

# metconnexion

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## *FEATURING*

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HUW PRIDAY, CAROLYN LAWRENCE, ANNE MIDDLETON,  
JOHN SENYONYI & WILLIAM PORTER





# EDITORIAL

*Marian Izzard*

This autumn edition of MET Connexion is on the theme of 'Revival'. As a team, we have been reflecting on what that means today. We have been drawn to the biblical interpretation of revival that the psalmist describes in Psalm 80 - that of restoration with God. Before restoration can take place, repentance must happen so that we humble ourselves before God and receive his forgiveness. We find that this 'formula' for revival is at the heart of the great revivals that we have seen in the past which lead to transformation and renewal. In this edition, we take a look at some of these revivals and consider how they might shape the way in which we can hope and pray for revival today.

Huw Priday, ordained minister and classically trained musician, looks at the characteristics for revival with particular reference to the Great Welsh Revival of 1904 and the transformation that this brought not only to Wales but to other places around the world.

John Senyonyi, former Vice-Chancellor of Uganda Christian University, shares in his article what we can learn from the East African Revival during the late 1920s and 1930s.

William Porter, leader of the Beacon House of Prayer, takes a look at the Wesleyan Revival and some features of the move of the Holy Spirit in early Methodism.

Carolyn Lawrence, Vice-President of the Methodist Conference, reflects on what new thing God might be doing in the Methodist Church as she explores the concept of 'Growth' during her year of office.

Anne Middleton, former editor of MET Connexion, shares about her new role as Performing Arts Mission Enabler and how we can find God's plan and purpose for each one of us.

David Hull, Chair of MET, takes a look at the foundational work of the Methodist Revival Fellowship as he shares conversation with the Revd Keith Jarvis.

Roz Addington joins the team as our new Prayer Secretary and takes over the role of 'Praying Always'. We are delighted to have Roz on board with us.

We have featured some 'good news' stories that several of our members have shared over recent months. Please do send in any 'good news' stories that you might like to share in a future edition to [editor@methodistevangelicals.org.uk](mailto:editor@methodistevangelicals.org.uk)

I would like to take this opportunity to give thanks for the life of Chris Faull and of his tireless work in proofreading many editions of MET Connexion over recent years. His tribute appears on page 28.

We are delighted that the Revd Janet Knowles-Berry has been willing to take on the role as proofreader for this edition and future editions.

Our next edition will be available in early January 2021 and we will be exploring the theme of 'Hearing God' and discerning his voice in a confusing world.

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# FROM THE DEVELOPMENT WORKER

*The Revd  
Derek Balsdon*

The Covid-19 pandemic continues to affect our lives in so many different ways. Many people have lost precious family members and friends, many more have suffered the virus themselves, and an increasing number of people have lost their jobs. I am grateful for being able to continue in full time employment, and I appreciate your ongoing financial support which enables me to continue as the MET Development Worker. I also value your ongoing prayer support. On the day I wrote this, my daily Bible reading was Romans 8:28-38, about being more than conquerors, and of nothing being able to separate us from the love of God. Commenting on this scripture, the late Selwyn Hughes wrote, 'In reality Paul is saying "Nothing can break you, if you don't break with God." If we stick with God then nothing 'will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Jesus Christ our Lord' (Romans 8:38). As this pandemic continues, I find it so helpful and reassuring to remain in and rest in God's awesome love.

When I became the Development Worker two years ago, I never anticipated how much the seventh point of the

Job Description would come into play: 'Other duties as may, from time to time, reasonably be required!' The Covid-19 pandemic has meant that I have been reasonably required to fulfil various other duties. This has included setting up and running numerous meetings on Zoom, including our weekly Prayer Meetings and Bible Studies, along with sorting out online alternatives to the usual MET Receptions. For Cliff College Festival @ Home we produced 'Raising up a new generation of Wesleys,' featuring an interview with Nicky Gumbel, and conversations with Ben Juliano, Carolyn Lawrence and David Hull. For the Methodist Conference we hosted live 'An evening with the Vice-President and friends.' These inspirational videos have had 1200 and 600 viewings respectively, so a much bigger audience than our usual receptions! Our Remaining Faithful: Moving Forward conference also moved online, with around 150 participants. All this is part of developing the work of MET. We now have an open Facebook page in addition to the closed Facebook group and we also have a YouTube channel where several videos are now available (new videos will gradually be added).

In Acts 1:8, Jesus spoke about the Holy Spirit giving us power to witness locally, nationally and to the ends of the earth. Through these various online ways, God's Spirit is enabling us to witness locally, nationally and to the ends of the earth (we have had people in other countries joining some of our online events). As the 'new normal' materialises, within MET we will be seeking God's guidance regarding what previous ways we go back to, and in what fresh ways we are being called and empowered to work

and witness. Within our organisation, and within our churches, we need to be open to God working in fresh ways, practices of which we would never even have dreamt a year ago.

Over the past few months, I have certainly missed travelling to different parts of the Connexion, preaching, teaching and worshipping. I am very grateful for all the online opportunities though, while they are a good second-best, it is not the same as physically being with one another in Christian fellowship. I am willing to make provisional bookings for teaching days and preaching appointments, even if they have to be cancelled nearer the time (or moved online). Please get in touch to explore possible dates.

The Bible Month book for 2020 is Ruth, and during June I led two online weekly Bible studies using the MET group study book, 'Three funerals and a wedding: The message of Ruth today' by John M Haley and Russell G Herbert. For September and October, I will be leading an online / via phone Bible study on Monday evenings; please contact me if you would like to join in. We continue with the MET Prayer Meeting on Sundays at 7 pm, as we pray for our church, nation and world. With regular church gatherings not happening, these online meetings have provided a precious opportunity to share Christian fellowship together, and can be accessed online and from any phone. Please contact me for access details.

May God's Spirit guide and empower your worship, work and witness,  
**Derek**

## Raising up a new generation of Wesleys

An evening with the vice-president & friends.

EVANGELISM | CHURCH GROWTH | PRAYER | REVIVAL



Nathan Veall  
RISING GENERATION  
REPRESENTATIVE



David Hull  
CHAIR, METHODIST  
EVANGELICALS TOGETHER



Carolyn Lawrence  
VICE-PRESIDENT, THE  
METHODIST CHURCH



Nathan Veall  
STUDENT AT FLORIDA  
SOUTHERN COLLEGE

The video is available on our website and YouTube channel

## DEVELOPMENT WORKER FUTURE APPOINTMENTS



Please pray for Derek Balsdon, our Development Worker, as he ministers around the Connexion. Please consider how your church or circuit could be encouraged by his ministry.

### *October*

- 3 | MET Executive (online)
- 4 | Longton Central Hall, Stoke on Trent
- 10 | MET AGM (online)
- 17 | Digging for Treasure (online)
- 31 | Speak, Lord: Discerning God's voice in a confusing world (Online day conference)

### *January 2021*

29-31 | MET South West Conference, Torquay

### *February*

26-28 Equipping for Ministry, Knaresborough, North Yorkshire

**met**

Methodist  
Evangelicals  
Together

## SPEAK, LORD:

*Discerning God's voice in a  
confusing world*

A day of teaching and listening to God  
**Saturday 31 October 10am - 4.00pm**  
An Online Day Conference on Zoom

For further details - see enclosed flier or visit  
[methodistevangelicals.org.uk/Speak-Lord](http://methodistevangelicals.org.uk/Speak-Lord)  
or phone or email us



## “ Conversations about Sexuality ”

**Sexuality is probably one the most prevalent topics of conversation in our culture, and because our culture endorses values that are very different from Christian values, we must engage in the conversation.**

Let us help you with these conversations, whether with individuals, families or with your congregation.

We can provide testimony, resources, support and advice to you as a Church leader and/or to members of your congregation.

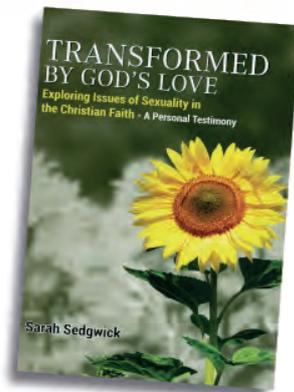
Support and speaking engagements are currently offered remotely via Zoom, and personal bookings will be available as you return to meeting together. All talks are tailor made to your specific congregational needs.

Contact us today for more information, or if you would like to discuss a specific need.



For anyone who wants to better understand the topic of sexuality and faith, the book

'Transformed by God's Love' is now available to purchase via our website or is available on **amazon**



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# CHARACTERISTICS OF REVIVAL

*Huw Priday*

**HUW PRIDAY, CO-DIRECTOR OF A FILM DOCUMENTARY, 'A DIARY OF REVIVAL', EXAMINES GOD'S CRITERIA FOR REVIVAL, FEATURING THE IMPACT OF THE 1904 WELSH REVIVAL**

For most Christians, the Holy Spirit being the third person of the Trinity is self-evident from scripture, beginning with the Spirit of God before creation 'moving upon the face of the waters' (Genesis 1:2). But what is the true role of the Holy Spirit? For some, he is simply an influence, some abstract source of power; but our Lord made it clear that his role was far more important. The Holy Spirit was to be our advocate with God. Our Lord's last words to his disciples in John 16 stated that after he left them, it would be the Holy Spirit who would lead, guide and inspire them. He clearly stated that, unless he went away, the Holy Spirit would not come. In Matthew 12:31 he referred to the fact that sin against

the Holy Spirit is unforgivable. In the Old Testament, the Holy Spirit was the inspiration for the prophets and other men of God. The church today needs to understand that the Holy Spirit is a vital and essential 'third person' of the Trinity, present with us and enabling us to do God's will. It was the Wesley brothers' encounter with the person of the Holy Spirit long after their call and ordination, which transformed their lives and led to the founding of the Methodist Church.

The great Welsh revival of 1904/05 in which Evan Roberts played a key role, saw a remarkable transformation of the small and seemingly insignificant nation of Wales. Christianity originally came to Wales soon after the crucifixion of Christ. This Celtic land has seen many spiritual revivals over the centuries. Despite this, the Great Welsh Revival of 1904 was unlike anything Wales had ever witnessed. The conditions that enabled God to move through those involved with this revival are crucial in understanding how true, authentic revival begins.



*Evan Roberts*

The main character in this epic event was a young, largely self-educated coal miner and blacksmith by the name of Evan Roberts. From the age of thirteen, Evan pursued a life of prayer and commitment to God's word that would eventually lead to a mighty outpouring of God's grace and love upon a nation of religious chapel-goers. Just one month before revival broke out, Evan



**Left:** A cartoon of Evan preaching on the open air in North Wales from John Elais pulpit. **Right:** Moriah Chapel where the young Evan Roberts grew up.



An illustration of an underground prayer meeting near Llanelli.



encountered the third person of the Trinity; the person of the Holy Spirit for the very first time. An encounter that became the catalyst for something much greater to come. It was this unique personal encounter with God, not as Saviour or as the Father, but with the empowering Advocate, whom Jesus had promised would enable his disciples. Prior to this, Evan's worship and devotion had been to God the Father through the saving grace of Jesus. This was an entirely new experience, one which transformed Evan's personal relationship with God, just as it had the Wesley brothers.

This is true of more recent revivals. For example, Dr Billy Graham and his musical Director Cliff Barrows came to Wales in 1946 to visit Moriah Chapel in Loughor, the scene of the outbreak in 1904, searching for the 'holy fire' of God which had fallen across many parts of Wales at that time. Upon arriving in London, they were taken to the Methodist Central Hall where the Revd Stephen Olford preached on the third person of the Trinity. The young Americans had never heard anyone preach about the Holy Spirit in those terms! After speaking with Stephen Olford, he agreed to meet them the following week in a hotel in Pontypridd, Wales, to pray for them. It was there that they encountered the third person of the Trinity in a convicting and transformational power, just as the Wesley brothers had.

Some 15 years ago, I met Mary Peckham in South Africa. Mary was converted in the great Hebridean Revival of 1949 under Duncan Campbell's ministry. Again, this revival was birthed out of the fervent and persistent prayers of those seeking the reality of God with a deep desire to be rightly related to him. I never tired of listening to Mary's testimony of how, in her rebellious youthful state, she was confronted by the living God of the Bible, on the Isle of Lewis in the midst of an incredible supernatural outpouring of his grace and love. She was asked many times what it had been like to experience revival. 'Was it like being in a great big party?' one Dutch reformed pastor asked her over lunch. 'Absolutely not!' she replied. Mary went on to explain how she remembered vividly the great conviction of sin and the awfulness of confronting it. The conviction came from the Holy Spirit who literally stopped Mary in her tracks as she walked home from a youth meeting that evening. She fell prostrate before God in deep repentance, crying out to her Saviour Jesus Christ for forgiveness. Then, and only then, did she know deep within her heart that she had received his forgiveness through the cleansing blood of Jesus and had been set free from her old life. At that point, joy and peace flooded her being in a way that changed her life forever.

Some months after returning to America in 1947, the very first Billy Graham Crusade took place. (I received this account first-hand from Dr Graham whilst visiting his home in North Carolina. It is substantiated in an article written by David Edward Pike, found at 'thenetcardiff.org.uk' website).

It was not until I had my own personal encounter with the third person of the Trinity that my Christian walk of 28 years was totally transformed. The Holy Spirit is the one who promises to lead us into ALL truth and when we encounter him it is a profound, life-changing experience.



Huw Priday visiting Dr Billy Graham

to the church in Galatia reminds us that we were crucified with Christ and our new life in Christ is now, by definition, a very different life and one that is empowered by the third person of the Trinity. The same transformation was experienced by the Wesley brothers and the young Americans.



*We cannot prepare ourselves for the ascent into God's presence. It must be a divine work of grace, initiated and executed by a holy, righteous and loving God but sought prayerfully and earnestly by those seeking it.*



So there seems to be a common denominator at work in what we so often refer to as revival. We must fulfil certain criteria in order for the conditions to be possible or conducive for God to work. Revival is God's initiative not our own. Who can ascend unto the mountain of the Lord? Those with clean hands and a pure heart (Psalm 24:3). We cannot prepare ourselves for the ascent into God's presence. It must be a divine work of grace, initiated and executed by a holy, righteous and loving God but sought prayerfully and earnestly by those seeking it. One of the prerequisites of revival is that it requires a heart of repentance in those seeking it. We must come before a holy God, acknowledging our sinfulness (our human propensity for sin), our utter weakness and inability to change our sinful state and our total dependency on Jesus' finished and complete work of atonement. This requires our humility. Jesus is our example. He humbled himself and became obedient; not just obedient, but obedient unto death. If we are to witness a divine work of grace that leads to true authentic revival, it must begin in our hearts. We too must individually and corporately be willing to

'die' to our old way of life and embrace the new and glorious life Jesus offers. For this to happen we need the help of the Holy Spirit.

The Welsh Revival of 1904 transformed not only the nation of Wales, but spread to many other nations including Los Angeles, North America; the Khasi Hills in Meghalaya region of India; Scandinavia; Africa; Latin America; Europe; the city of St Petersburg in Russia and Pyongyang in what is now North Korea. But it all began in Wales with a young man who hungered after God with full determination, faith and obedience.

God used another young Welshman by the name of Robert Jermain Thomas as a catalyst for the spiritual transformation that was to ignite in the great Pyongyang revival of 1906 in Korea. In 1866 God called 27 year old Thomas to take the gospel to Korea. His journey ended in his martyrdom on the beachhead at Pyongyang before he was ever able seemingly to fulfil God's call on his life. Thomas' martyrdom was a powerful illustration of the seed that Jesus talked of in John 12:24 which fell to the ground and died in order to bear much fruit. His martyrdom proved to be the catalyst for the Pyongyang Revival in 1906 which in turn led to the phenomenal spiritual growth across the nation of Korea. Today, there are over 12 million Christians in South Korea alone. Thomas' journey of faith and surrender to God led to his physical death, but for most Christians the Lord requires of us a 'dying to self', a laying down of our will in preference and obedience to his. South Korea continues to be the second largest mission-sending country in the world to this day. Despite the Korean War in 1950 dividing North and South Korea, the Holy Spirit continues to work in and through the hearts of yielded, surrendered followers of Jesus, bringing his light into the darkness of that despot regime. There are countless testimonies of Christians having been used of God in Korea, north and south. The Kingdom of God is advancing in the midst of a brutal, evil regime through his people who carry his presence within them (Luke 17:21).

The church today is in desperate need of renewal and many people are looking for answers in the wrong places. What can we deduce from these well documented accounts of revivals over

the last 150 years? Two things come to mind: firstly, we must take care to come aside with God in our prayer closets and there examine our own personal relationship with him under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. We must be willing to make our lives wholly available to him. Secondly, and most importantly we must seek the heart of God in true humility and surrender to his purposes for us, rather than asking him to 'bless' our own individual vision of what we want to do for God. We are called human beings and not human doings! The Lord Jesus said to Peter in Matthew 16:18 that he (alone) would build his church and the gates of hell would not prevail against it. For genuine revival to happen, it must be a God given conviction that captivates our hearts and leads us into his truth. Are we worshiping the God of Scripture or the god of our imagination? One to ponder!

*The Revd Huw Priday is a classically trained musician and tenor singer. Huw has sung the Welsh revival hymn: 'Here is love vast as the ocean' on TV broadcasts celebrating the centenary of the Welsh revival. His film documentary, 'A Diary of Revival', tells the story of Evan Roberts and the events surrounding the Great Welsh Revival of 1904. Huw was ordained in 2016 and ministers to classical singers and musicians around the world.*



A recording of Huw Priday singing 'Here is Love Vast as the Ocean' at the Cardiff International Arena to mark the centenary of the 1904 Welsh Revival can be viewed at [methodistevangelicals.org.uk/love-song](http://methodistevangelicals.org.uk/love-song)

See over for the love song of the Welsh Revival.

# 'THE LOVE SONG OF THE WELSH REVIVAL'

*Here is Love vast as the Ocean*

Written by Welshman William Rees and translated into English by William Edwards

Here is love, vast as the ocean,  
Loving-kindness as the flood,  
When the Prince of Life, our Ransom,  
Shed for us His precious blood.  
Who His love will not remember?  
Who can cease to sing His praise?  
He can never be forgotten,  
Throughout heav'n's eternal days.

On the mount of crucifixion,  
Fountains opened deep and wide;  
Through the floodgates of God's mercy  
Flowed a vast and gracious tide.  
Grace and love, like mighty rivers,  
Poured incessant from above,  
And heav'n's peace and perfect justice  
Kissed a guilty world in love.

Let me, all Thy love accepting,  
Love Thee, ever all my days;  
Let me seek Thy kingdom only,  
And my life be to Thy praise;  
Thou alone shalt be my glory,  
Nothing in the world I see;  
Thou hast cleansed and sanctified me,  
Thou Thyself hast set me free.

In Thy truth Thou dost direct me  
By Thy Spirit through Thy Word;  
And Thy grace my need is meeting,  
As I trust in Thee, my Lord.  
Of Thy fullness Thou art pouring  
Thy great love and pow'r on me,  
Without measure, full and boundless,  
Drawing out my heart to Thee.

# THE BEST OF ALL IS, GOD IS WITH US

*Carolyn Lawrence*

*VICE PRESIDENT OF THE METHODIST CONFERENCE, CAROLYN LAWRENCE, SHARES SOMETHING OF THE PRESIDENTIAL THEME AND CONSIDERS THE RELEVANCE OF THE LIVERPOOL RESOLUTIONS OF 1820.*

The Methodist Conference of 2020 will go down in history! It was the first, and hopefully last, conference to be held virtually. A handful of us gathered at Cliff College, carefully socially distancing in a studio to lead the Conference, aided by an awesome team of technical staff, and the rest of the members of conference joined the sessions via Zoom. It will also be remembered by me personally, as it was the Conference at which I was elected and inducted as the Vice President of Conference for 2020-2021. What was supposed to be a celebration with a gathering of friends and family, actually became a quiet, virtual event and, instead of speaking to a large congregation, I had to deliver my speech to a lone camera man in the chapel at Cliff!

The theme that Richard Teal, the President of Conference, and I myself chose for our year of office is from some of Wesley's last words: 'The best of all is, God is with us'. Never were those words more encouraging than whilst we were engaging in this surreal experience at Conference. Knowing God was with us when so many couldn't be physically

present, brought a ray of light and hope to the proceedings.



*Carolyn's induction in a socially distanced studio.*



*Grandchildren watching induction online.*

During our year of office we want to look at growth; both personal growth in discipleship and also church growth. Owing to Covid-19, some things that were planned will now necessarily need to be very different. The theme, however,

is still timely and quite prophetic as we learn how to be church in a different way and seek to encourage people in all their fears and uncertainties as they continue to build resilience in their walk with Jesus.

The verses that I believe God gave to me for this year are Isaiah 43:18-19:

'Forget the former things; do not dwell on the past. See, I am doing a new thing! Now it springs up; do you not perceive it? I am making a way in the wilderness and streams in the wasteland.'



*Little did I realise just how prophetic those words would turn out to be as we all seek to do new things and find new ways of being the church of Jesus Christ in our communities!*



My daughter Jo, painted an image to reflect these verses, showing the streams of water refreshing not just the physical creation but also symbolising a person reaching out to receive the



refreshing of the Holy Spirit for those dry and desolate situations we all face.

My friend Anne Middleton also created a reflective video based on these words which was used as part of the service for Reception into Full Connexion for our ordinands at Conference. Anne shares this on pages 12-13.

I had the privilege of visiting Brazil before the lockdown where the church is growing at an amazing rate. The church there has grown from 167,000 members in 2010 to a current membership of 275,000 and growing. Over the coming year, I hope to share some of the key principles of growth that I learned from the Methodist Church in Brazil and to encourage churches here that growth is possible and that God still has a good plan for the Methodist Church in Britain.

### LIVERPOOL RESOLUTIONS

Part of the reason for this theme of growth, is inspired by the fact that 2020 marks the 200th anniversary of the resolutions made by the Methodist Conference in Liverpool in 1820. The Conference that year was facing the unprecedented situation that Methodist membership was in sharp decline.

What was to be done? Enshrined in the minutes of that conference was a set of resolutions which were seen as being vital for the health and holiness of the church. They give us a wonderful example of how a declining church can turn around and begin to grow, enabled by the power of the Holy Spirit. The members of that Conference were determined to reverse the trend and it is said that other business was subjugated to the concern of charting a more fruitful course.

The full resolutions can be found in the Constitutional Practice and Discipline

of the Methodist Church or on the Methodist Church website. I have seen many of these resolutions reflected in the strategy of the Brazilian Methodist Church. Some of them are also reflected in the 'God for All' and 'Methodist Way of Life' projects that have been launched in the Methodist Church this year. I pray that we as individuals, local churches and as a Connexion can once again learn from these resolutions and their impact.

The resolutions can be grouped into seven main headings:

#### 1. RENEWING THE PREACHERS

The preachers resolved to devote themselves afresh to God and to focus on their personal growth and discipleship as they sought to care for the flocks entrusted to them. They vowed to eliminate any distraction from the work of saving souls and spiritually shepherding God's people. They prayed for spiritual gifts that would allow them to minister more effectively and recommitted themselves to the study of God's Word. The solution to decline, they believed, would begin in the hearts of the leaders.

#### 2. RENEWING THE PREACHING

The preachers committed to renewing their preaching. The content of their preaching was refocused on the vital doctrines of the Christian faith and the method would be evangelistic, experiential (practical), and zealous.

They would strive for clarity and simplicity while applying the doctrines of faith to people's lives. When visitors were present, they would pointedly and passionately offer an invitation to receive Christ. This is a practice I witnessed in Brazil, where it is a regular invitation to offer an altar call to encourage people to respond to the preaching of God's Word. Many engage with this call to respond each week.

The practice of Field Preaching was reclaimed. Wesley had started out in the highways and the hedges and called his preachers to proclaim the gospel outdoors twice a day wherever a crowd of twenty or more people could be gathered. Wesley had called those who wanted to keep the meetings indoors 'lazy Methodists'! Today, we might have to socially distance for a while, but maybe outdoor preaching is the way to go!



# THE BEST OF ALL IS GOD IS WITH US

#### 3. PRAYER AND FASTING

A special day of prayer and fasting was called across British Methodism for a reversal of the decline and the renewal of the movement. The preachers recommitted to leading quarterly days of prayer and fasting, prayer meetings and 'watch nights' (all night prayer events). This commitment to prayer is another feature of the church in Brazil.

#### 4. CHURCH PLANTING

Extension of the work was to be the job of every preacher as they began



# BEST OF ALL IS, GOD IS WITH US.

## 5. RECOMMITMENT TO CHILDREN AND YOUTH

Wesley had insisted that each preacher be personally involved in the ministry of teaching children. In light of the decline recorded in 1820, the Liverpool Conference commissioned a new catechism to be used with young people. The training of the rising generation would no longer be neglected.

## 6. CULTIVATE THE EXISTING MEMBERSHIP SPIRITUALLY

The preachers recommitted to visiting the sick, the 'careless', and the lukewarm. Class leaders were to recommit to visiting the members in their care weekly and to enquire personally about their spiritual wellbeing. During pastoral visits, families were encouraged to practice private spiritual disciplines. The public spiritual disciplines of worship, Sabbath-keeping and Holy Communion were to be likewise publicly encouraged.

## 7. RENEWAL OF TEACHING

They pledged to avoid small-minded arguments over theological minutiae. There was a 'spirit of strife and debate' that had crept in and the 1820 conference was committed to driving this out.

There was a renewed effort to make meetings 'interesting and appropriate to... the state of the people'. The need was recognized for high-quality, relevant and practical instruction that could be applied to everyday life.

## WHAT WAS THE RESULT?

The first-ever Methodist turnaround strategy was a great success. The movement tripled in numbers over the next eighty years and proved it could continue without the direct leadership of Wesley. Of course, decline eventually did come to the British Methodists and has sadly continued until the present day.

John Wesley claimed not to fear the eventual disappearance of the Methodists. He famously said:

*'I am not afraid that the people called Methodists should ever cease to exist either in Europe or America. But I am afraid, lest they should only exist as a dead sect, having the form of religion without the power.'*

I hope that during my year of office I will have the opportunity to encourage

people in their discipleship, especially post Covid-19, as we navigate these uncharted waters. I also hope to challenge some of the things that have hindered spiritual growth and maturity individually and as churches.

It is my hope that we can learn from these important resolutions of 1820 as well as the principles for growth witnessed in Methodist churches in Brazil and other nations, so that we can once again become a light in this land bringing people into a living relationship with Jesus and nurturing them to become disciple making disciples.

I continue to be deeply humbled and thankful for all those who have promised to pray during this year for myself and Mark, as well as for Richard and his wife Sue. I implore those of you who have the gift of intercession, to stand with us in prayer over the coming months, especially as we navigate our way through new ways of conducting the presidency and new ways of being church for the glory of Jesus and the extension of his kingdom here on earth.

He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit is saying! (Revelation 3:22)

*Carolyn Lawrence has a background in Primary teaching and has served as a mission partner in South America. She has also worked in the Global Relationships team of the Methodist Church. She now works voluntarily in the church both locally in Devon alongside her husband who is a Methodist Presbyterian and nationally within the Methodist Connexion. She has two married daughters, three grandchildren and two cats!*



ministries in new places and classes were to be started in neighbourhoods as a strategy for involving lay leaders and reaching new people. Prayer meetings, likewise, were to be held in homes as a way of developing new societies and leaders.

In Brazil, I witnessed the cell church model effectively enabling and growing leaders as well as in planting and growing new churches. I would love to see this model once again used within British Methodism.



# SEE, I AM DOING A NEW THING!

*Anne Middleton*

**ANNE MIDDLETON,  
PERFORMING ARTS  
MISSION ENABLER FOR THE  
PLYMOUTH AND DEVONPORT  
METHODIST CIRCUIT, IS  
TRYING TO BE PRESENT AND  
RESPOND CREATIVELY TO A  
NEW SEASON.**

When I stopped my role as MET Connexion Editor in January 2019, I was preparing for a period of change and knew that I had to make myself available for something new. In my farewell note, I wrote about being in a time of limbo - waiting to find out where my minister husband, Darren, would be stationed and what God had in store for me. It was a long season of waiting - though I remember making a decision that I would make the most of every opportunity during that time.

I had to remain available, but needed some income, hence I signed on with an agency to do some work as a Supporting Artist. It wasn't easy with child care, but I had some wonderful opportunities, including the delight of being able to take part - in a small way - in the CBBC series of Malory Towers! As I write, I am in a new liminal season. I wrote in my final edition about walking in the dark - not knowing what was around the corner - but trusting in God and hoping that he had something wonderful in store for me.

On 2 January - a year after my final edition of MET Connexion was released - I started a new role as Performing Arts Mission Enabler (PAME) in the circuit where my husband is posted, the Plymouth and Devonport Methodist Circuit. This is a new role for the circuit and the perfect role for me. I created a

logo (with the help of Daniel Watson, MET Connexion Designer) - a spotlight on the cross - which sums up how I see my role. I am passionate about the power of theatre and the arts to touch the soul and transform lives.

Then, only three months in, everything stopped! I had a lot of writing to get on with and new material to prepare, but I realised that I needed to be doing something now - not just preparing for the future. I had to be fully present, responding to the 'new' present and find a new way of working and being. My husband took to 'virtual church' like a duck to water. Don't get me wrong, he has spent hours preparing videos of his services, but he is really good at it. He suggested that I do my Easter story: 'Piggy and Woof Follow the Clues' as a video and said he would help me. I am the least technical person in the world - and it was quite stressful - but I could see the potential and have since made more story videos.

Early on in lockdown, I felt inspired to write a poem. Carolyn Lawrence, Vice-President Designate at the time, had asked me to write something on her theme of 'growth' to perform during the worship at the Methodist Conference. When we realised the Conference probably wouldn't be able to go ahead as planned, I decided to write something anyway. After a conversation with Carolyn and inspiration from Isaiah 43 and the current Covid-19 situation, I wrote 'Do you not perceive it?' This is when I truly discovered my passion for writing poetry! I found that I could express myself so much better through poetry. It was a truly reflective time; I realised that I wasn't really in a pit or hemmed in - it was more of a cocoon! I understood more than ever how important it is to live in the moment.

“

*I realised that I wasn't really  
in a pit or hemmed in - it was  
more of a cocoon!*

”

I noticed spring arrive more than ever this year. God speaks to me through nature. I started asking God what he was trying to show me and ask of me during that time. I had a real sense of letting go and 'letting God' and of 'being'.

I decided to make a video of my poem, to be available for the possible virtual Conference. I commissioned Simeon Wood - a fabulous Christian flautist to write a piece of music to go with my poem. Then I had discussions with another creative friend, Angela Smith, who filmed herself painting. I filmed myself simply responding to the poem, which, although I'd written it, spoke so powerfully to me! I feel that God has had his hand on the whole process and has inspired me to step out of my comfort zone and to do a new thing.

So, I just want to finish by encouraging you to live each moment in the moment, and to join in with what God is doing. God has a purpose for each and every one of us. When we can get to the stage that we don't mind what 'season' we're in - whether we feel useful or useless, because we're just being the person that God has created us to be - we will then be at our most fulfilled, fertile and fruitful. I also just want to say: it's OK to grieve what we've lost. I don't just mean loved ones; life is painful. 'Becoming' takes a bit of letting go and that's not easy.



*Do you not perceive it?*

Do you not perceive it?  
 In parched earth  
 Hard and cracked  
 Deserted, abandoned  
 Buried, forgotten  
 Deep down in the pit  
 Something is stirring

Locked in - hidden from sight  
 Treasure in dark places  
 Dig down - don't you feel  
 That pulse from deep within  
 Ascending from the darkness  
 Reaching for the light?  
 Do you not perceive it?

Stop! Don't touch!  
 Isolate, protect, forget  
 The wound, deep inside  
 Hide, from the light  
 Disconnect, lock-down  
 In your shallow tomb  
 Shut-up - air-tight

Do you not perceive it  
 In the air we breathe?  
 Restricted, stifled - gagged  
 Suffocating - air grasping  
 Greedily snatching hold  
 Of life as we know it - can't let go  
 Of breath withheld...

Do you not perceive it?  
 Something growing within  
 Small and tender  
 Vulnerable, soft  
 Deep inside, safe from the unknown  
 Not a tomb - a cocoon!  
 Did Jesus fear the loss of Mary's womb?

The word grew like a tender shoot  
 Like a root out of dry ground  
 A vessel of healing and hope  
 The water of life  
 Showering us with... love

Calling to all who are thirsty  
 Drink - and never thirst again!

Do you not perceive it?  
 Pouring life into hard places  
 Seeping, soaking, softening  
 New life sprouting forth  
 Like springs in the desert  
 And streams in the wasteland  
 See? I am doing a new thing!

In fertile soil of vulnerability  
 Raw and tender wounds  
 Grow seeds of hope into  
 Oaks of righteousness  
 Standing firm, providing shelter  
 Roots deep and nourished  
 By springs of living water

Reaching out - reconnecting  
 With greater intimacy  
 Between I and Thou  
 Finding our inner voice  
 The cacophony of chaos  
 Tunes into a cosmic chorus  
 Echoing throughout creation

As our faces tentatively test the light  
 May we fill our lungs with  
 The ruach - the breath of Life  
 That flows through the universe  
 Fully connected, present and  
 participating  
 In the symphony of creation  
 Proclaiming the Father's glory!

See, I am doing a new thing!  
 Do you not perceive it?

*Do you not perceive it? © Anne Middleton.  
 Written during the period of lockdown owing  
 to Covid-19; inspired by the situation and  
 the verses from Isaiah 43:18-19, which are  
 part of the prayer card for the President and  
 Vice-President of the Methodist Conference  
 2020-21.*



Anne Middleton invites you  
 to join the Performing Arts  
 Mission (PAM) Facebook  
 community. To see the  
 video of her poem and  
 other resources, visit and like her page:  
[www.facebook.com/performingartsmission](http://www.facebook.com/performingartsmission)



# THE EAST AFRICAN REVIVAL: LESSONS FOR THE CHURCH TODAY

*John M.M. Senyonyi*

**CANON DR JOHN M.M. SENYONYI SHARES ABOUT THE IMPACT OF THE EAST AFRICAN REVIVAL AND WHAT VALUABLE INSIGHTS THE CHURCH CAN LEARN FROM IT.**

*'To be broken is the beginning of revival ... It is being 'Not I, but Christ' and a 'C' is a bent 'I'... it is dying to self and self-attitudes.' Roy Hession.*

*'When self is on the throne, it is conspicuously out of place ... Revival begins by putting a line through the 'I' which is at the centre, and turning it into a cross.' Festo Kivengere.*

*'If we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another ...' 1 John 1:7.*

The East African Revival is unmatched in modern times for its impact and endurance over decades in the 20th Century. It imparted peculiar beliefs and practices to its adherents evoking godly fervour in them. Today's church has much to learn from this revival.

It is noteworthy that the revivalists (more commonly called Balokole) did not see revival as an event, but as a daily experience of the work of the Holy Spirit. They generally guarded against a legalistic approach to what they believed and practiced, as this is a ubiquitous danger in the Church.

The centrality of Jesus was probably the most prominent theme among Balokole. As a prominent revival preacher, William Nagenda, put it, the focus of 'revival' preaching was 'Jesus', not 'revival'. Revival theology was simple: sin alienates from God, from fellow man/woman and even from oneself, as evidenced by the willing engagement in self-destructive evil acts. The Son of God appeared as the divine answer to the problem of sin.

Jesus was preached as the crucified one; for the Saviour Jesus and the cross are synonymous. 'There is life for a look at the Crucified One - Look! Look! Look and Live' they proclaimed. Revival preaching was centered on the cross of Jesus Christ, soliciting repentance and faith. So, if our preaching digresses from proclamation of the crucified Jesus, we are not preaching the gospel at all. In him we find our satisfaction and to him we point everyone who seeks salvation.

Secondly, the East African Revival expressed an unwavering aversion for sin, for the first work of the Holy Spirit in a sinner is to create hatred for sin and terror of its consequences. It was not uncommon for believers to confess openly and with regret their sins, of course without intentional exaggerations. Yet when a believer openly confessed his or her sin, brethren paid less attention to the sin confessed than to the work of forgiveness wrought by Christ. They showed this by bursting out in the

renowned Luganda revival song of praise, Tukutendereza Yesu ('We praise you Jesus ...').

Believers frequently held weekend conventions in various places, at which the first subject of exposition was sin. The word for sin in Luganda is ekibi, which can be transliterated loosely as 'bad'. It was used to mean the totality of all that is bad and detestable. So at the Kako convention of 1938, Simeoni Nsibambi, a leader in the revival, aptly summarized revival abhorrence for sin with his strong insistent voice 'Ekibi kibi nnyo!', which forcefully translates as 'Sin is exceedingly bad'.

The contemporary church has often caved in to secular 'politeness' about sin, which labels any mention of sin from the pulpit judgmental. In popular Christian sermonizing, it is more fashionable to reinterpret salvation in social or economic terms. Yet unless the church detests sin, there is nothing to be saved from.

The result of this aversion to sin was 'moral transformation'. The revival Christocentricity, coupled with hatred for sin, resulted in moral transformation. Indeed, this was the most remarkable manifestation of conversion among the revivalists. It was incomprehensible that one should profess the name of Jesus without any visible change from a sinful lifestyle.

Moreover, revival was the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, the work of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit 'wakens, ... revives, ...



*The East African Revival is unmatched in modern times for its impact and endurance over decades in the 20th Century*



gives the burning heart, and he lights up the faces of men and women to be truly Christ-like'. Balokole were fired by the Holy Spirit for Jesus. So, in Rwanda, those who were revived were at first given the name Abaka; literally 'those aflame'.

The Holy Spirit's initial work involves conviction of sin but only so that we may run for refuge to the Saviour, for he shows only Jesus. He turns our hearts in obedience to the Christ. At conventions, the Balokole urged people to 'ask the Holy Spirit to show you only Jesus ... calling you to come and drink', for the work of the Holy Spirit is to glorify Jesus.

Another remarkable feature of the revival was their fellowship or, to put it differently, the unity of the Holy Spirit among them. Salvation meant friendship superseding racial, tribal, denominational or other differences that ordinarily divided their contemporaries. White missionaries gladly shared their life with Africans; men respected women as fellow heirs of the kingdom of God.

It was the Balokole who introduced weekly, monthly and tri-monthly 'fellowship meetings' in addition to their conventions. To date, they continue these meetings regularly. The format of their weekly meeting is: general prayer, sharing of personal testimony and the reading and exposition of God's word. This is followed by responses to the word to draw out practical messages before ending with prayer relating to the message. Thereafter, they stay around briefly greeting each other before departing for their homes. As a result, the brethren grow to know each other more, better than the superficial knowledge that characterizes today's church.

Any discussion of the East African Revival is woefully wanting if it does not mention the exalted position of the Bible among the Balokole. There is no book of

greater worth or with a truer message to a Mulokole (singular for Balokole) than the Bible. It is the most prized possession they have, and they read it. They carry it to church and to fellowship meetings. Not even poverty denies a Mulokole the treasure of owning and reading the Bible.

There are several theological debates on the Bible, particularly in the western church, that would make no sense to Balokole. When they read the Bible, they hear the Word of God and receive it as the truth. So convinced are they of the divine voice in the scriptures, that even unbelievers are counted to be under its authority, for the Bible tells of the Saviour of all mankind.

No Balokole fellowship meeting is complete without a reading from the Bible. They open it as they listen to the speaker opening their minds to the understanding of God's Word. They want more than finding the Bible at church; for that reason, their own Bible is often worn out, as a result of frequent reading. As the dictum goes, 'a Bible that is worn out usually belongs to someone who isn't'.

Repentance, brokenness, walking in light and 'putting things right' are common topics in revival meetings. They gained particular prominence and added a unique flavour to the common life of believers.

The Balokole never understood themselves as being sinless. Otherwise they would have done away with their strong teaching on repentance even among the Balokole. Their aversion to sin earlier alluded to was counterbalanced by the strong teaching of repentance. I will not belabour the definition of repentance understood as a turning 'from idols to serve a living and true God ...' (1 Thessalonians 1:9). In the East African Revival, repentance is a moral act. Repentance before God is followed by an actual turning from dead works and by 'putting things right' ('okulongoosa' in Luganda) with fellow men and women.

'Putting things right' was the common term for restitution, although it was more than material infractions. It could be a theft, or an inappropriate exchange of personal items in an unmarried relationship, or even injurious speech of any sort. Respectability cannot work the righteousness of God. It was argued

that as long as stolen goods still lie on our shelves, the believer's soul was plagued with guilt. A break with past evil influences necessitates some 'clean-up' work for the new Christian to have 'a clear conscience toward God and toward man' (Acts 24:16). Therefore, the principle of putting things right was generally applied in relationships.

Often the church is scandalized by bad relationships among believers as a result of Christians failing to make amends with each other. The revival brethren thus exemplified the secret of harmonious relationships among Christians.

Lastly was the teaching of 'walking in the light' in revival language (Luganda, 'okutambulira mu musana'). Walking in the light refers to transparency with each other. The Balokole discovered that real fellowship with each other is impossible while Christians wear masks before one another.

In conclusion, while they did not generally require these foundational stones of their fellowship legalistically, it is beyond dispute that fellowship with the Balokole would be at best superficial for any who ventured to live otherwise. The very high moral standards did not deter, but indeed attracted unbelievers to this faith. The Balokole too were relentless in calling unbelievers to the Lord with the full implications of that decision. The church today has much to gain from emulating God's work through the East African Revival.

*The Revd Canon Dr John M.M. Senyonyi is former Vice-Chancellor of Uganda Christian University, having retired in August 2020 after 10 years of service in the role. He retires in the midst of Covid-19 related government orders of education shutdowns.*





# GOOD NEWS STORIES

## INTRODUCING ROZ ADDINGTON, A NEW MEMBER OF THE MET TEAM!



*ROZ TAKES UP THE MANTLE OF PRAYER SECRETARY FOR MET AND SHARES SOMETHING OF HER JOURNEY SO FAR.*

I trained as a teacher, but my life changed quite dramatically when God called me to go to Cliff College (1989-1990). It was while I was there that I became aware of the importance of prayer. I became more acutely aware of this whilst serving on the Rob Frost Seed Team programme for two years and subsequently in Poland for 7 years. It was through Rob Frost that I went to Poland, to work with the Methodist Church as a missionary and a teacher of English as a foreign language in the Methodist English Language College.

On returning from Poland, I became youth and children's worker in the Skipton and Grassington Circuit for one year before getting married to Brian in 2001 and moving to Bedford. I'm not in paid employment, but I am very involved with the church at Cardington and within the circuit. I have been a circuit steward; I am involved with plan making, Methodist Women in Britain, running a coffee morning and a craft club where I sometimes lead workshops. I continue preaching, which I have now been doing for 28 years and, up until September, I was running a children's club. In my spare time I make greetings cards and do other craft work.

Prayer excites me and I am totally passionate about it. The post of being MET's Prayer Secretary both thrills and terrifies me, but I feel honoured to be asked. I realise it is a huge responsibility, but experience has taught me that where God calls, he also equips, so I know he will guide and lead me.

## WALK, PRAY, TALK *The Evangelical Alliance Alliance*

Be inspired to connect with God and your friends as together you step out in prayer for your community.

Walk, Pray, Talk is a five-part resource produced by the Evangelical Alliance that will help you to explore the connection between the place you inhabit in the everyday, your Christian faith and your God-given purpose as you follow Jesus into his world.

Through each of the five sessions you will explore prayer through themes of being people of God, present to God and people, participation, and caring for a place.

We really want to encourage you to get out and about praying for your local community. We believe you will thrive as God's people, together, in your places, in a new way.

For more information, visit [eauk.org](http://eauk.org)



## A VIRTUAL RECEPTION INTO FULL CONNEXION



*The Revd Phil Dixon*

It was probably sometime during May when it was becoming clear that the 'Reception into Full Methodist

Connexion' and ordination, that we probationary ministers had worked so hard for, and looked forward to, was not going to happen. For all of us it was a great feeling of disappointment and loss. However, in the context of the unprecedented situation the loss of life and everyone's plans being turned upside down, it was completely understandable.

For me personally, to be received into Full Connexion online from my own home did not diminish the significance of the event.

It was an amazing privilege, and an emotional occasion that I will never forget: to have my fellow ministers, along with the laity of the church that had supported me during my candidature and who had assisted me in my discernment of God's calling, find me fully acceptable and worthy to be received as a Presbyterian into the Methodist Church. Of course, it was not just a personal event, as each candidate appeared on screen and gave their affirmation. Even though we were physically distanced, we were all joined together in a completely unique way that only the Holy Spirit can achieve.

Furthermore, the Presidential theme for this year, 'The best of all is, God is with us', applied directly to the Reception into Full Connexion on the evening of Saturday 27 June. God was with each one of us, spread throughout the country in our own homes, watching or taking part.

Our ordinations are planned to take place physically on 18 April 2021 at Methodist Central Hall, Westminster. So we have another hugely significant event to look forward to. That is two, very good news stories, instead of one!



## PRECIOUS FINDS DURING LOCKDOWN

*Sarah Sim*

During lockdown, I have started clearing out my late father's study. Dad died almost five years ago. I have found some very precious things including the Bible that was presented to my dad in April 1949 when he was recognised as a fully accredited Local Preacher. Later the same year, my father went to Cliff College and then went on to train as a Methodist Minister. I know that my dad loved his time at 'Cliff'. In the front of my dad's Bible is the text 'Do the work of an evangelist'. My dad was certainly faithful to his calling, as many people could testify.

I was doubly blessed when I realised that I was accredited as a Local Preacher exactly 70 years after my dad was! I pray that I may be as faithful to the Lord as he was.

Also ... if it had not been for lockdown, I may not have discovered and joined the MET prayer meeting that meets on Zoom on a Sunday evening.

## THE GLORY OF THE GOSPEL

*The Revd Janet M. Knowles-Berry*



'Lockdown!' - 'Masking!' - 'The R Number!' are words and phrases which have become familiar 'new norms' by which we live.

Yet, whilst 'lockdown' is not a new word, to the majority of able-bodied citizens worldwide, it has not previously meant personal confinement.

Then, we have the word 'masking' which has brought into vogue a new way to describe mask wearing.

Lastly, 'The R Number' which keeps an eye on the varying levels of infection.

I welcome these safeguards, they are essential to overcoming the Covid-19 pandemic even though, in exchange for our health, they ransom our freedom.

However, amidst it all, I have been grateful to join MET's 'lockdown' Zoom meetings, led by the Revd's David Hull and Derek Balsdon. Here, like-minded Christian folk, being thankful that God is steadfast, join together in prayerful fellowship and rejoice in the gospel of Jesus.

For, even though we are living with 'lockdown', 'masking' and 'The R Number', the gospel of Jesus tells us of a freedom that is not 'locked down', is not 'masked', but is a living revelation which is not 'varying', but an eternal surety. For, through his death and resurrection, our Lord Jesus paid the price of our spiritual ransom with his own saving 'R' number of 'R' for redemption; graciously freeing us from the lockdown of sin and saving us unto eternal salvation.

## LICC RESOURCES

*The Revd Phil Clarke*

London Institute for Contemporary Christianity (LICC) continue to expand their offer of resources for mission with their Gateway Seven Series of Bible studies now covering Exodus, Ruth, Proverbs, Ezekiel, Mark, 1 Peter and Revelation. These combine evangelical scholarship, effective application and attractive presentation and are part of a growing tool kit for engagement with contemporary society both in terms of broad societal issues and personal faith.

LICC sprang out of the vision of John Stott decades ago for deep discipleship and relevant witness. Under Mark Greene and an expanding panoply of younger scholars and leaders, it confronts issues of contemporary culture in an accessible style. Printed materials are backed up by a range of on line resources and conferences from which many Methodist churches, circuits, districts and their leaders benefit.



# 'SEE HOW GREAT A FLAME ASPIRES, KINDLED BY A SPARK OF GRACE'

## *DAVID HULL, IN CONVERSATION WITH KEITH JARVIS, REFLECTS ON THE ORIGINS OF THE METHODIST REVIVAL FELLOWSHIP, ITS LINKS WITH THE EAST AFRICAN REVIVAL, AND THE MESSAGE WHICH COMES DOWN THE YEARS TO US TODAY.*

My conversations with Keith Jarvis about revival, one of the subjects closest to his heart, began five years ago at MET's Revival Prayer Conference, at which I was one of the speakers. On the Saturday afternoon, I was asked to share some reflections on the East African revival. As regular readers of MET Connexion will by now be well aware, my wife, Sarah, was born into a family steeped in revival. Her grandfather and great uncle, Drs Bill and Joe Church, were central figures in the East African Revival. Since marrying her, I had read some of the accounts of the revival and so, when asked to share some reflections at the conference, I was able to say that what had struck me most was the sense that the revival wasn't initially a triumphant experience. Rather, it began as Joe Church came to the end of himself and sat under a thorn tree, having reached a point of desperation and about to give up on his missionary efforts in failure. It was then, as he prayed, that revival came. Historians of the revival have identified that desperate prayer under that tree as the beginning of the great revival.

The MET Revival Prayer Conferences, now known as REVIVE, are a legacy of one of MET's predecessor organisations, the Methodist Revival Fellowship. As that afternoon session ended, an early member of the Methodist Revival Fellowship, Keith Jarvis, caught me for a conversation, which I have never forgotten. He explained to me that he had known Joe Church and that I had observed what Joe Church himself had identified as one of the characteristics of the revival. 'People in Britain misunderstand what revival is,' Joe told him; 'They think it is the top blowing off, but it is the bottom falling out.'

Keith told me that he had known Joe Church many years ago, even visiting his Cambridgeshire home. Given I was serving as Chair of MET and had recently married into the Church family, I was amazed when Keith told me that he believed the birth of the Methodist Revival Fellowship was directly related to the East African Revival. Over the past five years, I have wanted to continue that conversation with Keith, and this present edition of MET Connexion, focusing on Revival, has given me the perfect opportunity.

It was in 1958, when he first went to the Southport Holiness Convention and heard John H J Barker speaking, that Keith's interest in revival and a deeper spiritual life began to grow. It was both a challenging and a disturbing experience and prompted Methodist minister, Harry Lister, to encourage him to join the

Methodist Revival Fellowship which had been formed earlier that decade.

About the same time, Harry Lister handed Keith a leaflet advertising a conference in North Wales, led by Roy Hession. Unbeknown to Keith at the time, Hession, a British evangelist, had been greatly influenced by the East African Revival. The only thing that caught the young Keith's attention was the price: £5 all in. It seemed like the offer of a real adventure that he couldn't resist. That week, he met not only Hession, but also William Nagenda and Yosiya Kinuka, two of the leaders of the East African revival, who spoke powerfully of the work of the Lord in their hearts. Keith later discovered that, had he gone to the gathering a week earlier, he would also have met Joe Church; as it was, that would have to wait for some years.

Roy Hession had been converted under Joe Church. He had begun to call together British people who had been touched by the East African Revival and they had gathered in Matlock, Derbyshire in 1947. There, they sensed the Lord speaking to them, a message Hession documented in his small, though nonetheless influential book, 'The Calvary Road'. From those beginnings grew a network of revival fellowships across the UK.

The Methodist Revival Fellowship began in 1952. Lists of those involved read as a rollcall of many who would become the outstanding evangelical Methodist



*L-R: William Nagenda, Roy Hession and Yosiya Kinuka 1956, Abergele, N. Wales*

leaders of their day: John Barker, Howard Belben, the Rt Hon Roland Lamb, Robin Catlin, Ron Taylor, Trevor Staniforth, Keith Lewis and Harry Stringer. It was Howard Belben who inserted the word 'Methodist' into the Revival Fellowship's name within the Conference resolution which launched it, keen that it should clearly be a fellowship of Methodists, for Methodists, within the Methodist Church. Such people would have a profound effect on Keith's Christian discipleship and ministry and, over the years, the MRF would provide great encouragement, inspiration and fellowship in the midst of his circuit ministry.

A jubilee conference was held at Swanwick in Derbyshire in 1971 to celebrate the fiftieth anniversary of the beginning of the Rwanda Mission, which had sent the Church brothers and their forebears to East Africa. Festo Kivengere, one of the most prominent African leaders of the revival, was the main speaker. Through Kivengere, Keith was introduced to African Enterprise and, at the invitation of its British Secretary, Jean Wilson, would later join the board of directors.

Keith internalised the message of the revival; it shaped his heart, discipleship and ministry. Over the years, he spoke at a number of revival conferences and made several trips to East Africa, where he felt very much at home amongst the brothers and sisters in Christ there. Some of Keith's conference messages can be listened to via the website [sermonsofgrace.org/keith-jarvis/](http://sermonsofgrace.org/keith-jarvis/).

It was whilst he was speaking at the revival fellowship conference in Southwold in 1973 that Keith first met Joe and Bill Church. In 1981, Joe Church's *Quest for the Highest* was published and Keith reviewed it for *Sound of Revival*, the MRF's magazine. Keith observed that the book was likely to be, 'the last of the real "pioneer missionary" books about Africa, especially as a first-hand account'

and he outlined the main emphases of both book and revival: 'repentance, the cleansing blood of Jesus, and walking with God in the light'. Referring to Joe Church's diaries, which provided the main source material for the book, Keith suggested, 'Perhaps there has not been such a well-documented account of revival since Wesley's journals'. He looked back, observing how, in 1936, Joe Church had published 'Victorious Praying', a call to the churches of Britain to pray for revival. As he read and reviewed this latest book, Keith reflected that perhaps the emergence of revival fellowships across the denominations, not least the MRF, may well have been an answer to that call to prayer. Thus, within divine providence, the MRF's roots may well be traced back to that short pamphlet, written by Joe Church.

It was as a result of that review published in 'Sound of Revival', that Joe Church invited Keith to visit him in his Cambridgeshire home. There, as they looked through the archives of the revival together, Joe Church asked Keith if he would write an ongoing account of the revival. With all his other ministry commitments, he felt it would be a project too far and, in the end, the account would be vividly written by Katherine Makower in 'The Coming of the Rain: The biography of a pioneering missionary in Rwanda'.

That meeting with Joe Church in his home was almost forty years ago. The message of the East African revival and fellowship with those who had experienced revival first-hand has continued to shape Keith's life and ministry to this day. The legacy lives on.

Methodism was born in revival. Almost three hundred years ago, Charles Wesley wrote in astonishment about all that the Lord was accomplishing in his day, 'See how great a flame aspires, kindled by a spark of grace'. Joe Church adopted a similar image, writing from the heart

of the East African Revival, describing the holiness it cultivated in the hearts of those caught in its path: 'Revival is like an African bush-fire: as it burns and spreads over the mountain side all that lurks in the long grass, the snakes and the rats, have to flee for their lives.'

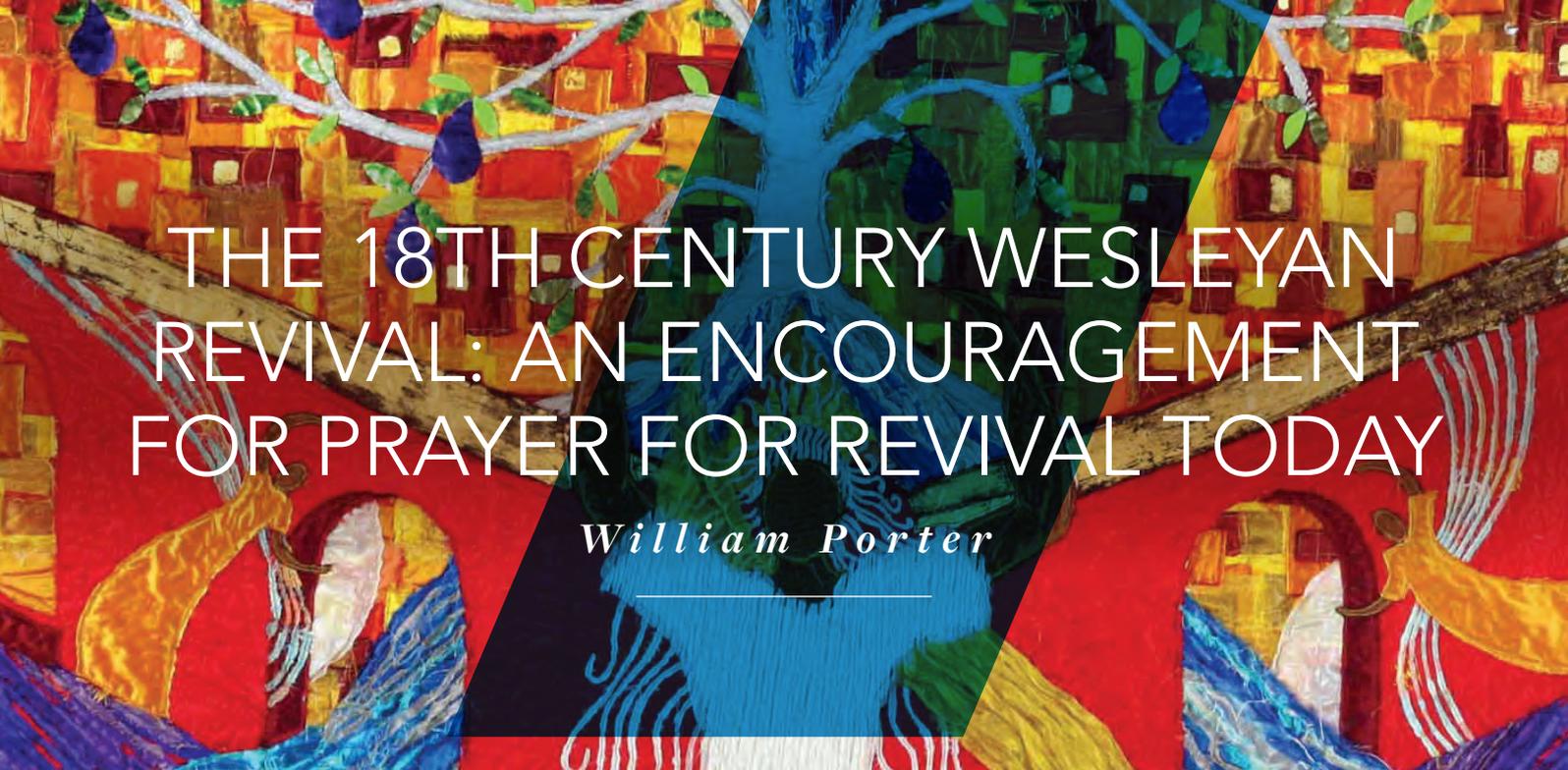
What was the message at the heart of the revival fellowships and of the revival itself in which they were rooted? It was and is, purely and simply, the message of Jesus: beholding the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world, and walking in the light with him. We must not make revival the main thing. In many ways you have to 'get into' revival before you can properly pray for it. It is a message of brokenness, of seeking for holiness and of being filled with the Holy Spirit. Joe Church and his colleagues discovered that it was not in calling the Africans to repent, but out of the confession of their own failures, that revival came. The way we began the Christian life, in coming to Jesus at the foot of the cross in repentance and faith, is the way we must continue in it. The Holy Spirit who led us to the cross when we first became Christians leads us to the cross today. We have a continual need for the Holy Spirit, for the cross, for repentance. We are sinners saved by grace. When we fully depend on him, the Lord could once again bring revival 'in the midst of the years' (Habakkuk 3:2 KJV). It could begin with us.

It is a legacy that urges us each to ask of ourselves: am I revived at this moment? Am I walking with the Lord right now?



*The Revd Keith Jarvis is a supernumerary Methodist Minister living in Congleton, having served for forty-one years in Full Connexion.*

*The Revd Dr David A. Hull, Chair of MET, is a minister in Full Connexion with the Methodist Church, serving within the Free Methodist Church in Kingswood, Bristol, the birthplace of Methodism.*



# THE 18TH CENTURY WESLEYAN REVIVAL: AN ENCOURAGEMENT FOR PRAYER FOR REVIVAL TODAY

*William Porter*

There has been so much written about the Wesleyan revival of the 18th Century. How do you encapsulate a movement that grew to 100,000 strong, re-evangelised much of England of that time, and altered the social and moral fabric of society, all within half a century? Stories centre on the life of one man, John Wesley, yet the revival was more than about him; for it caught up a generation of awakened and emboldened Christians in the purposes of God, and a movement which could not be contained within the structures of the church. Methodists around the world live in the heritage of the Wesleyan revival, and Christians of all streams who pray for revival live in the awareness of the importance of this as a model of what God can do in and amongst a people.

The term 'revival' is a treasured part of evangelical spirituality, yet is itself an ambiguous word. I choose not to use it as simply describing stories of religious enthusiasm, but as conveying a move of the Holy Spirit in a particular time and place, which elicited a particular response from the people of that time. Indeed, the eye witness accounts of revival tend to use phrases like 'God turned up', 'God came among us', 'God's power fell on us'. There is something profound at work in times of revival, yet not two revival occurrences are the same. Neither, for that matter, do all revivals carry the same weight of significance. Some are localised outbreaks of the work of the Spirit, confined to a small community and lasting no more than

a few weeks or months. The Wesleyan revival of the 18th Century however draws much attention, because the scale of the move of the Spirit was so much more widespread and long lasting. In our modern context, many reading this article may well be praying that God would visit us in a similarly powerful dimension as did Wesley and his contemporaries. Three aspects of the work of the Spirit in that period of time amongst the Methodists correspond to facets of the Spirit's work in scripture: He comes to us as a river of life; as the wind from heaven and as a flaming fire.

## THE RIVER OF GOD

Jesus described the work of the Spirit as like wells and streams of living water inside us; Ezekiel's prophecy of God's future work among us speaks of a great river of life flowing from the temple. The early Methodists experienced the revival as though being swept up in a mighty river of God. For one thing, it brought life to his people. Wesley and his friends were living for a few years or more in a search for a living experience of their salvation; their Holy Club meetings were for sincere and searching Christians. When, one by one, they broke through into an assurance of faith, there was great joy and a release into new songs of praise and fresh motivation for sharing the gospel.

Subsequently, the Spirit brought a new relevancy for the Christian message in the nation. A population which had considered the church mainly irrelevant

for their context of social change and industrial revolution were now presented with a potent message of Jesus Christ, an offer of sins forgiven and preached urgently by the revivalists, not in churches, but in fields and public spaces for the common person.

Thirdly, the Spirit created a surge in the expression of the kingdom of God in 18th Century England. Accessible religion had come to the working class industrial new towns of England; family and community life was strengthened with Methodist societies at their heart; people were empowered to create social change and relief of poverty. Scores of lay people were trained for ministry in their local congregation and became equipped as voices of hope and mobilisers of others from lower socioeconomic classes of society.

The river of the Spirit so often does all this in experiences of revival. What could happen in our day if the Spirit moved again through his people and our nation as a mighty river of life?

## THE WIND OF GOD

Jesus illustrated that the moving of the Spirit in a person's life was like unpredictable wind; the disciples in the Upper Room at Pentecost experienced the violent wind from heaven which thrust them out from their secret prayer place into the public centre of Jerusalem life. The wind of God speaks to us about three things in the Wesleyan revival. It shows that God's work in revival was

sovereign and yet occurred amongst those most hungry for him. John Wesley in his mission journey to America was a failure and also a miserable victim of a storm. Three years later, he was a willing and fervent participant in the wind of the Spirit blowing seeds of the gospel across England. The praying Methodists who longed for something new of God encountered him in power; the staid and satisfied clergy of the church of England were passed by.



*What could happen in our day if the Spirit moved again through his people and our nation as a mighty river of life?*



Secondly it shows that the revival of the 18th Century had common marks and yet was highly contextualised. It is for good reason that the revival became known as a 'Great Awakening', because it touched Britain, central Europe and America. The wind of the Spirit, blowing first in the Moravian movement in Germany, swept through England and similarly through the American colonies. There was something deep and sovereign about the breadth and depth of the revival. It had the same transforming gospel message, yet it was contextualised in different ways. In England, the new religious fervour combined with the rising of Christian led social action projects brought a moral and mediating influence upon the ruling powers of society. It helped prevent a revolution. Yet in the American colonies the revival, led by George Whitefield and Jonathan Edwards, became a formative spiritual event in an emerging national consciousness, and gave spiritual meaning and connectedness to the struggle for independence; it helped form a revolution.

Thirdly, the revival was trans-local and ecumenical. Some revivals just touch a locality and a neighbourhood, yet this Great Awakening was an international affair. It threw leaders of different

theological positions into a melting pot with each other - Puritan Edwards, Calvinist Whitfield and Arminian Wesley. The renewing aspect of the revival was both outside the established church yet also welcomed by individuals within that same church. That is not to say there were no fallouts, and of course the founding of a new Methodist denomination, but there was an ecumenical thread at its heart which is a hallmark of the Spirit who loves to break down walls which divide us. Yes, God's revival winds are sovereign affairs, but they most often occur amongst those most hungry for him. Are we open to any way in which God wants to blow upon us and through us today? Are we ready for him to break down walls and create a genuine new opportunity for a harvest of faith in our land?

### THE FIRE OF GOD

John the Baptist referred to Jesus' coming ministry as one who would baptise in the Holy Spirit and fire. On the day of Pentecost, the followers of Jesus received tongues of flame and tongues of ecstatic witness. What does the flame of the Spirit illustrate of early Methodism? For one thing the Methodists in their day were not afraid of enthusiasm. Whereas the ministry from the pulpits of the parish churches was dry and intellectual, the ministry of the Wesleyan preachers was full of the Spirit's unction and was all about heartfelt religion. Wesley was a man who started a movement by setting himself on fire so that others could see him burn.

Moreover, the work of revival in 18th Century England was clearly about the power of the Holy Spirit confirming the message of the gospel. Wesley's journals are scattered about with the impact of God's manifest presence in meetings and preaching gatherings; people fell down under the Spirit, they experienced sudden conviction of sin, they broke through into wonderful testimonies of their assurance of faith. In short the flame of revival was abroad in the land among the Methodists.

Thirdly, the work of the Spirit was one which refined and reformed. The Methodists, in their class meetings and bands, looked for changed lives, demonstrated by a new piety, greater love and a higher morality. To be thoroughly converted meant to stop drinking; to look after one's family; to bring in an honest wage and to be empowered as a force for good in

one's community. Even Wesley's focus on perfection was grounded in the desire for people to become all they could be for God. It was pure motives, pure love that was his focus of sanctification, which was a growth experience, fleshed out over a lifetime. The reforming effect of the revival was simply that such spiritual vigour and intentional discipleship amongst so many people, could not be contained within the established church. Much has been made about Wesley's organisational genius in the gradual emergence of a new denomination. Yet it was the central thrust of early Methodism as a disciple making movement which made it such an effective force. Times of revival are rarely containable within existing structures; it is the new wine and old wineskins again. Or, to return to the river analogy, streams of renewal often cut out new channels in which to flow, before gradually finding their way back into the existing river bed further down the line.

The Spirit of God works often in an intense way during revival. As the very flame of love, he awakens a response of love for Jesus and a new passion in our faith. As he moves in power, signs and wonder do occur, whether we are used to them or like them or not. And he takes us deeper in a refining of our faith, and a reforming of what we are used to in ways of being church. Are we open today to our Christian communities being baptised in the Holy Spirit and fire? Are we willing to become a fiery disciple making movement if he chooses to use us in that way in our nation?

*The Revd Dr William Porter is married to Karen and leads the Beacon House of Prayer in Stoke on Trent, and heads up the UK Houses of Prayer network. A Methodist minister, he also holds an MA in Contextual Missiology and a PhD in Revival Studies.*



# RESOURCE REVIEWS



## NEW WESTMINSTER SERMONS *Martyn Atkins*

Latvia: Indevelop, 2020  
ISBN 978-0-85346-342-9 | pp. 231, £10.99  
Available via the MCHW website:  
[methodist-central-hall.org.uk/new-westminster-sermons](http://methodist-central-hall.org.uk/new-westminster-sermons) or Amazon.

Those of us that are ministers know what it is like to be a little bit worried when we discover who has been stationed to follow us! After fourteen years of struggling to fill the shoes of the great preachers who had gone before me as superintendents at Methodist Central Hall Westminster, it was such a tremendous relief when the stationing system (in my opinion not always renowned for its good sense!), produced Martyn Atkins as my successor. I knew that the pulpit at Westminster could not be in better hands.

Those of you who have heard Martyn preach at Easter People, Cliff College events, and ECG, as well as up and down the Connexion, or indeed across the world, will know why I felt as I did!

After Martyn had been at Westminster a year or so, I asked one of the stalwart members at the church what she thought of his preaching. 'It's fantastic' she enthused. 'There is so much in Martyn's sermons that I have to listen to them for a second time each week.' I was only mildly affronted that she only ever listened to mine once! Another member of the congregation, a deep thinking Oxford scholar with much experience of fine preaching at his previous church, spoke of profound theology laced with good solid Yorkshire common sense. Be warned though! The very first time I invited Martyn to come as a

guest preacher to Westminster, I had two reactions. An experienced and ordained colleague said that she felt that it was the best sermon she had ever heard, whilst two senior members of the congregation asked that I never invite him again!

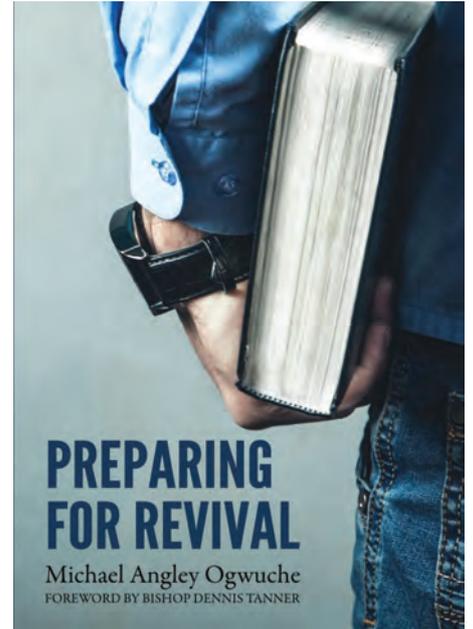
So, make of these sermons what you will. I promise that you will not be disappointed, but stimulated intellectually and fed spiritually. They really are quite superb, both as sermons and as tools for personal devotion; I read one a day as part of my quiet time. Behind each of them is Martyn's deep conviction that we are called to be a mission shaped church. These sermons are not just to be read, but to be taken into the market place and tested.

The sermons themselves: 38 in all, have a tremendous range. Doctrinal themes include church membership and baptism. Discipleship is picked up as Martyn thinks about pilgrimage, guidance and giving. Methodist emphases are there in three sermons covering Aldersgate Sunday, Remembrance Sunday and the Good Friday united procession. The second half of the book features 18 sermons that take us through the Christian year.

I cannot speak too highly of these sermons. They are easy to read and well-illustrated; not just by Martyn's words, but also by his wife Helen's photographs. You will be blessed upon reading them for the first time, but I am sure you will come back to them time and again. Thank you, Martyn, for both your ministry at Westminster and this collection, a gift to a far wider congregation.

*Reviewed by the Revd Martin Turner,  
Supernumerary Minister in the  
Gloucestershire Circuit, formerly  
Superintendent of Methodist Central Hall  
Westminster (2001 - 2015).*

## PREPARING FOR REVIVAL *Michael Angley Ogwuche*



Exeter: Onwards and Upwards, 2020  
ISBN 978-1-78815-529-8 | pp. 139, £9.99  
Kindle edition £8.99

Michael Ogwuiche has served the Methodist Church in Britain as a Recognised and Regarded presbyter. His book, *Preparing for Revival*, contains both deep despair and great hope. He shares his grave concern for the state of the church and our nation, and the potential for glorious revival. He writes about the gradual moving away from God and his ways, and how, like the church of Laodicea, we have become lukewarm. Instead of holding to God's standards, through Satan's influence of blinding the eyes of so many people, we have gradually shifted towards the ways of the world. He challenges us to realign ourselves to God, by calling us to a closer relationship with God which includes deep repentance of our own sin (detoxing our souls), the sin of the church and the sin of the nation.

This book is rooted in both the Old and New Testaments, in the work of God the Trinity and in our covenant relationship with Father, Jesus, Holy Spirit. He indicates how the story of Nehemiah encourages us to rebuild through seeking God afresh in prayer and fasting, grieving over the state of the church and nation, and rebuilding together. The resurrection is a key distinctive feature of Christianity, and as resurrection people we can experience the presence of Jesus Christ and the power of the Holy Spirit in our lives and within our

churches. Even if our faith in God is only as small as a mustard seed, we can expect God to do great and glorious things.

This book is not just theoretical, it is also very practical, and includes biblical prayers of repentance and renewal. Michael inspires us to have faith so that through renewing our covenant relationship with God, we can experience God's merciful blessings afresh upon the church and the nations. Furthermore, we can even experience revival in our generation!

*Reviewed by the Revd Derek Balsdon who is a Methodist Presbyterian, and serves as the MET Development Worker.*



## THE FORERUNNER CRY: PREPARING OUR LIVES FOR JESUS' RETURN

*William Porter*

Milton Keynes: Authentic, 2019  
ISBN 978-1-78893-033-8 | pp. 268, £9.99

How do we prepare our lives for Jesus' return? William Porter helpfully looks at the end times through the lenses of: Jesus' Second Coming: The Big Picture; Last-Days Events: The Best and Worst of Times; Last-Days Events: The End-Times Drama; Wider End-Time Themes

in the Bible, Understanding the Book of Revelation and The Forerunner Call.

Each part gives biblical teaching, critiques different interpretations and offers personal experience contextualised into today's UK church setting. A 'pause for thought' section provides useful questions to reflect further and the final chapter of each part looks at what this says about our living here and now.

In the final part, 'The Forerunner Call', the author helpfully defines forerunners as those who 'precede, herald and indicate something that is to come' and explores in more depth how we might be more alert to the signs of the times and gain fresh expectancy of living now in the light of Jesus' return. Reading this in the context of the Covid-19 pandemic also gives new insights to consider.

William Porter sets out to reach both a youth and young adult audience while giving sufficient theological reflection for church leaders. I think he succeeds and while he does not expect everyone to agree with all he shares, this accessible guide will help many to engage with this crucial part of our Christian faith. He strongly believes that God is saying today: 'Get ready! Get ready, church. Get ready, world'. Ready for what? Get ready for glory, shaking and Jesus' imminent return'. May this book spur us on to know how to play our small part in God's grand plan.

*Reviewed by Jane Holloway, National Prayer Director, World Prayer Centre, Birmingham, UK.*

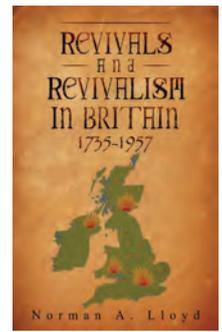
## REVIVALS AND REVIVALISM IN BRITAIN 1735-1957

*Norman A Lloyd*

Milton Keynes: Acorn Ind Press Ltd, 2018  
ISBN 978-1-912145-91-1 | pp. 310, £9.99

The author was ordained in 1954 as the Minister of a Welsh Baptist Church. He has written on a number of historical subjects and has a particular prayerful interest in the history of revivals, having been the minister of a church in Wales that had known revival, and whose members had experienced revival.

Many years have passed since Britain experienced such a spiritual awakening and the memory of them has been largely lost. This book reminds us of what God has done in the past and for Christian churches and all Christians to pray in the words of the psalmist, 'Will you not revive us again that your people may rejoice in you?' (Psalm 85:6)



The book covers eleven periods of revival.

God has greatly blessed our land in the past, even in the darkest and most desperate times, in answer to the earnest prayers of his people. This book shares many examples of such a prayer. Thousands began gathering in hundreds of prayer meetings for the spread of revival. The following quote sums up the importance of prayer for revival: 'The land was covered by a canopy of prayer and people everywhere hungered for more of God's presence and power'. There was also a great desire for Bible study and biblical teaching as a preparation for revival.

During these times of revival in our nation millions were converted. In two years of revival, two million converts were added to the nation's churches and 200,000 members were added to the Methodist Church. A feature of the revival was the earnest desire of those who became Christians to win others for Christ. In fact it was they, perhaps, more than the preaching of the ministers, which spread the revival and won the great majority of converts through their prayers and zealous witness.

I have often said in my own teaching ministry 'we cannot organise an outpouring of the Holy Spirit in revival, but we can desire it and pray for it, both individually and corporately'. I believe this book will encourage this desire and prayer for revival; I commend it to you.

*Reviewed by David Greenaway, a Supernumerary Minister in the Derby Circuit. Before his transfer into the Methodist Connexion he was a Minister in the Evangelical Free Churches and the International Director of One Step Forward Ministries and Publications, and Vice Chair of the British Church Growth Association.*

Revival awakens in our hearts  
An increased awareness of the presence of God.  
A new love for God.  
A new hatred for sin.  
And a hunger for his Word.

*Del Fehsenfeld Jr.*

lhopkc.org

## A PRAYER FOR REVIVAL

Spirit of God, come, Oh! come, we pray; earth's night is dark - and many go astray,  
the fire of love for souls is burning low, Oh! send thy fire and set the church aglow.

Spirit of God, come, Oh! come, we pray, we need a mighty Pentecost today.  
Great Spirit, come - convincing men of sin; unveil the unbelief that works within.

Spirit of God, come, Oh! come, we pray. Thy fire must fall - there is no other way  
to bring revival both to church and home. Thine must be the fire; burning Spirit, come.

Spirit of God, come, Oh! come we pray, light up the darkness with Thine own bright ray.  
Burn up the wordliness, the sin, the dross; and turn men's hearts to Christ and to His cross.

Spirit of God, come, Oh! come, we pray, revive Thy Work! Oh! Lord, without delay.  
Revive the love for souls, their need reveal, and set Thy church ablaze with holy zeal.

Spirit of God, come, Oh! come, we pray, revive and deepen prayer from day to day.  
Then dost respond to faith's persistent plea, "teach us to pray", till we the answer see.

Printed from the 'Joyful News' from Cliff College Archive and submitted by a MET member.



# OCEAN DEPTHS

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*Out of the depths I cry to you,  
Lord; Lord hear my voice*

Psalm 130 v 1-2

## ARTIST MARION DEACON WRITES:

There is something so alluring about the ocean - sitting on the beach and listening to the gentle lap of the waves. Getting lost in the ever-changing hues and colours. I believe we need to find our inner strength from times of quietness and times of reflection. With God's help we feel more able to continue on our journey. I use painting as a way of finding space and quiet. It makes my heart sing to interpret our beautiful landscape through colour and form.

Many people find calm and joy through the enjoyment of art. I invite you to get lost and to feel revived by Ocean Depths.

To see more of my paintings please go to my website:  
[www.mariondeacon.com](http://www.mariondeacon.com)

# REVIVAL: GOD'S PART AND OURS

Kevin Jones



This last chapter of Colossians may at first seem to say little about revival. However, it highlights Paul's method in approaching church growth. Here, we clearly see 3 steps which lead to church growth: prayer, witness and team work.

## PRAYER

The gospel and the power of prayer: 4:2-7,12. What is the purpose of prayer? Are we trying to persuade God to do what we ask? No! Prayer brings our lives in line with God's best will for us: 'Thy will be done' (Matthew 6:10). If we do not pray, there are things on earth that will not be accomplished as God intends them to be. Prayer is placing our will into agreement with the will of God. It was John Wesley who said 'God does nothing except in response to believing prayer.'

How should we pray? 'Devote yourselves to prayer, being watchful and thankful' (4:2). There are several lessons here: We are to be consistent, watchful, specific, focused, earnest and thankful. To be watchful is to be alert to God, and alert to the needs around us. This includes personal needs, but extends to our family, church, and nation. 'I urge, then, first of all, that requests, prayers, intercession and thanksgiving be made for everyone - for kings and all those in authority, that we may live peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness' (1 Timothy 2:1-2).

Prayer is to be wide ranging in its scope, but specific in its requests. Paul asks for a specific need. A very bad prayer is the one commonly repeated from the book of prayer, 'we pray for all people everywhere according to their need.' A prayer should be specific enough to know when it has been answered.

Prayer is hard work. Epaphras was 'wrestling in prayer' that his church 'may stand firm in all the will of God, mature and fully assured' (4:12). Wrestling is also translated as 'striving' (ASV), 'labouring earnestly' (NAS), 'praying fervently' (KJV), and 'earnestly' (RSV). Prayer is hard work.

There are three keys to effective prayer:

1. We must pray in accordance with God's Word. God has given us many great and precious promises. We may bring those promises before his throne that they may be fulfilled. We must learn to pray the promises.
2. We need to come in faith. 'Whatever you ask for in prayer, believe that you have received it and it will be yours' (Mark 11:24). This is not a blank cheque to believe the ridiculous and ask selfishly. It is the condition for praying God's promises.
3. We must be guided by the Holy Spirit. We do not know how to pray, but the Holy Spirit leads and intercedes through us. 'In the same way, the Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groans that words cannot express.' (Romans 8:26). This is fervency in prayer that is available to us all. Each time we come to pray we must actively seek the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

As we pour out our prayer, he pours in his joy. We are to be 'watchful and thankful' (4:2). Thankfulness is a lost art in the church. It can transform our relationship with God and each other. Remember there are three possible answers to a prayer: 'yes', 'no' and 'wait'. Each can be God's will for our lives and we must be willing to accept his will.

## WITNESS

The privilege of witnessing: 4:5-6. We need to remember that Paul is in prison and prays for an open door, but not the one we would expect. He asks God to 'open a door, for our message' (4:3). Even in prison, his concern is the spread of the gospel. We would not expect opportunities in prison, but Paul did. His first desire is sharing the good news of Jesus.

His prayers were answered; later he writes to the Philippians: 'Now I want you to know, brothers, that what has happened to me has really served to advance the gospel. As a result, it has become clear throughout the whole palace guard and to everyone else that I am in chains for Christ' (Philippians 1:12-13; see also Philippians 4:22).

If we don't find opportunities to witness, then either God has not opened the door, or we are not asking. We are not looking for the doors we open, but the doors God opens. Rick Warren describes God's opportunities as 'surfing the wave he sends.' Wesley was more proactive. People told him not to be so forceful in his witness, but to wait until someone asked. He found himself travelling in a carriage and so waited for the opportunity to arise. When it did not come after an hour, he decided to make the opportunity and share his faith anyway. If we are prayerful, there are always opportunities to share our faith with others.

Paul's method was to speak with clarity and kindness: 'Be wise in the way you act towards outsiders; make the most of every opportunity. Let your conversation be always full of grace, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how to answer everyone.' (4:5-6)

It is not God's job to spread the gospel, that is a task he has entrusted to his church. It is to be done prayerfully, wisely, kindly, tactfully and boldly. Our manner and our attitudes to people outside the church are very important. We must value people as God values them. They are not just people to witness to, but people who are deeply loved by God.

### TEAM WORK

The presence of friends: 4:7-18. Paul closes by introducing us to his team (4:7-17). Paul did not work alone; he had a team sharing in God's mission and ministry. If we are to grow, it will be a team effort. Christianity is a team sport. Paul's team includes Epaphras, Tychicus, Onesimus, Aristarchus, Mark, Luke and Demas. They all have a story.

Tychicus is highly commended as: 'a dear brother, a faithful minister and fellow-servant in the Lord' (4:7). He carried this letter to Colosse. If he had failed there would be no book of Colossians. He also carried Paul's personal news and was accompanied by Onesimus (4:9).

Onesimus is the runaway slave mentioned in Philemon. He had sought to escape his Christian master in Rome, but he could not escape God. His name means 'useful' and Paul writes to Philemon saying the former 'useless' one may at last live up to his name. Paul valued Onesimus highly, but before

he could grow in Christ, he had to put right his relationship with Philemon and return not just as a slave, but as a brother (see Philemon 10-15).

Mark and Luke, the Gospel writers, are with Paul, and Luke is introduced as a Greek doctor (4:11,14). Greeks were educated and skilful physicians; they were the first to trace the circulation of the blood through the body. We find that Luke not only wrote the Gospel and Acts, but actually lived through the experiences he recorded. (Note the use of the word 'we' in Acts 16, Acts 20 and Acts 21:16 to the end.)

As for Mark, there is a strange sentence, about him. 'Mark, the cousin of Barnabas. (You have received instructions about him; if he comes to you, welcome him.)' (4:10)

Mark's history is chequered. He was on the first missionary journey to Cyprus, but half way through returned to Jerusalem. When Barnabas sought to take him on the second journey, Paul and he strongly disagreed. It seems Barnabas was right, for Mark had a ministry after all. Paul tells the church to forgive, and welcome him. Obviously, his previous problems were known, but now he stood with Paul in Rome. In Paul's last letter he writes: 'Get Mark and bring him with you, because he is helpful to me in my ministry' (2Timothy 4:11). Mark is an example of someone who is slow to

grow, who needed encouragement, but became a great blessing to the church.

Paul worked with a team, each contributing their gifts. Paul's team were devoted to prayer and ready to make the most of every opportunity. Each was different, but they combined to make Paul's mission a success. If our churches are to grow it will take each one of us combining in prayer, open in witness and offering our abilities to make it happen. It will take one more thing and here Paul finishes. It will take God's grace: 'Grace be with you all' (4:18).

*This series of studies is available in the MET publication, 'Colossians: Hope In Desperate Times'.*

*The Rev'd Kevin Jones is Lead Pastor at King's Church Free Methodist, Penwortham, Preston.*



*Prayer brings our lives in line with God's best will for us*



# TRIBUTE TO CHRIS FAULL



3 July saw the calling home of a valiant servant of the Lord, Chris Faull of Nailsea. He had suffered from a lung disease for the past four years.

Although attending an Anglican church in recent years, he had a long association with MET and Headway before that. So much so, that he was the Chair of the South West Conference Committee through the 90s and early 2000.

Being a retired bank manager, he had good leadership skills. He also always had a wonderful sense of humour.

Even in retirement from the South West Conference Committee at 70, he was a fervent and loyal supporter of MET and the South West Conference.

We remember in our prayers his widow Janet and the family at this time.

Adrian Dawe

*We are also very grateful to Chris for his proof reading for MET Connexion magazine for many years and for his meticulous attention to detail. He gave of his time freely and with cheerful enthusiasm. He will be greatly missed. - Editor*

## DIGGING FOR TREASURE 2020

### *Word & Spirit – Authority & Power*

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**Saturday 17 October 10am - 3.15pm | £5 per person**

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**Stephen Gaukroger**

Baptist Pastor and Founder of Clarion Trust International

**Gareth Higgs**

Superintendent Minister, Plymouth Methodist Central Hall

**Catherine Hutton**

Methodist Minister, Sutton Methodist Circuit

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# PRAYING ALWAYS

*Roz Addington, MET's new Prayer Secretary*

'Commit your ways to the Lord and you will succeed' (Proverbs 16:3). These were the words I woke up with at about 5.30 am one morning. We may have many plans, but unless we commit them to God and follow him they are useless.

We are living in troubling times and now more than ever we need to pray ardently and seek God's will for our lives, our church, our country and the world. Covid-19 and its consequences of bereavement and debilitating side effects, along with economic hardship for individuals, families and businesses have left people bewildered and fearful for the future. We need to pray for God to intervene in these situations, bringing a hope that can only be found in him.

As a church, we have left the path of scriptural holiness and turned instead to the ways of the world. Romans 12:2 tells us not to follow the ways of the world, but to walk in the way of the Lord. It is not talking to the 'world', it is talking to the church.

Back in June, God gave me the following words:

*'Tell my people called by name to stand firm, to move neither to the left or the right but to move onward in my strength and I will be their guide. I will lead them by the hand and show them the way I want them to go.'*

We need to stand firm on scripture and seek the will of God if we want to see revival. I do believe that revival will come, but we must do our part and that means we need to pray, to seek actively God's will and follow what he is saying, sticking to biblical truths. Revival begins with repentance. It begins with us. It begins with the church. We need to put our own house in order before we can bring others in from a non-church background.

'Stand up and be counted' was a phrase that was around when I was in my teens and early 20s. There was a picture of a field of sunflowers. One single sunflower stood up high above all the others. This is what the church needs to be: standing out as being different from the world around us, to be a moral compass for society, not following what society does.

Prayer is the key to this. We need to know what God is saying before things can move forward. That means coming before God humbly and in prayer, listening to what he is saying through the Spirit. We may have lots of good ideas, but unless it is what God wants, it will simply remain a good idea. We need to be listening in the Spirit, discerning what God is saying.

So, I urge us all to come before God and ardently intercede for the church. Repent of the ways in which we are attempting

to follow the pattern of world. We need to be bold in standing up for Biblical truths and waver neither to the left or the right (Proverbs 4:27). We need to keep to the narrow way and not stray on to the wide one which leads to destruction. (Matt 7:13-14).

So, as we say in church, 'Let us pray'.

The topics for prayer will be in 4 sections, one for each week. The first week will concentrate on the church, including the work of MET, the second week on Covid-19 and related topics, the third week on Brexit and the fourth week on world issues. I have suggested items which I feel God has laid on my heart to include but it is up to you how you use these suggestions. God may lay on your heart other issues; the important thing is to pray as you feel led.



## WEEK 1 | THE CHURCH

1. Pray for a return to Scriptural Holiness: for repentance within the church for having left God's ways and followed the way of the world. (Ephesians 6:19; Romans 12:2; Psalm 119:103 & 105)
2. Pray for our church leaders: for a conviction of the need to follow the way set out in the Bible; for our President and Vice-President of Conference: Richard Teal and Carolyn Lawrence, for chairs of district and superintendents as well as our presbyters, deacons and lay workers. (Proverbs 3:5 & 6; Proverbs 16: 1-3; Isaiah 30:19-21)
3. For a move of the Holy Spirit to fall upon the church: that there will be a mass rising against the liberal theology which is plaguing it; to stand firm on biblical principles and for eyes to be opened as to what is happening in our church; for people to find a voice, to speak out boldly and stand up for what they believe. Pray for the Holy Spirit to fall and burn up all false teaching and ideologies. (John 16:13; Isaiah 43:18-21; John 15:1-8)
4. For the work of MET: for the 3R's: Re-kindling of the Wesleyan vision, Renewing the Wesleyan vision and Raising up of a new generation of Wesleys; for David Hull as he seeks the way ahead in remaining faithful to biblical teaching in the face of opposition; for the Remaining Faithful Network, for courage to stand up for biblical holiness. (Isaiah 41:9-13; Joshua 1:6-9)

5. For our young people: that their eyes would not be blinded to wrong teaching; for Nathan Veall as he reaches out to the younger generation. Pray that he will know the Lord's guidance and inspiration in all that he does in reaching them, particularly those who are at university; the initiative of WHOTWay. (Proverbs 2:1-11)
6. Pray for the individual churches of our land: that God would grant them wisdom and discernment as to the time to re-open their buildings safely; for help in having everything in place to open safely. Pray for the Holy Spirit to fall, opening up new ways of doing things. (Isaiah 30:21; John 16: 13)



## WEEK 2 | COVID-19

1. Pray for those who have been badly affected physically by the virus and who once again are having to re-learn basic skills; for strength for themselves and their families; for patience and understanding on the part of the general public as these people come back into society; those who now face life-long challenges of health. (Romans 15:13; Philippians 4:1-8)
2. The mental health of those who have suffered through the pandemic; those who are bereaved; those suffering from the effects of lockdown. (Isaiah 40:28-31; Isaiah 41:9-13)
3. For the doctors and nurses who have been on the front line and who have had to deal with huge loss of life and the worst horrors of the virus. Pray for restoration for those dealing with exhaustion having given out everything they have; also, for care workers, especially in our nursing homes. (Matthew 11:28-29; Psalm 23)
4. For those affected financially by the pandemic; for individuals, families and businesses; the many who are now facing financial hardship; those who have lost livelihoods and who are wondering where to turn to find the means to support themselves and their families. (Jeremiah 29:11-13; Psalm 146:5-10)
5. For our schools: that the children, students and staff will feel safe and able to adapt to the new environment and restrictions in which they are learning and working; for no further spread of the virus. (Psalm 91; Psalm 46)
6. For the opening up of the country after lockdown; for the government to get their policies right for the good of all; wisdom to know what to do and when; for the national debt caused by the provision for families and businesses through the lockdown period. Pray for Government leaders to find faith in God and rely on him. (2 Corinthians 4:8; Matthew 7:7-8)
7. Pray for those who are working on a vaccination for the virus, that a solution may be found. Pray that they will seek the Lord's guidance and inspiration. (Proverbs 20:18; Psalm 32:8)



## WEEK 3 | BREXIT

(Jeremiah 29:10-12; Proverbs 3:5-6; Psalm 121)

1. Those who are negotiating deals whether with the EU, other parts of the world or through the World Trade Organisation, that the strategies put forward would be from God and for all decisions made to benefit all and not just a few.
2. For all organisation to be in place from 31 December 2020, the end of the transition period, and for things to go smoothly. Pray especially for haulage companies that they would be able to get paperwork in place; for businesses, to have all necessary documentation in order.
3. For checks and structures to be in place at our ports and airports; for those working in HM Customs who are on the front line of imports and exports.



## WEEK 4 | WORLD ISSUES

1. The persecuted church: strength for those who are in fear of their lives for simply worshipping God. Pray for courage and strength; for comfort and help for families where a loved one has been detained; for release for those who have been detained; churches in parts of Africa, the Middle East, China and North Korea; countries like Russia where worshipping is becoming more and more restricted. (Matthew 5:11-12; 2 Tim. 3:10-12; Romans 8:35-37)
2. Areas where there are gross injustices taking place; where corruption is rife and where people are in abject poverty because of the decisions of their leaders; Somalia, Lebanon, remembering the massive explosion that took place in Beirut and the complete devastation which that has caused; Hong Kong and the crackdown which is happening in that land; the many nations around the world where justice is but a dream. (Psalm 82:3-4; Psalm 146:7-9; Isaiah 10:1-3)
3. Areas in the world where there is war and conflict; where the land has been laid waste and people are struggling to survive; where famine and disease are rife, and people are desperate.
4. Refugee camps. Pray for compassion amongst the nations. Pray for justice; relief for the helpless; prevention for the spread of disease, especially the corona virus. (Proverbs 31:8-9; Psalm 72:12-14).
5. Pray for aid agencies for them to receive the financial support they need to alleviate the suffering of the destitute around the world, both from the general public and from the wealthier nations across the world; also, that they will have access to the worst affected areas. (Luke 16:19-31).



# FROM THE CHAIR

*The Revd Dr David A. Hull*

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Dear Friends,

I always find the description of the rebuilding of the temple in the book of Ezra to be profoundly evocative. It was a day of great rejoicing, but there was another sound mingled with the joy: the sound of sorrow. As the younger people rejoiced, the older people wept (Ezra 3:12).

It is impossible for us to imagine the scene of the dedication of the first temple under King Solomon. As the king prayed, the glory of the Lord filled the temple, so much so that the priests could not enter it, and all the people knelt in worship, saying 'He is good; his love endures forever' (2 Chronicles 7:1-3). However, the Lord responded with a warning that, if they were unfaithful to him, his glory would depart from the temple and it would be destroyed. Sadly, they chose unfaithfulness and the Lord kept his word. In his great vision, Ezekiel watched as the glory departed from the temple (Ezekiel 10:18). The temple was destroyed and the people were carried off into exile.

They longed to return home, but when they finally arrived, they found a desolate land. They set about rebuilding and the young people laid the foundations of the temple with great rejoicing. The older people watched and wept, for this new temple was nothing like the old one. Although they sang the same songs of praise, 'He is good; his love towards Israel endures for ever', the Lord's glory did not return. The longing for the return of the Lord's glory would fill the rest of the Old Testament years.

I wonder if we share something of that sorrow when we sing our great Wesleyan hymns in worship. They are hymns of revival, written in times of revival, expressing the praises and prayers of those who had been revived, who knew what it was for the glory of God to fall in an extraordinary way. As we sing them today, do we ask with tears in our eyes, 'Where is

the glory?' Perhaps many of us are drawn to Habakkuk's great prayer, 'Lord, I have heard of your fame; I stand in awe of your deeds, Lord. Repeat them in our day, in our time make them known; in wrath remember mercy' (Habakkuk 3:2).

When Martyn Lloyd-Jones preached a series of sermons in 1959, marking the centenary of the 1859 revival in Wales, he began by 'diagnosing the need'. He was motivated to mark the anniversary and take the theme of revival, because, he said, of the 'appalling need' of the church and the world and continued, 'unless we, as individual Christians, are feeling a grave concern about the state of the Church and the world today, then we are very poor Christians indeed.' His conclusion: 'We have got to feel it until we become desperate. We must ask ourselves how we can succeed if we do not have this authority, this commission, this might and strength and power. We must cease to have so much confidence in ourselves, and in all our methods and organisations, and in all our slickness. We have got to realise that we must be filled with God's Spirit. And we must be equally certain that God can fill us with his Spirit.'

If Lloyd-Jones could write of the 'appalling need' of the church sixty years ago, how much more must we recognise it today? Yet, there is good news. The history of revival tells us that it is in desperate times that revival begins. Earlier in this edition of MET Connexion, I have written of Joe Church's experience in Rwanda. When he came to the end of himself and cried out in desperation, revival came. The same was true for John Wesley. By God's grace, it can be true for us, too. Let's pray fervently that it will be so.

Rejoicing in our partnership in the gospel,



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