The Brazilian Revival

Jonathan Edwards Center Brasil 2014
The Brazilian Revival

Acknowledgment: The following notes are based on Luiz Roberto F. de Mattos, Jonathan Edwards and the Criteria for Evaluating the Genuineness of the “Brazilian Revival” (Sao Paulo: Centre de Pos-Gracuacao Andrew Jumper, 1997). Master thesis under supervision of Prof. Heber Carlos de Campos Sr.
The **Brazilian Revival**

Thesis structure

- Introduction
- Chapter 1 The “Brazilian Revival”: Unauthorized Fire or Fire from the Lord
- Chapter 2 Jonathan Edwards and The Great Awakening
- Chapter 3 Genuine Religious Affections
  - A review of Edwards’ *A Treatise concerning Religious Affections* (1746)
- Chapter 4 Revival and the Manifestation of God’s Kingdom
  - A review of Edwards’ *A History of the Work of Redemption* (1739/74)
- Chapter 5 Revival, The Chief End for Which God Created the World, and the Nature of True Virtue
  - A review of Edwards’ *The End for Which God Created the World* (1765), *The Nature of True Virtue* (1765), and *Charity and Its Fruits* (1856).
- Chapter 6 Is a Revival Going on in Brazil?
- Bibliography
The Brazilian Revival

Introduction

The Brazilian evangelical church from 1950-1997

- Extraordinary growth from 1.7 to 35 million believers.
- Problems: Religious exploitation, superficiality and distortions of Scripture exposition, and emphasis on signs and wonders vs. Scripture as normative authority.

How to assess the inquiry, “Is Brazil living a true revival or not?”

- Biblical-historical and theological approach of research with specific attention to Jonathan Edwards’ assessment of the Great Awakening
Chapter 1 The “Brazilian Revival”: Unauthorized Fire or Fire from the Lord”

Evaluation in 1996 of Brazil’s contemporary religious reality

• 1. Without hesitation: genuine work of God’s Spirit
• 2. Total rejection: outpouring of God’s Spirit
• 3. Restrained opinion, avoiding definitive statement: may be or may not a work of God’s Spirit
The Brazilian Revival

Chapter 1 The “Brazilian Revival”: Unauthorized Fire or Fire from the Lord"

Historical Expectation for Revival in Brazil

• Since 1950’s (publication of Revivamento, 1953)
• Need for revival:
  • Prayer
  • Missions
  • Individual Holiness
  • Christ’s lordship vs. emotionalism
  • Biblical instruction
  • Confession of sin
The Brazilian Revival

Chapter 1 The “Brazilian Revival”: Unauthorized Fire or Fire from the Lord”

Positive or affirmative assessment

- Expectation of Revival and Spiritual Renewal Movement or Charismatic Movement (originating of late 1950’s)
  - Baptizing with the Holy Spirit
  - Renewing charismatic gifts
- Miracles (neo-Pentecostal church)
- Renewed spirit of prayer (1996 watch-night prayer meetings)
- Extraordinary growth (in numbers and demographics: from soccer players to screen-writers, from pastors to political leaders)
- Hunger and Thirst for God
Chapter 1 The “Brazilian Revival”: Unauthorized Fire or Fire from the Lord”

Negative or rejective assessment

• Different reasons for denial...the situation is complex
• Revival opens doors to theological errors (liberalism and inclusiveness--see for example the developments of Presbyterian Church USA)
• Caution against emotionalism
• Numerical growth led to crisis: ethical and doctrinal
• Lack of features of genuine awakening (though need of revival is recognized),
  • a holistic missionary perspective (biblical historical informed)
  • a reformation (theology [divine sovereignty and human depravity and sin] and liturgy)...a return to Scripture
Chapter 6 Is a Revival Going on in Brazil?

Edwards’ assessment of Revival

- Conversion joined with deep conviction of sin
  - people of different background but clear conscious condition of sinner
  - Brazilian revival: reduction to “accepting Christ” is “fashionable.”

- Special desire for God’s Word
  - “Every hearer was eager to drink in the words of the minister...”, and the “Bible is in much greater esteem and use than before...”
  - Brazilian revival: deep exposition of Scripture rejected; not hearing of the Word; yet, “recent publications also seem to indicate a progressive interest for God’s Word...”
Chapter 6 Is a Revival Going on in Brazil?

Edwards’ assessment of Revival (con’t)

• Renewal in God’s worship
  • a renewed pleasure in singing and praising God
  • Brazilian revival: renewed interest in praising God yet worldly influence (heavy rock etc.)

• Change of nature instead of outward
  • True spiritual experience...produce a new motivation for seeking God. Radical inward change produces new behavior and practice...progressively revealing the image of Christ
  • Brazilian revival: concentration of outward phenomena rather than in change of nature
The Brazilian Revival

Chapter 6 Is a Revival Going on in Brazil?

Edwards’ assessment of Revival (con’t)

• Social transformation through the manifestation of God’s Kingdom
  • True revival, inward change of nature leads to new individual ethics and result in engagedness of church in relevant and strong social work
  • Brazilian revival: “supposed conversions of millions has not in fact affected the social reality” yet...some positive and promising signs: recent church involvement in the social disenfranchised.

• God’s glory, the ultimate and chief end of the church
  • God in Himself and ad extra: glory, holiness, love and happiness--consequences of living for God’s glory. What is the chief end of man? Man's chief end is to glorify God, and to enjoy him for ever...
  • Brazilian revival: happiness from selfish life style, man happiness vs. God’s glory
Chapter 6 Is a Revival Going on in Brazil?

Edwards’ assessment of Revival (con’t)

• Love of benevolence instead of love of complacence
  • True revival, inward change of nature leads to new disposition. True virtue consist in a benevolent love towards being in general and above all to God.
  • Brazilian revival: A feeling of satisfied with yourself ...

• Spirit infusing his own nature into the church
  • True revival, inward change of nature worked by God’s Spirit produces true love, disposition to God and men, and inclined hearts to God’s will: “the essence of religion consist in this loving attitude.”
  • Brazilian revival: Fruits of the Spirit are lacking in general.
Chapter 6 Is a Revival Going on in Brazil?

Conclusion

- Brazilian revival doesn’t meet Edwards major principles of true revival but,
- Some elements of the Brazilian spiritual environment may indicate “that we can be living a pre-revival condition in our country...”, because of the presence of:
  - The spirit of prayer, asking God for granting of a genuine revival
  - The renewal of worship
  - The increased and sober concern with social transformation
- and yet...emphasis on outward manifestations and selfish man-centered spirit in the Brazilian church are the obstruction for true revival
The Brazilian Revival

Conclusion

Thesis of Luiz Roberto F. de Mattos, Jonathan Edwards and the Criteria for Evaluating the Genuineness of the “Brazilian Revival” is closed with a prayer...

Oh, that You would rend the heavens!
That You would come down!
That the mountains might shake at Your presence
As fire burns brushwood,
As fire causes water to boil—
To make Your name known to Your adversaries,
That the nations may tremble at Your presence! [Isaiah 64:1,2]

Oh! se fendesses os céus, e descesses, e os montes tremessem à tua presença, como quando o fogo pega em acendalhas, e o fogo faz ferver a água, para fazeres notório o teu nome aos teus adversários, de sorte que à tua presença tremam as nações!