



Network for Revival Prepare Issue 47 - December 2023

The first article below shows how overpowering God's presence can be in Revival. The second shows that **listening to God is vital to praying and preparing for Revival.**

The Hawaiian Revival (1836)

Titus Coan, an American missionary in Hawaii, longed to see God bring Revival. But many who worked among the Hawaiians, including some missionaries, thought they were "so debased in mind and heart that they could not receive any true conception of the true God, or of spiritual things."

Coan's first visit to the island was in 1836. Large crowds gathered to hear him preach. Many began to weep silently and, when he had finished, the crowds refused to leave. In the village of Hilo, some 10,000 people came to hear him.

The revival spread to other islands. People trembled when he preached. Some fell to the floor. One man cried out "Lord, have mercy on me, I am dead in my sins." Then he wept loudly and trembled. Many others joined him. Coan wrote "Many wept aloud, and many commenced praying together. The scene was such as I had never before witnessed. I stood dumb in the midst of this weeping, wailing, praying multitude, not being able to make myself heard for about twenty minutes."

However, one young man came intending to disrupt the meeting where Coan was speaking. But he fell unconscious for several hours. When he regained consciousness, he immediately confessed his sins and later joined the church.

Sadly, there is a tragic side to this story. In November 1837 about 200 people were meeting on the beach for prayer and a tidal wave suddenly swept them out to sea. 13 died. After this event the numbers attending the church increased.

Thousands of people were converted through the Revival. When they were accepted as churchmembers, they placed their hand on the Bible and promised "to abstain from all that is forbidden and to obey all that is written therein."

Preparing for a church which is radically biblical in the power of the Spirit 7: A church listening to God

I've taken many funerals in my ministry. In quite a number of cases the family asked if they could play the Frank Sinatra song "I did it my way" at the end of the service. I hadn't the heart to refuse them. But I reacted silently "That could have been the most serious mistake the deceased made in their lives!"

However, many Christians and churches could sing that song too. They live their lives their way, not God's way. Many of the members don't listen to God in daily prayer and Bible reading. They run their churches their way, not God's way. They can be individuals or churches who claim to uphold biblical principles. But if they are doing things their way rather than God's way, they are not upholding a vital biblical principle. All too many churches and Christian organisations make decisions in committees which only have a brief prayer at the beginning, and possibly at the end, of their long discussions. Revival is all about God's intervention, about him doing something unusual. So, prayer and preparation for Revival must be open to his intervention – listening to God.

It makes such a difference when worship is led by someone who is listening to God, sensitive to the prompting of the Spirit. It flows and inspires the congregation to be profoundly aware of God's presence and to offer heartfelt worship. Years ago, God said to me, as an Anglican Minister, that I couldn't turn up at church and, in effect, tell the Holy Spirit what the service was to be like and how to lead in worship. It was presumptuous. We could use the liturgy as the framework but we had to be open to the Spirit who might lead us to do something unexpected. I felt inadequate and threatened when I first realized God was calling our church to this, with me in leadership. But he enabled me (then others) to hear him. Eventually, we discovered people in the congregation who were gifted in leading spontaneous

worship. I led the service and they led a section (or sections) of it in spontaneous worship. However, I had to be open to the Spirit and flexible too. We listened to God over the first priority – worship.

The Holy Spirit can inspire us to move smoothly and inspiringly from one aspect of worship to another: hymns/songs of uplifting adoration or joyful praise, prayers of adoration, confession, thanksgiving or supplication, meaningful silence, an inspiring, heartfelt sermon etc. Such openness causes congregations to be regularly lost in wonder, love and praise. This contrasts with an inflexible liturgy or hymn sandwich which can exclude something special the Holy Spirit wants to do.

A crucial question we need to ask about our church (and ourselves) is “Are we listening to God?” And that includes in prayer for Revival. It’s difficult enough to get some churches to pray corporately, including in depth for Revival. But some churches pray corporately without letting God get a word in edgeways. Their prayer is a monologue, a spiritual shopping list of their own needs.

We must remember that prayer is dialogue. Prayer is central to the Trinity. Jesus prays to the Father (Rom 8:34) as does the Holy Spirit (Rom 8:26-27). Nothing is done without that prayerful cooperation within the Trinity. Our prayers can be united with the prayers of Jesus within the Trinity. That is a wonderful thought because our prayers are so small. But they can become our signature added to the great petition Jesus is offering to the Father. We need to ask the Holy Spirit to harmonise our prayers with those of Jesus within the Trinity. Paul points out that the Spirit will help us to know how to pray: “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).

We need to major on a loving relationship with God and people in a love relationship talk *and listen* to one another. They long to please one another and this requires listening to what the other person has to say, noting their opinions and desires. They submit to one another. So, we need to submit to God in prayer – to have an attitude of reverence. Hence the psalmist says “The Lord confides in those who fear him” (Psa 25:24). Not listening to God is offensive to his majesty and holiness. Not listening to God is running his church (or my life) “my way” or “our way.” How presumptuous!

Our church or prayer group needs to ask God how to pray. It needs to wait on him and be sensitive to the prompting of the Spirit, not rush into presenting a prayer list to God. We need to know how God wants us to pray for Revival. We can take our stand on God’s promise through James “If any of you lacks wisdom, you should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to you” (Jas 1:5). We need to meditate on Scripture to give the Lord an opportunity to speak to us through it. If we are open to God and strongly desiring his will to be done, we will hear him. We can expect the prompting of the Spirit through the gifts of the Spirit. Someone can give a prophecy which can provide guidance (but it has to be evaluated by others). Also, the more you pray, the more you hear, the more sensitive to God’s voice you become.

Prayer for Revival requires us to pray as God wants us to and to be open to his special intervention.

There is further advice about hearing God in my article [How to Hear God](#)

God bless you,

Tony

PS. NEW ARTICLES I HAVE WRITTEN

A Church under Judgment

The 1980s-90s was an Age of Warning over denials of basic truths: the Virgin Birth, the bodily Resurrection of Jesus, the uniqueness of Jesus as the only Saviour plus approval of unbiblical sexual behaviour. Now, having compromised, we have entered the Age of Judgment for the church. The only hope is Revival. See [A-Church-Under-Judgement](#)

The Israel-Gaza War

My wife and I ministered in Israel for some years and have a real concern for the Israelis and for the Palestinians. The first article is about God’s Purpose for the Jewish people, related to the war. The second covers what is behind the war; Palestinian support for Hamas; Palestinian opinion on the two-state solution; the legal position on the war; Israel’s dilemma because of the Hamas tactics; how we should respond. See [Articles-about-the-Israel-Gaza-war](#)

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](#)).