

What Does Revival Look Like?

It happened a dozen years ago. Michael Plant was one of the world's best yachtsmen. Numerous times he navigated the oceans, gaining skill and notoriety. Then in the fall of 1992, he decided to set out from the East Coast on a solo voyage across the Atlantic Ocean to France.

He purchased a state-of-the-art sailboat with the best navigational equipment money could buy, christening it "The Coyote." With one press of a button, its emergency global positioning locator could transmit a signal to a satellite, relaying it within seconds to either of two ground locations that could pinpoint his exact coordinates, even in the middle of the vast ocean. The Coyote was the most fail-safe vessel of its kind.

But on the fourth day of his voyage, ground locators lost contact with the Coyote. Weather scans of the Atlantic showed storms causing high seas, and it was assumed that Plant was navigating the storms and would soon regain contact. But he never did. Search-and-rescue squads were deployed to the last known location of the Coyote but to no avail. Commercial airliners were asked to monitor their emergency channels in case Plant was broadcasting signals for help.

Two weeks after his departure, a ship about 400 miles off the Azores came upon the Coyote floating upside down. If there's one position where a state-of-the-art global positioning locator will not be of much use, it's upside down. Hoisting the Coyote up for a closer look, the rescuers searched the cabin, hoping to find the emergency life raft already deployed, which would indicate that Michael Plant might still be alive and floating somewhere in the Atlantic. But they found the life raft only partially inflated, still stuck in the hull of the boat. To this day, the body of Michael Plant has never been found.

The telltale culprit in the accident was a broken keel. No one knows whether the Coyote hit some ocean sewage, a submarine or a whale, but the ballast had been broken off, leaving the boat without any weight in the keel. The ballast was an 8,000-pound weight, making this sailboat one of the safest vessels on the ocean. Even should it capsize, the design of the ballast would roll it upright again. Yet without the weight in the keel, the Coyote was no match for the storms of the Atlantic.

For a boat to have stability in a storm, there must be more weight beneath the waterline than above it. Without ballast, a boat can look fine in the calm water of the port. But without any weight in its keel, the boat is unable to launch any further into the deep. Many individuals and churches want to set out into the "deep things of God," but what is the ballast that enables us to do so without capsizing?

It happened nearly a hundred years ago, in a decrepit old Methodist church that was definitely on the wrong side of the tracks in the old industrial part of Los Angeles, near a tombstone shop, some stables and a lumber yard. Hundreds of people jammed the building and the street outside just to be touched by the Spirit of God. The press ridiculed such spiritual enthusiasm, but the negative publicity only inflamed people's curiosity. Eventually, multiplied thousands from around the world would be forever changed by this revival that ran non-stop in day and night prayer meetings or over three years. Little could the subscribers of the Los Angeles Times have guessed that in years to come, historians would say that the Azusa Street revival gave birth to modern Pentecostalism and became the most significant revival of the twentieth century in terms of world evangelism.

Perhaps the most significant feature of the Azusa Street revival was that there were no "superstars." Even the "pastor" of the church, William Seymour, spent most of his time on his knees with his head buried in the homemade pulpit. There was something major going on below the waterline of this revival – how different from today's "renewal services"!

A prophecy was given during this revival, at some unknown point by some unknown person. Nearly a hundred years later, it sounds a warning for us in the Apostolic movement ...

"In the last days three things will happen in the great Pentecostal Movement ... there will be an overemphasis on power, rather than on righteousness; there will be an overemphasis on the gifts of the Spirit, rather than on the Lordship of Christ; there will be an overemphasis on praise, to a God they no longer pray to."

WHAT DOES REVIVAL LOOK LIKE?

It is probably easier to tell you what revival DOESN'T look like ...

It doesn't look like "business as usual" in our services and ministries. **It doesn't look like** the pride that values eloquence over anointing in the pulpit. **It doesn't look like** the self-righteousness that can critique everyone and everything else, while remaining unaware that the real spiritual problem is in the critic. **It doesn't look like** the selfishness that demands that every service, sermon, song and ministry be targeted to the whims of the saints instead of the needs of the lost. **It doesn't look like** the fear of man that keeps our witnessing and our worship so polite that it is powerless. **It doesn't look like** the lukewarmness that lets people attend church only when it suits their schedule and obey God only when it suits their lifestyle. **Do we really want revival, or do we merely want more blessings to squander on ourselves?**

Matthew 4:1-11 Then was Jesus led up of the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil. [2] And when he had fasted forty days and forty nights, he was afterward an hungred. [3] And when the tempter came to him, he said, If thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread. [4] But he answered and said, It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God. [5] Then the devil taketh him up into the holy city, and setteth him on a pinnacle of the temple, [6] And saith unto him, If thou be the Son of God, cast thyself down: for it is written, He shall give his angels charge concerning thee: and in their hands they shall bear thee up, lest at any time thou dash thy foot against a stone. [7] Jesus said unto him, It is written again, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God. [8] Again, the devil taketh him up into an exceeding high mountain, and sheweth him all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them; [9] And saith unto him, All these things will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me. [10] Then saith Jesus unto him, Get thee hence, Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve. [11] Then the devil leaveth him, and, behold, angels came and ministered unto him.

THE THREE TEMPTATIONS OF “FALSE REVIVAL” ...

- Wasting the “bread” on fleshly hunger instead of eternal priorities (power rather than righteousness)
- Being careless in our walk and expecting God to bail us out (gifts of the Spirit rather than Lordship of Christ)
- Worshipping something else besides God in our secret place (praise to a God you no longer pray to)

Revival always breaks out when repentance is manifested. Repentance is not just sinners who are set in their ways making a change; it is saints who are set in their ways making a change!

Isaiah 57:15 For thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy; I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones.

2 Chronicles 7:14 If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land.

Habakkuk 3:2 O Lord, revive thy work in the midst of the years, in the midst of the years make known; in wrath remember mercy.