

FIRESTARTERS 5

PRAYER TOOL

Igniting Prayer for Revival in our City • 5 Minutes to Read • 5 Minutes in Prayer

FOR THE WEEK OF Nov 14th - 20th, 2021 - Vol 81

THEME VERSE:

*For whoever wants to save their life will lose it, but
whoever loses their life for me and for the gospel will save it.
What good is it for someone to gain the whole world, yet forfeit their soul?*

Mark 8:35-36

THE GOD OF REVIVAL:

Revivals of the Carolinas: Ripples from the First Great Awakening (Pt 2)

Most Christians have heard of the First Great Awakening, the revival that swept across the 13 American colonies in the 1700's. And some may recognize the name of George Whitefield or John Wesley as leaders within that historic movement. But one group of Christians which God powerfully used in that revival may not be as well-known: these are the circuit riders of the great awakening.

Who were the circuit riders? Before the mid-1700's, the common way to start churches was to have an appointed priest or pastor settle in a new area and build the congregation by inviting people to attend and slowly adding to its attendance rolls.

The circuit riders were a new paradigm to fit into the challenges of the new world. In America, pioneers and settlers alike were often spread far apart and scattered as the colonies expanded. This was especially true of the frontier regions at the time, in places like the Carolinas. The reasoning behind circuit riding was that the only way to get the news of the Gospel to all the new colonists, and even the native American Indians, was to ride hard to all these distant places and get the Word out to them. These traveling preachers "rode their circuit" as they and their horses journeyed from community to community in their appointed geographical section.

The Methodists, under John Wesley's leadership, gave birth to this strategy of sending out circuit riders along set routes to visit towns and settlements, preaching at each place for a few days, and then restarting the whole grueling process again from the beginning. George Whitefield practiced this informally as an itinerant evangelist and revivalist from 1739 onwards in the colonies. In just the first 15 months of his preaching, he journeyed over 5000 miles and impacted one quarter of the entire colonial population. God would set Whitefield's messages alight with Holy Spirit fire, drawing crowds of over 25,000 in Boston and leaving deep spiritual transformation in their wake. He also travelled through North Carolina, planting seeds in coastal towns like New Bern and Bath.

Francis Asbury would later be raised up by God to help found the American Methodist church, and he would organize and propel the idea of circuit riding as a key strategy for their movement. He himself and his teammate Harry Hosier would, over their lifetimes, personally see over 270,000 miles travelled and 16,000 sermons preached. North Carolina benefitted directly from Asbury's treks as he made many visits to preaching centers in this state.

The typical circuit rider was young, in good health, and unattached. Unlike most other ministers, they were not required to have a lengthy formal education. All they needed was a clear grasp of the Gospel, Holy Spirit fire in their hearts, and the commitment to endure great hardship. This included risks of mosquito-borne illness, sudden storms, predatory bandits, physical fatigue, rejection by hecklers, and extremely low salaries. Each circuit covered an area as large as 500 miles in circumference, typically taking 4 weeks traveling by horse to visit every stop along the

route. Each assignment for the rider might last up to 1 year, giving each community along the way a chance to hear from this preacher multiple times over this period.

North Carolina was not a very responsive region when revival first arrived in the 1730's. Even as late as 1790, only 1 person out of 30 in North Carolina attended any church. The first formal Carolina circuit only began in 1775 with just 3 riders. Yet, by the persistent and mighty moving of the Holy Spirit through the faithful circuit riders, by 1802, North Carolina had 200 circuits with over 350 itinerant preachers to care for the flock that now numbered over 80,000. Sometimes revival fires take a while to burst into full flame, but it will do so when God's timing is just right and the heart of the Church is ready.

THE GOD WHO ANSWERS PRAYERS:

Praise God for how COVID-19 numbers have flattened out the last few weeks in our city and nation! Also, thank God that more options are appearing for quick and effective treatment, even if someone contracts the illness. Of course, we are still praying for God's healing touch for those afflicted and that this pandemic's tyranny of fear and sickness will soon end.

PRAYER REQUESTS THIS WEEK:

FOR THE CITY:

- **PORNOGRAPHY IN SCHOOLS.** The Governor of South Carolina recently is looking into complaints that a book available in the school library system contains sexually explicit and pornographic depictions that far exceed the recognized definition of obscenity. Pray for parents and leaders in our school systems to be more aware of these kinds of materials and to more diligently guard against their proliferation.
- **SUICIDE.** Recently, Mooreville high school released students early from school after an apparent suicide took place in a bathroom there. Also, college campuses have noticed a rise in suicides in the past academic year. Nationwide, suicide rates are increasing this year among young people. Please pray that the Church would shine the light of the Gospel of Jesus Christ to those who feel lost in despair, and that we would lovingly offer them the hope we have in Him.

FOR JOBS, BUSINESSES, AND ECONOMY:

- **DRAWN TO JESUS.** Pray that difficult circumstances, such as supply chain issues, worker shortages, and inflation, will draw people closer to Jesus and strengthen their faith as they trust in Him.
- **MARKETPLACE OPPORTUNITIES.** Pray for revival in the marketplace – from corporate executives to small business owners to workers - that prayer and Bible studies would become focal points for businesses and that followers of Jesus would be bold in living out their faith and modeling for others what it means to love your neighbor.

FOR OTHER MINISTRIES AND REVIVAL:

- **LOVE LIFE MINISTRY.** A Love Life production premiered this week called "I survived Sanger" where they expose the truth of Margaret Sanger's vision for Planned Parenthood: to eliminate African-Americans and people with disabilities through abortion. Pray for the truth to be known. Pray also for Week 40, our week of celebration where all churches are invited back to the prayer walk. Keep praying for all the pastors, churches, speakers, and mothers that chose life to be speaking and sharing encouraging testimonies boldly. Ask the Lord that many more churches, pastors and Christians will be burdened to get involved and take action in their city to stand for the unborn.
- **REVIVAL.** Father God, raise up a new generation whose hearts are as sold out for Jesus as the circuit riders of old. Give them the willingness to suffer, to make sacrifices, and to go all out for the sake of the Gospel and the Kingdom of God. Ignite them and baptize them with fresh revival fire!

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