

March 2009

## Awakening to God II

*And that, knowing the time,  
that now it is high time  
to awake out of sleep:  
for now is our salvation nearer  
than when we believed.  
Romans 13:11 (KJV)*

Dearest Partners in Prayer, Shalom,

Please reread my February prayer letter. If you did not save your letter, we do have it posted on line at [billyebrim.org](http://billyebrim.org).

To recap, on June 29, 2008 at our Sunday afternoon corporate prayer as we were praying about the then upcoming election in November, about Israel, and about the nations, the Lord interrupted us with a strong word that came through me:

One thing will save America.

And it is NOT the election.

*It is an awakening to God!*

One thing will help Israel and the nations.

*It is an awakening to God.*

At the same time inspired thoughts raced through my mind: *The best person in the world could be elected President, and it wouldn't help if America did not awaken to God. America's history. The Great Awakening. The part of prayer in an awakening.*

And so, I followed the direction. I studied history and those moves of God that history labels as *awakenings*. My February letter includes many marvelous facts of *The Great Awakening* of the 1700's out of which America was born.

Then I came to see that America not only was born out of an *awakening*, but she was preserved through an *awakening* prior to her most critical hour, The Civil War. And I promised in my February letter to write next about the simultaneous awakenings in the USA and in Northern Ireland (Ulster) in the years 1857-1859.

### Surprises

Two things surprised me when I became cognizant of certain facts. The first surprising fact met me in Northern Ireland where Lynne Hammond, Shelli, and I went in November after the *Autumn Assembly*. Pastors Paul and Karen Brady of Living Rivers Church in Ballymena had left a book in my room. *Ireland's Lost Heritage* by David Carnduff<sup>1</sup> is a study of the visitations

of God in Ireland, beginning with Patrick. The following from Chapter 4 on "The Ulster Awakening" sounded a keynote in my spirit:

In the 19th Century, Ulster experienced an Awakening of such proportions that among other things, an estimated 100,000 people were swept into the Kingdom of God...it happened within the space of one year—1859. The outpouring of the Spirit that came in that year was so concentrated when it hit Ulster like a tidal wave, that it carried everything in front of it....

Is there any difference then between a Revival and an Awakening? A case could be made for saying that there is; for 'a Revival' could be described as 'a visitation of God's Spirit on God's people,' but 'an Awakening' as 'a time of such intense visitation that both the Christian and non-Christian communities are affected.'

An 'awakening' however, is something different. It is considered to be the effect of revival on the community at large, including those who are outside the Christian faith. William McLoughlin calls it a 'cultural revitalization' and explains that, while 'revivals alter the lives of individuals; awakenings alter the world view of a whole people or culture.'...1859 was truly 'an Awakening,' for the whole public at large was affected.

When I got to the first service at Living Rivers, Pastor Paul reminded me—and this was my first surprise—that the Ulster Awakening coincided with what is called *The Fourth Great Awakening* in America. And he held up a copy of *Revival Fires* by Wesley Duewel.<sup>2</sup>

*Why does that come as a surprise?* I thought. *I have read that book many times. And I think I am the one who recommended it to Pastor Brady.* So I picked up the book and read again about the simultaneous awakenings on opposite sides of the Atlantic.

An amazing fact: They both began with prayer. And the prayers began on the same day, September 23, 1857. This is not to say that others had not prayed before, and were even then praying. But the outpourings that resulted in the awakenings can be traced specifically to that date. First we'll look at the awakening in America.

### **1857-1859 Awakening in America**

When I spoke on this *awakening* at the Copeland's Ministers Meeting in January, Ann Stratton came running up with a book entitled *The New York City Noon Prayer Meeting* by Talbot W. Chambers.<sup>3</sup> (Pastors Dan and Ann Stratton have led a congregation for years in the financial district of New York City where the 19th Century prayer meetings began.)

In 1858, Talbot W. Chambers, as pastor of the North Dutch Church, Fulton Street, NY, wrote the account of the noon prayer meetings that began there. The Fulton Street church stood in the exact vicinity of where the World Trade Center subsequently stood—between West Street and Greenwich, crossing at Fulton.

The church building dated back to pre-Revolutionary War days. Its first immediate environs were homes of families of Dutch descent. Chambers wrote:

But of late years the tendency has been quite the other way. The rapid and constant growth of the city demanded ever-increasing accommodations for its trade and commerce. Streets once filled with the families of substantial citizens were invaded by shops and warehouses... [dwellings] were replaced by stately blocks adapted solely to business purposes...the attendance at the North Church...was reduced almost to a skeleton. Yet there was no decrease...in the population immediately around the old edifice. But...the character of the people was greatly changed....

The church board decided to hire someone to reach the new population. They hired Jeremiah Lanphier, a middle-aged businessman. Lanphier worked from dawn to dark visiting people in the offices and shops, with little results. He grew weary. But he discovered that if he took an hour in the middle of the day to pray at the church he was revitalized spiritually and physically. Chambers writes:

Waiting upon the Lord he renewed his strength...his own soul was cheered and refreshed, and he was enabled to set forth...with a quickened sense of the Divine favour....

This fresh, personal experience of the blessedness and power of prayer suggested to Mr. Lanphier's mind that there might be others, especially those engaged in business, to whom it would be equally pleasant and profitable to retire for a short period from secular engagements and engage in devotional exercises...a neat handbill was prepared.... At twelve o'clock, on the 23rd day of September, 1857...the Missionary took his seat to await the response to the invitation given.... After a half hour's delay, the steps of one person were heard as he mounted the staircase. Presently another appeared and another, until the whole company amounted to six.... On the next Wednesday...the six increased to twenty...and the subsequent week...forty were present.

Within a few weeks the place was packed and pastors from other churches who attended the Fulton Street meeting began prayer meetings across the city. Those in attendance felt "an awesome sense of God's Presence." Wesley Duewel reports:

They prayed...expected answers, and obtained answers. Newspapers began to report on the meetings and the unusual spirit of prayer.... By March 19 a theater opened for prayer, and half an hour before it was time to begin, people were turned away. Hundreds stood outside in the streets because they could not get inside.... Meetings began in February in Philadelphia. Soon Jayne's Hall was overfilled, and meetings were held at noon each day in public halls, concert halls, fire stations, houses, and tents. The whole city exuded a spirit of prayer....

Almost simultaneously noon prayer meetings sprang up all across America [in most of the major cities and in rural areas]. By the end of the fourth month prayer fervor burned intensely across the nation.... This was not a revival of powerful preaching. This was a movement of earnest, powerful, prevailing prayer.... In some towns, nearly the entire population was saved... a spirit of prayer occupied the land, as though the church had suddenly discovered its real power.... *The Presbyterian Magazine* reported as of May...50,000 converts.... In February, a NY Methodist magazine reported 8,000 conversions in Methodist meetings in one week.... The Louisville daily paper reported 17,000 Baptist conversions in 3 weeks during March. And according to a June statement, the conversion figures stood at 96,216-and still counting....

*The Washington National Intelligencer* reported that in several New England towns not a single unconverted person could be found.... Of the 30 million people living in the US, nearly 2 million were won to Christ during the revival. The moral change was so great across the country that the Louisville, Kentucky, daily paper reported that the Millennium had arrived.

The fourth great awakening was above all a revival of unity. Denominational backgrounds were forgotten....

#### **The Invisible Cloud of God's Presence**

A canopy of holy and awesome revival influence—in reality the presence of the Holy Spirit—seemed to hang like an invisible cloud over many parts of the US, especially over the eastern seaboard. At times this cloud of God's presence even seemed to extend out to sea. Those on ships approaching the east coast at times felt a solemn, holy influence, even 100 miles away, without even knowing what was happening in America.... Revival began aboard one ship before it reached the coast. People on board began to feel the presence of God and a sense of their own sinfulness. The Holy Spirit convicted them, and they began to pray. As the ship neared the harbor, the captain signaled, "Send a minister."

#### **Revival in the Army**

Because of the bitter tensions of the Civil War...it seemed that the southern states would not be as powerfully influenced by the revival as the northern ones.... An unusually powerful revival broke out among the southern troops stationed around Richmond, Virginia, in the autumn of 1861. It began in the hospitals among the wounded...and then spread into the camps as these men returned to active duty. Prayer meetings were organized and hundreds converted...by the end of the war at least 150,000 soldiers had been converted...the percentage among the southern troops was 21 percent.

I can see that in times of crisis America was born out of an awakening and then preserved in an awakening to God. It can happen again.

#### **Awakening in Ulster (Northern Ireland)**

News of the awakening in America reached around the world. And ministers from Northern Ireland came to see what was happening at the Fulton Street meetings.

But strangely enough, it was on September 23, 1857, the day the first Fulton Street meeting was held, that four young Irish men, newly converted, began to pray in a small rural schoolhouse near Kells. (Pastor Brady took us to the place!)

Certain things about their prayers were quickened to me. They prayed, "Lord, pour out Thy Holy Spirit on this district and country."

David Carnduff reports their *focus* and *faith* as follows:

Over 40 years later [Jeremiah] Meneely [one of the four] recalled, "many of the people ridiculed our praying for an outpouring of the Spirit, saying that He had already been poured out on the day of Pentecost. But we replied that the Lord knew what we wanted and we kept right on praying until the power came."

The four met in a little schoolhouse in Kells...which has been described as "the epicenter of the revival" and soon their numbers grew.... Clearly in evidence was their singleness of mind, a unity of purpose, a refusal to be...sidetracked from their agreed goal...an unshakeable conviction that they were acting in the will of God...they knew where they were going and were determined that nothing or no one would stop them from getting there. Again in Meneely's own words in 1903, "We did not allow the unsaved in the prayer meeting. It was a fellowship meeting of Christians met for the one great object of praying for an outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon ourselves and upon the surrounding country. This was the one great object and burden of our prayer. We held right to the one thing and did not run off to anything else."

As stated above, the resultant power of God made available "swept 100,000 into the kingdom of God in only one year—1859."

"I would like to call attention to another of the secret causes of the blessing granted in that work—the *faith in God* that marked the workers. I never met anyone who seemed to have it so deeply settled in his heart as a principle, that the way to honour God and to please Him was to expect great things from Him, as James McQuilkin [one of the four]. He delighted to speak of the great things God was about to do, and spoke of them as if he saw them done." (Selected Letters with Brief Memoir of J.G. McVicker, Echoes of Service, London, 1902).

McQuilkin's understanding of putting faith into practice was influenced by the writings of George Muller....

A mark of the outpouring was intense conviction of sin. Even upon people in the streets: ...Describing the revival at Ballymena and elsewhere, John Shearer writes of some who "were suddenly pierced by a sharp sword and their agonized cry for help was heard in the streets and in the fields. Here, for example, is a farmer returning from market in Ballymena. His mind wholly intent on the day's bargain. He pauses, takes out some money and begins to count it. Suddenly an awful presence envelops him. In a moment his only thought is that he is a sinner standing on the brink of hell. His silver is scattered, and he falls upon the dust of the highway, crying out for mercy."

### **For Now...**

There's so much more to tell. And I will write more later. Especially about the second surprising fact I discovered. *The First Great Awakening and the Fourth occurred at times of financial disaster!*

For now, we're doing what we are led to do. We are praying here at *Prayer Mountain in the Ozarks* every Wednesday at 12 noon CST. We are praying in unity, focused and in faith, for an *Awakening to God*. Please join us. It doesn't matter if you pray for Revival, the Rains, the Glory, an Outpouring, or an *Awakening*. As the Irish boys said, "God knows what we mean." We stream live, split-screen with the Living Rivers Church in Ballymena.

Many from around the world pray with us. They often write or email. And so far, I've read all of them. Here's what a few are saying:

"...we had an awakening in Australia around the 1800's and 1900's. In the state of Victoria attendances totaled a quarter of a million when the population of Victoria was only one million." (MJ) "The KCM Communications Dept is joining with you in faith on Wednesdays for a great awakening in America...via live streaming and can hear you loud and clear. The picture is great, too!" (Ft.Worth, TX) "I find this to be a wonderful, uplifting, and inspiring prayer time!" (LL, Long Island, NY) "Since I got laid off from my job Feb 9, I am at home, so I believe God wants me to join in with you all. I long for an awakening in NY! We need one!" (LG) "Tuesday night, the Lord led me to The Awakening Prayer time. I was there ready & waiting on Wednesday morning." (R, North Bend, OR.) "Praise God to be able to join you. I have little ones and have been unable to go to prayer." (IV) "Here I am in England watching." (BG) "We linked up with you last Wednesday, what an awesome prayer time. We are in Scotland in the UK. While praying I saw the earth against the dark night background, As I watched, I saw smoke, like incense rising up from over the earth and meeting altogether at the top of the earth, it then was 'breathed' in high above the earth...as He inhaled He was pulling the prayers upward unto Him." (The W Family) "I am from Glen Burnie, MD. I am in agreement and in unity with all the prayers that are being prayed. It's so exciting to be a witness of these things and to be a part of help bringing it into existence through prayer." (J.H.)

We have heard from Canada, Europe, Israel, South Africa, Australia, and across America. Prayer groups at EMIC (Ft. Worth) and Living Word (Minneapolis) and others join us. How wonderful it is to pray in unity.

On April 26, Pastor Brady, from Ballymena, will minister at Dan Stratton's Faith Exchange Church in New York. Representatives from the two awakening sites will meet. On Monday they will pray near the site of the Fulton Street Church. I *may* join them in person. I will certainly join them in prayer. We will stream it from here and talk with them by phone. Or, we may stream it from there.

Thank you for staying connected in this. Let us ask and expect greatly of the Lord to His Glory.

Love in Him,



Billye Brim

<sup>1</sup> David Carnduff, M.Th., *Ireland's Lost Heritage*, (IPCB Publications, printed by Antrim, BT41 1 AB, 2003)

<sup>2</sup> Wesley L. Duwel, *Revival Fire*, (Zondervan, Grand Rapids MI, 1995) pp 125-160

<sup>3</sup> Talbot W. Chambers, *The New York City Noon Prayer Meeting*, (Wagner Publications, Colorado Springs, CO)