

# Chapel of the Air - Interview With Dr. Orr (Part 2)

by J. Edwin Orr

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*Revival is a personal and ongoing process of getting right with God, seeking vision and faith, and praying persistently for spiritual change.*

**Duration:** 15:33

**Scripture:** 1 Kings 18:41-45, 2 Chronicles 7:14, Proverbs 29:18, Habakkuk 2:2, Acts 1:8, Ephesians 5:18, James 5:17-18

**Topics:** "Interview"

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## Description

In this sermon, the speaker shares his experience of preaching and the impact it has had on people's lives. He emphasizes the importance of prayer and how it precedes revival, using the example of Elijah's prayer for rain in drought-stricken Israel. The speaker also highlights the significance of having a vision of what God can do and the importance of claiming the promises of God in prayer. He mentions the success of a revival movement in Nagaland, India, where society improved as a result of the movement of the Lord.

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## Transcript

Compared to the world, one person is small indeed, but both are important. So this visit will look at both, the world and the individual, as once again we discuss revival with Dr. J. Edmund Orr. Welcome to the Chapel of the Air.

Dr. J. Edmund Orr is an internationally respected authority on church history. He holds doctorate degrees from Oxford University, University of California at Los Angeles and Northern Baptist Seminary. His studies of recent evangelical awakenings have gained wide recognition for their thoroughness and their accuracy.

All who recognize the name Dr. J. Edmund Orr understand that revival is a topic close to his heart. I think wherever and whenever revival occurs, he is interested. As a writer and historian, Dr. Orr is your concern primarily academic? Not at all.

I would say that it has become academic because of the necessity to prove the case to scholars. Amplify that a little bit more. Don't scholars believe in revival having value? I would say that there has been a steady campaign of denigration of revival this past 50 to 100 years.

Are there abuses that brought about that mindset or what? No, I think Satan does not like moving to the spirit of God. I was asked about a certain well-known man who perhaps we regard as one of the chief opponents of the whole subject. How do you account for him? I think of Wormwood and the script tape, that particular department of denigration.

Yes. I am grateful for all the work that you have done as you have chronicled revival around the world. Let us look at the world through your eyes, Dr. Orr.

Where is revival presently being experienced? I would say one of the prime examples today would be in Nagaland. Nagaland, of course, is north of Mizoram. That is a great deal north.

Exactly, northwest of Burma, northeast of Bangladesh. It is a self-governing state of India. Now, the Mushris got in there in 1872.

After 100 years, they had won about 100,000 active church members. They wanted to celebrate their centenary, so of course they decided to have a Graham campaign. But the Indian government would not give Billy Graham a visa.

The question was raised in Parliament. Mrs. Gandhi said, I will not give India a bad image by refusing a visa to a man as well liked as Billy Graham. So he was given a permit for a very short visit.

And the Nagas were disappointed. However, they set aside 1973, prayerful arrival in every church. 1974, consular training in anticipation of it.

1975, military considerations. And 1976, the movement began. Now, I told you that there were 100,000 active members in 1972.

Today, 212,000. Now, that's the evangelistic outreach of the revival. I was invited there.

It's too long a story to tell you how I got in, but I had a really wangler permit too. And the first time I've ever spoken in such a vast meeting, I couldn't see the people beyond the 20th row because of the fog. It's up in the Himalayas.

But I was asked there because they are having the problems of success. During the outpouring of the Spirit in 1976, there were 12-year-old boys who prophesied in the name of the Lord. Today, some church members, when they want something done, they prompt their 12-year-old boy to get up in the church and speak.

That's an abuse of things. There are people who dance for joy, for sin is forgiven. Now, some people say if you don't dance in a meeting, you're not filled with the Spirit, and so on.

But that movement is really a successful movement. It's probably a classic revival movement. In Nagaland, now, that's not an advanced culture at all.

No, in one sense, yes. The missions have been so successful that the standard of education is higher among the Nagas than the rest of India. Isn't that fascinating? And that's really part of the history of revival, where society has improved as a result of the moving of the Lord.

The first time I heard a Naga choir, they sang a song that gripped my mind so much that I brought the song to this country and it juiced it, How Great Thou Art. Never the first I ever heard sing that. Isn't that

fascinating? Now, is there an ebbing of the revival flow there through these abuses, or does it continue to grow strong? No, you see, why I mention the abuses, if the devil can't stop revival, he will stampede it.

And the leaders of the churches, mercifully, didn't oppose the movement, although they saw certain weak features. But the movement was reaching into other areas, into Burma and all the states round about. Go through the world in your mind just real quickly, and what other areas know revival in a special way right now? I would say the Solomon Islands and Papua New Guinea.

Bishop Festo Cavangere visited the Solomons for the South Sea Evangelical Mission, which is Plymouth Brethren and Baptist. But he encouraged them to pray. They thought they were having revival, they were having such good meetings, but he said, no, no, a lot more is to come yet.

He said that with his experience of the East African revival. But through the visit of a Maori evangelist, Morley Thompson was his name, in the 70s, there came this remarkable movement in the Solomon Islands. And there, it's not judged by church growth, because already the whole population was related to churches.

There would be Methodist religions and Roman Catholic religions, Anglican religions and so forth. But church attendance has been phenomenal since. It just happened before independence, and my friends who are Solomon Islanders have prepared them for nationhood.

You have written a book on this, have you not? I've written a book called Evangelical Exodus of the South Seas, which has some paragraphs in this. Yes, what factors do you see in places like this that contribute to revival that are different, say, than our own country? Well, Alan Tippett, who is a church growth expert now in Australia, he points out that on the mission field, there are two conversions. The conversion of heathen people from idols to serve the living God, but they still don't know the scripture.

Then maybe after a period of indoctrination, they become thoroughly scripture acquainted, and the Holy Spirit begins to work among them, as among believers in other parts of the world. I'd say that's the main difference. Now, revival is a very extensive topic.

We can talk about revival in the world, or in a nation, or a large metropolitan area, certainly a church, a family. But I want to reduce it down to its very limit here, just in terms of being intensely personal. Help us understand how someone can know revival individually.

Describe what it looks like on a personal basis. I think that personal revival is when an individual gets right with God. Presupposedly, he does know the Lord as Savior.

But he comes under conviction of the shortcomings, whether it be prayerlessness, or a bitter critical spirit, or whatever. But it essentially issues in the experience of Romans 12 and 1, where he presents his body a living sacrifice. Now, the verb present is in the aorist infinitive there.

It's a point of action. The best translation of that would be in the C.B. Williams translation, which is carried over into the amplified version, to make a decisive dedication of his whole personality to God. Actually, it's in the verbs that would be dedicated decisively, your whole personality to God.

He lets God have all there is of him. Then he becomes, shall we say, subject to the filling of the Holy Spirit. I shudder to hear of people who claim to be filled with the Holy Spirit without any holiness of life.

So that you're saying that even though this has happened, it's not a cure-all. It is a continuing process of the Spirit being given control of a life. Well, you see, the Western emphasis is a crisis of commitment, and the Calvinist emphasis would be growth and grace.

Kazik emphasizes a crisis with a mutual process. That's fascinating. And so it's continuing revival in that sense.

In your own personal life, it seems like you've studied revival so long. Isn't it possible with a subject like this to grow sour on it after a while? And how do you guard against this in terms of your own walk with the Lord? Well, I feel, of course, the big fact is the servant of God. God calls people.

There is a verse which I stir up the gift which I had with the laying on of hands. And actually, my call to the ministry was in the subject of revival. The very first band of workers, although we were young evangelists, we called the Revival Fellowship in Ireland.

And I find I just go back to where I was before. It so happened that in 1933, which is over 50 years ago, I came to a new experience with God myself at that time. It went putting things right with God and seeking to be filled with the Spirit, and I believe he answered prayer.

And there was a long apprenticeship after that. I went out on a bicycle, and I didn't see many results. But then in my lifetime, I've seen times of revival.

So that I can speak from experience. But it's a case of just renewing one's vows. On a constant basis, isn't it? Share with us, if you don't mind, how you pray for revival in terms of your personal life.

Maybe you've answered that already, but also as it relates to the world. Evan Roberts once said to me, always pray for vision to match your faith. A man may have all the faith in the world, but if he doesn't have vision, he cannot apply it.

I've never forgotten Evan Roberts saying that. So I think vision is one of the important things. A vision of what God can do.

You see, if a person doesn't believe there's going to be a revival before the Lord comes, he won't see revival. He just is not a believer. There are two factors.

Taking the promises of God. I've never forgotten Armand Gueswine saying that. He met an old Methodist preacher on Long Island when he was a Missouri Lutheran pastor.

And he asked him, what's the secret of your prayer life? He said, always plead the promises of God. But then ask God for vision. The vision so that you may apply it.

One of my favorite passages is that, write the vision. Make it so plain that he who writes it will start running. That's been my call.

So it's been a renewing thing. And when I get back to my original call, I feel renewed by the Holy Spirit. Do you hear people who are responding to your call telling you that? I was preaching.

I preached one Sunday a month for a pastor who has 7,500 in church on Sunday mornings. And I asked him, he wanted to videotape my talks. I asked him, why are you so kind? Well, he said, I heard you in college and it turned my thinking around.

I got encouraged by that. And all of a sudden, it's encouraging to find where it's been an ongoing thing with other people. And I never suspected it would turn out that way.

What would be a promise of God that you're claiming for this country as you go back to Scripture in your mind? Well, I just think of the one that applies to all countries. And that is, if my people called by my name shall humble themselves and pray, seek my face, turn from the wicked ways, and I will hear from heaven, they'll forgive the single human end. That is a promise that God made to the nation of Israel.

But it applies to the people of God in any given country, whether it's Norway or Madagascar. Or Canada or the United States as well. Yes, praise the Lord.

Once again, Dr. Rye, thank you for sharing the rest of my questions, all of which relate to revival in a given local church. I'm going to save for one last visit. That's because Ted Sealy needs the rest of the time to close.

That's right, David, I do. And I hope, friend, that you'll help me use that time well by listening carefully for the next few moments. Dr. Rye's accounts of revival clearly show that the first step toward spiritual change is persistent prayer.

The truth of that fact, as far back as Elijah's time, will be David's broadcast theme starting next week. You may recall the biblical account of drought-stricken Israel needing rain to restore her parched land. But the nation was spiritually parched too, in need of refreshing showers of revival.

Answering Elijah's prayer, God signaled the coming refreshment with a little cloud like a man's hand. Prayer always precedes revival. And don't you agree that North America needs people to pray like Elijah? If you're willing, we'd like to help you get started.

To do that, we've prepared a set of clouds for you. And yes, they're shaped like a man's hand. Actually, these are cloud symbols, and they're printed on pressure-sensitive stickers.

They come in three sizes, all small enough for you to put in places where they'll remind you to pray for an end to our spiritual drought. And the cost of this joint rain-making effort is simply your commitment to pray. To receive your set of prayer reminder stickers, write to us today at the Chapel of the Air, Wheaton, Illinois, 60189.

In Canada, it's the Chapel of the Air, Box 2000, Waterdown, Ontario, LOR2HO. During these hot August days, many things can dry up quickly. And at the Chapel, it's the time when our financial resources often slow down to a trickle.

Your help is a reservoir of encouragement to get us through such dry times. And your gift of any size would be welcomed and needed. Again, our address is the Chapel of the Air, Wheaton, Illinois, 60189, or the Chapel of the Air, Box 2000, Waterdown, Ontario, LOR2HO.

Join us tomorrow for David's final interview with Dr. J. Edwin Orr. Their timely discussion about revival in the local church will take place right here in the Chapel of the Air. [www.chapeloftheair.org](http://www.chapeloftheair.org)

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