



Network for Revival Prepare 25 January 2021

In recent issues we have looked at seven motives for prayer for revival: Pleading the love of God; Pleading the name of God; Pleading the Kingdom of God; Pleading the Blood of Christ; Pleading the promises of God; Pleading for those without hope and Praying for angelic intervention. In the last issue we thought about Spiritual Warfare: taking up the shield of faith and resisting the devil and his demons. In this issue we look at:

Fulfilling the priestly ministry of intercession

The New Testament makes it clear that believers are called to be a holy priesthood, offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ” (1 Peter 2:5). We can “have confidence to enter the Most Holy Place by the blood of Jesus” (Heb 10:19). Our priestly ministry includes:

- Offering a continual sacrifice of praise (Heb 13:15)
- Offering our “bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God” which is “true and proper worship” (Rom 12:1). We are to offer them as an instrument of righteousness (as opposed to sin - Rom 6:13).
- Doing good and sharing with others, “for with such sacrifices God is pleased” (Heb 13:16). Paul calls financial gifts “a fragrant offering, an acceptable sacrifice, pleasing to God” (Php 4:18).

These three sacrificial offerings are essential to prayer for Revival because personal holiness is a vital foundation to such prayer. But there is one other beautiful description of our priestly ministry. The Book of Revelation describes our intercession as incense: an angel “was given much incense to offer, with the prayers of all God’s people, on the golden altar in front of the throne. The smoke of the incense, together with the prayers of God’s people, went up before God from the angel’s hand” (Rev 8:3-4). (The Greek also allows the prayers to be the incense, but, either way, our prayers are described as ascending like incense before God). This is a beautiful picture of our priestly prayers in the Holy Place. I find that very encouraging. When you pray, and you are right with God, you can imagine your prayers ascending like the smoke of incense into the very presence of God, which is a stimulus to faith.

However, a priestly ministry also involves representing someone before God. Because of the shed blood of Christ and his on-going priestly ministry, we can enter the Most Holy Place and offer our intercessions for the individuals, church and society at the altar. I find it really helpful every day to imagine I am entering the Most Holy Place bearing the intercessory burden on my shoulders, as a priestly intercessor, standing before the “ark of God’s presence” and asking him to receive the burden, because Jesus is the burden-bearer. I also imagine myself (on the same principle as ‘drinking the blood of Christ’ in Communion) ‘sprinkling the blood of Jesus before the ark of God’s presence.’

This vision stresses the privilege of intercession – a priestly ministry in the Most Holy Place, before God himself. It is immediate access to God, by the blood of Jesus (hence the importance of personal holiness).

Let us fulfil our priestly ministry of intercession for Revival by regularly entering the Most Holy Place, standing before the ‘ark of God’s presence’ and offering up the incense of our prayers, pleading the blood of Jesus. And let us believe for God to release his power.

The South African Revival

In 1860 revival broke out in Andrew Murray’s parish in Worcester, 75 miles NE of Cape Town. Andrew was wary of emotionalism and initially tried to calm emotions down. Before the revival only some three or four people attended the prayer meeting. But when the revival came, people flocked to the meetings. They fell down before God confessing their sins. Prayer meetings were held three times a day. Sometimes they went on until three in the morning, but even then some were reluctant to leave. When they did leave, they sang in the streets.

One Sunday evening a young girl of about 15 was permitted to pray aloud. As she prayed, the congregation heard a sound in the distance which came nearer and nearer until it shook the hall.

On another occasion, Andrew had preached and, after the service he was called to deal with a crowd praying noisily in the hall. He called out loudly, asking the people to be quiet. But they continued to pray. It seemed no-one heard him and they continued to call on God for mercy and pardon.

One Saturday evening Andrew Murray was leading the meeting and the sound in the distance approached again. The people prayed loudly and Andrew tried to quieten them. That evening there was a stranger present who said to him “I think you are the minister of this congregation: be careful what you do, for it is the Spirit of God that is at work here. I have just come from America, and this is precisely what I witnessed there.”

People even in remote farm houses were suddenly seized by deep feelings of repentance. One local farmer, a very quiet man, was suddenly seized by a very distressing conviction of sin for several days. Then he experienced a joyful conversion and became a courageous, outspoken witness to others.

The revival had long-term effects. For example, at a time when it was difficult to find men willing to be ordained, 50 young men in the area offered themselves to become ministers. It was also recognised that general behaviour amongst the villagers had greatly improved. Even upright citizens were powerfully convicted of sin. A local member of parliament wrote that he couldn't find the words to describe the wonderful change that had come over local people since he had visited the previous year.

Our response to the Signs of the End

The Bible verse which God emphasised when he called me to major on prayer and preparation for Revival was “make ready a people prepared for the Lord” (Luke 1:17) following John the Baptist's example. That is what Revival is about. Also praying for Revival is praying for the hastening of the Return of Christ.

So, last time, in the Advent edition, I attached a chart entitled “An overview of the signs of the End” ([A-brief-overview-of-the-signs-of-the-End-spoken-of-by-Jesus.pdf \(networkforrevival.co.uk\)](https://www.networkforrevival.co.uk/A-brief-overview-of-the-signs-of-the-End-spoken-of-by-Jesus.pdf)) which commented on the signs Jesus told us to look for: false messiahs, war, famine, earthquakes, persecution, leaving the faith, secularism & compromise, false teachers, world evangelism, pestilence etc. Page 2 added “Later signs nearer to the return of Lord”: re-establishment of Israel, cosmic disturbance, false prophets and false christs, the great distress and the antichrist.

Some Christians more or less ignore the signs of the End. Others are fascinated by them – but don't do anything about them. The proper response is to renew our commitment to obeying God in the light of the End Times. In this edition I attach the Page 3 of the chart “Our response to the Signs of the End” which comments on taking prayer seriously, taking the Bible seriously, being filled with the spirit, corporate prayer, biblical exposition, radical discipleship as well as praying for revival. We need to be doing all of these things and encouraging other believers to do so too.

Next time I will complete this chart project by attaching numerous hyperlinks to papers and talks (by Patricia and me) on the subjects in the previous paragraph. They will also include materials which new or uninformed Christians can use.

God bless you,

Tony

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.