



Transcript:

T.M. Moore/“Revival: Not That Simple”

Episode 49

Announcer:

Welcome to the Post COVID church podcast with your host, Stuart Kellogg.

Stuart Kellogg 0:12

Welcome and thank you for taking the time to listen. A common hopeful refrain during this pandemic: it will focus the minds even of those without faith and lead to a revival. Well, it's never been that simple historically. And it will take more than a once in a lifetime event to light the fuse.

My guest author, and theologian Tia Moore, who spent the last half century in pastoral and campus ministry, theological education and leadership training. He's also written and studied extensively about revival. He currently is the principal at the Fellowship of the Ailbe, a brotherhood committed to the revival of the kingdom of God. He's written more than 30 books, one of his latest, “Restore Us”. He and his wife and ministry partner, Susie have four children, eight grandchildren and two great grandchildren. Welcome back to you.

T.M.:

Good to be back. Hey, I'm glad to see you again.

Stuart

One of the best quotes from the almost 50 podcast guests I've had in this last year plus, came last summer. We're talking about turtle churches, those hunkering down waiting for normal to return. And you said, “We don't want to go back there!”

T.M. 1:29

Yeah, we were losing. We were losing ground. We were not making any impact to speak of on the culture or on the major issues of our society. We were just sort of content going about our business doing our little church thing and not bothering anybody. And so why would we ever want to go back there and just keep doing that? That's not the way ahead, I don't think.

Stuart 1:50

You write, that despite our modern technique and technology society, we can't program revival and that God works from the inside out. Please explain.

T.M. 1:59

Yeah, I think many people when they think of the term revival, church people who've grown up in the church to think of revival, they think of like a week of meetings with a special guest speaker who comes in, there's a lot of organization. There's food that has to be gathered there, you know, the times that the be set up, the announcements have to get out, and we're going to have a week of meetings. And then when that's over the revivals, over nothing much happens as a result of that.

But we tend to think of revival as something that we do something that we coordinate, something that we plan and carry out. When really the teaching of Scripture is quite the contrary, that revival is something that God does. And he begins it in the hearts of each one of his people, and in their churches, so that they actually experience a greater quickening in the life of faith, have a larger view and a richer experience of their salvation, that begins then to flow out from them to the larger world. This is something that God does. And he does it in his timing, he does it in his way. And when he does it, there's no mistaking that something unique is going on here.

Stuart 3:06

How does a major event like this pandemic play into the possibility of a revival?

T.M. 3:11

Well, there's no guarantee, of course, that a worldwide event like this, or even any crisis of any sort, will, will spark a revival. But one thing you have to say about something like this pandemic is it does wondrously focus the attention. It have to cause people to wonder, you know, what's this all about? And what's going on? And how is this going to impact me? And it can even cause people to wonder about, if this is the year that I'm to die, what's next after that?

So there can be a an openness created on the part of people about what life is all about. What what's after this life? Or is there anything at all like with this life and on the part of Christians. It can also serve to create a sense of urgency, while since so many people are getting sick and dying, we really should be doing more than we're doing right now. So an event like this, of the magnitude that this has been, can can really get people's attention. One to open them up to the possibility of something beyond this life and the others to remind us of just how urgent our calling is because people are dying out there every day without the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Stuart 4:22

What role does the church play in an effort to begin a revival in the wake of an event like this pandemic?

T.M.:4:29

Well, we don't need some large scale disaster or catastrophe to get us to seek revival. In fact, the teaching of Scripture is that we should probably be seeking revival all the time. In fact, if you read the 119th Psalm, we don't know exactly who the author of those those great verses were. But over and over again, the psalmist cries out, "revive me revive me, revive me in your loving kindness. Revive me according to your Word ,revived in your righteousness reborn. He's crying out from his own perspective for this daily renewing of his spirit enlarging of his sense of salvation, the stretching out of God's Spirit in him in new and exciting ways.

And so I think the message to us is that this is something that every one of us should be seeking every day, regardless of what the external situations are in the world or in our lives. God wants us to know more of our great salvation. He wants us to grow in Christ to become more like Him, and wants us to bear spiritual fruit, be bold in our witness. And that's not going to happen unless he's working from the inside out within us every single day. So the more that we pray for that, the more that we seek that the light, the greater the likelihood that God is going to respond to those prayers. And we begin to see incrementally progress in our own life in the Lord.

Now historically, what happens when great revivals break out, is that there are extraordinary seasons of prayer focused on by groups of people or by a few individuals, or even sometimes by one individual, the whole Celtic revival that lasted for four centuries, from the middle of the fifth century, to the beginning of the eighth century, that began in one man's prayers. So there was a sense in which God calls his people together, like you see, for example, in many places in the Psalms, to seek Him in prayer, that he would revive them, revive their churches, and bring a great awakening to the world.

Stuart 6:30

It's not just saying, "We've scheduled a revival, please come." It reminds me in seminary, studying Jeremiah Lanphier and "The Businessmen's Revival" in the middle of the 19th century, he felt called. So down in Wall Street, in New York City, one day at lunch, set up chairs, nobody came. Slowly they did in the days and weeks, and then it just exploded.

T.M.:

in this chair, Fulton Street Reformed Church in New York City, and just decided that there needs to be some movement of God's Spirit. So announced a prayer meeting in 1858, Jeremiah Lanphier. And it's soon enough, though it was a halting halting beginning. Soon enough, there were prayer meetings all over the city, then all over the state, then all of them down the east coast, then all across the whole nation, prayer meetings of people calling for revival and multitudes of people coming to faith in Christ. And a whole new enterprise in the Gospel beginning as a result of that one small prayer meeting there in the consistory room of the Fulton Street Reformed Church,

Stuart 7:40

It was fascinating reading clippings from the New York Times covering the event.

T.M.: 7:45

Yeah, yeah, it was, it was a great event. And it's not the only such event that we've seen in church history. Or even in American history. We've seen great revivals in the past and neat and what I would call near revivals as well, that didn't quite come to full maturity, before they actually began to peter out,

Stuart 8:04

You write, that revival begins with the individual and the three P's, can you outline them?

T.M.:

We do need to **pray**, yes. But praying by itself is not enough. There has to be repentance. And repentance brings with it **penance** that, that change of lifestyle from what we were doing, to where we are going. And when you do make that change, and the spirit is stirring within you, Jesus promised that he will overflow like rivers of living water, and that will lead to **proclamation** of the gospel. There's no awakening in the world of large numbers of people coming to faith in Christ, without the proclamation of the gospel boldly witnessed to by Christians who have been renewed in their own spirits and revived by the Lord through their prayers through their practice of penance, and now into the area of proclamation that's gotta be there.

Stuart

My guest, author and theologian, Tia Moore, one of his latest books restore us.

Is it fair to say that no revival has ever begun without repentance?

T.M.: 9:13

Oh, yeah. Well, it has to begin in us and God's not going to revive us if we're holding on to sin. If we, if we insist on continuing in those ways which are inimical to following Him, then there's not going to be any revival. Psalms says in Psalm 66:18, if we harbor sin in our lives, God won't even hear our prayers, much less to answer them. So there has to be confession of sin, there has to be waiting on the Lord to convict us and to admit our sins and then and as is necessary to make restoration within the parameters of those sins. If I've sinned against you. I need to come to you we need to be healed peaceably together as a result of that confession leading to the kind of penance or a practice of a different way of life. That allows that healing to take place. Now, there's not going to that's not going to revive us. If we're just looking for that as some sort of a patch on to the kind of compromised Christianity, we've been living all of our lives, that's not going to happen.

Stuart 10:14

When you look at what's going on in the church now from covering up sexual abuse in the Southern Baptist Convention, obviously the same in the Catholic Church, Hillsong, Ravi Zacharias. It impacts the ability of the church to appeal to the world. And its ability to revive, doesn't it?

T.M.: 10:32

It absolutely does. There was an article last week in *The Atlantic* of all places, talking about how the Evangelical Church has failed the world because it doesn't offer anything attractive in the way of real life or real love or real meaning, meaning and purpose. But rather, what it looks like is a body of hypocrites and cover ups that nobody wants to be associated with. And when you when you have an article like that, in a journal, like the Atlantic, it's almost like a crazy core, hey, somebody out there, do something different, would you we need something. It's almost like there is a world cry for the church, to be the church. But that is not going to happen until we as individuals, come before the Lord seek the Lord continually asking the Lord day by day to revive us and transform us increasingly into the image of Jesus Christ.

Stuart 11:26

So rather than focusing on how many are leaving the faith, we should start focusing on me and the band around us.

T.M.:

Yeah. One of my great heroes of the faith is of course, St. Patrick, who was taken into slavery. when he was the equivalent of a high school student, he was 16 years old. He was kidnapped and taken Ireland into slavery. Ireland was a wild place. It was just a handful of Christians holding on in the southeast, and he was a slave for six years. And then he finally managed to escape and make his way back home, only to be called by God in a series of compelling visions to go back to Ireland, and evangelize those, even though he had no training. He had no support, his own church wouldn't support him, his parents and his family resisted him going back.

But he went back anyway, went back to a place that was so wild in a culture that untamed that the Roman legions wouldn't even dare to invade it. And he went there to preach the Gospel. And he preached for 60 years. So thousands of converts, scores of churches, people ordained to the ministry, and the beginnings of a great revival. And all of that began in Patrick's life, in the midst of his enslavement when he was in a situation he didn't want to be in.

He knew that it was the judgment of God, he repented of his sins. He says, in his confession, I prayed 100 times every day, and as many times every night for six years. And as a result of those prayers, God brought a tremendous revival. So if one man can pray his way into a worldwide revival, a revival of such an impact that Thomas Cahill in his book says, the Irish people actually saved civilization during this era during this Irish revival. If God can use one man like that, why can they use us?

Stuart 13:22

St. Patrick's Day is a lot more than green beer?

T.M.:

And quite a bit more.

Stuart:

I remember listening to your presentation about St. Patrick at the Colson Center. I had never known that story. I wish more people knew about his role as an evangelical. And it's timely Isn't it?

T.M.: 13:41

Isn't it's kind of a template in many ways for other periods of revival which seem to begin in times of prayer. If you look at the 88th Psalm, for example, in verse :18, it says that when God begins to revive his people, they start to pray. And the more they pray, the more God moves to revive them. And so there has to be a devoted season of prayer and of waiting on the Lord, to move in his own way in his own power, to bring the kind of revival that we need in our churches, and the kind of awakening that the world needs in order to find eternal life through Jesus Christ.

Stuart 14:22

Of course, as you write, and we can see all around us, Christians don't want to be “under bond and cords of the law of Go”. As you say, they want to be “the captains of their own fate.” Is that the core problem in the church today?

T.M.: 14:36

Well, it is a problem. And that's the state of the law of God. By that I mean the 10 commandments and all those statutes throughout the five books of Moses that illustrate and guide us in the application of these laws that are given to help us love God and love our neighbors, as Jesus said, the whole laws fulfillment this the law, the law of God, understanding Law God practicing the law of God keeping the Lord God has fallen on hard times and angelical churches these days. I mean, there are even pastors who say, that no longer applies. You don't have to. You don't have to study the law of God.

Stuart 15:12

Pastor Andy Stanley famously called for us to “unhitch from the Old Testament”.

T.M.:

Yeah, well, Solomon says that the the person who neglects the law of God, his prayers are an abomination to God. Now that so this is, this is a seamless cloth when it comes to repentance being revived. If we're going to be revived again, we're going to be revived into God's covenant into a proper relationship with him, which he has defined for us in His law, which Jesus perfectly fulfilled. And said, “if you want to be great in the kingdom, if the keep the law and teach the law, that's the way the greatest.”

You're not earning your salvation by doing that—we can't earn our salvation—but you're proving it and improving it. The more you grow in the law of God and understanding how the grace that comes through that law equips enables us to love God and love our neighbors. And as long as we set that law aside, we don't study and meditate on that law. We don't teach that law and try to practice that law. We can not expect God to bless us in the path of revival we just can't.

Stuart 16:20

That ties into another of your comments. You write that Christians don't care much about their history. Why is that important?

T.M.:

Well, because if we if we were more historically conscious, we would realize how many times in history on all kinds of different scales it has pleased God to bring revival to the church, and awakening to the world. Through the period of the early church for the first two and a half centuries, that was nothing but one continuous series of revivals against the most violent opposition the church has ever known.

The Celtic revival from the fourth to the eighth century, throughout the Middle Ages, various periods of revival in different locales, the Protestant Reformation, the Catholic reformation that ran alongside that for a while the first Great Awakening, the second Great Awakening, the 1858 awaking, the Welsh Revival. All of these in periods of history are evidences that God does respond to the prayers of his people when they wait on Him.

And especially when they come together to wait on Him in extraordinary seasons of praying for revival, God in his time, brings it in surprising ways. The Second Great Awakening in this country was also a worldwide awakening lasted for about a generation from 1800, to about 1833. Out of that Great Awakening, not only did multitudes of people come to faith in Christ, and whole bodies and congregations of denominations of the Lord's church were renewed. But the whole movement for the abolition of slavery came out of that. There were 600 colleges and universities formed in the United States alone as a result of that effort. And more and more positive things happen socially and culturally, as well as spiritually, because people committed themselves to seeking the Lord in prayer. We are not going to have any revival if we just think we can tweak a few things here or there, or just go back to the status quo ante and just be normal Christians all over again. That's not going to bring revival. We need to pray.

Stuart 18:30

How can folks find out more about the Fellowship of the Ailbe, and your books and material?

T.M. 18:36

Yeah, we can, you can go to our website,

<https://www.ailbe.org>

and look at the resources there. Or you can write to me, just send me an email t.,

tmmoore@ailbe.org

And we have devotional materials, we have study materials, we have books on revival. I could give you a list and let you choose what you want. And we'll send it to you most of it's free. The book restore us is available in our bookstore. And that really is a guide to why we should pray for revival, how to put a group together and also with prayer guides to us once you come together to seek the Lord for revival. So write to me at tmmoore@ailbe.org or go to our website, <https://www.ailbe.org>

Check out through the "Resources" tab, all the different things that are available for you.

Stuart 19:29

And we have a transcript of our conversation. So if you don't have a pen and paper and want all that information, it's really easy. Go to the website, www.thepostcovidchurch.com. Look at the show title. And in this case, it's "Revival Not That Simple". Just click that and you will have the transcript and all that information.

My guest T.M. Moore, author, theologian one of his latest books is [Restore Us](#). Thank you so much T.M. for being back with us on the post COVID church podcast.

T.M.

It's a great privilege to be with you, Stuart. You're doing a great job. Keep it up brother.

Stuart

The mission, "helping the church share more of the Good News in the face of hostility, persecution and disinterest." Thank you so much for listening. And please do visit the website. It's got lots of information not only about today's show, but also all the archived materials.

Thank you for being part of the post COVID church family. If you have comments or questions, please send them to me stuart@thepostcovidchurch.org. Thank you so much for listening. Have a great day. I'm Stuart Kellogg.

Announcer. 20:46

Thank you for listening to the post COVID church podcast. You can find much more at the post COVID church group on Facebook or on the website, www.thepostcovidchurch.com

Transcribed by <https://otter.ai>