

# Revivalism, Missions, and Modernism

## 1789-1914

### August 9

#### I. The Birth of Revivalism

Billy did a great job last week informing us about Revival in the America's and in England under such men as Jonathan Edwards, John Wesley and of course George Whitfield. If you didn't hear that session I would encourage you to go back and listen to it on-line.

By way of reminder let me summarize a few important aspects of the Great Awakening as it is often referred to, that is this time period in the 1730's and 1740's.

Solomon Stoddard, who also just so happened to be the grandfather of a man named Jonathan Edwards, defined revival as **“some special seasons wherein God doth in a remarkable manner revive religion among his people and among the unregenerate.”**

So there is both a *rededication* aspect of revival and a *regeneration* aspect of revival.

(I. The Birth of Revivalism)

This was a period bathed in prayer over months and years. It was totally unexpected. No one saw this coming. It was marked by serious preaching of the gospel message and a profound conviction of sin on the part of the hearers. It was also marked by true conversions and changed lives over a long period of time.

There were certainly emotions involved in true revival, but it was the emotions of the people hearing the gospel, not necessarily the emotions of the preacher stirring up the people. That's a big difference.

**Three things may mark true revival:**

**1) It is all the work of God.** The Holy Spirit moves through the preaching of His Word and people are brought to Christ. Because it's

the work of God its almost always unexpected and unplanned. You plan to preach but you can't plan for conversion and revival.

2) **The Revival will conform to the doctrines of the Bible.** Revival can only be extraordinary in degree and intent, not contrary to the nature of Christianity. In other words, true revival doesn't bring about something that isn't Christian anymore – e.g. Mormonism, shakers, etc. or I would argue – “the manipulation of people to bring about a desired response.” That's changing the nature of Christianity.

3) **True revival will result in true conversions and lasting growth in the individual...**true growth over a period of time. Not a flash in the pan, emotional response. No 15 minutes of fame and it's over. This is real and lasting.

**Let me stress at least one more time that in true revival, you can't plan it.** You can plan the meeting, you can pray, you can preach a powerful gospel message and the rest is up to God. At the end of the day, it is up to the Lord to do the work. Up until the late 1700's, the whole of the church for the past 1700 years understood this.

But there would come a day when people began planning and holding meetings where it was assumed and expected that something exciting was going to happen!

***“If we accept the propositions that true revival is a work originating solely with God, that revival is the activity of God in saving souls and sanctifying Christians, and that the faithful proclamation of God's Word only will produce spiritual fruit, then we must conclude from both scriptural truth and history that there is a great difference between revival and revivalism.”*** Iain Murray

Unfortunately, Revival would soon give way to what we will refer to as *Revivalism*.

We will define **Revivalism** as: “The man-engineered, technique-driven, hyper-emotionalism and number's focused approach to religion.”

In his book *“Revival and Revivalism”* by Iain Murray, he would write about this kind of emotionalism, ***“Once the idea gains acceptance that the degree of the Spirit’s work is to be measured by the strength of emotion, or that physical effects of any kind are proofs of God’s action, then what is rightly called fanaticism is bound to follow. For those who embrace such beliefs will suppose that any check on emotion or on physical phenomena is tantamount to opposing the Holy Spirit.”***

And another quote from Iain Murray:

***“Seasons of revival became “revival meetings.” Instead of being “surprising” they might now be even announced in advance, and whereas no one in the previous [eighteenth] century had known of ways to secure a revival, a system was now popularized by “revivalists” which came near to guaranteeing results.”*** Iain Murray

Much of this began in outdoor camp meetings in rural Kentucky in the late 1700’s and early 1800’s. (pic)

A little background. Remember last week when Billy spoke about one of the unintended consequences of putting the Bible into the hands of the common man and letting him interpret for himself? The Catholic Church feared that and to some extent they were right. Prior to the Reformation in the 1500’s you really had two major denominations, the Roman Catholic Church and the Eastern Orthodox Church. That’s an oversimplification but not that far from the truth.

100 years after the Reformation, you have hundreds or thousands of denominations.

What this means is there is no longer a central gatekeeper to the truth or what is supposed to be the truth. The doors are open and anyone gets to decide their version of the gospel, how to conduct a church service, theology, etc. That’s fine if you have the right people in charge.

But when you don't, when you have people who know virtually nothing about the Bible now leading a church, and may or may not have the right motive in why they are leading a church, you can imagine what's going to happen.

Remember I said a moment ago that much of what we will define as *revivalism* began in outdoor camp meetings in rural Kentucky in the late 1700's and early 1800's.

And one of the main problem were many of the people who were experiencing these emotions and events in the camp meetings were becoming leaders in the new denominations and they had zero training in the Bible. They hadn't gone to Bible school or seminary. They didn't know much if anything about theology and to make matters worse, they didn't *want* to know. They had this misguided thought that theology brought about coldness and deadness and they wanted to keep the fires of emotion burning.

They rejected orthodox theology and rejected the respected pastors of the day. They rejected *theological* words for "Bible words" and pushed the laity having power in the church.

One other thing that these new sects and denominations had in common was an intense hatred for the Calvinistic understanding of the gospel which had been a huge influence on most protestants up to this time. The exception were the Methodists led by the Wesley brothers from England. But outside of the Methodists, the Congregationalists, the Presbyterians, and the Baptists of the days were largely Calvinistic in their view of the gospel. That is stressing the sovereignty of God in salvation. God is the first mover in salvation based on his election of the saints.

This would change in the wake of revivalism; Arminianism would come to rule the day. That is if Calvinism stressed God as the first and primary mover in salvation, Arminianism stressed man's free will as the primary mover in salvation.

One word became standard in the midst of *revivalism*, "**Confusion.**"

One pastor wrote of one of these meetings, which occurred on September 10<sup>th</sup>, 1801:

***“In time of preaching, if care is taken, there is little confusion: when that is over, and the singing, and praying and exhorting begins, the audience is thrown into what I call real disorder. The careless fall down, cry out, tremble and not infrequently are affected with convulsive twitching’s.”***

Some of these would continue for several days and nights consecutively.

Hysteria was not the only consequence of Revivalism. Many new denominations were birthed, some *somewhat* Orthodox like the Marshallites, the Cumberland Presbyterian’s and the Disciples of Christ. Other denominations like the Mormon’s and the Shaker’s made no claims for Christianity but saw themselves as new custodians of the truth received from heaven.

Philip Schaff would say, ***“Every theological vagabond and peddler may drive here his bungling trade.”***

See, when truth takes back seat to emotion, when the right interpretation of the Bible becomes secondary to hysteria, the flood gates are open for heresy. To condemn them was to condemn the Holy Spirit and how dare you do that!

### **True Revival vs. Revivalism**

- 1) Revival is God-centered, Revivalism is man-centered.
- 2) The means by which God brings about revival are prayer and the preaching of God’s Word as blessed by the Holy Spirit. The means by which revivalism comes about are a formula, a plan, a strategy to bring about the right emotions so people will make decisions for Christ.
- 3) Revival brings about true conversion and long-term growth, revivalism brings about superficial commitment that fades away quickly when trials come.

## **The Face of Revivalism - Charles Finney (1792-1875) (pic)**

To be honest at the outset, I am not a fan of Charles Finney. He is an important figure in church history, but in my mind, for all the wrong reasons. His theology is bad and his practices are terrible and while many people would distance themselves from him, his theology and his practices are widely used even today in the American evangelical church.

Charles Finney was born in Connecticut in 1792 and in 1794 his parents moved way out west, to West New York. He would grow up and study law and pass the state bar.

He would say he was drawn to the Bible because of its many reference in his law books. In 1821 he had a conversion experience and he immediately began to preach.

At the time Finney was a Presbyterian and was ordained in 1824. He preached and traveled on horseback going from village to village. He was a tall, strikingly handsome, articulate preacher who spoke in a direct, simple fashion, as if he were speaking to a jury.

That would all change as he became more exposed to the camp meeting preachers and he watched with fascination as they whooped up their crowds into great hysteria. By 1832 Finney would reject Calvinism and would write his own systematic theology, although I would never encourage you to read it.

- Finney denies the doctrine of original sin
- He was a moralist in the sense that he denied that real change was brought upon our nature at salvation but that we were now more ready to chose right over wrong.
- He denied Penal Substitution and the doctrine of imputation and followed what is referred to as the Governmental Theory of the Atonement.

**“According to this view, Christ’s death was not a payment of debt on behalf of those whose sins he bore; it was rather an action to satisfy public justice, making it safe and possible for God to forgive those who repent and believe. So the act that secures forgiveness is man’s, not Christ’s.” Iain Murray**

While many would argue that Christ’s work on the cross secures the salvation for all who would believe. Finney would say no, Christ’s work only makes salvation possible. Now it’s up to the individual to believe. There is no true election or God’s choosing. God is not the first mover, man is.

**“The atonement itself does not secure the salvation of any. When a sinner repents that state of feeling makes it proper for God to forgive him.” Charles Finney**

(Finney Slide)

- Finney would become one of the first to advertise his tent meetings in newspapers and through people handing out placards. Promotion now became an integral part of evangelism.
- He would say that revival may be and should be brought about by human means.

In fact he taught that all faithful preachers were able to secure revivals and only one conclusion could be drawn about preachers who failed to do so. You can imagine the damage this caused on individual pastors and the guilt they felt or the failures they assumed they were. Much damage was also caused upon whole congregations as people asked their pastor’s to either bring about revival or resign and “not stand in the way of souls.”

One man wrote to another young pastor who had been toiling in a new town but had not seen “revival yet”, “What have you been about all this time that you have not got a revival before now?”

We'll see in a moment that had men like William Carey and Adoniram Judson or Hudson Taylor fallen into this mentality, they would have quit and India and Burma might still be without the gospel.

- Results become more important than faithfulness!

Faithful Pastor Weekend!

- Pragmatism and what works became far more important than theology.
- The Holy Spirit became an agent at man's disposal and revival was reduced to methodology and manipulation calculated to produce moral results.

His impact would be huge. By some estimates 500,000 people were brought into the church through his preaching.

Finney was one of the first to use what were referred at "**New Measures**", that is new ways of bring about responses from people that had never been used before.

- He was egalitarian in his view of women in ministry. He would encourage women to both pray and preach in his camp meetings.
- He was also one of the first to popularize what was then referred to as the "*anxious bench*", a seat set out front of the stage, where anxious sinners could come to think about their sins and request prayer. The thought was that if you can get them to come forward you have a better chance of getting them to make a decision. Can you think of what this foretold? The altar call.
- The altar call has been part and parcel in so many churches today. Where did it start? Here in the revivalism meetings in the early 1800's.
- He would be one of the first to promote the "prayer of faith" for people to pray to accept Jesus.
- Pragmatism – Let's use what works – not prayer and preaching in and of themselves, it's now advertising, using certain music, emotionalism, manipulation, etc.



## **Lasting Impact of Revivalism on the Modern Church?**

- 1) Pragmatism. The end justifies the means. Whatever works to get people there and get people “saved” was important.
- 2) The altar call and the prayer of faith.
- 3) De-emphasizing God’s sovereignty in salvation and emphasizing man’s personal choice. “God is standing at the door or your heart and knocking and only you can open the door to let Jesus in.”
- 4) Revival’s are planned for. Guaranteed results! With enough planning and the right execution, you can guarantee conversions.
- 5) Numbers equal success and God’s blessing! Get results and get them now!
- 6) Modern Crusade Movements – Billy Sunday, Billy Graham....

Let’s talk about something far more encouraging!

## **II. The Modern Missions Movement**

### **William Carey (pic)**

William Carey was born in England in 1761 to poor parents. His father was a weaver and also taught school to supplement his income and provide for his five children.

William was the oldest child and he devoured adventure books like *Robinson Crusoe* and *Gulliver’s Travels*.

At the age of 17 he attended church and heard the gospel preached and trusted in Christ as his Savior.

He married and began preaching and for a time, walked eight miles each Sunday to preach at a poor church in a neighboring town.

He somehow managed a marriage and three jobs; a cobbler, school teacher and a pastor.

Carey would have a number of significant trials in his life, least of which were his own poor health, the death of an infant child, a wife who would endure a series of mental problems and seemly never enough money to buy adequate food.

In spite of this God was working in Carey's life and giving him a vision for the gospel going to the nations. He spoke about it all the time and was always devouring news of missionaries.

Apparently he was regularly rebuked, **"If God wants to save the heathen, He will do so, without your help or mine."**

Carey even published a paper entitled, "An Enquiry into the Obligations of Christians to Use Means for the Conversion of the Heathen" in which he stated his case for foreign missions. Hardly anybody read it.

Well, at least one person did. He was a Christian doctor named John Thomas. John felt God leading him to India and he needed a helper and William Carey volunteered to go along.

Lest you think all is rosy for missionaries, here's what happened in the first few months after they got there, that was after long conversations with his wife to get her to come with him in the first place.

They landed in Calcutta in November of 1793. Their health turned worse, their living conditions were deplorable, they ran up debts and had no money to pay them, their youngest son died and the two oldest sons ran amuck and were incorrigible. To top it all off, they had zero converts.

Wouldn't you be tempted to say, "The Lord has closed the door"?

If Carey was anything he was faithful.

Seven years later, think about how long seven years is, they moved to Serampore and joined up with a group of Danish missionaries. It was then that they had their first convert. Seven years and one convert!

But, more would follow and soon they had a small church established and then completed the first translation of the New Testament into the Bengali language.

**Thirty-years later Carey had translated the Bible into forty-four languages or dialects and had started schools all over India and Burma and Bhutan . Thousands had come to Christ because of his influence and he became a model for generations of missionaries to come from both England and the America's.**

### **Adoniram Judson**

If William Carey would be one of the first and greatest of missionaries to come from England, then Adoniram Judson would be one of the first and greatest missionaries to come from America.

He was born in August of 1788 in Massachusetts and his father was a pastor. He entered what is now Brown University when he was 16 and graduated Valedictorian when he was 19. Overacheiver!

In the wake of a friends death he rededicated his life to God and in 1808 went to seminary to study the Bible and prepare for ministry. It was here that he knew he had to be a missionary. Someone had to go to the unreached and tell them the gospel. Why not him?

Adoniram would marry a young lady named Ann Hasseltine on February 5<sup>th</sup>, 1812.

Letter to Mr. Hasseltine asking for his daughters hand in marriage:

**“I have now to ask whether you can consent to part with your daughter early next spring, to see her no more in this world ? Whether you can consent to her departure to a heathen land, and her subjection to the hardships and sufferings of a missionary life?**

Whether you can consent to her exposure to the dangers of the ocean; to the fatal influence of the southern climate of India; to every kind of want and distress; to degradation, insult, persecution, and perhaps a violent death? Can you consent to all this, for the sake of Him who left His heavenly home and died for her and for you; for the sake of perishing, immortal souls; for the sake of Zion and the glory of God? Can you consent to all this, in hope of soon meeting your daughter in the world of glory, with a crown of righteousness brightened by the acclamations of praise which shall resound to her Saviour from heathens saved, through her means, from eternal woe and despair?"

Letter to Ann Hasseltine Before Their Marriage

"January 1, 1811. Tuesday Morning

*It is with the utmost sincerity, and with my whole heart, that I wish you, my love, a happy new year. May it be a year in which your walk will be close with God; your frame calm and serene; and the road that leads you to the Lamb marked with purer light. May it be a year in which you will have more largely the spirit of Christ, be raised above sublunary things, and be willing to be disposed of in this world just as God shall please. As every moment of the year will bring you nearer the end of your pilgrimage, may it bring you nearer to God, and find you more prepared to hail the messenger of death as a deliverer and a friend. And now, since I have begun to wish, I will go on. May this be the year in which you will change your name; in which you will take a final leave of your relatives and native land; in which you will cross the wide ocean, and dwell on the other side of the world, among a heathen people. What a great change will this year probably effect in our lives! How very different will be our situation and employment! If our lives are preserved and our attempt prospered, we shall next new year's day be in India, and perhaps wish each other a happy new year in the uncouth dialect of Hindostan or Burmah. We shall no more see our*

*kind friends around us, or enjoy the conveniences of civilized life, or go to the house of God with those that keep holy day; but swarthy countenances will everywhere meet our eye, the jargon of an unknown tongue will assail our ears, and we shall witness the assembling of the heathen to celebrate the worship of idol gods. We shall be weary of the world, and wish for wings like a dove, that we may fly away and be at rest. We shall probably experience seasons when we shall be 'exceeding sorrowful, even unto death. We shall see many dreary, disconsolate hours, and feel a sinking of spirits, anguish of mind, of which now we can form little conception. O, we shall wish to lie down and die. And that time may soon come. One of us may be unable to sustain the heat of the climate and the change of habits; and the other may say, with literal truth, over the grave—*

*'By foreign hands thy dying eyes were closed;  
By foreign hands thy decent limbs composed;  
By foreign hands thy humble grave adorned;'*

*but whether we shall be honored and mourned by strangers, God only knows. At least, either of us will be certain of one mourner. In view of such scenes shall we not pray with earnestness 'O for an overcoming faith,' etc.?"*

Wow! (pic of them both)

The day after their marriage they knelt at the alter of their church and were consecrated for missionary work. The *day after* their wedding!

They set sail for India but the British rulers in India wouldn't let the American's stay. Remember at this time there was no love between the American's and the British, ever heard of the War of 1812?

William Carey met with Adoniram and Ann and suggested they go to Burma as there was a huge need there for the gospel.

They went to Burma and immediately began learning the language and culture and began living as the native Burmese did. They dressed like them and ate like them and eventually spoke like them. Adoniram and Ann would work together on the first translation of the Bible into the Burmese language. That translation is still the official Bible of the Burmese people today.

Like William Carey, it would be years before they would see their first convert. In this case, it would take six years before the first person gave their life to Christ.

Things were looking up. Then a war broke out between the Burmese and the British and the Burmese mistook Adoniram for being British and so threw him into prison for two years. Deplorable conditions – kept in chains, hung up by his feet at night, disease,... horrific!

These two years were difficult times for both Adoniram as he languished in prison and for Ann who was taking care of the family and the church.

Finally Adoniram was released from prison and shortly after Ann died, at the young age of 36. The prophecy came true!

Adoniram would stay in Burma another 24 years and in that time he would establish some 63 churches, mostly among the Karen tribe, hill people of Burma and Siam.

I mention the Karen tribe in particular because our missionaries, Allen and Sam in Thailand, live right on the border of Burma and many of the people in the church they attend are Karen people.

By the time Judson died, there were some 100,000 Karen people baptized as Christians not to mention thousands of other Burmese people.

Even today the name of Adorniram Judson is revered in Burma (Myanmar) and his Bible is the Bible of the Burmese people. Many people celebrate his birthday as a holiday even today in Burma.

## **Hudson Taylor (1832-1905)**

Hudson Taylor was born in England and his father was a Methodist preacher. At first he walked away from the faith of his parents but at 17 years of age he made a profession of faith and never looked back and so after committed himself to being a missionary in China.

In 1851 he purposely moved into a poor neighborhood near Yorkshire in England so he could know what it was like to live poor and depend on God to meet his needs. Pretty mature decision for a 19 year old.

Taylor left England for China in September of 1853 and arrived five months later (don't ever complain about the long plane ride on short-term missions trips) in March of 1854.

His first 18 preaching tours around the vicinity of Shanghai, saw zero converts and lots of ill feelings toward him by the Chinese people.

Four years later he married Maria Jane Dyer, whose own father had died as a missionary in China. She was in China working at a girls school when Taylor met her.

Months after they were married they adopted a Chinese boy as their own and a year later had their own child, but who died as a small baby. A year later they had another child, a girl named Grace.

When many of us might be considering quitting, Taylor at this time wrote a letter to his sister and here is a quote from that letter from February 14, 1860:

***“If I had a thousand pounds China should have it—if I had a thousand lives, China should have them. No! Not China, but Christ. Can we do too much for Him? Can we do enough for such a precious Savior?” Hudson Taylor***

In his first six years in China, Taylor worked in Shanghai, Swatow, and Ningpo, learning the language, translating the Scriptures, even running a hospital for a time. During this time he resigned from his missions

agency and went independent, eventually forming his own missions agency, the China Inland Mission. (Now OMF – Overseas Missionary Fellowship).

CIM would not make direct solicitations for funds, would not guarantee a salary to its workers, but would share all of its income evenly. It would appoint people from different nations and different denominations and would even grant both single and married women fully missionary appointment, radical for the day.

Hudson Taylor would spend 51 years in China!

To say that Hudson Taylor walked to his own drumbeat was an understatement. But then he had to, there were very few who had gone before him and those that had had been largely unsuccessful and hadn't stayed very long.

One of the things that Hudson Taylor did that was very radical for the day was to start dressing like the Chinese and eating what they ate and living like they lived.

***“I am fully satisfied that the native dress is an absolute prerequisite to reaching these people.”***

***“Quietly settling among the people, obtaining free, familiar, and unrestrained communication with them, conciliating their prejudices, attracting their esteem and confidence, and so living as to be examples to them of what Chinese Christians should be, require the adoption not merely of this costume but also of their habits...The foreign appearance of chapels and indeed the foreign air given to everything connected with religion have very largely hindered the rapid dissemination of the truth among the Chinese. But why such a foreign aspect be given to Christianity? The Word of God does not require it...It is not their denationalization but their Christianization that we seek.”*** Hudson Taylor

Taylor would insist that everyone who was an official China Inland Mission's missionary, lived exactly this way.



Taylor would make several trips back and forth to England drumming up missionaries to join him in the task of bringing the gospel to China.

When he got there, there was a handful of Chinese Christians in the whole of the country. By the time of his death, in 1905, there were 205 mission stations, 849 missionaries, and an estimated 125,000 Chinese Christians.

Today? The most conservative estimates are 26 million and many people think there are likely closer to 200 million Chinese Christians in China today.

Chances are these people are genuine believers. You have no other rational reason to go to church and worship Jesus other than you really believe He is the Savior of the world.

In America there may be as many as 10 million Christians (probably high).

It's easy to think that heaven is a bunch of white people singing *How Great Thou Art*. We might be singing that hymn but we're more likely to be singing it in Chinese than we are in English!

**“No other missionary in the nineteen centuries since the Apostle Paul has had a wider vision and has carried out a more systematized plan of evangelizing a broad geographical area than Hudson Taylor.”**

Ruth Tucker

I wish we could talk about:

David Livingstone in Africa

Mary Slessor in Nigeria, Africa – her biography is our book of the month for August – PLEASE read it.

So many more.

## **We are building our own generation**

Shon & Sarah – going to India next month

Joseph & Jessica at Radius

Chad and Martha – going to PNG next year

Sarah Brown – going to the Punjabi people

Emily Loewen – going to work amongst the deaf unreached peoples of the world

Pat & Ky Murphy -

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So much more I wish we could talk about:

**Charles Spurgeon – The Prince of Preachers in England**

**John Darby and the Plymouth Brethren Movement and the beginning of Dispensational Theology – rapture being a different event from the second coming, 7 years of Trib., Millennial Kingdom, etc.**

**Billy Sunday – “I want every boy to have a Bible in his hand and Jesus in his heart.”**

**Dwight Moody – Moody Bible Institute**

**William Booth and the founding of the Salvation Army**

**Azusa Street Revival and Pentecostalism and the Assemblies of God Denomination**

**Karl Barth and Dietrich Bonhoeffer**

## **Billy Graham Crusades and his influence in America and now Franklin Graham**

So much more...

Christ said he would build his church. It has not been an easy or primrose path to get there. Our history has been filled with shameful things.

But our history has also been filled with amazing and brave and faithful men and women who in the face of adversity and at the cost of their livelihoods and sometimes their lives, have stood tall for Christ. Would we do the same.

Next week...