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REVIVAL: A TOOL FOR EFFECTIVE SOUL WINNING IN THE
LOCAL CHURCH.

A Thesis

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ABSTRACT

The need for revival cannot be over-emphasised. To win souls to the Kingdom of our God should be done with all that is at our disposal. And this is adequately highlighted and discussed in the study.

In Chapter One, the writer gives a general introduction to the thesis; Attempt is made to state the purpose and significance of the study. The different meanings of revival are also discussed, and this make the urgent need why revival should take place in the local church and in our land to be more clearer.

Chapter Two discusses some accounts of revival in the Bible. Every heavenly-minded Christian is reminded and charged to be thirsty for a genuine revival in our own time. If revival could change the lives of people for better in biblical times, we should also expect and experience true revival today.

Necessities for revival in the local church is examined in Chapter Three of this study. There is no way of escape for us as a nation unless a genuine revival happens.

The discussion of Chapter Four centres on revival preaching in the local church. It is through preaching of the undiluted message of God to the wayward world that true

revival can be experienced.

In Chapter Five, the discussion is on revival planning in the local church. The local church and all Christians are challenged to carefully and prayerfully plan for revival services. Adequate planning of revival services which is backed up with earnest prayers will definitely have a positive result.

Chapter Six is the concluding chapter of this study. Some recommendations are given to both the Pastors and the churches on how revival will be made a tool for effective soul-winning in the local church.

CONCLUSION

The writer has made an attempt to wake all Christians up from their slumber and develop a positive attitude toward revival. During the course of his research, the writer discovered that the reason why revival has not occurred in the local church was because Christians have not turned to God completely. Christians have allowed themselves to be used by the devil. We have not asked for revival to take place in our local churches and our nation because we are not ready for it. Instead of fighting against evil in our society, many Christians condone it. And that is the reason why there is moral decadence in our land.

We are debased morally as a nation. Many homes have broken down, and many marriages and family lives have fallen apart. We are not only in decline morally, we also have trouble with ourselves socially.

Many of our social services are groaning under the strain being imposed upon them by rising crime, family breakdowns, delinquent children, deficient health which more often than not is a direct result of man's inhumanity to himself and others.¹

The situation in our various areas of commercial and public life is appalling as "senseless killings, bloodshed, injustice, self-righteousness, rape, murder, idolatry, theft and self-justification are on a wide-spread scale."² Things are in a state of flux in the political realm. The political dream in this nation has turned into a nightmare. Many people have realized that their trust in politics is misplaced. Where we have failed most today is the spiritual realm, and it is only a God-sent revival that can provide a way of escape from destruction for us as a church and as a nation. The preaching of God's message sinners should be taken seriously at this time.

Many Christian churches were born through the preaching of God's word and each of these churches had experienced revival and growth.³ The preaching of God's word should not be toyed with and this is a challenge to all Pastors and ministers of the gospel. Genuine preaching of revival messages will definitely change the life of many people to God.

In preaching revival messages, a minister of the gospel should examine himself properly whether or not he is qualified to deliver God's word to the people.

John the Baptist was called "a man sent by God" (John 1:6), and Ananias told Paul, "God has sent you" (Acts 22:14). In his letter to the Romans, Paul described himself as a "servant of Christ Jesus, called to be an

apostle and set apart for the gospel of God" (Romans 1:1).

A faithful minister of the gospel must be humble (Matt. 3:11; John 3:30). A messenger of God's word should be bold and courageous (Acts 4:29). "Today, we hesitate to pray in the open, call sin by its name, or mention Christ even to our children because we might be called a name or given a look."⁴ The minister of God's word must be optimistic and expect signs and wonders as he prepares to deliver God's message to the people. If signs and wonders were necessary in Jesus' days (Acts 10:38), how much more so for us today.

The devil is so powerful today that the world needs a demonstration of the greater power of God, something along the lines of Elijah doing battle with the priests of Baal (I Kings 18:20-40). We must be ready to pray boldly and even publicly for the sick and anguished. "If we had faith like a grain of mustard seed, others would see us moving mountains of pains and uprooting sycamores of sin, hatred and injustice."⁵ The preacher has a crucial role to play in making revival to happen in the life of the people. He is the factor for any meaningful revival to take place, so he must completely depend on the Holy Spirit's power to effect it.

A well planned revival service will in turn cause a season of refreshing and renewal of strength for God's services which a believer has been called into. Every dryness, weariness, and indolence will be shaken off, he

will become more conscious of his calling. A revived believer will long to love and fellowship with the Lord and also strives to be a vessel for God's use in expanding His kingdom on earth.⁶ The church and all Christians as a whole should therefore wake up from slumber and shake the devil's kingdom to its foundation by planning for effective revival.

The devil does not wish us well as Christians and he is always looking for our fall. Leonard Revenhill said,

If we will do God's work in God's way at God's time with God's power, we shall have God's blessing and the devil's curses. When God opens the windows of heaven to bless us, the devil will open the door of hell to blast us.⁷

Every obstacle must be removed from our way in order for revival to take place.

The world around us is looking for sincerity of conviction within the church and within the lives of individual Christians. Until we have a personal concern and a sense of personal responsibility for revival, it will never happen.⁸

For a genuine revival to take place within our local churches, for signs and wonders to be experienced by members of our local churches; and for souls to be won to the Kingdom of our Lord, we should respond to the challenge to seriously pray more than ever before. We should not allow the devil to intimidate us. The battle must be fought and won. Dr. Sola Aworinde, in his sermon said;

I am sorry for those who do not know the power of prayer. And there are many church people who are in that category. They are the king of people about whom the devil does not bother. The prayerless Christian is a powerless Christian. So, he is not considered to be a threat to the evil forces.⁹

The assignment that God gives to the church is very crucial and she (church) should be diligent in carrying out the assignment. The church should be serious in her effort to be the light shining in darkness, and also to engage in those functions through which revival will be made to take place in our land.¹⁰ The church of God cannot afford to fail, revival should be made an effective tool for soul winning.

Edward E. Gindson, Glory in the Church, (New York: Harper & Row, 1975), p. 100.

Walter R. Inge, "Prayer Changes Things," Worship, (New York: Harper & Row, 1975), p. 100.

The Ministry of the Church, (New York: Harper & Row, 1975), p. 100.