

The Easter Revival in New Zealand

by J. Edwin Orr

The Easter Revival in New Zealand was a significant event that demonstrated the power of prayer and confession in bringing about spiritual renewal and revival.

Scripture: 2 Chronicles 7:14, Psalm 51:10, Joel 2:28, Acts 2:17, Romans 12:2, Galatians 5:22, Ephesians 5:18, James 5:16, 1 Peter 5:6, 1 John 1:9

Topics: "Revival Movement", "Holy Spirit"

Description

J. Edwin Orr preaches about the remarkable Revival that took place in the Auckland Province of North Island, New Zealand, showcasing how Revival can be expected in any location. The Revival began during Orr's ministry at Ngaruawahia Easter Keswick and other camps, leading to public confessions of sin, numerous conversions, and intense meetings late into the night. The cablegram from A. S. Wilson highlighted the extraordinary events, including significant offerings and pledges. The Revival spread to various camps and meetings, resulting in deep spiritual experiences, confessions, restorations, and conversions, ultimately leading to a powerful movement of God's Spirit.

Transcript

THE story of the Revivals which began in the Auckland Province of North Island, New Zealand, demonstrates very clearly how Revival may be expected in any part.

A cablegram received in London and published in The Christian, summed up the work fairly well. It was signed by the Rev. A. S. Wilson, author of Faith's Fight and other well-known books, whose reputation as a preacher is better known in the Southern Hemisphere.

"Extraordinary New Zealand Revival begun during Orr's ministry at Ngaruawahia Easter Keswick and other camps. Hundreds publicly confessing sin, scores of conversions resulting, with sanely intense meetings of tireless crowds continuing till approaching midnight. Ngaruawahia missionary pledges and offerings Sunday approximately two thousand pounds. - A. S. Wilson."

But to go back to beginnings. Jack Sherriff and I arrived in Auckland Harbour (on the M.V. Rangitane) on April 6, which happened to be Tuesday. We had no Monday that week, owing to the crossing of the international date-line east of New Zealand. So on Sunday, we had attended Divine Service on board ship; and the following day, when we landed, was Tuesday.

When the officials came aboard the boat, I noticed one young man wearing a Crusader badge: so I spoke to him.

"Hallo. A Crusader, eh?"

"Yes, I am," he replied pleasantly, "and you seem to be a Christian, too?"

"Sure," said I. "Meet my friend, Mr. Sherriff, a Bromley Crusader."

We started a conversation. He asked me how long I would spend in New Zealand, where I hoped to go.

"I expect to go down to a convention at Ngaruawahia," I informed him.

"So do I," he replied. Then he looked at me.

"I say - excuse me, but do you happen to be Mr. Edwin Orr?"

"That's my name."

"Let's shake hands again. I have been praying for you for quite a while now. But I did not know that you would be coming on the Rangitane."

(I had received a cablegram from the Bible Training Institute of Auckland-it reached me in Los Angeles - asking me to attend the Easter Convention at Ngaruawahia, as a speaker. I had cabled an acceptance, so apparently the news had got round.)

We attended to Customs and Immigration: gave an interview to a Press man: then got ready to go ashore. My new I friend, Broadbent asked:

"Have you any personal friends in New Zealand?"

"No, I am afraid not. As a matter of fact, I have an uncle who settled in New Zealand somewhere when I was about a year old, but I cannot trace him."

Scarcely were the words out of my mouth (as we say in Ulster) when a dark-haired, sunburned man rushed up to grasp my hand. I recognised him from ancient photographs.

"Uncle John, I presume?"

"Yes, Edwin. Welcome to New Zealand."

He explained that he had been following my movements, and that upon receipt of news regarding my arrival, he had i come down from Russell to meet me. A moment later I was introduced to my Aunt Charlotte and Cousin Nellie. I felt heart-warmed at being welcomed by my own kith and kin who had remembered me as a baby. John Wright, my mother's brother, is a retired schoolmaster.

Sherriff and I were also greeted by praying friends who had not seen us before - Mr. J.O. Sanders of the Bible Training Institute, Miss Brain, Mr. Page, and others were good enough to come down to meet the boat. They were evidently pleased to see both of us looking so sunburned and healthy. We had supper with Mr. and Mrs. Sanders. On that Tuesday, Sanders, Sherriff and I agreed to unite in prayer for Revival to sweep the Convention on Saturday following. It did. And then I went off to my cousin's house for a long,

long yarn on family affairs. I was well pleased to find that my relatives were deeply interested in spiritual things. A few days later I was to meet my Cousin Jack Wright, who had been converted a month previously in a mission conducted by Evangelist J. P. Miller. It was a fine family reunion.

On Wednesday morning, it was my privilege to speak at the Bible Training Institute. This influential school of the prophets was founded by the late Rev. Joseph Kemp, and has continued till this day to be one of the great factors in the work of the Lord here. The students listened well to the message, and a break came in the meeting when one after another rose to confess hindrance and sin. Criticism, prayerlessness, secret sins were amongst the honest confessions-and a little local revival broke out as soon as these hindrances were cleansed away. Dr. Charles J. Rolls, the noted Bible teacher who was Dean of the Institute in days gone by, arrived at ten o'clock to speak to the students (it was their last day of the term), and finding the whole company on their knees, he joined us, and we all spent a glorious hour before the throne, asking and receiving revival. Dr. Rolls, from that moment, became a close friend and helper: I could see that revival was a genuine passion with him. That meeting was really the revival in first fruits.

Mr. Page very kindly volunteered to motor our party around the sights of Auckland. We visited Mount Atkinson, Mount Eden and other places, and the net impression was that Auckland is a most beautiful city, set in superb surroundings. It is amazingly beautiful. After such a treat, we went to the Farmer's Trading Company's Restaurant. Here I was introduced to Mr. Laidlaw, the manager, a splendid Christian worker.

"Yes, Mr. Orr," he said, "I have been hearing plenty about you from my brother-in-law, Dr. Harry Ironside."

The very name Ironside made me feel happy.

All day I kept meeting people who had been praying for me. I was greatly struck by the atmosphere of expectancy which prevailed-especially among the young people. There was no end of enthusiasm.

Mr. Sanders handed me the printed programme of meetings:

Thursday, April 9th:

7:30 p.m. Opening meeting. Welcome by Chairman, John P. Miller.

Friday, April 10th:

10:30 a.m. Revs. John Bisset and E. L. Gunasekera

2:30 p.m. J. Edwin Orr

6:30 p.m. Open Air Meeting

7:30 p.m. Dr. Charles J. Rolls

Saturday, April 11th:

10:0 a.m. Dr. Charles J. Rolls

12 noon. River Excursion

7:00 p.m. Open Air Meeting

7.30 p.m. J. Edwin Orr

Sunday, April 12th:

10:0 a.m. Communion Service. Dr. Charles J. Rolls

11:0 a.m. J. Edwin Orr

2:45 p.m. Missionary Meeting

6:30 p.m. Open Air Meeting

7:00 p.m. Evangelistic Service. W. J. Mains

Monday, April 13th:

10:30 a.m. Dr. Charles J. Rolls

2:00 p.m. J. Edwin Orr

6:00 p.m. Testimony Meeting

This Easter Convention at Ngaruawahia has become the "Keswick" of New Zealand. Folks seemed full of expectancy regarding the blessing that was to come - and the revival overwhelmed them.

In the meantime, revival broke out in a meeting at Auckland. My companion and I were having supper with the family of the young man who had greeted us on board. Without warning I was told that I would be the speaker at a service in a marquee the same evening in Mount Eden district.

"I promised to go along all right," said I, "but I understood that Dr. Rolls was to be the speaker."

"He was," said my informant, "but he stood down at his own suggestion. He wants the young people to hear you."

"He must be a perfect gentleman," said I.

"He is."

And so I went along to the meeting held in Mr. Rimmer's tent. It was crowded with young people, bright, happy young people. The service began in the usual way. Dr. Rolls was on the platform with me, and I felt greatly helped by his friendly attitude. I went ahead with a message to Christians. The Lord began to work in their hearts, and the expected break came. A young man stood up to ask prayer for deliverance from sin: another followed; then another. One young leader startled his friends:

"You all think that I am a deeply spiritual Christian - that I have that reputation. But I want to tell you inside I am like a sepulchre."

All the scenes of revival began to be enacted before our eyes. Some were melted into tears: some broke down while speaking: two or three prayed at once. One memory which will last was how a young man (an islander) began to sing in a voice of silver!

Calvary covers it all,

My life with its guilt and shame.

My sin and despair

Jesus took on Him there:

And Calvary covers it all."

The hush of God fell on the place. Backsliders were restored. An appeal was made to the unconverted, and found fifteen or more definitely seeking salvation.

Here is Keith Rimmer's report:

"Though the Marquee was filled, it would have been far too small had we known previously that Mr. Orr would have been present. As it was, he faced an audience most of whom had read his books j the expectancy, therefore, was tremendous and the results wonderful.

"That the Spirit of God worked wonderfully through the meeting was evident. Things that had proved a hindrance to our meetings were openly confessed, many Christians realising the insufficiency of their consecration. Many cases of definite conversion were recorded. At the close, when the benediction was pronounced, no one seemed willing to go home.

"Many of us have been praying for revival. Revival has started. Truly God has shown His willingness to bless where there has been a willingness to confess and forsake the things that hinder Divine Power."

I had the joy of meeting people at the end-if there was an end to that meeting-who had got revival, restoration or salvation. Some may ask - But how do you know that the decisions were real? Take an example. Mrs. Graham, the camp mother at Ngaruawahia, was introduced to me a couple of days later. She shook my hand.

"Oh, Brother Orr, I am delighted to see you. Do you know? Four girls of mine were soundly saved at that Wednesday evening meeting."

And so the revival came to that meeting of young people. There was much rejoicing, and as I learned that some there present were going to be at Ngaruawahia, I felt more and more convinced that a revival would sweep .the Convention. I said so. Some people smiled. Others said that they hoped so. Some of us knew that revival would come because it had, come first to our own hearts. Revival does not produce pessimists.

Ngaruawahia is a little Maori town at the confluence of the Walkato and the Walpa rivers. The name in the beautiful Maori tongue means the meeting of the waters. It is supposed to be hard for English tongues to master that word, but I did not find it so. One need only remember that each Maori syllable ends in a vowel. The ng at the beginning is a nasal. So the word is Na-ru-a-wa-hi-a. One British evangelist called it Naggery-waggery.

The Ngaruawahia Easter Convention on Keswick lines is the outgrowth of a camp started by Mr. Bruce Scott, an Auckland lawyer. Most of the young people prefer to be under the canvas at Easter, which is at the beginning of a beautifully mild and warm autumn. The camp has grown and grown to great proportion and has attracted such speakers as Dr. W. Graham Scroggie, Dr. and Mrs. Howard Taylor, Dr. R.V.

Bingham, Rev. W.P. Nicholson and others. The present year (1936) has been a record year from the numerical point of view. Over 750 registered, and there were 1,200 at the meetings in the tent.

Bruce Scott was a great help to me, and a great deal of the work behind the scenes was due to him. J.O. Sanders of the Bible Institute is a wizard in organisation, and "hats off" to him for the success of the camp. Humorous, kindly, business-like, Sanders was worth his weight in gold.

As soon as I reached Ngaruawahia, I found that the Maori looked upon the district as an historic Maori centre. I met half a dozen charming little Maori schoolgirls - all Christians - who taught me to sing in Maori. The Maori people are surely the most wonderful of all the so-called native races - talented, musical, heroic, chivalrous. With Messrs. Sanders and Scott and a small party we were received by Her Highness Princess Te Puea Herangi. His Majesty the King of the Waikato Maori was unavoidably absent. Nevertheless, we were welcomed in a way that charmed everyone. An old wahine greeted us with the chant of welcome: there were speeches of greeting; and exchange of compliments. A choir of Maori people sang a lovely hymn in their own tongue. Then I had the honour of an introduction to the Princess. She seemed very gratified when I told her that the Maori and the Irish shared the love of nature, love of poetry, love of music, and love of fighting. She was more amused when I told her that when I arrived in New Zealand I could scarcely distinguish between a pakeha and a toheroa. (A pakeha is a European and a toheroa is a New Zealand shellfish - quite a delicacy as soup.)

The Convention began in conventional ways with an opening meeting. Mr. Miller (who led my Cousin Jack to Christ) gave a fine address. Friday's meetings were pent up with expectancy, but no break occurred. Dr. Rolls gave a remarkably fine address on Friday evening.

After the evening meeting, a young man who had been in the revival in Rimmer's tent approached me.

"Mr. Orr," said he. "About a dozen fellows want you to come along to Tent Number Twenty-nine. They are concerned about revival."

I went. We discussed the hindrances to revival with frank earnestness. There seemed to be conviction, deep conviction.

"Now, you fellows," I said. "Do you really believe that God is going to give us revival?"

There was a chorus of "Amen." "Yes, but do you believe that He will start the revival here in this tent to-night?"

After a silence, one young man said quietly:

"If we pay the price."

"All right," said I. "Let's get to prayer and see if God keeps His word. We'll pray for a revival here."

Some of them began to kneel.

"I say," cried one young man. "Don't - before we pray to God for revival, I want to get something off my mind."

A silence of amazement greeted his declaration. Then he turned to another fellow in the tent:

"Jack, I want to confess openly that I have been criticising you behind your back."

We were taken aback.

"Will you forgive me? I think I ought to get right with you first."

After a painful silence, the other fellow said it "That's all right. It's my fault, too. I have been doing the same thing behind your back. May God forgive us both."

When we started praying, transactions were gone through with the Lord. The first prayer was a broken confession of secret sin: another sought cleansing from pride: another confessed criticism: another unbelief. Young men are honest in their prayers - and these were not kept back by the presence of women.

"O God, O God," cried one, "deliver me from the bondage of the flesh."

"Lord, help me. Take out of my life the lust of the eyes."

I think that everyone of the twelve young men got right with God. Then the spirit of revival began to fall upon us - it was an amazing meeting. We sang, we prayed, we rejoiced, we cried unto God. At ten-fifteen, I said to them:

"Now look here. I am going off to my hotel to go to sleep. But take a tip from me-go and try to get some of the other I tents on fire for the Lord. It is your work just as much as mine. . We asked God for a revival here - we have got it. The same thing will apply to the other tents."

They divided up into parties of three and started out. I went to my hotel. I felt the urge to tell Dr. Rolls of the revival, but did not want to disturb him. However, I could not sleep, so I left in my coat, got an apple, told the hotelkeeper that I would go for ten minutes' walk, and set out for the camp. To my amazement (for lights out was at ten-thirty) there were prayer meetings going on in a dozen tents. I listened. In some tents, revival had begun: in others they were asking for blessing. I met some of the boys from '29.'

"How did you get on, eh?"

They laughed.

"We were received very coldly in the first tent we went to as a matter of fact they said we must be crazy and they put us out. But the other fellows are being well received."

"What are you going to do now?" I asked.

There was a late prayer meeting of a score of fellows going on in the big marquee, and the two boys from '29' announced their intention of "butting in." I left them and walked back to the hotel, rejoicing at their boldness. They went down to the marquee, and found a very ordinary sort of prayer meeting about to be closed. Now one of these two young men was an over-exuberant fellow in temperament: the other was a quiet type. The quiet fellow went to the front of the prayer meeting and boldly interrupted the prayers, much to the astonishment of the score of men.

"Listen here, you fellows. What's the use of praying for other fellows' sins. You ought to confess your own, and get a revival in your own heart first."

And so they told an astonished company of how the revival had descended upon Tent 29. In the twinkling of an eye, there was conviction as the Holy Spirit descended upon that prayer meeting. Men were broken down, confessed sin, cried for mercy, sought forgiveness, asked for revival. And the prayer meeting in the big marquee went ablaze with spiritual power.

In the meantime - it was quarter to eleven - I reached the door of my hotel, and to my utter dismay, found myself locked out. I knocked the door, rang the bell, hammered, knocked again - all without avail. It is surely a remarkable thing that the other visitors had been shown a private way in at the back - but I was blissfully ignorant of such an ingress, for no one had told me. I tried every means of getting in until quarter past eleven. Finally, I made up my mind to go down to the camp and sleep on a spare palliasse. So off I set for the camp the third time. This time I heard unusual sounds from the big marquee and went in to find a deep revival begun.

The two fellows from '29' were in a fix - they did not know what to do next. The meeting was crying out for experienced leadership, so I quietly took charge. I explained that I had been locked out - they seemed hilariously delighted at that. The meeting took a new turn, for those seeking souls were urged to clinch matters and return thanks to God for the forgiveness that had been sought. A wave of praise suddenly swept over the group of men. Most of them had the joy of forgiveness and revival - but some were not right yet. One fellow prayed:

"O God, take the hatred out of my heart towards -- " (The man himself was sitting on the same form). "O God, knock the pride out of me, so that I may have the grace to go and shake hands with him and ask his forgiveness."

When he had finished praying, he got up and held out his hand to his enemy. They shook hands, while tears of joy rolled down many a fellow's face - tears of sorrow or tears of joy, I do not know. Another wave of praise swept over the group - we stood up and sang, "I've got the joy, joy, joy, joy, down in my heart." I got to the piano, and a great praise service went on.

"Say, fellows," I suggested, "don't you think we'll be getting into trouble for making such a noise? - it's after half past eleven!"

"We'll stay up all night."

"Hallelujah."

"Praise the Lord."

The fervour rather carried us away, I am afraid. The scenes that night were the nearest thing to spiritual intoxication that I had ever seen. And yet, both Scott and myself had the witness of the Spirit in our hearts. We knew that it was genuine Revival. I was half amused and half astounded when one man-reputedly the quietest in the camp-climbed up and started the electrical amplifying apparatus working. His voice boomed out into the sleeping (?) tents:

"Praise the Lord-Revival has begun in the camp."

A moment later, the flap of the tent was lifted up, and a figure in pyjamas appeared. The look of astonishment on his face was soon replaced by a look of eagerness for the same blessing evidenced by our faces. He came back a moment later with his overcoat over his sleeping apparel. Others came along

in the same way while we sang praises at the midnight hour. This praise, alternated with prayer, went on till after one o'clock in the morning. Strange things happened. After a rousing chorus which gave us the opportunity of letting our new-found joy overflow, a man stood up:

"You fellows are happy: I am not. Will you pray for me? I am a big hypocrite, that's all I thought I was something, but just now the Lord has shown me that I am steeped in sin. Oh, pray for me."

He sat down and buried his face in his arms, and we could see his shoulders moving with broken sobs. Some got up and ! prayed for him. Then we sang:

Would you be free from your burden of sin?

There's power in the Blood."

By one o'clock there were no fewer than sixty men in that revival meeting - everyone of whom had made his peace with his Lord. Other enemies were reconciled, other sins were confessed, other souls received the transforming power. At one o'clock, I managed to persuade them to go to bed. They protested - I insisted, I backed by a few others. Finally we stood up to sing:

"Hallelujah to the Lamb

Who died on Mount Calvary,

Hallelujah, Hallelujah, Hallelujah, Amen."

The benediction was pronounced. It was ignored so far as going to bed was concerned. The praise service started allover again. At last we prevailed on them to go to bed. The last hymn was, "Blest be the tie that binds." The "sixty " - as they were afterwards called, were one in heart. My only concern was the fact that they had made the noise of six hundred - and that in the middle of the night. But revival had come-we were all convinced of that.

I slept in the Boat House.

Next morning, there was a buzz of conversation throughout the camps. It appears that people were awakened by the singing within a radius of half a mile. The girls' camp was awakened: sleepers were awakened up across the river. Comment was made everywhere. Most of the people were satisfied with the explanation that revival had begun in the men's camp: but there were mutterings from a minority. Bitter comments were made.

Said one man (indirectly) to me:

"Do you think that it was the work of the Holy Spirit to disturb people out of their sleep?"

"I believe it was the work of the Spirit to disturb people out their sleep. Wait and see for yourself," I rejoined.

After considering the matter prayerfully, I asked permission the chairman to make a statement publicly. He gave me five minutes. So I explained matters, and said that the sixty young men hoped that no one was unduly hurt.

"I have heard unkind criticism," I concluded. "So let me say this. The majority of these men were leading backsliding lives in bondage to sin for years. Now they have got victory. Do you blame them for praising the Lord far into the night? Why, I wish that you all had been there."

I asked the men concerned to endorse all that I said by standing up. "The Sixty" stood up like one man.

"Did you experience revival last night?"

"Amen." It was emphatic.

"Show these people how you feel about it."

Spontaneously, they burst into a hymn of praise which shook the place. There was no more criticism, for all were deeply impressed. As I sat down, I remarked:

"We have come to Ngaruawahia for revival. Revival has begun. Take heed that you do not hinder the work of the Spirit. Mark my words, you may see revival sweep the camp to-night."

That Saturday was the day of the picnic. I had a chance of making contacts with folks of all classes that afternoon, and truly the expectancy in all hearts was unbounded. It appears that revival broke out independently in a house-party on Saturday morning. All these signs greatly encouraged us.

Saturday evening's service was utterly overcrowded. There were 1,000 people crammed into the tent, and dozens of others all round the place. Dr. Rolls gave me a nod as I started to speak.

"I'm praying for you." I preached for a full hour. The hush of conviction was upon the place-the very same atmosphere that pervaded Merrill MacPherson's church before the revival broke out there in Philadelphia. The great problem was how to handle such a great meeting when the break came.

When the appeal was made, a score of young people walked forward to the front and confessed besetting sin. Many were in tears as they knelt there. People began to break down all over the meeting-and yet that meeting was singularly orderly. Mr. Sanders and Dr. Rolls made their way over to the men's dining tent, and to them I sent score after score of young folk seeking blessing. Before very long there were two hundred being dealt with. Other leaders went out and dealt with different groups-there were seventeen after-meetings scattered all over the camp. Rev. A. S. Wilson calculated that over five hundred were dealt with: scores of backsliders were restored: there were dozens of conversions. About three hundred older people waited with me in the big marquee-and revival swept them likewise. Pastors and workers confessed backsliding; tears flowed; decisions for Christ were made by the unconverted. Two Chinamen, who could not speak English, were in the meeting under conviction of sin. They were dealt with through an interpreter and decided for Christ. All told, a score of these converts were received at the Lord's Table on the morrow, and there were others who could not attend.

These after-meetings began at nine-thirty. There was plenty of opportunity for people to slip away. But all were of one mind. About ten-thirty the people in the big marquee began to sing the praises of the Lamb. This was a signal for all around to come back to the main meeting. At ten-thirty, one thousand people were in the tent again-surely the greatest proof of all. That praise service of one thousand happy people continued with- out break until eleven-thirty when the leaders persuaded them to go off to bed. This they were very loath to do, but we insisted.

Let us look at the revival from a different angle. In an article published in the New Zealand paper The Reaper, entitled "Revival at Ngaruawahia," Mr. Sanders stated:

"For some time before Easter, a spirit of unusual expectancy had been kindled in our hearts by the Holy Spirit, but the reality far exceeded the expectation. Those of us who were responsible for the conduct of the camp had the great joy of sitting back and seeing God work in a sovereign way. We were as men that dreamed."

The second and third paragraphs repeat what I have said about the first three days of the Convention. We take up the thread of Mr. Sanders' narrative at an interesting point-just when he took charge of one of the after-meetings:

"The writer was deputed to take charge of the meeting of those who had so risen. What a scene that dining marquee presented, a scene such as we read of but are seldom privileged to see-young and old flocked in and knelt quietly at the tables with bowed heads, many with tears flowing, until some 150 had gathered. . . . The tent was filled with the voice of prayer as a dozen or twenty prayed in subdued tones at the same time. Each seemed totally oblivious of the other, anxious only to lose the burden of sin. As they got through to victory, they quietly returned to the large marquee where similar scenes were in progress. At ten-thirty, all assembled in the marquee for a service of praise. With exultant joy, hymns and choruses of praise and rejoicing were sung until the whole township rang and rang again . . .

"While this work was going on among the Christians, many unconverted souls were being saved. Two Chinese who could not speak English were led to Christ through interpretation, and had you entered one tent late that night, you would have seen three Chinese and three students with their arms around one another thus confessing the reality of their joy and unity."

At midnight I could not think of sleeping. So Jack Wright (my cousin) and I went for a walk up the hills. We heard the sound of singing coming from the big marquee-men's voices, singing the chorus which I had composed:

"Coming this way, yes,

Coming this way,

A mighty revival

Is coming this way.

The Lord keeps His promise

And that is enough:

We're praying for blessing

From North Cape to Bluff"

We made our way down to the marquee. The front was crowded by a couple of hundred men singing lustily everything they could sing. It was one of the most amusing things outstanding in my memory of the Ngaruawahia revival-just to watch Sanders trying to persuade those men to go to bed.

"You'll have to go to bed, fellows," he cried, trying to make himself heard above the other voices. Next moment he himself was swept away in the singing of another hymn of praise.

"Look here. You'll have to go to bed. We all need physical rest and sleep. We have a very full programme to-morrow" -

"It is not to-morrow, it is to-day, brother."

It being after midnight, it was Sunday, and a roar of laughter greeted this sally. They sang another and another hymn, but on being told that they could get up as early as they liked to sing, they reluctantly went off to bed. By about two o'clock in the morning, the camp was quiet.

Another funny thing happened. When the revival began in the big tent, "the sixty" cleared out to the prayer tent to have a meeting of their own - "to pray through." In the hush of the big meeting, we were disturbed by the sound of praises from the sixty. I sent Mr. Sanders out to keep them quiet. He shifted them to the furthest part of the camp-the angle between the two rivers - consequently they could not be removed further away. But still their praises rent the air. The friendly policeman went down to them, saying:

"Look here. If you fellows don't keep your voices under control, I'll ship the lot of you down the river in the big boat."

Easter Saturday was a day of tremendous revival. Some folks were too utterly amazed to understand the significance of it all. We were highly gratified when one well-known Christian stood up to say that he had "come for blessing, but did not expect to see anything more than an ordinary convention." But he "realized now that it was the sin of unbelief." Another well-known Christian approached me, and I could see that he was trembling with nervousness:

"Mr. Orr," he said, "I really came here for blessing, but I have a confession to make. All along I have been utterly opposed to you and your ministry."

"Well, brother," I replied, "if I can clear up any misunderstanding, let me do it."

"But that's just it. I haven't a single real objection to you. I just didn't like you. I have confessed to God the sin of lovelessness, but I want your forgiveness as well."

"Well," I said gently, "if you have confessed your sin to the Lord, He has cleansed it away - it does not exist, so I have nothing to forgive. I'll tell you what I'll do, I'll just forget the thing as far as you are concerned."

It was not necessary for any of the speakers to be reconciled - their unity of heart was a prime factor in the revival. Most of all I felt the help of Dr. Rolls' sympathy and prayers. I was rather amused when he burst into my room early on Sunday morning:

"It's a feast of thanksgiving - it's a feast of thanksgiving. Remembering the Lord's death is not an occasion for mourning - we must enter into His great triumph."

"All right, doctor," I rejoined. "You are to lead the Communion Service so I pray God that it will be a feast of thanksgiving."

Dr. Rolls delivered one of the finest pre-Communion addresses I ever heard. It lifted us up to the highest plane of thanksgiving and joy. Sing - Rejoice - it was Easter morning. One thing was noticeable to me - it had been predicted that the tremendous stress of Saturday would be followed by a reaction. Instead, we found that the feeling of the people was running very deeply - there was less demonstration but even deeper feeling.

A thrill ran around the packed tent when Sanders began to speak:

"There are some with us this morning, at the Lord's table, who, twenty-four hours ago, were not in the Kingdom. We welcome them."

That Easter morning Communion service was true to its motto - All one in Christ Jesus. The note of triumph sounded all the way through.

The service that followed was even more crowded, for visitors from Auckland and Hamilton arrived in time for it. It was my privilege to give a Bible Reading on the subject of the Holy Spirit. They listened well - and when I stopped, I found that I had spoken for an hour and a half. Sherriff drew my attention to this fact, but remarked:

"It showed real grace, and it was a proof of revival to see the absolute absence of restlessness."

There was a missionary meeting after lunch, but I was away at another camp, so I was not a witness of what was described to me. I learned that the revival had meant a real revival of practical missionary interest-two thousand pounds being pledged.

At the evening service, which I missed on account of another camp service, Mr. Mains, the Hon. Principal of the New Zealand Bible Training Institute, preached the evangelistic message. Nearly three-dozen people made their decision for Christ, for hard hearts were broken down. The influence of the revival was being felt.

In the meantime, Mr. Sherriff, Mr. Jack Wright (my newly converted cousin), two members of "the sixty," and I set out by car to Pukekohe, where the Churches of Christ were holding their Easter convention. All of us spoke, and there was an immediate through partial response. Revival to many hearts, but not all-one reason being the presence of curious townspeople along with the deeper Christians. But I received a letter ten days later giving supplementary data-my informant was a well known pastor. "Your visit gave that spiritual shock which stimulated faith to believe for a better life-the cleansing and filling. However, the general confession of sins was very new to our people: so we called a meeting on the free afternoon. To our surprise, very few campers were absent, a most impressive service was held, difficulties were met and a prayerful expectation of blessing. That evening we had a quiet meeting of great power, and after many of God's people were deeply moved, with tears and heart searching, there were ten definite conversions."

Mr. Keith Rimmer, in whose tent revival had begun in Auckland, came to that meeting to take us to the Baptist Young Men's Bible Class Camp at Maungitawhiri. We arrived there about five-thirty, and the meeting began at six-thirty. First I had the pleasure of meeting Dr. Hodge, pastor of the well-known Baptist Tabernacle of Auckland. It had been arranged that Dr. Hodge was to be the evangelistic speaker. I was to speak first to the Christians and prepare the way, but Dr. Hodge himself suggested that I should go ahead if the atmosphere warranted it.

Sherriff spoke first, describing the outbreak of revival. Jack Wright gave his testimony, and told how he had been rebuked and revived. The two members of "the sixty" added their testimony and exhortation. I noticed one peculiar thing. When the last speaker but one (of our party) told how there had been reconciliations and described fellows in the men's camp breaking down into crying, a wave of mild contempt spread over the faces of his hearers. The speaker noticed it.

"Look here. Maybe you fellows think that we were 'sissies' to break down and cry. Mark my words-some of you who think that you are big he-men will be in tears before to-night is out, for I am convinced that revival will sweep this camp as well."

Nobody believed him, yet his words were fulfilled exactly.

One hundred and fifty men were in the meeting, and only a handful of ladies. I asked the latter's permission to ignore them. Then the message followed unhindered by niceties of expression. We called sin sin: lust was described as lust: hypocrisy was hypocrisy: prayerlessness was a broken vow; unbelief was an insult to God. The atmosphere of deep conviction of sin was soon prevalent. The sword of the Spirit, the Word of God, seemed to cut to every heart.

"Now before we get to prayer for a revival in this camp, let us get rid of the hindrances in our own personal lives."

A dead silence followed.

The first confession made was one of cowardice in witnessing for Christ at business. Others followed.

"I, too, am a good Christian on Sunday and a miserable failure for the rest of the week. I have secret sin as well."

"I am a failure all the week and Sunday as well-I'm a hopeless hypocrite. Pray for me."

Each confession cut other hearts.

"My sin is the lust of the eyes and evil thoughts."

"I, too, have secret sin. And I am ashamed of Christ to my friends."

At this juncture, I felt it a good time to intervene.

"Will those who have asked for prayer and made confession, please come forward? We'll pray for you first."

Within a minute, about sixteen fellows were kneeling at the front. One or two were crying. We prayed for them, urging them all the while to accept God's promise of forgiveness and cleansing conditional upon confession. Someone started singing that beautiful chorus:

Calvary covers it all,

My life with its guilt and shame:

My sin and despair

Jesus took on Him there

And Calvary covers it all.

There was restrained sobbing. Those who were kneeling at the front returned thanks to God for taking the burden away, and quietly slipped back to their seats.

"Now, If there are any others needing blessing, say so."

Nobody moved. I felt the indignation of the Lord.

"You big hypocrites. How dare you cover up your secret sin, How dare you resist the striving of the Spirit . . . ?"

A boy sitting beside Dr. Hodge suddenly burst into tears. Other "big he-men" broke down likewise. Further confessions were made. Altogether, eighty young men were dealt with, after confession of hindrance. This did not surprise me, but something else did. An appeal to the unconverted was made. Thirty responded. One after another they stood up-at the front and allover the tent, Said one young man:

"I want to be a Christian."

"I want to be a Christian, too," said another.

"I'm a backslider, and I want to return to the Lord." In response to the appeal, they came out to the front. We all got to our knees.

Pass me not, O gentle Saviour,

Hear my humble cry.

While on others Thou art calling,

Do not pass me by

Saviour, Saviour, Hear my humble cry:

While on others Thou art calling,

Do not pass me by

Some were dealt with individually, but the majority knew the Gospel from childhood. Prayers of thanksgiving and praise for revival, for restoration, for salvation began to ascend. It became a praise service. We sang our Hallelujahs. I noticed one of our party, one of the sixty, clapping his hands while we sang. I fetched him up to the front.

"My friends," said I. "It is quite scriptural to clap your hands. This fellow here will show you how to do it."

Before he did, he said whimsically: "I'm an Anglican-and this is what a revival does for Anglicans."

A roar of laughter shook the tent. A hand-clapping Anglican leading a praise service in a Baptist camp was too funny for words.

Running over, running over,

My heart's full and running over:

Since the Lord saved me,

I'm as happy as can be,

My heart's full and running over.

At nine o'clock, I announced that our party would have to leave.

"You see, there is a meeting in Ngaruawahia at ten o'clock to-night for those who are desiring to be filled with the Holy Spirit. So we'll have to go.

" The meeting so far had lasted two and a half hours. The men themselves immediately proposed carrying on the service. Quite happily I turned over the meeting to Dr. Hodge - who himself seemed to be deeply moved by all that had taken place. Another strange thing followed. A young man at the back stood up and interrupted:

"Mr. Orr, before you go-I want to get something off my mind, for I have been a hindrance here. There are two men in this camp with whom I am not on speaking terms. I want that removed. I have confessed to God this sin of criticism and lovelessness - but I want to ask these fellows' forgiveness. If they forgive me, will they please shake hands publicly? Their names are -- "

The three men publicly shook hands and apologised. So did another couple. Then another fellow stated publicly:

"I have been criticising Dr. Hodge behind his back. I refused to take part in his open air meeting. . . ."

He crossed over to the pastor.

"Will you forgive me, Dr. Hodge?"

The much amazed pastor and the intensely earnest young man shook hands warmly. These "little foxes which spoil the vines" were being driven out of the vineyard. We left the men singing:

Floods of joy o'er my soul

Like the sea billows roll

After a run of an hour or more we reached Ngaruawahia. I felt on the point of collapse. I had not been in bed before 1:30 a.m. for nights running. We were exactly half an hour late, arriving at ten-thirty. Judge our amazement upon finding the big marquee absolutely packed full of happy people. However, I was given extra strength to carry on for another hour. The camp officer from Maungitawhiri had accompanied us, and he described briefly the revival that had broken out at the Baptist camp. The joy of his hearers knew no bounds. This Sunday night meeting went on until approaching midnight- four hours all told. Every revival meeting had disregarded time -it took all the forcefulness of J.O. Sanders to persuade the people to go home to bed.

Here is Mr. Sanders' account:

"On Sunday morning, about 1,000 gathered for the Communion Service at which Dr. Rolls gave the address. The hearts of all were stirred as, unmindful of denominational differences, we remembered the dying and undying love of the Saviour. Then followed a Bible Study by Mr. Orr in which he gave a clear and satisfying interpretation of the various terms used of the Holy Spirit . . . after the confession and cleansing experienced by so many on the previous evening, the clear teaching necessary was given in the subsequent meetings.

"At the missionary meeting . . . an appeal was made for those who were willing to yield their lives in full surrender to Christ for His service, whether at home or abroad. Hundreds of young folk rose. . . indications are that the £2,000 mark (in missionary subscriptions) will be passed this year.

"Mr. W. J. Mains gave a most searching address in the evening when many more found Christ. At 9.30 the meeting was changed into one for Christians. Very few left the tent which was still practically full at 11 p.m. After singing and prayer, brief testimonies as to how they had entered into the blessing of the Spirit- filled life were given by Dr. Rolls, Mr. Allan and the writer (Mr. Sanders). This met the difficulties in the minds of many who by faith appropriated that same fullness. Rev. A. S. Wilson led in prayer for those who responded. Dr. A. B. Simpson's beautiful hymn expressed the attitude of those present, and was sung with great meaning:

I take the promised Holy Ghost,

I take the power of Pentecost,

To fill me to the uttermost:

I take, He undertakes

Monday morning brought another day of continued revival. It was the closing day of the convention-and yet the feeling was at white-heat. We had a happy time both morning, after- noon and evening.

To quote The Reaper once more:

"But perhaps the outstanding meeting of the whole camp was the testimony meeting which commenced about 6:30 p.m. (although many had gathered before that). When it was announced that all who desired to testify must come up to the platform and speak through the amplifier, it was thought that few would face the ordeal. From the very first moment, however, the platform was crowded -and sometimes the aisle too-with those eager to tell of blessing received. As it neared ten p.m. and the meeting had been going on for nearly four hours, the writer endeavoured to close down; but the young folks jumped from their seats and literally ran down the aisle lest they should miss their opportunity. After another hour of testimony, unbroken except for choruses, another attempt to close the meeting was made. (It failed.) Once again midnight was drawing near when the meeting concluded with singing such as one expects to hear in heaven. The testimonies given were clear, definite and sincere. One was struck with the confidence with which naturally shy and timid souls gave testimony. They spoke in a power obviously not their own.

"There were many remarkable features about the gathering. There was a great spontaneity and freedom, and yet no extravagance. In spite of consistently late nights and long meetings, campers did not seem unduly tired. One young hopeful even suggested that we have longer meetings. While there was no great wave of emotionalism, a subdued yet contagious holy joy was in the air. It did not seem unnatural for old men and matrons to yield to the exhortation of Psalm 47:1 and clap their hands for very joy. Our hearts are

filled with rejoicing-and the end is not yet."

In my farewell address, a touching thing was done. Four Maori girls came up and sang the Maori farewell:

"Po ata rau

I moe a i ho nei:

E haere ana

Haere ra

Ma hara mai ano:

Ki-ite tau i tangi atu nei."

I think that my own translation is better than the usual one:

"Now the hour draws nigh

When we must say good-bye:

Soon you'll be sailing

Far across the sea;

When you're away,

Remember me, I pray:

You'll find me waiting

Your return to me."

I sang it in Maori immediately afterwards, hoping to put to shame the majority of New Zealanders who possess a colossal ignorance of the beautiful language of the Maori people.

The Monday evening service-the testimony meeting- lasted till about midnight. Sherriff, Wright and I caught the 9.35 p.m. "Limited" at Frankton Junction, and reached Wellington next day.

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/j-edwin-orr/the-easter-revival-in-new-zealand/>

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