

The 1857-1862 Revival

When God comes in power

Compiled by Bennie Mostert

Jericho Walls Publication

Order from:



Jericho Walls International Prayer Network
Private bag X22
Lynnwood ridge
0040
South Africa

Tel.: +27 12 365 3213
Fax: +27 12 365 3214
E-mail: info@jwipn.com
Website: www.jwipn.com

Introduction

2010 is the 150th anniversary of the 1857-1861 revival in South Africa. Very few people still know about this revival. I talk to young and older people and they know nothing about it. It was for instance through this revival that the Dutch Reformed Church got their 10 days of prayer leading up to Pentecost Sunday every year. Very few people know this. Then in 1860, the revival came to Montagu, Worcester, Paarl, Wellington and many other places in the country. The first stirrings of the revival were already felt in 1857 in KwaZulu Natal and its full power was experienced in 1860.

Revival can have various definitions and many people talk about revival, but few know about these powerful revivals in the history of the church. Likewise, not many people are aware of some of God's great deeds of the past.

When reading these accounts of the 1860 revival and making some notes, I once again became aware of the powerlessness of the church today, the need for such a revival, the possibility of such a revival and the influence of such a revival on a society.

I am starting my story in New York, where it is generally accepted that this revival started. **The Laymen's Prayer Revival** started in New York in 1857 and spread all over the world, touching many nations, including South Africa.

Important note

I did not give references for all the quotes, or acknowledge the sources of all the information that I use in this book, but I have tried to give all the book titles that I used as resource material for the different sections and topics in this book. Thorough research has been done on these revivals throughout the years and many of the books on the different revivals make use of the same research.

I have not tried to do new research, but simply to tell the stories of the 1857-1861 revival again. Very few of these stories are in print and available at present and I thought it might be helpful to make them available again to the church in written format.

The state of our nation

We are living in difficult times in South Africa and also times of hope and opportunity. While we saw a miracle in 1994 with the peaceful transition to a multi-party democracy, that ‘miracle’ is over and done with. And God is still alive and almighty, willing to listen to the cries of His people – and waiting for His people to cry out to Him.

While we have seen great macro-economic growth the past fifteen years, our economy is also affected by the enormous economic meltdown since the middle of 2008. Over the past 15 years poverty increased and the bottom 50% of the population is poorer than 15 years ago. Every form of crime and violence has increased in these 15 years: Theft, violent crime,

domestic violence, rape and child molestation, car hi-jacking, armed robberies, murders, etc. The fifth most violent city in the world is Cape Town and Johannesburg is number twenty. Corruption, political and economical, is at an all-time high in the country. Violence is on the increase. HIV/Aids figures are still rising and some stats say that as much as 25% of the nation may be affected. In some regions, the number of affected people is over 50%. Drug abuse is increasing sharply. The number of unemployed people in our country is the fourth highest in the world.

Churches from all denominations are running empty. Young people leave the church not to come back. The older generation is also 'silently' leaving the church, moving from church to church and eventually becoming 'out-of-church' Christians; still committed Christians, but not connected to the institutionalised church. Many pastors and leaders leave the local churches and start 'para-church' organisations, trying to address the need of the communities and the world in a more effective way. There is an increase in supernatural activity and participation in the occult. Simultaneously more and more people are becoming atheists, agnostics and more and more apathetic. There is also outright slandering of God and mocking of all that is religious.

But there is also another side to the story. In the midst of the devastation, God is raising up a younger generation that is full of hope and faith and is following Jesus in a radical way. We are seeing large numbers of men turning to God. We are seeing equally large numbers of women being revived and making a difference in their homes and workplaces. Over the past

10 years one of the most significant and most encouraging developments is increasingly large numbers of Christians that are starting to make a difference in their place of work; starting prayer groups, living uncompromisingly and with biblical integrity. There is a growing prayer movement in the country. The Global Day of Prayer mobilised hundreds of thousands of people yearly during the past decade and thousands of 24/7 prayer watches are being established in local churches, in communities and even in prisons. There is also a significant prayer awakening amongst the youth. More than ever before, the church is reaching out to the social needs of people in the nation. There is a new determination in the church to make a difference and to reach people with the gospel of Christ.

Where does this leave us? In a situation ripe for God to intervene. Time and time again there have been similar situations in history. And then God would come.

Chapter 1

The Laymen's Prayer Revival New York 1857-1858

The 1857-1858 revival was the biggest and most widespread revival in American history. Some also call it the *Fourth Great Awakening*.

Others call it The *Laymen's Prayer Revival* because it was pastors but also an exceptionally large number of laymen.

The state of the nation in 1857

In 1856 a Methodist named William Arthur published a book of fiery sermons which closed with a prayer pleading with God to "Crown this nineteenth century with a revival of pure and undefiled religion ... greater than any demonstration of the Spirit ever vouchsafed to man." His prayer was answered when the greatest revival in American history began the next year.

In 1857 churches were sliding downhill. In many places church attendance continued to decrease and the number of conversions (on a national scale) continued to dwindle. Thousands of Americans were disillusioned with Christianity. William Miller, a New England farmer, had captured nationwide attention with his prediction that Christ would return on October 22, 1844. When nothing happened, new dates were set. Many abandoned their faith.

Prior to the Fourth Great Awakening in America in 1857-

1858 there was a collapse of the banking system in America that also spread to Europe. Due to the long, hard winter of 1856-1857, transportation and trade transactions were delayed. The spring of 1857 brought some relief, but by the end of summer, businesses had begun to collapse. Before September 1857, the Ohio Life Insurance and Trust Company of Cincinnati, with a branch in New York City collapsed, causing panic. Some banks suspended operations altogether, including eighteen of New York City's leading banks. On 14th October, 1857, the extensive banking system of the United States collapsed, bringing ruin to hundreds of thousands of people in New York, Philadelphia, Boston, and the industrial centres of the nation. The panic caused rich men to go broke literally overnight. Suicide and murder increased, and destitute people roamed the streets of the cities.

Historian James Edwin Orr summarized the state of the nation in the following five points:

1. Gain, gambling and greed were rampant. There was spectacular wealth, utter poverty and the gap between rich and poor was growing; this was accompanied by a rapid increase in violent crime.
2. There was an alarming increase of occult activity because of the vacuum left by the disappointment of many people with the church.
3. Immorality, a playboy type of philosophy of free love was advocated and accepted by many.
4. Commercial and political corruption increased. Bribes, illegal business practices and national laws still legalised slavery.
5. Atheism, agnosticism, apathy, indifference to God and

the mocking of God were flourishing.

The decline was fivefold: social, moral, political, spiritual and economical.

The influence of Finney and the Palmers on the 1857-1858 revival

Charles Finney is probably the most important person that prepared the way and had an influence on the 1857-1858 revival. Finney's books Lectures on Revival and Memoirs of Rev. Charles G. Finney were powerfully used by God in preparing the way for the 1857-1858 revival. During 1851 Finney had meetings in Syracuse. It seemed as if the whole city was going to be converted, someone wrote. Some 100 000 conversions were related in one way or another to these meetings. Revival broke out in Rochester in 1856 under his ministry and the influence of that spread to New York. God also used Finney in Boston where he preached mainly in Park Street Church. Hundreds of ministers all over the United States came to listen to Finney during 1857. That helped to prepare the pastors for the coming revival.

Walter and (especially) Phoebe Palmer were also instruments of God to help prepare the way, and their ministry often resulted in revival. Their camp meetings in Ontario and Quebec during the summer of 1857 drew up to 6,000 people. In the fall of 1857 revival broke out in Hamilton, Ontario. This revival had all the characteristics of the revival movement that began weeks later in New York. This revival or renewal movement was widely reported in newspapers across Amer-

ica, especially in the Methodist churches. Many pastors started to experience a deep hunger for revival. Very soon reports on local awakenings were reported all over the United States.

An increase in prayer before the 1857-1858 revival in New York

It was the prayer meeting in the Fulton Street, Dutch Reformed Church in New York however, that sparked the revival. But this prayer meeting was not just a bolt from the blue. It came against the background of more than a decade's prayer meetings all over New York and Boston. Before the 1857-1858 revival in New York, there was a steady build up of prayer. In 1840, Park Street Church in Boston started to pray for revival. They immediately began to see change in the church and an extraordinary increase in membership. After about four years the prayer meetings stopped. Two years later, Old South Church in Boston began to pray seriously for revival. More and more people joined in the times of prayer. In 1856 they added quarterly days of prayer and fasting. Eventually hundreds and often thousands would meet five days a week, at 8h00 in the morning to pray for revival and the salvation of the lost. For eight years people in Old South Church in Boston prayed for revival. In 1857 the prayers became remarkably urgent and from reports it was clear that confidence and hopefulness were rising. The revival started in the fall of 1857.

By September 1857, when the revival started in Fulton Street Dutch Reformed Church in New York, there were many doz-

ens of prayer groups and many hundreds of Christians that were praying for revival in churches and in small groups all over New York and Boston. When Jeremiah Lanphier called for a prayer meeting, the soil was prepared. At the first meeting, Wednesday 23 September 1857, from 12h00-13h00, only six people turned up. In a sense, it was just one more prayer meeting of business people and other people burdened for revival and a change in the social, spiritual and economical situation in New York and the nation. The 1857 revival, however, was sparked by that specific prayer meeting, although it didn't come as a result of just that one prayer meeting. For more than 16 years there was intense and focused prayer in Boston and New York where people cried out to God to intervene.

The start of the Fulton street noonday prayer meetings in New York

Jeremiah Lanphier, a concerned layman, started a noon prayer meeting for New York businessmen. He was a newly appointed city missionary. One day the thought came to him to organise noonday prayer meetings. The idea was to have an hour of prayer, from 12h00-13h00. This was a time when large numbers of businessmen and factory labourers took an hour to eat and rest. He printed some pamphlets to invite people to such prayer meetings. The first one was held on 23 September 1857. Only six people came to the first prayer meeting on September 23, 1857 on the third floor of the "Consistory" of the Old Dutch Reformed Church on Fulton Street. The second week 20 people turned up, the third week 40, the next week 100. Within a short time the whole church

was taken over by 3,000 people coming to pray daily, at noon and also at other times. By spring, daily prayer meetings had shot up in many locations and daily attendance grew to 10,000 (out of a population of 800,000). By January 1858 the newspapers sent reporters to cover the meetings. “The Progress of the Revival” became a standing news headline. And then it literally spread all over the United States.

Most prayer meetings were held for exactly one hour: 12h00-13h00. Many factories would blow their whistle at 11h55 to give people an opportunity to attend the prayer meetings and the whistle was blown again at 13h05 as a signal for people to start work again.

An eyewitness account of a typical noonday prayer meeting:

Noonday prayer meeting book

We take our seats in the middle room, ten minutes before 12 o'clock. A few ladies are seated in one corner, and a few businessmen are scattered here and there through the room. Five minutes to 12, the room begins to fill up rapidly. Two minutes to 12, the leader comes in, and takes his seat at the desk or in the pulpit. At 12 noon, punctual to the moment, at the first stroke of the clock, the leader arises and commences the meeting by reading two or three verses of a hymn. Each person finds a hymn book on his seat; all sing with heart and voice. The leader offers a prayer – short, purposeful, to the point. Then he reads a brief portion from Scripture. Ten minutes are now gone. Meantime, requests in sealed enve-

lopes have been going up to the desk for prayer.

A deep, solemn silence settles down upon our meeting. It is holy ground. The leader stands with slips of paper in his hand. He says, “This meeting is now open for prayer. Brethren from a distance are specially invited to take part. All will observe the rules.”

All is now breathless attention. A tender solicitude spreads over all those upturned faces. The chairman reads: “A son in North Carolina desires the fervent, effectual prayers of the righteous of this congregation for the immediate conversion of his mother in Connecticut...”

In an instant a father rises: “I wish to ask the prayers of this meeting for two sons and a daughter.” And he sits down and bursts into tears, lays his head down on the railing of the seat before him, and sobs like a broken-hearted child.

A few remarks follow – very brief. The chairman rises with slips of paper in his hand and reads: “A praying sister requests prayers for two unconverted brothers in the city of Detroit; that they be converted, and become true followers of the Lord Jesus Christ.”

Another: “Prayers are requested of the people of God for a young man, once a professor of religion, but now a wanderer, and going astray...”

Two prayers in succession follow these requests – very fervent, very earnest. And others who rise to pray at the same

time sit down again when they find themselves preceded by the voices already engaged in prayer. Then arises from all hearts that beautiful hymn sung with touching pathos, so appropriate just at this stage of this meeting:

*There is a fountain filled with blood
Drawn from Immanuel's veins,
And sinners plunged beneath that flood
Lose all their guilty stains.*

Then follows a prayer by someone who prays earnestly for all who have been prayed for; for all sinners present; for the perishing thousands in this city; for revivals to spread all over the land and world.

It is now a quarter to one o'clock. Time has fled on silver wings.

There arises a sailor, now one no more, by reason of ill-health, but daily labouring for sailors. He was converted on board a man-of-war, and he knows how hard it was for the converted sailor to stand up, firm against the storm of jeers and reproaches and taunts of a ship's crew. "Now I am here," he says, "to represent one who has requested me to ask your prayers for a converted sailor this day gone to sea. I parted from him a little time ago and his fear, his great fear, is that he may dishonour the cause of the blessed Redeemer. Will you pray for this sailor?" Prayer is offered for his keeping and guidance.

Then follows the closing hymn, the benediction, and the part-

ing for twenty-three hours.

Stories from the revival

Thousands of remarkable stories are told of people that met God in this revival.

The owner of a hardware store in New York urged businessmen at the Fulton Street prayer meeting to always set a holy example. A well-known manufacturer followed him to his store and confessed that he had cheated him for years and wanted to pay him back.

When the news spread that there were daily prayer meetings where sinners were welcomed, prayed for, and encouraged to turn to Christ, hardened criminals were saved. A notorious criminal nicknamed “Awful Gardiner” surprised everyone when he found Christ through the prayer meetings. He was just one of thousands that came to Christ in this way.

Often during the prayer meetings people sent in requests to pray for specific people. Sometimes it would be family members; at other times friends or people from another city or even from other countries, or a mother asking prayer for a wayward son. Often days or sometimes weeks afterwards, someone would bring a report of the salvation of those people.

A mother praying for the salvation of her six unconverted children died. Soon afterwards, during a prayer meeting, a man stood up and told the story, saying, “I am one of those

six children and I am the last one (to get saved)!”

Hundreds of people who had always spent their nights in places of sin came to the prayer meetings that had begun in the evenings. Thousands forsook crime and became devoted followers of Christ. Crime and vice drastically declined. Wealthy people generously helped the poor whom they now regarded as their brothers and sisters.

Ships coming into New York harbour came under the power of God's presence. It was reported that when ships came near New York, it was as if they entered a God-zone, a definite and very real zone of divine influence. On one ship a captain and thirty men were converted to Christ before the ship docked. Revival broke out on a battleship, the North Carolina. Four sailors started to meet for prayer down in the depths of the ship. One evening they were filled with the Spirit and began to sing. Their ungodly shipmates came running down to make fun of them, but the power of God gripped them and they humbly knelt in repentance. So great was the need that after some days they had to ask ministers from ashore to come and help.

“Do you have to stop business at noon and go to a prayer meeting?” a customer from Albany asked a New York City merchant. “Yes, I must. Why don't you come with me?” The customer went with him and received Christ. He returned to Albany and started prayer meetings there.

In March of 1858 a religious journal reported that “The large cities and towns from Maine to California are sharing in this

great and glorious work. There is hardly a village or town to be found where ‘a special divine power’ does not appear displayed.”

In Chicago 2,000 men met at noon for prayer in Metropolitan Hall. In Jayne’s Hall in Philadelphia 4,000 were meeting. An elderly philanthropist named John Crozer wrote in his diary: I have never, I think, been present at a more stirring and edifying prayer meeting, the room quite full, and a divine influence seemed manifest. Many hearts melted, many souls devoutly engaged.

In December of 1857 in Utica, New York attendance at a weekly union prayer meeting increased so rapidly that by the third meeting the main floor and the balcony of the First Presbyterian Church were packed with deeply burdened people. Then daily prayer meetings were started each morning. One night when a certain prayer meeting for spiritual awakening at Anson Street Presbyterian Church in Charleston, South Carolina was dismissed, no one left. The congregation stayed until midnight while he Lord worked powerfully. Eight weeks of nightly meetings followed, with crowds numbering from 1,500 to 2,000. Many turned to the Lord. The New York Observer published a report from Waco, Texas of a mighty moving of God. “Day and night the church has been crowded during the meeting ... Never before in Texas have we seen a whole community so effectually under a religious influence ... thoroughly regenerated.”

The power of prayer touched every aspect of business. There had never been a higher tone of honour. The Bible became the

standard. Any business that injured the community was regarded as wrong. People in every kind of business began to be more honest, truthful and conscientious.

At least three thousand came to Christ in Newark, New Jersey. In many smaller towns scarcely any unconverted people remained. In Haverhill, Massachusetts, the Spirit deeply moved the crowded daily prayer meeting. Sometimes half of the assembly silently wept. One pastor found at least one person in every home in his congregation deeply concerned about their relationship with God.

An unsaved man went to the prayer meetings on Fulton Street in New York hoping someone would help him. But none did. Then one day he heard a mother's request for her son's salvation. He discovered that note was from *his own* mother! Soon afterwards he found Christ. In Kalamazoo, Michigan, a woman turned in a request for her husband's salvation. One man responded, "Pray for me. I'm that man." Four other men also did the same. A wealthy young New Yorker was born again at a noon prayer meeting. Upon returning home he read from the Bible and knelt to pour out a fervent prayer for his wife and sister. His wife and his sister knelt beside him and wept as they also received Christ. One man disowned his daughter when she confessed Christ. However, when he fell seriously ill, he sent for her and asked her forgiveness. She shared Christ with him. Within three days her father, mother, two brothers, and a sister entered the family of God.

In New Hampshire there was a place called Hell Corner. About 20 families were living there in isolation. They had ba-

sically no contact with anyone beyond themselves. It was a place where there were no known Christians and they were known for their profanity, wickedness, gambling, and almost every other evil practice. On one occasion some of them were gathered and were swearing and indulging in all kinds of evil talk. One (godless) woman tried to stop them and they started to mock her. Someone suggested they start a prayer meeting in her house. A notorious backslider offered to lead in prayer (trying to mock God) but he broke down while praying. The meetings continued under the leadership of a man from another town and four or five hardened men were convicted of sin and turned to Christ. Many in Hell Corner became praying people. The Spirit of God simply came into this dark place and people were saved and that without any preaching or outside influence. In March of 1858, six people began a prayer meeting at 8h30 for the Legislature. By the fifth day two rooms were filled and interest was growing.

One young sailor that had recently been converted was getting ready to leave on his next voyage. A missionary visited him while his landlord was trying to convince him to take some liquor with him. He looked to the missionary and said, "I would rather take your *prayers* to sea, than all the rum in the world."

In 1858 in Louisville, Kentucky 1,000 attended the daily prayer meetings. One writer said, "The Spirit of God seems to be brooding over our city, and to have produced an unusual degree of tenderness and solemnity in all classes." An amazing work of grace was changing the city.

Some of the leading businessmen of Boston were attending prayer meetings. An unusual number of people who had lived wicked lives also came. One writer said, “Publicans and sinners are awakened, and are entering the prayer meetings of their own accord. Some of them manifest signs of sincere repentance.”

Remarks

James Edwin Orr estimated that one million people got converted and another one million church members were revived in the two years, 1857-1858. At that time the entire population of the United States was 30 million. Calculations show that during 1858 there were at least 50,000 conversions per week. In New England for instance, 50,000 out of a population of 250,000 were added to the churches. The majority of these people came to Christ without them having heard a single sermon. There was very little preaching and most of the prayer meetings were led by laymen, not pastors (although the pastors attended the meetings). There were no ‘big names’, famous preachers or revivalists or advertising. People simply found the venues where there were prayer meetings and joined in the prayers. Thousands of unsaved came to these meetings, were struck by the simplicity of the gospel and were saved on the spot.

While noonday prayer meetings were held all over New York and all over the United States, there were many early morning and also large and prolonged evening prayer meetings. One eyewitness and historian said that people basically prayed the Word of God back to Him and secondly they prayed as if they

expected God would *hear and answer* them. How much unbelieving prayer we have today!

The 1857-1861 revival period resulted in a renewed mission interest. Old missionary societies were revived and new ones like China Inland Mission were born, also the Student Volunteer Movement and great mission thrusts in many countries. The revival that basically started in New York in 1857, affected Wales, Scotland, Ireland, Britain, Germany (where a 30-year period of revival followed), India, South Africa, Indonesia, West Indies and the Netherlands. One example is Sweden where it was reported that some 200, 000 people out of a population of 3 million had been awakened.

Chapter 2

The 1860 revival in South Africa

Early stirrings

Many people think the revival that started in the Western Cape in 1860, marked the first stirrings of the South African revival. But it started earlier, in 1858, in KwaZulu Natal and the Eastern Cape. Some missionaries that experienced the 1857 revival in New York, came back to resume their work in Zululand and amongst the Xhosas. Alan Grout wrote from Zululand: “We are witnessing a shaking of the dry bones in the Esdumbini Valley ... several young men came to say ... your preaching has touched our hearts, we have decided to abandon heathendom and serve the living God.” Joseph Jackson, a Methodist reverend testified: “...the Spirit fell upon them in such an overpowering manner that they could not depart, but continued in prayer till the break of day.”

The revival amongst the Zulus resulted in extraordinary praying, tremendous conviction of sin, immediate conversions and enthusiastic evangelistic outreach.

In 1856 a 12-year-old Xhosa girl started to prophesy that all animals must be destroyed and all food be consumed. On 18 February 1857 a miracle will happen: cattle will come out of the ground, food pits will suddenly be filled, dead warriors will arise and all the tribes of Africa will drive the Europeans into the sea. The Xhosas acted on these prophecies and the result was mass starvation and many died. Families killed one another for food. Clans of thousands of people were nearly

wiped out. This situation created an openness for the gospel.

It was in this period of time that revival broke out in Grahamstown. All churches were affected. Large crowds came to church every night. Soon the whole area, even up to Port Elizabeth and East London were affected. People of all races were impacted. If there was not a building available, people met in the open. Missionaries in the Transkei reported that thousands of Xhosas turned to the Lord. One mission reported 600 new members within one month and crowded church meetings.

The 1858 revival amongst the Xhosas and the Zulus were brought to South Africa by Reverend William Taylor, a man that based his ministry on the ministry style of John Wesley. He was born in Virginia in 1821 and came to South Africa in 1858 after ministry in other continents. He travelled on horseback from town to town and God granted revival. Rev. Taylor used a Xhosa interpreter by the name of Charles Palma and travelled through the Transkei and Zululand to preach the gospel. When Taylor left, Palma took those sermons and preached them from kraal to kraal. As a result, revival came to those regions, especially amongst the Xhosas. Through these two men revival came to many places in KwaZulu Natal and the Eastern Cape. The news about the revival in the Eastern Cape spread and thousands came to meetings. Many came under deep conviction of sin, followed by joyful praise when they broke through in deliverance and assurance of salvation. There was no manipulation in the meetings. Under the preaching, people would simply fall on their faces in the meetings and start to cry out for mercy.

One of the results of this revival was a strong interest in missions. Missionaries travelled as far as the old Rhodesia and Zambia to preach the gospel. Revival fires also started to burn in Botswana.

Dutch Reformed Church conference in 1860 and the results

The church in South Africa heard about the revival that started in New York (1857-1858). A deep hunger for revival started to grow in the hearts of many ministers. A booklet with the title: *De Kracht des Gebeds* (The Power of Prayer) was written and widely distributed. This book helped to create a spirit of prayer in many congregations and towns. In April 1860 the Dutch Reformed Church called for a conference on revival, which was held in April 1860 in Worcester. The conference was attended by 374 preachers and laymen. Stories were told about the revival in New York. Just 50 days later, the churches that sent delegates, began to experience a move of the Holy Spirit. There were ministers from the Dutch Reformed Church, the Methodist Church, leaders from the Scotch Presbyterian Church, Wesleyan and Rhenish Mission Society.

Dr. Robertson, one of the speakers at the conference said later said the revival started during that conference, and the exact point was when Dr. Andrew Murray Jnr. stood up to pray. Something happened at that specific moment that cannot really be described, but several people believe this was the beginning of the revival.

The first stirrings of the 1860 revival in the South and West-

ern Cape that flowed from this conference started in Montagu. James Cameron, the Methodist minister in Montagu, wrote a report to the Wesleyan Methodist Magazine in 1860: “Oh sir, what can I write? The Lord is doing wonders here ... the Spirit is among us ... prayer meetings every day and every night of the week ... people who never prayed publicly are opening the mouth widely. Last Sunday I asked those who were exercised (seeking God) to come early to the church for prayer meetings ... they came in large numbers, very early ... 3 o’clock in the morning; on Thursday a poor farm girl began to pray. The words were of the Spirit; we all cried, “God is here,” and young and old began crying for mercy ... keeping on until about 12 noon ... the Dutch Reformed people came out of their prayer meetings and joined us ... the place was so crowded that a number had to pray outside.”

For many weeks the awakening at Montagu was marked by intense conviction of sin, strong men crying out in anguish and repentance. Montagu underwent a complete transformation. The transformed lives of new believers caused unbelievers to ask the way of salvation. A community noted for its indifference was suddenly a community committed to serious religion. Cottage meetings with whole families of all races met together to pray and praise the Lord. All races, even on remote farms, experienced conversions. On one farm a farmer heard a loud crying one morning and found his wife’s servant in agony of prayer for the forgiveness of her sins. Soon all races, even on remote farms, experienced similar conversions under similar circumstances. Six prayer meetings started. People were crying out, pleading that God would not pass them by. Strong men cried out to God in anguish.

Revival broke out in Worcester in the congregation where Dr. Andrew Murray (Jnr.) and Jan de Vries worked. One evening 60 young people were being led in devotions by Jan de Vries. They would stand up and ask for a hymn or a prayer. Prayer meetings started and increased. During one of these prayer meetings, a 15-year-old slave girl got up and simply said, "O, how I love Jesus." All the people present heard the sound of thunder and the building started to shake. All of them began to pray simultaneously and they were conscious of the presence of God. Each one seemed so burdened by his load of sin that they continued to call upon God for forgiveness and cleansing with an intolerable weight of guilt, sin and shame. All of them prayed simultaneously. Dr. Andrew Murray, the pastor of the congregation heard about what was happening and hurried to the meeting. It seemed very disorderly to him and he tried to quieten them down and said, "Silence, this is confusion. I am your minister sent from God ... Silence!" No one took any notice of him, but continued to pray. Each one seemed burdened with their own sin and cried to God for forgiveness and cleansing, with an intolerable weight of guilt, shame and sin. Murray tried to sing a song. With no effect. Night after night people continued to pray into the early hours of the morning. Eventually someone who had seen what happened in the revival in New York cautioned Andrew Murray, because he saw the same things happening in the 1857 revival in New York.

And the revival spread ...

Revival spread to other parts of the Cape and the rest of South Africa. For weeks prayer meetings were held in Wellington

where people prayed for revival. Prayer meetings multiplied. Some venues could not hold all the people coming to pray. God started to work mightily and the church leaders reported that more happened in a few weeks than in all previous history of the church in Wellington.

The revival started to spread widely over the country from district to district. In Heidelberg, revival came in 1860, and again in 1868, the 1870s and in 1884. Congregation after congregation experienced repeated revivals for half a century. In one town after the other the revival broke out: Swellendam, Tulbagh, Ceres, Robertson, Villiers and many more. Many of the English denominations also experienced revival.

In Calvinia, a town in a rural area, there was no minister at the time, but for several years ministers had tried in vain to start prayer meetings there. Within weeks, several prayer meetings started, even on remote farms, none knowing about the other, yet they shared the blessing of revival.

In Paarl, Rev. Van der Linde and his congregation had a deep desire for revival. From the beginning of 1861 there were some stirrings of the Holy Spirit in the congregation. More and more people started to attend the prayer meetings. Then, before Pentecost Sunday 1861, Rev. Van der Linde called his congregation to 10 days of prayer, like the early church prayed for the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. Many people attended the prayer meetings during those 10 days. On Pentecost Sunday there was a great expectancy, there was a realisation that something was about to happen. During the afternoon service, while Rev. Van der Linde was praying, the

Spirit of God came in power and a remarkable revival followed in the months to come.

In 1867 the Dutch Reformed Church synod decided to encourage every church to observe 10 days of prayer every year before Pentecost Sunday. This practice led to much blessing and spiritual fruit over the next 150 years in the Dutch Reformed Church.

After revival broke out in Worcester, powerful revivals were reported in many places. In Murraysburg district one reverend called it a “shaking awake” of the people. Hundreds of startling conversions caused him to say that no more than 50 people were left unconverted in the Little Karoo. In Beaufort West the revival came with great force, from 6-13 January 1861, about four months after it started in Worcester. Prayer meetings often lasted all day and were held four times a week. On Sundays meetings were held also in homes, under trees and farm houses because the churches were too small to accommodate all the people.

Prince Albert, Graaff-Reinet and Richmond were among those places that experienced revival in 1861. It spread over the country and reports of revival came from the Free State and the Transvaal; of outpourings of the Holy Spirit, deep conviction of sin and many conversions.

After this 1860 revival there were several other periods of revivals that followed in the next 60 years, like in 1868, the 1870s, 1889, 1897, 1901-1905, and 1927.

The impact of the revival on the nation

Before the 1858-1862 revival, spiritual life was at a very low level in the established churches and on the mission fields. Religion was very formal, prayer meetings were poorly attended and sin abounded in communities.

But when the revival came, many things changed. The community changed. The way people behaved changed and people busied themselves with things that were not part of their lives before the revival.

In basically every place where revival broke out, there was deep conviction of sin. Strong men were crying out to God and wept about their sins. Notorious sinners repented and started to follow the Lord. In many places there was deep anxiety and terrible fear of God. Large numbers of people got converted in every community. Often people came under deep conviction of sin without attending any church service or anyone speaking to them. In some areas people were unaware of the revival and suddenly they became concerned for their souls and started to seek God. Extraordinary scenes were witnessed in those days. Heart-rending testimonies of conversion were heard. Visions were seen and troubled dreams dreamt. In some cases people got converted in their own homes, in other cases even behind bushes and rocks, on mountains and in ravines. Men, women, the elderly, children, gentlemen, servants – all bowing the knee before the King of kings, crying for mercy. This was not just emotion. The converts from the revival were lasting converts. There was a very, very low incidence of backsliding over the next dec-

ades.

People started to attend prayer meetings, often into the early hours of the morning. Joseph Jackson, a Methodist reverend that worked in KwaZulu Natal testified: "...the Spirit fell upon them in such an overpowering manner that they could not depart, but continued in prayer till the break of day." In Worcester, Montagu, Wellington and Stellenbosch people prayed at all hours of the day, especially during the nights.

A new joy and freedom were present in the lives of the converts and they were immediately concerned about the lost and started to pray for their salvation. Church attendance grew dramatically. Large numbers of people attended church services, in many cases every day. There was a remarkable unity amongst church leaders and also among believers in the churches. Financial generosity increased. Everywhere people were talking about God. Even non-Christians were talking about God. In many towns there was an unexplainable presence of God. Daily people got converted and were added to the church.

People were not ashamed to testify about their salvation and that they were Christians. Suddenly there was a new concern for the lost and an upsurge of people that wanted to go to the mission field. The most glorious result of the 1860 revival was the post-revival missionary drive; an upsurge of missionary zeal and missionaries that travelled as far as Zambia and Zimbabwe (then called Rhodesia) to preach the gospel and establish mission stations. The Holy Spirit made believers aware of their Christian responsibility towards their domestic

servants and farm workers and they responded actively by giving liberally for outreach programs. Per Capita, South African Christians gave more to missions than any other country in the world in that specific period. Within 10 years, 12 mission stations were established in and beyond the Cape Colony, in Zimbabwe, Botswana, Malawi, up to as far as the Sudan.

The conduct of people, not only those of new believers, changed. People started to live holy lives. Family relationships were restored. Husbands took their roles as fathers seriously and the biblical order in the families was restored. There were many testimonies of reconciliation in families.

Stories abounded of long-standing quarrels being settled, people living with hatred and an inability to forgive being reconciled to their neighbours, families and people in the business community. People from different races were reconciled, worshipped and prayed together and accepted one another in love.

Businessmen stopped unlawful practices and were doing business with honesty and sincerity. Working conditions and the quality of work changed for the better.

Juvenile crime and sexual immorality stopped. Drinking and cursing stopped. Slowly the prisons emptied. Criminals got converted. Old debts were paid.

This revival touched KwaZulu Natal, the Eastern Cape, Free State, Western Cape, and many mission fields up north in the

country. It touched isolated communities and bigger towns. People could not escape the powerful work of the Holy Spirit.

In Stellenbosch, a church bulletin read: The whole of society has been changed, yes, turned literally upside down!

Chapter 3

Ulster, Northern Ireland and the 1859 revival

When the church in Ireland heard about the revival in New York and other places in the USA, many ministers and Christians felt a deep hunger for God and began to pray with new earnestness. At the general assembly in Dublin in 1858, the Presbyterian Synod devoted two sessions to revival. The more than 2,000 people present listened in great earnest. Two men were appointed to go to New York to go and see the work and to bring back a report. When the two men returned, their report brought an even greater hunger for revival.

The ‘beginning’ of the revival in Ulster is traced back to four young men that committed themselves to pray for revival (James McQuilkin, John Wallace, Robert Carlisle, Jeremiah Meneely). McQuilkin read the biography of George Müller and gave it to his friends to read and they also heard the stories of the 1857-1858 revival in New York. They started to pray in September 1857, and by the end of that year converts started to increase. In the winter of 1858/1859 prayer intensified and more prayer meetings and prayer groups sprang up. It is said that by the time that the revival came to Ulster, there were 104 prayer groups all over the city, in effect praying almost night and day for revival. They were greatly influenced by three books: George Müller’s *Life of Trust*, *The life of Murry McCheyne* and Charles Finney’s *Lectures on revival*.

On the 14th March 1859 McQuilkin organised a big prayer meeting. About 3,000 people came, standing in the rain and

mud, gripped by the power of the Holy Spirit. A layman began to preach. About 100 people fell prostrate in the mud, surrendering to Christ. There was an extraordinary conviction of sin. This happened over and over during the revival. Professor William Gibson wrote the following: “Even strong men have staggered and fallen down under the wounds of their conscience. Great bodily weakness followed...With tears streaming down their faces and looks of unutterable anguish, they confessed their sins, appealing to the Lord for mercy with piercing cries ... I have never heard such cries before: “Lord Jesus, have mercy upon my sinful soul; Lord Jesus come to my burning heart; Lord, pardon my sins; O come and lift me from these flames of hell.” (Revival Fire; Wesley Duewel, p.139) The fires of revival spread to other places in the district. People were meeting in kitchens, barns, churches, schoolhouses, fields and on roadsides. There were all-night meetings of prayer and weeping. People forsook farm work and business and crowded into meetings.

In April 1859, during a busy market day in the town Ballymena, a man in his thirties suddenly fell to the ground and cried for about ten minutes: “Unclean, Unclean ... Lord have mercy on me as a sinner!” An awesome fear of God fell on the people. By 17th May the whole town was in the grip of the Holy Spirit’s convicting power. Careless men broke down and sobbed like children. Churches were crowded, families prayed together while all classes and ages were seeking the Lord. Prayer meetings carried on all through the night. Then the fire started to spread to other towns. There were strong physical manifestations which led to the salvation of many people.

People were meeting even in gravel pits. Hundreds of people called on ministers to come and help. Many faces were filled with pain as people realised what sinners they were. And when they broke through, the faces of the new converts beamed with such joy that the newly saved were easily identified.

Boroughshane, Ballymena, Ballycarry

At Boroughshane, workers in a spinning factory were suddenly seized by the Holy Spirit's conviction of sin. Within an hour 20 were lying prostrate on the floor, crying out to God. The factory had to close for two days while people prayed.

Many people of all ages, Protestant and Roman Catholic, attended meetings and were converted. Some Roman Catholic priests gave their members holy water to protect them against the "revival plague". Family worship was restored, drunkenness, swearing, quarrelling and fighting diminished. In one place an area fair ended in a prayer meeting with 5,000 attending.

Even ships passing those regions experienced the presence of God and many sailors came under conviction of sin. The revival spread all over the country. In Belfast a large distillery closed and the whiskey trade started to fall. Pubs closed down. Race courses drew fewer people. Crime was reduced tremendously. Throughout Ulster judges often had no cases to try and many times there were no prisoners in custody.

Revival came to Ballymena 'suddenly'. Crying and prayers

filled the streets and most houses. Some, under deep conviction of sin, did not sleep for many nights. Twice a week there were large mid-day prayer meetings and people from all denominations attended them. On one occasion 5,000 met for prayer in a quarry. Children 10-12 years of age were saved, and prayed with great power for unsaved adults. People were amazed at the prayers of these children. They organised their own prayer meetings. Young businessmen took leave from their jobs and gave themselves to prayer and to further the revival. People came from England, Scotland and other parts of Ireland to see the work of God. At Ballycarry, after the revival broke out, meetings continued for forty-two nights. Prayer meetings often continued through the night.

Belfast

The revival reached Belfast in June 1859. Crowds began to gather nightly in Episcopal, Presbyterian, Wesleyan, Independent and Baptist churches. Night and day, convicted people were visited by revived laymen. It was especially amongst the young people that revival spread in a remarkable way. On 29 June there was an extraordinarily large open-air meeting in the Botanic Gardens in Belfast: 40,000 people. Children were even sitting in the trees. The moderator of the general assembly of the Presbyterian Church led the service and asked the people not to resist or grieve the Holy Spirit, but to ask unceasingly, earnestly and expectantly, that He would descend on them so that many people may be born again. That caused many people to be struck down under deep conviction of sin. Many wept and cried for mercy. Children started prayer meetings on the edge of the crowd. Some of the children were

from the poor section of society. After this meeting, church services were packed daily. Often it was impossible to dismiss services and people only went home in the early hours of the morning. A pastor described that some people “felt the pains of hell” as they were convicted by the Holy Spirit. That was followed with great joy and outpourings of love as the Holy Spirit gave assurance of salvation. They were simply crying out, “How I wish I could tell you about Jesus’ love. I would take sinners in my arms, if I could, and lay them at His feet.” Conversions crossed the boundary lines of society. Learned men, wealthy merchants, lords and ladies wept under the same deep conviction that could be seen in farmers and common labourers.

In one church one hundred people were saved at one meeting. The Holy Spirit moved in a powerful way and twenty prayer meetings started in this one church; another four hundred people were saved just from this one church alone. Some schools shut down as revival spread amongst the children in the classrooms. Strong men wept as they heard the children’s prayers.

In July another large open-air meeting followed with some fifteen thousand in attendance. Ministers prayed with people under conviction of sin till 3h00 in the morning. Another meeting was attended by 20, 000 people. All over Belfast meetings were held for both children and adults. One church reported 40 prayer meetings amongst their members.

Prostitution began to dwindle as many prostitutes were saved. Savings deposits in banks increased. Political demonstrations

ceased for the time being. Many factories closed temporarily so that people convicted of sin could deal with that, because they could not continue working. Prayer life matured and answers to prayer were reported every day. Singing bands became a common sight. Pastors ministered to crowds gathering in the streets.

In Coleriane a boy came under such conviction of sin that the principal of the school sent him home, with another boy. They saw an empty house and went in there to pray. After the boy found peace he immediately said, "I must go and tell Mr. ...". He entered the school grounds, saying to this man, "Sir, I am so happy; I have the Lord Jesus in my heart." Others heard about it. One boy after the other slipped out of the classroom. Soon scores of boys were kneeling all over the playground, each on their own, wrestling with God. The young boy that got peace a little while before went to these boys and started to pray with the other boys. Soon there were bitter cries of boys convicted of their sins. The cries pierced the hearts of the other boys in the classrooms. They went down on their knees and also started to cry for mercy. The girls' school heard the cries and they too fell to their knees and wept. Adults heard the cries and ran to the school, just to be convicted of their own sins and find salvation.

During 1859 about 100,000 people joined the church.

Chapter 4

The 1859 prayer revival in Wales

Wales is a nation that experienced many revivals. There was a revival in 1739, “the great revival” in 1760, and many other visitations (1791, 1817, 1840, 1848). But during the 1850s the church in Wales felt the need for a new awakening. In private prayer, family worship and congregational meetings people were praying for revival. When the revival eventually came in 1859, it was like the 1857-1858 revival in America; a revival of united prayer.

God used two ministers to ignite the flame of revival through their preaching: Humphrey Jones and David Morgan. Jones came from America where he was greatly influenced by the writings of Charles Finney. For six months God used him in a special way and there was great anointing on his preaching. Even at 5h00 in the morning people were crowding the chapel in Tre’r-ddol. The streets were lined half a mile in all directions with people coming to listen. Prayer meetings were held each night. Revival broke out in village after village as he preached from village to village.

Reverend David Morgan was greatly challenged by Humphrey Jones. God touched David Morgan in a special way. For three months Morgan and Jones ministered together and then Jones faded from the picture. Wherever David Morgan went, the Spirit was poured out and people were converted. Revival spread from church to church and among all denominations, from village to village, from county to county. Notorious sinners came to church in their hundreds. Many ministers were revived. In spite of the powerful preaching of especially David Morgan, the revival in Wales spread not so much by preaching as by prayer.

Often people left the churches weeping, but returned again because they could proceed no further without committing themselves to the Lord. The children started their own prayer meetings and prayed fervently. Something extraordinary laid hold of the people. Everybody was amazed. The Christians were full of joy. Sinners experienced the terror of God's presence. In one village it was reported that only half a dozen people did not profess to be saved.

In some meetings the Holy Spirit came like a mighty rushing wind. In four counties churches held a day of prayer for the outpouring of the Spirit. Then in February 1859 the Spirit came in mighty power. Many were saved daily and daily prayer meetings started. One minister reported 650 new converts. Some new believers literally leaped for joy.

In some of the districts revival came only after a year of prayer, longing and labouring. In these counties the revival was accompanied by much solemnity and great earnestness in prayer. In one town revival came during a house prayer meeting while the people were singing. As they were singing other people heard them and the revival spread like wildfire. Children began to sing and pray for hours and held prayer meetings from house to house. In a most astonishing way drunkenness disappeared. In one Baptist church people were praying for four months before revival came. In some towns revival broke out in different places on the same night. It was especially the prayers of the children and young people that astonished the people. They met to pray everywhere: in houses, classrooms and along the roads.

In some places it was reported that it seemed as if it was raining tears as people confessed their sins and wept for joy. Revival broke out in about forty coal mines.

Chapter 5

Revival in Scotland 1860

When the news of the American revival (1857-1859) reached Scotland, the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland came together to give thanks to God for what was happening across the ocean and to plead with God for a similar outpouring of His Spirit on Scotland. The second Sunday in July 1860 was set aside as a day of prayer for revival. The news spread quickly. Among the Presbyterians alone 40,549 members were found weekly in their prayer meetings, praying for revival. Apart from the 1,205 prayer meetings, there were also 129 new interdenominational prayer meetings per week. The prayer burden deepened when the Scottish people heard that God had visited Ulster in Northern Ireland with revival. Crowds up to 20,000 came to listen to speakers telling of the revival in other countries. The subject on everyone's lips was revival. In many places the crowds were so big that the churches were too small. Then people started to come to the Lord in growing numbers. In some places as many as 500 people stayed behind to be helped. There were no great preachers, advertising or any organising. The revival spread to the Orkney Islands and Shetland. Even five years afterwards, the Presbyterian Church reported that the revival was still continuing. Many 'good Christians' realised that goodness is not enough, and turned to Christ, the Crucified One. Others turned from sinning openly to lives of holiness, some weeping with joy for sins forgiven. James Edwin Orr said that careful research shows that 300 000 people were saved during the 1860 revival in Scotland. (In the same revival 650 000 people were converted in England.)

One of the first effects of the awakening in Britain was deepened interest and sympathy with the poor, the suffering, the people that lived on the periphery of society. The combination of evangelism and social upliftment was characteristic of the types of initiatives that started in those days. The lasting work of the Salvation Army that was started through the labours of William and Catherine Booth is a well-know example.

Chapter 6

The Jamaican Revival of 1860

The Jamaican churches heard about the revival in New York in 1857-1859 and began praying for a similar outpouring of the Holy Spirit in Jamaica. As people prayed, anticipation of an imminent revival heightened. By 1860, most Christians believed God would send them revival by year's end, but none anticipated the intensity of the showers of blessing they were about to receive.

The revival started in a Moravian chapel in September 1860. During a Friday morning service the revival broke out when a boy was praying and the whole church was gripped by the power of God. A young girl began to pray and then the Spirit came like a mighty rushing wind. Strong men fell on their knees, trembling and being shaken as if by an unseen hand.

Prayer meetings sprang up in several communities. The tide of evil was stopped. People accustomed to cursing now started to call on the Name of the One they used in vain.

The revival spilled over to other denominations: Anglicans, Baptists, Congregationalists, Methodists and Presbyterians. Preachers travelled to different places to preach and even before they started to preach, people came for prayer and help. One missionary preached in Bethel Town and suggested a dawn prayer meeting and 500 people came. The Spirit was poured out and a mighty work of God followed.

In the Mount Carey chapel a service was held and 1,200 peo-

ple attended. Many crowded outside the door and 3,000 unsaved came under deep conviction of sin in that community.

The Methodists reported that by 1863 the revival fires were still burning. Sales of Bibles increased. Still more and more people got saved. Church membership was rising sharply all over the island. Rum shops and gambling houses closed, marriages were restored and prodigal children returned home. It purified the churches, thousands got converted and churches were crowded. It also enraged those ungodly people who didn't want to humble themselves before God.

The nation of recently liberated slaves had discovered their real liberty in Christ, and most chose not to return to the bondage from which Christ had set them free.

The way forward

When we read these stories, we become aware of the power of the Holy Spirit. We live in a time where the powerlessness of the church is seen as totally normal, where we try to do the work in His Kingdom with psychology, different courses and programmes. There is nothing wrong with psychology, courses and programmes, but it can never replace the power, indwelling, the baptism and anointing of with the Holy Spirit. We need something different, more than just a renewal. New structures and the use of new technology (i.e. the Internet, Face Book, Twitter, etc.) can't replace the power of the Holy Spirit. Unfortunately, that is exactly what many people think.

The purpose of this short description of the world-wide revival of 1857-1862 is to show that God can do much more than we can pray or think. When you read eyewitness accounts of this revival, it becomes clear that people were awe-struck by the power of God, the magnitude and depth of the revival and the supernatural working of the Holy Spirit in this revival.

One of our problems is that the unnatural state of the church has become the norm. May we experience a holy dissatisfaction that will cause us to cry out to God, for nothing is impossible for Him. May He come, like in the 1857-1862 revival and fill the church with His Presence and with the power of the Holy Spirit. Why do we have churches that are empty today? Many books have been written about it. One thing I know: when God and God's power is present in a congregation, when God has poured out his Spirit on a congregation (as described in Acts 4:29-31 and the revival of 1860), there

will not be a church building in this nation that will be large enough to accommodate all the people that will come. It will break the power of sin and the lost will come to God, with or without sermons, with or without programmes, with or without new technology, the understanding of new trends, or the use of generation relevant music. Whilst reading the history of the 1857-1862 revival, a few things became clear to me:

- Take note of the spiritual condition of the USA, Scotland, Wales, Ireland and South Africa. The spiritual and social welfare condition in a country does not limit the power of God and what He can and will do in such circumstances.
- Take note of the importance of prayer in this revival.
- Take note of the deep conviction of sin when God starts to work. Compare it to what we consider to be revival today.
- Take note of the fruit of this revival: the social welfare conditions in the country changed radically; new power and life in the church; the church working on it's basic mandate: missions, reaching out to the need of the poor and preparing the believers for their service in the Kingdom. It isn't difficult to compare the spiritual condition of the church and the countries where revival broke out. The problems are still the same, the solution also.

What next?

Here are a few things you can do:

1. Your own relationship with God:

Each person must make sure where he/she stands with God. Here are a few basic questions that we should ask ourselves:

1. Is there any known and unconfessed sin in my life?
2. Are there any doubtful practices in my life?
3. Are there any specific instructions or commands in Scripture that I ignore?
4. Am I prepared to publicly confess Jesus as my Lord and Saviour?
5. Do I live ethically at my workplace?
6. Am I filled with the Holy Spirit and am I obedient to the Holy Spirit?

2. Start to pray:

All the revivals in the past can be traced back to between one to eleven people that started to pray. In many cases it was the youth that started to pray. Start by praying at least two or three times a week for revival. Put aside 20-30 minutes for this. Start a prayer group. Start one at work, at school or university or with a few members of your church. Call on God for spiritual revival in your congregation, the community, at work, in university or in school. Contact a few neighbouring congregations to pray with you for revival and ask God to pour out his Spirit on the church. Consider a 24/7 prayer watch. Every congregation can take one day per week to pray all 24 hours of that day. Once a month or once every two

months all the congregations can take a full week of 7 days to pray for revival night and day.

3. Share the message:

Motivate others to read on revival and talk to your friends about it. Give them this book and other books on revival to read.

4. Read the Word:

Seek the Lord's face through reading the Word to hear what is in His heart and then do whatever He tells you to do.

5. Preaching

There has been very few revivals without the powerful preaching of the Word of God. Be a visible and radical witness for Jesus Christ. Stand on the principles of the Word. Pray for the preachers and encourage them to preach the Word of God radically and fearlessly.

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