

First Friday of the Month Call to Prayer – May 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 May 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, May 2nd, 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>Pray, O pray, my brother (and sister)! . . . I am astonished that we do not pray more, yea, that we do not live every moment as on the brink of the eternal world, and in the blessed expectation of that glorious country.</i> William Bramwell 1759 - 1818</p>

Revival: The First Step

Dear Friends, let me begin this month's meditation by expressing my gratitude to those of you who responded with feedback on last month's article, *The Revival Challenge*. Your reflections, ideas and expressions of commitment to pray for revival were most heartening, and served to confirm in my own heart that we are on the right track. One particularly encouraging letter came from a dear elderly lady who committed to rising every Monday morning during the 5 weeks of Eastertide at 3:00 AM to pray for an hour for renewal in the Church and revival in our nation. Please continue to let me know how you are being called to respond and what insights into revival prayer you may be given by the Holy Spirit. (If you haven't had a chance to read *The Revival Challenge*, it is available on the ANiC website at www.anglicannetwork.ca/prayer_and_meditation_0414.htm)

In last month's article, I made this statement: "*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.*" The more that I have meditated on the subject and discussed it with others, the more I believe that the above statement is true. It would be so much easier to research the data developed by the church growth gurus and find just the right evangelism program to initiate in our local churches and neighbourhoods. Fruitful perhaps, but not revival.

So, the question remains: If God is sovereign and all spiritual awakenings occur through his initiative, how exactly are we to pray for revival?

For me, the answer to this question must begin with my own repentance; repentance of my hard heartedness, my lack of true passion for those without Christ, and the ensuing fervour in prayer that such a passion would release. I need to confess to him that on the few occasions when I have asked for revival in our land, it has been more driven by a personal desire for security, financial stability, and a pleasant place for my children and grandchildren to live in freedom and safety.

Revival always brings heartfelt repentance, and not just among the lost of our secular society. It must begin with the Church. It must begin with you and me. Otherwise, we will participate in an exercise of religious activity, but it will bear little fruit. I must get brutally honest with the Lord, repent of my selfishness, and ask him to share with me his loving heart for those for whom he died.

I am reminded of the passage that recounts the consecration of Solomon's magnificent new temple where God gives clear instructions to his people should they stray from following the Lord:

"If my people who are called by my name humble themselves, and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and heal their land."

2 Chronicles 7:14 ESV

Even in Solomon's day, repentance needed to begin with *"my people who are called by my name"*. Surely, this is where we, too, must start. Perhaps, we should humble ourselves through fasting, not to convince God that we're serious this time, but to manifest our contrite hearts and our complete and utter dependence on him. Then we should "seek his face" by spending time in his presence and in his Word - gobs of time - not trying to extract from the Lord the secret formula to revival, but delighting in him through worship and drawing close enough to him in personal intimacy that we can more deeply share his burden for our broken world. Church, I can't tell you how long this might take before we could move to the next step, but I doubt that one specially called hour of repentance is going to suffice. God is passionately after our hearts and attitudes and, if I'm a typical example, we have a long way to go.

We live in a culture that is so results driven and where speed and immediacy are the ultimate goals. As a furniture store slogan on TV declared over and over again a few Christmases ago, "You can have it all, and you can have it now!" We are naïve if we think that this attitude of entitlement has not found its way into our orthodox and evangelical churches as well. That's why we look for formulas; read the right verses, say the right prayers, make the right declarations, and we can get God to answer our prayers and to answer them right now.

No, not this time. If we are truly serious and committed to seeking him for revival, then we must totally surrender to his timetable and his agenda. He will have it no other way. Surely, one of our "wicked ways" from which we must turn includes trying to manipulate God into doing things our way so that we are not too terribly inconvenienced by his will and purpose.

The history of people that were praying for revival in various places around the world and throughout the ages suggests that God will answer those prayers "at just the right time", but it might take months, years, or even decades. And yet, it will come exactly on time! It will come when our hearts are finally in the right place for the Lord to give us that for which we have been asking him.

In the early 1990's, a Vineyard worship song entitled, *Show Your Power*, blessed many churches. It is a cry to the Lord to send revival. Here are the lyrics:

He is the Lord and He reigns on high,

He is the Lord.

Spoke into the darkness, created the light,

He is the Lord.

Who is like unto Him, never-ending in days?

He is the Lord.

And He comes in power when we call on His name.

He is the Lord.

Your Gospel, O Lord, is the hope for our nation,

You are the Lord.

It's the power of God for our salvation,

You are the Lord.

We ask not for riches but look to the cross,

You are the Lord.

And for our inheritance, give us the lost,

You are the Lord.

Show Your power, O Lord our God!

Show Your power, O Lord our God, Our God.

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The last petition in the second verse has always challenged and convicted me: *"And for our inheritance, give us the lost."* As God stirs our hearts concerning repentance and revival, surely this is what we must ultimately desire. We ask not for riches, but we do ask for the lost as our inheritance in a mighty harvest beyond anything we have yet seen. Lord, help us to **never** settle for anything less!

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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...

- Our **complacency and prayerlessness** when it comes to the salvation of the lost, and our weariness in asking God to send revival to our church and nation. Repent of a **fear of the potential inconvenience and discomfort** that true revival might bring.

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, Charlie Masters, 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 comfort and pour out His blessing on them. May they be filled with the joy of the Lord as they seek His guidance for more permanent worship facilities.
- That God would continue His work in & through the **Anglican Church in North America (ACNA)**.
- For **Archbishop Bob Duncan** (and wife, Nara), especially in the remaining weeks before he steps down as primate. Pray also for the **ACNA House of Bishops and the Provincial Assembly in June** that the Lord’s purpose will prevail in **the election of our new Primate**.
- **GAFCon Primates and Fellowship of Confessing Anglican (FCA) leaders** – 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.
- 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 **Christians in the Middle East, Asia & Africa** who face growing pressure and persecution as countries embrace extreme forms of Islam and Islamic terrorists groups advance their agendas.
- 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, and as the **Korean and Malaysian governments** seek to help their citizens grieving over their lost loved ones in recent disasters. Pray that the evil one’s agenda for violence, hatred and bloodshed would be averted.