

Can Revival Be Declared? Divine Agency, Discernment, and the Authority to Name Spiritual Awakening

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Abstract

When Christians call a gathering or movement a revival, they do more than report heightened religious activity. They attribute unusual agency to God, claim that this agency can be known, participate in shaping the movement through the act of naming it, and distribute institutional authority and historical legitimacy. This essay asks who may responsibly make that claim and by what criteria it should be received. It develops a constructive theology of revival through a layered method in which Scripture and Christian theology provide the normative grammar, historical cases test how claims are mediated and received, sociology clarifies social mechanisms without adjudicating divine agency, and interreligious comparison functions analogically rather than evidentially. Drawing on cases from the Great Awakening through the 2023 Asbury Outpouring, the essay argues that revival is an intensified and socially diffusive work of the Holy Spirit that renews the Church in fidelity to Jesus Christ and bears fruit in repentance, holy love, reconciliation, justice, and mission. Its distinctive proposal is a three-stage model of responsible naming: immediate testimony, provisional ecclesial recognition, and fuller historical confirmation. Beneficiary institutions may participate in discernment, but they cannot make their own judgment conclusive. Responsible recognition instead depends on converging witnesses, accountable practices, and enduring fruit.

Keywords: revival; Holy Spirit; discernment; revivalism; ecclesiology; global Christianity; Wesleyan-Holiness; Asbury Outpouring

Scripture quotations are from the New International Version (2011) unless otherwise indicated.

1. Introduction: A Declaration That Does Something

Christians should be able to speak confidently about the activity of the Holy Spirit. A church unable to recognize grace has confused caution with faithfulness. Scripture does not present God as absent from the Church, nor does it train believers to regard repentance, reconciliation, spiritual gifts, healing, or renewed mission as merely human events. The Church is right to pray

for awakening, to expect God to answer, and to testify when people encounter the mercy and holiness of Jesus Christ.

Yet a problem arises when testimony becomes certification.

At emotionally powerful gatherings, the language of revival can move quickly. Worship is fervent. People confess sin, pray at an altar, report healing, or recover hope. Attendance grows. A leader announces that God is doing something unprecedented. News travels through pulpits, print, livestreams, podcasts, and social media. Participants may return home convinced that they have witnessed revival. None of this should be mocked. Each feature may accompany a genuine work of the Spirit. None is self-interpreting.

Crowds can gather without repentance. Music can move the body without renewing the mind. Public confession can become coercive. An altar can fill while injured relationships remain unreconciled. An event can generate spiritual resolve that disappears when ordinary responsibility returns. Institutional enthusiasm can borrow the vocabulary of Pentecost while resisting the accountability that Pentecost creates.

The question is therefore more exact than whether revival is possible: **What kind of claim is made when an event is called a revival, who gains the authority to make that claim, and how should the Church test it?**

This essay argues that a revival claim operates on four levels at once. It is **theological**, because it attributes unusual activity to God. It is **epistemic**, because it claims that human beings can recognize that activity. It is **performative**, because naming an awakening can extend and shape it. It is **institutional and political**, because the designation confers legitimacy, attracts attention and resources, identifies authorized interpreters, and helps determine which memories will become normative. The last two dimensions do not invalidate the first two. They do, however, make accountable discernment indispensable.

The central claim is that revival may be **testified to** in the present, **recognized provisionally** through ecclesial discernment, and **confirmed more fully** through enduring fruit and historical reception. It cannot be conclusively self-certified by the leader, platform, congregation, denomination, university, or ministry whose authority stands to increase through the designation.

This is not a demand for silence until historians arrive. It is a theology of truthful testimony governed by humility, multiple witnesses, and the freedom of the Spirit.

The argument is offered from a Wesleyan-Holiness location and informed by a Salvation Army tradition of conversion, sanctification, testimony, open-air witness, and practical service. It is not bounded by that location. Reformed, Pentecostal, Catholic, Orthodox, Anglican, evangelical, and global Christian sources reveal both genuine differences and an important ecumenical convergence: spiritual intensity deserves neither reflexive suspicion nor automatic trust. The Spirit is welcomed without being domesticated, and claims about the Spirit are tested by their conformity to Christ and by the life they produce.

This essay uses a layered constructive method. Biblical exegesis and Christian theology supply the normative grammar for what may count as revival: they identify the agent, content, and ends of a specifically Christian claim. Historical comparison does not prove divine agency; it tests how revival claims are mediated, contested, institutionalized, and remembered. Sociology of religion explains mechanisms of gathering, charisma, diffusion, and routinization without deciding whether God acted. Interreligious comparison is analogical only: it identifies recurring forms of religious revitalization precisely to show why formal resemblance cannot establish the presence of the Holy Spirit. Constructive theology then brings these materials into a proposal for responsible Christian naming. The cases are strategically contrastive rather than statistically representative: they span different periods, ecclesial traditions, regions, media environments, and relations of race, gender, colonial power, and institutional authority. They were selected because each exposes at least one recurring problem of naming — mediation, technique, transnational reception, Indigenous agency, institutionalization, contested social fruit, or platform-age amplification — rather than because they constitute a complete genealogy of revival.

2. Clarifying the Vocabulary

The terms *revival*, *awakening*, *renewal*, *revivalism*, and *revitalization* are often treated as synonyms. They overlap, but collapsing them conceals the argument.

Revival will mean an intensified work of the Holy Spirit that renews Christian persons and communities in fidelity to Jesus Christ and extends the Church's witness through repentance,

faith, holy love, reconciliation, justice, and mission. The word *intensified* names an unusual concentration, visibility, reach, or urgency. It does not suggest that the Spirit was absent before the event or that ordinary means of grace are spiritually inferior.

Awakening will refer to the wider social diffusion of such renewal across congregations, networks, regions, or populations. A local revival may contribute to an awakening, although the terms have often been exchanged in historical usage.

Renewal is the broader category. It includes slower and less spectacular reanimation through liturgical reform, monastic recovery, catechesis, theological retrieval, ecclesial repentance, social holiness, and institutional change. Christian history contains renewals that do not resemble modern evangelical revival meetings. Medieval monastic reforms, the Protestant and Catholic Reformations, Orthodox spiritual movements, modern liturgical renewal, and the Second Vatican Council each complicate any claim that revival must display a single emotional or organizational form.¹

Revivalism names the methods used to seek, organize, intensify, or reproduce revival. Prayer meetings, preaching tours, camp meetings, altar calls, testimony, music, publicity, protracted meetings, small groups, and digital networks may all become revivalist means. The distinction matters because a theology of revival emphasizes divine agency, while revivalism raises questions about human agency. The two need not be enemies. The use of means is not equivalent to manufacture. Problems arise when technique becomes proof, when predicted results become a claim upon God, or when organizers treat outcomes as validation of their platform.

Revitalization movement is a comparative category drawn from anthropology. Anthony F. C. Wallace famously defined it as a deliberate, organized, conscious attempt by members of a society to construct a more satisfying culture.² The category can illuminate recurring patterns across Christian, Indigenous, Islamic, Hindu, Buddhist, Jewish, and new religious movements. It cannot decide whether the Holy Spirit is acting. Social science describes forms, causes,

1 Michael J. McClymond, "Revival and Renewal Movements," in *The Wiley Blackwell Companion to World Christianity*, ed. Lamin Sanneh and Michael J. McClymond (Chichester: Wiley Blackwell, 2016), 244–62; Aleksandra Djurić Milovanović and Radmila Radić, eds., *Orthodox Christian Renewal Movements in Eastern Europe* (Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017).

2 Anthony F. C. Wallace, "Revitalization Movements," *American Anthropologist* 58, no. 2 (1956): 264–81, <https://doi.org/10.1525/aa.1956.58.2.02a00040>.

networks, and consequences; Christian theology makes the additional judgment that a movement corresponds, or fails to correspond, to the God revealed in Jesus Christ.

These definitions guard against two reductions. The first is theological inflation, in which every successful program becomes revival. The second is secular reduction, in which every revival is explained away as collective emotion, identity formation, or social stress. A movement can be historically conditioned, psychologically experienced, organizationally carried, and still be understood theologically as a work of grace. Divine and creaturely causation are not competitors. At the same time, a social explanation of the movement's form cannot establish its divine origin.

3. The Biblical Grammar of Renewal and Discernment

The English term *revival* is not a technical biblical category. Scripture instead supplies a constellation of images: God gives life, returns a people from exile, restores covenant faithfulness, pours out the Spirit, raises the dead, renews the mind, reforms communal practice, and sends witnesses. Any Christian theology of revival must be built from this wider grammar rather than read a modern meeting format back into the text.

3.1 Israel's renewal is covenantal and public

The prayer “Will you not revive us again, that your people may rejoice in you?” (Ps. 85:6) addresses a covenant God whose restoration encompasses forgiveness, righteousness, peace, and the land. Josiah's reform in 2 Kings 22–23 joins recovered Scripture, public covenant renewal, the dismantling of idolatrous practice, and repaired worship. Ezra and Nehemiah likewise connect the reading of Torah with confession, material responsibility, and the rebuilding of communal life. The prophets refuse a revival reduced to religious excitement. Isaiah 58 joins true fasting to the loosening of injustice, care for the hungry and unhoused, and the repair of ruined places.

The pattern is decisive. Biblical renewal is never only interior. It reorders worship, memory, relationships, economic conduct, and public faithfulness. It may include grief and joy, but emotion is caught within covenant response.

3.2 Pentecost is event, interpretation, and social formation

Acts 2 is often treated as the controlling Christian image of revival, and rightly so. The Spirit comes in power. The disciples speak in other tongues. A crowd gathers. Peter proclaims the crucified and risen Christ. About three thousand people receive the word and are baptized.

Yet Luke does not ask the reader to accept the event merely because it is extraordinary. The same signs generate competing explanations. Some hear God's wonders; others conclude that the disciples are drunk. Experience does not settle interpretation.

Peter therefore interprets the event through Israel's Scripture and centers it on Jesus. Joel's promise, Jesus' death and resurrection, repentance, baptism, forgiveness, and the gift of the Spirit belong together. The Spirit's presence does not make interpretation unnecessary. It makes faithful interpretation urgent.

Luke then carries the account beyond spectacle. Those who receive the message devote themselves to apostolic teaching, fellowship, the breaking of bread, and prayer. Economic relationships change. Possessions are shared. Public witness and mutual care deepen together. Willie James Jennings reads Acts as the Spirit's disruptive formation of a people across boundaries they would not otherwise cross.³ Pentecost is not simply a more intense religious experience. It is the creation of communion in difference under the lordship of Jesus.

Pentecost thus supplies a grammar for revival claims. A work of the Spirit is Christological, scripturally interpreted, penitential, communal, materially consequential, boundary-crossing, and missional. The visible signs matter, but their meaning becomes clearer through the people they form.

Acts also prevents Pentecost from becoming a picture of instantaneous ecclesial purity. The community formed in Acts 2 soon confronts deceit (Acts 5:1-11), inequity in the distribution of food (Acts 6:1-7), and conflict over the inclusion of Gentiles (Acts 10-15). The same Spirit who creates communion also drives the Church into correction, structural response, and wider fellowship. Mixed fruit, therefore, does not by itself disprove divine action. The more searching

³ Willie James Jennings, *Acts: A Theological Commentary on the Bible* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2017).

question is whether a community remains corrigible under the gospel and whether its conflicts are drawn toward truth, justice, holiness, and communion.

3.3 Openness and testing are one practice

Paul's instruction in 1 Thessalonians 5:19-22 holds together commands that revival discourse often separates: "Do not quench the Spirit," "do not treat prophecies with contempt," and "test them all." These imperatives are addressed to a community, not to isolated spiritual consumers. Paul similarly directs the Corinthian assembly that "the others should weigh carefully what is said" (1 Cor. 14:29), placing charismatic speech within corporate judgment and edification. Openness without testing becomes credulity; testing without openness becomes functional unbelief. Discernment is not resistance to the Spirit but one of the practices through which the Spirit protects and matures the Church.

First John makes the Christological test explicit: "do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits" (1 John 4:1). First Corinthians 12–14 adds an ecclesial and ethical frame. Charisms are diverse gifts for the common good. No ecstatic manifestation can displace the confession that Jesus is Lord, the primacy of love, intelligibility in the assembly, or ordered participation by the body. Galatians 5 names fruit that no claim to power may bypass. Matthew 7 adds a warning with particular force for revival cultures: spectacular works performed in Jesus' name do not, by themselves, prove obedient relationship with him.

Kirsteen Kim draws four converging criteria from this biblical witness: confession of Jesus as Lord, ethical fruit, charisms ordered by love, and liberating good news for the poor.⁴ Her formulation is especially important because it places pneumatology within global and ecumenical discernment. The Spirit is not the possession of any community. A church may witness to the Spirit, but it cannot convert that witness into ownership.

These passages are not a technical biblical checklist for modern revivals, and the argument does not treat every narrative detail as normative. The move from description to criterion is canonical and theological: recurring scriptural patterns identify the ends toward which the Spirit directs the

4 Kirsteen Kim, "How Will We Know When the Holy Spirit Comes? The Question of Discernment," *Evangelical Review of Theology* 33, no. 1 (2009): 93-96, <https://lausanne.org/occasional-paper/case-study-how-will-we-know-when-the-holy-spirit-comes-the-question-of-discernment>.

Church — confession of Christ, repentance, truth, love, communal edification, justice, and mission. Later movements need not reproduce Pentecost's phenomena to be judged by those ends. Conversely, phenomena that resemble Acts do not authenticate themselves apart from the canonical pattern of life to which they point.

4. Four Dimensions of a Revival Claim

Calling an event a revival sounds descriptive, but the speech performs more than one function.

4.1 The theological dimension: “God has acted”

At its strongest, revival language attributes an intensified work to the triune God. This claim cannot be reduced to saying that many people attended, that participants were sincere, or that something unusual occurred. Christian speech identifies the agent as the Holy Spirit, the content as conformity to Jesus Christ, and the end as the glory of God and the renewal of creation.

This theological claim is ontological before it is promotional. If God acts, that action does not depend on a leader's announcement. The Church receives rather than produces the Spirit. The language of gift therefore resists both institutional possession and technological control.

4.2 The epistemic dimension: “We know what happened”

Divine action must be humanly recognized through testimony, Scripture, tradition, communal judgment, and fruit. This recognition is real but fallible. Sincere people can misinterpret experience. Leaders can mistake organizational success for anointing. Critics can mistake unfamiliarity for disorder. Historical narratives can omit those who paid the cost of a celebrated movement.

The epistemic question is not solved by choosing experience or doctrine. Experience requires interpretation, and doctrine requires embodied judgment. The Church needs a disciplined form of practical wisdom that receives testimony without making testimony self-authenticating.

4.3 The performative dimension: “The naming helps create the event”

Speech-act theory reminds us that some utterances do not merely report reality; they act within it.⁵ To name a gathering “revival” can invite pilgrimage, encourage testimony, focus prayer, create expectations, connect scattered episodes, and give participants a shared identity. The claim may become one of the causes of the movement's diffusion.

This is not necessarily deception. Christian testimony has always circulated grace through narration. The Gospels, Acts, missionary letters, conversion accounts, hymns, newspapers, radio, and social media have carried reports of divine action. The issue is not whether revival is mediated. It is whether its mediation is truthful, accountable, transparent about uncertainty, and ordered toward Christ rather than institutional self-enlargement.

4.4 The institutional and political dimension: “This event, leader, or place now bears authority”

Revival language distributes power. It can establish a sacred center, confer charisma on leaders, attract donations and visitors, protect methods from criticism, and shape denominational memory. Once an event is framed as a sovereign work of God, questions about safeguarding, theology, money, racial exclusion, leadership conduct, or measurable fruit may be dismissed as attacks on the Spirit.

Here the identity of the speaker matters. A participant testifying “God met me” makes a different claim from an institution advertising “Revival is here.” The first offers accountable witness. The second can function as self-certification, especially when the institution gains status from the label.

The theological, epistemic, performative, and institutional dimensions cannot be separated in practice. Responsible revival speech must therefore ask not only, “Is this true?” but also, “Who is authorized by this claim, who is excluded from its interpretation, what conduct does it excuse, and what forms of life does it produce?”

5 J. L. Austin, *How to Do Things with Words*, 2nd ed., ed. J. O. Urmson and Marina Sbisa (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1975).

5. Contested Christian Grammars of Revival

Christian traditions do not share a single account of awakening. Their differences reveal recurring tensions between sovereignty and means, experience and institution, spontaneity and formation.

5.1 Edwards: neither intensity nor irregularity decides

Jonathan Edwards wrote amid the controversies of the eighteenth-century Great Awakening. In *The Distinguishing Marks of a Work of the Spirit of God*, he argued that bodily effects, unusual intensity, imagination, imitation, imprudence, and departures from customary order neither prove nor disprove the Spirit's work. Positive marks concern the elevation of Jesus, opposition to sin, greater regard for Scripture, truth, and love.⁶ In *Religious Affections*, his most demanding positive sign is Christian practice. Gracious affection becomes the settled business of life.⁷

Edwards is helpful precisely because he was a defender and critic of revival at once. He refused to let opponents discredit awakening by pointing to excess, but he also denied defenders the right to turn excess into evidence. Strong affection may be appropriate to a great object. Its strength does not establish its source.

5.2 Wesley: witness is confirmed in holy love

John Wesley likewise refuses rationalistic dismissal and religious presumption. The Spirit may directly assure believers of adoption in Christ. Yet no supposed witness should be trusted when separated from its fruit. The tree is known by its fruit, and spiritual testimony is confirmed through love, joy, peace, patience, gentleness, goodness, faithfulness, meekness, and self-control.⁸

6 Jonathan Edwards, *The Distinguishing Marks of a Work of the Spirit of God* (1741), https://www.monergism.com/thethreshold/sdg/edwards/edwards_distinguishingmarks.html.

7 Jonathan Edwards, *A Treatise Concerning Religious Affections* (1746), pt. 3, sign 12, <https://www.ccel.org/ccel/edwards/affections.vi.xi.html>.

8 John Wesley, "The Witness of the Spirit, Discourse II," Sermon 11, especially secs. II.7 and IV.6–V.3, *The Wesley Center Online*, <https://wesley.nnu.edu/john-wesley/the-sermons-of-john-wesley-1872-edition/sermon-11-the-witness-of-the-spirit-discourse-two/>.

Wesley's critique of “enthusiasm” did not reject emotion or vigorous devotion. It opposed claims to divine inspiration without scriptural and rational warrant.⁹ When he narrated the Methodist revival, he appealed not only to crowds and conversions but to repentance, changed conduct, endurance, love of God and neighbor, and “all the fruits of holiness.”¹⁰

The Wesleyan contribution is especially significant because sanctification prevents revival from being defined as a temporary interruption. If grace perfects love, then awakening must enter habits, relationships, work, money, speech, and care for the neighbor. The Salvation Army's *Handbook of Doctrine* preserves this grammar by affirming decisive experiences of grace while directing believers to judge growth by obedience and deepening love rather than intensity alone.¹¹

5.3 Finney: means, responsibility, and the danger of manufacture

Charles Grandison Finney represents a decisive shift in revivalist agency. In *Lectures on Revivals of Religion*, he rejected the idea that revival was a miracle in the sense of an event unrelated to appropriate means. Revival follows when people use divinely appointed means under the ordinary laws of moral action.¹² His approach democratized responsibility and encouraged intentional evangelistic labor. It also helped create a culture of expected results, measurable decisions, protracted meetings, and techniques designed to precipitate response.

The theological danger is not the use of means. Preaching, prayer, music, testimony, invitation, and organization are ordinary creaturely instruments. The danger is an operational logic in which technique appears to secure divine action, visible response validates technique, and reported numbers certify revival. A Wesleyan account can affirm prevenient grace and responsible cooperation without treating grace as an outcome organizers can guarantee.

9 John Wesley, “The Nature of Enthusiasm,” Sermon 37, secs. 11–13, *The Wesley Center Online*, <https://wesley.nnu.edu/john-wesley/the-sermons-of-john-wesley-1872-edition/sermon-37-the-nature-of-enthusiasm/>.

10 John Wesley, “On Laying the Foundation of the New Chapel, Near the City-Road, London,” Sermon 132, secs. 5–9, *The Wesley Center Online*, <https://wesley.nnu.edu/john-wesley/the-sermons-of-john-wesley-1872-edition/sermon-132-on-laying-the-foundation-of-the-new-chapel-near-the-city-road-london/>.

11 The Salvation Army, *The Salvation Army Handbook of Doctrine* (London: Salvation Books, 2010), 191–94, especially 193, <https://www.salvationarmy.org/books/salvation-army-handbook-doctrine>.

12 Charles G. Finney, *Lectures on Revivals of Religion* (1835), lecture 1, <https://www.ccel.org/ccel/finney/revivals.iii.i.html>.

5.4 Pentecostalism: charismatic power, global polycentrism, and discernment

Pentecostal and Charismatic traditions widened the modern grammar of revival through expectations of Spirit baptism, healing, prophecy, tongues, deliverance, and missionary empowerment. Yet Pentecostalism cannot be reduced to an American export from Azusa Street. Global historians have emphasized multiple centers, transnational networks, Indigenous agency, and local cosmologies. Ogbu Kalu, for example, interprets African Pentecostalism as an African response to African questions rather than a derivative copy of Western religion.¹³

Pentecostal theology at its best also refuses an isolated phenomenology of gifts. Simon Chan locates Pentecostal experience within the Christian spiritual tradition and the Church's worship, while Amos Yong offers a pneumatological account of discerning spirits that is both hospitable and normed.¹⁴ The International Catholic-Pentecostal Dialogue provides a notable ecumenical convergence: charismatic and institutional dimensions are co-essential, authority is service under Christ, and gifts require communal discernment by clergy and laity under truth and love.¹⁵

5.5 Catholic and Orthodox renewal: reception, communion, and ordinary holiness

Catholic Charismatic Renewal, emerging in the United States in 1967 and spreading globally, shows how a spontaneous experiential movement can be received, contested, organized, and integrated within a sacramental and hierarchical church. Valentina Ciciliot's study of its early development demonstrates that prayer groups and charismatic communities did not simply bypass ecclesial authority; they negotiated recognition, structures, and criticism.¹⁶ The resulting tension is not a defect to eliminate. It can be a site of discernment, provided authority does not quench gifts and charisma does not exempt itself from accountability.

13 Ogbu Kalu, *African Pentecostalism: An Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008).

14 Simon Chan, *Pentecostal Theology and the Christian Spiritual Tradition* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2000); Amos Yong, *Discerning the Spirit(s): A Pentecostal-Charismatic Contribution to Christian Theology of Religions* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2000).

15 International Catholic-Pentecostal Dialogue, "Do Not Quench the Spirit: Charisms in the Life and Mission of the Church," report of the sixth phase, 2011-2015, Information Service 147 (2016): 47-62, esp. secs. 72-83, 115-23, <https://www.christianunity.va/content/unitacristiani/en/dialoghi/sezione-occidentale/pentecostali/dialogo/documenti-di-dialogo/testo-del-documento-in-inglese.html>.

16 Valentina Ciciliot, "The Origins of the Catholic Charismatic Renewal in the United States: Early Developments in Indiana and Michigan and the Reactions of the Ecclesiastical Authorities," *Studies in World Christianity* 25, no. 3 (2019): 250-73, <https://doi.org/10.3366/swc.2019.0267>.

Eastern Orthodox reflection broadens the category further. Paul Gavriluk's Orthodox appreciation of the 2023 Asbury events identifies analogues in unceasing prayer, tears, ascetic repentance, and liturgical participation in Pentecost. He also insists that authenticity is tested through fruit, time, and incorporation into the Church's structures.¹⁷ Orthodox renewal movements in modern Eastern Europe similarly show that reanimation may travel through monasticism, lay brotherhoods, liturgy, pilgrimage, and resistance to political domination rather than the Protestant revival meeting.¹⁸

These traditions differ substantially in sacramentality, ecclesial authority, sanctification, charisms, and the relationship between event and institution. Still, they converge on a central principle: neither spontaneity nor official recognition is sufficient by itself. Charisma and order correct one another under Christ.

That convergence should not obscure the article's distinctive question. Edwards, Wesley, Pentecostal discernment, and Catholic-Orthodox reception chiefly ask which marks make a claimed work of the Spirit credible. This essay adds a second-order problem: who may publicly name the work, at what stage, and with what authority. The constructive model below therefore joins traditional tests of doctrine and fruit to temporal and institutional controls on the act of declaration itself.

6. Histories That Test the Claim

Historical cases do not provide a simple checklist. They expose how revival is remembered, mediated, and contested. The cases that follow are not treated as commensurable units: they differ in duration, documentation, ecclesial setting, political context, racial and gender dynamics, and institutional aftermath. They function as contrastive tests of the argument, not as evidence for a single causal genealogy. Where influence is claimed, it is tied to identifiable networks or scholarship; where only resemblance is at issue, the comparison remains typological.

¹⁷ Paul L. Gavriluk, "The Asbury Revival and Lent: An Orthodox Appreciation," *Public Orthodoxy*, February 28, 2023, <https://publicorthodoxy.org/2023/02/28/the-asbury-revival-and-lent/>.

¹⁸ Djurić Milovanović and Radić, *Orthodox Christian Renewal Movements*.

6.1 The Great Awakening: was it discovered or invented?

The First Great Awakening occupies a foundational place in evangelical memory. Yet historians have debated whether the colonies experienced one coherent awakening. Jon Butler provocatively called the Great Awakening an “interpretative fiction,” arguing that later narratives exaggerated the unity and scale of diverse local events.¹⁹ Frank Lambert shifted attention from later invention to contemporary construction. Revivalists themselves used print, correspondence, travel, and transatlantic networks to connect scattered occurrences into a common story of extraordinary divine work.²⁰ Thomas Kidd has retained the category while portraying a contested field of moderate evangelicals, radicals, and anti-revivalists rather than a unanimous movement.²¹

This debate yields a crucial theological insight. The awakening was neither a pure event later contaminated by narration nor merely a publicity campaign. Narration belonged to the event. Print allowed distant communities to recognize themselves within a common work, intensified expectation, and created a translocal evangelical public.

The performative force of naming is therefore ambivalent. It can bear faithful testimony and help an awakening travel. It can also impose coherence, suppress counter-testimony, and convert a complex history into a usable institutional origin story. The right response is not to demand unmediated revival, which has never existed, but to demand honest mediation.

6.2 Finney and the Second Great Awakening: when results become evidence

The revivals associated with the early American republic expanded through camp meetings, voluntary societies, itinerant preaching, frontier networks, and new measures. They also intersected with abolition, temperance, women's activism, denominational competition, Indigenous dispossession, and the market culture of a rapidly changing nation. Nathan Hatch's influential account emphasized the democratizing effects of revival-era Protestantism, while later

19 Jon Butler, “Enthusiasm Described and Decried: The Great Awakening as Interpretative Fiction,” *Journal of American History* 69, no. 2 (1982): 305–25, <https://doi.org/10.2307/1893821>.

20 Frank Lambert, *Inventing the “Great Awakening”* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999).

21 Thomas S. Kidd, *The Great Awakening: The Roots of Evangelical Christianity in Colonial America* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2007).

surveys have stressed the variety of revival forms, conversion practices, and social consequences. The period cannot be reduced to a single narrative of democratization or reform.²²

Finney's confidence in means created energy for evangelism and reform. It also sharpened a durable temptation: to infer divine favor from decisions counted, seats filled, funds raised, or institutions expanded. Numbers can identify reach. They cannot measure repentance, truth, reconciliation, or holiness. Statistical success may accompany revival, but it cannot serve as its theological certificate.

6.3 Wales and Mukti: media, gender, and transnational reception

The Welsh Revival of 1904–1905 illustrates the intimate relationship between religious experience, modern media, and social change. Newspaper reporting did not simply observe the movement. It amplified testimonies, expectations, and the fame of Evan Roberts. Edward Gitre's account situates the revival within modernization, technology, and new practices of selfhood.²³ The movement produced powerful memories of confession, prayer, changed conduct, and public impact, but later narration has also repeated inflated statistics and romanticized social claims. Roberts's exhaustion and collapse warn against treating a leader's unlimited availability as proof of spiritual faithfulness.

Reports from Wales were among several currents moving through global evangelical and holiness networks, but Mukti should not be treated as a derivative episode or merely a prelude to Azusa. At Pandita Ramabai's Mukti Mission in western India, a movement of prayer and charismatic experience arose among a community largely composed of women and girls in 1905. Allan Anderson places Mukti within the multiple global origins of Pentecostalism before Azusa Street.²⁴ Yan Suarsana shows how later missionary and Pentecostal narratives helped construct Mukti as a recognizable “Pentecostal” revival.²⁵ The case therefore does two things at once: it

22 Nathan O. Hatch, *The Democratization of American Christianity* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989); Kip Richardson, “Revivals, Awakenings, and Conversion in American Protestantism,” *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Religion* (2018), <https://doi.org/10.1093/acrefore/9780199340378.013.423>.

23 Edward J. Gitre, “The 1904–05 Welsh Revival: Modernization, Technologies, and Techniques of the Self,” *Church History* 73, no. 4 (2004): 792–827, <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0009640700073054>.

24 Allan Anderson, “Pandita Ramabai, the Mukti Revival and Global Pentecostalism,” *Transformation* 23, no. 1 (2006): 37–48, <https://doi.org/10.1177/026537880602300106>.

25 Yan Suarsana, “Inventing Pentecostalism: Pandita Ramabai and the Mukti Revival from a Postcolonial Perspective,” *PentecoStudies* 13, no. 2 (2014): 173–96, <https://doi.org/10.1558/ptcs.v13i2.173>.

unsettles a genealogy in which innovation travels only from Western male centers, and it warns that the categories by which movements are remembered may be retrospective.

6.4 Korea and Azusa: Indigenous agency and contested belonging

Korean Protestant revivals from 1903 to 1935 likewise arose within transnational exchange and national crisis, yet became distinctly Korean. Public repentance, dawn prayer, Bible study, evangelism, and leadership by figures such as Kil Sŏnju helped indigenize Protestant Christianity amid war, epidemic, social disruption, and Japanese imperial expansion. Sung-Deuk Oak's work resists the older claim that these revivals were merely passive or otherworldly.²⁶ Their spiritual and political meanings were multiple, and the history cannot be reduced either to missionary strategy or nationalist resistance.

Azusa Street in Los Angeles, beginning in 1906 under William J. Seymour's leadership, became a catalytic center within this already moving network. Its worship challenged racial and gender hierarchies in ways that were both real and incomplete. Cecil Robeck's historical reconstruction emphasizes the mission's interracial character and global influence.²⁷ Keri Day presses further, interpreting Azusa's embodied religious life as a radical critique of racialized American belonging.²⁸ The movement's later denominational routinization, including the reassertion of segregation and male control in parts of Pentecostalism, shows why the first moment cannot be the only evidence. A revival may disclose a reconciled possibility that its institutional heirs later betray.

Across these four cases, cross-border circulation did not erase local agency. Testimony, people, prayers, periodicals, and theological expectations moved through networks, but communities received and transformed what traveled. The comparisons therefore support a polycentric account of revival without collapsing distinct ecclesial, racial, gendered, and political settings into one event or one originating center.

26 Sung-Deuk Oak, "Major Protestant Revivals in Korea, 1903-35," *Studies in World Christianity* 18, no. 3 (2012): 269-90, <https://doi.org/10.3366/swc.2012.0025>.

27 Cecil M. Robeck Jr., *The Azusa Street Mission and Revival: The Birth of the Global Pentecostal Movement* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2006).

28 Keri Day, *Azusa Reimagined: A Radical Vision of Religious and Democratic Belonging* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2022).

6.5 The East African Revival: confession, fellowship, and contested social order

The East African Revival began in northern Rwanda in the 1930s and spread through Uganda, Rwanda, Burundi, Kenya, Tanzania, and Congo. It is among the most enduring modern Christian revival movements, yet it remains less central in North Atlantic revival narratives than it should be. The *balokole*, “the saved,” practiced public testimony, confession, restitution, disciplined fellowship, evangelism, and the crossing of some ethnic and ecclesiastical boundaries. African leaders and ordinary believers were not secondary carriers of a missionary awakening. They gave the movement its language, social force, and durability.²⁹

Derek Peterson's work complicates celebratory accounts. Revivalists formed translocal solidarities that challenged ethnic patriotisms, kinship obligations, customary authority, and colonial definitions of social order. Their radical truth-telling could expose greed, adultery, theft, and violence, yet the movement also required negotiation and ecclesial discipline as it was domesticated within church and civil life.³⁰

This case exposes the inadequacy of a simple “good effects” test. Effects are judged from within contested moral worlds. Restitution may be liberation for one person and social disruption for another. Confession may be truthful or coercive. Refusal of ethnic loyalty may enact Christian catholicity or evade responsibilities of justice. Discernment must therefore attend not only to whether life changed, but to the theological and ethical character of the change, the freedom of those involved, and the voices of those who bore its consequences.

6.6 Asbury 2023: an outpouring in a platform age

On February 8, 2023, students remained after chapel at Asbury University in Wilmore, Kentucky, for prayer, worship, confession, and testimony. The gathering continued for sixteen days and drew visitors from around the world. The university generally preferred the term Outpouring, and key leaders resisted a premature verdict. Zach Meerkreebs later summarized

29 Daewon Moon, *African Initiative and Inspiration in the East African Revival* (Leiden: Brill, 2022).

30 Derek R. Peterson, *Ethnic Patriotism and the East African Revival: A History of Dissent, c. 1935–1972* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012).

that posture directly: “We don’t know and we will let history and folks name it what they want.”³¹

That restraint is itself theologically significant. The institution did not refuse testimony, but it distinguished hospitality toward an event from ownership of its final interpretation.

Asbury also demonstrates that digital mediation is not an external layer added after a revival begins. K. Macy Burkett's analysis argues that Generation Z users shared and consumed #AsburyRevival TikTok content in a search for connection and reduced uncertainty after the COVID-19 pandemic.³² A sociological account of uncertainty does not refute participants' theological testimony. It identifies a human condition within which that testimony became compelling and transmissible.

Christopher Whyte's 2026 comparison of Azusa and Asbury advances the discussion by examining the aesthetics and ethics through which observers affirm or critique revival.³³ Judgments about calmness, order, spontaneity, emotional style, race, and respectability are never neutral. A quiet room is not inherently more authentic than expressive worship. Nor is visible intensity inherently more open to the Spirit. Aesthetics can conceal cultural privilege by making one community's bodily habits appear universal.

Asbury therefore offers an especially useful contemporary test case rather than a settled verdict. It included spontaneous student participation, repentance, worship, institutional efforts at stewardship, rapid social-media diffusion, and ecumenical visitation. It also occurred within a university whose historical identity already included repeated revival narratives. Expectation, memory, institutional culture, and divine openness need not be mutually exclusive. The event should neither be dismissed as socially conditioned nor certified from its atmosphere, scale, or institutional testimony alone. Its longer historical reception remains incomplete.

31 Asbury University, “The Outpouring at Asbury University,” accessed August 20, 2026, <https://www.asbury.edu/about/revival-history/outpouring/>; Zach Meerkreebs, “Asbury Outpouring,” under “Was it Revival?,” accessed August 20, 2026, <https://www.zachmeerkreebs.com/asbury-outpouring>.

32 Burkett, “Generation Z and Faith,” 204–21.

33 Christopher Whyte, “From Azusa to Asbury: On the Aesthetics and Ethics of Revival,” *Pneuma* 48, no. 1 (2026): 9–38, <https://doi.org/10.1163/15700747-bja10146>.

7. What Social Science Can and Cannot Explain

Revival scholarship weakens when theology and social science are treated as rival total explanations.

Émile Durkheim's account of collective effervescence helps explain how gathered bodies generate heightened energy, shared symbols, and a sense of realities larger than the individual.³⁴ Max Weber's analysis of charisma and its routinization illuminates how extraordinary authority becomes office, rule, succession, and organization.³⁵ Wallace's revitalization model connects movements to cultural stress, prophetic vision, communication, organization, adaptation, and transformation. Contemporary media studies show how algorithms, visual styles, testimony, and identity needs affect diffusion.

These accounts ask essential questions. Why now? Why this population? Why this leader? Why did one testimony travel while another disappeared? How did a temporary gathering become an institution? Whose cultural style was treated as evidence of holiness? Which social anxieties made the message plausible?

None of those questions decides whether God acted. Christian theology has never needed grace to occur without bodies, histories, needs, or institutions. The incarnation itself forbids a spirituality that treats material mediation as contamination. If the Spirit heals lonely people through a gathering shaped by post-pandemic anxiety, the anxiety does not make the healing unreal. If print connects believers across the Atlantic, print is not therefore a counterfeit spirit. If organizational routines preserve a movement's gifts, routinization is not simply decline.

The reverse error is equally serious. Because patterns of religious revitalization recur outside Christianity, formal resemblance cannot establish Christian revival. Islamic traditions of *tajdid* and *islah*, for example, join return, purification, reform, and faithful adaptation; modern Buddhist revival movements have likewise combined devotional reform, education, print, institutional innovation, and responses to colonial modernity. These parallels are analogical, not evidential.

34 Émile Durkheim, *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life*, trans. Karen E. Fields (New York: Free Press, 1995).

35 Max Weber, *Economy and Society: An Outline of Interpretive Sociology*, ed. Guenther Roth and Claus Wittich (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1978), 246–54.

They help identify recurring social forms, but they do not supply evidence that the Holy Spirit is present in a Christian movement.³⁶

Christian discernment therefore requires more than morphology. It must ask whether a movement is Christological, ecclesial, ethical, and eschatological, while remaining humble about the Spirit's freedom and attentive to truth, beauty, justice, and grace beyond familiar boundaries. Social science and interreligious comparison can sharpen the questions; neither can answer the theological claim on the Church's behalf.

8. The Ethical Burden of Revival Speech

Revival claims can create environments of extraordinary generosity, courage, repentance, and hope. They can also intensify vulnerability. The greater the claim to divine immediacy, the greater the duty of safeguarding.

8.1 Coercion can imitate surrender

Repeated invitations, public pressure, prolonged services, sleep deprivation, emotionally directive music, authoritative prophecy, compulsory confession, and the threat of “resisting the Spirit” can produce visible response without free consent. None of these elements is automatically abusive. Their combination can become coercive when participants are denied meaningful freedom to pause, refuse, question, or seek counsel.

Research on spiritual abuse commonly identifies patterns of coercive control, manipulation, exploitation, secrecy, censorship of decision-making, and demands for obedience within a religious frame.³⁷ Revival leaders must therefore ask not only how many responded, but whether people retained agency, received appropriate care, and were protected from the misuse of spiritual authority.

36 For conceptual comparison, see Anthony F. C. Wallace, “Revitalization Movements”; Mohammad Hashim Kamali, *Tajdīd, Iṣlāḥ and Civilisational Renewal in Islam* (Herndon, VA: International Institute of Islamic Thought, 2018), <https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctvkc66vh>; and Steven Kemper, *Rescued from the Nation: Anagarika Dharmapala and the Buddhist World* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2015). These examples are analogical comparisons of recurring forms, not evidence of theological equivalence or of the Holy Spirit's presence.

37 Lisa Oakley and Justin Humphreys, *Escaping the Maze of Spiritual Abuse: Creating Healthy Christian Cultures* (London: SPCK, 2019).

8.2 The leader's body is not expendable

Revival histories often sanctify exhaustion. The leader preaches without rest, counsels through the night, becomes permanently available, and is praised for surrender. The collapses, illnesses, family costs, or later instability that follow are treated as unfortunate prices of anointing.

This is a theological failure. Sabbath, creaturely limitation, shared leadership, and pastoral care are not obstacles to the Spirit. A movement that consumes its leaders or volunteers has not yet learned to distinguish sacrifice from institutional extraction. The well-being of leaders is one of the fruits to be discerned, not a private matter outside the revival's moral record.

8.3 Marginalized and injured witnesses belong to discernment

Celebratory histories privilege platform testimony. Discernment must also hear those at the edges: women whose labor sustained the movement but whose authority was later restricted; racial minorities welcomed symbolically but excluded structurally; local residents displaced by crowds; persons with disabilities whose lack of healing became shame; survivors silenced to protect a leader's reputation; LGBTQ persons discussed as symbols rather than neighbors; poor communities used as evidence of mission without receiving power.

These voices are not hostile data external to theology. First Corinthians locates discernment in a body whose apparently weaker members receive special honor. Acts repeatedly shows the Spirit forcing the Church to hear unexpected witnesses. If public claims of revival render criticism spiritually suspect, the movement has insulated itself from one of the means by which God may correct it.

8.4 Negative fruit cannot be offset by scale

Institutions often treat abuse, financial opacity, doctrinal manipulation, or racial injustice as unfortunate exceptions outweighed by conversions and attendance. Christian moral reasoning does not permit simple arithmetic. A large benefit does not sanctify preventable harm. Good fruit deserves gratitude, and injured people deserve truth, repair, and justice. Both must be included in the final account.

9. A Constructive Model: Discernment by Converging Witnesses

The historical cases now return the argument to its governing claim: revival may be testified to immediately, recognized provisionally, and confirmed more fully through enduring fruit and reception. No beneficiary institution should treat its own judgment as conclusive.

The model proposed here is polycentric reception by converging witnesses. It differs from frameworks that primarily identify marks of the Spirit by adding two questions those frameworks often leave implicit: who is authorized to name a movement, and when that naming should carry public authority. Confidence grows as distinct witnesses and forms of evidence converge, while every stage remains open to correction.

9.1 Three stages of responsible recognition

Stage	Responsible public claim	Evidence and guardrail
Testimony	"God met me/us here."	First-person testimony and immediate fruit. Honors encounter without certifying the whole movement.
Provisional recognition	"We perceive signs of unusual renewal."	Scripture, theology, five tests, and multiple witnesses. Interested institutions may speak but should disclose their interest and invite external testing.
Historical confirmation	"Over time, this movement has been received as revival."	Enduring fruit, institutional embodiment, harms, diffusion, and later testimony. Reception is revisable and must include marginalized archives.

The stages are cumulative but not mechanically sequential. A movement may generate credible testimony before wider recognition, and later evidence may revise an earlier judgment without erasing every grace received.

9.2 Five converging tests

Across all three stages, discernment should ask five interdependent questions. Each positive test has a corresponding failure mode, so the framework does not require a separate catalogue of disconfirming signs.

1. **Christological and scriptural:** Does the movement deepen truthful allegiance to the crucified and risen Jesus and submit experience to Scripture and the wider wisdom of the Church? A leader, place, aesthetic, or novelty should not become functionally indispensable.

2. **Penitential and sanctifying:** Does it produce confession, repentance, restitution where possible, holy love, humility, truthfulness, and the fruit of the Spirit? Persistent refusal of accountability weighs against the claim.
3. **Ecclesial and accountable:** Does it form a worshipping, teachable people whose gifts are tested for the common good? Safeguarding, financial questions, theological correction, and freedom to refuse must not be treated as resistance to God.
4. **Reconciling and missional:** Does renewed worship become repaired relationships, evangelism, mercy, justice, service, and shared agency across barriers of race, caste, class, gender, nationality, disability, and status? Exclusion or commodification contradicts this trajectory.
5. **Temporal and generative:** Does the fruit endure beyond the gathering and beyond charismatic leaders, reproduce without coercive control, and strengthen ordinary Christian faithfulness? Dependency on a brand or personality counts against durable reception.

No single test settles the question, and mixed fruit must be interpreted rather than simply counted. Numerical growth without holiness may be expansion rather than revival, while genuine grace may coexist with conflict, immaturity, or institutional failure. The decisive issue is the movement's trajectory under correction: whether truth is received, harm is addressed, repentance deepens, and life is increasingly conformed to Christ.

9.3 Who discerns?

Polycentric discernment does not mean an opinion poll or equal authority for every observer. It means that no interested platform controls the whole interpretation. Participants and local pastors contribute firsthand testimony and bear responsibility for formation. Christians outside the sponsoring institution, theologians, historians, and safeguarding professionals test doctrine, analogy, power, and harm. Affected communities, including voices likely to be marginalized, supply evidence that celebratory accounts can miss. Later historians add temporal distance. The institution closest to the event therefore remains an important witness, but never the only one.

9.4 Objections and limits

First, the model may seem too cautious to traditions that have named revival while it was occurring. As §5 showed, Edwards wrote criteria for distinguishing a work of the Spirit in the midst of awakening, Wesley interpreted Methodist renewal in the present tense, and Finney expected churches to recognize and seek revival through appointed means. Their confidence is a needed correction to endless agnosticism. The model therefore does not postpone all judgment to historians: it permits present testimony and provisional ecclesial recognition whenever the available evidence warrants them. What it rejects is the move from warranted recognition to unreviewable certification.

Second, some may question whether revival is precise enough to bear this theological weight at all. The term is historically unstable, often associated with Protestant revivalism, and easily confused with awakening or renewal. This essay accepts that limitation rather than solving it by definition. Revival here is a stipulated constructive category for intensified Spirit-given renewal in fidelity to Christ; communities whose traditions prefer renewal, outpouring, or another term need not adopt it. The framework governs the authority of revival claims when the term is used; it does not require revival to become an ecumenical universal.

Third, polycentric reception might appear to delay necessary leadership, disperse responsibility, or privilege experts over local testimony. It should do none of these. Participants remain the primary witnesses to encounter, and local pastors and institutions bear immediate responsibility for interpretation, care, and safeguarding. Wider theologians, historians, affected communities, and relevant professionals do not replace local testimony; they test claims that exceed local knowledge. A beneficiary institution may therefore make a provisional judgment if it discloses its interest, remains corrigible, and invites external ecclesial and ethical scrutiny.

Fourth, mixed fruit does not automatically invalidate divine action. Acts itself narrates genuine works of the Spirit alongside deceit, conflict, inequity, and the need for correction. Discernment should therefore distinguish between the reality of grace and the adequacy of an institution's revival claim. Serious or repeated harm, especially when denied or protected, may weigh heavily against public certification without requiring the conclusion that no participant encountered God.

Fifth, time is not a self-correcting tribunal. Historical reception can reproduce the power of those who controlled archives, institutions, money, or public memory. Later confirmation must therefore be plural, archive-aware, and revisable, with deliberate attention to women, racial and ethnic minorities, colonized communities, injured participants, and other witnesses whom triumphant histories may omit. Time enlarges the evidence; it does not sanctify the dominant narrative.

10. Can Revival Be Declared?

The answer depends on what *declared* means.

If declaration means that believers may testify to the present grace of God, then yes. Christian speech should be capable of wonder, gratitude, and holy confidence. To forbid such speech until every outcome is known would quench testimony and misunderstand how grace travels.

If declaration means that a congregation, university, ministry, or wider Christian body may recognize an unusual pattern of renewal, again yes. Responsible leadership sometimes requires public interpretation. Such recognition should remain provisional, disclose institutional interests, welcome external scrutiny, and be proportionate to the available evidence.

If declaration means that leaders or beneficiary institutions may conclusively certify their own gathering as revival on the basis of intensity, attendance, manifestations, publicity, sincere conviction, or short-term response, the answer is no. The Spirit is not possessed by a platform, and an institution cannot be the sole judge of a designation that magnifies its own authority.

The most truthful public grammar is therefore graduated:

- “We are praying for revival, and people are testifying to unusual grace.”
- “We perceive signs of unusual renewal, and discernment continues.”
- “Over time, this movement has been received as revival because enduring fruit confirms its initial testimony.”

Such language is not timid. It is precise. It allows faith to speak without converting hope into possession.

Conclusion: Revival Is Received Before It Is Branded

Revival is not a status conferred by announcement. It is a grace received and discerned through the life of the Church. Immediate testimony may be truthful, institutions may offer responsible provisional recognition, and later communities may confirm or revise those judgments as the fruit becomes clearer. None of these stages is infallible, and none gives a beneficiary institution ownership of the Spirit's work.

The histories considered here are not interchangeable, but together they expose recurring pressures around mediation, authority, memory, and fruit. Print connected eighteenth-century awakenings; revivalist techniques widened participation while tempting organizers to equate results with grace; Mukti, Korea, Azusa, and East Africa complicate single-center genealogies; Catholic and Orthodox traditions show the importance of ecclesial reception and patient formation; and Asbury illustrates both the reach of platform-age testimony and the wisdom of leaving its final historical status open.

Across these cases, mediation is unavoidable. The decisive question is whether mediation becomes witness or possession. Truthful witness directs attention to Christ, invites testing, shares authority, protects vulnerable people, tells the truth about harm, and allows the Spirit's fruit to exceed the institution that first received it. Possessive speech makes the platform central, treats questions as unbelief, monetizes sacred attention, and writes history before the Church has had time to live it.

The Church should therefore pray expectantly, testify courageously, discern polycentrically, protect diligently, and judge patiently. This posture does not diminish revival. It protects the name of the Holy Spirit from becoming promotional language and directs glory away from the platform toward Jesus Christ.

Revival may begin in an extraordinary moment. Its credibility is revealed when grace becomes holy love, confession becomes restitution, worship becomes reconciliation, gifts become service, power becomes accountability, and those who cried out to God in the gathering continue to follow Christ when they return home.

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