

SUMMARY OF

GLOBAL AWAKENING

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- Key Insights
- Best Quotes
- Study Questions

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Global Awakening



MAIN IDEA

Something incredible has happened over the past century, something perhaps as significant as the Protestant Reformation. While Christianity is declining in the rapidly-secularizing West, it has exploded globally in places such as Africa, China, India, Brazil, and Korea. While there are many factors to consider, at the heart of the resurgence of Christianity is *revival*.

Revivals are “charismatic people movements that transform their world by translating Christian truths and transferring power” (p. 28). They are spiritual awakenings with cultural, sociological, and political consequences. Revivals often happen when there is dissatisfaction with the way things currently are and a prophetic leader sees the gospel in a fresh way. This leader then preaches the gospel in a culturally relevant way, creating a new community of faith that changes the world around

them. In the process, the gospel is transferred from outside missionaries to indigenous leadership. This has happened around the world in the twentieth century, and the future of Christendom looks bright.



Charismatic People Movements

Christianity has exploded globally even as it has declined in the West over the past century, and at the heart of this resurgence is revivals.

Christianity might seem to be declining in the West, but it has been expanding rapidly across the world. Africa went from 10 million Christians in 1900 to 400 million by 2000. Pentecostalism went from a handful in 1906 to 500 million by 2000. Amazing numbers like these are reported across Brazil, China, Korea, and more. The reality is that the center of global Christianity has shifted in the past century from the West to the global South. What is at the heart of this shift? *Revivals.*

“Global revivals are charismatic people movements that seek to transform their world by translating Christian truth and transferring power.” (p. 28) Revivals are movements wherein large numbers of people testify that they have been awakened to the gospel, and their lives, communities, and societies are subsequently transformed. There are multiple dynamics at work in revivals, the principle results of which are spiritual in nature.

Revivals:

1. Are both a work of God through His providence and something that human beings participate in
2. Cause public confession of sin and repentance, as was prominent in the revival in Uganda
3. Lead to numerous and dramatic conversion experiences, as was seen in the revival in India, when from 1921-1931 over 12,000 new converts joined the church each month
4. Lead to an eschatological vision, where the new converts begin to see their lives and communities as a part of God's plan to renew creation
5. Breed further revivals as those who have been the recipients of missions go on missions themselves. This is seen in African churches like the RCCD, that have churches now in 110 countries. "The religious expansion in the twenty-first century, unlike the nineteenth, is no longer from "the West to the rest" but "from everywhere to everywhere" (p. 172).

Revivals are at the heart of the resurgence of Christianity globally. While it would be easy for Western Christians to be disheartened at the decline of Christianity at home, they should be encouraged about what God is doing globally and be eager to get involved.

KEY QUOTES

- “In the face of its decline in the West, Christianity in Africa, Asia and Latin America underwent a century of dramatic growth.” (p. 10)
- “We are arguing in this book that revivals are both human and divine dramas in which large numbers of indigenous people change their world through the creative use of early Christianity.” (p. 64)
- “The *Balokole* Revival has had a deep impact on many of the Protestant churches of Eastern Africa, invigorating and renewing their life and offering to individuals the challenge of a deeper experience of salvation in Christ and a more radical commitment to Christian discipleship.” (p. 108, italics in original)
- “Personal liberation through an evangelical conversion is an ever-present element in a Christian revival.” (p. 198)

APPLICATION QUESTIONS

- How would you define *revival*?
- Is revival something that we do, something that God does, or both?
- Why should Western Christians care about revivals happening around the world?



Revivals and Leadership

Revivals are often started by ‘new light’ leaders, who have a spiritual awakening and then communicate the gospel in a culturally relevant way.

Revivals often begin with a prophetic leader speaking the message of the gospel in a culturally relevant way. Indeed, “without revival leaders there are no revival movements” (p. 61-62). God has raised up a number of leaders around the world to bring forth the truth of the gospel, such as:

- [Kil Sun Ju](#) in the [Korean Revival of 1907](#)
- [Joseph Babalola](#) in the [Aladura Revival of 1930](#)
- [V.S. Azariah](#) in the [Dornakal Revival in India](#)
- [William Nagenda](#) in the [revival in Uganda](#)
- [Billy Graham](#) in the revival in American Evangelicalism
- [Paulo Borges Jr.](#) in the revival in Brazil
- [Mensa Otabil](#), representing African Pentecostalism
- [Zhang Rongliang](#) of the [Chinese House Church movement](#).

To these names could be added countless men and women raised up by God in revival. In many of these cases, the leader had a spiritual crisis

within a cultural context of dissatisfaction and despair, which led to a fresh experience of the gospel and a message preached in a way that spoke to their culture. The leader discovers a new way of viewing reality in light of God's Word, a reality that resolves a personal crisis (fear, shame, guilt, etc.) and gives hope by a vision of a positive future. Thus, revival leaders are those who have experienced God's grace and are able to see a glorious future that God has for His people and are able to communicate this in a culturally relevant manner.

An example of this is Mensa Otabil. Born in Ghana in 1960, Otabil's father died when he was six. This was a traumatic experience for the family, but Otabil was saved at twelve and Spirit-baptized in 1976. He founded the [International Central Gospel Church](#) in 1984. His message is Afro-centric in that he emphasizes the way that biblical history points to the liberation and uplifting of Africans. He also emphasizes eschatology to promote reverse mission. Remarkably, there are [RCCD](#) African churches in 110 countries. Otabil had a spiritual crisis and awakening in the context of despair, saw the gospel clearly, and articulated it in a culturally sensitive way.

KEY QUOTES

- “This power transfer normally happens when the prophet sees the gospel in a new light, a light that shows an enslaved people a new way to the promised land.” (p. 57)
- “Revival leaders are more often than not charismatic intellectuals who discover new maps of reality and share those maps with spiritually and culturally stranded exiles.” (p. 64)
- “Revivals, if they are to succeed and propel a movement outward, must raise up indigenous leaders, formulate a powerful biblical message that speaks deeply to the context and organize their followers into missional structures that will carry out the vision.” (p. 170)

APPLICATION QUESTIONS

- What can a revival or awakening do to be created and sustained?
- Who are the spiritual leaders in your life that you can pray for?



Revivals and Community

Revival movements create new communities that strive for unity, holiness, and shared mission.

Revivals don't end with individual conversions but rather create new, radical communities. In revival movements, “alienated victims shift into charismatic family members who live lives of a glad dependence both on the risen Christ as well as on each other” (p. 18).

Revival communities must work for *unity*. As conflict inevitably arises both internally (doctrinal disagreements) and externally (government opposition), it is essential that the conflict is resolved within the community, as was seen when the Chinese house church movement signed the [United Appeal in 1998](#).

Revival communities are often rather demanding in terms of the call to *personal holiness* and a life of mission. Ironically, these new demands do not turn people toward less-demanding churches but rather bring people in. “This is why liberal churches which tend to demand less of participants will lose members over time. They do not offer enough in

terms of assurance of salvation, of life after death, of union with God, of ultimate meaning and purpose. Conservative churches tend to grow over time because they offer more and can therefore demand more of their members.” (p. 110)

The church community sees itself as on a *mission* to transform their local community. They are to be the “salt of the earth” ([Mat. 5:13](#)) to make a difference in their community, like the Brazilian Pentecostals have been. “Pentecostal morality and strict personal discipline has helped to rebuild family life, challenge the destructive street ethic of *machismo* and renew neighborhoods.” (p. 153, italics in original)

Revival does not merely save individuals but brings them into new communities that must:

1. Work together for unity.
2. Understand the radical demands of the gospel.
3. See themselves as on a mission to the local community they are in and the world around them.

KEY QUOTES

- “Conversion does not have to be either individual or group. It can be, and in the majority world often is, a matter of both.” (p. 75)
- “The East Africa revival brought not one but several kinds of radical community to Ugandan Anglicanism and other historic mission churches in East Africa through an emphasis on personal holiness and biblical mission.” (p. 92)
- “Seen through the lens of global revivals, the house churches of China in their three documents of 1998 are getting ready to change their world. They realize that removing the obstacle of disunity and the external obstacle are necessary to unleash their full power as a missional movement.” (p. 195)
- “Through the use of their spiritual gifts and through radical love to one another that crosses ethnic and class lines, a radical community is formed that is sent into the world to heal the nations.” (p. 199)

APPLICATION QUESTIONS

- How does a revival produce a new community? What is the purpose of this community?
- Is the community in your life striving for unity, holiness, and mission?

CHAPTER

1

Beyond the Sawdust Trail

While Christianity was on the decline in the West in the 20th century, it underwent dramatic growth in Africa, Asia, and Latin America. At the heart of the global resurgence of Christianity is revival. A revival is “a charismatic people movement that seeks to transform their world by translating Christian truths and transferring power” (p. 28).

There are five dynamics within global revivals:

1. **Spiritual:** the content of the message
2. **Cultural:** what makes a revival local
3. **Historical:** how revivals develop over time
4. **Global:** how global trends influence local revivals
5. **Group:** the varieties of revivals.

Revivals typically begin with problems, and out of the ashes of the old paradigm springs charismatic new leaders that form a movement that clashes with the established powers. If this conflict is resolved, it moves outward to impact the local culture and the world.

KEY QUOTES

- “To miss the rise and significance of the New World Christianity would be like a concerned Christian in sixteenth-century northern Europe missing Luther and the reformation.” (p. 10-11)
- “Revivals restore the spiritual dynamics of Christianity and lead to new movements or renewed institutions.” (p. 27)

CHAPTER

2

Above the 38th Parallel

The Korean revival of 1907, led by Kil Sun Ju, was a remarkable example of how global forces impact local communities and are a major factor in revival. This phenomenon is called *glocalization*, when local communities react against globalization leading to a renewal of local communities, specifically in their religion.

Facing the threat of Japanese colonization, the revival of 1907 led to hundreds of thousands of Koreans professing Christ. Kil Sun Ju was the most prominent leader, and in 1919, he signed the [Korean Declaration of Independence](#), which called for an independent Korea. Though he was martyred in 1935, the impact of the revival was long lasting. The Korean church became self-supporting under new leadership and was hailed as a ‘genuine Pentecost’ by missionaries.

KEY QUOTES

- “When the smoke had cleared, three hundred thousand Korean Christians stood where only a handful had stood two decades before.” (p. 46)
- “The Korean revival of 1907 transformed the Korean Protestantism by turning globalization (the transmission of alien commerce, culture and religion) into glocalization (indigenous reception and expansion of the localized faith).” (p. 52)

CHAPTER

3

The Resurrection Man

The African Aladura Revival of 1930, led by Joseph Babalola, highlights the important role of leadership in revivals. The transfer of power from missionary leadership to locals usually happens when a prophetic leader sees the gospel in a new light and proclaims it in a culturally relevant way.

Babalola had a crisis of faith in which he did not sleep for a week but then received the call to preach the gospel. His gospel message was accompanied by signs and wonders, including raising the dead. This revival is an example of the importance of Spirit-filled, indigenous leadership. Without leaders, there are no movements, and movements are usually most effective when the leader is indigenous. Leaders take on the role of a prophet by proclaiming the message in a culturally relevant manner.

KEY QUOTES

- “They were not looking for ‘personal peace and happiness’ so much as they were looking for a world in which evil, that which destroys life, has been conquered.” (p. 58)
- “Without revival leaders there are no revival movements.” (p. 61-62)

CHAPTER

4

Waking the Dead

The Dornakal Revival in India in the early 20th century is an example of the important role of conversion in revivals.

The conversion of the [Dalit](#) (untouchables) sparked great controversy between Gandhi and Bishop Azariah, one of the central leaders in this revival. Gandhi was opposed to the Dalit converting to Christianity because it was a roadblock to his national vision.

In the early 20th century, almost one million Dalit came to Christ over a ten year period. Conversion in [Acts 2](#) included:

1. Beholding Christ
2. Believing in Christ
3. Belonging to Christ's community
4. Behaving with Christ's mission.

Conversion must happen in the church, where there is a genuine sense of belonging, so that “no conversion is complete without the conversion of the church” (p. 90).

KEY QUOTES

- “Conversion does not have to be either individual or group. It can be, and in the majority world often is, a matter of both.” (p. 75)
- “Christian conversion, for Luke, is the turning away of the whole person from an old reality in which Christ is marginal to a new reality in which Christ is central.” (p. 84)

CHAPTER

5

Nothing but the Blood

The revival in East Africa in the mid-20th century is an example of how revival creates a radical community through radical choice. The revival was centered on public confession of sin and a conversion experience that led to a life of holiness.

This revival showed that churches that make greater demands of their people also tend to offer greater spiritual benefits, since the revivalist moved the church of Uganda away from the Anglicanism that upheld it and toward being a church that “raised the costs of being an Anglican Christian (conversion, activism, repentance) by increasing the rewards offered” (p. 111).

The irony is that the churches that demand more tend to get larger commitments from their people, whereas churches that demand little inevitably decline.

KEY QUOTES

- “The East Africa revival changed the colonial world situation of Uganda and surrounding countries for tens of thousands by changing their status and offering new structures that reinforced their new identity.” (p. 108)
- “This is why liberal churches which tend to demand less of participants will lose members over time. They do not offer enough in terms of assurance of salvation, of life after death, of union with God, ultimate meaning and purpose. Conservative churches tend to grow over time because they offer more and therefore can demand more of their members.” (p. 110)

CHAPTER

6

Born Again

Revivals were prominent after World War II in America with figures such as Billy Graham leading the way. A major contribution to global awakening happened in the mid-1970's with the [Lausanne Congress on World Evangelization](#), creating a global evangelical coalition.

Evangelicalism has two tendencies:

1. The *custodial ideal*, which means preserving moral virtue in a society. It is “the conviction that public virtue is necessary for national life” (p. 131).
2. The *plural ideal* of allowing religious and cultural diversity in the public square while placing biblical faith in the private and voluntary arena.

KEY QUOTES

- “Seen in this way the significance for world Christianity of the evangelical post war revival has less to do with the rise of the religious right or the exporting of American religion than it does with the creation of an international evangelicalism.” (p. 132)

CHAPTER

7

Salt of the Earth

Brazilian Pentecostalism is a movement that grew from a handful of people in 1910 to nearly eighteen million presently. This revival reached its height from 1970 to 1990 under the leadership of Paulo Borges Jr. After dramatically converting in 1971, Borges Jr. planted Sal de Terre church in 1987, which expanded to become multiple congregations.

This movement emphasized:

1. The gospel
2. The miraculous
3. Social justice change that comes with revival.

The morality of Pentecostalism and an emphasis on strict personal discipline had a major impact on the culture of poverty in Brazil. In this way, the Brazilian revival illustrates the justice factor in revivals and the impact revivals make on their communities.

KEY QUOTES

- “The story of Brazilian Pentecostalism is the story not of an American export but a homegrown cluster of indigenous movements that translate Christian truth into Brazilian contexts in order to change their world.” (p. 136)
- “The promise of real change through Pentecostalism led to explosive church growth from 1970 to 1990.” (p. 144)

CHAPTER

8

New Jerusalem

The rise of neo-Pentecostalism in Africa is an excellent example of reverse mission, which is the practice of sending missionaries to places that formerly sent missionaries to those places. A prominent new leader in African Pentecostalism is Mensa Otabil. His message is centered on using biblical history to empower African Christians to engage in:

- Mission
- The centrality of eschatology
- A practical message that reaches matters of daily life.

The church that he founded is now in 110 countries and has even sent missionaries to countries that are deeply resistant to the gospel like Pakistan, China, and Malaysia. A revival creates a missional impulse that causes those who formerly received missionaries to send them, which is why African, Brazilian, Korean, and Chinese missionaries are making an impact for the gospel in the Western world.

KEY QUOTES

- “Revivals, if they are to succeed and propel a movement outward, must raise up indigenous leaders, formulate a powerful biblical message that speaks deeply to the context and organize their followers into missional structures that will carry out the vision.” (p. 170)
- “Revived churches are missional churches and the new churches of Asia, Africa and Latin America are moving beyond local and national contexts to embrace the global context.” (p. 173-174)

CHAPTER

9

Taming the Dragon

The revival through the Chinese house church movement illustrates the place of conflict resolution in revival. In August 1998, Zhang Rongliang and other house church leaders wrote a document called the United Appeal to seek to unify the house church movement. House churches were often divided over doctrinal disagreements, competition for money, and personal grudges.

Three strategies used to bring unity were to:

1. Clarify the essential doctrine
2. Revise the goals for cultural change
3. Be realistic about the expected outcome of confrontation with forces of opposition.

This illustrates powerfully the need for revival movements to resolve both internal and external conflict if they are to be successful. The Chinese house church movement has an estimated 10-20 million Christians on the conservative end of the estimate and is growing several times faster than the birth rate in China.

KEY QUOTES

- “By seeing their story as the story of the universal church in both biblical history and beyond, house churches transform their sense of identity and in so doing increase their confidence, faith and hope for future success.” (p. 183)
- “The creation of this positive perception of house churches from ‘ghettoized’ counterrevolutionaries to an enormous and growing channel of blessing for the country could well assist in the numerical growth of house church Christianity in China until its claims to represent mainstream Christianity in China become difficult to refute.” (p. 194)

CHAPTER

10

Rethinking Revival

Revivals are “charismatic people movements that transform their world by translating Christian truths and transferring power” (p. 202). Essential elements of revival include:

1. Evangelical conversion
2. The use of spiritual gifts
3. The creation of a new community on a mission to change the world.

Though revivals are a global phenomenon, they are often diverse in emphasis. Revivals are both human and divine in nature in that God is ultimately responsible but we also have a role to play. Revivals point forward to the future, but they neither create a new theocracy nor point to the last gasp of Christianity in an increasingly secular world. Instead, they point forward to greater religious freedom as their influence expands.

KEY QUOTES

- “This book has been an attempt to understand these new kinds of leaders and the local movements they have championed, local movements knit together by the Spirit of God to become a great and global awakening that has created the New World Christianity.” (p. 198)
- “In one of the many ironies of a sovereign God, the twentieth century, the most secular century in history, created the conditions for a grassroots revival that may well be producing in the twenty-first century new spaces for a global faith.” (p. 214)



CONCLUSION

The key to understanding the resurgence in global Christianity is *revival*. Revival movements in Africa, Brazil, China, Korea, India, and more show that God is at work in His church, raising up leaders and creating new communities to preach the gospel in new and powerful ways. These revival movements transform individuals who then transform their world.

3 KEY INSIGHTS

1

Charismatic People Movements

Christianity has exploded globally even as it has declined in the West over the past century, and at the heart of this resurgence is revivals.

2

Revivals and Leadership

Revivals are often started by ‘new light’ leaders, who have a spiritual awakening and then communicate the gospel in a culturally relevant way.

3

Revivals and Community

Revival movements create new communities that strive for unity, holiness, and shared mission.

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