



Network for Revival Prepare Issue 40 – September 2022

The church is God's cooperative society

God is cooperative. He is love. Therefore he is three Persons. These Persons live in cooperation with each other. Cooperation is fundamental to love. Prayer is fundamental to that trinitarian cooperation. So, prayer is fundamental to the Trinity. It arises from God's very being.

Jesus majors on prayer in heaven. He "is at the right hand of God and is also interceding for us" (Rom 8:34). "He always lives to intercede for" us (Heb 7:25), just as he majored on prayer, including during many nights on earth.

The Holy Spirit also majors on intercession. "We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us through wordless groans. And he who searches our hearts knows the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for God's people in accordance with the will of God" (Rom 8:26-27).

The Father hears these prayers and works accordingly. He rules in cooperation with the Son and the Spirit. But there is more. We are called to be caught up in the divine cooperation and the prayer within the Trinity, in union with Christ. He intends that our prayers are caught up in his divine governance.

Surely Jesus is praying for Revival, and we are called to cooperate with his prayers. We might sometimes wonder what effect our little prayers have. But if we see them as cooperating with the prayers of Jesus, adding our 'signature' to his petition to the Father, as it were, they become much more significant. It follows that we should always pray for the Holy Spirit to harmonize and unite our prayers with those of Jesus.

Jesus delights to cooperate with us in prayer (because of the importance of cooperation to the Trinity) and by working in and through our lives.

So, when we pray for Revival, we are cooperating with Jesus who is also praying for Revival.

Since prayer is fundamental to God's cooperation with us, individuals and churches should be majoring on prayer – not just brief prayers in Sunday services etc. The essential sign of a good church is this corporate prayer. Prayer is the way God wants to run the world, the church and our lives, and fulfil his purposes through constant cooperation. We were intended to live in continual partnership with God, in the continual dialogue of prayer - speaking and listening to God. Why do many Christians and churches not pray very much? Because it is so important - but the devil works overtime to prevent it. We must major on prayer, even if only as a small group to begin with.

As I have said previously, I plan to share with you how churches can become radically biblical in the power of the Spirit, and ready to follow up Revival. But it starts in prayer, especially corporate prayer. Seeking to be radically biblical without the foundation of corporate prayer could lead to legalism. Only through prayer will such an aim be achieved in the Spirit.

It follows from all this that the church should be truly godly and function on the basis of cooperation: unity in diversity, manifesting different gifts, everyone making a contribution. It is meant to be an example of loving cooperation, not a passive gathering ruled by a leader. The church is intended to be the Lord's cooperative society!

The mini-revival in an Essex church 1978 to 1995

We experienced what I would now call a "mini-revival," by the grace of God, in our parish in Hawke, Essex. It lasted over 15 years and God did remarkable things during that time. The foundation of it all was prayer. It

was the Lord who brought all this about. We simply prayed and did what he told us (and enabled us) to do. This led to the church becoming radically biblical in the power of the Spirit.

The Lord took hold of an ordinary, rather divided, church and, in answer to prayer, brought about quite remarkable changes:

- radical openness to the Holy Spirit, with many lives being transformed
- uplifting and inspiring worship which was wide open to the Holy Spirit.
- extensive and continuous numerical growth, with many conversions.
- vibrant prayer life (expressed in 25 weekly prayer cells, a weekly leaders' prayer group and occasional evenings of prayer for the whole congregation),
- deep unity, based on biblical principles,
- discovery and use of the gifts and ministries of the congregation,
- radical delegation (mainly through 12 area weekly Ministry Groups which functioned like mini-churches, including in evangelism),
- an effective ministry amongst a large number of children and teens

It led to a national and international ministry, including links with, ministry to and resourcing around 3000 churches in numerous countries. Hundreds of church Ministers visited the church to see what God was doing and to benefit from teaching about the biblical principles on which the church was run. To God be the glory!

Part of the story is told in my book "That the World May Believe" which you can download free from [That-the-World-May-Believe](#). I also wrote a 20-page summary [History-of-a-parish-church](#).

For those of you not in church leadership or retired Ministers, much of the material I shall share can be used in the context of a housegroup.

How can a church become radically biblical in the power of the Spirit?

Throughout the years of this mini-revival, God taught us many lessons and enabled us to produce a practical strategy. I plan to share this strategy through ten brief articles in *Prepare!* over the coming months. (There will be other articles relevant to Revival also). ***We need churches which are really ready to follow up Revival.***

The significance of the funeral service for Queen Elizabeth

I was hoping and praying that the funeral service would be a good witness. But when I watched it, especially the archbishop's sermon, I was quite overwhelmed. At the Queen's instigation, it clearly conveyed the uniqueness of Jesus as the only Saviour, and of faith in him being the only way of salvation (John 14:1-9) and of receiving eternal life (1 Cor 15:20-26, 53-58). The archbishop's sermon was brief, simple and profound. But the most significant thing is that this clear proclamation of the Gospel through the sermon, readings, hymns and prayers went out to an estimated half of the world's population (and to 500 world leaders in the congregation). It must have been the biggest audience for an evangelistic presentation ever. I am reminded of Jesus' prophecy "this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come" (Matt 24:14). Many have preached around the world, but this service seemed to be a very significant aspect of this sign of the End. We should pray for many to be brought to faith, including in the UK, as people continue to watch it or read the content.

The Lord is at work!

God bless you,

Tony

In Network for Revival God has called us to "make ready a people prepared for the Lord." This includes:

- Encouraging people to seek holiness and true biblical discipleship.
- Encouraging people to major on prayer for Revival.
- Encouraging churches to be radically biblical in the power of the Spirit (see [Church Development](#) for information and resources).
- Encouraging people to "Watch!" for the return of Jesus (Mk 13:32-37 – see [Eschatology](#)).