

The Idea and Practice of Revival Among Southern Baptists¹

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Baptists survive only if they live in the mode of revival. They depend solely on conversion for the origination of church membership and upon a life of consistent holiness for its maintenance. Born out of English dissent in the seventeenth century, early Baptists, often at the peril of personal freedom, founded churches of believers. They frequently disregarded warning, or even legal prohibition, and itinerated preaching the gospel-call for repentance and faith. They were committed to active evangelism and continued church reform.² Given this abiding reality of Baptist ecclesiology, still there are times in which an extraordinary work of the Holy Spirit becomes evident. That God clearly has intentions to manifest his glory in conversion and increase of holiness at appointed seasons can hardly be denied by the observer of church history. The Bible records these kinds of events that punctuate its narrative, and leads us to believe that indeed, if we faint not, we shall reap, at times even a hundred-fold.

At the end of the nineteenth century a *Dictionary of United States History* carried a short article on the Baptists, highlighting their major contribution to American culture and pointing to the remarkable growth that they had experienced. In the thirty years first noted in this article, Baptists increased eighteenfold by adding around 944 churches. In the next twenty years they increased about 140% by adding over 1,400 churches. The next twenty years saw 2,889 churches added for a growth of 118%. Another twenty years saw the addition of 4,178 churches a growth of 78%. In 1872 the previous two decades had produced another 8,897 churches, a growth of 94%. By any sober judgment, these bare numbers show growth that indicates a sustained commitment to church planting and gospel preaching for evangelistic purposes. Periods of awakening in America have not bypassed Baptists. Southern Baptists were heirs of and nurtured within this context.³

BAPTISTS AND THE FIRST GREAT AWAKENING

The First Great Awakening affected Baptist life by injecting new zeal, increasing the number of churches and converts, and through geographical expansion. In 1700 only fourteen Baptist churches existed in all the colonies, nine in New England, four in the Middle Colonies, and one in the South. Through the labors of Isaac Backus,⁴ Valentine Wightman, Shubal Stearns and other Separate Baptists, the Philadelphia Association, and the Charleston Association the growth of Baptist numbers and churches indicated a true operation of the Holy Spirit in multiplying the presence and influence of Baptist among American evangelicals.

Like Backus, other individuals converted under the preaching of the Great Awakening had an expansive and enduring impact on the stability and growth of Baptists in the colonial period. Among these were Benjamin Miller, Oliver Hart, John Gano, Shubal Stearns, and Daniel Marshall. Backus in New England, Miller and Gano in the Philadelphia Association and the South, Hart in Charleston, South Carolina, and Stearns and Marshall in the South joined the company of itinerants produced by the Awakening. They also planted Baptist churches.

The churches of the Philadelphia Association sought full-bodied Christianity among its churches and their members.⁵ Order involved truth,

conversion, life, and expansion of the knowledge of Christ. Fundamental to all was doctrinal truth. Spiritual life as well as doctrinal care is evident throughout the minutes. Every year saw the urging of exertion toward spiritual growth and vital knowledge of God. Orthodoxy without godliness had no attraction for them; but any pretension to spirituality aside from orthodoxy rang just as hollow.⁶ We find this record in 1748: "Praised, magnified, and for ever adored be the riches of sovereign grace, that the labors of the poor servants of God in their ministerial office are not altogether lost and fruitless. The Lord has been watering his garden with the increase of God, which we pray may abound more and more."⁷ In 1766, four Virginia churches requested permission to withdraw from the Philadelphia Association because of the difficulty of distance, and their request was granted.⁸

The Sandy Creek church in North Carolina, established by Stearns and Marshall, demonstrates the exponential growth of Baptists in the South. Robert B. Semple observed that upon their establishing the church, that they "began a work, kindling a fire which soon began to burn brightly indeed, spreading in a few years over Virginia, North and South Carolina and Georgia."⁹ Morgan Edwards commented that the remarkable events of its ministry were "worthy of a place in Gillies's book and inferior to no instance he gives of the modern success of the gospel in different parts of the world." Beginning with sixteen people, it became "the mother of all the Separate-Baptists." In seventeen years its influence was so great that it became the "mother, grand-mother, and great grandmother to forty-two churches, from which sprang 125 ministers." Gospel preaching "went forth from this Zion and great was the company of them that published it, in so much that her converts were as the drops of morning dew." Edwards believed that "a preternatural and invisible hand works in the assemblies of the Separate-baptists bearing down the human mind, as was the case in primitive churches."¹⁰ Robert Semple summarized the fervent spiritual interest that surrounded Separate Baptist ministry for about a five-year period between 1766 and 1770.

It was not uncommon at their great meetings for many hundreds of men to camp on the ground, in order to be present the next day. The night meetings, through the great work of God, continued very late. The ministers would scarcely have an opportunity to sleep. Sometimes the floor would be covered

with persons struck down under conviction of sin. It frequently happened that when they would retire to rest at a late hour they would be under the necessity of arising again through the earnest cries of the penitent. There were instances of persons traveling more than one hundred miles to one of these meetings; to go forty or fifty was not uncommon.¹¹

The zeal and usefulness of Daniel Marshall also extended into Georgia. In Georgia, Daniel Marshall established the first Baptist church in 1772 in Kiokee. Steady growth plus rapid expansion during the first decade of the nineteenth-century brought the number to 140 churches with 11,000 members.

BAPTISTS AND THE SECOND GREAT AWAKENING

Isaac Backus saw a great outpouring of revival among the Baptists beginning in 1785, immediately after he had expressed great concern about the spread of universalism among the evangelical churches. In 1800 he recorded this exclamation: “The revivals of religion in different parts of our land have been wonderful.” In 1803, he wrote, “In Boston there is the greatest work going on which they have ever known there” and the ripple effect could be observed in many surrounding towns.¹² The *Massachusetts Baptist Missionary Magazine* reported revivals all around New England.¹³ In the ministries of Samuel Stillman, Thomas Baldwin, and many others these pockets of infidelity, stupidity, and error were confronted with faithful preaching, itinerant ministry, and prayer with the result that for more than fifteen years, a constant stream of revival reports filled the ages of this magazine.¹⁴

Along with the amazing movement of the Spirit in New England, Backus made brief mention of a great revival that overtook the Baptists of Kentucky from 1800-03. Revival fires, however, flashed out in certain spots in the decade before the beginning of the nineteenth century. J. H. Spencer, in his *A History of Kentucky Baptists from 1769 to 1885*, paints a picture of destitution in religion in Kentucky up through 1784 where “there has been nothing like a religious revival, of which we have any authentic account, in any one of the settlements.”¹⁵ In the latter part of 1784, the first revival in Kentucky began under the ministry of John Taylor with the conversion of Susannah Cash in a meeting in his log home. This led to the founding of the Regular

Baptist church of Clear Creek. They called John Taylor as pastor and an “instantaneous revival” occurred that resulted in Taylor’s baptizing sixty of his neighbors in the Clear Creek community.¹⁶ In the great revival at the last of the last decade of the century, after a few years of coldness and decline, the church again received effusions of the Spirit and increased its membership to five hundred.¹⁷

In the first decade of the nineteenth century, Baptists, along with several denominations experienced what they would see as a mighty outpouring of the Spirit in revival. Baptists avoided much of the emotional excess that penetrated the movement among other denominations. The reigning theology of these revivals was Calvinistic in the view of sin and dependence on God. It was thoroughly orthodox in the view of the person of Christ. The experiential importance of these doctrines emerged naturally from the struggle of soul of those in the throes of conversion distress. Even those who had lived upright lives saw themselves as “a lump of moral corruption in the sight of God.” They were dripping with sufficient sin “to damn a world if imputed to them.”¹⁸ Neither the Arian nor Socinian savior would do in such cases but “only an Almighty Saviour will suit.” Jesus came not to give some assistance to “self-helpers” but to save “the lost and helpless.”¹⁹

The number of Baptists in the state trebled in three years. Large parts of Virginia in the early nineteenth century saw great religious stirring interspersed with months of deadness, decline, and unfaithfulness. William Fristoe, writing about the Ketocton Association, gave in 1808 a rousing witness to the work that had been current among them. He noted that “an Almighty and irresistible [sic] arm made bare, and a people called out of the world by rich, free, irresistible [sic] and unfrustrable grace; wonderful indeed, that so barren a desert should become a fruitful field; the minds of many that were blind, made so free, and tongues that were dumb, stimulated to adore and praise the riches of divine grace.”²⁰

When William B. Sprague compiled his lectures on revival into a book published in 1832, he appended letters from several leading evangelical thinkers on the subject including Francis Wayland, president of Brown University. Wayland gave an excellent synopsis of the content of a Spirit-wrought revival. Such a visitation of grace would cultivate the deepest piety among Christians, involve extraordinary effort for the conversion of sinners, and continue as long as possible without an undue wearying

of men's minds and bodies, inciting neglect of other duties, and provoking mere excitement of the passions. A common error infiltrating revival excitement included reliance on mere means instead of the Spirit of God and the iconization of language, ideas, and means that have no biblical warrant, and a tendency to spiritual pride.²¹

BAPTISTS IN THE PRAYER REVIVAL

Baptists grew along with virtually all other denominations during the great revival of 1857-58. Initial indications of this revival came in connection to the prayer meeting initiated by Jeremiah Calvin Lanphier in the Consistory building on Fulton Street to the rear of the North Reformed Dutch Church in Lower Manhattan, New York.²² The revival leaped over denominational barriers. Baptists were deeply involved and affected. Across the nation, Baptist congregations increased in baptisms, membership, and subsequent contributions to missionary causes. Numbers of churches and members increased at large percentage rates. By 1860, approximately 18% of Baptist membership had been baptized in the past two years. In Georgia, the *Christian Index* reported, "Never since we entered upon the state of action has there been so general and so glorious a work ... and blessed be His holy name, we have shared in some way in the blessings thus bestowed upon the country."²³

The phenomenon of revival for a century had caused great Baptist growth in North and South. Particularly in the South the beginning and expansion of Baptist churches both in size and spirituality was so connected with the energy of revival that it was embedded in the consciousness of the churches.

REVIVAL IN THE CIVIL WAR

The Prayer Revival prepared both sections of the country for the fratricidal carnage of the next half decade. During the war, an initial decline in spiritual interest and increase of profanity, gambling and general worldliness was soon succeeded by the success of a large number of means of distributing religious intelligence among the soldiers.²⁴ Colporteurs, Bible Societies, and camp preachers began to effect results in a great ingathering of converts in both armies. Baptists were particularly active and aggressively sought to

capture the momentous events for eternal purposes. In September of 1863, John A. Broadus wrote in the *Religious Herald*:

It is impossible to convey any just idea of the wide and effectual door that is now opened for preaching in the Army of Northern Virginia. ... In every command that I visit, or hear from a large proportion of the soldiers will attend preaching and listen well; and in many cases the interest is really wonderful ... A much larger proportion of the soldiers attend preaching in camp than used to attend at home; and when any interest is awakened the homogeneity and fellow-feeling which exists among them may be a powerful means, as used by the Divine Spirit, of diffusing that interest through the whole mass. Brethren, there is far more religious interest in this army than at home. The Holy Spirit seems everywhere moving among us. These widespread camps are a magnificent collection of camp meetings. Brethren, it is the noblest opportunity for protracted meetings you ever saw. The rich, ripe harvest stands waiting. Come, brother, thrust in your sickle, and, by God's blessing, you shall reap golden sheaves that shall be your rejoicing in time and eternity.²⁵

One report by F. S. Petway stated that "it has continued up to the present time, without any abatement of the interest. Each night crowds of penitents throng the altar for prayer."²⁶

Broadus's mention of both camp-meetings and protracted meetings and Petway's mention of "the altar" showed that a culture of revivalism was developing. A discussion on these matters was under way concerning both their strengths and weaknesses while the phenomenon was being massaged and shaped into a standard form of evangelism and revival technique.

CONTROVERSY OVER REVIVAL METHOD

The capitulation to dependence on forms came slowly in Baptist circles and not without opposition and critical investigation. As early as 1808, William Fristoe had noticed exactly what Wayland described as the use of language, ideas, and means without biblical warrant. Fristoe described carefully the method and brought a clear and stern warning against it.

In some few instances among us, in addition to preaching the gospel in its simplicity, something of human invention, or contrivance, have been brought forward to aid the good work, such as these—when done preaching, the preachers passing thro' the congregation singing an hymn on some tender and affecting subject, with a tune of mournful sound, or if thought proper, of lively cheerful sound; for when this method is adopted there is no certain rule to go by, and the people are to be taken as they are found. The above is accompanied with shaking of hands and exhortations with a great appearance of affection; by these means soft and tender passions have been wonderfully wrought upon, and some have expressed their desire to be prayed for, and sometimes enquiry is made whether some do not desire to be prayed for; the person or persons affected fall on their knees, at the preacher's feet, while prayer is made for them—all this is done with an air of solemnity, as much as possible, that it may affect all around; why such a mode of conduct has been adopted by any, is not so easy to say; to suppose, for a moment that it has been done to ingratiate themselves into the esteem of the people, and so make their way easier through the world seems too severe and harsh, or that they thought they could effect and bring about the conversion of souls by human exertion, cannot be admitted. We are ready to conclude that as anti-christ has been so successful in making proselytes by this means, that the honest and sincere have been ensnared; and led away by a misguided zeal, and lost sight of the unerring word of truth, and the primitive example of the faithful.²⁷

Fristoe recognized that enthusiasm often accompanied the ingathering of the elect but that “at the same time it is no way related to, nor forms any part of religion, and therefore blameworthy, and cannot be justified, and ought to be discountenanced by the wise.” After a brief survey of the proper place of human affection, the practice of Christ and the apostles in using the preaching of strong doctrine as the means for the conversion of sinners, Fristoe observed, “we have lived to see that these men-made converts, is but of short duration; their seeming grace or religion pass away as the morning cloud or as the early dew; it becomes the sons and daughters of light to guard against every imposition, and every device of imposters.”²⁸

Basil Manly, Sr., became suspicious of revivalistic technique when he served in Charleston and came face to face with its oppressive power in Alabama in the 1840's. Manly warned that professions resulting from high

wrought excitement pass away and will damage the person. The lust for great numbers creates carelessness and the tendency to make the church a harlot by allowing unbelievers, unconverted, and graceless persons to crowd into it without a careful and legitimate restraint.²⁹

A great trial for Manly came when his brethren sought to persuade him to appeal for physical movement at the close of a sermon. He observed that such response was the criterion of good effects. Ministers and sermons of an inferior quality, but well-sharpened in this art, would have people around them in heaps apparently under conviction of sin. He felt that the modern religious culture had left him behind for he could not comply with the style deemed effective.³⁰

Continued growth of the practice brought efforts to employ these formalized revival techniques without embracing their extravagance. In 1852, E. T. Winkler, encouraged by the “unusually large number of conversions of recent occurrence in the South and South-west” wrote about “Revivals of Religion and Protracted Meetings.” He gave an extended narrative of the Old Testament, New Testament, and historical material on the subject, contending that engagement in “special and prolonged religious services, and to expect special religious blessings, is repeatedly sanctioned by the word of God.” His history included the Reformation, the Puritan movement, and the Great Awakening under Edwards, Whitefield, and the Tennents. Those that object, Winkler reasoned, should not confine their analysis to the “occasional excesses attendant upon them” One cannot deny their power and should see them as “the appropriate means of grace—means which the loudest assessor of divine sovereignty might freely use, as they have always been sublimated by petitions to a throne of grace, and been regarded as efficacious only through the aids of the Holy Spirit.” Unhelpful emotion was merely incidental to the depth of transaction that necessarily occurs in conversion and thus the earnest Christian will find in “the principle of these extraordinary means of grace, one of the most admirable of the prescriptions of Grace,” We must not be “afraid of revivals and protracted meetings.”³¹

In September 1856, *The Christian Index* of Penfield, Georgia, carried an article entitled “How To Have a Revival.” Immediately the writer distanced himself from the “spasmodic fit of enthusiasm which subsides by Monday morning.” Instead, he was looking for “a real old-fashioned outpouring of grace—Christian rejoicing, sincere mourning, all trembling to

see the ‘stately steppings’ of the Holy One in the congregation of his saints.” This kind of revival is “worth laboring for, worth praying for.” In search of a revival, Christians also must be in search of a variety of things that cause a tepid spirituality and pursue an earnest willingness to part with them. Covetousness, love of this present world and its supposed pleasures, unkind feelings that approach the state of malice, an offended spirit that harbors unforgiveness—all this hinders a free operation of the Spirit and seals spiritual midgety in the soul. Revival cannot be scheduled but awaits a true sowing to the Spirit on the part of Christians.³²

George Boardman Taylor wrote a series of three articles for the *Religious Herald* in 1861 confessing some hesitations but admitting that he was convinced that “it is highly appropriate to set apart special seasons and use special means for the purpose of ingathering, and that it is perfectly reasonable at such seasons, to expect unusual additions.” Outside aid may legitimately be used in such meetings. He sought also to prepare the churches to minimize the well-noted abuses of these meetings, particularly the sad reality that “many false converts are gathered into the church,” and the church itself “suffers a reaction and relapse after the meeting is over,” and often the pastor is “crippled in his influence” or even “driven from his position.” Effectual means may be taken to avoid these problems, Boardman argued. Protracted meetings should be preceded by prayer meetings, “truth should predominate, as distinguished from mere appeals to the feelings,” great care should be taken in the use of the anxious seat and the inquiry room, those under apparent motions of the Spirit must be encouraged to express their feelings about the issues of their soul in order to be evaluated by gospel truth, and candidates should be thoroughly known through serious conversation. Any attempt to receive utter strangers who “come forward for prayer, profess conversion, and propose to join, all on the same occasion,” Taylor earnestly protested against.³³

Five years later, just on the other side of the Civil War, J. B. Jeter wrote five articles on “Protracted Meetings” for the *Religious Herald* in 1866. He defended their use biblically and pragmatically and gave much advice concerning their proper execution. He believed that the “benefits of these meetings have greatly overbalanced their evils.” Jeter’s pragmatism extended to the assertion that, even in the absence of any evidence that Christ or his apostles ever used such methods, divinely sanctioned ends justify,

even require, such methods as can be envisioned to accomplish the end. “If we can best fulfill these requirements by setting apart anxious seats, appointing special meetings for inquirers, and adopting such like measures, we are not only authorized but indirectly required to employ them.” In fact, so Jeter contended in the final article, “we have rarely known persons to be converted in meetings, in which anxious seats were used, that refused to occupy them.” The same “pride, worldliness, prejudice, indecision and skepticism which prevent them from occupying those seats, ... keeps them away from Christ.”³⁴ Taylor, though a bit more reticent than Jeter, was “far from opposing anxious seats” for “it secures special prayers of God’s people in behalf of those so asking, it *commits one* to himself, and to his worldly companions, and to the devil; and tramples upon that pride which opposes any manifestation of interest, and by a law of the soul, increases that interest.” Though employing some safeguards, these Baptist patriarchs mounted a defense of revivalism based on the proposition that the end justifies the means.

In that year, August of 1866, the *Religious Herald*, carried a series of resolutions passed by a meeting of Baptist and Methodist ministers and private members. They met to discuss means to promote the interests of Christ and to elevate the standard of piety in the churches. Among the measures was promotion of study of the word of God, particularly the Sabbath school in light of the phenomenon of frequent conversions among its scholars. They also promoted the duty of all Christians by “labor, prayer, and contribution” to send the gospel to the lost abroad and those destitute of the gospel in our own land. The group was alarmed at the number of young professors who frequented “dancing parties and other places of worldly and sinful Amusements.” Should they not desist after loving exhortation, they should know that such conduct “merits the censure and discipline of the churches.” The sixth resolution concerned protracted meetings. Such means had been instrumental at times for the conversion of sinners and the “prosperity of the churches.” Of late, however, the resolution stated, such meetings had become “social and epicurean” and the annual scheduling of such meetings on a regular basis without regard to the “state of religious feeling in the community is of doubtful propriety.” In all, the churches should look more to the ongoing regular meetings of the church as a means of conversion and less to protracted meetings.³⁵

The hesitation expressed in this article and by Manly and Fristoe was shared by many other Baptists. The subsequent years produced regular debate in Baptist papers of the nineteenth century as full-time evangelism began its long journey to irreducible claim to orthodoxy. Protracted meetings, the use of the anxious bench, traveling evangelists such as Faye Mills, Sam Jones and D. L. Moody in particular all continued to receive critical evaluation. Moody received more positive comments than negative, though one writer vented, "Others may have had a different experience, but so far as *we* have seen, the fruits of Evangel-*ism*, taken as a whole, are like the apples of Sodom."³⁶ When asked about card-signing as a means of expressing conversion one editor wrote "We most heartily disapprove of this new-fangled piece of machinery for engineering people into the church" and added, "We can scarcely conceive of a more ingenious contrivance of Satan for destroying the churches by filling them with unconverted people."³⁷

Cornelius Tyree spoke carefully to what he perceived as "The Defects in Modern Evangelistic Preaching." These defects had led to conversions of short duration, and church members of unholy lives. He noted that "modern revivalists" did not give due prominence to repentance, and they failed to "preach the terrors of the law" or the "certain and endless perdition of the wicked." Better to be too stringent like the Baptist fathers than to adopt the "hurried, easy, half-way conversions of some evangelists." They emphasize the human side asserting the ability as well as the obligation to believe in Christ, but omit "the sinner's deep depravity, his inability to convert himself, and his absolute dependence on the sovereign spirit," thus truncating "the full, God-honoring, soul-saving gospel." The methods used, Tyree implied, arise from "their love of money and over anxiety for numbers and quotable results" and so they have "widened the strait gate, and popularized the gospel, to make it palatable to the carnal mind." It is a devastating fact as well as an observable reality that the "preacher, who takes rising in a congregation, and coming forward for prayers, or coming to an inquiry meeting, or signing a blank card to live a better life, for conversion, will help in deceiving more souls than he will aid in coming to Christ."³⁸

Severe misgivings about the modern professional evangelists were registered by prominent thinkers in Baptist circles. W. E. Hatcher and Henry H. Tucker both dedicated extensive articles to warnings about the dangers closely aligned with the pursuit of itinerancy as a full-time calling.

Admitting that, closely guarded and under the scrutiny of a sincere and severe discipline, the revivalist could do much good to the church, still the common experience is widespread fraud. After discussing the lure of fame, numbers, and money and noting the churches' eventual exclusion of large numbers of these supposed converts, Tucker wrote, "The Doctor makes many converts, but most of them are *his* converts—not the Lord's."³⁹ Hatcher put forth similar observations, noting that the modern evangelist "sometimes reminds one of the street peddler, who has a new nostrum for toothache. He holds up the gospel remedy, and then calls on the sinners to march up and get it." If evangelists really warrant the status of gifts to the church, then a notable sobriety and depth must replace the powerful tendency to the superficial.

The Baptists need evangelists. They need men who have been trained in the schools, who have real sympathy with pastoral work, who have kindly and courageous denominational convictions, who believe in missions, who believe that religion is a life which is to grow, not by fits and jerks, but by patient faith and honest living, who honor the local church, who will help pastors, who are not ambitious for a great fame, who are not hankering after newspaper notoriety, who trust in the Holy Spirit and not in methods for producing conversion, who are not clamorous for instantaneous results, who are content with a moderate income, who know how to study, who are gentle and courteous in manners, who are sound in faith, and have favor with God and with men.⁴⁰

Several others—J. M. Wood⁴¹ and J. M. Hurst⁴²—expressed similar misgivings concerning the defective fruit of the means that were being employed. The revivalists themselves brought an increasing wave of resentment. Henry Holcomb Tucker conceded that in the rare case where one is gifted, sincere, and orthodox, he is a gift to the church. The mass of "revivalists," however, use unwarranted methods, affected zeal, and unbalanced doctrine to swell the church membership. In the process, "a great injury has been inflicted on the church; a still greater injury perhaps on those who have been persuaded on false grounds to unite with it." In short, "the revivalist, so-called, may have had good intentions, but his mission was one of mischief, and he is nothing but a pious fraud."⁴³

A SHIFT IN PERCEPTION AND PRACTICE

Soon, however, the generation that urged sanctified discretion passed. Caution no longer spoke. *The Christian Index*, formerly giving the most ringing words of warning, subsequently gave full endorsement to the professional system. On February 25, 1915, its front page article was entitled "The Secret of Billy Sunday's Power." After mentioning several possible factors of a spiritual and personal nature, the article concluded that his success resulted from the preparation for his meetings. Both in baseball and as agent for Wilbur Chapman, Sunday had learned the value of preparation. More than two months of preparation preceded his Philadelphia meeting with advertisement, a recruited choir, zealous backing of all the evangelical preachers in the city, and cottage prayer meetings. Thus, thousands are converted and large gifts flow into the treasury. If Baptist churches, therefore, did that kind of preparation proportionately, also argued the writer, Baptists would have more famous preachers and more converts.⁴⁴

The professionalism and technique that had been biblically analyzed, criticized, and often subjected to outright rejection began to find a place in Southern Baptist churches through the apparently sensational success of Billy Sunday (1862-1935). Uncritical acceptance of the external appearance of success explained largely, if not totally, in terms of human engineering of massive response contradicted the concerns of Southern Baptists for the seven previous decades. Now with the techniques and methodology of bringing a revival, such efforts reached a pitch of high refinement. The importance of broad doctrinal knowledge and commitment declined, the skill in observation and care of souls in the throes of conviction became much less common, and immediate decision became paramount. Revival was redefined.

The gradual amalgamation of the Billy Sunday's revival technique and Southern Baptist ongoing promotion of spiritual life in the churches came in the ministry of Lee Rutland Scarborough (1870-1945). Immersed after an unfruitful profession at an early age, Scarborough was converted at age seventeen and baptized by B. H. Carroll at the First Baptist Church of Waco. Upon Carroll's recommendation, Scarborough served as a supply preacher for First Baptist Church, Cameron, Texas. He soon was called as pastor. He also served as pastor of First Baptist Church, Abilene, Texas, before he joined

Carroll at the seminary in 1908 while it still was in Waco. Carroll's vision of having a distinct chair of evangelism at the seminary was fulfilled when Scarborough occupied what was called "The Chair of Fire." Upon the death of Carroll, L. R. Scarborough was elected president in 1914 and continued there until 1942.⁴⁵

In his book, *With Christ After the Lost*,⁴⁶ Scarborough celebrated Charles Finney (1792-1875) as "one of the greatest men of America, who combined the scholarly and evangelistic in a happy and dynamic way." Scarborough observed that "he used the methods of modern evangelists, calling on men everywhere to seek God for salvation, inviting them to the front in his audiences, praying for them and giving an opportunity to confess Christ."⁴⁷

Scarborough discussed the impact of D. L. Moody, C. H. Spurgeon, and Billy Sunday. On each he highlighted their soul-winning success. Sunday, yet to have his most significant impact, Scarborough wrote, was a "great preacher, sound on the fundamentals of the plan of salvation and mighty in his grip on the common heart of man." Scarborough, like the writer in the *Christian Index*, saw Sunday as the consummate organizer and "will likely go down in history as America's greatest single winner of men to Christ."⁴⁸

In a chapter entitled, "Revivals—How To Promote Them," Scarborough wrote that their values include the elevation of the churches and communities from "lethargy and spiritual dearth," they initiate "new movements for God and humanity," they open "fountains of liberality," they induce people to "God's world work in revivals," they are the "richest means of church extension," they are the "breath and life of missions," and they "develop some of the world's greatest leaders." Among these who "found their chance and way to fame through revivals" were "the Wesley brothers, Dwight L. Moody, Sankey, Sunday" along with John the Baptist and the Apostle Peter.⁴⁹

Conjoining the ideas of a true spiritual awakening and an event on a church's calendar, Scarborough contended, "All vital religion languishes in revivalless churches, souls go on in sin and to hell and God's glory fades and His throne is dishonored. Thus, revivals are the most vital to the things we hold dear in the world."⁵⁰ Scarborough deals with divine effectuality and human means as both necessary in any attempt of a church to foster a revival. He asserted clearly, "The presence of God is an absolute necessity.

His divine Spirit is the primal factor. He is the true and only source of revival power." Human means, however, are not inconsistent with dependence on God alone. "Yet even God needs and must have men in promoting a revival," Scarborough continued. God's power makes his people willing to labor and is "God's way of showing His revival cooperancy."⁵¹

Then there are certain essential factors expressing the working cooperation of these two forces. After words about the importance of prayer and the content of preaching, Scarborough gives advice about advertisement and organization including this observation: "Revivals do not go off by spontaneous combustion. If they are properly conducted and their results conserved, they will be organized. Half of Billy Sunday's and Dwight L. Moody's success was due to their organization. The revivals of smaller proportions should be organized to get larger results."⁵²

Scarborough then gave pragmatic advice on church cooperation, the song service, personal work, and the after meeting. Especially important for the song service is the type of accompanist used: "Its instrumental side should be in the hands of a Gospel accompanist. She should know Gospel music and have enthusiasm and fire in her touch. All sorts of instruments can be used to great effect in revivals."⁵³ Messages about the person and offices of Christ, focusing on his redemptive work should be preached "with soul-breaking passion in the power of the Spirit of God to the hearts of men if revivals do what they ought."⁵⁴

The developing revival format, scheduled normally twice a year in many Southern Baptist churches, was used to promote a variety of Convention programs. For example, during the 75 Million Campaign (1919-1924), the nomenclature of "revival" was used for enlistment of pledges and the suggestion of a "stewardship revival" for increasing faithfulness in paying pledges and including other denominational ministries as an element of true devotion. J. F. Love warned Southern Baptists that at the White Throne many will have to give answer on the issue of "paying our campaign pledge, of giving or not giving to Christ in this great world-hour to help Him minister to the needs of a distressed world and save the lost for whom He died."⁵⁵ These efforts to co-opt the term revival for money-giving produced among many a negative response. A culture of denominational giving briefly supplanted the event that was deemed the chief means of evangelism among the churches. Scarborough, the chairman of the campaign, regretted that

brief intermission of revival emphasis confessing, “We let up on evangelism. We pressed enlistment, campaigns for money, paying pledges, and took the emphasis off missions and soul-winning.”⁵⁶

In 1956, Convention Press published *the Southern Baptist Program of Evangelism* by C. E. Matthews. This book promoted a convention-wide, state by state program of evangelistic outreach that solidified the nomenclature of “revival” for scheduled meetings on the church calendar. The plans suggested in this book, even the very language of the publicity, the announcements, the high-attendance day, the cards to be signed, the language of the invitation were used tens of thousands of times in Southern Baptist churches. The idea of “revival” carried a culturally designated meaning quite distinct from its meaning in the nineteenth century. For example, the “Associational Chair of Evangelism” should “urge each church to have at least two revivals every year: one as part of a simultaneous crusade, and the other as an individual church revival.”⁵⁷ Concerning the planning of a simultaneous crusade, the author wrote, “The simultaneous revival produces greater results in every way than any other method.” Later he wrote, still advocating the simultaneous crusade because of its need for organization, committees, coordinated planning, and focused energetic work—“not everyone likes to work”—“It does not require much effort on the part of a pastor and a church just to ‘jump-up’ the average eight-day meeting. About all that is done in the matter of preparation for the average single church revival is to secure an evangelist, put an ad in the paper, make some announcements, and offer some prayers.”⁵⁸ Again, the vulgarization of the vocabulary is obvious in the statement, “The steering committee should be created as soon as the date is set for the simultaneous crusade, and it is automatically dissolved when the revival is concluded.”⁵⁹ Matthews suggested several letters to be written to the membership prior to these preaching services. One written to the “Junior” department says, “Your Sunday school record shows that you have not confessed Jesus as your Lord and Saviour.” After listing several Scriptures that emphasize the need for salvation, the letter exhorts, “Come to our revival every night through Sunday.”⁶⁰

Of vital importance in the plans and organization for such scheduled revivals is the post-sermonic invitation to the congregation as an opportunity for salvation. In discussing the invitation,⁶¹ Matthews likens it to a farmer’s success defined in terms of how much corn actually is put in the granary.

“The same principle applies in the work and the objective in a revival and other preaching services.”⁶²

The intensity of Matthews’ attention to the invitation truly is remarkable and defined the popular contours of Southern Baptist worship and evangelism for decades. In that context we find “revival” used as designating the series of meetings finally concentrated in the invitation: “Cooperate gladly and follow fully the evangelist’s plans for this great occasion. If you are not able to trust him here, do not invite him for a revival. You probably will see more people responding in this hour than in all other services of the revival combined.”⁶³ The idea of revival became virtually synonymous with the pressurized skill and persistence used in this invitation. Matthews used Paul’s emphases on persuasion (e.g., “Knowing, therefore, the terror of the Lord, we persuade men” [2 Cor 5:11 KJV]), as related most intensely to this post-sermonic time of appeal. In a service particularly focused on this strategy, “The message by the evangelist should not be longer than twenty-five to thirty minutes, followed by the invitation.”⁶⁴

If any one—ushers, deacons, committee members, choir, music director, pastor, guest evangelist—fails in following these instructions they show they do not “understand the full meaning of an invitation to the lost to make that decision which will settle his eternal destiny.”⁶⁵ The help of the choir is vital for “there is no telling how many millions of lost souls throughout the centuries have been influenced to accept Christ by consecrated choirs singing the invitation hymns.”⁶⁶ The ushers, in context of receiving instruction about distribution of hymn books, sufficient seating for possible overflow, temperature in the building, must recognize “the gravity of this hour” to avoid “bungling their part.” Should they seat people at the wrong time or be late to Sunday School, “They may hinder people and be responsible for someone’s going to hell.”⁶⁷ In the context of the details and an ingenious extension of manipulative tactics, Matthews advises, as a second series of invitation opportunities in a section entitled “Seasoning the Green Wood,” “The seasoned wood has responded to the revival fires. You will have numbers of lost and unchurched present who have not attended the revival before; and if they are not saved now, they may never attend another religious service.”⁶⁸ Repeated devices are used to provoke more responses.

When he recognized that not fifty percent of the membership of Southern Baptist churches are “active Christians,” he rejected the idea that most of

the rest were not regenerated, but said that it was due to a lack of method in conservation of results.⁶⁹ Part of conservation is the planning of more revivals. “The associations that do not participate in annual association-wide revival crusades are the associations that need reviving most. . . . The pastors that do not participate in association-wide revival crusades are the pastors that need reviving most.”⁷⁰

This programmatic—and judgmental—approach to revival gained virtually dominant acceptance in Southern Baptist churches. The planning for such revival increased in detail and became so streamlined that by 1979 the Mass Evangelism Department of the Home Mission Board [now NAMB] published a book entitled *Revival Planbook for the Local Church*.⁷¹ Spiritual emphases, the necessity of Bible-centered gospel preaching, and a fundamental God-centered approach pepper the *Planbook* throughout. “Revivals never just happen. They are the work of God. God works in God’s people when they pray. Pray for compassion for the lost. Pray until the revival is totally in God’s hands. Pray expecting results.”⁷² The main emphasis, however, is organizational and programmatic. The presupposition statedly borrows from Charles Finney’s idea of revival as the predictable product of the proper use of means. “Charles Finney once said, ‘It is useless to expect a revival simply by asking for it, without bothering to fulfill the laws which govern spiritual blessings.’”⁷³

The first substantial section, entitled, “Revival: Why?” begins, “A proven method of evangelism is what Southern Baptists have come to know as ‘revival.’”⁷⁴ The section gives six results of a revival “when properly administered.” Revival is a “reminder to keep our priorities in proper order, . . . is a retreat with God from the ordinary, . . . is the unified force of the church declaring Christ’s concern for the lost to a community, . . . is a focus on the spiritual needs of a church, . . . intensifies and develops prayer life, . . . [and] sets a spiritual atmosphere that ripens the harvest.” This final emphasis went on to say, “The intensified atmosphere of concern and proclamation makes it easier to achieve a harvest of souls. Adequate planting and watering guarantees [sic] such a harvest. Without proper planning, praying and preparation, that revival would not produce any harvest.”⁷⁵

That one can conceive of a “revival” without a harvest shows the radical shift in concept concerning the word. In a section encouraging “Follow-up” for a new Christian, the *Planbook* asserts, “Leading a person to Christ

is easy compared to following up that same person.” Part of the instruction on that topic states, “Don’t be discouraged if someone does not respond to your efforts to help him grow. In the parable of the sower (Mark 4:1-8) Jesus said that many people would not grow after they received the Word. But the emphasis in that parable is that there will be some who will grow in leaps and bounds. Our task is to follow up people in the power of the Holy Spirit and let God take care of their response (1 Cor. 3:6-7).”⁷⁶ These remarks show that the concept of regeneration as an effectual unilateral act of divine grace had been smothered under evangelistic method. Also, the care with which Baptists protected regenerate church membership was dismissed with doctrinal flippancy.

Richard Lee, pastor of Rehoboth Baptist Church, Atlanta, and President of the Southern Baptist Pastors’ Conference declared, “I am tired of the doomsayers who claim we cannot have revival.”⁷⁷ His book is an extrapolation of the prayer, “Lord, send a revival,” based on the 1927 B. B. McKinney hymn by that name. Lee focuses the prayer into four spheres that constitute his chapters; “In Our Hearts, ... In our Homes, ... In our Churches, ... In Our nation.” Lee writes of the need for desperation in personal revival citing several biblical passages about hungering, thirsting, panting, contrition and instructs, “The fact is evident that God is always willing to do His part, if we’re willing to do ours.”⁷⁸ After descriptions of the necessity of confession, prayer, attention to the Word of God, and total obedience, Lee asked, “Do you want personal revival?” His answer, “If you do its available to you.”⁷⁹ Lee deals with the issue of the struggle between the flesh and the Spirit, carnality and spirituality, and dominant desire for fellowship with God. Throughout he focuses on the necessity of believing the Bible and its doctrines, believing in the saving purpose and power of Christ, and the necessity of cultivating a desire to know God and walk with him. A revived church will see people coming down the aisles, baptisms stirring the waters, and evangelistic activity always moving.⁸⁰ His last section and last two chapters focused on America as a Christian nation. After setting forth seven principles of a Judeo-Christian ethic operative in the founding of America, Lee identifies four reasons that God has blessed America: America was founded by godly people, America has blessed Israel, the majority of Americans claim to be Christians, and America is a key in the prophetic future.⁸¹ For America to prosper under God’s blessing, we must maintain a healthy remnant of

Christians in the nation and Christian conviction in offices of state. To do this we must pray (blessings and influence for righteous leaders and removal for those who are evil), participate (vote for the right people and be active for just causes politically), persist (don't lag in working for righteousness), and "proclaim the truth of the glorious gospel."⁸² Lee closes the book with this focus on revival for the sake of America's well-being.

The only way a nation can be changed is if the people are changed. All that will affect a permanent change in the people of America is the gospel of Jesus Christ. If the people of America hear the gospel, and come to repentance, God promises today, "I'm going to hear from heaven. I'm going to forgive their sin and heal their land." When an Almighty creator God, who gave us this nation and has watched over it, sees us returning to those principles of righteousness upon which our land was founded, then he is going to be able to bless America. May God bless America!⁸³

Throughout, Lee looks at revival as God's response to human obedience. God is put in a position to grant revival when Christians achieve a determined and energetic effort to manifest biblically described and mandated traits of obedience and spirituality.

In 1993, Chuck Kelley, Jr., published *How Did They Do It?*⁸⁴ After pointing to the local church as the "real story of Southern Baptist evangelism," he enlarged the focus to concentrate on "what Southern Baptists have done through their department of evangelism."⁸⁵ He divided the history of Southern Baptist evangelism into four sections from 1845 through 1990. The first deals with initial to put into practice the guiding determination for propagation of the gospel. Through uncertainty, contention, compromise, committees, and B. H. Carroll, the convention adopted an evangelism department as an element of the Home Mission Board. Kelly summarized, "The evangelism department was designed for one purpose—to plan, promote, and lead revival meetings."⁸⁶ The second historical division, 1906-1942, saw the 75 Million Campaign, deep indebtedness of the HMB, and the defunding of the department of evangelism. In 1936, the department was resumed with Roland Q. Leavell at its helm. Revivals, personal witness, and evangelistic literature composed a three-pronged approach to his view of church effectiveness in this Great Commission endeavor. Kelly summarized the revival emphasis in this way.

As secretary of evangelism, Leavell emphasized three aspects of evangelism. He remained deeply involved in planning, promoting, and participating in simultaneous and other forms of revival campaigns in cities, associations and states. Although Leavell did not lead a staff of evangelists and singers, he still recognized the effectiveness of revivalism in Southern Baptist life. When he was asked to develop a soul-winning campaign for Southern Baptists in 1938 and the Baptists of America in 1940, revival meetings were a major part of the strategy.⁸⁷

In the third stage of development (1942-1955), Southern Baptists, under the leadership of M. E. Dodd sought to combine a centennial celebration with a simultaneous revival, called the Centennial Revival Crusade. A goal of one million baptisms was set. A bit over 256,000 was numbered, a great defeat in the mind of those who had set the goal. This initiated the C. E. Matthews era in which, according to Kelley, "the harvest was enormous, and the momentum Matthews created for evangelism within the denomination remained for years."⁸⁸ Perhaps his lasting legacy was the structure of organization for evangelism in the national convention and in the state conventions and the evangelism conferences at each level. Kelley noted, "He stressed continually the importance of thorough preparation. In this regard, he stands in the line of Charles Finney, Dwight Moody, Billy Sunday, and Billy Graham."⁸⁹ All the details of preparation he suggested, however, and thus the immediate successes in the Matthews era resided within revivalism. Kelley summarized, "Through building his program around revivalism, Matthews did not have to convince Southern Baptists that his basic method was sound nor train them to do something unfamiliar. Instead he was able to focus on motivating them and training them to implement his approach to revivalism."⁹⁰

After discussing the diversification of evangelistic outreach during the era of 1955-1990, Kelley discussed four distinct methods of evangelism used by Southern Baptists; decisional preaching, personal evangelism, Sunday School, and Revivalism. More so than in other denominations, revivalism fit the ethos of Baptist life because of the voluntary nature of conversion and church membership. A key observation in this chapter again highlights the influence of Charles Finney. "Whereas Calvinists of his day would emphasize revival as the act of a sovereign God working at the

discretion of His will, Finney referred to revival as the result of the right use of the means God described in the Bible. When we do what God requires, God sends revival.” Kelley spends the remainder of the chapter describing how to implement “what God requires,” for “This perspective opened up the potential for revivalism as a tool for evangelism.”⁹¹ After describing several ways in which a church might do what God requires, Kelley cautions that “Techniques of planning and promotion can obscure the necessity of the Holy Spirit’s ministry for a truly impactful revival.”⁹² The word “revival” took on such an irreducibly programmatic meaning that one can conceive of a “revival” that is not “truly impactful.”

In 1994, Jimmy Draper wrote *Bridges to the Future: A Challenge to Southern Baptists*.⁹³ After chapters about the contemporary cultural challenge, Baptist history, Baptist ecclesiology, Baptist cooperation, Baptist missions, internal dynamics of growth and decline in Baptist churches, and internal evidence of a new surge of life, Draper wrote about prelude to revival. The increase of crime, moral decline, apathy, cruelty, domestic collapse, and multifaceted secularism show the urgent need for a true spiritual awakening. Also, discouragement in the churches, the apparent ineffectiveness of perennial methods seeking infusion of spiritual life, and stagnation in the number of baptisms signal the need for revival. Having prefaced this discussion with the proposition, “God always makes his people responsible for spiritual awakening,” based on 2 Chronicles 7:14, and encapsulated the proposition with the statement, “God expects action from his people”⁹⁴ Draper comes to the close of the chapter with the assertion, “Will a great awakening occur in this generation? That is up to you and me.”⁹⁵

Draper does not describe revival as an event on the church calendar. He wants genuine spiritual renewal that results in desperate and energetic discipleship. He considered the issue of divine sovereignty and human responsibility. A century earlier, God’s work was proclaimed as initiatory and the only effectual operation of revival. Human response as evidence of a gracious operation of the Spirit followed. The author, however, saw the opening aperture of revival as the human preparation and limits the divine to the role of responsive and secondary. He closed the chapter with this challenge: “The response we make to Him will determine whether He can and will use us for His glory as we move into the 21st century.”⁹⁶

Lewis Drummond sought to focus on revival as a human response to the

sovereignty and revealed attributes of God. He isolated eight of these and how they can operate to effect revival. In writing of God as Father in the context of the revival that defined the reign of Josiah, Drummond taught, “Only the *sovereign grace* of God can explain it. It must be said again that revival always finds its final answer in God’s sovereignty.”⁹⁷ As he illustrated with historical accounts of revival and in the kingship of Josiah, “the Word of God becomes central in all great awakenings.”⁹⁸

The second attribute inciting revival Drummond isolated as divine sovereignty. Avoiding what he called a “humanistic approach” to 2 Chronicles 7:14, he saw divine sovereignty as bringing his people to exert the actions of humbling, praying, seeking, and turning. Again using both biblical examples and historical revivals, Drummond said “the initial act in revival begins with God moving and enabling His people to do so.”⁹⁹ He illustrated divine sovereignty in several discreet salvific and preserving actions of the Exodus rounding the discussion off with, “God’s absolute sovereignty in revival certainly does not nullify the responsibility of God’s people to pray and seek revival.”¹⁰⁰

As God reveals himself as a God of hope, Drummond crocheted the stories of Ahaz and Hezekiah with historical examples of revival, including personal revival, he asserted, “Revived, cleansed people are a happy people.” Emerging from the integration of confession and covenantal renewal and the variety of responses to these reviving provocations, Drummond reached this doctrinal and experiential principle of “the Spirit’s effectual call” manifesting the “elective sovereignty of God.”¹⁰¹

Spiritual awakening also may come as God reveals himself as holy. Using God’s manifestation of his glory to Moses, Drummond discussed the ingratitude and irreverence of iniquity God’s holiness uncovers. Also, this revelation moved Moses to pray vigorously for God’s covenantal promises to be sustained. Holiness drives to repentance; repentance drives to contrite supplication for moving and transforming manifestations of mercy.¹⁰²

“In a spiritual awakening God reveals Himself as grace.”¹⁰³ Using the examples of the Shantung Revival and the reluctant mission of Jonah, Drummond called on the reader to marvel in the powerful manifestation of grace in revival. He surmised, “We need a fresh grasp of what our evangelical forefathers called ‘the doctrines of grace.’ God’s mercy is utterly fathomless. It reaches the depths and forgives you and me.”¹⁰⁴ God’s granting of revival

is a “revelation of grace,” and such grace produces deep repentance and supplication for mercy.

Drummond discussed God’s revelation of power by looking at Pentecost—its purpose, the prayer that preceded, its preaching, and the integration of evangelism—this is the ultimate priority¹⁰⁵—with social ministry. He also incorporated analyses of the prayers of David Brainerd and that of Jacob’s wrestling with God. The continuous revival in east Africa provided rich illustrations of the principle of power in a multi-faceted way. Again, as virtually in each chapter, he finds Charles Finney as a positive encouragement in the governing ideas of the chapter. Nothing—nothing—that constitutes revival can be experienced or done apart from the power of the Holy Spirit. In revival, man conforms to the power of God as manifest in his covenantal purpose. Drummond defined revival in this way: “In the final analysis, revival is really no more than an ongoing, vibrant, Spirit-filled fellowship with Jesus Christ (1 John 1:1-9).”¹⁰⁶

Chapter seven illustrates how God’s love prompts revival from a state of destitution and rebellion, Ichabod (the glory has departed), to a state of Ebenezer, (God is our rock of help). Again he emphasized the issues of repentance, prayer, and forgiveness. Chapter eight shows that God is “available” for revival. The promises connected with prayer demonstrate that “God is far more ready to give than we are to receive.” The author used this final chapter to argue that “god honors intercessors and makes himself readily available for a spiritual awakening today.”¹⁰⁷

He closed with a renewed call for a concert of prayer. Taking encouragement from the revival in South Korea and the prayer that permeated that billowing movement, as well as from John Sutcliff’s reissuing of Jonathan Edwards’s call for a concert of prayer, Drummond urged his readers to “start a Concert of Prayer in your circle.”¹⁰⁸

In 2011, the professors of evangelism in Southern Baptist institutions contributed to *Mobilizing a Great Commission Church for Harvest*.¹⁰⁹ One article, “Keys to Benefiting from a Revival Meeting,” shows in that title the idea of scheduling a “revival” became orthodox diction in Southern Baptist nomenclature. The definition given, however, hearkens back to the nineteenth-century and partook of some of the concerns of Drummond: “In this chapter, the term *revival* is defined as the sovereign movement of God, through the work of the Holy Spirit, to revitalize believers in Jesus

Christ to pursue a more vital spiritual life, work, and witness.” Then the author further clarifies, “*Revival meetings* refer to a period of time set aside by a church for the purpose of spiritualization and/or evangelism.”¹¹⁰

The author demonstrated that such a scheduled event still is high on the list of evangelistic and revitalization methods among churches of the Convention. He noted, “When revival meetings in SBC experienced their golden era, the revival meeting was the prevalent methodology for evangelism.”¹¹¹ After a brief history of the development of the “revival” as a programmatic event, he isolated five factors that have created the perception that such revivals are decreasing in effectiveness. Four of these highlight pragmatic issues, but the first sets forth a biblically and spiritually relevant reason with a twist toward human initiation: “Western Christianity is in need of spiritual awakening. The church must pray for an awakening and cleanse herself from sin and live the life of holiness. Then we could reach others for Christ.”¹¹²

The author relies largely on C. E. Matthews ideas and the *Revival Planbook*, updated to *Revival Preparation Manual*, to advise how to organize the event. He expressed confidence that such preparation can yield effective results. “It is my conviction,” he wrote, “that the effectiveness of revival meetings will depend on the stewardship of that methodology by the local church.”¹¹³

CONCLUSION

Southern Baptists came into being with a vibrant memory of and in the recent experience of powerful reviving movements of the Holy Spirit. Their initial purpose based on a deep sense of obedience to the mandate of missionary and evangelistic faithfulness prompted energetic involvement for outreach while maintaining the vital principal of regenerate church membership. While Southern Baptists tested some of the methods commenced by itinerating evangelists and revival preachers, they harbored deep suspicions of the developing methodology as manipulative and dangerous for true spiritual experience. They wanted no manipulated pseudo-conversions. That would increase infidelity, secularize church life, and challenge the practice of church discipline. Professional decision-getters were resisted, and their methods were deemed unscriptural. Their deep ecclesiological commitments and their confessional awareness made them

press against these burgeoning methods while still desiring strong evidence of the awakening operations of the Holy Spirit.

Soon after the emergence of Dwight L. Moody and then Billy Sunday, Southern Baptists began to follow suit in both their method and theology of revival. Convention literature on the subject became dominantly methodological and the concept of revival became identified with a date on the church calendar. Desire for revival, prayer for revival, preaching for revival, and even expectation of revival still flourished. So did greater dependence on the energy and determination of man. The scheduled meetings, dominant for sixty years, began to share place with other emphases that were seen as opportunities to elicit more deeply spiritual personal commitment to Christian discipleship and evangelism.

The last four and a half decades have seen a doctrinal revitalization on biblical inspiration, infallibility, and inerrancy. That was experienced in the context of a contested accompanying recovery of confessional emphases on divine sovereignty in the entire spectrum of soteriological issues. In this writer's observation, this constitutes revival in itself, and may well serve as a necessary prelude to deeper work of God's Spirit that will result in distinct and increasing purity in the churches and powerful manifestations of effectual gospel power in evangelism and missions.

¹ Parts of this article have been previously Published in Robert Davis Smart and Michael A. G. Haykin with Ian Hugh Clary, *Pentecostal Outpourings: Revival and the Reformed Tradition* (Grand Rapids, MI: Reformation Heritage Books, 2016), 218ff.

² See my discussion of Hanserd Knollys and William Kiffin in *The Baptists*, 3 vols (Ross-Shire, Scotland: Mentor, 2005) 1:155-58. See also the discussion of Benjamin Keach, 181-88.

³ John Franklin Jameson, *Dictionary of United States History: 1492-1895. Four Centuries of History* (Boston: Puritan Publishing Company, 1894), 51. Jameson was a professor of history at Brown University, had been at Johns Hopkins University, and wrote a work entitled *History of Historical Writing in America*. Cathcart's *Baptist Encyclopedia* contains statistics for slightly different years, but seems, by trajectory to be roughly consistent with these numbers. For example, in 1770 it gives the total for churches as 77. In 1792, it gives the number as 891, 109 less than Jameson's number. In 1812, it reports 2,164 as opposed to 2,433. In 1832, however, the number in Cathcart is 5,320, only 2 different from the 5,322 of Jameson. In 1875 Cathcart reported 21,423 churches compared to Jameson's 1,872 number or 18,397, an increase of about 3,000 churches in three years. Cathcart reported for 1880 the total number of Baptists as 2,296,327 compared to the 1890 number of Jameson at 3,594,093. See William Cathcart, *The Baptist Encyclopedia*, 2 vols (Philadelphia: Louis Everts, 1881) 2:1324. The numbering between the two volumes is consecutive.

⁴ Isaac Backus, *A History of New England with Particular Reference to the Denomination of Christians called Baptists* 2 vols. (Newton, MA: Backus Historical Society, 1871) 2:106-07.

- 5 *Minutes of the Philadelphia Baptist Association from A. D. 1707, to A. D. 1807*, ed. A. D. Gillette (Philadelphia: American Baptist Publication Society, 1851), 25. Subsequent references will be *Philadelphia Minutes* plus the page number.
- 6 *Philadelphia Minutes*, 29, 30.
- 7 *Philadelphia Minutes*, 57.
- 8 *Philadelphia Minutes*, 95.
- 9 Robert B. Semple, *A History of the Rise and Progress of the Baptists in Virginia* revised and extended by G. W. Beale (Richmond: Pitt & Dickinson, 1894), 14.
- 10 Morgan Edwards, *Material Toward a History of the Baptists* 2 vols. prepared for publication by Eve B. Weeks and Mary B. Warren (Danielsville, GA: Heritage Papers, 1984) 2:90-97.
- 11 Semple, *A History and Rise and Progress of the Baptists in Virginia*, 23, 24.
- 12 Alvah Hovey, *A Memoir of the Life and Times of the Rev. Isaac Backus* (Boston: Gould & Lincoln, 1858). 301-06.
- 13 *Massachusetts Baptist Missionary Magazine*, May 1804, 50. Hereafter BMM.
- 14 BMM, 1:94
- 15 J. H. Spencer, *A History of Kentucky Baptists from 1769 to 1885* (Cincinnati: J. R. Baumes, 1885), 49.
- 16 John Taylor, *Baptists on the American Frontier: A History of Ten Churches of which the Author has been alternately a Member*. Edited and introduced by Chester Raymond Young. (Macon: Mercer University Press, 1995) 184-85. The book contains an excellent biography of Taylor and the religious dynamics defining this era in Kentucky Baptist life. The book will be referred to as Taylor, even when citing material from the introduction.
- 17 Spencer, *History of Kentucky Baptists*, 63, 64.
- 18 Taylor, *Baptists on the American Frontier*, 276.
- 19 Taylor, *Baptists on the American Frontier*, 276-77.
- 20 William Fristoe, *A Concise History of the Kectocon Baptist Association and the Life of the Rev James Ireland* (Harrisonburg, VA: Sprinkle Publications, 2002), 3.
- 21 William B. Sprague, *Lectures on Revival*. Reprint ed. (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth, 1978), appendix, 9-15.
- 22 Talbot W. Chambers, *The New York City Noon Prayer Meeting* (Colorado Springs, CO: Wagner Publications, 2002), 28. The book originally was published in 1858 and was entitled *The Noon Prayer Meeting of the North Dutch Church, Fulton Street, New York: Its Origin, Character and Progress, with Some of its Results*.
- 23 Roy Fish, *When Heaven Touched Earth* (Azle, TX: Needs of the Times Publishers, 1996), 263, 255, 254, 238.
- 24 William W. Bennett, *A Narrative of the Great Revival which Prevailed in the Southern Armies During the Late Civil War Between the States of the Federal Union* (Harrison VA: Sprinkle Publications, 1976), 7-85. Originally published in 1877.
- 25 Cited in J. William Jones, *Christ in the Camp, or Religion in the Confederate Army* (Harrisonburg, VA: Sprinkle Publications, 1986 [originally copyrighted 1887 by B. F. Johnson & Co.]), 248. This book has an appendix of 160 pages of letters from religious workers in the Confederate army. The letters describe personal interviews with soldiers, preaching services, response to tract distribution, powerful movements of conversion among large groups, religious decline and disinterest, prayer meetings, the times, manner, and opportunity for exhortation and many other items of interest to the religious life of the army.
- 26 Bennett, *A Narrative of the Great Revival*, 281.
- 27 Fristoe, *A Concise History of the Kectocon Baptist Association*, 46, 47.
- 28 Fristoe, *A Concise History of the Kectocon Baptist Association*, 47-50.
- 29 See my discussion in *The Baptists*, 2:278-82.
- 30 Basil Manly, letter to his wife, September 4, 1846.
- 31 E. T. Winkler, "Revivals of Religion and Protracted Meetings," *The Southern Baptist* (September 29, 1852), 1.
- 32 "How to Have a Revival," *The Christian Index*, September 18, 1856, 1.
- 33 G[eorge] B[oarman] T[aylor], "Protracted Meetings" *Religious Herald* (May 1861).
- 34 J. B. Jeter, "Protracted Meetings," *Religious Herald* (March 8, 15, 22, 29, April 5 1866). 1 [the first editorial article in each number].
- 35 *Religious Herald*, August 2, 1866, 1.
- 36 See *The Christian Index and Southwestern Baptist* (March 25, 1880), 1; *The Religious Herald* (July 28, 1887), 4; *The Christian Index* (April 15, 1886), 9. *The Christian Index* (November 7, 1895), 4.
- 37 H. H. Tucker, "From California," *The Christian Index and Southwestern Baptist* (March 11, 1880) 2.
- 38 C[ornelius] Tyree, "The Defects in Modern Evangelistic Preaching," *The Christian Index* (July 18, 1889), 5.
- 39 Henry H. Tucker, "Dr. Tertullus, the Great Revivalist," *The Christian Index and Southwestern Baptist* (May 18, 1882), 8.

- 40 W. E. Hatcher, "The Modern Evangelist," *The Examiner* (November 24, 1887), 1.
- 41 J. M. Wood, "Revivals," *The Christian Index* (March 22, 1883), 6.
- 42 J. M. Hurst, "Fidelity to God and His Church," *The Christian Index and Southern Baptist* (October 1, 1891), 1.
- 43 Henry H. Tucker, "Revivalists," *The Christian Index and Southwestern Baptist* (May 11, 1882), 8.
- 44 B. J. W. Graham, "The Secret of Billy Sunday's Power," *The Christian Index* (February 25, 1915), 1, 2.
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- 54 Scarborough, *After the Lost*, 151.
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- 62 Matthews, *Southern Baptist Program of Evangelism*, 92.
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- 66 Matthews, *Southern Baptist Program of Evangelism*, 93. Centuries? One wonders how many centuries may be documented of choirs singing invitation hymns.
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 104 Drummond, *Eight Keys to Biblical Revival*, 140.
 105 Drummond, *Eight Keys to Biblical Revival*, 148, 149.
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