

URGENT APPEAL CAMPAIGN

"Living Room Events/Tours"

Teaching Curriculum For U.A. Facilitators

David Bryant

May 3, 2002

Washington, DC

This outline accompanies a training video prepared by the *National Revival Network*, *America's National Prayer Committee* and *Mission America*—co-sponsors of the URGENT APPEAL document and **URGENT APPEAL Campaign**. At the request of the three coalitions, the outline was developed by one facilitator, based on his experience in conducting ten Living Room Events, in different regions and with a variety of ethnic and denominational leadership participating. The suggested guidelines can equip any facilitator to guide similar events in their own community.

A "Living Room Event" can take anywhere from 2 1/2 to 4 hours, depending on your audience and the context. The outline below can be collapsed or expanded in time, primarily based on how "group interaction exercises" are conducted.

The approach below assumes that the facilitator (and participants) has in hand the core document *An Urgent Appeal To Christian Leaders In America for Consensus and Collaboration on the Biblical Nature and Hope of Corporate Revival*. The document can be secured, and more helps found—including purchase of the training video that follows the outline--by visiting our website: www.urgentappeal.net.

Session I

- Get acquainted
- Introduction to the reason we're here
- What is the Spirit saying to the churches today>?
- A glance at the document
- So...What do we think about "revival"/ "corporate revival"?
- When we come back
- Closing prayer time

Break

Session II

- Background on the Campaign
- Overall vision for the Campaign
- A walk through the document
- Open discussion by the group
- Next steps after today
- Conclusion of Living Room Event (Praying through the URGENT APPEAL)

• SESSION I

GET AQUAINTED:

Go around the room and tell 3 things about yourself: *Name, *church, *a Bible character you are most like and why (one sentence only)

.INTRODUCTION TO THE REASON WE'RE HERE

- Opening story or two ("Taxi Driver"/ "Presbyterian on Revival")
- Here to explore two major themes: Urgency / Revival
- Is there an urgency for a new work of God in the Church? Is that to be a work of corporate revival?
- Here to explore two major responses: Consensus / Collaboration
- Is there a way to reach consensus on the topic of revival? If so, are there ways that leaders can collaborate for that God-given work? If so, is it urgent that this happen? And, can it happen here?

• WHAT IS THE SPIRIT SAYING TO THE CHURCHES TODAY?

- Story (Billy Graham on Larry King/ "Mel Blanc—Which voice is yours?")
- September 11—Wake up call/ refocus priorities/ Listen for a word from Heaven
- Revelation 2&3, in times of crisis the Spirit desires to speak, for us to hear
- *What do YOU think the Spirit's Agenda is for the Church right now?* **Large group brainstorming.** Possible answers: judgment/ reconciliation/ unity/ focus on Israel/ moral crisis/ call to holiness/ focus on Islam/ etc.
- George Barna's perspective (based on year-long research in 2000):

The nation seems mired in spiritual complacency. America certainly did not experience the spiritual revival that many Christians hoped would emerge as the new millennium began. In fact, Americans seemed to have become inoculated to spiritual events, outreach efforts and the quest for personal spiritual development.

Overall, Christian ministry is stuck in a deep rut.

Our research continues to point out the need for more URGENT reliance upon God to change people's lives. Too many Christians and churches in American have traded in spiritual passion for empty rituals, clever methods and mindless practices.

The challenge to today's Church is not methodological.

It is the challenge to resuscitate the spiritual passion and fervor of the nation's Christians.

- Barna adds research on 66 moral categories/ on 40% pastors ready to quit.
- *What do YOU think about Barna's sense of the Spirit's agenda for the Church?*
(Open discussion)
- OVERVIEW of what recent surveys seems to suggest at least seven major concerns many leaders are identifying. This became quite evident working on the document *URGENT APPEAL*:
 - 1) Our generation is at a crossroads with God
 - 2) Our nation is in crisis
 - 3) The Church is in crisis
 - 4) Our only lasting hope is Divine intervention ("revival")
 - 5) There are some wonderful signs of hope that God is at work
 - 6) We must act now to seek consensus and collaboration to that end
 - 7) Christ must be kept at the center of God's intervention

A GLANCE AT THE DOCUMENT

- Look at the title...consider each word and its importance (see p. 6-7)
- HOW THE DOCUMENT CAME INTO BEING
 - *Sponsors: NRN...then NPC and MA
 - *Six major drafts...over 100 national Christian leaders...very diverse
 - *Well-received (response of a PH.D church history prof)
 - *Not intended to be a “primer” on revival
 - *Rather, this is a “conversation starter”...based on the assumption that most leaders already have done some solid thinking on the Biblical theme of revival
 - *A tool to explore if consensus and collaboration are possible/ and urgent
- Let’s read the objectives—see p. 5
- There has never been anything like this before.
- Designed to preempt the problems of previous Great Awakenings and help us to be ready for a fresh work of God

SO...WHAT DO WE THINK ABOUT “REVIVAL”/“CORPORATE REVIVAL”?

- Story on revival (NYC: Epicenter of 3 Great Awakenings)
- **Private Reflection:** Take a sheet of paper. Write down the following:
 - *One word definition for revival (Ill: “resuscitate”)
 - *Think of a “picture” (metaphor) for revival (use in a slide show)
 - *One short Biblical passage that touches on revival
- **Share one word** around the room/ Then have them look at p. 14
- **Share passage** in groups of 3
- **Slide show:** (Click) “What do you see?” (Share one by one)
- CONSIDER ISAIAH...
 - *44—outpouring/ think flowers in a desert
 - *52:1-3; 60:1-3—awakening/ think waking up this morning
 - *64:1-4—rending heavens/ think curtain at a play
- BIBLICAL OVERVIEW:
 - *OT—Prototypes/The Exodus/Judges/II Chronicles/Haggai
 - *NT—Case Study/Acts/Prayers of Paul/ II Thess 3:1/ Mark 1:15
 - *Church History—Dr. Ebenezer Porter (1830—eyewitness):

The history of these revivals shows that the genuine tendency of such seasons is to render Christians grateful, watchful, fervent in spirit.

Many, doubtless, must be viewed as sincere Christians who are not consistent Christians.

The wise and foolish virgins slumber together, while the bridegroom tarries. But when the Redeemer comes in the triumphs of His grace to visit His churches, then his true followers are seen waking from their apathy, and going forth to welcome the King of Zion with an energy and earnestness and ardor of affection greatly surpassing their first love.

--LECTURES ON REVIVAL

- *How do you respond to Porter’s definition of corporate revival?*
(Brief open discussion)

- WHEN IT TOUCHED ME? (Kent State / II Corinthians 1 at a crisis moment in ministry)
- SIGNS IN OUR GENERATION: prayer movements/ coalitions/ renewal Movements/ youth awakenings/ in other nations
- IT IS A GROWING HOPE: more frequently mentioned/ conferences on it/ books on it/ focus of millions of prayers/ solid reasons—p.21
- **Small group discussion:** “Do YOU see any reasons for hope? If so, what are they? If not, why is that?”
- GREAT NEED OF THE HOUR: “Start the conversation—now!”/ purpose of the URGENT APPEAL Campaign is to do this very thing.

WHEN WE COME BACK...

- *Background on the Campaign
- *What the campaign ultimately envisions
- *Role of the document to “Start the conversation—now!”
- *Overview of the document
- *Open preliminary discussion of the issues
- *Extended prayer
- *Possibilities and steps from here

CLOSING PRAYER TIME: *What do you most need to say to the Father right now?*
(Small groups)

Break for Refreshments

SESSION II

Opening Story (Stamp: United We Stand/ NDofP: America United Under God)

BACKGROUND ON THE CAMPAIGN

- “Urgent Appeals” in Scripture: Hezekiah (read II Chronicles 30:5-12)/ Habakkuk 2/Haggai/ Invitation for banquet (Luke 14)/ Words of Paul in II Corinthians 5 (persuade, appeal, beg)
- The vision for “urgent appeals” in previous revivals. (Another word from Porter lectures:)

I would by all means advise you to avoid that hesitating and paralyzing apprehension
Which leads a minister to be so much afraid of being wrong as to do nothing.
Under God, the ministers of the 19th century [*or, 21st century*] have a mighty work to accomplish.
Our own vast country is to be brought under the influence of the Gospel.
The wide world is to be evangelized.
The day of slumber is passed. The sacramental host of God’s elect is marshaled in arms,
And wait for ministers to lead them on to victory.
Gird on your armor, then, soldiers of the cross!
The Captain of salvation heads the van, having on his vesture and on his thigh a name written:
King of Kings and Lord of Lords!
He has gone forth in the triumphs of His grace, conquering and to conquer.
Stubborn hearts, in numbers unexampled, bow before the all-subduing influences of His Spirit.
--LECTURES ON REVIVAL

- HOW DID THIS CAMPAIGN EVOLVE:
 - **Nationwide Call to Prayer* from Mission America in USA TODAY, etc.
 - *Meeting of NRN: in prayer came the word “urgent”
 - *Development of the document...”to start the conversation now”
 - *Presented to Mission America...another year of input from scores of leaders
 - *Adopted by National Prayer Committee as a major “project” in May 2001
 - *Presented to 5000 pastors in Orlando, January 2002
 - *Presented via “Nationally Broadcast Concert of Prayer” to whole Hemisphere
 - *Development of “Spanish” and “Youth” versions
 - *Development of a potent website (www.urgentappeal.net)
 - *Field tests of “Living Room Events”, interfacing with NPC/ Mission America field staff
 - *Video-training tool developed to rapidly multiply Living Room Events
 - *Training of national leaders in D.C. following NDofP activities, May 2002
- Why word “CAMPAIGN”?...Consider a “political campaign”/ due to sense of urgency

OVERALL VISION FOR THE CAMPAIGN

- *Thousands of Living Room Events, sponsored and facilitated by local leadership
- *Pastor “Conversation Cells” form, to spend next 6 weeks working through questions for six sections of document/ Lay people also form Cells/
- *Conclude six weeks by determining response to: *Declaration of Intent*
- *Beyond *Declaration*, determine together: If there’s consensus, how can we collaborate?
- *Goal: Pastors (and lay leaders) laboring together for corporate revival where they live.
- *Goal: Theme of Biblical revival becomes a dominant theme at all levels of ministry.
- *Goal: “*To flood the Church with “Messengers of Hope”*” at every level
- WHAT IS THE ROLE OF THE DOCUMENT?
 - *Not a primer on revival, but it does synthesize and bring under one cover many of the most critical themes for exploring (conversing on) corporate revival.
 - *Arrange major themes in a logical flow of topics for maximum effectiveness. The “conversation” moves through six major sections.
 - *Saves busy leaders the need to do a lot of initial research (document represents literally hundreds of hours of research by NRN “drafting committee” and others)
 - *Designed to get the conversation started, and to help leaders identify what they *already* believe about the issues—corporate revival, urgency, collaboration, etc.

A WALK THROUGH THE DOCUMENT

Simply walk through it, turning the pages, stopping to highlight a thought here or there, such as:

- *p. 4—call to prayer
- *p. 7—six bullets on what document will do
- *p. 7—desire to make it personal and how this can be done
- *p. 11—sample of questions for conversation
- *p. 12—only place scholars are quoted, and why its done here
- *p. 16—insuring that all conversations on revival are Christo-centric
- *p. 20—why the need for an “apologetic” and the value of having it
- *p. 25—clarifications: 3 key ones here, plus a set of questions in the Appendix. Again, this is simply designed to get a conversation started.
- *p. 29—series of cautions: nothing like this was ever confronted before previous revivals. What a difference it makes to face them in a pre-revival time.
- *p. 33—seven “Ps” summarize most of what all the great literature on revival suggests we need to do to be ready. Here are ways to collaborate. Reflected in the *Declaration of Intent*

ALSO, take a moment to explain why the document “Evangelical Celebration of the Gospel” was included in a document on corporate revival (pp. 42-47)

OPEN DISCUSSION BY THE GROUP (Take questions in any order)

- What do you like about the document? How might it be helpful?
- What questions does the approach of the document raise for you?
- What currently hinders consensus among us on corporate revival? What are the biggest conceptual obstacles?
- What currently hinders collaboration among us on corporate revival? What are the biggest practical/logistical obstacles?
- What steps might we take together to overcome obstacles to consensus? Or, to collaboration? Could this document—and the six weekly studies—be useful?
- Does the whole issue of corporate revival—local or national—have a ring of urgency for you? Why or why not?
- Does the concept of being “about” revival, not just “for” revival, make sense to you? If so, which are you and why?
- How do you react to the “Declaration of Intent” overall? How do you respond to the issues it outlines?
- Would you be interested in joining a “Conversation Cell” for the next six weeks? How do you see that coming together for you?

NEXT STEPS AFTER TODAY

- Consider signing the *Declaration of Intent* (**read it out loud in unison**)
- Spend a season of prayer right now, addressing some of the vision and concerns that have surfaced throughout the Living Room Event. Depending on the quality of discussions, and the time left for prayer, you might consider using the document: ***“Praying Through the URGENT APPEAL.”*** The same outline might be used for an in-depth prayer time following the six weeks of “Conversation Cells”, when participants reconvene as a whole to discuss next steps in collaboration.
- Decide WHO wants to begin a “Conversation Cell” and HOW it will happen.

CONCLUSION OF THE LIVING ROOM EVENT

- The “urgent appeal” is really in THREE directions: (1) God’s appeal to us...(2) Our appeal to God...(3) Our appeal to each other and to the people we serve.
- Closing story (Yonggi Cho on Matt. 11:12)

“Let the conversation begin...now!”

“And let it begin with me.”