

From the Editor

On Wednesday February 8, 2023, Asbury University experienced the beginning of another revival. I am writing this as the revival is entering its tenth day, with no sign yet of stopping. The air in Wilmore is quite electric with expectation as people come from other parts of the country and the news of the revival spreads through social media. As a historian, I know the stories of the 1950 and 1970 revivals and how they impacted both Asbury College (now University) and Asbury Theological Seminary. God is always willing to meet people who seek after God, but somehow the communal experience often seems to take on special meaning to those involved.

Peter, James and John had a similar experience which is recorded in the Gospels (it is significant enough to be recorded in Matthew 17:1-9, Mark 9:2-10, and Luke 9:28-36). Jesus took his closest disciples up on a high mountain and appeared in his radiant true self along with Moses and Elijah, two great heroes of the Old Testament who were recorded to have met God in physical form (Exodus 33:18-23 and 1 Kings 19:11-13). The three disciples were witness to Jesus Christ being revealed as the real presence of God. This is the heart of what revival is about. People experience the real presence of God. Of course, this can happen anywhere and at any time, but it can also be especially impactful to witness this as part of a group.

The danger, which we see from scripture, comes in our response. Scripture records that Peter suggested building three shelters, or shrines, to this amazing experience. Human beings have a natural tendency to try and capture an experience and preserve it, when this is not really the purpose God had for the experience. Jesus had taken the disciples up to a high place, where they had an amazing spiritual revelation about the presence of God, but the point was not to put that experience in a box, or live forever in that experience. This experience was meant to encourage, inspire, and strengthen the disciples for life in the valleys. I have known so many people in the Christian life who seem to run from spiritual high to spiritual high, seeking to maintain that "mountain top" experience. But that is not the purpose of such an experience. This type of experience is to empower us to

go back into the world and share the love of God with a hurting world full of sinful people in need of the Good News of Jesus Christ.

This issue of *The Asbury Journal* is not intentionally about the revival (there would not have been enough time), but as with every issue, it is about how people encounter God on the mountain tops and in the valleys of life. Howard Snyder opens the issue with a thoughtful reflection on N. T. Wright's lectures, which were given in November of 2022 as part of the Seminary's Centennial Celebration. Snyder explores the theological implications of the challenges Wright raised, many of which Snyder has also written on in the past. Ruth Anne Reese follows with an article about cruciform teaching- living out the Gospel in the valleys of everyday academic education. This was a paper originally presented at the Advanced Research Program Colloquium in October of 2021. The next article by Chase Franklin seeks to try and help extend that mountain top experience for pastors by returning to a stronger understanding of Sabbath and the need to observe this commanded time of rest. W. Creighton Marlowe returns to *The Asbury Journal* to examine Psalms 1 and 2 as an extended chiasm exploring the plans God has for human beings and the importance of following the laws of God. Ryan Kristopher Giffin exposes the history of one of those mountain top experiences in the founding of the Holiness Association of Texas, while Kirk S. Sims follows this with an examination of E. Stanley Jones' view of sanctification. Jones himself was a product of Asbury College and an early revival that occurred there, and he carried some of this experience throughout his ministry. Robert A. Danielson looks at the missional impact of Sidney W. Edwards in the Spanish-speaking Caribbean and Central America. Edwards was also a product of Asbury College and the ministry of H. C. Morrison and his views on sanctification. Philip Hardt closes out this issue with a study on how Methodism, through Dr. David Reese fought against the pseudo-science of phrenology and its impact on theology and larger social issues as well. Finally, the *From the Archives* essay continues to examine some of the most important work of Asbury Theological Seminary's founder H. C. Morrison in the little-studied period of his ministry from the late 19th to the early 20th century. In particular, Morrison's work in publishing and in creating a center for the Holiness Movement in Louisville, Kentucky.

Asbury has often been known as a place for revival, and I rejoice in any experience which brings people closer to God as revealed in God's

Son, Jesus the Christ. I rejoice whenever people experience the power of the Holy Spirit in their lives and rededicate themselves to serving God wherever they might go in ministry. We might be called to academic theology and teaching, to biblical study and pastoring a local church, to missions in India or Central America, or to secular fields like medicine or business. But we must remember that mountain-top experiences serve a function of empowering us to move into the valleys of life. If we struggle to remain on the mountain-top we end up building a shrine to an experience which serves no purpose for the Kingdom of God. We end up putting God into a box at the same time God is calling us out of our boxes and into a hurting world full of struggles and pain. Revival only succeeds when it is able to transform the experience of the mountain-top into ministry in the valley. I rejoice at what God is doing in Wilmore right now, but I will rejoice even more when I see it impacting those on the margins of society in real concrete ministry. Remember that the Jesus who was transfigured on the mountain, also told of a final judgment,

Then the righteous will answer him, "Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you something to drink? When did we see you a stranger and invite you in, or needing clothes and clothe you? When did we see you sick or in prison and go to visit you?"

The King will reply, "Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me." (Matthew 25: 37-40)

Revival is only truly a revival when it comes down from the mountain and becomes the Gospel lived out among the hungry, the needy, the immigrant, and the prisoner. We are "revived" in order that we might serve a hurting world and introduce Jesus Christ to those who have never met him before. Do not stay on the mountain-top and try to enshrine an experience, but bring it down with you into the valleys which need that experience and touch from the living God. Then we can truly say, "We have experienced a revival!"

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