

Sunday 29th October & 5th November 2023 9.00 am and 10.30 am

WINTER IS APPROACHING AND OUR OPPORTUNITIES TO KNOW GOD MAY BE DISAPPEARING

Sermon preached by The Revd Dr Tony Martin delivered at Cromwell
Presbyterian Church



READINGS:

Psalm 24

Revelation 7:9-17

The Great Multitude in White Robes

9 After this I looked, and there before me was a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, tribe, people, and language, standing before the throne and before the Lamb. They were wearing white robes and were holding palm branches in their hands. 10 And they cried out in a loud voice:

**“Salvation belongs to our God,
who sits on the throne,
and to the Lamb.”**

11 All the angels were standing around the throne and around the elders and the four living creatures. They fell down on their faces before the throne and worshiped God, 12 saying:

“Amen!

**Praise and glory
and wisdom and thanks and honour
and power and strength
be to our God for ever and ever.
Amen!”**

13 Then one of the elders asked me, “These in white robes - who are they, and where did they come from?”

14 I answered, “Sir, you know.”

And he said, “These are they who have come out of the great tribulation; they have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. 15 Therefore,

**“they are before the throne of God
and serve him day and night in his temple;
and he who sits on the throne
will shelter them with his presence.**

**16 'Never again will they hunger;
never again will they thirst.**

**The sun will not beat down on them,'
nor any scorching heat.**

**17 For the Lamb at the center of the throne
will be their shepherd;**

'he will lead them to springs of living water.'

**'And God will wipe away every tear from
their eyes.'"**

John 10:22-30

Further Conflict Over Jesus' Claims

**22 Then came the Festival of Dedication at
Jerusalem. It was winter, 23 and Jesus was in
the temple courts walking in Solomon's
Colonnade. 24 The Jews who were there
gathered around him, saying, "How long will
you keep us in suspense? If you are the
Messiah, tell us plainly."**

25 Jesus answered, “I did tell you, but you do not believe. The works I do in my Father’s name testify about me, 26 but you do not believe because you are not my sheep. 27 My sheep listen to my voice; I know them, and they follow me. 28 I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; no one will snatch them out of my hand. 29 My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all; no one can snatch them out of my Father’s hand. 30 I and the Father are one.”

SENTENCE FOR THE DAY

The Lamb in the midst of the throne will be their shepherd and will guide them to the springs of the water of life, and God will wipe every tear from their eyes. Revelation 7:17

INTRODUCTION

The events preceding today's Gospel reading – John 10:22-30 - were during the Feast of Tabernacles, which was celebrated in late October.

But the events of today's reading occurred in December, around the fourteenth, during the Feast of Dedication.

It was also called the Festival of Lights. The Jewish name is Hannukah which means “dedication.”

The origin of this feast was found in a time of trauma and heroism in Jewish history.

Antiochus Epiphanes IV

King of Syria
175 – 164 BC



The [King of Syria, Antiochus Epiphanes](#), reigned for 11 years between 175 - 164 B.C and he set out to eliminate the Jewish religion for good.

He was the one who introduced the Greek gods in Palestine.

Now, as you might expect, the Jews resisted him ... and his idolatry.

In 170 B.C., he attacked Jerusalem and eighty thousand people were killed and eighty thousand

were sold as slaves. About 80 kgs of silver were taken from the Temple treasury.

In this time, if you possessed a copy of the Torah, or if you circumcised your son ... you were executed.

If the mother circumcised her son ... she would be crucified upside down with her children hanging around her neck.

What a charming thought given recent developments in Israel, you might say, Tony.

The Jewish Temple was profaned during this terrible time. The Temple chambers were turned into prostitution chambers.

Pigs were sacrificed on the Altar to Zeus.

According to the scholar Weitzman,

The history of religious persecution could be said to have begun in 167 B.C.E. when the Seleucid king Antiochus IV issued a series of decrees outlawing Jewish religious practice.

According to 1 Maccabees, anyone found with a copy of the Torah or adhering to its laws - observing the Sabbath, for instance, or practicing circumcision - was put to death.

Jews were compelled to build altars and shrines to idols and to sacrifice pigs and other unclean animals.

The temple itself was desecrated by a “desolating abomination” built atop the altar of burnt offering.

The alternative account in 2 Maccabees adds to the list of outrages: the temple was renamed for Olympian Zeus, and the Jews were made to walk in a procession honouring the god Dionysus.

Without apparent precedent, the king decided to abolish an entire religion, suppressing its rites, flaunting its taboos, forcing the Jews to follow “customs strange to the land.”¹

Now Judas Maccabaeus and his brother led a rebellion against Antiochus. These men fought for freedom and won the struggle in 164 B.C.



¹ Weitzman, S. (2004). Plotting Antiochus's Persecution. *Journal of Biblical Literature*, 123, 219.

The Temple was cleansed ...and purified ... after the three years of pollution.

Interestingly, when the menorah or candlestick was re-lit for the dedication of the Temple ... one cruise of oil ... was left with the seal of the priest on it.

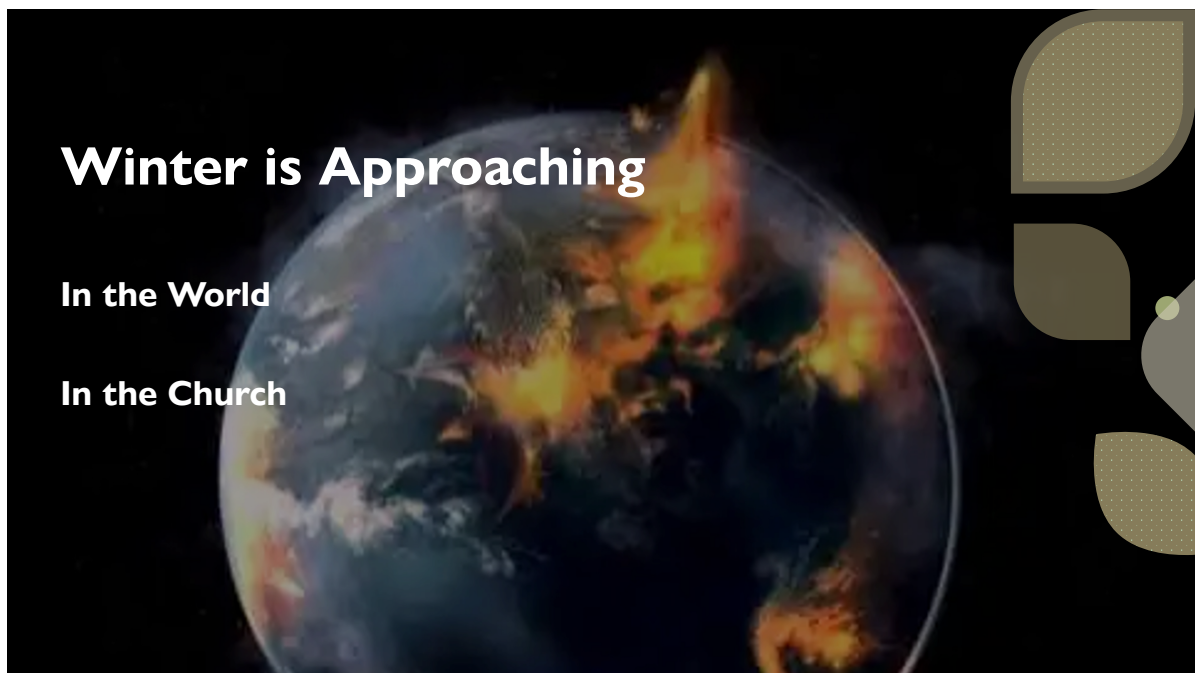
And this was enough oil for one day, yet it miraculously lasted for eight days until new oil could be made.

To this day, the Jews light one candle a day for eight days, celebrating the miracle and freedom from Syrian tyranny and the rededication of the Temple in Jerusalem.

Now, do you notice that in John 10, as Jesus enters the Temple on Hannukah ... it is winter – it is the northern hemisphere - both in the season and in the approaching calamitous road to calvary.

For the rest of John's Gospel, Jesus largely focusses on his own. The Lord will reduce his public profile in the lead up to his crucifixion.

Well, what can we learn from today's Gospel reading?



Winter is Approaching

In the World

In the Church

**FIRSTLY, I WANT TO SAY THAT ... I
BELIEVE ... WINTER IS APPROACHING US
AS WELL: BOTH IN THE WORLD AND IN
THE CHURCH**

OK, what do you mean by this Tony?

I do not want to startle you ... but unless we are deaf and blind ... surely ... we cannot but help realise the world is changing around us.

We are in a season of shaking.

At the beginning of Russia's invasion of Ukraine, leading world commentators and politicians, were suggesting WW III had started ... and there is a realistic expectation ... we will experience a change in the global order ... and possible nuclear exchange.

Peter Frankopan is professor of global history at Oxford University wrote:

Russians have been told repeatedly by their TV anchors and columnists that they are engaged in an existential global conflict. But what might have looked like wild exaggeration

a few weeks ago is now an increasingly credible point of view outside Russia too.

Fiona Hill, until recently the senior director for European and Russian affairs on the US National Security Council, was asked last weekend if talk of a possible new world war was far-fetched. She answered bluntly: “We’re already in it. We have been for some time.”

Fankopan continues: Such warnings should force us to look beyond the horrifying scenes in Mariupol, Bucha and countless other cities and towns that have been subjected to savage onslaught by Russian forces since the end of February and to assess wider, global perspectives — including what this means from the perspective of the UK and Europe, and indeed the rest of the world.

... we are witnessing the birth of a new world — one that like all births is painful and traumatic.

Sergey Lavrov, Russia's foreign minister spelt this out recently when he said that "this is not about Ukraine at all, but the world order. The current crisis is a fateful, epoch-making moment in modern history.

"It reflects the battle over what the world order will look like."

Frankopan concludes by saying, **That might sound melodramatic, but the stakes could hardly be higher. The possibility of the potential use of nuclear weapons should be taken very seriously. As Fiona Hill put it about Putin: "Every time you think, 'No, he wouldn't, would he?' Well, yes, he would."**²

² Sunday Times, Saturday, April 30, 2022, PETER FRANKOPAN Has Russia already started World War Three? The seismic impacts of the Ukraine conflict are everywhere we look Link <https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/has-russia-already-started-world-war-three-x33n9qfhx>

Now, I could also mention the alarming developments in Israel and the Middle East, but the situation is so fluid that whatever I might say, could very well be dated by developments this afternoon.

And not only that, of course, you will be very well informed of the calamitous and dangerous situation ... that you don't need me to comment.

OK, as Jesus walked into the Temple ... for the Feast of Dedication, Hannukah, ... the darkness and chill of winter ... enveloped him ... and he was challenged about his identity and mission.

Calvary also lay just around the corner ... and after the splendid resurrection ... commenced a severe persecution of Jesus' followers ... beginning with the martyrdom of Steven.



And, I believe, winter is approaching us as well ... and the challenge to the church is equally stark:

Professor Diarmaid MacCulloch, an expert in church history at Oxford, said that in England we are “seeing the last generation who automatically went to church is now dying” as western European societies grow more secular.³

³ [Archbishop of Canterbury: Churches celebrate Easter return of their flock](#)
Kaya Burgess, Religious Affairs Correspondent
Friday April 22 2022, The Times

Now, it is not news for me to say that churches are in steep decline, and the Christian faith is ignored by many – and in my opinion – hideously distorted by sections within the church.

The voice of the εὐαγγέλιον – the gospel – has largely fallen silent ... and is widely disbelieved.

The days – I fear - when the opportunity to proclaim ...

the Gospel message openly and candidly ...

to be saved ...

or the opportunity to serve God ...

and to witness for him ... are disappearing.

Now, this of course may change.

Because revival and spiritual awakenings ... do seem to begin ... in the most unusual and unpredictable times ... and places.

But, I take seriously the comments of Jeremiah ... where he warned about ... fleeting opportunities. He said,

The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and we are not saved. Jeremiah 8:20

So, it is winter ... with darkness ... and an icy chill in Jerusalem ... and the Jews gather around the Lord ... at Solomon's Porch.

They ask, "How long will you make us doubt?" This means, "How long will you keep us in suspense?"

It seems these people had two attitudes:

1. Some wanted to know the truth
2. Some wanted to trap the Lord.

And it is ironic ... that they say to the Lord, “Tell us plainly!” ... because this was exactly ... what he had done, but they did not want to hear it.

They were lost ... because they refused to be found!

So, firstly, I want to say ... that just like Jesus in the Temple on Hannukah ... I believe winter is approaching us today.



SECONDLY, THE CROWDS ASKED “IF YOU ARE THE MESSIAH, TELL US PLAINLY”

You know ... whether it is politicians attacking their opponents empty and confusing promises ...

or the population at large ... wanting clarity and certainty from its leaders ...

we are all familiar with the appeal of ... “plain-talking leaders.”

The trouble is, of course, that talking “plainly” about that which is inherently complex ... or even beyond our understanding ... is misleading to the hearer ... and demeaning to the subject of the discussion.

Now, in media training ... I was taught to identify a sound bite ... and to communicate that authentically ... irrespective of the question. It is

the sound bite... that will be remembered ... not the question.

And we don't need a doctorate ... to recognise the trouble ... with talking plainly ... about the things of God ... is that the things of God ... are anything but plain.

When a person begins speaking with unequivocal certainty ... using reason and logic ... about God ... this is likely to be ... a sign ... that the person is no longer speaking about God.

We can speak with unequivocal certainty ... about things our mind can grasp ...

but God is not one of those things that we can grasp with our mind alone.

God holds us, we do not hold God.

And sometimes our desire for ... plain talk ... in the realm of faith ... is seen in Bible studies ... where we are determined to find out “what the Bible really means.”

And at the liberal end of the spectrum, some might say ... the Bible invites us to experience and participate in ... rich stories ... with multiple meanings.

But ... I believe ... it is far more nuanced than either approach.

There is no doubt in my mind ... the Bible is a magnificent ancient text ... subject to all the disciplines of textual criticism.

But is also the Word of God ... that can be understood ... only if the Holy Spirit ... informs our reading ... and applies it to our heart.

The Bible, above all ... is to be spiritually discerned ... through the work of the Holy Spirit.

It is more than a text ... to be intellectually analysed and debated.

John Stott, the great evangelical author, of last century wrote,

“The double authorship of the Bible will affect the way in which we read it. Because it is the word of men, we shall study it *like every other* book, using our minds, investigating its words and syntax, its historical origins, and its literary compositions. But because it is also the Word of God, we shall study it *like no other* book, on our knees, humbly crying to God for illumination, and for the ministry of the Holy Spirit, without whom we can never understand it.⁴

⁴ John RW Stott, *The Bible book for today*, 1982, IVP, p19

So, those who try to discern “the plain meaning of the Bible” might discover ...

there is nothing plain about God ...

who spoke from a burning bush ...

and is named “I AM WHO I AM.”

And in this passage from John’s Gospel ... Jesus says to his demanding inquirers ... that he has already told them plainly ... what they need to know.

The trouble is ... that the way Jesus told them ... was through his works.

In other words, ... it seems Jesus’ identity ... and mission ... cannot be reduced to words ... or a title ... instead, his identity and mission must be witnessed and experienced.

And this becomes clear ... in the analogy ...
Jesus uses ... of the sheep and shepherd.

You see, the sheep know and trust the shepherd ... not because they have gone through any sort of rational, intellectual discernment ...

but because they have experienced the shepherd ... and his “works.”

In the same way ... a child knows and trusts his or her mother ... because of experience, not reason, ...

and it is not an accident that Jesus elsewhere says, **“whoever does not receive the kingdom of God as a little child will never enter it” Mark 10:15; Luke 18:17.**

OK, there will always be a role for what we call Christian apologetics.

After all, the first and great commandment is,
**“You shall love the Lord your God with all
your heart, and with all your soul, and with all
your mind and with all your strength” Matt.
22:37; Mark 12:30 and Luke 10:27.**

Our minds, you will agree, must be engaged in
the discernment of truth ... and of understanding
the ways of God ...

but many of us are still thinking like **Descartes ...
who said “I think, therefore I am”** ... thus
emphasising the mind ... as pre-eminent in
obtaining knowledge.

And you may have noticed, some of the
bestselling books of our day ... written by self-
proclaimed atheists ...

are devoted largely ...

to exposing what the authors perceive ...

as intellectual fallacies ...

in traditional religious teachings, especially Christianity.

And perhaps ... in squabbling and debating about who believes the right things about God ... we get entangled with words about God ...

instead of witnessing and experiencing the actions of God ...

and walking in the ways of God.

I feel ... that without denying the importance of ... the mind in the development of faith ... and in the pursuit of spiritual truth ...

we should perhaps focus on turning ... to an authentic experience of God ...

recognizing this experience ...

may very well be ... beyond our understanding ...

and largely ... exist outside ... the powers of a rational ... and logical explanation.

After all, the early church grew dramatically, ... not because multitudes were convinced of the truth of creeds and dogmas

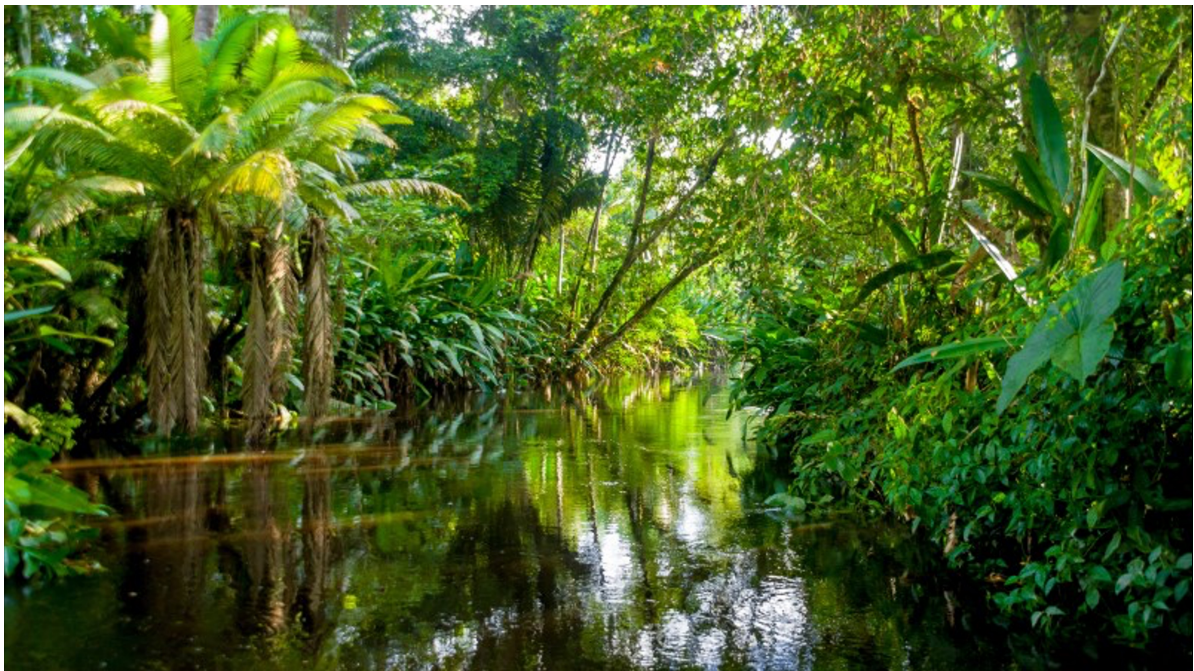
... but because multitudes experienced the living Lord ... and a new life ... that was foolishness to the wise 1 Cor. 1:27.

So, do you think today ... in the nation of New Zealand, and perhaps in the church ... we have been too stuck in our heads ... and ignored the Lord reaching out to us ... through witness and experience of his actions?

**AND SO, THIRDLY, A TRUE UNDERSTANDING
OF JESUS ARISES FROM DIVINE ACTIVITY IN
OUR LIFE**

Jesus said,

**27 My sheep listen to my voice; I know them,
and they follow me.**



Now the Jesuit priest [Anthony DeMello](#) told a parable he entitled “The Explorer,” which illustrates our predicament.⁵

In it, a person leaves his home village to explore the faraway and exotic Amazon. When he returns to his village, the villagers are captivated as the explorer tries to describe his many experiences, along with the incredible beauty of the place, with its thundering waterfalls, beautiful foliage, and extraordinary wildlife.

How can he put into words, though, the feelings that flooded his heart when he heard the night sounds of the forest or sensed the dangers of the rapids?

So, he tells them they simply must go to the Amazon themselves.

⁵ Jones, G. D. (2009). Pastoral Perspective on John 10:22–30. In D. L. Bartlett & B. B. Taylor (Eds.), *Feasting on the Word: Preaching the Revised Common Lectionary: Year C* (Vol. 2, pp. 444–448). Westminster John Knox Press.

To help them with their journey, the explorer draws a map.

Immediately the villagers pounce on the map.

They copy the map, so that everyone can have his or her own copy. They frame the map for their town hall and their homes.

Regularly they study the map and discuss it often, until the villagers consider themselves experts on the Amazon - but they do not know the location of every waterfall and rapid, every turn and bend.

And they cannot sense the sound, smell, visual delight and terror of the jungle.

You see, knowing about the Amazon ... is different from experiencing the Amazon first hand.

And we read in the Gospel this morning,

The Jews who were there gathered around him, saying, “How long will you keep us in suspense? If you are the Messiah, tell us plainly.”

But Jesus was directing his audience ... to his works ... to divine activity ... to an experience of God.

An experience ... which would carry them ... through a dark, cold, winter ... characterised by argument, confrontation, and ultimately for some ... violence and a brutal death.

You know, people will often press ministers, priests, pastors, and fellow Christians ... to “tell us plainly” ... about the things of God.

Because they value the ability ... to speak eloquently of one’s faith ...

And, I admit, it is a wonderful gift ... if it is done well.

But the most important task, however, ... is to encourage others ... to make their own personal journey ... and to experience the living Lord themselves.

And Jesus elsewhere tells us ... that to know God ... now and throughout all eternity ... we need to reach out to God ... in repentance and faith.

Repentance, is of course, sorrow for our sins ... and a commitment to align our lives ... with the purpose and will of God.

It is that simple.

For, as DeMello suggests in his parable, there can be a certain futility about drawing maps - however plain and explicit they might be.

Because knowing about the Amazon ... is different from experiencing the Amazon first hand.

You see ... there is no such thing as an armchair explorer ... and likewise ... there is no such thing as an armchair Christian.

To know God ... is to respond to the stirrings of the Holy Spirit ... as you hear the Word of God proclaimed ... and as you witness the actions of God ... in the lives of others around you.

Do you think those listening ... to Jesus ... on that cold winter's day in the Temple ... understood this? ... or were they lost ... because they refused to be found!



The Hebrides Revival and Awakening 1949-1953

To conclude, allow me to joyfully affirm Jesus' words,

27 My sheep listen to my voice; I know them, and they follow me ... no one can snatch them out of my Father's hand.

So, seek the Lord ... today ... while he may be found.

The Hebrides Revival began with two sisters: Peggy and Christine Smith. One was 84 years of age and blind, the other 82 and crippled with arthritis. They were greatly

burdened because they'd been told no young person attended public worship at their church. They decided to pray twice a week. On Tuesdays and Fridays they got on their knees at ten in the evening, and remained there until three or four in the morning; two old women in a very humble cottage.

Then Peggy had a vision of the church crowded with young people. They persuaded their minister to call 'a session'. Seven men covenanted 'not to give rest nor peace to the Almighty until He made their Jerusalem a praise in the earth'. Those men also began to meet on Tuesday and Friday nights for some months

Then one night in November a young man began to pray, 'God, are my hands clean? Is my heart pure?'

But he got no further. He fell into a trance and lay on the floor of the barn. Within a matter of minutes three other elders also fell into a trance. The minister and other intercessors were gripped by the conviction that a God-sent revival must always be related to holiness and godliness.

Are my hands clean? Is my heart pure?

An awareness of God gripped the whole community. Little work was done as men and women gave themselves to

thinking about eternal things, 'and God seemed to be everywhere.' In the little cottage the two sisters knew God had kept His promise and told their minister to invite a missionary to come and help them.

Duncan Campbell was called to lead a series of meetings. For the first week of evening meetings little happened, though five young people found God. (Would that every church might have five young people find faith!)

Then on 13 December 1949, at the end of the meeting, all had left except Campbell and one other. The deacon said, 'Don't be discouraged. God is hovering over us, and he'll break through any moment. I can already hear the rumbling of heaven's chariot wheels.'

He began to pray before falling to the ground in a trance. Five minutes later the local blacksmith came back to the church and said, 'Mr Campbell, something wonderful has happened. We were praying that God would pour water on the thirsty and floods upon the dry ground, and listen, He's done it! He's done it! Will you come to the door, and see the crowd that's here?'

Even though it was 11 at night between six and seven hundred people had gathered around the church. They'd been moved by a power they could not explain. A hunger and thirst gripped them and the meeting continued until 4 in the morning. Strong men were bowed down and

trembled in God's presence. Nearby a dance was in progress but the young people ran from it, 'as though fleeing from a plague', and made for the church.⁶

So, allow me to ask ... do you sense the stirring of the Holy Spirit in your life?

Are you moved by the actions of God ... which you have witnessed ... in other people's lives?

Do you know that God loves you ... and is calling you to be his own ... calling you to come home?

Well, I believe Jesus is speaking to us today ... and I believe winter is approaching!

What do you believe?

⁶ The Hebrides Revival and Awakening 1949-1953 - a short history
By Alex Dunn
Self Published

Allow me to mention a spiritual awakening which is sometimes called a revival near here ... in Waikaka valley.

Revival in the Waikaka Valley⁷

The area near the present town of Gore, in Southland, was opened to white settlement in 1855, and during the 1860's there was a minor gold rush in Waikaka. At a later stage, dredging was done, also, which ruined some of the farm land. The soil was very fertile.

The early settlers were generally a fine class of people, and might generally have considered themselves to be Christians. The early parish structure covered large areas. The few ministers in Otago and Southland had to travel long distances to administer the church ordinances, so services in the Waikaka area were not frequent.

The people were so engrossed in carving out a living for their families in this pioneering situation, that there was very little time to think about God, or eternity, or to be involved in a church. So, a spiritual deadness prevailed.

⁷ EVANGELICAL REVIVALS IN NEW ZEALAND: A History of Evangelical Revivals in New Zealand, and an Outline of Some Basic Principles of Revivals, by Robert Evans and Roy McKenzie, pp36-38

James Dickie was born in Tannahill, Ayrshire, in 1854, and came to New Zealand with his family when he was only nine. In the land sales in 1875, and after, he bought a farm in the Waikaka valley, and took his bride there a few years later. Dickie was a frank and transparent person, who was looked up to by his friends and neighbours.

On New Year's Day, 1881, his wife was away, leaving him alone at home. It was the custom not to work on 1st January. He was reading the early parts of John's Gospel, and in coming to chapter three, was struck by the statement of Christ that nobody could see the Kingdom on God unless he was "born again." He did not know what this meant. He had been outwardly religious, but had never experienced any deep relationship with God.

This question about the new birth exercised his mind to such an extent that he got down on his knees, and asked God that he might know by personal experience what the new birth really was. God met him there, and he rose a transformed person. He started immediately, in the most candid and natural manner, to tell everyone about his great discovery. The reaction from the people to whom he spoke often was that if Dickie needed to be born again, then "I must need it, too." So great was their confidence in the man; so thoroughly did they respect his testimony, that in a little over three months, more than forty men and women among the early settlers were soundly converted.

John Thomson reports on his conversations with Andrew Johnston, the Blind Evangelist, who had many memories from the early days in Waikaka, knew many of the early characters, and had been told what happened during the revival.

Thomson says, "At first he (Dickie) was apparently met with indifference, even ridicule. After all, many of the good farming folk of the valley had been staunch church-goers for years (at least in other locations).

But THEN, amazing things began to happen. Farmers out ploughing were suddenly "struck down" by a sense of their exceeding sinfulness and began crying out to God for mercy and forgiveness....it was simply a movement of conviction, repentance, an overwhelming sense of God's forgiveness and love coupled with a sense of urgency to pass the gospel message on.....there were no other manifestations....purely conviction, the overwhelming sense of God's grace and forgiveness, and the necessity 'Woe is me, if I do not spread the gospel.'

The result of all this was that the "fire" spread from farm to farm, hamlet to hamlet, especially from the Waikaka Valley to the village of Waikaka. As the "fire" spread there developed a great hunger to study the Bible. Prayer meetings were established in many homes and in the district churches (which were nearly all Presbyterian) Along with the earnest study of God's Word came an

accompanying growth in holiness some of the 'old-timers' who though staunch and upright in many other ways, were nevertheless quite 'fiery of temperament'. But as the Spirit of God moved in convicting power these same men became soft and gentle and gracious.

By 1883, there was sufficient support for the Presbytery to induct a minister, the Rev. William Wright, to the new charge of Knapdale, which included the Waikaka area. This service, which was both an ordination and induction service, took place on 21st February that year in the Knapdale woolshed.

The revival created a distinctly different flavour and atmosphere about this Knapdale-Waikaka parish, compared, for example, to the neighbouring parish of Tapanui.

On August 16, the first Session meeting took place, and it was resolved that a series of evangelistic meetings would be held toward the end of the year, to help lay a foundation for the spiritual work of the congregation. Mr Duncan Wright was asked to be the mission preacher, but, upon his arrival in the Waikaka valley, he had an accident, and broke his leg. So, the local Waikaka men had to take the services, instead. Apart from James Dickie, they were John Kirk, William Johnston and Adam John Nichol.

Of course, some people criticised this effort by the laymen, saying that it was an unnecessary innovation. But God blessed the venture, begun in fear and trembling. The Gospel made headway through the district, and into the surrounding neighbourhood.

Another result of the spreading fire was the closing of dance halls, pubs, etc. Not that these things were preached against, but rather the hearts of the men and women were turned to godly things. In time the district became 'dry'. (Eventually a local product called Hokonui Whisky began to appear, because normal liquor supplies did not exist.)

Another outcome of the revival was a great upsurge of interest in the district in overseas missions. By the turn of the century the original "flame" was beginning to wane a little, but nevertheless to this day in Eastern Southland there still remain pockets of strong evangelical testimony coupled with a unique interest in missions.

The revival touched several families in the Waiwera district. Future leaders who were raised up in this way were J. C. Jamieson, who was heavily involved in the early stages of the Bible Class movement, and was later Youth Director for the Presbyterian Church in Victoria. Another person was the Rev. John Johnston.

The Rev. John C. Jamieson later wrote a small study booklet about revival, in which he described a revival in Waiwera. It is not clear whether this referred to the earlier revival related to the Waikaka movement, or to another revival, later.

"The writer remembers in Waiwera, New Zealand, a very few earnest folk beginning to pray and work for a revival. For a long time nothing seemed to happen. Then suddenly one night a decision took place. During the week others decided, and before long a great work took place with far-reaching results."

Another area affected by the revival was Catlins, where Robert McLay and his family lived. Girls from this family later married Adam John Nichol from Waikaka, Houlton Forlong from Wanganui (son of Gordon Forlong) and the Rev Joseph Weir.

The character of the revival was really based, however, upon personal contacts and conversation, where one

person would witness to another, and a new convert would be won by the strange and sovereign workings of the Spirit. James Dickie won many converts in this way. The revival worked its way slowly for a number of years in this manner, and had a widespread effect in this scattered, rural area.

Within two years, six Sunday Schools had been opened, and four churches had been opened free of debt.

As time went by, Dickie also preached in other parts of the Presbytery, winning converts.

In 1894, he sold his farm and took up lay preaching on the west coast, based at Kumara.

This was a more difficult work, with less response, but he stuck at it for a number of years. He finally retired to live in Gore. His efforts, however, represent "only one facet of a widespread spiritual quickening taking in the Gore - Waikaka farming settlements, around 1900, and reaching South Otago.

The following testimony illustrates his influence, still continuing after his retirement. "Sunday night saw me sitting in church at Athol, with more than ordinary expectations. Mr Dickie preached a forthright gospel message, in a loud voice and with much assurance. It simply poured out of him. Though despondency gave place to hopefulness by the end of the service, I was still under bondage.

Having a strong desire to talk to Mr Dickie I waited at the door until he came out and braved up to open conversation by asking him if he knew my brother Willie. "Your brother Willie," he said, "And who might he be?" "Willie Diack." I replied. "Willie Diack! Are you his

brother? Oh yes! I know Willie. He has had a conversion experience. He is now walking with the Lord." How my heart was burning within me. I had always felt Willie was a step or two behind me in religious fervour. Now I felt left behind. Mr Dickie said, "Will you take a walk along the road with me? I am staying with Mrs Price tonight and will catch my train back to Gore tomorrow."

There was a hawthorn hedge to pass as we neared the Price house and while walking under its shadow, Mr Dickie suddenly said, "Now, before I go into the house we will just kneel down for prayer for a minute." We both knelt down and Mr Dickie prayed for a brief while, then suddenly said to me, "Now, will you just repeat after me the Publican's prayer, 'Lord, be merciful to me, a sinner.'"

I did this but as I did so I lost control and kept praying on and on, not able to stop. Mr Dickie was breaking forth with "Hallelujah. Praise the Lord. Glory. Glory." Eventually we both rose, and my burden was lifted. I was free and full of joy."

The long-term influence of this revival can also be seen through the way families of those converted in the revival intermingled or spread out to touch other families, as generations passed. For example, as already mentioned, links developed with people affected by a revival in Wanganui. Some of these people went to the mission

field, especially to the New Hebrides (Vanuatu), and saw revival there.

The Pounawea Keswick Convention started in 1908, with strong support from the areas which had been affected by the revival. The revival produced generations of faithful and evangelical people from many families.

Amen