



Network for Revival July 2019

The national need of revival

Lord Kerslake MP, ex-head of the Civil Service, said recently that Britain facing its most “perilous” state than at any point in his long career. He added that he has “no doubt this country is currently in a deep crisis” and “fundamental change is needed.”

We are, of course, a very divided country after the Brexit referendum when the vote was 51.9% to 48.1% in favour of Brexit. There is also a serious threat to the Union of the UK. The Hansard Society 2019 Audit of Political Engagement found that trust in Parliament is very low because MPs are so divided – only a small minority have confidence in MPs’ handling of Brexit. Lord Kerslake said Brexit had “completely paralysed” both Westminster and Whitehall.

It is not surprising then that populism is affecting the UK (as it is other countries). Populism is about ordinary people rising up against the establishment. People speak of an anti-establishment revolt which has been happening since the economic crisis of 2008. Many believe the vote for Brexit was an example of this. But populism also includes support for a venerated, charismatic, strongman leader who is willing to break the rules. Hansard reported that when people were asked whether “Britain needs a strong ruler willing to break the rules” 54% agreed and only 23% said no. 42% of respondents agreed that many national problems could be dealt with more effectively “if the government didn’t have to worry so much about votes in parliament.” Boris Johnson has, of course, spoken of proroguing (temporarily suspending) Parliament in order to force through a No Deal Brexit, which a leading MP called a “constitutional outrage.” Populist leaders also tend to undermine the media and sometimes the law.

Britain’s reputation has been seriously damaged around the world by the Brexit chaos, and President Trump’s comments on our ambassador amount to very public contempt for the UK. Some have called it an existential challenge to Britain’s entire foreign policy.

Furthermore, discrimination against ethnic minorities is growing (64% reporting discrimination in 2016; 76% in 2019). Then there is the seemingly endless controversy on antisemitism in the Labour Party.

The biblical concept of marriage as a life-long, heterosexual union is, of course, being seriously undermined. The extremely liberal approach to sexual relationships inevitably has negative effects on the family and children, the long-term effects of which will be very serious, both for individuals and society. Gender confusion amongst children is a cause of deep concern. A 10-year old child who was excluded from school for five days for alleged “anti-LGBT comments” is reported as saying “Before anybody knew what LGBT meant everybody knew what gender they were. But now people are confused and they’re saying that they’re bisexual, and trans...before all of this happened, they were completely confident of who they were but now they’re not.”

However, worst of all is the decline in religious beliefs. The 2018 British Social Attitudes survey said that the steady decline in religious belief among the British public is “one of the most important trends in postwar history.” 52% say they do not belong to any religion, compared with 31% in 1983. 25% stated: “I do not believe in God,” compared with 10% in 1998. The report states that these figures challenge theories that people are “believing but not belonging” – in other words, that faith has become private rather than institutional.” The report also stated that 11% of people say they trust churches and religious organisations, compared with 36% who have confidence in the education system, 34% in the legal system, 16% in business and industry and 8% in parliament.

In my estimation the present situation has the marks of divine judgment. God often judges human beings through their own actions, i.e. we bring judgment on ourselves. But judgment is not the end of the story. God is merciful. All of the above is a powerful motive for prayer for revival which will not only bring many individuals to faith but, as history shows, will have an important effect on public opinion and behaviour. The Wesleyan Revival came at a time when Britain was in a state of extensive moral depravity – and had a profound effect on society.

A major danger facing the world – Global Warming

I'm sorry for being rather gloomy in this edition of *Prepare!* but we do need to face up to these issues in our prayers (see the good news at the end of this edition).

One aspect of Network for Revival is to help us to see revival in the prophetic (and eschatological) context of what is happening in society and the world (hence the above brief summary of the national problems Britain is facing). But this needs to include seeing things on a global level. Hence the attached Update on Global Warming - one of the great threats to the welfare of humanity. The paper contains a good deal of current news and evidence and covers:

Economic opposition to climate change reports

Climate Change denial

Effects of Global Warming

- Rises in sea level
- Melting of Arctic ice
- Extreme weather

Social effects of global warming

- A great increase in refugees
- Danger of war
- Crop failure
- Heat deaths
- Disease

Quotations about revival

An experience of Revival in Lemreway, Lewis “The following features were the outstanding features of the revival. There was a universal consciousness of the presence of God— a sense of the Lord's presence was everywhere. On the streets, in the shops, in the school — wherever people gathered, revival was the topic of conversation. It was by no means confined to revival gatherings — wherever people met, even in the public houses, the revival was the topic of conversation. Converts sang spontaneously in the buses, praising the Lord and praying as they went from one parish to another. It had a great influence on those who travelled in the buses, whether they were converted or not. I know of two of the bus drivers who were converted. It was so easy to speak about God. You felt free to talk to anyone about Him. Everyone seemed to accept the fact that the Lord was working in the parish — a universal consciousness of the presence of God.” (*Colin & Mary Peckham, Sounds from Heaven, p. 271*)

Lord, do it again, I say, for your sake, the sake of unbelievers and for the sake of society.

I have had contact with

Be assured of my prayers for you.

God bless you,

Tony

PS I have had contact with Colin and Madeleine Windsor (members of the mailing list) who lead conferences on praying for revival organised by the Mission in Hounslow Trust. They are leading one at Brunel Manor, Torquay on September 20th-22nd. For details see <https://www.brunelmanor.com/events/praying-for-revival-day-weekend-conference> or contact Colin and Madeleine at office@hounslowmission.org.uk

Revival is a supernatural event in the church and society. It is a work of the Holy Spirit which brings: an overpowering sense of God's presence leading to uplifting, inspired worship; an awesome sense of God's holiness leading to a deep conviction of sin, even amongst those outside the church; a supernatural drawing of people together and an outpouring of love for one another, all of which leads to a huge number coming to faith. People's lives and whole communities are transformed.