



A Shouting Revival in West Kentucky!

By PASTOR BEN STRATTON

“Thursday night...shouting broke out and continued until after midnight.” This is how the media described a tent revival that took place in 1929 in the small town of Hickman in West Kentucky. The evangelist was a 44-year-old Baptist pastor named Cornelius Bowles. Kentucky Baptists invested deeply in the life of young Bowles, and his life bore much fruit as a result.

As a child both of Bowles’ parents passed away, and he was sent to live at the Louisville Baptist Orphans Home (now called Sunrise Children’s Services). In time both he and his sister Cornelia were adopted by Mr. and Mrs. Hutcherson, a faithful Baptist couple from Fulton County in far west Kentucky. The family attended the Poplar Grove Baptist Church just outside of Hick-

man, where in 1904 Cornelius was saved during a revival meeting. The Hutchersons had prayed for God to call one of their adopted sons to preach, so they rejoiced when Bowles surrendered to the ministry. Needing an education, Bowles enrolled at the Hall-Moody Bible Institute in nearby Martin, Tennessee. This school trained multitudes of pastors from the Jackson Purchase who were able to study under legendary Kentucky Baptist professor J.B. Moody. Bowles went on to pastor the David’s Chapel Baptist Church outside his hometown of Hickman as well as large congregations in Tennessee, Oklahoma, and West Virginia. For a time, he even served as the State Evangelist for the Oklahoma Baptist Convention preaching meetings throughout the Sooner State.

In August 1929 the West

Hickman Baptist Church decided to invite Bowles to preach a three-week revival meeting in Hickman. Fearing there was not a building in the town big enough to hold their crowds, the church decided to meet in a large tent outside. The church advertised the revival as a “Great Home Coming,” “Under the Big Tent,” and “One of the West’s Greatest Preachers.”

The services started Sunday night, August 11, and continued nightly through Sunday, September 1. Attendance grew each night, with extra chairs being put out. Close to 2,000 people gathered under the tent to attend the services. Every night, Raynor Eddings, a song leader from Independence, Missouri, would lead a 100-person choir in special singing. Even more important, each morning, women throughout Hickman would

gather in cottage prayer meetings, to pray for the revival services.

The Word and the Way, the Southern Baptist newspaper in Missouri, later reported how God answered their prayer:

“The meeting was far reaching in every way, and was more like the old-fashioned meetings of twenty-five years ago than any meeting held in this part in many years. Actual shouting on the part of those who had been saved during the meeting and on the part of Christians could be heard every night. Thursday night, before the meeting closed Sunday, shouting broke out and continued until after midnight. Mostly Baptists took part in the shouting and Brother Bowles remarked that he was glad that Baptists could shout as well as anyone else. The meeting closed in a blaze of glory with nearly two thou-

sand people under and around the tent and with nearly two hundred conversions.”

Somewhere along the way, Baptists lost both our shout and our joy of the Lord. Yet Psalm 32:11 declares, “Be glad in the Lord, and rejoice, ye righteous: and shout for joy, all ye that are upright in heart.” The fact that close to 200 people were born again and nearly 2,000 people gathered together for worship in a town of only 2,300 was definitely something to shout about. If Baptists would get back to praying fervently for the Lord to work (James 5:16), and preaching the Word of God with power (Romans 1:16) we can see shouting revivals in our midst again!

By Pastor Ben Stratton, Farmington Baptist Church, Farmington, KY

The River Ran Backwards

By VAN YANDALL

John 7: 37-38 “ In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink. He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water.”

The morning was cool but pleasant. I walked out onto the pier under the Brooklyn Bridge with my early morning coffee. The New York skyline cast shadows over the city, I felt totally alone and susceptible. We were working with a Christian disaster relief group providing meals for first responders and victims.

The scene of that September morning in 2001 included smoke off the site of the collapsed World Trade Center towers. It had been five days since the terrorist attack on America.

The smoke continued to rise off the rubble and the thoughts of the lives lost troubled my soul. The

dead are dead but their families were in extreme grief. Not knowing for sure what has happened to a loved one is horrible but to consider the circumstances of their death sets the heart and mind beyond its normal limits.

Sea gulls floated by as if being uplifted by an unseen force emanating off the water of the East River. Not a river, it bears the name. Actually it is a saltwater tidal estuary or strait connecting the Atlantic Ocean in two places.

Finally my eyes cast down toward the water and the thought besieged my mind, “The river was running the other direction yesterday! Am I going mad? What’s happening?”

In a few seconds the realization came forth, the tide was going out; whereas yesterday it was coming in. Being from western Kentucky, my ability to comprehend the tides was limited and came only from text books.

A river running back-

wards happened on February 7, 1812. When the New Madrid fault slipped on that date, the Mississippi River ran backwards for several hours forming Reelfoot Lake in northwest Tennessee. That quake is estimated to have been as high as 8.2 on the Richter scale.

Water in volumes too large to accurately determine, exerts tremendous force. The energy produced by tides exceeds all the energy produced by mankind every second of every day. To harness that energy is another matter.

Tidal energy is currently being used in a few locations around the world, most notably at the Sihwa Lake Tidal Power Station in South Korea and La Rance, France, which is the oldest large-scale tidal power station still in operation.

The awareness of tidal potential as a renewable and economical source of energy has long existed but the initial cost of tidal power plants is mostly

prohibitive. Perhaps in the future, the tides will be utilized to decrease the use of fossil fuels which some believe is a major factor in climate change.

Life on earth could not exist without water. Genesis 1: 2 tells us, “The spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters.” We know that water is one of the essential components for God’s creation process.

The combining of carbon based matter (Genesis 1: 1), water (Genesis 1: 2) and light (Genesis 1: 3), the process of photosynthesis happens. With that, chlorophyll is produced, of which a by-product is oxygen.

We humans inhale oxygen to be distributed by our lungs into our blood which in turn feeds the thirty trillion cells in our bodies. On the return trip through our veins the residue left (carbon dioxide) is exhaled into the atmosphere which provides for plants the fuel to produce more chlorophyll thus

more oxygen.

God was the first recycler and it appears He thought of everything. I suppose that’s why He’s God.

Considering the power of moving water and that water is essential for photosynthesis and human survival, we can understand why Jesus emphasized water in His teachings.

John 4: 13 “Jesus answered, “Everyone who drinks this water will be thirsty again, but whoever drinks the water I give them will never thirst. Indeed, the water I give them will become in them a spring of water welling up to eternal life.”

At times it seems as if the church, like the East River, is running backwards. The church as Jesus intended it to be has in many cases lost its focus. Matthew 16: 18 “That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it”

That statement by Jesus indicates one and only one church. His church has been severely fragmented and divided by denominationalism which is a result of individual thinking. Religionists have taken it upon themselves to distort the words of our Savior/Creator.

We cannot rewrite the scriptures and expect it to go unnoticed. Revelation 22 18b-19a “If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book: And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life.”

The perversion of the originally intended church goes far beyond the corruption of the scriptures. Churches are not to be social clubs or entertainment centers. Speakers are not to preach what has lately been dubbed as “feel good” preaching.

Jesus’ sacrificial death on the cross for the remission of the sins of all mankind was nothing to take lightly and celebrate as the winning of a ball game. Jesus’ death and resurrection changed the history of the world as no other event, ever!

We often wonder why the church is in decline in America. Perhaps these are a part of the reasons. We must preach the Gospel of Jesus Christ and adhere to His teachings and not let this river run backwards.

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