

NIGERIAN BAPTIST THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

NBTS
012-r
M-DIV

**REVIVAL CONCEPT IN THE OLD TESTAMENT
AND CONTEMPORARY CHRISTIANITY**

**BEING THESIS
SUBMITTED TO
THE FACULTY OF THEOLOGICAL STUDIES**

**IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS
FOR THE AWARD OF THE DEGREE
MASTER OF DIVINITY**

J. C. POOL LIBRARY
BAPTIST SEMINARY
TGBOMOSO NIGERIA

**BY
OJEWOLA, MORAWO OLADENI
MATRIC. NO. 01/0047**

JUNE 2006.

09 - 0086

ABSTRACT

Revival is in the lips of many Christians today. Churches are fond of revival programmes so much that without them, contemporary Christianity is almost incomplete. This work has attempted to expose the concept of revival from its roots in the Old Testament as well as its development in contemporary Christianity.

Five revivals in the Old Testament were examined and their principles and characteristics highlighted. The characteristics of revival in contemporary Christianity have also been exposed through a study of the revivals under some preachers and evangelists who have impacted Christianity these past 250 years. This study has established that revival has changed meaning tremendously over time, and that revival concept in the Old Testament is not the same as in contemporary Christianity.

**J.C. POOL LIBRARY
BAPTIST SEMINARY
DOBOMOSO NIGERIA**

Conclusion

From this study, the conclusion is that revival originated from God. God continues to revive people through the Holy Spirit. Revival started in the Old Testament but between the time of Malachi and the sudden appearance of John the Baptist, there was no revival experience. The Pentecost was significant in sparking up powerful Christianity, a resurgence of which had happened these past two hundred and fifty years. Revival has changed meaning over the years and it was restricted to spiritual cleansing and national reforms of the Israelites in the Old Testament. The meaning and application of revival are wider today and extend to almost every gospel work. It is largely used for indoor and outdoor gospel campaigns today.

Revival is the work of God through the Holy Spirit and outside the competence of human beings to wrought. Revival comes as and when it pleases God although human beings can seek revival especially through the

observance of the covenant contained in 2 Chronicles 7:14. Whatever people may say of revival it will continue to come as long as it is genuinely sought. It was to the church and it is still to the church that God gave and gives revival respectively. It seems that the revivals in the Old Testament were meant to prefigure the Pentecost, and contemporary Christianity. The Holy Spirit is the instrument of revival in contemporary Christianity but this was not quite evident in the revivals of the Old Testament. The idea of revival in the Old Testament turns out to be different. In Christianity today, revival is also seen as the idea of reliving powerful Christianity of the type displayed in the book of Acts.³⁵ The meaning has changed over time and the environment has also changed.

Some Observations and Suggestions for Revival

1. Revival helps to add genuine converts to the number of the church. These converts can easily be integrated into the local church through follow up and discipline.
2. Converts from crusades are not so easily integrated into the local church organizing the crusade. This is largely due to the inability of the local churches to do follow ups. Similar problems are associated with citywide crusades which hardly reflect in the growth of local churches and the expenditures relating to them are difficult to justify.³⁶

³⁵Sinclair Ferguson, *New Dictionary of Theology* (Leicester, England: Intervarsity Press, n.d.), 588.

³⁶Molshe Rosen, "A Foreign Field of Five Boroughs," *Christianity Today*, Vol. Xxx, No. 6, March 27, 1981, 33-34.

3. Revival in the local church will continue in popularity for its potency in renewing the congregation and helping to add to the church “those who are being saved” (Acts 2:47c). Some of the problems or drawbacks of local church revival are:

- (i) The environment could easily tempt both the stale Christians and the new converts who may become proud and conceited, and the problem of spiritual pride.³⁷ Christians may become lazy and complacent in neglecting family altar, weekly programmes, personal devotion and quiet time observances, Bible study and discipleship programmes, all of which may not be as exciting as revival service experience.
- (ii) Money, wealth and sex may be used to tempt the leader for the revival³⁸ such that the pattern and goals of revival are easily influenced by the world. The church may thus easily lose her fire.
- (iii) The rising cost of inputs may lead to a situation whereby revival is marketed. Rather than allow the Holy Spirit to lead individuals to give to the cause of revival, marketing of revival may be the vogue. This trend in the marketing of anointing which is condemnable has started in the USA.³⁹

³⁷Davies, *I Will Pour Out My Spirit* 241.

³⁸*Ibid.* 242.

³⁹H. Stephen, “Don’t Market Revival,” Stephen’s Home page, The Internet Revival Library, Accessed on 18 November 2005 www.internetrevivallibrary

4. The church must genuinely desire, pray for and expect revival through a chosen vessel of God and not by manipulators. In contemporary Christianity, revival is often seen as that which brings mass conversion of sinners, making the presence of God deeply felt.
5. The impact of revival is assessed by whether they produce lasting converts or not. This is possible today only if we leave revival in the able hand of the Almighty God. Manipulation of whatever nature and degree will vitiate genuine revival.
6. Contemporary Christianity must continue to seek revival because of its numerous benefits for church growth, stabilization of membership, boosting of Christian service including missions, production of many converts, helping to build communities and nations that are totally healthy, and transformation of lives.
7. Research activities must be upgraded to enable contemporary Christians consolidate and maximize the gains of revival (crusades inclusive). Every revival program must have a research and monitoring unit that follows the progress of revival from the beginning to the end, and which thereafter does a monitoring of the converts to ensure their proper integration into local churches.
8. More studies should be carried out in every theological institution to educate contemporary Christians about revival. The Nigerian Baptist Theological Seminary, Ogbomoso should set the pace in encouraging research into the concept and practice of revival. As far as the writer is

