



FOREWORD BY JIM CYMBALA

THE PRESENCE

Experiencing More of God

ALEC ROWLANDS

This engaging book is a collection of riveting stories about real people whose encounters with the living God transformed not only their lives but also their worship. These experiences of meeting God head-on stand at the core of a genuine spiritual revival—an awakening to the presence of God, who directs from the inside out the formation of our character and our mission in the world. Shaped by the deep maturity of an anointed leader who has witnessed God at work in his life and in the lives of many others, this inspiring book is a pastor’s well-timed call for the church’s spiritual renewal.

ROBERT W. WALL, THD

The Paul T. Walls Professor of Scripture and Wesleyan Studies, Seattle Pacific University and Seminary

Just as Moses refused to leave for the Promised Land without God’s presence, I never want to enter the operating room without first welcoming God’s presence by praying with my patient, and by filling the room with the sounds of worship music. In the same way that the many facets of a diamond draw attention visually, Pastor Alec’s *The Presence* has encouraged me to focus my attention wholeheartedly on seeking more of God’s presence in my life.

MICHAEL M. HAGLUND, MD, PHD

Endowed Professor of Neurosurgery, Neurobiology, and Global Health, Duke University Medical Center

I’ve had the privilege of sitting under the teaching of Pastor Alec Rowlands many times over the years, and his insight always cuts straight to the heart. I had the same experience while reading this book. It’s life-changing, empowering wisdom on how to live in the daily pursuit of God’s presence. This book is a beautiful and powerful reminder that we serve a God who loves to be close to us. Alec gives practical advice on how to truly experience God and be aware of His life-altering presence on a daily basis.

NATALIE GRANT

Five-time GMA Dove Award-winning singer/songwriter

With a solid biblical foundation, historical wisdom, and contemporary pastoral insight, Dr. Alec Rowlands reflects on his life in light of the broader Christian story—in a way that honors and depends on the sovereign presence of the holy God whose joy is fresh every morning. Here is truth on fire. Here is Christian humility that invites us all to share in the longing of Christ for the deep renewal of His church and sustained outreach to the lost sheep of our day.

DR. STEVEN J. LAND

President and professor of Pentecostal theology, Pentecostal Theological Seminary, a Church of God ministry

The Presence identifies the key to the transformation of individuals, families, churches, and nations—spiritual revival. Pastor Alec combines Scripture with powerful anecdotes from his own pursuit of God’s presence, his family and church life, and history’s great awakenings that God used to draw nations back to Himself to show how prayer, deep repentance, and obedience characterize every true revival. He shows readers how to pray and see their head knowledge of the Almighty become heart knowledge—in God’s presence.

TONY PERKINS

President, Family Research Council

The reality of the presence of God is a theological fact but also a spiritual mystery. Pastor Alec Rowlands deals with the most important issue in every person’s life, the reality of both knowing God and experiencing His presence. Weaving the biblical text with historical accounts, personal experiences, scholarship, and a rich personal walk with God, Pastor Rowlands shows how God reveals Himself in the Bible and in personal encounter, and how revivals have erupted from time to time to move people from head knowledge to heart experience. This is a wonderful and much needed book.

GORDON ANDERSON, PHD

President, North Central University, Minneapolis, Minnesota

THE PRESENCE

Experiencing More of God

ALEC ROWLANDS

with Marcus Brotherton



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FOREWORD

FROM THE BEGINNING, the Holy Spirit has played a vital part in bringing about God's purposes on earth. We see him first hovering over the waters in Genesis as God prepares to bring beauty out of dark chaos. Later, he comes upon men and women, enabling them to accomplish incredible victories against great odds. The Spirit inspires prophets to deliver God's word with power and conviction; he helps kings rule with justice and compassion; he even anoints craftsmen to work with unusual skill and vigor.

But it's only with the coming to earth of the Savior, Jesus Christ, that we see the enlarged ministry of the Holy Spirit. Coequal with the Father and the Son, he settles upon the Messiah at baptism in the Jordan River and thus initiates three years of powerful public ministry. And after being crucified for the sins of the world, Jesus is raised to life by the power of this same Spirit.

But now comes the best part for believers in Jesus. The risen Christ promises that this same Holy Spirit will be given in a new way to all who put their trust in him. Christians will be indwelt by the same Spirit who raised the Savior from the dead! His activity in and through our lives, then and now, is frequently identified as *the presence of God*. No longer must we live in defeat and despair, for now the Holy Spirit, God's very presence, will be our source of strength. This is one reason why Christ, before he went back to heaven, chose lowly

fishermen and tax collectors to represent him on earth. Conscious of their own inadequacy, they would feel the need to depend on his presence to work in and through them as Jesus had promised. And that promise was fulfilled as the Christian church began to deeply impact the world two millennia ago.

Alec Rowlands is a friend, a fellow pastor, and a careful student of both the Scriptures and church history. *The Presence* is especially timely, because without God's presence—welcomed and treasured—Christianity's impact as a force in the world would prove weak. The history of spiritual renewal and revival is nothing more than Christians coveting the presence of God more than anything else, so that they can be a people pleasing to the Lord. *The Presence* will do more than inform you. It will stir within you a burning desire for the one thing that will satisfy—the presence of the Lord.

Jim Cymbala

MARCH 2014

CHAPTER I

UNTAMED LION

Revival is the overwhelming sense of God's presence that falls powerfully on a Christian people who have become dead or lethargic in their spiritual lives, reviving those elements of the Christian life that God intends to be normal for his church.

I RECENTLY RETURNED to my homeland of South Africa, with a camera crew. I wanted to interview people from my father's church who had witnessed a dramatic display of God's presence during a season of spiritual awakening back when I was a boy. After days of recording interviews, the crew asked if they could see some of Africa's wildlife in its natural habitat before we left for home. We drove them several hours out into the bush, west of Johannesburg, to Pilanesberg National Park. The officials at the main gate informed us that visitors had seen no lions or elephants for several days, but that other game would be easy to find. Cameras poised, we proceeded in our rented van on one of the many dirt roads that crisscross the park.

While my brother drove the van, I sat in the back with the camera crew and pulled the sliding door open so we would have an unrestricted view of whatever animals we could find.

We hadn't traveled more than a mile from the gate when my brother spotted a huge male lion off to the left of the van, no more than a hundred feet from the road, lying in the dirt with his face resting on his paws, facing us. The rest of the pride was behind him, camouflaged by the tall, brown savannah grass. They were so well concealed that the cars ahead of us had completely missed them.

The sliding door of the van was already open, and the cameras were rolling as my brother gently applied the brakes. It was a magnificent sight, except for one tiny detail. In the midday heat, none of the lions were moving. They were so still, in fact, that the video was going to look like a snapshot.

We have all seen lazy lions at the zoo, and we had traveled too far to simply replicate that experience. So I decided to shout at them. No response. Then, despite my brother's protests, I quietly slid out of the van, and with my eyes trained on the lion, picked up a stone from the side of the road. (I don't recommend that anyone try this.) I threw the stone in the direction of the lion, but on my windup, my throwing hand hit the roof of the van behind me and the stone didn't make it more than fifteen feet in front of me. The lion was watching me but seemed fairly disinterested in my antics.

By now, my brother was reciting how quickly a lion could cover the distance between us. But I was determined. Still watching the pride very carefully, I bent down for a second stone. Stepping far enough away from the van so my hand wouldn't hit it again, I was able to bounce the stone a few feet from the nose of the male lion. He jumped straight up and roared. Perfect footage for the camera!

Not knowing if he was going to charge me, I stumbled backward onto the floor of the van and tried, in the same motion, to close the door. To my horror, the door had latched in the open position.

This all happened in a matter of seconds, but it felt like it took an eternity to close the door. As it turned out, the lion didn't charge,

but to this day I still think about how quickly he could have covered the distance between us and had me for lunch before I ever got the door shut. *What was I thinking!*

Most of us have seen the ferocity of a lion catching and devouring its prey in a *National Geographic* special, but all from the safety of the family room couch. I can testify that it is an entirely different matter to be eye-to-eye with the real thing only a hundred feet away. Your heart beats a little faster. Your palms get sweaty. Your brain races to calculate escape routes. Every nerve and muscle in your body is alert and ready to respond. It is not for the faint of heart. No wonder C. S. Lewis uses Aslan the lion to represent God in his famous *Chronicles of Narnia*.

“Is he—quite safe?” asks Susan. “I shall feel rather nervous about meeting a lion.”

“Who said anything about safe?” replies Mr. Beaver. “Course he isn’t safe. But he’s good.”¹

Lewis was right. There’s nothing safe about pursuing and being near to God, if by *safe* you mean being left as you are, to follow your own agenda and depend solely on your own wisdom and resources for living. Those are the things that Aslan will devour.

The Christian life is not a game or a quiet pastime.

But if you are willing to have your life turned upside down, your values reshaped and your energies redirected by God, who is always loving and good; if you are willing to be used by him for the extension of his Kingdom here on earth, then drawing near to him is the only way to live life fully. The only things at risk are things not worth living for. And living in the daily pursuit of God’s presence is the best way I know to get to the quality of life and unmatched sense of adventure with God that we desire. It is the Christian life lived the way God intended.

The amazing good news is that we serve a God who loves to be close to us and to make himself known. Given what we know about our lives and our brokenness, that’s often hard for us to really believe. But that is God’s loving nature and his design for us. He has been

drawing near to reveal his love to broken, imperfect people from the times when he walked with Adam and Eve in the cool of the Garden to my quiet time with him just a few days ago in my study, when his presence flooded my heart through a single verse of Scripture and brought me to worship with tears of joy.

The reason Jesus came was to open the door to this kind of intimacy with God for all humanity. It is part of the inheritance of our salvation. And after Jesus ascended to the Father, he sent us the Holy Spirit expressly to facilitate our intimacy with God—in revelation, in worship, in prayer. God invites us to seek his presence.² He welcomes our pursuit of him. He rewards it. And his presence will be revealed to us in limitless ways as he makes himself known. But there is risk involved. Proximity to God involves not just having a good feeling. We have to be willing to be wholly consumed by his love and to have our lives rearranged by his grace.

So let me ask you: How satisfied are you with your Christian life, with the way you experience God? Be honest. How often do you enjoy his presence? Do you live too much of your life feeling empty, weary, abandoned? Do you wonder about a God who promises to love and provide for you, but who too often seems distant and silent? Maybe, like many Christians, you live somewhere between those two extremes, occasionally sensing God's presence, but at other times feeling as if he's a million miles away.

What about the church you attend? How frequently do you sense *awe* and *wonder* in Sunday worship when you gather together? Is the presence of God producing a humble and ready willingness within the congregation to repent of sin and receive the grace to change? Are lives being transformed? Are people there to serve rather than be served? Are they passionate to bring the gospel to those who don't yet know Christ? Or does church seem rather rote and predictable—even dull? Are people just going through the motions, singing the same songs and participating in the same programs year after year? Do they attend only when it's convenient—and even then, with an eye on the

clock to see how quickly they can get out the door and on to lunch or to watch the football game on TV?

Too many of us have settled for far less of God than he wants to reveal. Yes, we've been saved. Yes, we've been forgiven and justified. But there is so much *more* to living the Christian life. God wants to be intimately *known* and *experienced* in the life of every believer. God is alive and on the move. He is, very literally, "God with us."³ He's not distant, unapproachable, or uninvolved in our lives. He's here. He's now. He's around us and in us and through us, ready to communicate, guide, empower, challenge, bless, and fill us with the full measure of his joy and wisdom and strength.

He wants us to experience him, to be aware of his presence.

Before the first word of Scripture was ever written, Abraham, Jacob, and Moses experienced God's presence—in person—and those encounters changed absolutely everything about their lives. It was dangerous and wonderful at the same time. The question is, have *we* resigned ourselves to living our lives of faith vicariously through the experiences of these biblical heroes, or can we in any way expect to experience God's presence for ourselves as they did?

Salvation is by faith in Jesus Christ alone. We understand that. But if we're honest, there are times when, like Moses, we long to experience something more of God, to *see* the glory of God. God never rebuked Moses for his request. On the contrary, he rewarded Moses with a glimpse of his glory.⁴ Remember, God loves to make himself known. I don't believe this kind of "seeing" is a substitute for faith, nor are our encounters with God ever to be elevated above Scripture. But I believe we were created to *experience* God's presence, and that he "rewards those who earnestly seek him."⁵

I am convinced that God has not changed since his intimate encounters with Abraham, Jacob, and Moses. In the beginning, he created us with the capacity to experience him intimately. It's a capacity that Adam and Eve forfeited in their foolish desire for independence, but it is restored in you and me when we are reborn in Christ. Our highest purpose is to *know, experience, enjoy, and glorify* God.

It is time to recapture our spiritual birthright and God's design and purpose for the Christian life!

That's why this subject is so vital for us today. There is a growing hunger for God, as well as increasing dissatisfaction with the Christian life as it is typically defined, especially in the Western church. Church attendance is in decline. Young adults are abandoning the faith in unprecedented numbers. Far too many Christians have come to view church as lifeless and irrelevant, and as a result, are not connected to any community of faith. An alarming number of Christians are experimenting with nontraditional spirituality to fill the void. Many are being misled by a manufactured spiritual vitality promised by alternative church ministry models, alternative worship styles, and in some tragic cases, spurious theological innovations presented as the solution to their deep dissatisfaction. Electronic media today provide instant access to these spiritual alternatives for a global audience, negatively affecting the body of Christ in many nations of the world.

Many "solutions" to spiritual discontentment today are being presented as "new wineskin" alternatives for discarded church traditions. I understand new wineskins, but filled with *what?* New wineskins are for new wine. Where is the new wine of God's presence and power in the church? The apostle Paul told the Corinthians that he didn't come to them with carefully crafted and persuasive rhetoric, but with a "demonstration of the Spirit's power."⁶ Contemporary Western Christianity offers innovations in style, clever marketing, therapeutic self-concern, and well-rehearsed worship sets. The Western Christian experience is simply and desperately in need of *the presence of God*. So in a sense, the new wine is old wine rediscovered.

We need a fresh and dynamic experience with God that warms our hearts and transforms our lives. That's why I write with a sense of urgency today. To those who pursue the presence of God, this book doesn't merely offer a new wineskin—it offers *new wine!* It is only in God's presence that hearts will be stirred and filled and our struggles will find resolution.

My prayer is that this book will change us, that it will dislodge our faulty understanding of a distant and aloof God—our notion that he somehow isn't alive and moving *actively* in the world today. At the same time, I pray that this book will increase your faith and open your heart to a deeper experience of God's abiding presence.

I'll admit that it's an intimidating task to write about the presence of God, one that reminds me of the time when a friend's first-grade daughter was asked about her father's work. Because she didn't have the words to tell her classmates that he was a seminary president, she simply explained that he studied God. At a subsequent parent-faculty gathering, the teacher retold the story and then turned to my friend and asked, "Just how does one study God anyway?"

"Very carefully, ma'am!" he replied.

That note of caution describes the attitude of my own heart as I invite you to join me on a quest to discover what it means to experience the awesome yet very tangible presence of God.

Prayers for Revival

The current spiritual climate in North America, with its declining church membership, especially among the younger generations, is reminiscent of the situation in much of Europe after World War II.

As the war drew to a close in 1945, the effects of those years of horror took a terrible toll on many cities around the world, including Stornoway, a town on the Isle of Lewis in the Outer Hebrides, a chain of islands off the west coast of Scotland. Originally a Viking settlement, the town is the largest in the area, though it has only a few thousand residents.

A disproportionate number of young men from the islands had died in battle, and the postwar years were bitter for many families there. Young people were disillusioned, and many had abandoned even a pretense of faith in God. In fact, by 1949, there wasn't a single young person to be found in any of the churches on the Isle of Lewis.

Not one.

Alarmed by this state of affairs, two elderly sisters from the Church of Scotland in the town of Barvas spoke to their pastor and the elders of the church, sharing a surprising vision. While deep in prayer, they had seen the sanctuary packed to the doors with young people. But for this to happen, the women said, the church absolutely needed to dedicate itself to prayer. They challenged the church's leaders to join them in their barn every Tuesday and Friday evening for prayer.

For six weeks they prayed, and nothing happened.

They kept on praying.

And they prayed.

And they prayed.

Still nothing.

One night, one of the elders opened the evening prayer meeting with a reading from Psalm 24: "Who shall ascend the hill of the LORD? And who shall stand in his holy place? He who has clean hands and a pure heart . . ."

Suddenly, the man could read no further. Dropping the Bible, he fell to his knees on the barn floor and cried out, "God, are my hands clean? Is my heart pure? It is not the young people of this island who need reviving. It's me!"

Gripped by a deep conviction of sin, everyone else dropped to their knees alongside the elder and began praying prayers of repentance. That prayer meeting continued late into the night. Years later, the pastor of that church recalled the scene, describing how "the power of God swept into the parish" that evening. According to one account, "The following day, the looms were silent, little work was done on the farms as men and women gave themselves to thinking on eternal things gripped by eternal realities."⁷ One man I spoke to concluded that the prayers for revival and that single act of repentance had released something from heaven over the islands.

But what exactly did it release?

God's presence.

God's overwhelming presence was poured out over the islands for the next four years.

God's Presence and Glory

In the Old Testament, many people encountered a special sense of God's presence in a pillar of fire, a cloud, a wind, an earthquake, a burning bush, and a still, small voice.⁸ Moses encountered the presence of God on the top of Mount Sinai for forty days, and his face glowed for days afterward as a result.⁹ *Glory* is a noun used to describe God. It is the effect of God's revealed presence. It is not just a theological description of God. Glory is *real stuff*. As used in the Old Testament, glory means *weightiness, heaviness*—a substantial manifestation of God that we experience when he makes his presence known to us.

In the New Testament, the same word, *glory*, describes the majesty, the shining splendor, and the power of God, which is visible and accessible to all of us in Jesus, as revealed by the Holy Spirit. Paul says we are drawn to salvation by “the light of the gospel that displays the glory of Christ.”¹⁰ He adds that an even greater glory than what Moses experienced will transform our lives, revealing “ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit.”¹¹ Has that been your experience?

There is nothing lackluster, boring, or run-of-the-mill here! Glory is far more compelling than a market-driven set of truth statements. Glory commands our attention and demands our response. It is a far cry from encountering a domesticated God made in our own image. No, this is a powerful display of the untamed Lion of Judah.

Is God's presence truly available for us today? And if so, how? What might our experience of God's presence look like? Can I expect to experience the presence of God every time I read the Bible or worship or go to church? Is every true encounter with God dramatic, like Saul's experience on the road to Damascus? What are some of the ways God will make his presence known in my life? What do I need to do to prepare for God's presence? When I do sense his presence, is it just to make me feel good, or is there a greater purpose? What should I be looking for?

These questions have captivated me all of my life, ever since I had

my own first experience of God's supernatural presence and power in Durban, South Africa, when I was a boy (a story I'll tell a bit later). These questions motivated my study of church history, and they have taken me around the world in pursuit of Christians who have experienced the presence of God in ways not unlike those we see in the New Testament.

One of the places my search took me was to the Isle of Lewis, the site of the remarkable revival mentioned previously, one that lasted from 1949 to 1953. More than sixty years later I met with two of the island's residents, Colin and Mary Peckham, who, along with hundreds of others, had witnessed that extraordinary occasion of God's presence. It changed their lives, propelling them and many of their friends to missions around the world, and it turned life in the Hebrides upside down.

The Peckhams agreed to meet me in Stornoway and tell their story in full. They also promised to introduce me to more people around the island I could interview. As soon as they stepped off the ferry from the mainland, we headed to a local tearoom. As we sat around a small table, Colin and Mary began to tell me stories I will never forget. Mary said that the presence of God in those years was like a "canopy of God-consciousness that covered the whole island."

Blown Away in Stornoway

In the days that followed, I was able to interview many of Colin and Mary's friends, people who had come to Christ in dramatic ways during that 1949–1953 revival. Some lived in Stornoway. Others lived in the island villages of Barvas, Shader, Carloway, and Port of Ness. Some of the homes we visited were where the famous "after-meetings" had happened, where every square inch of floor space was jammed with worshipers until the early hours of the morning.

In every interview, one name kept surfacing: *Duncan Campbell*. He was an evangelist from Edinburgh who had been called in to help the local pastors respond to the spiritual awakening on the island. Campbell was a person of great integrity, a man of prayer who was

led by the Holy Spirit. Forceful in the pulpit, he was also sensitive to God's presence and gentle in dealing with new converts.

After the two elderly women, their pastor, and church elders had experienced the breakthrough from God in the barn, the sisters encouraged their pastor to invite Duncan Campbell to come and help the churches on the island during the time of God's visitation. Ten days later, Campbell stepped onto the pier in Stornoway. Meanwhile, the church in Barvas had been meeting every night since that prayer meeting in the barn. Members of the parish couldn't get enough of God.

On the night that Duncan Campbell arrived, the pastor in Stornoway had arranged for the congregation to gather at 9:00 p.m., which would allow him time to drive Campbell to the church, twelve miles from the ferry at Stornoway. When they arrived, three hundred people were already in the sanctuary, singing psalms and hymns. Campbell preached, but by his own account, "nothing really happened during the service." By 10:45 p.m., the meeting was dismissed.

Then, as Campbell and the pastor were walking down the aisle to leave, something surprising began to unfold. The elder who had read from Psalm 24 in the barn fell to his knees and cried out, "God, you cannot fail us! You promised to pour water on the thirsty and floods upon dry ground. God, you cannot fail us!"

At that moment, the door of the church burst open, and one of the parishioners came running in, crying, "Mr. Campbell, something wonderful has happened!"

Outside the church, a crowd had gathered, including many young people, and most of them visibly under conviction of sin. They arrived just as the service was being dismissed and the church doors were opened.

Remember—there had not been a single youth at church in the whole island before this.

Years later, Campbell described this scene to a jammed auditorium at a college in Alberta, Canada.

Over 100 young people were at the dance in the parish hall and they weren't thinking of God or eternity. God was not in all of their thoughts. They were there to have a good night, when suddenly the power of God fell upon the dance. The music ceased and in a matter of minutes, the hall was empty. They fled from the hall as a man fleeing from a plague. And they made for the church.¹²

When the doors of the church were opened, the young people flooded in past those who were leaving. Some came in singing. Many came in weeping. By the time the pastor asked Campbell to address the congregation, there wasn't a seat left. Many young people were kneeling or lying facedown in the aisles or in the area around the platform. All were praying. As Campbell made his way to the pulpit for the second time that night, he overheard a young woman lying on the floor near the platform. She was crying out over and over, "Oh, God, is there mercy for me?" Campbell preached on God's grace and forgiveness. The meeting did not dismiss until 4:00 a.m. By then, most of those present had received Christ as their Savior.

Mary Peckham said of those days on the Isle of Lewis that the *presence* of God engaged with the *knowledge* of God she had learned as a child in catechism. It moved that knowledge from her head to her heart. Before the revival, when she had on rare occasion attended Communion services, she had felt unmoved. She had listened dully as the minister read from the prophet Isaiah at every Communion: "Who is this that comes from Edom, from Bozrah in garments stained crimson? Who is this so splendidly robed, marching in his great might?" "It is I, announcing vindication, mighty to save."¹³

After Mary came to Christ as a teenager in the Barvas church, Isaiah's words gripped her heart so powerfully, she said, that at the next Communion, when the minister read those same words, she was surprised her trembling hands could hold on to the Communion chalice when it was passed to her.

The impact of God's presence was felt in all of the communities

on the island over the next three years. Casual conversations turned quickly to the things of God. Places of entertainment no longer held attraction for the people, and many went out of business. When there were no church meetings, people met in homes to pray and study the Bible. And they sang with joy wherever they went. One man told us that the singing was so powerful that it “went through you like fire.” Some said it could be heard from a mile away. Even the unconverted began cleaning up their language, their humor, and their relationships as they experienced God’s presence.

I have spent the better portion of my life collecting stories like this one from Colin and Mary Peckham, many of which I’ll share with you in the pages ahead. In the process of collecting these stories, I have come to believe that encounters with the presence of God are more frequent than most of us realize. Not every encounter results in an area-wide revival, of course; but they are nonetheless powerful and transformative in the lives of those touched by the presence of God.

If your experience of God until now has felt more like his *absence* than his *presence*, or if you simply long to deepen your understanding of God’s presence in your life, there’s good news ahead. Undoubtedly, God is already at work in your heart, stirring a desire within you for greater intimacy with him. It doesn’t matter whether you’re a brand-new Christian or you’ve been a Christian all your life. You may be a congregant or a pastor. You may attend a small church or a large one. You may live in Topeka, Kansas; Brisbane, Australia; or Mumbai, India. It doesn’t matter. The common denominator is that you’re hungry for more of Christ. The good news is that hunger comes from him. It is God’s Spirit already at work in you. The even better news is that he is not playing games with your life. If you act on the hunger he has given you and pursue him, he has promised to draw near to you. You may not know when, where, or how, but he will make himself known to you.

I pray that the journey we embark on together in the pages of this book will answer many of your questions and will be used of the Spirit to generate a deep hunger in your heart for more of God. And

may his presence in you touch and encourage others to seek him until there is a ripple effect in churches, towns, and cities across the nation.

But first, there's a common misconception we need to resolve: namely, that experiencing God's presence is *our* responsibility, something we can bring about through our own efforts. As we'll see in the chapters ahead, God reveals his presence in surprising ways at surprising times.

He is in charge.

Are you ready?

SIGNS OF REVIVAL

The fear of the Lord among believers brings a deep conviction of sin and results in repentance.