

Brushy Fork Baptist Church

A Light to the Counties and to the World

NEWSLETTER

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A Welcomed Touch from God

Are We Ready for Revival?

Many churches and pastors speak about revival and desire a revival. Are they really ready and prepared for revival to descend upon them? Revival at Brushy Fork Baptist Church is scheduled for this month (May 20-23), so we need to be asking ourselves - Are we ready for revival?

However, before we can determine if we are ready for revival we need to have a good definition of revival. According to our culture, revival is "a period of renewed religious interest" and/or "an often highly emotional evangelistic meeting or series of meetings" (Webster's Dictionary 10th Edition). Yet, is this a good theological or biblical definition of revival? Elmer Towns helps us by defining revival as, "an outpouring of God in His people when Christians: repent of sin, renew their love to God, recommit themselves to God's purposes, invest extended time in prayer, [in] communion with God, and [in] meditation, and experience blessings in Christian service" (The Ten Greatest Revivals Ever). Towns has highlighted some key aspects of revival in his definition. First, he has seen the need for revival rising out of a separation from God due to his people's disobedience. You do not have to read much of the Old Testament to realize that separation through disobedience is a regular occurrence in the life of Israel. Second, Towns has highlighted the need for repentance in the lives of God's people. He has also highlighted specific areas of life where true repentance will be manifested (renewed love for God, recommitment to God's purposes, prayer, communion, meditation, and Christian service). The Bible reveals all of these aspects of revival through Israel and the church as they experience God's touch of revival.

Are we ready for Revival? I fear that we are not, but we certainly can be before our revival services at the end of the month. Towns has two principles of revival that will help us get ready for our revival services. First, God's people

must be ready for revival. Second, God must show up for revival to occur. What Towns means is that the popular notion that we just announce a revival service or pray for revival to hit our church is totally wrong headed. In contrast, God calls his people to repent of their sins and wait for God to show up (see the book of Isaiah as an illustration).

Towns' point is that we cannot expect revival if we are merely passive or praying general prayers. Instead, we as a church have to be active. We must seek the Lord in prayer asking him to reveal sin in our lives and give us the power to repent of it. We must then repent (turn away from, i.e. quit doing) the sin that God reveals. Then and only then will we be ready to wait for God to descend upon us in revival. However, we must not think that are repentance requires God's descent upon us and our receiving his

blessings through revival. Ultimately, it is up to God when and how he descends and brings revival, yet he will not descend upon us until we are prepared through repentance and seeking him. So, let us take the remaining weeks and prepare our hearts to receive revival from the Lord on May 20-23 if he so wills.

written by Chris Clemans

Missionary Stories

Northampton, Massachusetts was a buzz in 1750 with the news that the esteemed Jonathan Edwards had been released from his post at his church. For the next year and a half, Edwards had the pleasure of living in Northampton and periodically filling the pulpit at his old church, much to the chagrin of his opposition. During this interim between ministries, Edwards was approached to go to Virginia or Scotland to pastor, but he decided to go to Stockbridge, Massachusetts as a missionary to the Indians. On August 8, 1851, Edwards arrived in Stockbridge to

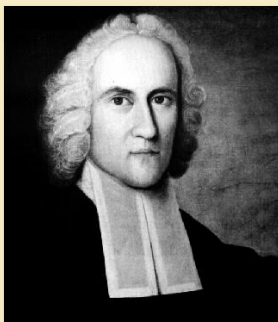


minister to the Indians and as pastor of a small congregation of settlers.

Edwards had to feel it was the Lord's will to make this transition, because the Williams family who had opposed him vehemently in Northampton had a cousin of some standing in Stockbridge. Edwards entered this post with some considerable opposition, but he took up the work of a missionary. His congregation of settlers never numbered more than eighteen, but his work amongst the Indians was not without success. In fact, the Williams family had to reconsider some of their judgments on Edwards after a time in Stockbridge. They thought that from his time in Northampton, Edwards was stilted and unfriendly and that he spent all together too much time in his study and lacked personal skills. However, after a short time in Stockbridge it was the Indians who took to Edwards and his ministry among them grew. Years after Edward's death, some of his relatives went back to Stockbridge and were greeted by many of the Indians that Edwards had ministered. Their reception was of gratitude towards their esteemed missionaries Mr. and Mrs. Edwards. A debate may be raised whether the Indians were more inclined towards Jonathan or his wife Sarah. Sarah would no doubt win this argument, but not to the extent that some would have supposed at the start of his ministry in Stockbridge.

Edwards was able to use his experience discerning the movement of the Spirit during the first great awakening in Northampton to gauge the sincerity and motivations of the Indians in their confession of conversion. He was also able use his network to secure a better education for the Indians. Yet, Edwards greatest work may have been in influencing the "six nations" that had banned together to stay on the side of the British and not to go over to the French during the French and Indian War (Seven Years War

[1754-63]). Edwards was concerned for the spiritual health of the Indians if they were to go to the side of the French; because, the French position was to minister to the Indians, but not treat them as full fledge members of their churches. In Edwards' eyes, the Indians would be denied the gospel and their freedom gained in Christ.



Jonathan Edwards is often remembered for his great theological mind, his writing of the missionary biography of David Brainerd, or his short presidency of Princeton College (now Princeton University); yet without Edward's time as a missionary we would not have some of his greatest work. It was during his time at Stockbridge that Edwards wrote the vast majority of his publications especially his major treatises. It was during this time of pursuing the gospel's reception amongst the Indians that he had his most successful ministry in the eyes of his biographers. Many think of Jonathan Edwards a great theologian but we forget that he was a great missionary too.

written by Chris Clemans

Youth Shout Out

Don't forget Brushy Fork Baptist Church at 7:00 PM Sunday night starting May 6 is the new place to be if you are from 6th to 12th grade. We are totally amping up our Youth Night and are seeking to make it as exciting as our outing to Laser Tag. Come out and see if we accomplished the task.

written by Josh McClure

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