

# Stirred UP

THE FIRST IN A SERIES ON REVIVAL

BY KEN HORN

A sudden commotion broke out at the large reception I was attending. The stir in the crowd marked the arrival of a celebrity. People flocked to where he was.

Whenever such a stir takes place, it usually means that someone or something notable has come on the scene.

Revival features both — the person of Jesus and the amazing things He does.

Revival shakes things up. If you hate change, you will have a hard time with revival.

And the change revival brings is all the more noticeable because it comes in times of deadness, times when “there is no one who calls on Your name, who stirs himself up to take hold of You” (Isaiah 64:7, NKJV). Christians can be lulled into lukewarmness, apathy or fear. This caused Paul to tell Timothy “to stir up the gift of God which is in you through the laying on of my hands. For God has not given us a spirit of fear” (2 Timothy 1:6,7).

One meaning of “to stir” is to rise from sleep to begin a new day. The saying “Arise and shine” comes from Isaiah 60:1. The apostle Paul says it this way: “Awake, you who sleep, arise from the dead, and Christ will give you light” (Ephesians 5:14).

Someone notable causes the stir that accompanies revival. It is always Jesus.

In the midst of the commotion caused by the great move of the Holy Spirit recorded in Acts 4, the crowd reacts: “When they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were uneducated and untrained men, they marveled. And they realized that they had been with Jesus” (v. 13). Oh, that that could be said of each and every believer. Genuine revival, even though it has human beings at the core, always draws attention to Jesus. If this element is missing, the revival is counterfeit.

Genuine revival turns people toward Jesus, changing their lives ...

and their lifestyles. It causes a stir when this happens. When someone realizes he is in danger and needs to be rescued, does he whisper, “Save me”? No, he shouts it! Desperation, on the part of the lost as well as in behalf of the lost, can cause a ruckus.

Before and during times of revival, Christians are stirred to pray — to “stand in the gap” (Ezekiel 22:30). And they are stirred to witness.

I was a youth pastor during the hippie era. When several got saved and started coming to church — in unkempt clothes, hair and hygiene — believe me, it caused a stir. It took awhile for the outer changes to reflect the inner ones. But which is more important? If you’re unwilling to have “undesirable” people in your church, you don’t really want revival.

Revival also causes Christians to be stirred to change themselves ... with God’s help. Revival brings more light with it, and thus, there is less need for legalism. Christians run

to the light like moths to a flame.

Believers are stirred to godliness. This is not just opposing evil in society (like abortion or homosexuality), but the evil that followers of Christ still battle in themselves. Revival makes people willing to be changed.

And when revival comes, changes can be sudden. Instantaneous healings, deliverances and transformations take place in many, though certainly not all, cases.

Revival also causes another stirring, one not nearly so positive. When God begins to move, the great lion rouses, stretches and bares his fangs. “Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour” (1 Peter 5:8). Acts 6:8-12 is an account of Satan stirring up the ungodly to attack the godly. While revival will often attract abuse from this world’s satanic forces, when there is no revival Christians are more likely to attack other Christians and destroy unity within the church.

Revival signals the onset of spiritual warfare. Christians rise up to fight the devil. And when revival comes, Christians rise up to love the devil’s prisoners. They fight the source of sin, while loving the very people who may be the instruments of that sin. This drives Christians to their knees, dominates their thoughts, and dictates their actions.

The power of the Holy Spirit is stirred up in times of revival. How much room do you have? God’s work in you is limited only by your capacity. It is why you can be filled and still expect more of God as you grow in Him.

Revival transforms minds. It helps fulfill Romans 12:2: “Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind.” Thought lives are purified.

When revival comes, the Word of God prevails (Acts 19:20). There is a high regard for Scripture

in every genuine revival.

When revival comes, religious people become godly people. There is a stir of expectancy. People have bursts of faith and begin expecting miracles. God’s works follow faith, and answers to prayer build faith even more, thus sustaining and increasing revival.

Doubt resists revival (Matthew 13:58), but faith stimulates it.

If you want revival, exercise your faith. Believe God. Expect answers to prayer — big and small.

The stir that brings revival must be a stir of God and toward God. If you are stirred in your own power — or toward some gifted evangelist — you will fail.

When revival comes, Christians become more dependent on God. Philippians 4:13 becomes a hallmark: “I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.”

Because people make mistakes, there are always problems associated with revival. But it doesn’t negate the good revival does. (See Proverbs 14:4.)

Revival is not all hype and pleasant words. There is always repentance, brokenness and hearts tender before the Lord.

*Oh, that You would rend the heavens!*

*That You would come down!*

*That the mountains might shake at Your presence....*

*There is no one who calls on Your name,*

*Who stirs himself up to take hold of You ...*

*But now, O Lord,*

*You are our Father;*

*We are the clay, and You our potter.*

(Isaiah 64:1,7,8)

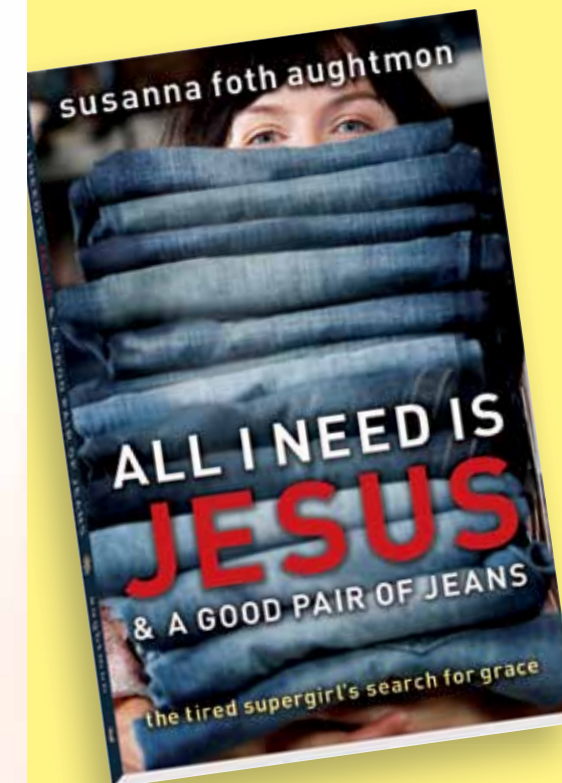
The church needs to get stirred up to take hold of God. *Then* we will see revival. **tpe**

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