

Revival In The Hebrides

By E. W. Lawrence (London)

About fifty years ago, Dr. R. A. Torrey said, "I believe . . . there is not a church, chapel, or mission on earth where you cannot have a revival, provided there is a nucleus of faithful people who will hold on to God until it comes." There has been a remarkable exhibition of that in the last two years, in the Hebrides islands, off the northern coast of Scotland.

Duncan Campbell, the man God is using in this remarkable awakening, is a very humble brother, but he has discovered the inner secret of spiritual power—death to self, that the life of the Risen Lord Jesus might flow unhindered through him.

"Where Two or Three . . ."

In 1949, the Presbytery of the Free Church of Lewis met together to discuss the ever increasing drift away from the Churches, and they passed a resolution, which was made public through the daily press there, calling faithful believers to view with deep concern, the spiritual indifference among the islanders, for the cold hand of humanism and the blighting hand of materialism were beginning to leave their marks on the religious life of the island.

Whatever effect this had on the church as a whole, in the parish of Barvas there was a small group of men who were spiritually burdened, and with the lead of their pastor, they besought the Lord continually at the place of prayer. They were fully assured that He who had promised a latter day revival, would, in His own time and way, fulfil His word. The timely word of Jesus no doubt was often fought out in the place of prayer: "The husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, being patient over it, until the early and latter rain. Be ye also patient; stablish your hearts; for the coming of the Lord is at hand." And so is Revival.

Now it is still true that God deigns to use the poor and insignificant to accomplish His purposes, and years before the 1949 resolution, two elderly sisters, both unmarried, and one of them totally blind, shared the burden for revival, and also met together to pour out their hearts in intercession for revival. "These were days of heart searching," said Mr. Campbell later, "of humiliation, as the small hours of the morning found them, along with their minister, waiting upon God." Night after night, for hours on end, they pleaded the promises, and sought God's face in prayer, and then, all of a sudden, two things dawned upon them: (1) Being a covenant keeping God, the Lord must keep all His covenant promises; (2) They themselves must do something about it all.

Why? and Now!

In one of our prayer gatherings, one young brother challenged the others with the eternal "Why?" "We believe in the cleansing power of the precious blood, but are our hearts clean? Is my heart clean? I believe in the power of the Holy Ghost, but am I experiencing the power of the supernatural in me and through me. We believe in revival, but are we seeing revival?" And if you will turn up verses 3-5 of Psalm 24, you will find the actual verses of Scripture that challenged these brethren and sisters, and the verses they prayed over night

after night, "Are MY hands clean? Is MY heart pure, or am I living the double life?"

As they faced up to the young brother's challenge, they were again driven back to their knees. "God is the God of Revival: He alone can solve the problem that confronts us today relative to the drift away of the church. He can do it. He has promised to do it, but it has not happened, and tonight we face the question, "Why?"

As with the first disciples who were told to "tarry in the city of Jerusalem" these brethren and sisters continued waiting upon the Lord. One night one young man present was able to get right through to the place of implicit confidence. "God has promised," he cried from a full heart, "and what He promises He is now going to fulfill." His words were prophetic.

At the other end of the parish the two sisters were also hearkening to the Word of the Lord to them. They reached the place of spiritual assurance. Behold here two small groups of God's redeemed people, one in heart and mind, deep in travail, and "as soon as Zion travailed, she brought forth her children."

We mentioned above of a second conviction that came upon the praying group in Barvas, that they must do something about the need of revival there. Nearly fifty years earlier, the parish had been greatly blessed through the labours of a Faith Mission pilgrim. They contacted the Faith Mission again, sending them another Macedonian call. They in turn approached Duncan Campbell, then engaged in convention work in the Isle of Skye. God immediately closed up that Convention work, and then he obeyed the call and went to Lewis. "God has said he is coming, and he will be here within a fortnight," the two sisters had replied when their pastor read a letter from Campbell, saying that other work made it possible for him to leave Skye before the next winter. Such is the over-ruling power of the grace of God. It is still recorded in God's word that "the secret of the Lord is with them that fear Him."

From Ordinary to Extraordinary

Mr. Campbell's first meeting at Barvas was "quite an ordinary one." From one report I gather that on this occasion he had spoken from Matt. 11:23, "And thou, Capernaum, which art exalted unto heaven, shall be brought down to hell; for if the mighty works which have been done in thee, had been done in Sodom, it would have remained unto this day."

Sixty or seventy people attended a night of prayer following this first meeting. Of it, Duncan Campbell said, "This young man (one of the praying band) laid hold upon God; he must have prayed for half an hour. The heavens opened. Several fell into a trance: I cannot explain that. I know that a supernatural power was let loose, and God stepped out into the field in mighty delivering power, and we know it."

Conviction was so great on the second night, that the preacher could not continue. The building was crowded, scores were crying for mercy, and six young men were gloriously converted to Christ. "The atmosphere was terrible with a sense of God." On that night, Campbell had spoken from Rom. 2, 4-6 (please

turn this up). He also said that the burden of every message in Lewis, from the very first day, had been the severity of God, sin, and repentance. The meeting closed (officially), and the congregation was dismissed. They returned again as a result of one of the elders who stood outside the building and recited parts of Psalm 102. They returned to the church building again, and Mr. Campbell addressed them from Psalm 50:1-4. These verses also speak of the judgment of God, and as a result the power of God swept through that congregation, and on every side men and women cried for mercy.

That "after meeting" finished about 3 a. m. next morning. Let Campbell himself tell what happened after. "As we were leaving the church, people were gathering at the police station, and a messenger suggested that we should go there, as they were in great distress of soul, listening to a God fearing man. There were hundreds there—not people who had been in church, but people who had been moved by the Spirit of God in their own homes. Here was God let loose in supernatural power; here men were prostrate before His presence. We knew that God had come. That night the mighty moving power of the Spirit of God swept through the parish. We arrived home at the manse at about 5 a. m. Revival had come. Who can ever forget the scene?"

And as that crowd sang through the Scots metrical version of Psalm 50, a breeze from high heaven again swept through the crowd, and the cry of the penitent was heard, just as amid the earthquake in Philippi.

"God of All Power"

God had kept His promise. His covenant had been fulfilled. Revival had come. And this began a period of about six months in which Campbell never got to bed before 4 o'clock any morning. The people simply would not go home.

The spirit of prayer and revival continues still, and today, more people attend these prayer gatherings than in the old days used to attend the regular Sunday services of the church.

Signs and wonders, so evident in first century Christianity, were seen here as well. The motion picture industry man used to go to Barvas once a week, but as a result of the revival, stopped going, as he found it was not a good financial proposition to go and show his films to empty seats.

"People would sometimes be lost in the glory and wonder of God," wrote Dwight Wadsworth, an American brother, who visited the scene of the revival, "and as the things of earth receded, they seemed to see Christ on the Cross."

This moving of the waters of the Spirit has not been confined to the parish of Barvas, and in other parts of the Hebrides where Duncan Campbell has ministered the Word of Life, similar scenes have been witnessed. In other villages fifty people experienced a deep life transforming conversion, and Campbell only remained in that place three days. Then other islands in the Hebrides group have seen the revival fires, including the island of Harris, home of the well-known "Harris Tweed" cloth.

Brother Wadsworth also said that he spent one whole day with Campbell, visiting from house to house, and he heard, from the lips of

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The King's Highway