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The Welsh Revival of 1904-05: To what extent did it influence mining communities?

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Introduction

The Welsh Revival of 1904-05 has been deemed as a historical event that dramatically impacted and changed Welsh society. The extent of the revival was seemingly across Wales, and Robert Pope claims there “was not one corner of the land, in the north or the south, which was without signs of revivalist fervour” (2006, p.519). Subsequently, revival from Wales spread to other nations in the United Kingdom and across the world. By some, the origin was attributed to Evan Roberts (1878-1951), a former miner and blacksmith, who held a meeting for the youth in his home town of Loughor in the autumn of 1904. Roberts focused initially in the industrial areas of south Wales before he went to north Wales and Liverpool in 1905 (*Church Times*, 2021). However, Pope’s research reveals the revival had begun in the north of Wales from 1903 (2006, p.516-7). Evangelists, such as Seth Joshua, F. B. Meyer confirm to have been in meetings with “great rejoicing emotions” from 1903 (Pope, 2006, p.517). Furthermore, along the west coast in New Quay and beyond, Joseph Jenkins and John Thickens claim they persevered through 1903 to realise tradition and formality, breaking through to revival in February 1904 (Pope, 2006, p.517). When Joshua arrived, he noted in his diary that “a remarkable revival spirit” was already there (Evans, 1969, p.58). It is also known that revival was breaking out in Baptist churches in the Rhondda valleys and beyond before Roberts even went there. R. B. Jones, who was second to Roberts in holding meetings and spreading revival, also saw revival erupt in Porth and beyond. There were numerous leaders in the revival. Yet, historians and eye-witnesses claim that the revival was not necessarily led from the pulpit but by the congregants and converts as the Holy Spirit moved amongst them. In the end, it is believed that a minimum of 100,000 new converts came into the churches. This is a minimum as many new church denominations subsequently sprung up, and figures are difficult to determine since they do not register their congregants as did the more traditional churches.

At the same time Wales was already considered a Christian nation, and eye-witnesses from the time testify to this fact (Sermon Index.net, 2016). They claimed, generally speaking, that Welsh mining communities already had knowledge of the

Bible and a respect for Christian faith and morality. However, at the same time many claim that drinking, especially with miners, was endemic, which affected the economic state of the average family. Furthermore, sectarianism was dividing churches as well as they were seemingly apathetic to the dire situation of the poorer in these mining communities. Yet, this supposedly changed as a result of the revival. Herewith, the miners' predominant state before, during, and after the revival will be considered, and investigation of primary evidence will be deliberated on the short- and long-term impacts on mining communities and their societies.

Newspapers were the principal way that the Welsh Revival was reported about, and consequently, the word spread via this means. Interestingly, most of the leaders did not directly publish their personal eye-witness accounts, because they did not want to monopolise attention to themselves out of reverence for God. There are also accounts of the numbers of converts in the villages printed in the paper on a regular basis. This has given a sense of the scope of the revival. Cardiff's *Western Mail* was one of the primary newspapers that carried the actual stories of those who were a part of the revival, and it is valuable for the detailed accounts. The challenges the newspapers bring is the potentiality of sensationalism. For instance, Pope claims why Roberts is highlighted and remembered more than others is because of the media reports (2006, p.518). Pope contends that both the *Western Mail* and the *South Wales Daily News* took interest in the revival from meetings that Roberts led from 11 November 1904, and both newspapers insist the revival started with him although Roberts denied this (2006, p.518). Roberts clearly stated, "I am not the source for this revival. I am only one worker in that which is growing to be a host. I am not moving the hearts of men and changing their lives; but God is working through me" (Pope, 2006, p.518). Nonetheless, the media made Roberts the centre of interest in their newspapers. Therefore, it was the media that penned the 'Evan Roberts' Revival', thus making it a product of the media but not in reality (2016, p.518). Nonetheless, these primary sources are helpful in drawing sketches of what may have happened. However, eye-witness accounts as well as secondary sources will be analysed in order to determine the facts.

Some secondary sources will be used to gain an understanding of the broader context in society as well as the religious norms during the time. Clive Field's (2013)

work begins to unwrap the complexities of the church attendance and the movements in Edwardian society. C. R. Williams (1952) study reveals how the revival mostly stayed within the borders of Wales but that there were potentially socio-economic and political divides between the churches and society. Williams also claims the revival's roots were planted during the time of the Methodists. However, Gitre (2004) and Pope (2006) beg to differ with Williams claiming that the revival not only spread into England but across the international borders. Gitre also claims this outpouring was nothing less than supernatural. More specifically, Lowe (2020) claims from quantitative studies that crime rates and drunkenness decreased as a result of the revival, which corroborates with some eye-witness testimonies of the time. Yet, his studies also validate Williams' research that in comparison to Wales, England did not have any impact from the revival. These and more secondary sources will be further analysed to determine the extent of the revival's impact on the miners and communities.

In consequence of these claims explained above, this is a noteworthy topic as the impact to Wales was extensive. Additionally, it will be discussed how churches took a more active role in society, which includes the mining communities outlook on faith and work. Moreover, how church leaders and congregants got involved politically to bring lasting change. Furthermore, the Welsh identity being linked to the language of their Bible and consequently the revival potentially as Kenneth Morgan purports (1980, p.96). Hence, it arguably strengthened the growing ideals of Welsh nationalism. Furthermore, it is also significant as it seemingly brought greater Christian unity within the various denominations and bolstered Nonconformist numbers for years after. The *Merthyr Express* is one of many confirming articles that commented that the church leaders, congregants, and new converts had put aside all sectarianism and consistently came together to pray (1904). The political impacts will be considered and discussed as well as the influence to the individual families in the mining communities. Additionally, as there is a lack of peer-reviewed work as well as secondary sources on the specific topic of the effects in the mining communities, this is potentially an important field to study. Consequently, this could also yield a lack of specific knowledge and understanding of how the revival truly

impacted the industrial communities as these are not always specifically addressed in either primary or secondary sources.

Chapter 1: The Qualities and Expanse of the Revival

Revival and its definition and qualities are argued by theologians as being a religious experience through to mystical occurrences (McGrath, 2017, p.93). However, where theologians' claims are more congruent is that it entails an 'outpouring of the Holy Spirit' as believed to be God's glory and presence come upon mankind (Pope, 2006). Dini Moga cites Jonathan Edwards as defining revival as a "supernatural work, because it transcends man and comes from the Spirit of God" (2019, p.56). Furthermore, Moga says it is not initiated by "man's effort" but the changes and outcome are based on the Holy Spirit's "operation in the heart of man" (2019, p.56). Roberts confirms this as he states, "The power of the revival in South Wales is not of men, but of God. I know that the work which has been done through me is not due to any human ability that I possess" (Goodrich et al., 2015, pp.81-82). The *Manchester Guardian* summarises Roberts as saying that God's presence can fill a place, but people were "no better unless God filled the heart" (1904). Therefore, revivalists were claiming that the true consequences of revival are changed hearts, and consequently, transformed lives.

There are numbers of ways in which an 'outpouring' is realised. With the Welsh Revival it was characterised by prayer, open confessions, unrehearsed singing, repentance and spontaneous experiences of the Holy Spirit as well as informal preaching (Traftan, 2004, p.1). Consequently, the church gatherings were known to last for hours and well into the night since people did not desire to leave, and even after the people left, they continued in prayer, Bible reading, and song (Goodrich et al., 2015, p.153-154). Joshua gives evidence of this when he was in north Wales preaching at meetings saying, "The revival goes on. I cannot leave the building...until 12 and even 1 o'clock in the morning – I have closed the service several times and yet it would break out once again quite beyond the control of human power" (Evans, 1969, p.59). William T. Stead, an eye-witness, relays how there was no "commanding human genius inspiring the advance. Ministers, each in their own churches, open the meetings. But once they get started, they obey the Spirit. The leading role is taken by the third Person of the Trinity" (Goodrich et al., 2015, p.33). Stead also explains that neither advertisements nor brass bands that

signify when and where these revival gatherings will take place (Goodrich et al., 2015, p.37). Therefore, the revival was spontaneous and unpredictable from anyone reasoning extrinsically. Revival also continued after the church gatherings for many. H. Elvet Lewis, an eye-witness from Carmarthenshire explains,

there was scarcely a home in the whole neighbourhood without some stricken soul in it. One afternoon a young woman prayed for her father's salvation: before the day had passed, she was returning thanks for the answer. She prayed again for a brother and a cousin, away from home in two different places: the following week, at one of Evan Robert's meetings, the two were brought in (1906, p.63).

Before the revival there was a growing anticipation of an awakening. The *Church Times* argues that just before the revival there was clearly a "firm expectation" for an imminent "outpouring" amongst some Christian groups, and therefore, it did not come as a surprise (2021). Citing only one Baptist minister, Rev, W. G. Davies of Penarth, reported to the *Manchester Guardian* that they had been "earnest prayer" for revival for two years prior to it happening, and he states that shortly before revival, the young people prayed nightly (1904). Therefore, congregants and notable church leaders, such as Joshua, were preparing through prayer meetings and preaching. As noted previously, there were some pockets that were experiencing revival in north Wales. Joshua had already been preaching on 'holiness' and encouraged the congregations to evangelise the working-classes because of the need amongst the poorer.

These type of meetings became strategic during the revival. In one of these meetings Joshua, who had been praying that God would raise up revivalists from the mining communities, met Roberts. This was realised in Blaenannerch on 29 September 1904, Joshua preached, and Roberts who fell under the conviction of the Holy Spirit for his sin and to evangelise (The Moriah Methodist Church, 2013). From there Roberts returned to his home-town, and this is where the first of his revival meetings occurred. There were four conditions that Roberts espoused for revival, and these consistently happened as preparation in meetings:

1. If there is any past sins or sins hitherto unconfessed, we cannot receive the Spirit. Therefore, we must search and ask the Spirit to search.

2. If there is anything in our lives, it must be removed – anything we were uncertain about its rightness or wrongness. That thing must be removed.
3. An entire giving up of ourselves to the Spirit. We must speak and do all He requires of us.
4. Public confession of Christ (Evans, 1969, p.84).

This standard would become a hallmark sermon and would subsequently take place amongst those attending the meetings (Lewis, 1906, p.61). Then prayers tended to repeat until personal experiences would occur. Lewis claims that in “thousands” of villages there was prayer for the communities, and subsequently, conversions would take place (1906, p.77). Within the seedbed of previous revivals was the belief that neither the sacraments nor living a pious life were going to result in salvation of the individual – only a “personal experience” directly from God, the forgiveness of sin and acceptance of Jesus Christ’s sacrificial atonement brought about true salvation (Williams, 1952, p.243). Hence, the emotional experiences of repentance were an outward sign that inward salvation had occurred. Subsequently, they believed that there would be good fruit in an individual’s life, and this included temperance, regular church attendance, integrity, and prudence (Williams, 1952, p.244). Therefore, personal experience’ was deeply engrained and planted the seeds of belief and expectation for religious emotional experiences, thus bringing the fruit of spiritual experiences in the revivals of 1859 and 1904-05. Personal experiences could materialize in various ways. They could manifest with more prayers and spates of repentance, open confessions, weeping, and singing by an individual or a whole chorus (Goodrich et al., 2015, p.43).

Prayers and praying were a prominent occurrence in the revival as well as a magnetic pull to remain in these gatherings. For example, in the meetings where Roberts was attending the prayers went as follows:

Send the Spirit now, for Jesus Christ’s sake. Send the Spirit powerfully now, for Jesus Christ’s sake. Send the Spirit more powerfully now, for Jesus Christ’s sake. Send the Spirit yet more powerfully now, for Jesus Christ’s sake
(*Church Times*, 2021).

This was the prayer until someone was inspired to sing, intercede for others, repent, or read a Scripture, and usually one simple act would usher in an outpouring of

God's Spirit. The *Manchester Guardian* reported how in revival meetings "outbursts" from the audience cried out for salvation (1904). Stead recounts such meetings stating that hundreds of people would crowd into the aisles and the galleries, with both sitting or standing, eagerly waiting – both men and women – "riveted upon the platform or upon whatever other part of the building was the storm centre of the meeting" (Goodrich et al., 2015, pp.37-38). Roberts accounts of his meetings in south Wales as follows,

The place of worship is full to the very doors and vestibule. The Spirit directed me to say three things show that God is with us. 1. Enormous congregations. 2. Unity between different denominations. 3. The baptism of the Holy Spirit (Evans, 1969, p.92).

Dr Eifion Evans cites *The Western Mail* (1904) soon after the revival fires began in Roberts' meetings with the journalist saying,

I felt that this was no ordinary gathering. Instead of the set of proceedings to which we are accustomed at the orthodox religious service, everything here was left to the spontaneous impulse of the moment. The preacher too, did not remain in his usual seat...A young woman rose to give out a hymn, which was sung with deep earnestness. While it was being sung several people dropped down in their seats as if they had been struck, and commenced crying for pardon. Then from another part of the chapel could be heard the resonant voice of a young man reading a portion of scripture... (1969, pp.93-4).

As stated previously, revival fires had begun in 1903. Jenkins testifies to revival beginning in February [1904] in New Quay with the young people (*Church Times*, 2021). One particular account in that time ignited revival. Florrie Evans stood in a meeting and said she "loved Jesus with all her heart" (Evans, 1969, p.58). Then she added,

Do you know that I was tired of life? Time was tiresome to me – it wore me out – thinking of eternity was out of the question – But thanks be to God I know what I will do with eternity! Give me truthfulness, give me purity, give me honesty. You are Clean, Pure and Truthful – The Truth itself – You are the Truth – you are all the Truth! I am overcome by You O God of Truth (*Church Times*, 2021).

After this outburst, one by one, people began to stand and publicly acknowledged their faith in Christ (Goodrich et al., 2015, p.39). This type of outburst with the subsequent salvation of individuals was common, and this was seen with William Hughes. Hughes, a working miner, found himself in the Glamorgan pits and came under heavy conviction after one of Dan Roberts' meetings (Evans, 1969, p.112). In this he felt "intense spiritual conflict" and remorse for his sins, and these were accompanied by uncontrollable shivering (Evans, 1969, p.112). He wanted to cry out to God, so he went to an isolated section of the coal face where he cried out for God's mercy and help. Hughes then accounts how he "felt a physical burden being lifted from him" followed by tears and joy (Evans, 1969, p.112). He then returned home and began to evangelise his own town-folk to everyone's surprise as he was a notorious for unsavory behaviours, and subsequently, he joined Roberts and carried on the work of an evangelist for years (Evans, 1968, p113).

Chapter 2: The Context Before and During the Revival

The context of religion and society during the late nineteenth into the twentieth-century is contradictory as some scholars argue that the Welsh were steeped in Nonconformity whilst others claim that society was beginning to move away from its Christian roots. Firstly, Williams claims that Nonconformity held a “pre-eminent” place in the lives of the Welsh although numbers in church were decreasing (1952, p.242). Hence, the question remains if this was evidence of a Welsh Nonconformist past that was beginning to fade. Morgan says during this time it was “less encouraging years for the...nonconformist bodies. They became aware of a diminishing impact, especially in the industrial coalfield where younger men and women in particular preferred the new wealth and leisure opportunities of increasing affluence... or in some cases the secular faith of socialism” (1980, p.96). Nevertheless, Williams says that Nonconformist chapels and ministers, in comparison to other denominations, had measurable influence in the culture and lives of the lower and lower-middle classes at the turn of the century, linking it to the language (Williams, 1952, p.242). Arguably, the Welsh language, which was inextricably linked to the Welsh Bible, deepened the people’s connection to the Christian faith. Secondly, Field’s study on church attendance reveals that numbers in Nonconformist churches were shrinking at the time; hence, his research questions the breadth of influence the Nonconformists had in society (2013, p.42). However, D. Denis Morgan confirms Williams’ claim by stating the Nonconformist movement had won the allegiance of the “ordinary working people” spectacularly and that Wales was a “nation of Nonconformists” (2004, p.121).

Eye-witness accounts are also as contrasting in regards to the true measure of Christianity’s influence in Wales at the time. For instance, Williams cites anonymous authors from 1901 who claim that “paganism is on the increase” in Wales and the people had “given themselves over to the Devil” (1952, p.245). Additionally, Stead saw first-hand both Welsh revivals [1859 and 1904-05], and he claims that before both that society was “corrupt” and in “decay” and that the nation was “given over to the Evil One” (Goodrich et al., 2015, pp.16-17). Stead’s perspective as a Christian

journalist was arguably broad. In contrast, another eye-witness account from a coal miner (Perry) who was a resident of a coal mining region near the border, gave a contrasting perspective to Stead. Mr. Perry explained in an interview that in his area miners were oppressed by harsh working conditions, but that they were regular attendees of chapel – both the Nonconformist and Anglican churches (Sermon Index.net, 2016). Perry states that the “whole town was religiously minded” and that they firmly believed the Bible before the revival whether they were committed or not although he says “drink” was a besetting problem amongst the miners (Sermon Index.net, 2016). He also said there was a saying, “the people of one book [Bible],” and this certainly denotes some measure of reverence for Christian tenets of faith (Sermon Index.net, 2016). Again, this seemingly confirms the language connection to Christianity. Consequently, this one testimony coincides with the Nonconformist influence and that attending church was a part of the culture at the time although there were social ills that plagued people. Additionally, for this region the miner’s testimony confirms a belief in the Bible in society despite their personal commitment to its tenets.

Church attendance was arguably seen to be one evidence of being a Christian at the time, and it is plausibly one way to determine the effects of the revival. There are differing schools of debate regarding church attendance, and this is because no national census of church attendance occurred in the Edwardian era (Field, 2013, p.41). Therefore, this makes it problematic to come to concise conclusions in this specific field of study. Furthermore, it is difficult to determine the percentages in the century before in order to compare any increase or decrease. Additionally, the data collected by traditional denominations were also sparse although there are indications that congregations were growing (Field, 2013, p.42). Conversely, Williams adds to this argument and states that chapel membership was falling, especially in the industrial areas (1952, p.245). Morgan concurs church membership was “no longer rising so fast—indeed, in 1900 the Baptists, Independents, and Wesleyans had actually to report an actual drop in membership compared with 1899” (1980, p.96). Nonetheless, Field found that when researching local agencies or newspapers, specifically in Caernarvon, Newport, and Tredegar, that church attendance was averaging forty to over fifty-percent of the population in the early

twentieth-century (2013, p.44). Morgan's research could partly shed light on why numbers of people did attend chapel as he argues that it was the renaissance of the Welsh culture, and Welsh was spoken in the chapel (1980, p.96). Yet, there are other factors in Field's study, which contributed to church attendance – weather, socio-economic status, women attendees versus men, and the ratio of adults to children. For instance, in Caernarvon those that went to church on a sunny Sunday were approximately twenty-six percent higher than on a stormy Sunday (Field, 2013, p.51). Field also calls to question how specific reports could potentially fluctuate from one area to another, thus not wholly representing Wales (2013, p.52). This causes challenges to obtain statistics for greater Wales (2013, p.52). Yet, interestingly a high percentage of marriages and funeral occurred in the church. This plausibly reveals some level of respect or belief in Christianity even if church attendance was decreasing.

Finally, Field concludes that two-fifths of the population of the U.K. went to church at least once a month, plus most everyone went to a Christian church for a rite of passage (2013, p.61). These findings do not always delineate England from Wales as well as depicts only some regions of Wales. Therefore, stating that Wales was still a relatively strong Christian nation is problematic as the evidence is not inclusive for the whole of the nation. Nonetheless, Field argues that calling the Edwardian era a 'faith society' is not inaccurate although church attendance was in decline in the areas that were studied (2013, p.62). Williams, on the other hand, argues that Nonconformity Christianity in Wales was on the decline and facing "crisis" as it had not seen for forty years at the turn of the century (1952, p.246). As Williams had a perspective from the mid-twentieth century and lived closer to the time, his understanding of the landscape along with his access to eye-witness testimonies adds a validity to his study. For example, he verified that Nonconformity was seemingly far from dead and was still respected, thus claiming long-standing fruit from the revival (1952, p.259). Alternatively, Field's research is from the twenty-first century, which plausibly brings a greater objectivity as well as he employs data from quantitative statistics. However, his research would not have the contextual understanding as much as Williams. Therefore, both have value in their analysis when juxtaposed to each other.

In the midst of this, there were socio-economic divisions, which clearly continued into church affiliations. For instance, Williams asserts that the bourgeoisie and upper classes were traditionally Anglican and English speaking (1952, p.242). In addition, he says that the miners, were largely Welsh speaking, thus arguably revealing the socio-economic divides (Williams, 1952, p.242). Therefore, this is apparently a complex political and religious situation, which makes it difficult to definitively qualify the specifics in every arena in the scope of this paper. Yet, it is widely known that Welsh Liberalism and Nonconformity were inextricably linked in nineteenth into the early twentieth-centuries although socialism was on the rise amongst the working-class as Morgan claims (1980). Socialism clashed with Christian Nonconformist ideas as it was linked to agnosticism (Williams, 1952, p.247). Nonetheless, Williams claims that Nonconformists were against the injustices in society and looked to bring change, yet more specifically for miners' problems, it was preached that change would come in the industry through "patience and conciliation" (1952, p.245). Thus, the divides were arguably entrenched. Therefore, the result eventually was that the common people fell away from God as trust in the chapels subsided. Yet, the experience of revival began to heal some divides. Once the revival came there are testimonies of miners who were dedicated and leaders in the socialist movement. For example, Tom Hughes an under official in the mines and also renown for being a leader in the Ethical Society (socialist club) was drawn into the foyer of the church in Roberts' meetings because of the signing (Shaw, 2014, pp.179-183). Hughes was so shaken because of the presence of the Lord that he went home and burned all his books on socialism, and subsequently, brought the other leaders in the society to the revival where all came to Christ over the next few days. Therefore, the socio-economic and political barriers that existed were beginning to disappear as a result of the revival.

As well as with the people, there was seemingly a growing indifference within the leaders of the Christian religion. Williams states that the problems were multifaceted at the dawn of the twentieth-century just before the 1904-05 revival. He mentions that there was apathy in the ministry as well as towards the social conditions of society (1952, p.246). Williams contends many working-class Welsh felt the Nonconformist ministers and chapels were not in touch and had abandoned them when it came to the problems in the industrial trades, such as mining (1952, p.245).

Additionally, Morgan states that Nonconformist churches were beginning to feel the strain of people being drawn to the enticements of modernisation, rationalism, and Anglicization (2004, p.121). Williams cites a Cwmllynfell miner from “*Y Diwygiad a’r Weinidogaeth*” (1906) which says, “Oh Lord, remember us the workers. Lord, remember also the preachers; make them more like unto Jesus Christ, and bring them closer to the workers” (1952, p.245). During most of the nineteenth-century, the culture of Wales was wrapped with chapel activities, services, and events. However, distractions came to the communities at the turn of the twentieth-century, and these began to slowly take the place of the chapel and Nonconformist culture. Interest in sports began to take precedence – football, rugby, and theatre (Williams, 1952, p.250). These along with drinking caused a change to take place in the culture. It was in this context that the winds of revival began to blow.

Chapter 3: The Short and Long-term Impacts of the Revival on Mining Communities and Society

In south Wales, shortly after Evan Roberts initial meetings, revival became the main topic of conversation and spread in the industrial areas of the south (Williams, 1952, p.252). There were noted changes in the miners as they related to others in their communities. It has been verified that there were true conversions amongst the miners, and the effects thereof were seen in the actual mines. One way the impact of the revival was realised was how the miners were conducting regular prayer meetings in the mines before work began. Evans claims and confirms that the communities most affected by “heavenly fire” were “undoubtedly the coal-miners” (1969, p.125). Evans recounts a “typical” scene in the mines that was reported about in the *Western Mail*:

The workmen on the night shift had gone down half an hour earlier than the usual time so as not to interfere with the operations of the pit. Seventy yards from the bottom of the shaft, in the stables, we came to the prayer meeting. One of the workmen was reading the 6th chapter of Matthew to about eighty comrades. He stood erect amongst the group, reading in a dim, fantastic light that danced with the swinging lamps and vanished softly into surrounding darkness. A number of lamps were attached to a heavy post closely wedged to support the roof, and around the impressive figure the colliers grouped themselves...Earnest men, all of their faces that bore the scars of the underground toiler; downcast eyes that seemed to be the ‘homes of silent prayer’; strong frames that quivered with new emotion. A hymn followed the reading, then an impromptu exhortation, occasionally supported by fervent ‘Amens’, and succeeded by prayers until the time came for work to be commenced (1969, p.125).

Furthermore, eye-witnesses explain that when the

Holy Spirit touched them, He transformed their lives to such a degree that the pit-ponies could no longer understand instructions given to them, so accustomed had they become to receiving blows and being sworn at! The

men worked with a renewed vigour that set production figures soaring. When work was done, they would hurry home for a quick meal and a bath and then be off to the chapel until the early hours of the morning, singing hymns as they went (Theological Studies.org.uk, 1995).

Lewis concurs that “coalmines had their sanctuaries,” and in the midst of prayer a question would be raised, “who is on the Lord’s side? And the safety lamps went up, one by one, and when a new lamp was held up” songs of praise would erupt (1906, p.80).

From those that were plausibly less likely to confirm changes within the mining communities were the employers. Yet, there were interviews conducted as well as testimonies given to reveal the extent of influence and transformation of the miners. For instance, Stead interviewed miner’s employers, and they said, “waste is less, men go to their daily toil with a new spirit of gladness in their labour...there is now heard the haunting melody of the Revival music” (Goodrich et al., 2015, p.38). Evans recounts how trade union disputes were affected when conveying one incidence of a miner who was charged with “filling dirty coal” (1969, p.125). On the way to the works committee to bring the dispute before the Miners Federation, he instead went to hear Roberts preach (1969, p.125). During the meeting he was convicted of his “mean actions” and went back to the colliery and apologised, dropping the matter altogether (1969, p.125). Therefore, it seems that there was genuine change within the miners since they changed in their behaviour and work ethic.

Williams confirms from newspaper interviews and articles that most of the conversions were from the industrial working-classes and many seemed sincere (Williams, 1952, p.254). Stead confirms this by the stating that the outcome of these numerous salvations was that there was less laziness and gambling as well as drinking (Goodrich et al., 2015, pp.38-39). He continues saying these same men are living “a sober and godly life, putting his energy into the Revival” (Goodrich et al., 2015, pp.38-39). The *Manchester Guardian* confirms such reports in Merthyr that the court saw a “astonishing decrease” in drunkenness compared to the same time the previous year and that those cases were mostly from the colliery areas (1904).

Furthermore, the court attributed the decrease “almost wholly” to the revival (*Manchester Guardian*, 1904). Additionally, this changed the family economics as earnings were no longer spent on alcohol or gambling. Testimonies reveal that Christmas of 1904 was the first that children were bought toys and groceries were bought, and this contrasts the years previous when poverty had abounded since money was spent in pubs (Goodrich et al., 2015, p.151). Arguably, these are examples of genuine transformation.

It was also noted that the miners were the majority in attendance at Sunday meetings, and their intense emotions were easily discernible (Goodrich et al., 2015, p.40). Lewis contended that “religiousness...is a national interest” with all its chapel activities and culture (1906, p.19). This could denote culture rather than conviction. Morgan concurs saying that although the miners were converted, he links the rise in miners’ participation at church in part to the rising nationalism since the revival was largely happening in Wales (1980, p.96). Morgan’s research reveals that Nonconformist chapel membership rose from

463,000 in 1903 to 549,000 at the end of 1905, according to the chapels’ own figures, with a swelling penumbra of ‘adherents’ also claimed by them. In the coalfield especially, evangelistic, messianic Protestant revivalism had immense impact, particularly in offering young miners and steelworkers a new spiritual and social vision in contrast with the harshness of the realities of industrial life. The temperance movement won thousands of new recruits. For a moment, the nature of the Welsh as ‘a nation of nonconformists’, in Gladstone’s words of 1891, was amply confirmed. In their turn, the chapels responded to a growing sense of nationhood and national pride (1980, pp.96-97).

This reveals that short-term consequences of the revival were an increase in church membership, especially amongst the miners. It also confirms that the revival had ‘immense impact’ with the miners. Yet, it may reveal there were mixed motivations in the response to the revival – true conversion and nationalism. However, some eye-witness evidences also provide unique insight into the miners’ work lives and the impact the revival made on them in the short-term – during and just after the revival. Herewith, the motives of the interviewees, such as Stead, could plausibly be to some

measure, biased towards Nonconformist Christianity since he was a devout Christian himself. Nonetheless, short-term consequences reveal some measure of transformation as there was seemingly a lifestyle change amongst the miners.

Overall, society was evidently impacted by the revival in the short-term. For instance, Pope claims that the social changes were dramatic with – “sport teams burned their kit, public houses closed their doors, drunkards were reformed, colliers, steel workers and quarrymen met for prayer meetings before their shifts and during their breaks” as noted before (2006, p.528). Furthermore, they testify to how the changes remained for the long-term since some crimes dropped in their rates as well as a general benevolence amongst the communities. For instance, Glamorgan “witnessed an incredible decline in convictions for drunkenness, from over 10,000 per year in 1903 and 1904 to 8,164 in 1905 and 5,490 in 1906,” (Pope, 2006, p.528). Matt Lowe’s quantitative research revealed that the revival “led to a reduction in aggregate crime by 5 to 12%, with this effect driven by much larger and persistent reductions in violent crime, and drunkenness” (2020, p.1).

Williams also confirms that the miners began to be “more kindly and sympathetic towards one another” (Williams, 1952, p.252). The *Manchester Guardian* cites the authenticity of the revival by reporting how quarry miners in north Wales let go of bitterness (1904). Lewis testifies of a lad who distinctly heard from heaven, “the revival will not come to you in Bethesda till you pray and try to be free of these bitter feelings’ – the reference being to the painful divisions created in churches and even in families by the long and destructive labour dispute” (1906, p.175). Evans confirms that feuds were forgiven and relationships healed that occurred during the divisive Penrhyn strike from 1900-1903 (1969, p.110). Additionally, long-standing debts were paid as well as gamblers “burnt their cards” in Bethesda and north Wales (*Manchester Guardian*, 1904).

There were also changes in the political landscape in the sense that many Christians began to see they had a role in bringing change. This can be seen in how individuals responded to the revival through to Nonconformist ministers, congregants and new

converts. From the churches came exhortations to take action in society. For instance, Williams cites J. Lewis Williams writes in 1908,

I am very pleased to note that the churches at last taking an interest in political matters. It is true that there are forms of socialism which are in no way related to Christianity, but surely there is one form of socialism which is a fundamental part of Christianity, 'Love the Lord thy God with all they heart and they neighbour as thyself.' The chapels cannot afford to ignore the fact that the death rate among the children of the poor is at the rate of 55 percent and among the children of the rich less than 18 percent. Why is this so? Because a Christian commandment is being ignored. Land and property have been stolen from the common people by other men who have never learnt to love their neighbours as themselves, God gave the land, the air and the sea to the people, and it is unreasonable for one class of people to maintain that they owned the land as it would be for them to claim ownership of the air and the sea. When Christ referred to the Devil, he was referring to those very people who are robbing their neighbours of their right to live (Williams, 1952, p.255).

Another anonymous Baptist minister wrote in 1909 of the societal troubles and prescribed the following to the chapels in order help to the dire situations:

- a) Educate young men in good behaviour towards women
- b) To campaign in protest against bad landlords and bad employees
- c) To cure drunkenness by personal appeal to the drunkards
- d) Minister of Religion should set about collecting data relating to bad housing conditions, with the assistance of their chapel members
- e) The chapels should demand that political leaders and political candidates must be men of good character, and give their whole hearted support to such men and withdraw unreservedly their support from men who are not of good character
- f) Finally ministers of religion should examine their own consciences and their own motives for entering the ministry and for remaining in it”
(Williams, 1952, p.256).

Therefore, social reform began to be a thrust amongst the Christian leaders and many attitudes began to change over time. This seemingly was a long-term result of the revival, although there were plausibly other contributing factors. Nonetheless, there was an awakening to the problems in society, namely among the socio-economically poor. At the same time, there were those in the Nonconformist churches that did not want such reforms as they saw it as embracing socialism (Williams, 1952, p.257). Yet, in hindsight Williams claims that the revival and the following change of many towards politics brought about a social consciousness, which caused many to become involved and bring about a balance to potential militant socialism in Wales (1952, p.258). This resulted to social habits and attitudes remained different to what it was like before the revival.

There remain different viewpoints regarding the longer-term impacts of the revival as well as the reason it was seemingly short-lived. Williams contends almost a half century later that it is difficult to total the influence of the revival, and at best, there are many “impressions” rather than “evidence” that can help string parts together (1952, p.254). Evans’ inspection and research on the revival reveals a complexity of possibilities in answering this question. Firstly, he highlights how various ministers scorned Roberts, and it deeply distressed him and “altered the course of events” (1969, p.138). Subsequently, people began to question the minor characteristics of the revival, which spread confusion (Evans, 1969, p.138). From this, Roberts recalls several years after the revival that “the mistake at the time of the Revival in Wales in 1904 was to become occupied with the effects of the Revival, and not to watch and pray in protecting and guarding the cause of Revival” (Evans, 1969, p.138). Evans’ research also concluded that reasons for a decline of the revival included the lack of church discipline, a lack of solid Biblical teaching, harmful influences, doctrinal conflict, an overemphasis on Pentecostalism, and the question regarding new denominations (1969, pp.182-200). Secondly, Evans comments that when there was an enormous influx of new converts, the traditional churches found it difficult to help them keep to Biblical standards (1969, pp.182-3). Thirdly, ministers also realised that some new converts relied on fresh outpourings of the Holy Spirit rather than the “steady sanctifying influences of the Holy Spirit” (Evans, 1969, p.183). Lastly, doctrinal divides in Christianity increased between and within some denominations.

These divides were about liberal theology and strict adherence to the tenets of the Bible as well as the Baptism of the Holy Spirit, which some deemed as essential (Evans, 1969, pp.189, 191). All of these things culminated and supposedly brought some measure of a fall out. Nevertheless, Williams contends that those that did endure ensured that Nonconformity continued in the Welsh landscape (1952, p.255).

Conclusion

The Welsh Revival of 1904-05 was noted as spontaneous and was neither constructed nor directed by man as Stead and others maintain. It seemingly was like Pentecost as mentioned in the Bible. This was evidenced by the healing of divides between people and differing groups in society, e.g., the forgiveness noted amongst the quarrymen of Bethesda. It was also shown by unity in various churches as well as the ongoing compulsion to pray, plus the subsequent dramatic conversions. Consequently, there are different aspects that are difficult to confirm via evidence. These aspects would be to track the continuity of changes in individuals' lives through to the impact on their life ethics for the longer term. Therefore, to measure the full extent of the impact of the revival is unattainable. However, based on the evidence provided, it is probable that this supernatural outpouring brought about changes that could not have happened otherwise, especially as it seems society, at large, had arguably begun to transition from Christianity to other pursuits.

Although the Welsh identified with Nonconformity as Williams contends, the trends began to reveal that the people and ministers were alienated as the leaders were potentially apathetic from the social problems. Williams claims this was especially the case in industrial mining areas. This supposedly caused many falling away from the church, and to exacerbate this situation, was the allurements of socialism, rationalism, and worldly pursuits, particularly amongst the younger. Morgan also claims that since Welsh nationalism was growing, that the appeal of the revival may have been linked to this purpose. Furthermore, both Williams and Stead argue that paganism was increasing although one eye-witness states that people were religiously minded. This was seen in Field's research as most everyone went to church for rites of passage and assumed to be a 'faith society'. However, that could have been the long-term influence of Nonconformity, past revivals, and the fact of the Welsh Bible. This potentially evidences that although society had some semblance of faith, it did not hold a position to bring about the necessary changes that were needed in communities. Thus, any changes, like a revival, would be noticeable since there were gaps between the church and society.

When investigating the short and long-term influence of the revival in the mining communities, it was evidenced that the majority that were affected were the miners. This was realised through the first-hand testimonies of prayer meetings being held in the mines as well as salvations taking place there. Additionally, the mine employers were recognising the transformation in the workers as their work ethic and attitudes changed for the better. Clearly, this was beyond the church setting, and this reveals that not only had the miners been changed but that this outpouring was continuing beyond the church meetings. The temperance amongst the miners was evidenced by first-hand accounts as well as in the newspapers. This led to the home economic situation changing for the better as evidenced as well as a drop in crime as Pope claims and Lowe's research reveals. Church attendance increased, as Morgan contends, the revival had an 'immense' impact with the young miners. Another shift in the mining communities were the attitudes of the leaders in the churches. They began to bring attention to the needs in society and proposed the practical steps to deal with these. Therefore, social reform began to be espoused from the pulpits, thus potentially healing the divides between the ministers and miners. These were potentially both short-term and long-term results of the revival.

It is easy to discern that there were short-term impacts of the revival as situations changed for many. Therefore, the extent of the influence of the revival in the short-term is easier to substantiate as well as measure. Hence, it seemingly had huge impacts in the mining communities. Yet, as mentioned the longer-term influences thereof are difficult to qualify, and as Williams contends, perhaps the main evidence for that is that Nonconformity was staid for that generation and that militant socialism never took root in society. Nonetheless, as the evidence for the long-term effects could not be qualified, it is problematic to determine. This would arguably entail more detailed testimonies of many of the people that were transformed over a long period of their lives, and as there was no records attainable, it was not conclusive. Perhaps, it is enough to say that approximately 100,000 were converted, who were predominantly miners, and that in itself, is quite a measurable impact of the revival.

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