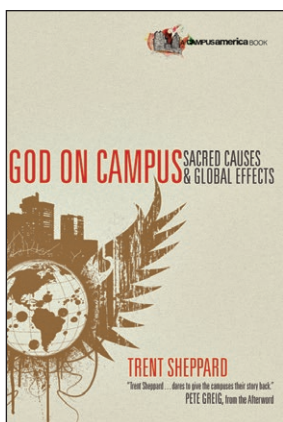


2030 CALLING *Sampler*

with selections from



God on Campus by Trent Sheppard

Teach Us to Pray by Gordon T. Smith

AND a forthcoming book
by James Choung and Ryan Pfeiffer

Plus 40% Off from InterVarsity Press on the Last Page

 INTERVARSITY PRESS

 InterVarsity

Dear friend and ministry partner,

We invite you into an exciting season for colleges and universities, as a mighty movement of God's Spirit is evident! And we invite you to join us in prayer and vision for what God is doing to use this student generation to advance His Kingdom. As you read through these selections from three InterVarsity Press books, we pray that you are inspired and engaged with us on this journey to see a gospel movement on every U.S. campus by 2030.

Longing for revival, we catalyze movements that call every corner of every campus to follow Jesus.

Longing for revival . . .

"Revival" is a word with many different connotations, positive, negative or just confusing. James Choung and Ryan Pfeiffer, two InterVarsity leaders who are witnessing spiritual awakening on campuses today, are writing a book to unpack what we mean by "revival." Because you are a partner with us, we want to give you this exclusive sneak peek at the introduction and first chapter. (The book will be published in early 2020 by InterVarsity Press.)

We catalyze movements . . .

In *God on Campus*, Trent Sheppard shares stories of the Spirit inspiring prayer movements among

students and professors, and he shows how those prayer movements led to societal transformation. In his short “Interlude: Reflections on Student Movements,” he describes where InterVarsity and the Urbana Student Missions Convention fit into the long history of campus movements. Then, in a motivating chapter, “Prayer Is the Place to Begin,” he offers glimpses of the Spirit moving in recent years to mobilize this generation of students.

That call every corner of every campus to follow Jesus . . .

Prayer is at the center of InterVarsity’s 2030 Calling. And it’s one significant way you can join today’s movement of the Spirit of God. In *Teach Us to Pray*, Gordon T. Smith recommends beginning with the prayer Jesus taught to his disciples. In the chapter “Prayer and the Kingdom of God,” Smith reminds us to pray with three things in mind: thanksgiving, confession, and discernment. As we pray, we are participants in advancing the Kingdom. Please pray with us for every campus to have a vibrant gospel witness and for every corner of every campus to be reached.

**Learn more about InterVarsity’s 2030 Calling
intervarsity.org/2030.**

See the last page for 40% off these and other books from IVP.

REVIVE!

Forthcoming Winter/Spring 2020

Following are the introduction and first chapter from a new book on revival written by James Choung, InterVarsity's vice president for strategy and innovation, and Ryan Pfeiffer, InterVarsity's associate director of evangelism. The title is not even final yet! And these are unedited, unproofread, and uncorrected drafts; please forgive the errors we have not yet found and fixed.

**Sign up for IVP's Books & Deals email newsletter
to watch for the launch of this new book!**

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INTRODUCTION

Revival for the Rest of Us?

“Come,” he replied, “and you will see.”

JOHN 1:39

It didn't go well.

I (James) had flown from Los Angeles to New York City to support one of InterVarsity's largest evangelistic campaign in decades. Years of planning and fundraising came together to blanket the city's campuses around two things: to show how the Gospel undergirds our fight against human trafficking and slavery, and to invite people to follow Jesus. As InterVarsity's newly-appointed national director of evangelism at the time, I wanted to support it however I could.

The campaign stretched wide. In a two-week span, 102 awareness events of various sizes happened all across the city, where an evangelist was paired with an activist to share good news *and* recruit for the fight against human trafficking. That particular night at Hunter College, I was the evangelist. I can't remember if there was an activist.

The night was billed as a cultural awareness event with no mention of spirituality. Campus clubs, mostly secular and us, would share a night of stories, songs, dance and food. In the dead center of this programmatic stew, I had ten minutes to get people's attention, make a connection between justice and the Gospel, and invite people to follow Jesus.

Even before the event began, my stomach started to turn.

The first group of students offered a cultural dance. Another student sang a song. All of it was received well by the audience, but nothing was

explicitly spiritual. As one student performed after another, I found myself desperately pleading with God for mercy.

The student right before me gave a heartfelt spoken word piece about the atrocities of injustice. It was an aching piece, and he had courageously opened up about his own life of abuse and neglect. As he left the stage, his body trembled in response to his own vulnerability and a respectful silence filled the room. But as powerful as it was, a set up it wasn't. My feet became cinder blocks as I walked up to the makeshift stage.

I had to scrap my opening joke, because that would've been insensitive to the student before. So I jumped in to the heart of the talk, no warmup, no-nonsense. It was something about being thirsty for justice, and how that was really a thirst for something more spiritual. Five minutes in, I was blowing it. The air grew dense and thick, suffocating life and breath. No one was looking at me, choosing the view of their feet over the wreck that was happening on stage. The pit in my stomach staged a protest, begging me to ditch the invitation to faith.

But I pressed on. I persevered. I told myself it doesn't matter if no one responds. I just needed to be faithful. Get it out there. I merely needed to give people an opportunity to respond, right?

So I went for it. At the end of my talk, I invited people who want to follow Jesus to stand. No one stirred. I asked again, and still, a frozen lake would have more movement than what was happening in people's hearts. Beads of sweat formed on my brow. But I was taught to ask three times, so I asked again, and all eyes were awkwardly staring at the ground or lifting their eyes to heaven as a prayer to make this painful moment end.

Heaven did not open.

I walked off, head bowed, face flushed, wishing someone would turn up the air-conditioning.

I needed a breakthrough.

I (Ryan) was home from college, visiting for the weekend. The warm California sun was setting, and fresh-off-the-grill cheeseburgers filled my stomach. My brother was washing dishes in the kitchen.

It was good to be home.

The post-dinner conversation started innocently enough with my dad casually asking me about my first quarter at the University of California, San Diego. He was the picture of a suburban dad, relaxed in a worn t-shirt, comfortable jeans and easy-going tennis shoes. I shared about my classes and schedule, but then seized an opportunity to share about my growing faith in Jesus.

It started well: “I’ve been going to this group called InterVarsity. I really love it. We study the Bible each week in the dorms. And then on Wednesday nights a couple hundred kids get together to worship and hear a message...”

I was just about to offer up some choice gleanings I had taken away from the most recent sermon, when my dad stopped me cold.

“Let’s get something straight,” he said. “I don’t want you trying to convert me. And I don’t want you talking to me about your faith.”

I hung my head. That’s not how it was supposed to go. I wanted so badly for my family to experience the love of God the way I had, but instead, I walked away rejected and defeated. It became a pattern: every time I tried to open up a spiritual conversation with my family, everyone ended up defensive, angry and further away from God than when the conversation began.

I started to believe that people can’t change. Families don’t change, right? My thoughts fell on me like a flood: Am I making things worse? What is it going to take? How long will it take? Can God really reach my family?

I needed a breakthrough.

It had definitely gone from bad to worse when a Ku Klux Klan hood appeared on the head of Dr. Seuss.

A few weeks before, fraternity students at the University of California, San Diego promoted a party on campus to mock black history month. It was called the “Compton Cookout.” Guys were told to rock oversized white t-shirts, and “anything FUBU, Ecko, Rockawear.” Girls? “Gold teeth,” “short, nappy hair,” and “speak really loudly, while rolling your neck.” Get the picture? Not the most inclusive party.

The black student community had already been on edge. State Proposition 209 effectively banned affirmative action in the admissions process in California higher education, and the black student population was dwindling to negligence, barely holding at 1.6% of the student population. That year, only 41 black students enrolled out of 3,566 California freshmen -- a disproportionate 1.1%.¹

Almost immediately, the daily protests began. Students came in droves from other campuses. Media outlets, such as the *The New York Times* and CNN, gave blow-by-blow accounts of it to the nation.²

In trying to respond to the embroiled community, the administration flailed. They hosted a rally, and invited the president of the Black Student Union to speak at the start. But they hadn't included her in the planning. So she used her opening speech to stage a walk-out. In another incident, the white chancellor was at the front of a student protest, head down and sullen. Inexplicably, she attempts to hug a black student protester, who promptly pushes her away and continues to raise her first and lead protest chants.

It's after these missteps that a noose was found hanging from a bookcase in the main library, which is named after Dr. Seuss. Black students became fearful over their safety. Shortly after that, on his statue on the first floor, the white hood appeared.

We needed a breakthrough.

MORE TO LIFE

All of us need some kind of breakthrough.

For some of us, we don't like what we see in the mirror. We're stuck in patterns that have us feeling defeated. Life was supposed to begin some time ago, but we never found our way to the starting line. Or we feel so burdened, oppressed, wearied or angered by the demands of life, that we don't know what we stand or live for.

Some of us wish we had better relationships with our family or

¹<http://www.voiceofsandiego.org/topics/education/why-black-students-are-so-scarce-at-ucsd/>

²<https://www.nytimes.com/2010/02/27/education/27sandiego.html>

friends. We are tired of the stale get-togethers to talk about the trivial matters, to get excited about professional sports teams that will come and go. We sit on our couches after our work or studies are done, after our kids are down for the night, and try to numb ourselves from the hectic stress of the day. We want something more than looking forward to the next fine meal, the next amazing TV show, or the next romantic relationship to come sweep us off our feet, only to disappoint us again.

Some of us wish for a better culture or world. Terrorist attacks, global warming, widespread poverty, ethnic strife, fluctuating markets, corrupt corporations, refugee crises, violent law enforcement, despotic world leaders — all make us yearn and groan for a better world. Everyone's divided: we're either politically blue or red, or either a part of law enforcement or in an impoverished community, either we wear red caps or march with women in cities all around the world, either we serve the executive branch of government or muckrake for a news outlet. We live in a polarized time. There's not much in between: you're either with us or you're against us. And if you're against us, we're taking you down. We're constantly in crisis, each news headline battering us with another reason to get angry or just lament.

But we can't ignore the nagging feeling that there must be more to life than this. We deeply feel that the world isn't the way it's supposed to be. We feel like aliens on our mother soil. We don't feel like we belong here. Something is definitely off or wrong, and we can't fight the sense that it shouldn't be this way. There must be more to life than this.

SOMETHING'S MISSING

It makes me think that there's an invitation waiting for us. What if there was a vibrant, spiritual reality we were meant to experience, but just didn't have enough in us to hope? What if we're missing a great opportunity to live the life we were meant for? What if we were being invited to a different kind of meaning and purpose in our lives? What if there was an alternative adventure waiting for us, but we didn't think much of it? What if hope was just around the corner?

There's an oft-quoted statement that's often attributed to Einstein, that, "Insanity is doing the same thing over and over again and expecting a different result."

But isn't that what we do in our faith journeys?

Some of us go to church. Week after week, we sit in pews, sing the songs, and soak in the sermons, hoping for something to light our souls on fire again. It's surely a helpful ritual, and everyone else tells you that, but you feel like there is something more that's yet to be found.

Others of us are even more committed. Not only do we have our weekly rhythms at church, we open the Bible and pray more or less every day. We may also be committed to a smaller, more intimate community that meets regularly on some weeknight. Lots of our time is spent in Christian community and in Christian practices, and still, we wonder if the Christian life is supposed to feel different.

Lots of us don't try at all. Church feels judgmental and at a distance. A life with God? That feels like a flight of fantasy, a crutch of psychology. We're unconvinced that God exists in the real world, much less actually loves us. But life still feels empty. Something deep itches, a gnawing that doesn't seem to go away, no matter how many dates you go on, or how many football games or movies you watch, or how many places around the world you get to travel to, something still eludes you. Have we settled for less?

Written over fifty years ago, A. W. Tozer's words still feel very relevant:

In the evangelical church we seem to have a great deal of passion for everything but God. We look around for activities that consume the resources of our lives. Instead of looking around at the world, we need to look up to the source of our redemption. We are so caught up with all the modern gadgets and methods that we have lost our passion for God.³

³A.W. Tozer, compiled and edited by James L. Snyder, *Delighting in God* (Bloomington, MN: Bethany House Publishers, 2015), 20.

Ouch. And Tozer didn't even have a smartphone.

We know that something isn't right. Something is off. Something isn't the way it's meant to be. We secretly wish that someone or something would take a jackhammer and bust through the ossified parts of our lives, to help us feel something — *anything* — once again. We silently hope that someone — *anyone* — would find his or her way to our souls, and show us what's really true, real, good or beautiful.

We want something to breakthrough.

But is it even possible?

WHAT DO YOU SEEK?

In the Scriptures, there were some folks who were honest with themselves, and knew that what they were experiencing in the here and now wasn't what was meant to be. They yearned for something more in their personal lives and in their culture. They lived in an oppressive time, when a seemingly-all-powerful government had taken away their ability to lead themselves. They wondered where God was in all of this.

They sought a season of breakthrough.

In fact, they had dedicated their lives to seeking that breakthrough. They became apprentices of a radical named John, who called people to righteousness and justice. If they had extra clothes, they should give to the one who has none. If they had extra food, they should give to those who go hungry. He told taxmen to collect no more than they should and soldiers to eschew violence for personal gain. He called them to be content in their wages.⁴ He painted a practical picture of a just way of life and society, and many people were attracted to his message.

But he knew that the story wasn't about himself.

It would be about the one to come.

So when John saw the one they were all waiting for, he basically told his apprentices that, whatever hope you were looking for by following me, here's the real deal. I'm a guy who's not even worthy to untie his shoes. But he? He's the one from God.

⁴Luke 3:10-14.

Two of John's apprentices approached this man, and he turned around and asked them a startling question:

“What do you want?”

Sure, it could seem like a casual question, like a brusque New Yorker asking, “Whaddya want?” But the word “want” in the original language is stronger: “to desire, to have or experience something, with the probable implication of making an attempt to realize one's desire.”⁵ Other English translations reflect this: “What do you seek?”⁶ And in this way, it goes deeper than the surface. It could be a question that tries to get at that itch, that gnawing, that deeper question that asks if there's more to life than this.

What do *you* seek?

The apprentices didn't miss a beat. They asked: “Rabbi, where are you staying?” Rabbi means teacher, and they wanted to learn. In fact, disciples didn't just consume content from their rabbis. The purpose of these disciples — or apprentices — was to do the things the rabbi did for the reasons he did them.⁷ So they didn't just ask the question out of curiosity. This was Middle Eastern culture: expressive and indirect. They wanted to be with him, to soak up as much as he would offer.

The reply was more striking.

“Come and you will see.”

And it's loaded with meaning. Sure, there's the surface answer again: come and you'll know geographically where I am staying. But this great rabbi seemed to hint not only about the location of his lodgings, but also about the state of their future souls. They were lost and now they were found. They were blind, but they would one day see. In fact, they would see “greater things than these.” And they would see what was really true, real, good and beautiful. They would get it. Something would break through.

⁵“ζητέω,” Johannes P. Louw and Eugene A. Nida, *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament: Based on Semantic Domains* (New York: United Bible Societies, 1989).

⁶NASB, ASV, cf. also ESV.

⁷I heard this phrase from Elizabeth Paul at a Lausanne Younger Leaders Gathering in Madison, WI in July 2012.

They were invited to check that out.
And their lives would never be the same.

CAN'T WE JUST BE FAITHFUL?

But fast forward in the Scriptures, and the author of Hebrews wrote about faithful witnesses: “All these people were still living by faith when they died. They did not receive the things promised; they only saw them and welcomed them from a distance, admitting that they were foreigners and strangers on earth.”⁸ They needed a breakthrough, but didn’t see it in their lifetimes.

Some promises won’t be fulfilled on this side of history. Embracing our alien status is healthy at times. It’s the tension we live in. So it makes sense to be encouraged to be faithful, like “these people” who “were still living by faith when they died.” And it’s true: we need to be faithful. Deeply faithful.

But I fear that sometimes, in our modern day, being “faithful” means “hang in there, because things will never change.” It feels fatalistic. Dictionaries support this idea: according to Merriam-Webster’s, faithful means “steadfast in affection or allegiance.” Faithfulness, as a book title goes, is “a long obedience in the same direction.” We’re to keep steady. We keep on keepin’ on.

But in our attempt to be faithful, I wonder if we’ve lost a sense of hope.

In *Shawshank Redemption*, one of the best movies of the 1990’s, Andy is sentenced to two life sentences for a crime he didn’t commit. He is regularly assaulted by other inmates, and lives precariously under the unjust thumb of the warden. As an act of rebellion, he plays Mozart’s *The Marriage of Figaro* over the public address system, and as a result, he’s punished with two weeks in solitary confinement.

Afterward, he tells his inmate friends over lunch that it was worth it, “the easiest time I ever did.” He explains that the music was in him, reminding him that what he saw wasn’t all that *was*. The music provided hope. And it’s with that remark, Red, a fellow inmate, bristles.

⁸Hebrews 11:13.

“Let me tell you something, my friend,” Red says. “Hope is a dangerous thing. Hope can drive a man insane. It’s got no use on the inside. You better get used to that idea.”

Have we gotten used to that idea?

Whether it’s in our individual lives, our relationships or in the world around us, many of us are afraid to hope again. We’ve been down this road before, and there have been promises of a new kind of life, but it didn’t work out. Whether it was a membership to a gym, a connection to a spiritual community, or even buying a great home. We thought that if we bought the right things or belonged to the right club that we would feel content. But that sense of security, that sense that everything is right in the world, scurried away.

So we assassinated hope. It was too dangerous.

But the author of Hebrews writes about faith in this way: “Now faith is confidence in what we hope for and assurance about what we do not see. This is what the ancients were commended for.”⁹

And there seems to be a deep connection to faith and hope. If we’re being faithful, we’re also hopeful.

Because hope is faith applied to the future.

But I wonder if we’ve settled for faith without hope, which leads to fatalism. Yet it seems foolish to have hope without faith, which is mere optimism. Can we have the kind of faith that isn’t afraid to hope again?

WHY REVIVAL?

It’s clear, then, that our issues aren’t going to be solved by a technical or strategic fix. Breakthrough won’t come from the latest marketing scheme, the most effective social media strategy, the strongest preaching series, or even the best tactics of vibrant ministry. We need something far deeper.

We need *revival*.

Now, if hope is a dangerous word, then to many, revival feels outright murderous.

⁹Hebrews 11:1

The word elicits strong reactions. It's hard to ignore. For some, it's the longing that has filled countless nights of prayer. It grabs them in the gut, in the soul. They want revival to sweep through their lives, their communities, the nation and the world. And they won't rest until they get it.

For others, the talk of revival, like Newtonian physics, creates an equal and opposite reaction, creating anxiety and fear that we'll "shake and bake" in church aisles and say God "showed up." A historian wrote, "Aren't revivals quirky folk rituals associated with rural American and nineteenth century camp meetings? Didn't they pass out of fashion with hula hoops and Edsels?"¹⁰ We're worried that we'll stoke up youthful or grandiose passions that will fizzle out. Perhaps most insidiously, we'll ratchet up hope only to disappoint them in the end. For some, leading people on with ungrounded hope is akin to spiritual abuse.

In full confession, I (James) must admit that I had been vehemently against that word. I grew up in a faith community where it was thrown around for everything. If it was a non-Sunday-morning event with a guest speaker, it was titled a "revival meeting." We sought revival, sang songs about revival, proclaimed that revival would come in this generation — how many prophets should we stone for the last one? — and it had a way of stirring up the passions and imagination of everyone who was as young as me.

And so, in reaction, my soul was set against that word.

So much so that when I accepted my first-ever external invitation to be a conference speaker, I preached against that word. The conference was located high in the mountains above Colorado Springs in a forested valley. At 9,124 feet, drinking lots of water was a necessity to stave off headaches and nausea, and a flight of stairs had me doubled over. And it was here, ironically under the canopy of a big outdoor tent, that I dressed down revival. Here's an actual snippet from that talk:

Ask the Lord what it means to be a part of this forcefully, advancing Kingdom. When he tells you what to do, be faithful. This way, you

¹⁰Mark R. Shaw, *Global Awakening: How 20th Century Revivals Triggered a Christian Revolution* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2010), 12.

wouldn't ask for revivals anymore. I must say that I get really bummed out when people pray for revival...

We ask for revival thinking that a corporate expression of some renewed faith is going to change our lives and our campuses. But we do nothing that would bring the name of Jesus the fame it deserves. We sit, but do not act. We pray, but do not move. We are a light that is under a bowl, shedding no light on the campus. But, the call of the Christian community is not merely to ask for revival, but to be faithful with our lives and to live it out! We are waiting in the wrong line, because we missed something central. Jesus, the very Jesus who died on the Cross for our communities to be reconciled to God, the very Jesus who took lashes on his back so that we can be in relationship with the living God, is King and is present in our communities! He is here! He reigns here in our collective hearts! So, when the King is here, we just need to be faithful and to obey his commands! We don't have to pray for revival, but we need to be faithful.

Not bad, right? But now, I think I got it wrong. And if you were there, I ask for your forgiveness.

But although I do write to you with some trepidation about the word "revival," but I now think it is important for a few reasons.

First, it is *biblical*. The Psalmist prays, "Will you not revive us again, that your people may rejoice in you?"¹¹ It's right there: a prayer for the revival of the Jewish people. Sure, we'll make a stronger biblical case in Chapter Two for the concept of revival, but for now, wouldn't that be a great prayer for the Church?

It is also *historic*. From Pentecost to the present day, revivals have dotted the timeline of Christian history. When they were present, we had new movements sprout up that have brought spiritual vitality back to the Church, whether it's the Franciscans to the Moravians to the Pentecostals. And the absence of revivals marked the Dark Ages.

¹¹Psalm 85:6.

It is even *strategic*. In the twentieth century, Christianity hasn't died away. It has thrived and blossomed, although it's center has shifted away from Europe and North America to Africa, Asia and South America. In his book, *Global Awakenings*, Mark Shaw believes that revival is the delivery system for this tremendous growth. "Global revivals," Shaw writes, "are at the heart of the global resurgence of Christianity."¹²

Revivals are not just good for us personally, but also for the expression of the Christian faith throughout the world.

But perhaps more importantly, it is a *powerful* word.

Sure, our culture often coopts the word. The word *revive* is used in all kinds of marketing from skincare to skateboards, craft beers to conferences, massage spas to mattresses. Even pop albums are titled, *Revival*.¹³ It's almost a commercial cliché.

But as we dig down, to revive something means that it must've been either dead or close to dead. Life had seeped away. Lungs stopped breathing. Hearts no longer beat. Flesh rotted away so that all you could see was a valley of dry bones. Something died within us or around us.

When something is revived, however, it comes back to life.

It's resuscitated.

In faith-speak, it's resurrected.

We seek that kind of resurrection in our lives, communities, societies and ultimately, throughout the world. Because, right now, much of it reeks of death.

The world needs leaders who are resuscitated, resurrected, revived. No revival has happened in history without revived people. And we need leaders who know how to help others be revived, and that's not going to happen merely with good management principles, solid execution of plans, or new ministry strategies. Sure, they are very important and helpful, but they are merely the skin and bones. It needs to be infused with breath, blood, soul and life.

And that only comes through God's Spirit.

¹²Shaw, 12.

¹³Selena Gomez released hers in 2015. Eminem? In 2017.

But before we scare anyone off, we also know that revival without good, wise, feet-on-the-ground strategic leadership will also quickly fizzle away. It's the difference between a weekend retreat, and an ongoing work of God's Spirit among us.

We seek the intersection of spiritual and strategic leadership that leads to revival.

We need revival for the rest of us.

And sure, revivals can break out.

But for revivals to last, they must be led.

That's where this book is going: what does it look like to exercise revival leadership in our day and age?

The first section of this book addresses the head. What is revival? What are the biblical foundations for the idea of revival? What is the process of revival in us and through us? We want to present the foundations and framework on the definitions, reasons and processes of revival in our day.

The second section addresses the heart. Once we grasp a rudimentary idea of revival, then how do we start seeking it? How do we prepare for it, if it were to come? What would it look like to experience revival personally? Revivals are first experienced, then given away.

The third section addresses the hands. Once we've experienced revival, how do we lead it for others? What skills will be necessary to help a moment become a movement? Revivals don't just happen; they need to be led.

We all need breakthrough. But how does that happen?

Come and see.

Chapter One

WHAT IS REVIVAL?

A revival, then, really means days of heaven upon earth.¹

MARTYN LLOYD-JONES

“This is what the kingdom of God is like. A man scatters seed on the ground. Night and day, whether he sleeps or gets up, the seed sprouts and grows, though he does not know how. All by itself the soil produces grain—first the stalk, then the head, then the full kernel in the head. As soon as the grain is ripe, he puts the sickle to it, because the harvest has come.”

— MARK 4.26-29

“For everything there is a season, and a time for every matter under heaven.”

— ECCLESIASTES 3.1

While he was in college, a friend of ours, Sam, once passed up an offer to go out for dinner. The father of one of his roommate’s was in town and offered to take the entire apartment out for dinner, but Sam was tired from a long day. While he declined, his other roommate, Jerome, didn’t waste a beat taking up the offer.

When Jerome returned, he said to Sam, “You won’t believe where we went to eat!”

“Where’d you go?”

“To the most extravagant restaurant I’ve ever been to.”

Then he began to describe his meal: Pellegrino, not water. Two different kinds of appetizers. Then, lobster. Steak. Duck. The best wine. Chocolate dessert. Add, they had their own dedicated waiter through-

¹Martyn Lloyd-Jones . *Revival* (Westchester, Illinois: Crossway Books, 1987), 103.

out the meal. Total cost? \$450 for four, even when the restaurant had thrown in the appetizers for free. And, of course, his roommate's dad had covered the bill.

Sam had one definition of *dinner* in his mind. But this dinner turned out to be something far better than he had imagined.

What if it's like that with the word *revival*? As we've written before, the word itself elicits strong responses. Some seek revival as the wonder-drug that will cure everything spiritual, while others avoid that kind of crazy by a wide berth.

I (James) have already confessed my initial aversion to the word revival. But when my friend and co-author, Ryan, started using the word around me, I had to look at that word afresh. Honestly, that's how much respect I had for him. I started to wonder if I was turning down "dinner" before finding out what revival truly was?

So before judgments are cast, let's wade into a definition.

DEFINING REVIVAL

A wide range of definitions have been offered before. Charles Finney, considered the father of American revivalism, defines revival as "a renewed conviction of sin and repentance, followed by an intense desire to live in obedience to God."² In his aptly-titled book, *Revival*, Martyn Lloyd-Jones defines it as "a period of unusual blessing and activity in the life of the Christian Church."³ James Burns, in his treatise titled *Revival: Their Laws and Leaders*, gives a broader, if even less clear, definition: "Large numbers of persons who have been dead or indifferent to spiritual realities then become intensely awakened to them."⁴ In *Center Church*, Tim Keller offers this definition: "A season in which a whole body of believers experience gospel renewal together."⁵ These definitions can be clustered around a personal or corporate renewal of our

²Charles Finney, *Experiencing revival* (New Kensington, PA: Whitaker House, 1984), 11.

³Martyn Lloyd-Jones, *Revival* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 1987), 99.

⁴James Burns, *Revival: Their Laws and Leaders* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1960), 21.

⁵Tim Keller, *Center Church: Doing Balanced Gospel-Centered Ministry in the City* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2012), 54.

spiritual experience and expression. But what all of them are saying in so many words is this: in revivals, faith becomes white-hot.⁶

A few authors add a movement aspect to revival. Burns often refers to revivals as “movements.” In Richard Lovelace’s comprehensive work, *Dynamics of Spiritual Life*, he adds an outward dimension to these movements: “Usually they [renewal, revival and awakening] are used synonymously for broad-scale movements of the Holy Spirit’s work in renewing spiritual vitality in the church and in fostering its expansion in mission and evangelism.”⁷ Mark Shaw also adds a transformative effect: “Global revivals are charismatic people movements that transform their world by translating Christian truth and transferring power.”⁸

The range of definitions is huge. Some talk about an individual’s spiritual awakening. Others talk of something more corporate. Others get more specific still, defining revival around a broad-scale people movement. It’s a hard definition to pin down.

Within InterVarsity, however, some of us noticed that the word *revival* kept coming back up around us. Other organizations, ones not normally interested in this kind of language, were using the same word. And with whatever misgivings we might have about the term *revival*, we could all agree that if we saw the *marks* of revival in our ministries, we would be thrilled.

That led us down a path to try and define revival... for the rest of us. Could we capture it in language that might be accessible for a wider swath of faith communities? We started to research what revival looked like in history, learned from its dynamics, and started to tackle a definition that might be helpful to our movement. After nine months, we landed on a definition, which we have now further modified:⁹

⁶Steve Addison, in his book, *Movements that Change the World* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2011), shares that all revivals start with “white-hot” faith.

⁷Richard Lovelace, *Dynamics of Spiritual Life* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1979), 22.

⁸Mark Shaw, *Global Awakenings* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2010), 17.

⁹The friends and colleagues who helped us come to this definition sat on InterVarsity’s Council of National Evangelists, which included Linson Daniel, Bryan Enderle, Rick Mattson, Serene Neddenriep, Doug Schaupp, York Moore, and the authors.

A season of breakthroughs
 in word, deed, and power
 that usher in a new normal
 of Kingdom experience and (expansion) fruitfulness.

A SEASON OF BREAKTHROUGHS

In the first line, “a season of breakthroughs,” we want to avoid defining revival by a singular event. It’s *breakthroughs*, not breakthrough. If revival means any one-off experience, then it’s not very useful as a term. For example, I just heard God speak to me. Should that be considered revival? We didn’t want a definition that could too easily speak of *any* single spiritual experience.

The implications of the first line are enormous. Given this definition, Pentecost—on its own—would not be considered a revival. Wait, what? Yes, the Holy Spirit surely swept through the community of believers, landing on their heads like tongues of fire, and 3,000 people and their families were baptized into the Christian faith. Still, we wouldn’t consider that revival.

Not yet.

But when you start to add verses 42-47, and the fledgling community starts to have a new set of rhythms that set it apart. It’s not just an event, but a cluster of events. It’s a revival now. Then add Acts 3, where Peter and John healed a paralytic in Jesus’ name. And Acts 4, where they were filled again with the Holy Spirit to speak boldly about the Gospel. Add Acts 5, where God’s Spirit supernaturally intervenes to discipline the Church. There’s Acts 6, where the people of God felt moved to empower ethnic minorities in church leadership, then you have something even more akin to revival. It wasn’t just one breakthrough, but a *season of breakthroughs*. The *whole* book of Acts describes the process of revival.

But it doesn’t last forever. It’s just a “season.” It’s nature’s rhythm. It ebbs and flows. It’s springtime after the winter. And there will come a time when revival will also cease for a season before the Kingdom comes

in its fullness. Revival just covers a limited period of time where God breaks through often enough to create a new normal.

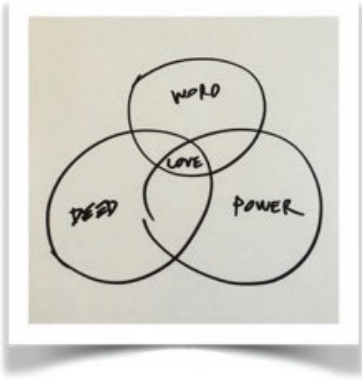
Taking this metaphor further, it's useful to note that the boundary between seasons isn't very rigid. Even in the throes of winter, spring already has its seeds. The potential lays dormant under the snow, but it is there, ready to break through. When spring arrives, a few sunny days surprise us. A warm gentle breeze carries the first scents of new life in the air. But then it disappears, and winter reasserts its presence again, delaying spring's full bloom. It's that kind of peek-a-boo, now-I'm-here, now-I'm-not experience that captures these seasons of spiritual awakening. At first, the signs are shy and fickle. But they eventually grow stronger and more consistent like the rising temperatures and longer days. Soon enough, we find ourselves in the embrace of a new season that sweeps us up into its characteristic joys and wonders. And one day, it ebbs away, but a new normal is established.

With just one line of our definition, we change the quality of revival that we seek. We don't just seek a single breakthrough, but a season of breakthroughs. It's not a momentary flash in the pan, nor does it appear abruptly out of nowhere. Instead, it builds up, like steam in a pressure cooker. Some of it sneaks out, but then it can sneak back in. Then it finds its full season of release. Then it settles down again, but it has already fundamentally changed our expectations of who we are and God can do through us.

IN WORD, DEED, AND POWER

The second line speaks of the nature of these breakthroughs, that it happens "in word, deed and power." In Romans 15:17-19, Paul describes the nature of his ministry:

Therefore I glory in Christ Jesus in my service to God. I will not venture to speak of anything except what Christ has accomplished through me in leading the Gentiles to obey God by what I have *said* and *done*—by the *power* of signs and wonders, through the power of the Spirit of God. So from Jerusalem all the way around to Illyricum, I have fully proclaimed the gospel of Christ.



As a missionary to the Gentiles, Paul, in his letter to the Romans, claims that he “fully proclaimed” the gospel of Christ. What did he mean? A few interpretations exist, but the most likely way to read this is that he fulfilled his mandate to plant strategic churches in the region described, “from Jerusalem all the way around to Illyricum.”¹⁰ And how did he plant these churches? In this passage, he describes

three different facets: word, deed, and power.¹¹

By word, we mean the preaching and teaching of the Gospel and guiding people to live it out. By deed, we mean the expression of the Gospel in compassion and justice. By power, we mean the expression of the Gospel in miraculous or explicitly supernatural ways. But how many of the faith communities we are a part of can claim to express word, deed *and* power? Most offer one. Few offer two. How many could you count that offer all three?

Yet Christian revivals often had all three. Although there are exceptions to this idea, it seems enough of a generality to describe what happened in Acts, with the Franciscans or Azusa Street.

¹⁰Cf. Douglas J. Moo, *The Epistle to the Romans* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Company, 1996), part of the New International Commentary of the New Testament.

¹¹To biblical scholars, we’re not merely putting our modern sensibilities to the text. From Douglas J. Moo’s *The Epistle to the Romans from the New International Commentary of the New Testament*:

The first part of this verse continues Paul’s description of the means by which Christ has “accomplished” things through him. “By word and by deed” (v. 18b) is the general summary of these means; the two “by” phrases at the beginning of v. 19 go into more detail. It is tempting to connect the first of these phrases with “by deed” and the second with “by word” in a chiasmic arrangement. Paul would then be identifying the “deed” part of his ministry with “signs and wonders” and the “word” part of his ministry as accomplished by “the power of the Spirit.” However, Paul would obviously attribute all that he accomplishes in ministry whether “by word” or “by deed” to the power of the Spirit. This makes it more likely that “by the power of the Spirit” refers to all the means of ministry that Paul identifies in vv. 18b–19a. And, while “the power of signs and wonders” probably relates to the “deeds” part of Paul’s ministry, it is unlikely that Paul intends the phrase as a complete description of his “work.” For there is no good reason to confine the term “deed” or “work” to miraculous works only; and Paul’s apostolic “work” included many other kinds of activities.

And once explained, it's easy to see how only having one of these poles can stunt revival in our hearts and communities. Word without deed or power could potentially be a privatized kind of faith or a dead legalism. A breakthrough in deed without word or power could be a social justice cause without explaining the source of its hope or knowing the sense of its power. A breakthrough in power without word or deed can become an excessive show of emotionalism or an unhealthy hunger for a heavenly experience that does no earthly good. But when these three come together in love, it has a way of keeping a healthy balance of the values of the Christian faith expression.

But what often happens in Christian circles is that the word-centered folks denigrate deed-centered folks, thinking that they do good works but don't have theological grounding, and also look down on the power-centered folks as people who chase experiences without being rooted. And deed-centered folks may judge word-centered folks as pandering to dead orthodoxy, while wondering when the power-centered folks will stop chasing an other-worldly, spiritual high and start seeking justice. While power-centered folks wonder if the word-centered folks have "a form of godliness while denying its power,"¹² while believing that the deed-centered folks are burning out and becoming angry because they don't tap into the life of the Spirit. What was meant to be kept together, we often pull apart.

By holding these three together, there is room for all in revival. And in fact, all are needed for revival to really happen.

We're not saying that all of these circles have to play out at the first flush of revival. Historically, revival can come through any one of these circles. The First Great Awakening came primarily through the word circle, where Wesley preached to miners and taught the Methodists to seek greater holiness through the support of Christian community. At the turn of the 13th century, the Franciscans started out primarily through the deed circle, as their founder cared for lepers and embraced voluntary poverty. The Pentecostal movement at the turn of the 20th

¹² Timothy 3:5.

century came primarily through the power circle, as the gift of tongues fell on a multiracial, praying community at Azusa Street.

So yes, revivals can start through any one of these circles. But as the revival matures, it starts taking on the other aspects. Manifestations of the Holy Spirit would disrupt John Wesley's meetings during the First Great Awakening, moving into the power circle. Although known for their vows of poverty, the Franciscans would spread throughout the globe preaching the gospel, while often having such spiritual ecstasy that they "lay on the ground like dead men."¹³ The Pentecostal movement might have started with an experience of God's Spirit, but leaned more into the deed circle with ethnic reconciliation — although that aspect of the Pentecostal movement would be vehemently opposed by white leaders within a decade.

Revivals, as they mature, move toward the center. They exhibit word, deed *and* power in love.

In the 1930's, a burned-out British doctor met together with a Ugandan health care worker to seek God for a greater infusion of the Spirit. They then experienced what they referred to as "a share in the power of Pentecost." (More details?) The East African revival which swept all the way down to South Africa, then spilled over to other continents. The revival swept into the deed circle when African Christian leaders and European missionaries publicly confessed racial pride, and invited others to do so as well at their gatherings. One African attendee said, "I have never before seen any white man admit he had any sins." Those touched by this revival actively promoted justice, fought corruption and elevated Christian ethics over tribal loyalty, some paying for these outspoken views with their lives.

And it's clear that all of this needs to operate in *love*. It's almost too obvious to be stated, but we didn't want to miss it. The Scriptures warn us that anything done without love is worthless. 1 Corinthians 13 explains this well through word, deed and power:

¹³"The Little Flowers of St. Francis," in *St. Francis of Assisi: Writings and Early Biographies: English Omnibus of the Sources for the Life of St. Francis*, edited by Marion A. Habig, 3rd Edition (Chicago: Franciscan Herald Press, 1973), 1331.

If I speak in the tongues of men or of angels [*power*], but do not have love, I am only a resounding gong or a clanging cymbal. If I have the gift of prophecy and can fathom all mysteries and all knowledge [*word and power*], and if I have a faith that can move mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing. If I give all I possess to the poor and give over my body to hardship that I may boast [*deed*], but do not have love, I gain nothing.

And love doesn't keep revival within its own communities. Love always spills out. Revivals shouldn't just affect people within the church, therefore, but it must always spill outside of its walls through the proclamation of the Gospel of Jesus, through works of compassion, justice and reconciliation of God's character, and through the power of Holy Spirit.

THAT USHERS IN A NEW NORMAL

The third line highlights the result of these breakthroughs: "That ushers in a new normal." These breakthroughs aren't merely about the experience, but they should create a *new expectation* of what God can do in us, through us and around us.

Imagine being a part of a faith community where it's a rare sight to have someone decide to follow Jesus for the first time. Like it's an endangered species: "See the new Christian grazing in the savannah..." But then, families start to get baptized to mark their new faith every three months or so. That changes expectations. It's a new normal to have families to come to faith every once in a while. And because that is happening, it doesn't seem impossible to think of someone coming to faith every month. In fact, it would be disappointing if the community went back to seeing no one come to faith. Disappointment would sink in, because a new normal had been established by a "season of breakthroughs."

This may be the most important piece of the definition: *revivals should create a new normal*. They weren't given so that we can just go back to the way things were. They were given so that our faith can have capacity for more, to hope for more, to seek more of God's Kingdom.

At the University of California, San Diego, I (Ryan) stood in front of a hundred or so students for our weekly InterVarsity worship gathering. At the end of a message about Jesus' love for lost people, I asked a simple question: "How many of you have ever seen a friend come to faith and have been a part of that process?" The room went dead silent. After an awkward thirty seconds, three students sheepishly raised their hand. Only three. Then, the dots connected before my eyes: virtually no one had ever seen it happen. We might as well have been asking students to pray for the dead to rise. It's no surprise that we saw no one come to faith through our community that year.

So, I formed a small team made up of two new staff (one of whom I led to faith during his junior year) and myself to inspire and equip students to lead their friends to Jesus. By the end of that year, we saw twenty-eight students come to faith. Each successive year saw more students come to faith than the year prior, and our faith was growing stronger. Emboldened, we began praying for over one hundred students to come to faith in a year. It was a crazy prayer: only two campuses in our national history had ever seen more than one hundred students come to faith in a year, and one of them had Billy Graham preach at a large event on campus! Yet with a new normal, we grew in confidence that God could use the students to make a significant impact on campus.

In just two years, over one hundred students came to faith through UCSD InterVarsity. And with each following year, we continued to break the one-hundred threshold. When I asked again about how many people had been a part of helping a friend come to faith, over half the room raised their hand! A palpable faith has energized the community with newfound purpose and joy.

After one of our weekly gatherings, where over a dozen students had stood to dedicate their lives to following Jesus, a freshman excitedly told me, "It feels like every week we are having a revival. I used to only feel that when I went to a Christian camp, but it would fade as soon as I got home. Here, it's like it never fades. It just keeps going from week to week!"

OF KINGDOM EXPERIENCE AND FRUITFULNESS (EXPANSION)

We round out our definition of revival with the fourth line, which describes the dimensions of breakthrough: “of Kingdom experience and fruitfulness.” It’s in *and* out. It’s internal *and* external. Our souls may be revived, but that should spill over into mission. It’s not just for us, but the revival was also meant for all around us. It’s not just meant to connect with individual souls, but true revival also brings a change in our character, our relationships, in our communities and in our societies. It breaks out into the world. It really has to create a new normal, not only in us, but around us—one that is good and just.

Some may take issue with our insistence that revival could actually be personal. Didn’t we just spend a lot of time trying to say that revivals aren’t just a blip on the screen, not just a one-time event? Yes, we still hold to that.

But when we study the history of revivals, we see that they are not moments or singular events but complex movements. But they always begin in the heart of a few individuals. Every revival movement begins with someone experiencing a personal revival:

Revivals always start with personal encounters with God and travel through concentric circles to their conclusions... Revival always starts with that one or those few who are serious with God, are ignited by God, and who become flames from which others can be set afire.¹⁴

It’s such a pattern that we can be confident enough to say this: no revival in history started *without* revived leaders. In a very real sense, revival starts *within* someone. Early 20th century evangelist Rodney “Gypsy” Smith was once asked how to start a revival. He replied:

Go home. Lock yourself in your room. Kneel down in the middle of the floor, and with a piece of chalk draw a circle around yourself.

¹⁴Malcom McDow and Alvin L. Reid, *FireFall 2.0* (Wake Forest: Gospel Advance Books, 2014), 8.

There, on your knees, pray fervently and brokenly that God would start a revival within that chalk circle.¹⁵



We can't ignore the personal experience of revival. It's a seed. It begins small and unnoticed in the soil of a desperate heart but can escalate into a people movement that spreads its branches broadly enough so that communities and even nations may find refuge in them.

But a personal revival is also *just* the beginning.

Revivals can be like earthquakes. With the seismograph, scientists can both detect and measure an earthquake. But not all earthquakes are the same. We live in Southern California, so we know earthquakes. Some shake, while others roll. Some feel like a sudden drop, while others hang around a bit. To measure its size, scientists use the Richter Scale.

What's interesting about the Richter Scale is that no matter where it registers—whether it's observed at a 1.0 or a 10.0, they are all earthquakes. Some make the 5 o'clock news while others don't disturb our slumber, but these earthquakes are happening every day, every hour, all over the world.

In this way, we could plot revivals on a chart of ranging magnitude, indicating their breadth and depth of impact. Take the Acts revival movement for example. We can see its journey through increasing levels of maturity and impact, all beginning at an epicenter of a relatively small group of people.

In light of this we could loosely categorize a revival's level of magnitude on a 1-5 scale:

- **Level 1: Personal revivals**¹⁶. At this level, the revival dynamic is localized to an individual or a small, intimate group of people. Renewed

¹⁵Mark Batterson, *The Circle Maker* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 2016), 225.

¹⁶In their book, *Fire Fall 2.0*, McDow and Reid outline a similar paradigm of seeing revivals on a gradient from Personal to Global levels of impact.

intimacy with God, where the heart is warmed and the mind is electrified by the nearness of His presence, is the burning center of the moment. Scripture, prayer, and worship come alive with holy expectation. With this newfound intimacy with God, new light is cast on the assumptions and paradigms of the day. As a result, discussion around topics left untouched by the prevailing church culture find safe harbor for biblical engagement, such as the Gospel, the priesthood of all believers, or the need for social reform and engagement with the marginalized and neglected. .

- **Level 2: Communal revivals.** The influence of the personal revival begins to leak to the larger community, permeating the broader network of relationships in the campus fellowship, local church, school, business or other organization. At this level, enthusiasm is growing, but so is apprehension. At the personal level, people can opt in or out. But as the revival dynamic engages the broader community it becomes unavoidable for the people who are not comfortable for a change in the status quo. Wise and humble leadership at this stage is critical if division and distrust are going to be mitigated.
- **Level 3: Regional revivals.** Revival starts to transform a city across denominational, racial, and socioeconomic boundaries. Word-of-mouth spreads awareness of this new thing well beyond the point of conception. As more people catch the wind of inspiration generated by the movement, new voices get added to the mix, some for the better and some for the worse so that the movement grows through the synergy—or dissipates from the confusion. Every revival movement, as a challenge to the status quo, is marked by some level of controversy. But at this stage, tensions reach their critical levels because heresy and confusion finds its greatest opportunity. Many have a knee-jerk, defensive reaction against this new work of God.
- **Level 4: National revivals.** The dynamics of the local revival spreads across the country, affecting society at institutional and systemic

levels. The impact on individual lives disrupts entrenched cultural paradigms and practices.

- **Level 5: Global revivals.** This level is closely aligned with the previous one. When a revival reaches national magnitude, it tends also to have a ripple effect globally. When Wales is set ablaze by the Revival of 1904, people are talking about Evan Roberts in a little chapel on Azusa Street in Los Angeles. Those testimonies, carried across the Atlantic, resulted in the Azusa Street Revival of 1906. And it didn't stop there. From that revived community in Los Angeles, missionaries were sent all over the world, inaugurating the Pentecostal Movement. At this stage, it has global impact.

Before the First Great Awakening, John Wesley had already suffered a crushing defeat in his pastorate in Georgia. He had sailed back to England with his tail between his legs and doubts about his own relationship with God. In the crucible of this ministry failure, God exposed in Wesley a place of holy discontent. After a series of heart-searching meetings with the Moravian leader, Peter Boehler, Wesley lamented, "I was indeed fighting continually, but not conquering. ... I fell and rose, and fell again." But when he made his way to Aldersgate Street in late May of 1738, a personal breakthrough sparked a *Level 1 revival* in the plowed soil of Wesley's soul:

In the evening, I went very unwillingly to a society in Aldersgate Street, where one was reading Luther's preface to the Epistle to the Romans. About a quarter before nine, while he was describing the change which God works in the heart through faith in Christ, I felt my heart strangely warmed. I felt I did trust in Christ, Christ alone for salvation, and an assurance was given me that he had taken away my sins, even mine, and saved me from the law of sin and death.¹⁷

The impact of this moment, though profoundly personal, would not remain private. Inspired by the example of the Moravian prayer vigil,

¹⁷Note is forthcoming

Wesley gathered others, including his brother Charles Wesley and George Whitefield, to commit themselves to seeking God for a greater outpouring of the Spirit. On January 1, 1739, eight months after John's Aldersgate encounter, a *Level 2* revival ignited as others in John's network of relationships felt their hearts warmed as well:

About three in the morning, as we were continuing instant in prayer, the power of God came mightily upon us, in so much that many cried out for exceeding joy and many fell to the ground.¹⁸

As the fire spread, the Holy Spirit ignited others to carry the revival beyond Wesley's own gifting and talents. It seems that this season of prayer with Wesley was like pouring lighter fluid on an already existing fire in George Whitefield's soul. Within weeks of this prayer meeting, the revival continued to expand to a *Level 3* when George began a preaching campaign in Bristol. Though at first it started small, it quickly exploded to crowds of thousands so that within four days over 10,000 people were crowding in daily to hear George preach in the open air. It wasn't long before Whitefield brought Wesley in to help with the preaching. In the midst of the excitement Whitefield boldly predicted, "The fire is kindled in the country; and I know, all the devils in hell shall not be able to quench it."¹⁹

Excitement and testimonies spread through word-of-mouth inspiring others to take up the call to spread the fire, escalating the movement to a *Level 4* national phenomenon. In order for the revival to spread throughout the country, it took more than Whitefield and Wesley alone to fan the flame. But it was Wesley's organizational skill that uniquely conserved the wild energy from dissipating and being lost. Organizing people into bands, classes, and societies for the purpose of discipling new believers channeled the revival throughout the untouched relational networks of the newly converted. As the historian, Diane Severance explained:

¹⁸John Wesley, *The Journal of the Rev. John Wesley* (London: J. Kershaw, 1827), 163-164.

¹⁹Harry S. Stout, *The Divine Dramatist—George Whitfield and the Rise of Modern Evangelicalism* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1991), 73-74

The revival cut across denominational lines and touched every class of society. England itself was transformed by the revival. In 1928 Archbishop Davidson wrote that, “Wesley practically changed the outlook and even the character of the English nation.”²⁰

It didn’t stop there. Refusing to be quenched by the miles of ocean waters, the revival crossed the Atlantic and set North America ablaze as well. Like a burning ember, Whitefield sparked revival after revival in almost every town he visited, allowing it to mature to its fullest form as a *Level 5* global awakening.

REVIVAL & THE KINGDOM OF GOD

Where revivals break through, so does the Kingdom of God. They aren’t the only place where the Kingdom of God is evident, but it *is* one of its most visible ways. Revivals are some of the most vibrant expressions of the Kingdom of God on earth. It’s an obvious expression of heaven touching earth. It’s where heaven, well, breaks through.

Jesus taught us to pray: “Your Kingdom come. Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.”²¹ Revival is what people begin to think, sing, and pray about when the Spirit of this prayer takes a hold of them. And where it begins as a thought or a prayer, it always has within it this potential to escalate into so much more. Perhaps this is something of what Jesus was hinting at when he talked about the Kingdom of God being like a mustard seed—something that is small at first, but can eventually grow into something so much bigger.

In teaching us to pray for God’s Kingdom to come and His will to be done, Jesus was giving us the seed of a much larger reality. As inherent as the potential for growth is in the mustard seed, so it is with the kingdom of God.

Jesus boldly declared that in his single life, the kingdom of God had begun to arrive. He was the exemplar of a revived life. In his singular

²⁰Diane Severance, *Evangelical Revival in England*, <https://www.christianity.com/church/church-history/timeline/1701-1800/evangelical-revival-in-england-11630228.html>

²¹Matthew 6:10.

self, something much bigger had begun. Heaven broke through. From one life, a moment on the cross transformed into a movement of salvation that encompassed the entire world. Seasons of breakthrough created a new normal, and a movement through word, deed and power in love began.

GOD ON CAMPUS

Sacred Causes & Global Effects

Following are an interlude and chapter from Trent Sheppard's history of campus spiritual movements.

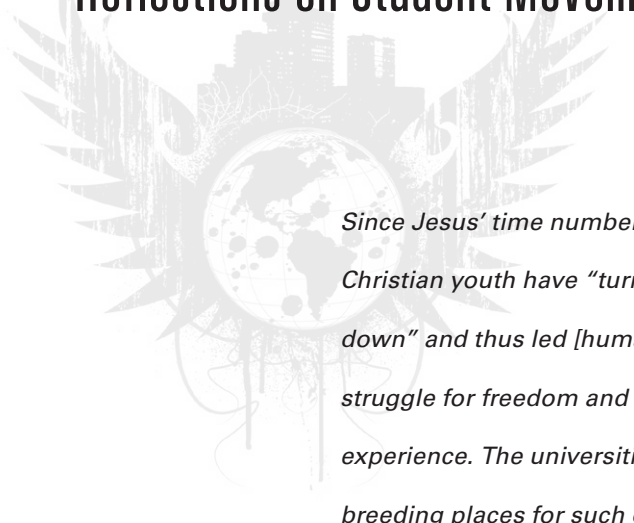
Sheppard is a collegiate minister and teaching pastor based in Boston, Massachusetts. He formerly worked with Youth With A Mission in the United Kingdom, and he still travels widely to speak on college campuses.

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INTERLUDE

Reflections on Student Movements



Since Jesus' time numberless bands of Christian youth have "turned the world upside down" and thus led [humanity] forward in its struggle for freedom and deeper religious experience. The universities have always been breeding places for such groups. Sometimes these groups have been by-products of the teaching of the university. Quite as frequently, however, they have been revolts against the restrictions on religious freedom and adventure that the university, along with the rest of society, placed upon youth.

—CLARENCE P. SHEDD

The year 1886 was significant in student history for two very different reasons. At Harvard, America's original college, chapel attendance was no longer required of the student body for the first time in 250 years. While Christian faith was never obligatory at Harvard and non-traditional theologies were welcomed on campus from very early in its history, chapel services had been part of the overall educational vision offered by this pioneering institution ever since it was founded in 1636. When compulsory chapel ceased at Harvard in 1886, a spiritual practice on campus that spanned a quarter of a millennium came to an end.

In a fascinating coincidence of history, it was also in 1886 that 251 college students from eighty-six campuses gathered in Northfield, Massachusetts, for the historic Mount Hermon Bible Conference with D. L. Moody. Chapter six tells the story of what happened at the Mount Hermon gathering and how the Student Volunteer Movement, which ultimately mobilized more than one hundred thousand student volunteers, was born during those momentous summer days. The important thing to recognize is that even as a *compulsory* form of student faith was fading at Harvard, a *voluntary* movement of student mission was emerging at Mount Hermon.

The shift at Harvard in 1886 was part of a much larger shift in education that was transforming American colleges and universities throughout this time. In *The Soul of the American University*, George Marsden explains that by "the 1920s the evangelical Protestantism of the old-time colleges had been effectively excluded from leading university classrooms." Older traditions of theology were systematically replaced with new and innovative ideas in scientific reasoning. Whereas before *character development* had been a primary aim of Christian higher education, in the new and increasingly secular climate, *cutting-edge research* now took precedence over most everything else.

The responses to these changes were varied. Some educators and students openly abandoned their time-honored traditions of faith and wholeheartedly embraced the rapid developments in modern thought. Others sought compromise between the two positions, denying cer-

tain portions of the Bible, such as the deity of Jesus, for instance, while still holding on to the overall moral teachings of Christianity. Other groups challenged the secular developments in education by insisting on a reading of the Bible that held fast to the “fundamentals” of the faith.

It is important for us to understand these various responses to Christianity and education because it was during this defining period in collegiate history that voluntary student movements like the college YMCA and the SVM were most active. In many ways they were filling the spiritual void that appeared on campuses when colleges and universities began to systematically move away from their faith foundations.

These voluntary student movements, however, were by no means unaffected by the profound changes in education that were taking place scientifically and theologically. It can be argued, in fact, that it was precisely because of such changes that the YMCA began to drift from its early evangelistic focus, so much so that it is hardly known as a force for evangelism today. A similar history of decline affected the once mighty SVM, which voted itself out of existence as its numbers and focus began to gradually fade.

As the strength of the SVM was visibly waning throughout the 1920s and 1930s, and a steady wave of secularization was transforming colleges and universities across the country, followers of Jesus on campus began pioneering new initiatives of faith. At a student Bible conference in the summer of 1936, for example, the Student Foreign Missions Fellowship (SFMF) was launched to reengage students with the call of global mission. Local SFMF chapters began to rapidly multiply on campuses across the country, and by autumn 1941 there were 36 chapters with 2,628 student members.

In 1945, SFMF joined forces with the InterVarsity Christian Fellowship (IVCF), a movement that came to the United States from Canada in 1939, but that traced its origins all the way back to a group of student believers at the University of Cambridge, England, in 1877. From its earliest years of development in the United States, IVCF was committed to being an ongoing evangelizing presence *in the university*, as

opposed to an evangelistic outreach *to the university*. “IVCF was a student mission,” explains Keith and Gladys Hunt in a historical account of the first fifty years of the movement, “not a mission to students. The campus was not a fishing pond for converts,” they continue, “IVCF was not a group of people making forays onto the campus; it was an evangelizing fellowship *within* the university.”

Because InterVarsity viewed their campus initiatives as lasting communities of scholarship and evangelistic faith rather than as temporary projects for quick conversion, the movement was well received on “secular” campuses even when faculty members and unbelieving students disagreed with them. “I do not agree with Inter-Varsity in its theology” confessed a professor at a conference on religion at a state university:

But there is one thing that does appeal. This movement is not working from the outside like a propaganda agency trying to tell students what they should believe or what they should do. Rather, this is a genuine grass-roots student movement, a genuine expression of [student] feeling and conviction. We may not agree with your viewpoint, but we will defend your right to carry on a work when it is done on this basis.

As IVCF continued its steady growth on campuses, the movement received an important surge of encouragement in the post-World War II era by partnering with The Navigators (NAV), a ministry started in 1931 by a young Californian named Dawson Trotman. The work was especially focused on helping high school students become effective disciples of Jesus. As the ministry grew throughout the late 1930s and early 1940s, NAV soon directed its disciple-making emphasis toward the millions of soldiers involved in the war. When these servicemen returned to the United States and began to enter colleges and universities, the Navigators’ leadership encouraged them to partner with existing student movements like InterVarsity, instead of starting new discipleship and evangelistic groups on campus.

In 1946, through the combined efforts of IVCF and SFMF, an international missions convention for students was held in Toronto. In a

sense this gathering was “receiving the baton” from the Student Volunteer Movement conferences that had been so effective in mobilizing students toward global mission in an earlier era. The 1946 convention in Toronto only drew 575 students, but two years later when it was moved to a more central location at the University of Illinois campus at Champaign-Urbana, its numbers more than doubled.*

Attending the 1948 gathering at Urbana was Jim Elliot, a young man from Wheaton College. Elliot had long been focused on missionary service and was the leader of the SFMF chapter on his campus. During the Urbana convention in 1948, Elliot became convinced of something he had been praying about for an extended period. “The Lord has done what I wanted Him to do this week,” he wrote after the convention, “as I analyze my feelings now, I feel quite at ease about saying that tribal work in South American jungles is the general direction of my missionary purpose.”

Shortly after Jim Elliot graduated from Wheaton College in 1949, he wrote in his journal, “He is no fool who gives what he cannot keep to gain that which he cannot lose.” Elliot was writing about his commitment to follow Jesus, regardless of what that commitment might cost. Six years later, while working in a remote region of Ecuador with the Huaorani people group, Elliot and four of his friends—Nate Saint, Roger Youderian, Ed McCulley and Pete Fleming—were speared to death. As the story of their lives and sacrifice spread, mission movements on campus exponentially increased.

In 1951, five years before Elliot and his friends were martyred, Bill Bright, a student at Fuller Theological Seminary, received an impression from God that he was to devote his life to leading students to Jesus. In response, Bright and his wife, Vonette, organized a twenty-four-hour prayer chain for students at the University of California at Los Angeles (UCLA). Within a few months, more than 250 UCLA students decided to follow Jesus, including the president of the student

*The IVCF student mission convention is now known as Urbana and continues to this day. Alongside Urbana, another significant student development that involved IVCF during the late 40s was the founding of the International Fellowship of Evangelical Students (IFES) in 1947. The IFES is a global collective of national student movements, currently representing student fellowships in 143 countries.

body, the editor of the campus newspaper and a number of well-known UCLA athletes.

At the advice of a professor friend from Fuller Seminary, the Brights named their new student initiative Campus Crusade for Christ (CC). The early growth of CC was nothing short of phenomenal, as evangelistic enthusiasm rapidly multiplied from UCLA to campuses across the country. During this time, Crusade's partnership with other student movements was essential, and it was not long before the national directors of InterVarsity, the Navigators and Campus Crusade were meeting with one another regularly to share vision, pray together and plan for the future.

A final movement that is broadly representative of this era in student history, especially as it relates to the momentum toward global mission on campus, is Youth With A Mission (YWAM), which was founded by Loren Cunningham in 1960. When Cunningham was a twenty-year-old college student at the Assemblies of God Bible College in Springfield, Missouri, he spent a portion of his summer break ministering with a gospel quartet in the Bahamas. During that short-term summer endeavor, Cunningham experienced a vision from God that revealed waves and waves of young people covering the nations of the earth with the message of Jesus.

As he pondered his vision and what it might mean, particularly concerning to Cunningham was the fact that so many college and university students seemed to start their studies with a passion to serve God as missionaries, but that by the time they completed their degrees, their commitment to such international service waned. After he graduated from college, Cunningham spent a period of time traveling around the world in an attempt to understand cultural diversity and the urgent needs of the global community. Shortly after he returned to America, the work of YWAM began. "It would be an organization," according to the early history of the movement, "that sent kids out after high school to gain a sense of purpose when going to college, and that welcomed all Christians no matter what the denomination."

The late 1960s and early 1970s were a transformative and volatile time on campus. Youth culture in general was experiencing the unpre-

dictable effect of widespread cultural change. Part three of *God on Campus* begins by exploring various facets of the student transformation that took place during this period, and then connects that very recent history to the electrifying story of what is happening on campuses today. In the words of John W. Alexander (1918–2002), president of IVCF for seventeen years:

God is at work on college campuses where he is building a portion of the body of Jesus Christ. Too often Christians write off the campus as hopelessly detached from God's presence and beyond the reach of the Holy Spirit. We repudiate this defeatist attitude and espouse the belief that even at the most hostile school, the principles in Habakkuk 1:15 apply: "Observe and be astounded, and be amazed; for I am doing a work in your day which you would not believe even if it were told you." God is the great active agent on these campuses; if he were not thus engaged, there would be little point to our efforts.

Central Ohio, 2007. *When legendary Amish barn builder Josie Miller was brought in by Liberty Presbyterian Church to help construct a sanctuary for their congregation in 1994, the seventy-five-year-old Amish patriarch probably had no idea that the sacred barn he was building would one day become part of the unfolding spiritual history of campuses in America.*

Whether Miller knew that student history was in the making or not, however, the massive “Barn Church” he helped design was definitely built to last. Its huge supporting beams each measure more than a foot in diameter, with the largest timber girder weighing a solid 3,100 pounds. The Barn Church is so sturdily built, in fact, that experts estimate the building will still be standing in five hundred years.

Just thirteen years after its construction, seventy-two students from eleven campuses gathered in the famous Barn Church on March 31, 2007, to tell stories about what God was doing in their lives. They talked and prayed for hours, and before the evening was over, they knelt down together on the smooth hickory floors of the sacred barn and officially launched forty days of nonstop student prayer across the Buckeye State. They called their initiative “Campus Ohio.”

Allison Brooks, a graduate of Ohio State University, together with Molly Gibson of Miami University and a few other friends helped initiate and network this surge of statewide, collegiate prayer. Their plan was simple: forty days of 24/7 prayer, passed like a baton from one campus to another, seamlessly connecting students across Ohio in a chain of nonstop intercession.

“[Although] the university students participating in the forty days of prayer . . . hail from all over the state,” reported an online periodical that covered the 2007 initiative, “they are putting geography and rivalry aside to worship and pray and move together. From Xavier, to Bowling Green, to Ohio State, to the University of Cincinnati and be-

yond," the article continues, "these students are joining together as one people, one body, one campus. Campus Ohio."

In the early autumn of 2002, Allison Brooks was a freshman at Columbus State Community College, paying her way through school by working a part-time job at a local mall. Sometime during that fall she decided to read the Gospel of Matthew.

Even though Allison had known the story of Jesus since she was a child, there was something about the Gospel that seemed different to her when she read it this time. The words were all the same, but the central character had somehow become more real. "I was captivated by his conversations," Allison later explained, "how Jesus spent time with people. I wanted to be like him, to talk like him, to treat others like [he did]. I was so hungry to know Jesus that I wanted to eat my Bible!"

As Allison's fascination with Jesus grew, so did her sense of bewilderment and wonder, confusion and even frustration regarding one area of his life. "I was annoyed by the prayer life of Jesus," she confessed. "[M]y experience told me prayer was what happened before meals, or in a moment of tragedy or panic, but I saw something different in Jesus."

What especially struck Allison was the frequency with which Jesus prayed, and the natural way he went about it, as if an open conversation with God or spending an entire night in prayer was a completely normal thing to do. She came away from her reading of the Gospel convinced that prayer was the central "thing" in Jesus' life that made him tick, the open secret of his unusual communion with the One he called Father.

From that time forward, Allison began to "experiment" in prayer. She prayed by herself. She wrote her prayers down. She even took the risk of praying out loud with her friends, something she had been very nervous to do, and discovered the realness and freedom in prayer that came when it was not about "praying to others, but to God."

As Allison's confidence in prayer increased, her adventures in faith did too. She was no longer afraid to tell people about what was happening in her life and she began to ache for others to know a similar

sort of friendship with God. Throughout the next year, while she prayed for her friends and coworkers, Allison learned to not give up in prayer even when it seemed like things would never change. As she held on in faith, four of her friends, two housemates and two coworkers (including her boss), decided to follow Jesus.

During this time a number of Allison's journal entries begin recording conversations and prayers about a "campus-wide prayer thing." By this point, Allison had made plans to transfer from the community college where she was attending to Ohio State University (OSU), the most populated campus in the country. Her journal entries about the "campus-wide prayer thing" were in reference to OSU. It was an idea she and a close friend from Campus Crusade, Katie Jones, had been talking together and praying about for some time:

Katie and I prayed time and time again for something swirling in our hearts and minds along the lines of prayer and unity. I referred to it in my journal as "this campus-wide prayer thing." . . .

We weren't sure what God was leading into as far as what this was going to look like, but we did dream of what things could be like if we prayed . . . and we knew that He was leading. We knew this increasing desire in our hearts was not of ourselves but a desire deposit[ed] from God. When we prayed, the desire grew.

It wasn't really intentional on our end . . . except that we had experienced the power of prayer and the intimate friendship we can know and experience with God in and through prayer. Our lives were turned upside down by this discovery, and we wanted the Church at Ohio State to get caught with it . . . and the campus [to] be immersed [in] this reality.

Through an unusual chain of events that helped her know she was on the right track, and with the help of some humble leaders from a local church, Allison started something called Love OSU in October of 2004. The central aim of Love OSU, which is still operating at Ohio State, is to help students come together and pray for their campus. "Our vision is . . . Jesus: obsessively, dangerously, and undeniably

Jesus," their website plainly states, borrowing the words from "The Vision," a poem by Pete Greig.

In the early days of Love OSU, what that vision looked like practically was gathering students to pray every two weeks and encouraging them to embrace the spiritual discipline of fasting on the first Monday of each month. The goal was not to start a new organization but to strengthen existing campus ministries by helping their students learn how to pray.

As the momentum in prayer steadily began to grow at Ohio State, one of the most important side effects was the fostering of unity. Students from multiple ministries were getting to know one another for the first time. That sort of friendship first, relational dynamic quickly became a defining trait for the evolving work of Love OSU. In the words of Allison, "The church [was] everywhere, we just [didn't] know each other!"

Throughout the next two years, as the story of Love OSU continued to unfold, Allison and her friends at Ohio State came in contact with a number of national works who helped them in their development, including Campus Renewal Ministries, 24-7 Prayer, Campus Church Networks and Burning Heart Ministries. The momentum was building rapidly now, and it seemed clear that God was creating something that would not only impact OSU but that might in fact influence campuses across the country.

Allison had been completely transformed through her simple "experiment" in prayer. The young woman who was once nervous about praying in front of her friends had since discovered such boldness in God that she was now lovingly known as "Crazy Allison" across campus.

Before long, Love OSU began renting a house within walking distance of Ohio State, where students could come any time, day or night, to gather with their friends and pray for their campus and community. It was an exhilarating time.

Most remarkable during this season was Allison's involvement in a semester of intercession that united some seventy campuses across America in a chain of nonstop student prayer in early 2006. Allison pro-

posed the idea while on a conference call with Campus Renewal Ministries, and the surge of prayer was coordinated by a partnership known as Campus Transformation Network. In the academic year that followed (2006–2007), the number of praying campuses increased to 120 through a timely initiative known as YOPP, the “Year of Partnered Prayer.”

In the midst of all the excitement and gathering momentum, however, there were times of discouragement as well. During one period in particular, Allison experienced what she later described as an “extreme wilderness” in her journey of faith. God seemed distant. Even though she kept praying, Allison’s faith felt very fragile and increasingly dry, even brittle to the point of breaking.

It was not that Allison had done anything wrong. It was simply that in all of her activity, she had started to feel as if she was a “tool” for God instead of a friend of God. Throughout those difficult days, as she neared the end of her studies, her local church, those humble leaders who had stood beside her from the very beginning, especially helped Allison find her way back to the simplicity of prayer and the certainty of her friendship with God.

In December 2006, Allison graduated from OSU. Even though she was finished with her studies, it seemed as if there was still something more for her as it related to campuses and prayer in Ohio. Hearing stories of what was happening at other colleges and universities across the state, stories very similar to her own, Allison began dreaming and praying about a statewide, collegiate initiative that would cover “Campus Ohio” in prayer for a full forty days.

*And that is why, in late March of 2007, seventy-two students from eleven campuses gathered in a sacred and beautiful barn, knelt down beside one another on its smooth hickory floors and started praying together for Campus Ohio to be transformed by the presence of God.**

*Allison Brooks is now the director of Network 50, part of Campus America, an initiative of 24-7 Prayer that is working with students and professors, multiple ministries and local churches to help create a connected, unbroken year of prayer in 2010 that involves students from every college and university campus in the United States. The story of Allison’s time at Ohio State was compiled from personal interviews and correspondence. (See also Love OSU’s website <www.loveosu.com> and Campus Ohio’s website <www.campusohio.org>.)



PRAYER IS THE PLACE TO BEGIN

THE CAMPUS OHIO STORY

Campus Ohio. The name is telling in its singularity. . . .

If more university students took hold of the vision, the nation could be transformed one college at a time.

Campus Michigan. Campus Indiana. Campus Kansas.

Campus Oregon. Campus America. What's beginning in Ohio . . . didn't start because of any national ministry. . . .

It was a simple and beautiful seed planted by God in the hearts of a few normal university students.

—RYAN MILNER

The story of Allison Brooks and Campus Ohio is especially compelling because of its simplicity. It is not the story of a perfect strategy or a flawless ministry. Neither is it the story of a fearless and experienced leader who always knew what to do and exactly how to do it. Rather, the story of Allison and what happened in Ohio is the simple story of a student who became fascinated with Jesus by reading the Bible, the story of a student who responded to that fascination by experimenting in prayer, the story of a student who discovered that there were others who wanted to learn how to pray too, the story of a student who realized that there is power in praying *together*.

When the students of Campus Ohio gathered in the Barn Church in early 2007 and began telling their stories to one another, most encour-

aging of all was the awareness that God was doing something much *bigger* than they imagined. As it turned out, Allison's encouraging account of what was happening at OSU was just one of numerous stories of God leading students to pray throughout Ohio. Lindsay Ellyson, for example, who was studying at Mt. Vernon Nazarene University during that time, had been gathering her friends on campus to pray for an hour every day, five days a week, for five full months. That sort of passion in prayer and consistency in purpose is contagious and holds the potential to "infect" an entire campus with the "epidemic" of awakening.

John Hayward, of the School of Technology at the University of Glamorgan in Wales, has traced the surprising similarities between the contagious nature of viral epidemics and the contagious nature of the spread of the gospel. In both cases the critical factors have to do with the intensity of the "infection" in the first place and the available networks of contagion through which the "virus" can be effectively spread.

To educate the public about the 2009 outbreak of the "Swine Flu," or influenza A (H1N1), the World Health Organization created an interactive online map that tracked the highly contagious virus as it rapidly spread across the planet. The map offers a fascinating glimpse into the viral mechanics that can transform a local virus into a worldwide epidemic. Observing the global effect of the swine flu in action, and especially witnessing the shockingly brief timescale in which it encircled the earth, helps us to understand how one person's health in a small town in Mexico can powerfully influence the health of the whole world.

When we apply that principle to the power of prayer on campus, the point is simply this: *a genuine obsession with Jesus has the potential to be wildly contagious*. The story of Campus Ohio is starting to take place on numerous campuses across the country. It is not a story that is limited to one particular region or a specific demographic. Students at state universities and private colleges, those involved in long-established collegiate ministries and brand new communities of faith, black and white students, Asian and Native American students, His-

panic and visiting international students, each in their own way are beginning to pray.

STORIES OF STUDENT PRAYER ACROSS CAMPUS AMERICA

We pray for the big things, . . . we pray for the small things. It's just a bunch of people hungry for God.

—SLATE STOUT

Arizona State University (ASU) is the second biggest campus in the country, just after Ohio State. More than fifty-one thousand students are enrolled at ASU. In the autumn of 2007, about six months after Campus Ohio, two hundred students at Arizona State determined to cover their campus in prayer for twenty-one days. "All through the day and night," reported an article in *USA Today* that covered the event, "they pray . . . their stillness and quiet in marked contrast to the nearly constant rush of . . . the campus."

Three months after the event at ASU, the *Michigan Daily* covered a similar story at the University of Michigan (UM). Students at UM were involved in a project on campus called "40 Days of Prayer." The report in the *Daily* particularly highlighted the testimony of a sophomore, "who . . . passionately spoke to a captivated crowd about how the 40 Days of Prayer helped her overcome an eating disorder." Multiple groups on campus, including Phi Alpha Kappa, Campus Crusade, World Reach International and New Life Church, sponsored the 2008 event. (One year later, when the event took place again, twenty campus groups were part of the prayer initiative.)

Just one month after the 40 Days of Prayer launched at UM in 2008, the *Columbus Dispatch* reported an incredible story that took place at Ohio University (not to be confused with Ohio State University). "When an . . . employee decided to end his life Friday," the article explains, "students turned to the power of prayer and the pen to save him. It worked."

According to the *Dispatch*, a group of praying students asked God to give them words of encouragement for a suicidal man who was

preparing to jump from the ledge of a building on campus. A crisis specialist read the words of encouragement to the distraught man during a four-hour suicide intervention that ultimately saved his life. The following are excerpts from what the *Dispatch* called the “Samaritans’ Letters”:

I know sometimes it is easy to feel alone in the world, but it is important to remember that there are people who care. Right now there are a lot of people praying for you. . . . You are not alone, and you are loved.

I don’t know you or what is on your mind. . . . But I do know the pain and brokenness that comes from living in this world. I have suffered from depression for two years, and I know what it feels like to be hopeless at times. But I know there is more. There is beauty. You’ll see it if you look.

When people pray on campus, things begin to change. At the sprawling campus of Arizona State this change looked like stillness in the midst of the mad hustle and bustle of fifty-one thousand students. At the University of Michigan it looked like a young woman set free from an eating disorder. At Ohio University it looked like a suicidal employee listening to words of life when he was on the very edge of death. The power of prayer changes things.

At McDaniel College in Maryland this looked like thirteen students deciding to follow Jesus. At Haskell Indian Nations University in Kansas it looked like a young Caucasian woman and an older Native American intercessor weeping together over the sins of history. At Oklahoma State University it looked like a bunch of guys transforming a nineteen-bedroom frat house into a counterculture of Christ-centered community and 24-7 prayer called The Jesus House. The power of prayer changes things.

At Morgan State University, a historically African American institution, this looked like a prayer tent in the center of campus with young black students on their knees in the middle of a late-night storm. At Gardner-Webb University in North Carolina it looked like “a prayer room covered in art and scriptures, a wailing wall with . . . heart cries

to the most holy God, a place where students could go spend time with their Creator.”

Those that visited the room encountered a wall of prayers and petitions. Real, raw prayers asking God for deliverance from sexual addictions, for suicidal thoughts, healing and release from illness, the salvation of lost friends. They found books full of prayers. . . . They were able to see maps covered with pictures and writing and prayers for different parts of the world. Markers and colored pencils were scattered on the floor from where people had written verses on the wall. From where people had written, “Come, Lord Jesus, Come!”

Whether it is fifty-two days on campuses throughout the state of Georgia or thirty days on campuses across Washington, Oregon, North Dakota and Alaska, students are beginning to realize that the power of prayer changes things.

EXPERIMENTS IN PRAYER: CATALYTIC EVENTS AND NETWORKS OF (HOLY) CONTAGION

When a doctoral student at Princeton asked, “What is there left in the world for original dissertation research?”

Albert Einstein replied, “Find out about prayer.

Somebody must find out about prayer.”

—PHILIP YANCEY

The movement of prayer currently building across the campuses of America is bigger than any one ministry, denomination, local church or organization. At its forefront are very ordinary students marked by an extraordinary passion to “experiment” in prayer. Although there are numerous local, statewide and national ministries partnering together and contributing to the momentum, there is not a centralized structure or single strategy that is essentially directing the movement. Truly it is a grassroots initiative and ordinary, prayerful students are the primary people making it happen.

At the same time, though, there have been (and will surely continue to be) catalytic events and vital networks that serve to inspire and instruct and spread the movement. One of the most well known of these events and networks is the 268 Generation that is behind the Passion conferences. In May of 2000, more than forty thousand students from every state in America gathered on a farm in Tennessee for a Passion event called OneDay, “a solemn assembly of prayer for spiritual awakening in [this] generation.” That historic gathering in 2000 was followed by similar events in strategic student hubs like Boston in 2003, where the Passion tour filled the Orpheum Theater with twenty-six hundred students in what proved to be the largest gathering of Christian students in the history of the city.

Representing another part of the burgeoning student prayer movement, and closely connected to the International House of Prayer (IHOP) in Kansas City, are a number of dynamic gatherings, schools and networks associated with TheCall, Onething and the Luke 18 Project. While each of these ministries serve a broader spectrum of people than college and university students alone, they are nonetheless strategically committed to praying for campuses. In particular, the Onething young-adult gatherings and the solemn assemblies of The Call have catalyzed tens of thousands of students into more intentional lifestyles of prayer and fasting.

What is especially encouraging about such catalytic events and critical networks is that many of them are beginning to serve one another in the common cause of prayer. For example, at Urbana 06 (which gathered 23,000 students and missionaries from every state and 140 nations), InterVarsity, Student Volunteer Movement 2 (SVM2) and 24-7 Prayer USA co-created an engaging and informative prayer room called The Journey. Students from the University of Arizona (UA) were so inspired by the experience in prayer that when they returned to their university they pitched a white tent in the center of campus and started a nonstop prayer chain that lasted for forty days. The prayer initiative at AU created such a compelling response that campus police posted a list of requests in the tent,

and the *Arizona Daily Wildcat*, the university newspaper, printed a story with the headline: “Students Pray Nonstop.”

Because the students from AU were especially inspired by the example of prayerful unity at Urbana, that same sort of unity became a major mark of their prayer movement on campus. “From the beginning,” explains Theo Davis, one of the leaders of the initiative at AU, “we fought to keep the vision as simple as we could: unity in the body of Christ.” Davis continues:

We chose to chase after unity in the body, which glorifies God, rather than chasing an agenda. By stripping the event of an agenda, we were free to just create a space where people could go and meet Jesus. This rendered denominational differences irrelevant because almost every Christ-follower values prayer. Some groups would not have participated if we had focused on some of those differences. . . . Our priority was not a picture-perfect prayer event, but simply coming together to glorify God.

THE AGENDA IS JESUS

So this guy comes up to me and says,

“What’s the vision? What’s the big idea?”

I open my mouth and words come out like this . . .

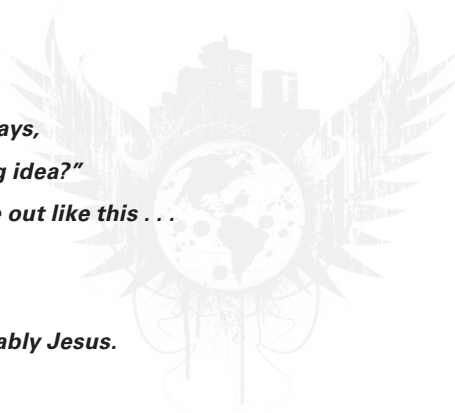
The vision?

The vision is Jesus.

Obsessively, dangerously, undeniably Jesus.

—PETE GREIG

One of the most compelling and controversial things about Jesus is his choice of friends. His disciples, with their various backgrounds and conflicting worldviews, were an unlikely collection of companions, to say the least. Ranging from Matthew the tax collector on the one hand to Simon the Zealot on the other, the polarizing agendas and diverse



political perspectives they represented were simply stunning for their first-century setting. That such individuals would willingly follow Jesus *together* was a miracle on par with someone walking on the Sea of Galilee.*

For the friends and followers of Jesus, it was not as if the controversial issues of their time no longer mattered to them, it was simply that Jesus *mattered more*. Clearly, the disciples still had their differences, but because of Jesus, those differences were no longer the things that defined them. Their unity was not based on abandoning their principles or on compromising the concerns that were closest to their hearts; rather, their unity was based on the fact that Jesus had called the disciples to follow him *together*. In John 17, shortly before Jesus is betrayed and arrested, he prayed for his disciples to become one:

I am praying not only for these disciples but also for all who will ever believe in me through their message. I pray that they will all be one, just as you and I are one—as you are in me, Father, and I am in you. . . .

May they experience such perfect unity that the world will know that you sent me and that you love them as much as you love me. (John 17:20-23)

The greatest test in the emerging student prayer movement is whether or not we will love and respect, serve and honor one another even when we disagree. Forging such relationships will undoubtedly demand real humility. But if we are willing to learn from one another, as the students at Arizona University did, and to get down on our knees side-by-side in the place of prayer, always remembering that the agenda is ultimately Jesus, we may just discover that we stand up much stronger *together*.

*This may explain why the Gospel of Luke records that Jesus spent the entire night in prayer before he called his disciples (Luke 6:12-16). When you take into account the disciples' differing viewpoints and competing perspectives, one cannot help but wonder if Jesus spent the whole night in prayer because he was praying, "Father, are you sure these guys will be able to get along with each other?"

FINDING YOUR PLACE IN HISTORY

***When God intends great mercy for His people,
He first sets them praying.***

—MATTHEW HENRY

Historically speaking, we are probably in the middle of the most widespread movement of prayer Christianity has ever experienced. Most extraordinary is the fact that so many different groups, from so many different backgrounds, in so many different places are praying *together*. In 2010 an initiative of 24-7 Prayer called Campus America is partnering with students and professors, long-established collegiate ministries and brand new communities of faith to help connect every college and university campus in the United States in a chain of non-stop student prayer for an entire year. With the help of Allison Brooks and many others, it is time to make the historic journey from Campus Ohio to Campus America, and it all begins in the place of prayer.

1. As you “experiment” in prayer, take courage from the words of Charles Spurgeon, a famous nineteenth-century British minister: “Perhaps you think that God will not hear your prayers because you cannot pray grandly like some other person. . . . Be satisfied to offer to God broken language. . . . Go to him with holy familiarity and be not afraid to cry in his presence, *Abba Father*.”
2. Let us become the answer to Jesus’ unanswered prayer, “Father, make them one . . . that the world will know that you sent me.” Are you willing to cooperate with a believer who believes differently than you? Are you willing to put aside nonessentials for the one, true essential: Jesus? Are you willing to pray with someone who does not share your political opinions, remembering that Jesus called the tax collector Matthew and Simon the Zealot to follow him *together*? Unity in prayer does not mean unanimity in opinions, but it does mean that we have to humbly recognize that *none of us have the whole truth*. Are you willing to make your social agendas, as important as they may be, as well as your intellectual pride re-

garding nonessential doctrinal differences, secondary to the centrality of Jesus? "Father, make them one," Jesus said, "that the world will know that you sent me."

3. Whether you are a student, a professor, a parent, a pastor, a ministry leader or simply someone who is willing to pray, visit www.campusamerica.org and see how you can get involved in the 2010 year of nonstop student prayer.

- p. 121 “He kept on, alone, and in response to his last prayer”: Douglas Nelson, *For Such a Time as This*, describing the Azusa experience of William Seymour, quoted in Borlase, *William Seymour*, p. 119.
- p. 122 Seymour (pronounced: See-More): Winkie Pratney, revival historian and humor icon, first pointed out the irony of Seymour’s name to me.

Interlude: Reflections on Student Movements

- p. 123 “Since Jesus’ time numberless bands of Christian youth”: Clarence P. Shedd, *Two Centuries of Student Christian Movements* (New York: Association Press, 1934), p. 1.
- p. 124 by the 1920s “the evangelical Protestantism of the old-time colleges”: George M. Marsden, *The Soul of the American University* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994), p. 4.
- p. 124 “Whereas before *character development* had been a primary aim”: See Mark Noll, *The Scandal of the Evangelical Mind* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1994), pp. 110-14.
- p. 125 SVM’s numbers and focus faded: For more details on the decline of the SVM, see David Howard, *Moving Out: The Story of Student Initiative in World Missions* (Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press, 1984), pp. 50-56; and Keith Hunt and Gladys Hunt, *For Christ and the University* (Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press, 1991), pp. 39-55.
- p. 125 SFMF chapters began to rapidly multiply: Howard, *Moving Out*, p. 61.
- p. 126 “IVCF was a student mission, not a mission to students”: Hunt and Hunt, *For Christ and the University*, p. 222.
- p. 126 “I do not agree with Inter-Varsity in its theology”: Ibid., pp. 78-79.
- p. 126 Navigators’ leadership encouraged them to partner: J. Edwin Orr, *Campus Aflame: A History of Evangelical Awakenings in Collegiate Communities* (Wheaton, Ill.: International Awakening Press, 1994), p. 191.
- p. 127 “The Lord has done what I wanted Him to do this week”: Jim Elliot, quoted in Elizabeth Elliot, *Through Gates of Splendor* (Carol Stream, Ill.: Tyndale House, 1996), p. 7.
- p. 127 “He is no fool who gives what he cannot keep”: Jim Elliot, quoted in Elizabeth Elliot, *Shadow of the Almighty* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1958), p. 15.
- p. 127 Huaorani people group: These people were sometimes called the Auca. But Auca is a pejorative name given by neighboring tribes.

- pp. 127-28 more than 250 UCLA students decided to follow Jesus: See “1951–1959” on the Campus Crusade For Christ International website <www.ccci.org/about-us/ministry-profile/timeline-1950s.aspx>.
- p. 128 national directors of IVCF, NAV and CC were meeting together: Orr, *Campus Aflame: A History of Evangelical Awakenings in Collegiate Communities* (Wheaton, Ill.: International Awakening Press, 1994), pp. 191-92.
- p. 128 YWAM was an organization “that sent kids out after high school”: See the history section of YWAM’s international website <www.ywam.org/contents/abo_his_1956.htm>. For more on YWAM’s pioneering history, especially see Loren Cunningham, *Is That Really You, Lord?* (Seattle: YWAM Publishing, 2001).
- p. 129 “God is at work on college campuses”: John W. Alexander, quoted in Hunt and Hunt, *For Christ and the University*, p. 236.

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- p. 136 “Come senators, congressmen”: Bob Dylan, “The Times They Are A-Changin’,” *The Times They Are A-Changin’* (1964).
- p. 136 “You say you want a revolution”: The Beatles, “Revolution” (1968).
- p. 139 “This vital decision rests with the . . . reform-minded students”: The Cox Commission Report, *Crisis at Columbia* (New York: Vintage Books, 1968), p. 197.
- p. 139 “Uncle Milo’s Nudist Farm”: Nathan Johnson’s debut album, *In Search of the Flip*, was followed by the innovative sounds of his critically acclaimed *Annasthesia*. For more, check out <www.thecinematicunderground.com> and <www.nathanj.com>.
- p. 140 “It was easy to dismiss his behavior as a silly stunt”: For a moving obituary of the legendary Naked Guy at Berkeley, who tragically committed suicide in 2006, see Jason Zengerle, “The Naked Guy,” *New York Times*, December 31, 2006 <www.nytimes.com/2006/12/31/magazine/31naked.t.html>.
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- p. 142 "Mark Rudd's revolutionary letter to the administration": A full copy of Rudd's letter is provided in Avorn, *Up Against the Ivy Wall*, pp. 25-27.
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- p. 143 "the outstanding and inevitable mark of the college awakenings": J. Edwin Orr *Campus Aflame: A History of Evangelical Awakenings in Collegiate Communities* (Wheaton, Ill.: International Awakening Press, 1994), p. 217.
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TEACH US TO PRAY

Following is the first chapter from Gordon T. Smith's simple and profound book on prayer—an instant classic.

Smith is the president of Ambrose University and Seminary in Calgary, Alberta, where he also serves as professor of systematic and spiritual theology. An ordained minister with the Christian and Missionary Alliance, he is well known for books like *Courage & Calling*, *Called to Be Saints*, and *The Voice of Jesus*.

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PRAYER AND THE KINGDOM OF GOD

*i*n learning how to pray, it is, of course, helpful to go to the very prayer that Jesus gave his disciples when they asked, “Teach *us* to pray.” He taught them to say what we know as the Lord’s Prayer, or in some Christian communities, the Our Father. The prayer is a sequence of prayers: “hallowed be thy name,” “forgive us our debts,” and “give us this day.” Yet these prayers pivot on one prayer or petition in particular: “thy kingdom come,” and its twin, “thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven” (Matthew 6:9-11 KJV). Essentially, then, Jesus taught his disciples to pray for the coming of the kingdom—for coming of the reign of God. When we pray “thy kingdom come,” we are expressing the longing of our hearts and minds that the will of God would happen, on earth as it is in heaven.

It would be a profound understatement to say that this matters. For indeed nothing matters more. Nothing. The

idea of the kingdom of God permeates the whole of the witness of the Old Testament; we read again and again of the longing for the future manifestation of the reign of God. From this vantage point, the prayer is a longing, in the Jewish tradition, for the coming of the Messiah. Jesus himself spoke of how he would not drink of the fruit of the vine again “until the kingdom of God comes” (Luke 22:18). And this is the prayer of the church: for the coming of the kingdom, for Christ to return and bring about the restoration and healing of the entire created order. We yearn for the consummation of the reign of Christ: that Christ—the Messiah—would be revealed, and that all creation would know the full manifestation of the healing and restorative grace of God.

Theologians therefore speak of this as an *eschatological* prayer—looking ahead to a day that is yet to come. That day is when the purposes of God—now very present in heaven, where God dwells—will be fully consummated on earth, where we dwell. Our great longing and prayer, in other words, is not to “go to heaven” but for heaven to come down and transform the earth and all its inhabitants and thus reveal the glory and purposes of God (see Revelation 21).

And yet when Jesus—the very one who announced that the kingdom of God is at hand (Mark 1:14-15)—offers this prayer, we have to also read it through another lens. Yes, the kingdom is future; we look forward to a day that is yet to come; we anticipate the consummation of the kingdom. But the kingdom of God is also very present. The disciples of

Jesus are those who now live in him and under his authority. We have become and are becoming citizens of this kingdom, living now, in the present, in and under the reign of Christ. His disciples are those who seek his kingdom and even now, as a foretaste of what is yet to come, begin to allow the will of God—"thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven"—to be effective and expressed in every sphere and dimension of human life—indeed, of the whole cosmos. This begins in particular, of course, in our own lives. In our prayers, we learn obedience; very specifically, we learn the freedom that comes in and through obedience within the benevolent reign of Christ. In our prayers we enter into the grace of deferring to the will and authority of Christ.

This is our great longing: to enter into his kingdom. Jesus suggests that we should seek the kingdom, that this is the most important agenda in our lives. It is worth any price; it merits the full scope of our energies and desires. We are invited not only to pray the prayer but also, in praying, to enter *into* the kingdom—to seek it and to live in this new dimension of reality. Saint Paul urges us to set our minds on things that are above (Colossians 3:2), which means precisely the same thing—to live with our minds set on Christ, who is the ascended Lord and whose reign has come and is coming.

As an aside, though an important consideration: all of this is a reminder that the gospel *necessarily* includes the reality that Christ is the ascended Lord. For too many Christians the gospel speaks merely of the cross of Christ and the

forgiveness that is found in and through the cross. This is gospel, of course, but is it the whole of the gospel? Surely the proclamation of the gospel also presumes the declaration that Jesus Christ is Lord and that, in the words of Jesus, “the kingdom of God has come near” (Mark 1:15). When we yearn for the salvation of God, we long for women and men to know forgiveness—of course. But we also long that the kingdom of God would come, that God’s will would be done on earth. That is, in the language of Philippians 2:10-11, we look forward to the day when every knee will bow and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord. And what that means is the healing and restoration of the creation and the triumph of justice, so that all things come under the benevolent authority of Christ.

PRAYER AND PARTICIPATION

When Jesus teaches his disciples to pray he invites them to seek the kingdom and to pray that the will of God, the reign of Christ, would be expressed in every sphere of their lives. This is our prayer. This is the deep longing, the yearning of the human soul and of all of humanity: we pray that all would be restored, redeemed, and healed. But it also makes full sense that we would pray this not only in a general sense but also with regard to the specifics of our lives. We truly pray this prayer only when our praying actually draws us into the reign of Christ—that is, into the very thing for which we are praying. The prayer is not passive but active; it is a prayer that

alters our lives. We pray “thy kingdom come” even as we seek the kingdom and long to enter more fully into Christ and allow the reign of Christ to inform and transform our lives.

We pray “thy kingdom come” in the particulars of our individual lives—our families, our workplaces, our neighborhoods. And we pray it for our cities, our country, and our world. We pray it for the church. And we long for God to act—mercifully and graciously. Our very praying reflects a confidence that God will act. But even as we pray, in our praying, we are changed. Our prayer is answered very specifically in our own lives as God grants us the grace of living in the kingdom. In other words, it is surely fine to pray for specific things: *I need a job, a home for my family, healing for a loved one*—indeed, all the things for which we might pray. But while prayer for what we need and what we long for is without doubt appropriate, we must remember that there is more to prayer than petition. In our praying not only are we asking God to change things, but we are being changed. More specifically, if and as we learn to pray, we become women and men who live in and under the reign of Christ.

So easily prayer becomes little more than asking God to act, asking God to do what only God can do, asking God to intervene and through mercy bring about God’s purposes in the particulars of our lives. But we are not mere observers of what God is doing in bringing about the kingdom. We are participants. Or as Darrell Johnson puts it, in this prayer we

“participate in heaven’s invasion of the earth” and thus experience more and more what it means to see and live within the reign of Christ, here on earth.

I serve as the president of a university that, like most of our peer institutions, has a dynamic and exciting athletic program. When our volleyball team is on the court facing a visiting team, especially from a school with which we have a bit of a rivalry, it can be quite intense—not only on the court but also in the stands. And of course I cheer eagerly for the young women and men who wear our university colors with a hope to win a championship and have a banner hung from the rafters. I always like it when we win, of course; and I particularly like it when we beat the sister institution with which we have a focused and historic rivalry.

But imagine that we are losing—it is a very close game, but we are losing. In moments like that we wonder what small but significant factor could change the outcome. I notice that the coach calls a time-out; surely he recognizes that he needs to make a strategic adjustment so that this close game shifts in our favor. But imagine that I do not wait patiently through the time-out, but rather conclude that as the president of the university I need to do my part. So I leave the stands, head to the huddle on the side of the court, and interrupt the time-out to advise the coach that I am available and willing to do my part. What’s more, I think my contribution could make a difference—perhaps the difference that will let us ultimately win the match. I urge him to put me into the game.

Well, of course the coach will patiently ask the president to return to the stands and will assure me that at this point I am only an observer, not a participant! I can only serve well by not getting in the way. I need to head back to the stands.

But it is not so with the kingdom of God. When we pray “thy kingdom come” we are not mere observers in the stands, watching God do God’s work and, so to speak, cheering God on. Rather, what is clear from the Scriptures is that while we *are* observers, we not *only* observers. We are also participants.

We are players in the work of God in our world; we are actors on the stage. We are not lead actors; we are not the ones who ultimately make it happen. But we are on the stage; we are players in the drama of God’s redemptive purposes in the world. Our lives and our work matter and make a difference.

And so we need an approach to prayer that reflects this reality: that in our prayers we are not only saying the words “thy kingdom come” but also actually entering into the kingdom, knowing—without doubt in small incremental steps, but still knowing more and more—what it means to live in the grace of the kingdom, the freedom that comes in living under the reign of Christ.

PRAYER AS FORMATION

Prayer has a formative impact on our lives—the manner or form of our prayers actually shapes the contours and character of our lives. So frequently, it would seem, our prayers begin

with our experience: something in our lives occasions a particular prayer, typically a petition or request. And thus the content of our prayers is determined by what is happening in our lives.

But perhaps the reverse should actually be the norm. Without doubt, the circumstances of our lives will inform our prayers. But perhaps what should be happening is that our prayers would inform our lives, that our praying would alter our living, that our prayers would shape the contours and content of our daily experience.

In this way of living and praying, we would allow our deepest convictions—our faith and our theological vision of God, ourselves, and our world—to inform our prayers and be the *means* by which we know the transforming power of grace in our lives. More particularly, we would choose that the reign of Christ—the kingdom of God—would increasingly be that which defines our lives, our ways of being, living, and responding to our world. We would find that the salvation of God is not merely something that God has done *for us*—in Christ, on the cross—but also something that God is doing *in us*.

To this end, our prayers play a crucial role. Indeed, if transformation does not happen through our prayers, it likely does not happen. This is why it is so crucial that we teach new Christians how to pray and that in our patterns and approaches to congregational life we are consistently coming back to the fundamentals of prayer. And this is why all of us,

older and newer Christians alike, are always coming back to the basics of the form and structure of formative prayer.

When we pray “thy kingdom come,” should not our prayer be an act of recalibration? Could our praying be an act of intentional alignment and realignment? That is, in our prayer our vision of the kingdom purposes of God will be deepened and broadened; we will be drawn into the reality of Christ risen and now on the throne of the universe. And thus through our prayers we not only pray for the kingdom but also come to increasingly live within the kingdom, under the reign of Christ.

This last point is crucial. So frequently we pray as though God is passive and we are trying to get God to act. But could it be that God is always active? And that in our praying we are aware of how God is actually always at work, bringing his kingdom into effect, and we are seeing and responding to the kingdom even as we pray “thy kingdom come”? In the process, we are increasingly more aligned and in tune with the kingdom, more and more living our lives, individually and in community, in a manner that consistently reflects, in word and deed, the coming kingdom of God.

THREE MOVEMENTS IN OUR PRAYERS

Can we do this? Certainly, but only if we are intentional. We need to consider the merits of a very focused and purposeful approach to our prayers. Yes, there is a place for spontaneity. And most certainly there is a place for freeform prayers

where we express to God our immediate thoughts and feelings. But when we speak of our formation in Christ and our participation in the kingdom—where the kingdom of God increasingly defines us more than anything else—we should perhaps be focused and purposeful. We can consider the value of consistency and even routine, an approach to prayer that has an order to it. We can even speak of a liturgy, meaning that our prayers have a regular pattern to them so that over time our hearts and minds and lives are increasingly conformed to the very thing for which we are praying.

In this kind of intentionality it is very helpful to think in terms of three movements in our prayers, three forms of prayer by which we respond to and learn to live in the reality that Christ is risen and active in our world—that in and through Christ the reign of God is coming. Three movements, with an intentional sequence.

First, we give thanks. We see and respond with gratitude to the ways in which God is already at work in our world and in our lives. We begin here. We begin by seeing the evidence of the reign of Christ—the ways that God is already at work in our lives and in our world. And we give thanks. We pray “thy kingdom come” in a way that not only acknowledges that God is already at work but celebrates and gives thanks for this work. We cannot pray “thy kingdom come” if we are not grateful for how the kingdom has come and is coming. Thanksgiving is foundational to the Christian life and thus foundational to prayer.

Second, we make confession—the essential realignment of those who long to live under the reign of Christ. We pray “thy kingdom come,” and very soon we also pray—if we follow the sequence of the Lord’s Prayer—“forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors.” We practice confession. It is clear from Scripture that when the kingdom is announced and when the kingdom is at hand—present, in our midst, and recognized—we respond with confession (Mark 1:15).

Confession is essential if we truly recognize and believe in the coming of the kingdom. If we have kingdom eyes, the genius of our response is that we see where there is a disconnect. We see and feel that our lives are not being lived in a way that is consistent with the kingdom. We cannot pray “your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven” unless and until we see the ways that our lives are not lived in consistency with the will of God. And so, recognizing the kingdom, we repent: we practice confession. Repentance, then, is not merely a matter of feeling bad about something we have said or done, but rather an act of intentional alignment—or better, *realignment*—with the coming of the reign of Christ.

And third, we practice discernment—considering where and how God is calling us to speak and act as participants in the kingdom of God. We pray “thy kingdom come” as those who are also called to be full participants, in word and deed, in what God is doing in the world. And so when we pray we of course ask—or better, *discern*—how we are called in our lives to witness to the kingdom.

We are not merely observers; we are engaged. We are invited—more, actually *called* as agents of God’s purposes in the world. Our words *and* our deeds matter. In some mysterious way, even though God and God alone brings about the kingdom, our lives witness to the kingdom—our words, our work. And so when we pray “thy kingdom come,” we also necessarily must pray, *How, oh Lord, are you calling me to make a difference in your kingdom purposes for our world?*

THREE TEMPTATIONS

Thanksgiving. Confession. Discernment. It may sound simple and straightforward, except for this: our hearts are not naturally inclined in this direction. Our default mode is not thanksgiving or confession or discernment. There is a powerful inclination that undercuts each of these—an orientation, a temptation that will keep us from praying well.

When it comes to thanksgiving, we so frequently focus on what God is *not* doing—on all the ways that we wish God were more present, more active, more attentive, actually doing what we wish God were doing but seems to not be doing. We see all that is wrong or lacking, and this is what most engages our hearts and minds.

But could it be that the genius of seeing well—of having kingdom eyes—is that we are first and foremost attentive to what God is *already* doing? Rather than complaint for what is wrong, our point of departure is thanksgiving for the

multiple ways that God is indeed already at work. And we give thanks. We begin and end our day with thanksgiving rather than complaint. We develop kingdom eyes that can see and appreciate the sometimes very quiet and subtle ways that God is at work.

So frequently we bemoan the state of our circumstances or the state of our society and, ironically, miss the ways that God is at work in our midst. Yes, we do need to be agents of positive change, but could it be that we can only discern God's particular call on us now if we are able to see how God is already at work? Rather than looking to other societies where we are impressed that God is at work in seemingly miraculous and dramatic ways and bemoaning that this is not happening in our situation, should we not see that perhaps in a secularized society God may be working in a far more subtle way? Having kingdom eyes means that we can see and appreciate and give thanks for the ways that God is at work.

When it comes to confession, the temptation is to look at how others are falling short, how others are not living up to the kingdom. Whether it is the people we work with, the people we live with, or the people we worship with, we think of all the ways that *they* need to change.

In our work, it is so easy to spend our energy frustrated with others and wishing that others would change. And while there is surely a place for accountability within the workplace, we would do well to humbly see and recognize where God is calling us to turn, to repent.

It is so easy to be disappointed with those who are older or those who are younger—feeling that our parents’ generation missed something or that the generation that follows us is not quite as committed or devoted as we are.

It is so easy to judge other church groups as somehow deficient, rather than asking and discerning how God is calling us to be more faithful to the gospel and repenting in response. And it is so easy to engage our society as critics and judges.

But the genius of confession is found in the immortal words of the psalmist: “Search me, O God. . . . See if there is any wicked way in me” (Psalm 139:23-24). The kingdom orientation is not to see the mote or speck in our neighbor’s eye, but to see the beam in our own eye (Matthew 7:3). We let God do God’s work in God’s time in the other. We recognize that we cannot confess for the other. And we instead take responsibility for our lives, for our behavior. Thus, to pray “thy kingdom come” is to turn from complaint to thanksgiving, and it is also to turn from judging others to making personal confession.

Then we also ask, How are we being called to speak and to act in witness to the kingdom of God? We learn discernment. The temptation here is twofold. One temptation is to see all that is wrong with the world, decide that the situation is hopeless, and despair—to throw up our hands and conclude that nothing can be done or that nothing is worth doing. We allow the seeds of cynicism to be sown in our hearts. The

other temptation is to try to do everything—to be heroes, little messiahs. We go through our days in frenetic busyness, overwhelmed by all that needs to be done and impatient with ourselves, with others, and of course with God, somehow thinking that by the sheer dint of our own efforts we can fix our circumstances and our world.

But is there not a third way? The way of quiet, even leisured, and courageous action, where we speak and act with wisdom, grace, and patience? Where we recognize that we are called to be players on God's stage and in the drama of God's kingdom purposes in the world, but with the deep and quiet knowledge and assurance that we are not the stars of the show? Can we let God be God and then also learn to speak and act in light of this: to be where are we being called to be and say what we are being called to say and do what we are being called to do? We are actors in God's work in the world as we witness in word and deed in all we do. But what we must stress is that we are truly actors only if we do that which we are *actually* called to do. No more; no less.

And this changes. As circumstances change in our personal lives and in our workplaces, or as changes come in our communities and societies, we need to ask afresh, *How, oh God, are you calling us, in this time and place and set of circumstances, to be participants in your kingdom?* We turn from despair to considered and courageous action; we turn from frenetic busyness and attend to that to which we have been called.

We practice thanksgiving. And we turn from complaint.

We practice confession. And we turn from a judgmental, critical spirit.

We practice discernment. And we turn from both despair and frenetic busyness.

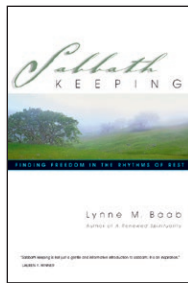
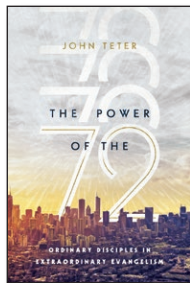
Three movements in our praying: each is a vital and essential dimension of the prayer “thy kingdom come.”

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