



## CULTURAL RESOURCES

**Sunday, September 18, 2011**

**(See the interview with Revivalist Dr. Charles Booth below.)**

**Benjamin Carroll, Guest Cultural Resources Commentator**

### **I. Introduction**

I was particularly struck by the use of 2 Peter 3:9-12 as the Scripture for one of the 2011 Lectionary Revival units. Struck because now we so rarely hear end-time preaching—maybe we hear ludicrous predictions about the end of time, but not end-time preaching. Second, I was struck by the use of this text for a Revival unit because of what Revival has become in the masses of black churches. It is now, as our lectionary commentator expressed, often replaced by a conference or an event to which we invite saved folk to show them the greatness of our churches and the amazing guest psalmist or soloist for the event. I had a pastor say to me not too long ago when I asked him about his spring revival, *“Man, my church is so broke. I’m not about to just invite in some preacher who may or may not invite me to preach for him. Plus, the*

*preachers everybody wants to hear are charging too much now to do a two-day revival. Plus, my folk ain't gon' do no evangelism; they'll get their shout on again and then won't give no money."*

This is a sad but true sentiment as to what revivals have become in too many black churches. Though I loved the revivals I grew up attending, I am now aware of their shortcomings too. Although we were encouraged to invite the unsaved, they were typically bashed or shamed into joining the church when they showed up. The choirs often sang too long and the services were always too long, typically running three hours and longer on Fridays. My grandmother has told me about the tarrying services for the saved and the unsaved. For the saved, they were too tarry as they repented from failing to live holy. Then, they were to leave on fire and go evangelize. Then, when unsaved people came to church, they would be almost forced before the mourners bench to tarry until they got the Holy Ghost. Such tarrying by some lasted several weeks. These were the days of even month-long revivals.

So, shall we continue revivals? Have they outlived their purposes? If the typical member does not invite the unsaved are they useful for that purpose? If well-known preachers are charging exorbitant costs to do a revival, is this acceptable in a global economy that is still suffering a meltdown? If revivals are now mainly feel-good opportunities for the saved, can't we just go with Sunday services? Are believers better served by teaching conferences?

Well, I believe that we need occasions in the life of the Church where the focus is on teaching the saved how to live responsible, liberated, victorious lives for Christ, and we also need occasions when the Church, on purpose and by design, evangelizes and preaches to save souls. In other words, the salvation of the lost is spotlighted and the uplift of the saved is also given significance. Instead of bringing their favorite horse (a sermon a preacher has often preached), revivalists are invited first to reach the lost and second to revive the saved.

Revivalists are told in advance of the needs, concerns, and hopes of the congregation and the community in which it is located. If a church is located in neighborhood that is filled with gang-bangers and thugs, why would a guest revivalist come to preach without addressing their presence and teaching the church how to address the issue? If a church is filled with elementary and high school age students, why would a revivalists not address the importance of education, the importance of parental involvement, and what churches can do to help make schools in their neighborhoods stronger? In other words, revivals must be relevant and impact the daily lives of those who attend them after the hearers leave the worship services.

Perhaps it may be necessary to determine if we want to hold a revival for the saved and then hold an evangelistic crusade to reach the unsaved. Both are critically important.

## **II. Planning a Great Revival**

**A. Pray** – Churches often do a great deal of logistical planning for revivals. They select themes, plan the music, advertise, and even raise funds to support the revival. However, whatever else is

done, no church should fail to make prayer a priority in planning a revival. Before any revival those who are prayer warriors should be enlisted to pray concerning the revival and its impact. Designated times can be established for prayer and the entire congregation can even be asked to pray at select times before and during the revival.

**B. Have a High Purpose** – Too often revivals are simply held because churches have always held them. They are dates on the calendar and not much more even if good preaching and singing are provided during the revival. But revivals can be so much more. Few revivals hold out soul-saving as a primary aim though churches gladly welcome new members during revivals. Often, no particular purpose is attached to a revival. If you want your revival to be successful, change this. Revivals are a great time to get large numbers of members, their families, and even community residents to attend church other than on Sunday mornings. Whether your revival is well attended or if you want it to be, have a high purpose attached to it. For instance, instead of just holding a youth revival with no particular purpose, hold a youth revival whose purpose is to lessen violence in your community and invite everyone including teachers, police officers, gang members, activists, and even the mayor. Or your purpose may be to help the community get healthier or get out of debt, or get educated, or recommit to God through pledging to better adhere to biblical principles for living. Whatever the purpose, make it an important one and plan in advance so that your efforts will achieve the maximum impact.

**C. Educate** – More than ever churches are filled with members who did not grow up in the church or joined a church after having belonged to a different denomination or a different religion. This means that churches must begin to take seriously the need to educate its members about its doctrines and beliefs. Revivals provide a great opportunity to educate. Prior to the preacher, a guest lecturer can be used to teach doctrine, church beliefs, or theology.

**D. Budget** – Revivals can be expensive. Well-known revivalists are now typically paid \$3,000 or more each day or night they preach during a revival, and this does not include the cost to fly them in and put them in a hotel and feed them. Then, outside musicians or guest psalmists (singers) may have to be paid. There are the costs to advertise, perhaps serve food before and/or after the revival, have a janitor on hand to clean the church, and the list goes on. Each church should know well in advance of a revival how much it will cost to produce it. This money should be put in the budget long before the revival. Although offerings are always raised during revivals, they should not be the primary means to fund a revival. If revivals are a consistent money-losing effort for a church, they may want to decrease their number of revivals, invite more sister churches to insure a sizeable crowd, and even hold a fundraiser specifically for the revival. I once attended a church that handed out Easter season gleaners each Palm Sunday that would hold twenty dollars; the gleaners had opening for quarters and dollars. Two months after Easter the gleaners were collected. This provided a great financial foundation for the two revivals the church held.

**E. Advertise** – Over the past 30 years I have absolutely concluded that most churches do too little to advertise their revivals. Beyond telling the members on a few occasions and reminding the choirs to be present, often little more is done. With the advent of social media and the ever-important word-of-mouth this should not be the case. Promoters advertise concerts, plays, and even wrestling matches until we are tired of hearing about a certain upcoming event. Although few churches have budgets to rival those of concert and athletic promoters, most churches have more than they need to advertise. The main thing that is needed is a team of people with some advertising familiarity, commitment, and a systematic, well-timed plan to get the word out about the revival.

**F. Assess** – If churches are bad at advertising their revivals they are even worse at doing an assessment of them. Revivals are important events in the life of a church, so it makes sense that churches would want to improve how they hold them. An assessment need not be long but should be strong and should assess what is important to your church. For example, you may want to assess the costs, the music, the seating, the choir, the ushers, youth participation, amenities for children, disability access, the length of the services, the attendance, and more. Members and even visitors can be asked to complete the assessment any night they attend. They can be placed inside the programs given out or handed out during the service. Just make sure that they are done and that they are anonymous. Those who complete them should do NO more than indicate whether they are a member or a visitor. Assessment forms can also be put on the church’s website and software can be used to tally the result. One good program for doing so is called “Survey Monkey.” Yes, it has a strange name, but it’s a good program for doing assessments.

### III. Q & A with a Great Revivalist—Charles Edward Booth



Charles Edward Booth has been one of the leading revivalists in America for more than 30 years, preaching in many cases more than 20 revivals a year. He is the long-time pastor of the Mount Olivet Baptist Church of Columbus, Ohio.

**Q:** Dr. Booth how long have you preached revivals?

**A:** I’ve been preaching 47 years and doing revivals for about 40 of those 47 years.

**Q:** What are the main differences (if any) you discern about revivals today and those of 20 or 30 years ago?

**A:** First, revivals are now shorter. Revivals used to begin on a Sunday morning and go through a Friday evening. You might preach on a Sunday morning and then Sunday night and go through Friday. Now, the average revival is three days and some two.

Another thing that's different is the two-preacher format where you have two preachers up in one night or even every other night of a revival. I don't like this format because I think it's too much for a congregation to handle more than one sermon a night in one setting. It requires a great shift to really grasp what is being said given that often the preachers have radically different styles and radically different focuses for their sermons. I question what is the intent of bringing in two preachers for one revival. If your intent is to feed the people, one should ask, "What is the best format for doing that?" Also, regarding intentions for a revival, a revival is different than an evangelistic crusade. An evangelistic crusade is primarily designed to save souls. But people don't really do that anymore. Once upon a time churches really prepared to save souls. You were deputized to bring your family and friends to church; we don't really do that anymore.

For me, a revival is a time to spiritually refresh the people, to get them in line with the ways of Christ again and to get them to go to deeper depths in discipleship. I also want to motivate people to live better.

I don't mind having a lecturer and a preacher on the same evening if the lecturer clearly understands that he or she is there to lecture and not preach; there is a big difference.

**Q:** What makes for a good revival?

**A:** One, a period of prayer especially concerning the revival must precede the revival. It can be a week before or longer, but it's important. Two, music is critically important. I have never been a proponent of churches bringing in outside choirs to swell the crowd. Bringing in a different choir for a revival is like bringing in almost an alien spirit. When I hold a revival I want my choir and my musicians to provide the music; they know me. They are in sync with me. Third, it makes for a good revival if you find out what the preacher wants to do when he or she is not in the pulpit. Do not plan the preacher's schedule. Pastor Caesar Clark was a cloistered revivalist. He would stay in his room until it was time for him to preach. Pastor Bob Wilson of Dallas enjoyed bowling while doing revivals. So, each preacher is different. Once upon a time the host pastor would take you to eat at the home of a church member before and after service. I prefer to eat after I preach. So, always ask the revivalist; that makes things better.

**Q:** How do you decide what to preach during a revival?

**A:** Most often I am going to preach on the road what I preached at home. I may take a pastoral sermon and tweak it or reshape it for use in a revival, but it came from my pastoral preaching at home. The sermons taken on the road are those preached at home that I look at and can tell that they have a certain puncture to them that goes beyond the pastoral preaching moment. On occasion I will prepare a revival sermon and first preach it on the road and then take it home.

**Q:** How long does it take you to prepare a sermon for revival?

**A:** J. Pious Barber said, “On Sunday night (meaning after you have preached on Sunday morning) you should have a thought, a text, or an idea in your head for the next Sunday.” So, I try to keep that in mind. Since most of my revival sermons are first preached at home, I follow the same process all the time. I do a written outline and then I do my exegetical work; that is the most time-consuming aspect of preparing. Then, I begin to flesh out the outline. After I have done those things, I can write the entire sermon in about two to two and a half hours working from a well fleshed-out outline. I still write my sermons in long-hand since I never learned to type. I try to have the sermon written by Thursday or Friday of a week.

**Q:** What are some of the most memorable revivals you have done and why?

**A:** I remember in the late 1970s early ‘80s I did the San Francisco City-Wide Revival and met Reverend E.V. Hill. That’s also when I first met Rev. Martha Simmons. I would preach during the noon hour and Reverend Hill would preach at night. Years later, we did the same thing for the Philadelphia City-Wide Revival. At the time, Ronald Reagan was president. Reverend Hill would build up Reagan at night and I would knock him down the next day. Our politics were very different but we really got along well and would go out to eat together each night after a revival service.

I also enjoyed doing revival at Mt. Carmel in Philadelphia where Rev. Albert Campbell was pastor. He was a good pastor and the people were always kind to me.

Another revival that is memorable are many of those I have done for Pastor Walter Scott Thomas. I have preached for him for 40 years every year the Sunday after Thanksgiving. I preached for him in all four of the buildings in which the church has been located. I developed a great friendship with that pastor and people.

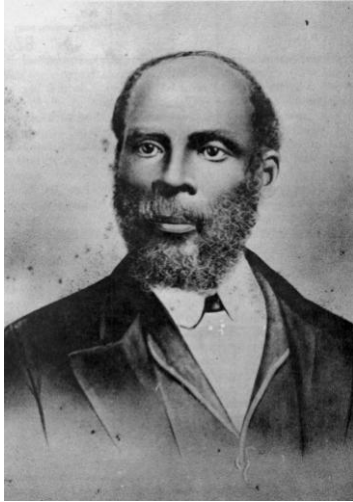
**Q:** Who are some of your favorite revivalists?

**A:** I loved hearing Reverend Caesar Clark. I first heard him in Westchester, Philadelphia. He was and remains one of the most phenomenal revivalists I have ever heard. I also enjoy Harold Carter of Baltimore and Dr. Bob Wilson of Dallas, who was for many years head of the Foreign Mission Board of the National Baptist Convention USA, Inc. I also enjoyed E.V. Hill. He had a delivery that allowed him to put a crowd in the palms of his hands. Then, there was the late Harold Oliver Davis, who is little known. He died a tragic death at the young age of 45. He pastored Cornerstone in Philadelphia. In the ‘70s he was preaching on the radio on WHAT in Philadelphia. One day, when I was a seminarian, Reverend Amos Brown told me, “There is a preacher you need to hear.” So, we listened to Davis on the radio. Afterwards, I in my seminary ignorance and arrogance said, “He was good, he can whoop, but he doesn’t have much depth.” Then, that same night, we went to hear him in revival after he had preached at his church. It was as if he had been a fly on the wall and heard my remarks and said, “Okay young Negro, you want some

depth.” His preaching was so masterful I stood up and I cried. The title of that sermon was “The Necessity of Religion in the Life of a Nation.” I shall never forget it.

#### IV. Great Revivalists of Yesterday and Today

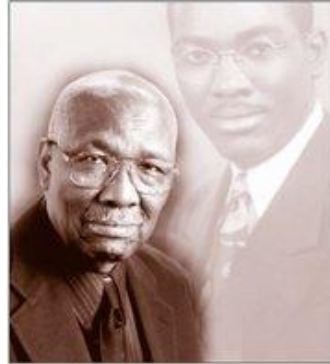
America has a long history of great African American revivalists. These amazing revivalists are



always preachers of power, passion, and soaring oratory. Their numbers are legion. Below is a brief list of noted revivalists past and present.

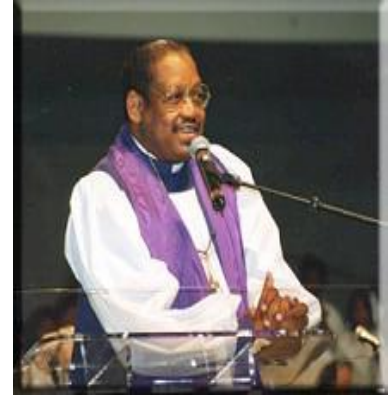


**Emmanuel K. Love**  
(1812–1901)



**C.L. Franklin**  
(1850–1901)

**John  
Jasper**



(1915–1985)





**Caesar A.W. Clark**  
(1914–2008)



**Frederick G. Sampson II**  
(1928–2001)



**Gilbert E. Patterson**  
(1937–2007)

**Jasper Williams Jr.**  
(1943–)

**Carolyn A. Knight**  
(1955–)

**Frederick D. Haynes III**  
(1960–)

### **Their Bios in Brief**

**John Jasper** – John Jasper was born in slavery and was the last of 24 siblings. He organized the Sixth Mount Zion Baptist Church of Richmond, Virginia, when he was almost 55. He started with nine members and grew the church to many hundreds. He remained there as pastor for 33 years. He was a masterful folk preacher and is best known for his sermon “De Sun Do Move,” which he preached on numerous occasions throughout the south including before the Virginia legislature.

**Emmanuel K. Love** – Emmanuel King Love was born in slavery in Alabama. In 1885 he became the pastor of the First African Baptist Church in Savannah, Georgia, where he remained until he died. At its height, the church had 6,000 members. Love was an editor, president of the Baptist Foreign Mission Convention, and helped form the National Baptist Convention, now the National Baptist Convention USA Inc.

**C.L. Franklin** – Clarence LaVaughn Franklin was born in Cleveland, Mississippi. He is the father of soul singer Aretha Franklin. He began pastoring the New Bethel Baptist Church in Detroit in 1946 and remained there until his death. Franklin was a premier whooper and great singer. His Detroit radio broadcast was listened to by thousands. Though he died more than 20 years ago, his sermons and albums are still purchased and his whooping style is still imitated.

**Caesar A.W. Clark** – Caesar Arthur Walker Clark Sr. was born in Shreveport, Louisiana. He pastored the Good Street Baptist Church of Dallas for more than 50 years. For more than 30 years Clark was one of the leading revivalists in America averaging 20 or more week-long revivals each year.

**Gilbert E. Patterson** – Gilbert Earl Patterson was born in Humboldt, Tennessee. He served as the Presiding Bishop of the Church of God in Christ, Inc. from 2000 until his death and was the pastor of Temple of Deliverance, the Cathedral of Bountiful Blessings of Memphis. He started the church and at his death the church had more than 12,000 members.



**Frederick G. Sampson II** – Frederick G. Sampson II was born in Port Arthur, Texas. From 1971 to 2001 he pastored the Tabernacle Baptist Church of Detroit. Sampson preached throughout the world and was twice recognized by *Ebony* magazine as one of the 15 greatest black preachers in America.

**Jasper Williams Jr.** – Jasper Williams Jr. was born in Memphis, Tennessee. He began pastoring Salem Bible Church in Atlanta in 1963 and has remained its pastor. He began preaching as a boy and gained considerable notoriety for preaching the funeral of C.L. Franklin. From the 1960s to the 1990s Williams was one of the leading revivalist in the country.

**Carolyn A. Knight** – Carolyn Ann Knight was born in Denver, Colorado. She formerly taught preaching at Union Seminary in New York and at the Interdenominational Theological Center (ITC) in Atlanta. For the past 20 years she has preached throughout America and is one of the few women preachers regularly invited to do revivals. She was also cited by *Ebony* magazine in November 1997 as one of America's 15 Greatest African American Women Preachers.

**Frederick D. Haynes III** – Frederick D. Haynes III became the pastor of Friendship-West Baptist Church in Dallas. As of 2011 he has served as pastor of Friendship-West for 28 years, growing the church from several hundred to more than 11,000. From the early 1990s to the present Haynes has been one of the top ten revivalists in the country.

## **V. Song for This Moment on the Calendar**

### **Wrapped Up, Tied Up, Tangled Up**

I'm wrapped up in his love.  
I'm tied up in his Spirit;  
tangled up in his love, and the world can't do me no harm.  
I'm wrapped up in his love.  
I'm tied up in his Spirit;  
tangled up in his love, and the world can't do me no harm.

Said I'm wrapped up, tied up, tangled up and the world can't do me no harm.

Wrapped up, tied up, tangled up and the world can't do me no harm.<sup>1</sup>

### **What the Lord Has Done for Me (You Oughta Been There)**

Chorus

Oh, oh, oh, what he done for me  
Oh, oh, oh, what he done for me  
I never will forget what he done for me.

(verse 1)

Picked me up and turned me around

what he's done for me.  
Picked me up and turned me around  
what he's done for me.  
I never will forget what he's done for me.

Placed my feet on solid ground, what he's done for me.  
Placed my feet on solid ground, what he's done for me.  
I never will forget what he's done for me.

Took my feet out of the miry clay,  
what he's done for me.  
took my feet out of the miry clay,  
what he's done for me.  
I never shall forget what he's done for me.

Placed em on a rock to stay, what he's done for me.  
Placed em on a rock to stay, what he's done for me.  
I never shall forget what he's done for me.

You oughta' been there  
when he saved my soul.  
You oughta been there  
when he put my name on the roll  
Then I, start singing,  
Then I start shoutin',  
Then, I start prayin'  
Oh what the Lord has done for me.

Chorus

Oh, oh, oh, what he's done for me.  
Oh, oh, oh, what he's done for me.  
I never shall forget what he's done for me.<sup>2</sup>

### **Telephone in My Bosom**

I've got a telephone in my bosom  
And I can, call Him, Up and  
Tell him what I want, tell him what I want,  
I can call Jesus and tell him what I want  
I've got a telephone of my own.<sup>3</sup>

YouTube: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=s0rFJGykpTs>

### **Glory, Glory, Hallelujah**

Glory, Glory, hallelujah!  
Since I laid my burdens down.  
Glory, Glory, hallelujah!  
Since I laid my burden down!

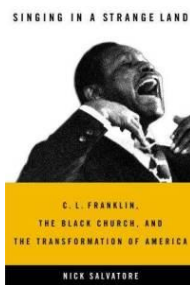
Friends don't treat me like they used to  
Since I laid my burden down.  
Friends don't treat me like they used to  
Since I laid my burden down!<sup>4</sup>

YouTube: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=G7hrruXF7K8&feature=related>

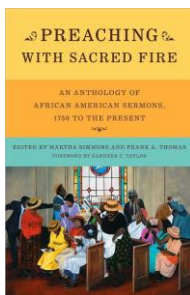
**What He's Done for Me** by Clay Evans<sup>5</sup>

YouTube: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XAqqfZoqu24&feature=related>

## VI. Books for This Moment on the Lectionary Calendar



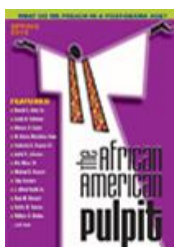
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- Great Revivalists II. *The African American Pulpit Journal*. Memphis, TN: Hope for Life, 2009.

### Notes

1. “Wrapped Up, Tied Up, Tangled Up.” Traditional
2. “What the Lord Has Done for Me (You Oughta Been There).” Traditional
3. “Telephone in My Bosom.” By the Farmer Singers. Fire in My Bones: Raw, Rare and Other Worldly African American Music 1944–2007. New York, NY: Tompkin Square Records, 2009.
4. “Glory, Glory, Hallelujah.” Spiritual. African American Heritage Hymnal. Chicago, IL: GIA Publications, 2001. #500
5. “What He’s Done for Me.” By Clay Evans. Traditional