

First Friday of the Month Call to Prayer – April 2014

This is the confidence that we have toward him, that if we ask anything according to his will he hears us. And if we know that he hears us in whatever we ask, we know that we have the requests that we have asked of him.
1 John 5:14-15 ESV

Welcome to our April 2014 First Friday Call to Prayer. Our aim is to provide you with teaching that we trust will enhance your prayer experience and will be an encouragement to you. We will also provide you with praise items and prayer requests coming from within ANiC and the Anglican Communion worldwide.

	Prayer Quote
<p>We encourage you to set aside the first Friday, April 4th, as a day of prayer and fasting for the Church in these critical days, ideally gathering with other believers in your parish or region for corporate prayer at some point in the day.</p>	<p><i>Satan does not care how many people read about prayer if only he can keep them from praying. When a church is truly convinced that prayer is where the action is, that church will so construct its corporate activities that the prayer program will have the highest priority.</i> Paul E. Billheimer 1897-1984</p>

The Revival Challenge

"Show me a people on their faces before God - gripped in the unction of prayer and I show you a people ready for revival." Duncan Campbell, 26-year old leader of the Hebrides revival in 1950

As part of my Lenten devotional time this year, I have been reading a daily meditation on revivals throughout the history of the church. Inevitably, I have been struck by a seemingly undeniable fact – without prayer there is no revival.

It's not the first time that I have read about revival through the course of my ministry, but this time it has not been out of curiosity or a deeper understanding of church history. Rather, it has been a time of serious contemplation and, indeed, repentance, as I have struggled with the pervading question – do I really want revival in my church, my city, my nation and in my generation? I say I do; I've always said that I do, but how badly do I really want to see a move of God radically alter the decaying spiritual and social fabrics of our 21st century culture?

Many of us may have seen signs posted on churches that proclaim, "Revival - Every Thursday Night" as we have driven through the southern US. Or perhaps we've read a newspaper ad that promised a week's worth of "revival" meetings because a certain famous evangelist was coming to town. True revival, I believe, has nothing to do with schedules, programs or eloquent oratory from visiting preachers. No, it is a sovereign act of God that completely resists our desire to package and control. We cannot make it happen, and yet it does seem historically that God desires us to ask Him for it.

In speaking about his experience in the famous outpouring in the Hebrides Islands in Scotland during the early 1950's, Duncan Campbell wrote:

"In speaking about the revival in the Hebrides, I would like to make it perfectly clear what I understand to be real revival. When I speak of revival, I am not thinking of high-pressure evangelism. I am not thinking of crusades or of special efforts convened and organized by people. That is not in my mind at all. Revival is far beyond evangelism at its highest level. It is a moving of God whereby the whole community suddenly becomes God-conscious before anyone says a word about God."

Perhaps you know the story of what happened on the Isle of Lewis in the Scottish Outer Hebrides. Two elderly sisters began to fervently pray because there were no young people attending church. Peggy Smith was 84 and completely blind. Christine, her younger sister by two years, could hardly walk and was severely bent over with arthritis. God had given them a simple promise from Scripture: *I will pour water on him that is thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground* (Isa. 44:3, KJV). Here is an account of what happened:

“With a deep burden in their hearts, they began praying. Twice a week for many months, they went down on feeble knees at 10:00 at night and did not rise until 3 or 4:00 in the morning. In the midst of their prayers, God gave them a vision of a man they had never met, a man who would be used by God to change the island. The man’s name was Duncan Campbell. During his time on the Island, revival broke out and hundreds of people came to know Christ. On the first day of the revival, 122 young people were saved.

“People were inexplicably drawn to Christ. Without publicity, telephones, or Internet, they were awakened in the middle of the night and drawn to gather in a farmer’s field or at a local parish church. Sometimes they did not make it – and instead simply fell by the side of the road confessing their sins to God.”

Evan Roberts, who was mightily used in the Welsh revival almost 50 years earlier, recounted his own experience in praying for revival:

“Through all weather, and in spite of all difficulties, I went to the prayer meetings. Many times, on seeing other boys with the boats on the tide, I was tempted to turn back and join them. But, no. Then I said to myself: ‘Remember your resolve to be faithful,’ and on I went. Prayer meeting Monday evening at the chapel; prayer meeting Tuesday evening at Pisgah (Sunday School branch); Church meeting Wednesday evening; Band of Hope Thursday; class Friday evening - to these I went faithfully throughout the years. For ten or eleven years I have prayed for a revival. I could sit up all night to read or talk about revivals. It was the Spirit that moved me to think about a revival.”

In 1904, Wales saw more than 100,000 people come to know Christ in under six months in a revival characterised by prayer, praise, joy, victory and the re-discovery of the Holy Spirit. The East African revival in 1929 began with two men praying together for two days in Uganda. The effects of that revival are still felt powerfully today in the African Church.

Do you see it, dear Intercessors? Are we having trouble getting young people into our churches? Are our prayer meetings growing in attendance or is it just the usual few? Is there a real spiritual impact being made on our communities and neighbourhoods or is the Gospel being “safely confined” within the four walls of churches? Are we satisfied with our current level of revival experience?

I am fully aware that the question that I am asking risks the danger of us falling into two potential snares. The one is the rationale that says, *“If God is totally sovereign, he is going to do it, whatever and whenever he pleases, and it doesn’t matter whether we pray or not”*. The other says, *“If we would just fast long enough, pray long enough, repent long enough (although no one seems to know exactly how long ‘long enough’ is), then God HAS to do what he has promised!”* To my mind, the first snare is irresponsibly fatalistic, ignoring the numerous scriptural exhortations that we should *“pray without ceasing”* and *“let our requests be known to God.”* The other snare is an attempt to put God in a box, to control him, to make a formula out of prayer such that if we do all the right things then God is compelled to comply with our requests.

And yet...Jesus told the story of the persistent widow in Luke 18 precisely so that they would see *“that they ought always to pray and not lose heart.”* But at some level, we have lost heart when it comes to praying and believing for revival, haven’t we.

During this Lenten season, I have come to see three things more clearly:

1. A supernatural outpouring of the Spirit upon our church and nation that brings about life-altering repentance is the only thing that can make any lasting change.

2. We do not need to wonder whether this is the will of God or not. It is always his will that humanity would turn to him in humility and repentance.
3. There is no formula whereby we can **make** God do this, but he does want us to share his burden for the lost, and cry out to him on their behalf. What his response looks like, and when it happens, we must leave with him. But we must not grow weary in the asking!

ANiC Intercessors, will you join me in a renewed commitment to seek the Lord's face for revival? Will you look to find even two or three others who agree in the Spirit and together begin to ask the Lord for an outpouring such as has not been seen in generations in our land?

Please let me know your reaction to what I have written this month. If it has touched your heart such as to create a response of action, please let me know what that is, too. Would the Lord create a small army of ANiC intercessors who would commit to asking our loving Father for the gift of revival?

O Lord, may it be so! Amen!

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Praise God ...

- For the incredible gift that God has given us in prayer – immediate access to our Father at any time of day or night. Thank Him for the incredible privilege of participating with him through prayer in his grand redemption plan.
- For the many ANiC “projects” and church plants – the small, but growing congregations of faithful Anglicans that He is adding to our number.
- For faithful Anglican primates, bishops, clergy and laity – throughout the Communion – who are standing for truth even when their stand for Christ and His Word makes them targets of attack.

Confess if needed...

- Times where we have grown weary and allowed doubt and complacency to erode our fervor in prayer for renewal in the Church and revival to sweep across our land.

Please pray...

- For a new visitation of the **Holy Spirit** upon our bishops and clergy, our parishes and our diocese. Pray that the fresh wind of the Spirit will bring renewal, healing and empowerment.
- For **Bishops** Donald Harvey and Charlie Masters as Bishop Don prepares to pass the mantel of leadership to Bishop Charlie at the end of June. May God grant each the grace, strength and zeal for this next chapter in their ministries.
- For **Bishops** Stephen Leung, Trevor Walters, Ronald Ferris and Malcolm Harding (retired) – and their families. Pray for spiritual and physical protection and renewal, for wisdom, and for a daily closer walk with God.
- For our **Archdeacons**: the Venerables Ron Corcoran (Vancouver Island), Dan Gifford (BC), Paul Charbonneau (Ontario), Tim Parent (Ottawa Valley), Paul Crossland (Prairies), Michael McKinnon (New England, USA), and Darrell Critch (Atlantic Region & Quebec) – and our Dean of Multicultural Ministries, the Very Rev Dr Archie Pell..
- For all of our **ANiC clergy** and families, especially those experiencing spiritual and physical attack.
- For the **ANiC congregations** that have lost their places of worship and are meeting in temporary facilities. May God pour out His blessing on them and may they be filled with the joy of the Lord.
- For **Archbishop Bob Duncan** especially in these few remaining months before he steps down as primate. Pray also for the **ACNA House of Bishops** that the Lord's purpose will prevail in the election of our new Primate.

- That God would continue His work in and through the **Anglican Church in North America** and that the Provincial Assembly in June in Pittsburgh will be a tremendous time of fellowship, spiritual renewal and blessing.
- **GAFCon Primates and the Global Fellowship of Confessing Anglican (GFCA)** – Pray for the Lord’s courage and wisdom as they seek to guide the orthodox reformation and realignment that is taking place in the Anglican Communion. May God grant us revival.
- **Southern Cone** – Pray for Presiding Bishop Tito Zavala in his primatial duties and for this province which includes much of South America.
- For the Archbishop of Canterbury **Justin Welby**. Pray that the Lord will grace him with wisdom, courage and the faithfulness to follow the teachings of Scripture in his decision-making.
- For the **Anglican Relief and Development Fund Canada (ARDFC)** as it raises funds for a pediatric ward for a busy clinic in South Sudan. Pray also for peace in that troubled country.
- For **all the Christians in the Middle East** who are facing increasing pressure and persecution as many of their countries embrace a more aggressive and extreme form of Islam.
- For **those who serve us and are in authority over us** – our police forces, our armed forces, our emergency responders, our municipal elected officials, our provincial MLAs and premiers, and our federal MPs and Prime Minister.
- For **God’s wisdom for the world’s leaders** with regard to the escalating situation in the Ukraine. Pray that the evil one’s agenda for violence, hatred and bloodshed would be averted.