

# A Brief History of Revivals

Mack Tomlinson | *illbehonest.com*

God has always brought revivals to souls, to churches, to nations, to missionary work. The First Great Awakening, 1730's - 1780's. Britain was gone morally, horrendously worse really than even what we see now in America. God raised up George Whitefield and the Wesley's, Jonathan Edwards in New England. And just through the preaching and praying of God's people, God sent rivers from heaven and turned the tide. And the Gospel swept the British Isles. George Whitefield preached in Boston when the population was 12,000. And Benjamin Franklin estimated there were 14,000 people there that day. They came from everywhere. It was like a prairie fire.

Fast forward, 1857-58, The Fulton Street Prayer Revival. How many of you know about that? Fulton Street, Manhattan. Right near Ground Zero Memorial. Right there. The North Dutch Reformed Church, Fulton Street. A young evangelist - a city missionary they called him - Jeremiah Lanphier had a burden. He said, you know, I think it's a good idea maybe to start a prayer meeting for businessmen. He did. He put up fliers about it. And first day, he was there and nobody else. And then suddenly, two came in. Three came in. Five came in. And within months, around New York City, there were 50,000 people gathering at noon in prayer meetings. They couldn't find buildings big enough to hold them. And that prayer revival, hundreds began to be converted. And within a year, there were 50,000 recorded conversions and people joined the evangelical churches in the day when you didn't walk the aisle, sign a card and you're a member. No, you were examined to see if your profession was credible. 50,000 filled the churches of New York City and the greater area. And that prayer revival spread west like a prairie fire. All around the south to South Texas all the way to California, God ignited a huge season of revival in prayer.

Fast forward quickly. 1949-52. Hebrides Islands of Scotland. Duncan Campbell was an evangelist. He was preaching in England, but there were two little praying ladies in Scotland in the Hebrides. Peggy and Sue? (from the room) Catherine. Mack: Thank you, historian. Peggy and Catherine. Peggy and Sue, that's a Western song. I'm sorry. Anyway, two little women whose ministry was intercession in their house. They had never been married. Hey, guys and ladies, if you don't ever get married, if God doesn't do that, give yourself to a ministry of intercession. It's the biggest need. A lot of young guys want to preach and teach. How many of them want to give themselves to a life of prayer?

So these ladies started praying. They had a burden. And they called their minister to come by and they said we believe God wants to bring Duncan Campbell here. Would you send him a telegram or whatever? Well, he respected these ladies, so he did. Campbell replied, I couldn't come for two years. I'm just booked. So the minister comes back and tells the ladies. To which one of them said, that's what Duncan Campbell says, but God says he's coming. He's preaching on a platform in a conference in England. He's supposed to bring the closing message and he's overwhelmed with this burden that he needed to leave and go to Scotland. He does. He leaves. Ultimately, gets on a boat to go to the Hebrides Islands. He arrives, I don't know, two days, three days later. He gets off the boat and there's a man standing there who

says, "Are you Mr. Campbell?" "Are you walking with God?" "Well, there's a meeting in the church tonight you're going to preach at." He said, "How did you know I was coming?" He said, "How did you know to come?" God was at work. And the Spirit of God swept those Hebrides Islands. Many, many conversions. I don't have time to tell that story.

Fast forward, 1971, Western Canada. Bill McLeod. They were having a crusade - two weeks of meetings. The Spirit of God fell. And hundreds were converted. They couldn't find buildings big enough for the crowds that began to come. And it swept Western Canada and parts of the Northern states, Northwestern states in America.

God has always brought revivals. And when the Holy Spirit comes, He comes suddenly, surprisingly, mysteriously. Sometimes like a gentle breeze, sometimes like a gushing wind. It's like a snowball rolling down a snow-covered hill. It's growing. It's like a gentle, light rain increasing and more keeps coming until a downpour soaks everything. The wind was blowing. That's how you explain Pentecost. The wind was blowing. Acts 4, they prayed. The house was shaken. And they're all filled with the Spirit of God. The wind was blowing. We need, brothers and sisters, for the wind to blow. Your church needs it. Our church needs it.