

The word 'revival' literally means "restoration to life," and that may be the best way to describe what happened on Wheaton's campus on March 19, 1995.

It began on Sunday evening, at a World Christian Fellowship meeting in Pierce Chapel. The program included testimonies by two students from Howard Payne University in Texas, who described a recent revival on their own campus.

After each student spoke, WCF student leader Matt Yarrington '96, M.A.'98, invited students to come to the microphones to speak if they wished. But first, Matt took a few minutes to make a personal confession of his own sin of pride in his leadership of WCF; he did so quietly, calmly, and briefly, but sincerely.

Then, a brave student came forward to a microphone and confessed his own sin of pride. Others came forward. After someone would honestly, vulnerably, and transparently share a public confession, friends would huddle around and pray for that person.

There were confessions of pride, hatred, lust, sexual immorality, cheating, dishonesty, materialism, racism, addictions, and self-destructive behavior. There was crying and there was singing. People confessed their sins to God and to each other, and there was healing.

That meeting went through the night, finally adjourning on Monday morning at 6 a.m., with students still waiting to speak. For two more nights, worship and confession went long into the morning, with crowds reaching 1,300 on Tuesday evening and 1,500 on Wednesday. The final gathering took place Thursday night.

I can remember listening to student after student; and asking myself the questions, *Is this good? Is this right? Is this appropriate?* And my answer to those questions was *Yes!*

You see, what we were experiencing was as a community. It was about brothers and sisters helping each other. It was members of God's family doing God's business in God's way. We were agreeing together to put away pretense and phoniness. We were all admitting to be broken sinners seeking only the mercy of God.

You might wonder about my purpose in recounting the details of something that happened ten years ago. Yes, it was a significant work of God in Wheaton's history. But more importantly, I want us to be reminded of the beauty and importance of the Christian virtue of forgiveness. It was forgiveness that was at the heart of the revival of 1995; and it is forgiveness that is at the heart of building Christian community in any place at any time. Our obedience to the second greatest commandment—loving your neighbor as yourself—involves a commitment to the difficult but critical practice of forgiveness.

Ephesians 4:17-32 connects with the whole notion of revival, spiritual renewal, and awakening. In these verses, the Apostle Paul is describing what it means to live the Christian life in Christian community. This happens only when Christ-followers truly follow Christ—when they "put off the old self" and "put on the new."

The revival of 1995 was indeed a remarkable work of God in the hearts and lives of His people on campus—one that prepared many to live lives of devotion to Christ. But wouldn't it be wonderful if we truly never needed another revival? What if, instead, we would be faithful in the little things, giving attention to personal relationships, and finding freedom and healing and wholeness on a daily basis in this Christian community?

The Revival Remembered

by Dr. Stephen B. Kellough '70
Chaplain

In the spring of 1995, Wheaton College experienced a remarkable outpouring of God's love on campus. Ten years later in a Chapel address, Chaplain Stephen Kellough reflects on the "Revival of 1995."

