of vital religion into all phases of church life in America and the world. May God in heaven help us not to fail ourselves, and others, in this day of our God-ordained opportunity in the fulfillment of our destiny!

What does a little more prestige and respect and sophistication and improved denominational image and profile have to offer against an opportunity and a destiny like that!

And what shall it profit us if we gain big buildings and big money and big success and big membership -- if we lose our mission and lose sight of our destiny!

# IT'S REVIVAL WE NEED!

By  
C. William Fisher

## **Chapter Six** **PAY THE PRICE OF REVIVAL**

Some teen-age boys were tinkering with a car that would no longer run. One said, "I believe the trouble is in the carburetor." Another said, "I believe it's the spark plugs." Another said, "I believe the problem is the battery." Finally one of the boys called out: "Hey, you guys, here's the trouble -- no gas." When they pushed the car to a filling station and filled up with gas, they started going places again.

All sorts of experts are swarming over the church today giving their diagnosis of the trouble, trying to answer the question, "What's wrong with our evangelism?" Some point at the superintendents and say, "There's the problem." Others point to the pastors and say, "There's the difficulty." Others point to the schools and say, "There's the trouble." Others point to laymen and say, "There's the problem." While many others point their fingers at evangelists and say, "No doubt about it, there's our difficulty."

Isn't it about time that all of us quit pointing our fingers at anyone except ourselves and then get down on our knees and pay the price to fill up with the power of the Holy Spirit! Then we could go places we've never gone before -- and we wouldn't have time to ask, "Do revivals pay?" We would be too busy enjoying the throb of power of a vital and thrilling evangelism.

But that's just it: we want evangelistic results without paying revival prices. We want to go places evangelistically without paying the price of filling up. But God is not running a discount house; if He gives evangelistic results, it will be because we have paid revival prices.

My own heart is disturbed when I see those who profess less than we do and yet at times show more concern, more real passion, more willingness to be filled afresh with the power of the Holy Spirit than some of us who profess so much.

The day before Dr. George Truett died, his wife left the hospital room for a few minutes and when she returned she had a friend with her. Not seeing Dr. Truett in bed, the ladies looked around and there, by the open window, they saw him kneeling with arms outstretched toward the city of Dallas. Sick as he was, and as near the end as he was, this man who had pastored the First Baptist Church in that city for fifty years, and had made a tremendous impact on its life, was kneeling there with tears running down his face as he sobbed, "O people of Dallas, won't you come to Jesus?"

We may not share their denominational labels or their theological bias, but may God in heaven forgive us if we who profess so much do not share that kind of burning, aching passion.

I don't know about you, but I have come to the place where I feel the needs of the world are so urgent and hearts are so hungry and the harvest is so white and the laborers are so few and the time

is so short and the bombs are so awesome that whether a man dots every [i] and crosses every [t] just as I do, or speaks the same words in the same accents, if he has God on him, if he is filled with the power of the Holy Spirit, if he has that burning, passionate hunger to see souls saved and the Kingdom advanced in these desperate days, I will gladly give him my hand and my heart and my prayers. Thank God, we can all be filled with the Spirit and enjoy the full throb of His power in our lives and in our churches and in our evangelism. And that, friends, is the only kind of ecumenicity that interests me in the least.

Can we get along without revivals in the Church of the Nazarene? The answer is an emphatic "Yes!" Lots of other churches do.

But it all depends on what you mean by "getting along."

If you mean, Can we build bigger and fancier buildings without revivals? -- the answer is yes.

If you mean, Can we add more members to the rolls without revivals? -- the answer is yes.

If you mean, Can we increase our college enrollments without revivals? -- the answer is yes.

If you mean, Can we increase our finances and our social and denominational prestige without revivals? -- the answer is yes.

If you mean, Can we enlarge our missionary enterprises without revivals? -- the answer is yes.

If you mean, Can we engage in various types of evangelism without revivals? -- the answer is yes.

But if you mean, Can we fulfill our mission as a holiness church committed to holiness evangelism without revivals? -- the answer is an emphatic "NO!"

To be a redemptive agency in this sin-scarred world -- we must have revivals.

To resist the incredible pressures of a church in transition -- we must have revivals.

To maintain our loyalties to our doctrines and our standards -- we must have revivals.

To fulfill the dreams and realize the vision of our founders -- we must have revivals.

To fulfill our destiny and to realize our full potential as a God-called, God-directed, God-empowered distinctively holiness church -- we must have revivals.

To hand on a spiritually vigorous and dynamic church to our children -- we must have revivals.

To have an evangelism that is more than a mockery of our mission, but that is a genuine holiness evangelism that sees souls saved and believers sanctified wholly and that is at once the dynamic of

the church and the only adequate answer to a confused and chaotic world, then we must -- we simply must -- have revivals!

May God help all of us to be willing to pay whatever price we have to pay for that revival emphasis that has ever been, and must ever be, the first and finest thrust of evangelism in the Church of the Nazarene.