

Invite God to Come

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I love back-stories! These are tales giving background to significant events.

Valentine's Day February 14th, 1904 was a Sunday. A church hosted an evening service where parishioners shared about their experience of love. One young girl stood and spoke passionately about how she experienced the love of God and how it was impacting her life. She spoke of the joy of forgiveness, the blessing of being a Child of God, and the tenderness and care of her Lord Jesus.

Many of the people present were deeply moved by this young person's witness. They began to ask the Lord to bring them to that place of love and passion for their Saviour. Many remembered how their walk had once been and began seeking in prayer for the Lord to re-ignite the flame of this relationship. A spiritual hunger was quickened in the hearts of people.

Evan Roberts' Message

In the Fall of that year, Evan Roberts delivered a message to a group of 17 parishioners where he encouraged them to do four simple things –

1. Stop any activity they knew did not glorify God.
2. Stop anything that fell into a "grey area," thus further consecrating themselves to the Lord through godly living.
3. Immediately respond to the nudges of the Holy Spirit – i.e. to bless a neighbor with a simple act of kindness.
4. To give glory to God publicly as they had opportunity – not preaching but simply acknowledging the goodness of God in their daily lives!

Each was a simple adjustment in lifestyle to center their lives more on glorifying the Lord in their daily lives!

All 17 agreed to live by this simple "Rule of Life" – Remember the "Rule of Life" in our Book of Common Prayer (1962) on Pp. 555?

In 6 months, 90,000 had converted to Christ with many more to follow. Crime fell where justices had no cases to adjudicate. Other profound social change became evident in the wake of thousands converting to Christ. This profound spiritual stirring went viral circling around the globe. Such was the impact of the 1904-05 Welsh Revival. This is chronicled in the 26-minute video "The Role of Prayer in Spiritual Awakening" by Dr. J. Edwin Orr. You can Google this or look up this profound lecture at YouTube.

Change

What would it take to see such change in our lives, our churches, our communities? The US has experienced a number of national spiritual awakenings and smaller regional stirrings. For example, a National Prayer Movement beginning in New York in the mid-19th C. swept across the US and resulted in over 1 million converts in a year. Many Episcopal Churches were profoundly affected, seeing membership grow from dozens to hundreds!

There has never been a national Spiritual Awakening in Canada. There have been regional and community awakenings. There have been several stirrings along denominational lines – notably among Maritime Presbyterians and Baptists, for example.

One respected student of spiritual awakening, George Otis, Jr. summed things up this way – God brought renewal... because He was invited to come!