

CONTENTS

Introduction: The Crisis We Face	7
PART 1: RETURNING TO THE KING	
1. When the King Is Your Problem	13
2. Returning with All Your Heart	25
3. The Unshakeable Kingdom	39
4. The Return of the King	55
PART 2: RETURNING AS THE CHURCH	
5. "If My People"	67
6. The Physical for the Spiritual	81
7. The Greatest of These	95
8. Igniting the Fire of Revival	107
PART 3: TURNING A NATION	
9. The Danger of Independence	123
10. The Partnership of Church and State	135
11. Creating Followers, Not Just Fans	149
12. A Call for National Revival	165
Conclusion: A Declaration of Dependence	177
Notes	181
Appendixes:	
A: A Strategy for National Impact	183
B: The Urban Alternative	197

When the King Is Your Problem

She was just a girl. A young teen—fourteen years old in a society and a day dominated by men. The year was 1904 and it was Valentine’s Day. She sat in a chapel in Wales, having only been converted to Jesus Christ not long before.

Tremors of political, social, and economic unrest rumbled beneath the surface of her nation. Many of its citizens spent their days digging in mines for coal, hands and hearts darkened by the soot and blackness surrounding them. They wasted their wages on liquor, their leisure on pleasure. Women had few rights at that time, and fourteen-year-old girls nearly none.

Regardless, God is no respecter of humanity’s value systems. God values all and will use whomever He chooses to carry out His work, usually someone we would least expect.

Like fourteen-year-old Florrie Evans, whom some called Flo.

As history credits Rosa Parks for starting the American Civil Rights Movement, history also credits Florrie Evans as starting one of

the greatest national revivals of all time, a revival that ultimately spread internationally as well—impacting us here in America.

The Valentine’s Day service was part of a two-month series of meetings where Pastor Joseph Jenkins had been preaching on themes of revival, renewal, and turning to God. During the morning’s service, Pastor Jenkins opened the floor up for testimonies on spiritual life and power. Young men stood to talk one by one but each time they rambled off topic, so Pastor Jenkins asked them to sit back down. One by one, these young men sat down, exhaling an air of timidity that infected the hearts of the others still seated.

“I Love Jesus . . . with *All My Heart*.”

Who else would stand when the pastor kept telling everyone to sit back down before they had even finished? Who else, but Florrie.

The fourteen-year-old stood to her feet after a long duration of silence, and with voice trembling she said these simple words: “I love Jesus Christ—with *all* my heart.”

Those in attendance have testified that at that moment they witnessed a change in the atmosphere. It is reported that as she spoke those words, the Holy Spirit’s presence and power fell upon the meeting—the air and the attendees, even the timid young men. So impactful was that moment that many, if not most, historians credit it, and this young girl, as the beginning of the 1904 Welsh Revival. Her words would influence a church and a nation. Her opening and only sentence began a spiritual renewal that would usher in thousands of new believers, reduce the tavern sales in one Welsh town to only nine cents on a Saturday night, cure alcoholics, lower crime, and increase justice and equality in the political realm. It would spread the fire of the Holy Spirit across the nations and even the world.¹

What Florrie Evans is identified with starting, Evan Roberts—a Welsh preacher at that time—is attributed as continuing. Days before

Florrie's simple statement, Evan had felt compelled to increase his time in daily prayer from several hours a day to seven. God had placed a burden on his heart for a spiritual awakening in his land and around the world. The number 100,000 burned in his mind. He believed that was the number God was going to bring to spiritual salvation in his country through a time of national renewal.

A GOVERNMENT TRANSFORMED

Roberts continued to pray until God began anointing his preaching in such a way that the Spirit's power flooded those in attendance. Services would often run until 3 a.m. Others soon joined Evan in proclaiming the message, men and women alike, and the movement spread.

Within less than a year after Florrie's proclamation, and as Evan's preaching led the way, 100,000 people had come to the Lord. But not only that, the government had been transformed—in fact, judges began wearing white gloves to symbolize the change. The national systems were reformed, churches filled to overflowing. Families were strengthened. And the movement of God's Spirit spread across the oceans to nations near and far.

You can be certain an awakening is authentic when even the secular news media joins in. The *London Times* began writing of the happenings as a regular, and positive, update in their paper. On January 1, 1905, they quoted the pastor of Saint John's Wood Presbyterian Church as saying, "The mighty and unseen breath of the Spirit was doing in a month more than centuries of legislation could accomplish."

On January 10, *The Times* wrote that, "for the first time there was not a single case of drunkenness at the Swansea Petty Sessions." The next day, a *Times* reporter quoted Parliament member David Lloyd George as saying, "At the next election Wales would declare with no uncertain sound against the corruption in high places that handed over the destiny of the people to the horrible brewing interest." David Lloyd

George went on to become the British prime minister (1916–22).

The Welsh awakening lasted a year but its effects resounded for decades. Real transformation and change was seen and experienced not only in Wales, but around the world. All because one young girl, Florrie Evans, was brave enough to stand and confess Christ publicly, while a preacher named Evan Roberts pleaded to the Lord and proclaimed the message of the Holy Spirit to his nation.

Never underestimate the power of a person. Never underestimate the power of prayer. Never underestimate the power of proclamation.

Never underestimate the Lord.

Friends and fellow citizens, the turmoil, corruption, inequity, and distress we are experiencing in our nation today can be addressed. It can be reversed. We can be transformed. Will it take humbling ourselves before the Lord? Yes. Will it take concerted and united prayer?

**Nothing is ever too
out of reach that God
cannot revive it.**

Yes. Will it take an awakening in the body of Christ? Yes. But all of these things are possible if we will return to God's Word, and make His principles and precepts the basis for our lives, and when we seek both His face and the Holy Spirit on behalf of ourselves, our families, our churches, and our land.

Nothing is ever too out of reach that God cannot revive it. Yet in order to *turn* our nation to God, we—His people—will need to make a collective effort to *return* to Him first.

Revivals do not happen spontaneously. Awakenings do not happen unknowingly. Rather, they are first conceived in people's hearts, then fed through prayer and fasting, which then gives birth to the organization of and call for localized and collective solemn assemblies, thus giving way to lasting transformation.

It is time for a birth like this in our land.

THE HISTORIC SOLEMN ASSEMBLY

When a solemn assembly or sacred gathering was called in Scripture, it was often called by those in leadership—whether that be a priest, prophet, or king.² Often it would first be called for a specific smaller leadership sphere before spreading to the entire nation. Even in America, our historical records verify that prior to every national awakening, the spiritual leadership of the day placed a heavy emphasis on fasting and gathering for times of solemn assemblies, typically in smaller groups that then led to larger gatherings.

During the inception of revival, God will often speak to people in separate locations, giving them the similar vision of the need for this type of gathering. When leaders and people meet who may not see each other often, or even know each other, they find that conversations turn to God's movement within their hearts. As a result, a synergy arises among denominations and leadership. And people who may have never worked together across church, denominational, or organizational lines now have their paths cross in this one overarching purpose.

A solemn assembly for the purpose of restoration is a sacred gathering where God's people, during a specific time of fasting and prayer, seek the renewal of their relationship with Him through the repentance of sin and the passionate pursuit of the return of His presence in their midst. It can also be defined as *a specific movement of God, by His Holy Spirit, through His leadership where He gathers the saints to Himself.*

Biblical history is replete with this similar theme of the assembling of the saints and God's subsequent restoration. After all, God has a heart for reconciliation. From the garden in Genesis to the heavens in Revelation, God issues a call time and again for reconciliation prior to announcing judgment. He is swift to spare, if we will but ask Him for the new heart and the new spirit as His prescribed pathway to seeing hope restored and lives transformed (Ezekiel 18:30–31).

OF CICADAS AND LOCUSTS

Never walk under a tree during a cicada emergence. I learned that early while growing up in Baltimore. Cicadas (who many misname as locusts) suck the juice of trees for their food. After eating they will, well—let me just say that they don't keep it all in and you don't want to be standing under them when they don't.

More helpful advice: Be careful when using a lawn mower during a cicada emergence. Cicadas confuse the sound of the mower with that of other cicadas. So they'll land on you—by the dozens. And plucking them off is akin to removing the spots off a leopard. Godspeed if you try. You'll need it.

And be wary if your neighbor offers a “special” sandwich or “special” pie during the cicadas' emergence as well. People have been known to barbecue, boil, bake, and fry these critters that mob by the millions during their seventeenth-year cycle of mating.

Cicada swarms have wreaked havoc throughout our world and throughout all time. When China was set to host the Beijing Olympics in 2008, they were forced to dispatch 33,000 exterminators to keep the infestation from reaching the host city during the games. In just that one swarm, the cicadas damaged and devoured over 3.2 million acres of agricultural land, and threatened to shut down the Olympic games altogether.

Biblical accounts of actual locust swarms may seem like lore but are as real as any swarm of cicadas that happen today. Yet locusts loomed even larger on the nations throughout biblical times because during that specific historical context, most nations relied on agrarian means for sustenance, trade, and growth. When a locust swarm ravaged through cities and regions—mayhem, starvation, and death morosely ensued.

WHEN THE FIELDS MOURN

In the opening chapter of Joel, God describes the impact of these locusts when He speaks to the prophet: “For a nation has invaded my land, mighty and without number; its teeth are the teeth of a lion, and it has the fangs of a lioness. It has made my vine a waste and my fig tree splinters. It has stripped them bare and cast them away; their branches have become white” (v. 6–7).

Earlier in Joel 1 we discover that the emergence God referenced wasn’t a normal one when one brood, or kind, of locust appears during a cycle. Rather, this invasion contained several different types of locusts converging on the land together. Scientists say that such a convergence typically happens only once every several hundred years, and usually only contain two types of broods at one time. Yet, from the record we read in the first chapter of Joel, we can see that when God sent the locusts, He sent all of them—the “gnawing,” “swarming,” “creeping,” and “stripping” (v. 4). He called them all up from under the ground to do His bidding. What one group of locusts didn’t destroy, the next group did. And what that group didn’t ravage, the next group did.

Thus, when we read God’s Word to the prophet Joel telling him to ask the people, “Has anything like this happened in your days or in your fathers’ days?” (v. 2), the answer is no.

They had witnessed swarms of locusts during their days, sure. But they had never had swarms of swarms, all swarming at the same time.

That’s why Joel is instructed to inform the people, “Tell your sons about it, and let your sons tell their sons, and their sons the next generation” (v. 3). God wanted everyone to remember this moment when the fields mourned and the land groaned from devastation.

GOD'S GREAT ARMY

Looking closely at the Scripture, we see that the locust invasion was not merely a natural phenomenon, but rather it was sent by God to make a spiritual point. As we observe in Joel 2, these swarms of locusts—along with other things—were caused by God Himself. They were, “My great army which I sent among you” (v. 25).

Yet even though the devastation was brought on by God to send a message, unfortunately many people just didn't get it—or maybe it ended up in their spam box of sorts. So God sent a mouthpiece—the prophet Joel—to fill them in on the situation.

What happened back then is often mirrored by what happens still today, and that is that the people of God far too often fail to recognize that what appears to be a natural phenomenon really is the supernatural work of God.

Turn on the evening news or political talk shows at any given time and you will be privy to turmoil and ruin on myriads of levels. If I wrote right now about the major stories currently claiming the headlines, this paragraph would soon be outdated. Give our nation a week or two, and we will see a whole new onslaught of distresses and issues before us. True, some stories rise to the surface as having a greater and more long-term impact, but the sheer volume of crisis in our land today is alarming.

Yet, despite it all, we rarely make a spiritual connection to any of it. We just think that the housing mortgage industry failed, the economy tanked, the collective health of our citizenry has diminished, families simply got redefined, prisons somehow became too full while government likewise grew too large.

We turn our heads to ignore the alarming costs of what insurance companies call “acts of God.” We assume that it's just a storm here or a disaster there, ignoring the sound of the felling of the trees for the printing of the paper for that ever-growing receipt. From 1980 through

2013, we've had 170 such "acts of God"—weather or climate devastations that have each cost \$1 billion or more. The National Climate and Data Center reports the combined cost of these disasters has exceeded one trillion dollars.³ No typo there; that's a T for trillion, as in "tragic." Whether it is God manifesting Himself meteorologically or just a natural pattern of His earth's weather movements, we cannot discount the impact we have felt as a nation under crisis.

Some would argue that we live in the church age wherein Jesus Christ has taken the punishment for our sins and so we no longer face God's wrath, the locusts, or intentional weather disruptions. But in the book of Romans, we clearly discover that the root cause of destruction and devastation is often tied to the natural consequences of turning away from God. Time and time again in the first chapter of Romans, we read these words, "God gave them over . . ."

As a result of hearts hardening toward and turning from Him, God allowed—as the natural consequence of spiritual rebellion—internal damage and deterioration to occur, ultimately exhibiting itself in external ramifications affecting others as well. It's not that the people referenced in Romans didn't know God either. In fact we read, "For even though they knew God, they did not honor Him as God or give thanks" (v. 21). They had distanced themselves from God and His Word. This distance is the same distance we see in the Old Testament times of spiritual judgment that serves as the core cause of those judgments.

Individual, family, and societal mess still stems from the same cause—distance from God.

So while the methods may not line up identically between the Old Covenant era and the New, the root of individual, family, and societal mess still stems from the same cause—distance from God.

In our solar system, we had nine planets. I say "had" because Pluto has since been demoted from the term *planet* to the much lesser

known term of being a Kuiper Belt object. But when I grew up, Pluto was a planet, so Pluto stays in my illustration. It is the farthest known planet—or once-called “planet”—in our solar system. You could go to Pluto any time of the year, and you would be certain to freeze to death. Freezing temperatures dominate twenty-four hours a day and seven days a week. The reason Pluto is cold is because it is situated far, far away. Its distance from the sun keeps it cold.

On the other hand, Mercury is piping hot. As the closest planet to the sun, it is hot all the time. The reason Mercury is so hot is because it stays close to the sun. Mercury never leaves close proximity to the source of its heat. So if you tried to take a day trip to Mercury, you would burn up before you even got in the vicinity simply because it is too hot.

Now, both Mercury and Pluto are in our solar system. They are just not positioned the same in that system. They do not share the same proximity to the center of the system, the sun.

As believers in Christ, we are all in the same system. Yet some of us are Pluto Christians, and others are Mercury Christians. Some are cold all of the time. Depressed all of the time. Discouraged all of the time. Defeated all of the time. Yet others are more like Mercury—hot all of the time. Victorious. Joyous. Overcomers.

However, those are the two extremes. If we were to summarize the majority of the people who comprise the collective body of believers in our nation today, we would probably lean more toward a comparison with Earth than either Pluto or Mercury. This is because “Earth” saints are seasonal. On Sunday, it might be summertime. But on Monday, the winds of winter have already set in. Why? Because situations and circumstances have rotated believers into a seasonal pattern. And we all know what happens when hot weather and cold weather collide—chaos. Which is evident not only in so many believers’ lives today, but also in the subsequent resultant outgrowth in our land.

DISTANT FROM GOD

The problem with our country today is not that God is not near. The problem is that we, the people, turn too quickly between near and far. We turn too quickly between God and other things that we look to in His place. As a result, America is undergoing the consequences, whether through active or passive wrath, because of distance from God.

Our nation's ills are not merely the result of corrupt politicians, terrorists, or extremists. Our troubles can be traced directly to ineffective Christians. The tragedy today is not that sinners sin; that's what they're expected to do, since mankind is born in sin and shaped in iniquity (Psalm 51:5; Ephesians 2:1–3). The real tragedy is that the church as a whole has failed to advance God's kingdom and principles in society in order to be a positive influence for good in our nation and in our world.

As we see in the passages from Joel, God sent His army of destruction to wake up *His people*, not to judge the rest of the world. God was Israel's problem Himself. God opened the doors for the locusts. God allowed the storms. And God gave them over to their enemies. God was the aggressor—not the Hittites, Philistines, or any other “ites” or “ines.”

Just God.

And when God is your problem, only God is your solution.

The impetus behind the problems, even crises, occurring in our nation today is spiritual, even though the symptoms reveal themselves as physical, social, financial, racial, and more. Those are merely the fruit. That's why we'll never see lasting solutions until we—the body of believers—appropriately return to God. Until we hear His voice. Until we humbly fast and pray. Until we all get on the same page together of seeking His face.

Our solutions to our nation's problems will not first and foremost be found in the White House. Our solutions will first and foremost be found in God's house, because He is ultimately in charge and His people have priority access to Him.

AMERICA: TURNING A NATION TO GOD

Now is the time to invoke those solutions by calling on the spiritual leaders and believers in our land to initiate a national solemn assembly. Now is the time to clearly comprehend that God won't restore our nation until He first restores His church.

To turn our nation to God, we must, as His body, return to Him.

And we must do this after the example of a fourteen-year-old girl named Flo—with *all* our hearts.