



## Network for Revival Prepare Issue 43 - March 2023

### How desperately we need Revival

Society in the West is moving away from God. Trust in the church, politicians, the police, etc has been undermined by such evils as child abuse, dishonesty, racism, etc. Marriage and the family are under attack. Children are vulnerable to potentially damaging influences and teaching. Various denominations, including the Church of England, have seriously departed from biblical teaching (despite some invalid claims to the contrary). How should we respond?

We can be critical of those responsible. We can take practical action to counteract harmful influences. We can take action to separate ourselves from people and organisations responsible for the social and moral decline. But we need to recognize that, through all this, God is calling us loudly to turn to him and pray for him to intervene – to come in a revival which can transform the church and society (as history shows).

True, we are already praying for Revival so that many individuals will turn to Christ and so that numerical decline in the church will be reversed. But we urgently need to pray for deliverance for the church from false teaching and compromise with society. We also urgently need to pray for transformation of society which is in such danger, and which has, to a significant extent, been let down by major denominations of the church, including the Church of England.

Revival is not an optional extra, which will cause encouraging growth in the church. It is about divine intervention which is crucial to the future of the church and society. We can criticise our leaders and take action against some failures. But God also wants us to have a positive reaction, praying, preparing and working for the solution – Revival.

### The Asbury Revival 2023

You will probably have heard of the Revival which happened last month at Asbury Christian University, in Kentucky, USA. It is reported that it began at the end of a chapel service when there was a call to confession and 100 people fell to their knees in contrition and repentance. There was a quiet but powerful sense of transcendence.

This led to a prayer and worship event which lasted for a couple of weeks – 24 hours a day - with many students attending. People gave testimonies and shared scripture passages. One witness said “Some were reading and reciting Scripture. Others were standing with arms raised. Several were clustered in small groups praying together. A few were kneeling at the altar rail in the front of the auditorium. Some were lying prostrate, while others were talking to one another, their faces bright with joy.”

A senior Baptist Pastor commented “God is very present.... The worship is glorious, unified and simple. The altar is almost always full. There are wise leaders from the university who are helping shepherd the movement. Everything is extremely orderly but vibrant, spontaneous and powerful.” The worship was passionate but reverent. A local theologian was asked if the whole thing was emotionalism and he replied that it was “deeper and wider” than that.

Debby Wright, national director of Vineyard Churches UK & Ireland and a senior pastor, said “There was no hype, no emotionalism, no manipulation or stirring up. There were no famous names, sometimes not even a face, just a voice coming from the side of the stage. What was evident was a holy reverence.” She added “For several hours, during worship, I couldn’t hold back my tears.”

There have been previous revivals at Asbury, including one in 1950 where worship and prayer continued for 118 hours, then in 1970 when the worship lasted for 144 hours.

Criticisms of the revival, e.g. that it was a planned event, were clearly contradicted by the President of Asbury University, Dr Kevin Brown, who added: "What we have experienced since that Wednesday morning has been a current of immeasurable goodness flooding our community and quickly moving into other regions of the world. Words fail any effort to communicate the abundance of experiences and stories that will leave us forever changed."

## **Preparing for a church which is radically biblical in the power of the Spirit 01: Overcoming hindrances**

### *A church prepared for Revival*

History shows that, whereas some Revivals last a long time, other revivals can fade away fairly quickly or even go off the rails. We need to be prepared for Revival in prayer and holiness. But we also need churches to be prepared to follow up people affected by revival, especially those with no Christian background. Such churches need to be radically biblical in the power of the Spirit. If you are not in church leadership or in a sympathetic church, the strategy we recommend can work out in a home group. In fact, such groups are part of the strategy we recommend. Prayer is fundamental, as is seeking to go on being filled with the Spirit.

In the last issue of Prepare! I included the 12-point biblical vision for a church which is radically biblical in the power of the Spirit, and attached a longer version of those 12 points (see [Prepare-42-January-2023.pdf](#) ([networkforrevival.co.uk](#)) and [Vision-Long.pdf](#) ([networkforrevival.co.uk](#))). I want to be completely practical in what I write, so, in this issue, I want to address hindrances which you may be facing and which may discourage you from proceeding towards the vision.

However, the most important priority, whatever hindrances there may be, is to pray for Revival. It is obvious that only the intervention of the Holy Spirit will bring about a church which is really radically biblical in the power of the Spirit. So, the establishment of such a church is both part of Revival and provides a helpful environment for Revival to come and to thrive. Our practical actions have to be carried out in the power of the Spirit so that he can use them.

Here are some possible hindrances:

#### **1. We have no prayer group**

Such a group is essential, so start one, even if it is very few in numbers. Remember the two elderly sisters who prayed extensively in the Isle of Lewis, and whose prayers were greatly used in the start of the Revival in the Hebrides.

#### **2. People in the congregation seem quite content with where they're at**

Search out those who are not content or who are open to going deeper with God and pray with them. Again, God can greatly use a very small number if they are really dedicated.

#### **3. We are a divided church**

Again, search out those who desire to go deeper with God and who are prepared to pray for healing of the division and for Revival. God can deal with division, through prayer.

#### **4. I am leading a number of churches, which is very demanding**

Search out where there are churchmembers keen to go deeper with God and to pray for revival, and meet with them for prayer. Also, one of the key principles in the biblical vision is delegation. See if there is anyone capable of taking a spiritual lead in each congregation, and meet for prayer with such people. You don't have to delegate immediately. Play it by ear and see how the potential candidates develop.

#### **5. (For those not in senior leadership) We have an unhelpful Minister**

You are free to start a private home group to pray for revival. You can pray for your church to experience Revival. But your group can also seek to become a fellowship which is radically biblical in the power of the Spirit, putting into practice the biblical vision. It is important to avoid being divisive, though.

If you are facing other hindrances, feel free to be in touch. We may be able to offer advice and we can certainly pray.

## Preparing for a church which is radically biblical in the power of the Spirit 02: Teaching the 12- point Biblical Vision

As I mentioned above, in the previous issue I included the 12-point Biblical Vision (see the hyperlinks above). Here are some initial practical steps to move towards the Vision in your church/fellowship:

1. Share the Vision with your leadership (or with the members if you are in a small fellowship) and seek agreement to examine it further.
2. Teach the Vision to them using our 20-session “**Called to Serve**” course. Download the course book from [CalledToServeChurchDevelopmentBook.pdf](#)
3. You are welcome to download our other resources in teaching “Called to Serve”:
  - “**Called to Serve**” taught by me in approximately 30-minute audio sessions. You can download these from [Church Development – Christian Teaching Resources](#)
  - “**Called to Serve Leaders Notes.**” Download from [Church Development 01 Called to Serve - Leaders Guide](#)
4. Session 20 of “Called to Serve” is a Service of Dedication to the Biblical Vision, where people who have done the course can make a commitment to putting the Vision into practice by the grace of God. I recommend discussing the issue privately with each member, to see that they are committed to the Vision before having the service.
5. In subsequent issues, I will share some other practical suggestions and resources to assist with putting the Vision into practice.

God bless you,

Tony

### PS. A NEW ARTICLE I HAVE WRITTEN

My new article “**CLIMATE CHANGE AND EXTREME WEATHER**” partly addresses the controversy raised by those who deny climate change and gives some reasons for accepting it is happening and needs to be prayed about. (It also provides hyperlink access to brief and longer answers to 218 objections to climate change). My article also gives a good deal of evidence of climate change. See [Climate-Change-and-Extreme-Weather.pdf](#) ([christiateaching.org.uk](#))

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](#)).