



# WAKE UP TO A WINDOW OF OPPORTUNITY

DAILY DEVOTIONALS  
LENT 2025

ANDREW TAYLOR

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DAILY DEVOTIONALS  
LENT 2025

It is time to 'wake up' and to pray for a  
'Word and Spirit' youth awakening ...  
... unto the ends of the earth

**Andrew Taylor**

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# Introduction

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## The time has come

**I**t is time to wake up and pray! Over 1,500 years ago St Benedict called his monks to listen to Jesus Christ's voice in Scripture. He said, 'Now at last we must wake up, as Scripture rouses us to do when it says. "Now it is time for us to rise from sleep."<sup>1</sup> The Roman Empire had fallen and over the centuries that followed, Christianity spread throughout Europe, primarily through Benedictine and Celtic missionary monks. They were devoted to singing and praying the Psalms. It is time for Europe to listen to Christ's voice in the Psalms again today. Listen to a song below drawn from Psalm 95 and the 'Prologue' to Benedict's *Rule*<sup>2</sup> (see Appendix on page 78) calling us to pray. (Open the camera app on your phone and point the camera at the QR code.<sup>3</sup>)

**'Wake up and hear the call'<sup>4</sup>**



In Mark 1:15, at the start of his ministry, Jesus said, 'The time has come, the kingdom of God is at hand.' In God's economy, there are unique *kairos* times — times of opportunity. Here in Europe, we are in a *kairos* time to pray for a 'Word and Spirit youth awakening leading to a mission movement unto the ends of the earth'. We are in a time and a season to build on Jesus, the Living Word — a time when God is drawing together 'on-fire' Southern hemisphere Christians from Africa, South America and Asia, who are coming, along with migrants, to Europe and our inner cities. Some of these are from unreached cultures; many are from oral cultures. The nations are coming to our continent. The Lord is gathering a family of nations, under his rule in his presence. It is time to call out for revival. It is time to 'Wake up and pray', and to prepare our hearts for the coming of our Bridegroom, King and Judge.

Prophecies have been spoken over our continent in times past. Smith Wigglesworth gave a prophecy in 1947: 'When the Word and Spirit come together, there will be the biggest movement of the Holy Spirit that the nation, and indeed the world ever seen. It

will mark the beginning of a revival that will eclipse anything that has been witnessed within these shores, even the Wesley and the Welsh revivals of former years.<sup>5</sup> It is time for the different streams to come together, both Word and Spirit, for us to learn from the Orthodox Church, the Catholic Church and the more traditional churches, to learn from the way they have engaged with the Scriptures and honoured them as a sacred text. It is time also to call out to God for a Pentecostal passion and for the 'breaking in' of God's kingdom today. Let's not miss the day of God's visitation. Let's not miss the season of opportunity that we are living in today, here in Europe, to pray for an awakening. We are in a unique window of opportunity when God is about to birth a new youth awakening unto a mission movement. It is time to line up with God's Living Word. It is time to line up with our high priestly intercessor Jesus Christ, who is seated at the right hand of the Father. Let's take the opportunity that God is giving us at such a time as this to line up with his will, for our continent and to call out to him for the birthing of an end-times youth awakening.

### **A time to build on Jesus, the Living Word**

**Each morning** this devotional will look for Jesus Christ's voice in the Psalms. For Augustine and the Church Fathers, both Christ and the Church speak frequently in the Psalms. When Augustine read the Psalms in the light of Paul's insights about Christ's crucified human humility, Scripture opened up to him. One way this happened was that he now saw Christ using the Psalms to explain himself. Christ invites us to pray with him, through the Psalms. Morning by morning let's hear his voice and obey. Let's build our lives on Jesus, the **Living Word**.

### **A time to pray for a youth awakening unto a mission movement**

**Each evening** this devotional will focus on the work of the **Spirit** in historic revivals, particularly in Wales in 1904–05 and the Hebrides in 1949. A verse from the Psalms will give inspiration along with testimony from these awakenings. Each evening will then encourage prayer for one of the 30 largest unreached people groups in Europe (listed in descending order opposite — data provided by Joshua Project<sup>6</sup>).

	Unreached people group	Location	Number	Primary religion	Primary language
1	South Asian, general	United Kingdom	3,062,000	Hinduism	Hindi
2	Turk	Germany	2,802,000	Islam	Turkish
3	Bosniak	Bosnia-Herzegovina	1,606,000	Islam	Bosnian
4	Gheg Albanian	Kosovo	1,500,000	Islam	Albanian
5	Libyan Arab	Italy	1,203,000	Islam	Arabic, Libyan
6	Moroccan Arab	Spain	792,000	Islam	Arabic, Moroccan
7	Kabyle Berber	France	710,000	Islam	Kabyle
8	Gujarati	UK	635,000	Hinduism	Gujarati
9	Turk	Bulgaria	503,000	Islam	Turkish
10	Macedonian Albanian	North Macedonia	521,000	Islam	Albanian
11	Arabic Algerian	France	474,000	Islam	Arabic, Moroccan
12	Jewish, French	France	442,000	Ethnic religion	French
13	Moroccan Arab	France	441,000	Islam	Arabic, Moroccan
14	Bosniak	Germany	435,000	Islam	Bosnian
15	South Asia, general	Italy	412,000	Islam	Urdu
16	SouthAsia, Bengali	United Kingdom	353,000	Islam	Bengali
17	Moroccan Arab	Belgium	344,000	Islam	Arabic, Moroccan
18	Turk	Netherlands	309,000	Islam	Turkish
19	Moroccan Arab	Netherlands	309,000	Islam	Arabic, Moroccan
20	Iraqi Arab	Germany	308,000	Islam	Arabic, Mesopotamia
21	Afghan, general	Germany	295,000	Islam	Dari
22	Jewish, English	United Kingdom	288,000	Ethnic religion	English
23	South Asian	France	273,000	Hinduism	Hindi
24	Crimean Tatar	Ukraine,	253,000	Islam	Crimean Tatar
25	Moroccan Arab	Germany	237,000	Islam	Arabic, Moroccan
26	Azerbaijani	Georgia	232,000	Islam	Azerbaijani
27	South Asian	Netherlands	230,000	Hinduism	Hindi
28	Turkish Cypriot	Cyprus	228,000	Islam	Turkish
29	Kurmanji Kurd	Germany	224,000	Islam	Kurdish, Northern
30	Turk	France	220,000	Islam	Turkish

## Prayer

Lord, help us to line up in prayer over the 40 days of Lent 2025 and see the birthing of a move of God that goes out from Europe to the ends of the earth. Lord, unleash a youth movement — wild horses to go throughout the world to the ends of the earth carrying the glory of the King of kings. Lord, give us your heart of compassion to shepherd and prepare the multi-ethnic mission movement that you are birthing on our doorstep with all these internationals landing on our shores every day.

## A time to build on Jesus, the Living Word

**E**ach morning this devotional will look for Jesus in the Psalms. In Psalm 2, David wrote, ‘you will break them with a rod of iron’. Prophetic intercession is like a lightning rod<sup>7</sup> ... a rod of iron going out from the mouth of Jesus seated at the right hand of the Father. I believe that this is what actually happened in the Upper Room over the 10 days before Pentecost — a well of prophetic intercession opened.

The Lord Jesus Christ poured out his Spirit on his disciples in the Upper Room. The disciples got the revelation that Jesus — the man who walked for three years on this earth with them — was also the man who is now seated at the right hand of God the Father. When the prayers of the disciples as they prayed Psalm 2 and Psalm 110 lined up with the prayers of King Jesus seated at the right hand of the Father, the word went out of Jesus’ mouth and struck the earth. A well of prophetic intercession was opened in the Upper Room, as Word and Spirit came together and it became a well of prophetic proclamation on Pentecost Sunday. Read Peter’s sermon in Acts 2. Peter clearly proclaimed in Acts 2:34 what they prayed — the revelation in Psalm 2 that Jesus was now seated at the right hand of the Father. He is the fulfilment of David’s psalm. The nations were now going to be his inheritance. It was a done deal! What had been prophesied throughout the Old Testament Scriptures was now accomplished. The apostles continued to pray Psalm 2 in Acts 4:25,26 when they encountered opposition, ‘the kings of the earth taking their stand’. Nothing would stop, no human king or earthly ruler would stop, the proclamation that Jesus is King ... and as they prayed the building shook.

### A time to build on Jesus, the Living Word

The words of the Hebrew Scriptures now made

sense ... because Jesus, the living Word of God was revealed. The Word of God was now preached throughout the book of Acts. We read that ‘The word of God spread’ five times in the book of Acts.<sup>8</sup> The word of life flowed from the city of God, Jerusalem. There was a flowing of the anointed word of God, a revelation of Jesus, the Word of God. The Bible (the black and white print) is not the Word. The Word of God is Jesus, revealed in the Holy Spirit-inspired Scriptures. There is a river of blood that flows through the Old Testament, the sacrifices that culminated with Jesus dying on the cross, his resurrection and his ascension. Jesus was the fulfilment of all those sacrifices, and as the light went on in that Upper Room, prophetic intercession precipitated a pouring out of the Holy Spirit. As John prophesied, Jesus was the one who would baptise with spirit and fire. The Holy Spirit (the Spirit of God) came down, and the Word went out from Jerusalem to Judea and Samaria and is still going out to the ends of the earth.

As we line up in the place of prayer with this revelation, as we call out to God to reveal himself afresh, as we pray the prophetic intercessory prayers, that Jesus is praying in the throne room of heaven right now, there will be an unblocking of the living Word of God, a building on Jesus, the Living Word. The word of God will spread from Jerusalem to Judea to Samaria and to the ends of the earth. Jesus’ prophecy that he will come again when the word has gone to every ethnic group will be fulfilled. It is time for us to pray for a new multi-ethnic Bible mission movement to the ends of the earth. It is time for an unleashing of Gen Z wild horses to go throughout the world to the ends of the earth carrying the glory of the King of kings.

## Prayer

Lord, we call out to you for a fresh revelation of Jesus, the Word of life. When Peter said, ‘You are the Christ, the Son of the living God,’ Jesus said, “On this rock, I will build my church.” Today we live in a window of opportunity. It is time, Lord, to open the windows of heaven and unblock the well, once again as you did in that Upper Room. Come and build your kingdom on earth as it is in heaven. We line up with your will: our food is to do your will and finish your work. My short life will soon pass: all I do I want to do for Christ. Come and build a work that will last on you, Lord Jesus Christ.



## A time to pray for a youth awakening unto a mission movement

**N**orman Grubb says that the Welsh Revival in 1904 ‘proved what the Holy Ghost could do through a company of believers, who were of one spirit and of one mind, as on the day of Pentecost.’<sup>9</sup> This was a distinctive of the Lewis Revival in 1949 too. We need another heaven-sent move of God in Europe! As the stories of past revivals are told, testimonies enable us to catch the wind of the Spirit and breathe faith in us that the Lord can do it again. The word ‘testimony’ in Hebrew is *aydooth*, which means ‘do it again’. Each evening devotional, inspired by a verse from the Psalms and testimony from the Welsh and Lewis Revivals, will encourage faith that the Lord will do it again, with the same authority and power as before.

In the spring of 1904 Evan Roberts came into a place of consecration and commissioning. Andy Byrd describes how ‘He entered a place of holy separation to the Lord’s purposes, pressing into God in the place of prayer. He went into several weeks of what he described as encounters with God. He began to pray a simple prayer: “God, a 100,000 salvations in Wales ... as you pour out your Spirit.” That prayer would be more than answered in months to come.’<sup>10</sup> Edwin Orr said, ‘The whole of Wales was affected. Hardened unbelievers were gloriously converted. Drunkards, thieves, gamblers were transformed. Confessions of awful sins were heard on every sides. Old debts were paid. Miners prayed together before commencing their shifts in the coalmines. Pit ponies, unused to the new kindness and clean language, without the usual kicks and curses, almost stopped work until they got adjusted. Courts had few cases to try. Whole football and rugby teams got converted and fixtures were abandoned. The young men were more concerned with praying than playing! Dance halls were deserted, the pubs were empty and not a few went out of business, but the

prayer meetings were crowded.’<sup>11</sup>

Under 50 years later, Peggy and Christine Smith — two women aged 82 and 84 years, one blind and the other doubled over with arthritis — got on their knees in 1949 in Barvas on the Isle of Lewis. At 10 o’clock in the evening on Tuesday and 10 o’clock on Friday evening, they waited and prayed until 4 o’clock in the morning, each week for many months. They had but one promise from God — Isaiah 44:3: ‘I will pour water on the thirsty land and streams on the dry ground; I will pour out my spirit on your offspring and my blessing on your descendants.’ They faced a desperate challenge — no young people in their church — but within months there was a whole community with no unsaved in the parish.

### A time to unblock wells of revival

How can we pray for the windows of heaven to be opened and revival rain to be poured out again? Just as Isaac reopened the well that was dug in the time of his father Abraham (Genesis 26:18), we can re-dig the wells of revival today. The Lord gave our spiritual forefathers a promise and they stood on that promise; they reminded the Lord that he is a covenant-keeping God. John Dawson said, ‘Covenant is much more than a sterile legal transaction. God’s covenants are covenants of divine passion initiated with those who have moved his great heart. Therefore, when we pray, “Lord, remember David (say), it evokes such memories in the Father, of the man after His own heart, that He cannot contain Himself. These memories stir Him to act.”’<sup>12</sup> Let’s remind the Lord in prayer that he is a covenant-keeping God, and if we live in those same British Isles today, that we are their spiritual descendants, and are thirsty for him to do it again today, in our day.

## Prayer

Lord, we remind you of Isaiah 44:3 — ‘I will pour water on the thirsty land and streams on the dry ground; I will pour out my spirit on your offspring and my blessing on your descendants’ – and the promise to Peggy and Christine Smith over 70 years ago. We remind you that you are a covenant-keeping God. You cannot fail us, Lord. We are thirsty, too, today. The revival in the Hebrides inspired the first generation of those serving with Youth With A Mission (YWAM) in Lausanne to go to the nations. We thirst for a youth awakening unto a mission movement again! The nations are on our doorstep in Europe. Pour out your Spirit again, rend the heavens and come down and may salvation spring up from the ground. Come seek the lost and heal the lame, that glory might be brought to your name, Lord Jesus!

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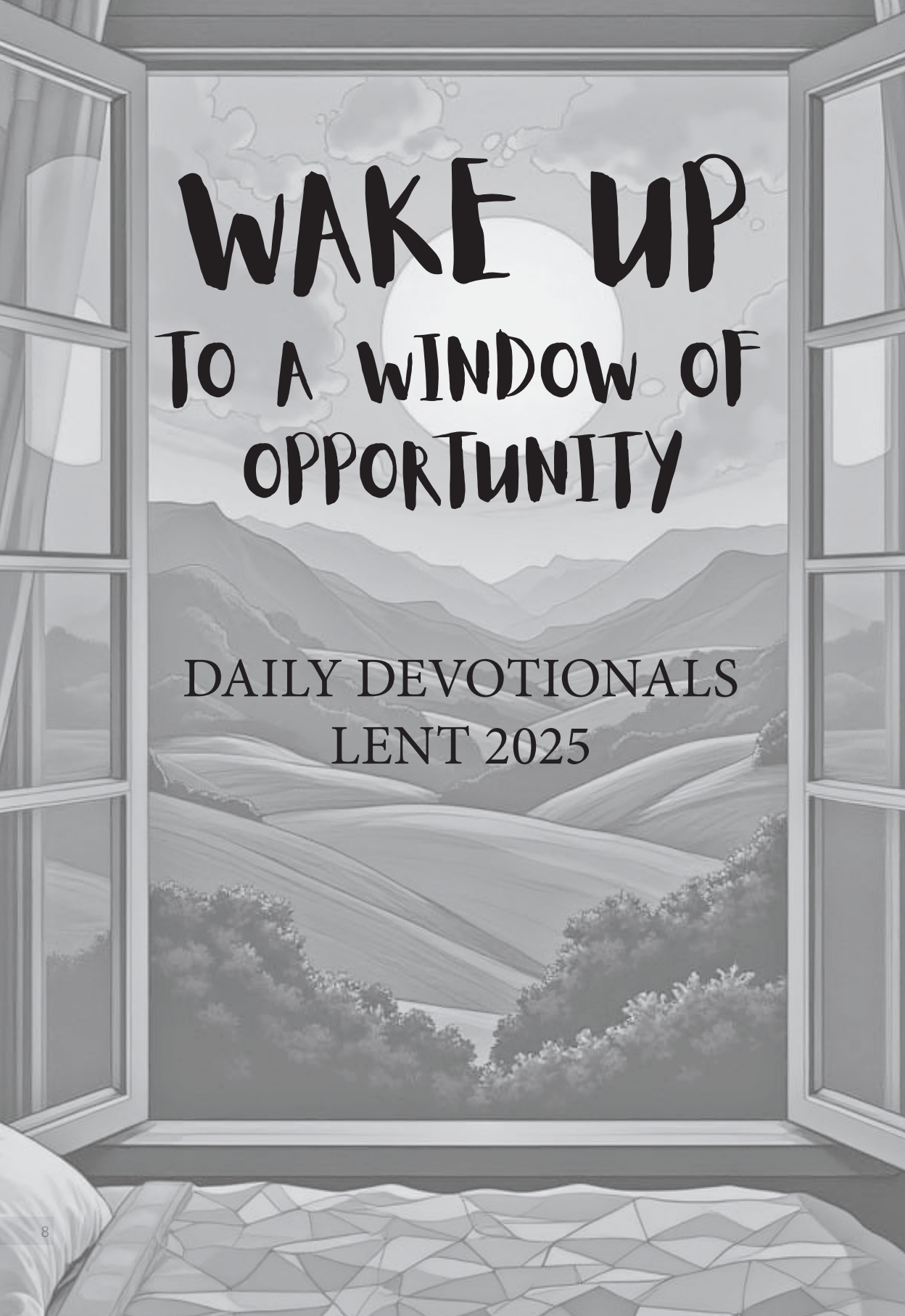
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**BENEDICT'S RULE**

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# WAKE UP TO A WINDOW OF OPPORTUNITY

DAILY DEVOTIONALS  
LENT 2025

## Spirit break out

*'Blessed is the man ... his delight is in the law of the Lord and on his law he meditates day and night ... He is like a tree planted by streams of water.'* (Psalm 1:1-3)

**T**he spirit of prayer for revival is rooted in intimacy. Jesus' life on earth was like a tree planted by streams of water. His delight was in the Scriptures and he was in constant communion with his Father in heaven. Waiting for a messiah, the Jews did not expect a carpenter from Nazareth. They hoped for a deliverer from the Roman occupation. He was an unlikely instrument, but in him was life, and his life was the light of the world. He was the incarnate, manifest presence of God the Father, carrying his heart-cry for restoration of fellowship with man. There is a deep cry running through Scripture — can you hear it? — for the dwelling of God to be with man once again. There is a dream in the heart of God flowing like a river through the Bible of 'One family of nations on earth, fearing and obeying him, loving one another and in his presence'. Jesus Christ came to earth. He seemed an unlikely instrument of God's purposes but he revealed a deep longing in the heart of God for intimate fellowship with mankind. He was rooted in God the Father like a tree, planted by streams of water, and his life has born much fruit, and continues to bear much fruit in seasons of refreshing across the globe.

The Lord's way before he pours out his Spirit in new measure is to raise up an unlikely instrument. John Wesley's biographer said in 1739, 'it was an unpredictable providence which led John Wesley to become an open-air evangelist. Field preaching was not congenial to him ... He was so very particular that he could not bear the slightest speck of dirt on his clerical attire. He hated noise and disturbance. He was accustomed to the academic calm of Oxford or a country rectory. That he should venture into the highways and byways and face the great unwashed is nothing short of a miracle.'<sup>13</sup>

Charles Finney was another unlikely revivalist. He was a lawyer and used by the Lord in the 1820s. 'Some complain that he was a disgrace to the ministerial profession that he talked like a lawyer at the bar; others that he talked in a colloquial manner, that he said "you" instead of "they" when preaching about sin and sinners, and he said it with such an emphasis as often to shock people, that he urged people with such vehemence, as if they might not have a moment to live.'<sup>14</sup>

Evan Roberts was yet another unlikely instrument for revival. When revival broke out in the chapels in Wales in December 1904, the newspaper reporters 'were amazed to find a young preacher who had no oratory, a prophet who would not pronounce fiery judgments.' A local man told one of the Pressman, regarding Roberts 'he seems to be just talking and explaining things and then giving a smiling invitation.'<sup>15</sup> But a key feature of his life was that he meditated on the Scriptures day and night. He grew up in a coalmining town in Wales and worked with other miners deep in a coalmine. Later he spent 12 hours a day working at his uncle's forge from Monday to Saturday, but he always had his Bible with him in the mine. In his first job in the mine he was a door-boy opening and shutting the ventilating doors: as a collier went past him, Roberts would give him a text and at the end of each shift, as the miner made his weary way past him, he would ask, 'What truth did you find in that text?' He spent hours memorising Scripture.<sup>16</sup> Roberts' life of devotion bore fruit in season, and in 1904 a Holy Spirit revival broke out. The devotion of this young miner to the Word and the Holy Spirit bore much fruit, with 100,000 coming to Christ, and today 500 million see the Welsh Revival as when their movements began. Let's cry for Holy Spirit break out once again!

## Prayer

We pray for the Bengali-speaking South Asians 'in the United Kingdom, the 16th largest unreached people group in Europe, whose language is Bengali and whose primary religion is Islam. There are 353,000, 1.0% Christian and 0.13% evangelical.'<sup>17</sup> Thank you, Lord, that you are gathering one family of nations under your rule and into your presence in Europe. We pray for Christians to demonstrate compassion for their Bengali neighbours and for a fresh 'breaking out' of your Spirit among the Bengali-speaking Asians in the UK.



## Jesus is King: an invitation to pray with him

*'I have installed my king on Zion, my holy hill.'* (Psalm 2:6)

In his book *Finding God in the Psalms*, NT Wright says that the main problem in the Western world today is that we have forgotten that Jesus is King.<sup>18</sup> We need to read the Psalms, because they transform our worldview. Today, we have adopted a very different worldview from the biblical one and Wright describes our worldview today as Epicurean. 'Epicurus proposed that the world was not created by God or the gods and ... our world and our own lives were simply part of the continuing self-developing cosmos in which change, development, decay and death itself operated entirely under their own steam ... Our world has largely adopted this worldview as the norm.'<sup>19</sup> This worldview has hindered us from seeing the person of the Lord Jesus Christ, the Living Word, revealed figuratively in the Old Testament and the Psalms.

As Wright says, we can 'live and pray'<sup>20</sup> and inhabit the worldview of the Psalms. In Psalm 2, a prophetic psalm written by King David, we are invited to partner with Jesus in praying for the world. Charles Spurgeon described Psalm 2 as a dramatic 'fourfold picture',<sup>21</sup> resembling a theatrical drama, with a curtain opening and closing on each Act. He believed this four-act drama relates to the 'latter-day'.<sup>22</sup> Although there is a lot of criticism and ridicule of Jesus and his followers today, we have not yet come to a day where there is a unified global coalition of national leaders and leaders of business, government, media, religion, education, family and arts/entertainment with a raging hatred against Jesus (Act 1 of the drama), but that day will come and it is coming soon (Act 2). In one of the most terrifying statements in the Bible, the Father laughs in a mocking tone at the raging kings and rulers of the nations. Right now, Jesus is seated at the

right hand of the Father and has been there for 2,000 years, and in verses 7–9 (Act 3) David eavesdrops on the conversation between the Father and the Son. The Father tells the Son that he will inherit the raging nations and peoples. Jesus' response to the rage and to the Father is an intercessory declaration that will be like a rod of iron, and will dash the nations into pieces. In Acts 4, the Early Church encountered huge opposition and prayed Psalm 2, that God would put the rod of his mouth in the mouth of the Church. They declared that all opposition would be dashed to pieces, and the place where they gathered was shaken and they were filled with the Holy Spirit. David encourages kings to serve the Lord Jesus in humility and adoration (Act 4).

God is raising up an army of revival intercessors across the earth, not known by men, but known in heaven. Psalm 2:9 will be the fruit of their intercession.<sup>23</sup> This is how he will rule the nations, and we can partner with him in seeing his inheritance come forth. His 'rod' will come out of the mouth of the Church, destroying the power of the evil one in the earth. God is preparing us to intercede for the nations, and on our lips his words will be a rod of iron, as we pray for his kingdom to come. In times of shaking, he is our secure foundation. We need to build on a revelation of the resurrected Christ, who came on a donkey, but will come on a horse as a warrior king. Will we follow Jesus humbly through the refinement of these challenging days, facing opposition, betrayal and shakings like he did, and line up with his passion for the nations in prayer? Jesus Christ, King and High Priest, is praying Psalm 2. Let's respond to this invitation and pray with the King.

## Prayer

Listen to a song drawn from Psalm 2 and pray with Jesus Christ our King.



'Rod of iron'<sup>24</sup>

## May your glory that is above come down today!

*'You have set your glory above the heavens.'* (Psalm 8:1b)

Jesus quotes Psalm 8 in Matthew 21:16 when children in the temple hail him as Messiah. There was also childlike innocence and a wonder for God's creation about Evan Roberts. His biographer Phillips said, 'To him the mountains revealed the immutability of the God-head ... the sun leads his mind to the Sun of Righteousness ... fascinating to him are the moon and the stars and he loves to gaze upon them.'<sup>25</sup>

When, in the early days of the Welsh Revival in Pontypridd Chapel, a presiding minister read out the names of 33 converts, Roberts threw his arms around the surprised clergyman and shouted ecstatically 'Is this not glorious?' It is not just the purpose of creation to give glory to God. It is also the purpose of the gospel that God will receive 'acknowledged glory' through evangelism and revival. It is all 'unto God' receiving 'glory'.

Habakkuk, when praying for a renewing or reviving of God's work, describes what he saw in answer to his prayer as: 'God came ... his glory covered the heavens and the earth was full of his praise. His brightness was like the light rays, flashed from his hand; and there he veiled his power.'

Arthur Wallis, inspired by the recent Lewis Awakening and stories from the Welsh Revival, said: 'In evangelism man takes the initiative, that it (is) with the prompting of the Holy Spirit. In revival the initiative is solely God's. Revival is more than big meetings, and it's more than evangelism. Revival is a visitation from God.'<sup>26</sup> Roberts had received a visitation from God, who had apprehended him. Brinley Evans, editor of the *Llanelli Mercury*, interviewed Roberts. He said 'he has the eyes of an enthusiast and the tenacity, purpose and strength of

the will of which martyrs are made ... He tells "the old, old story" as he would to a child, and instead of striking terror into the hearts of his audience, he wins them over by appealing to the conscience and all that is best in man. At later stages of his meetings however, when the air is charged with electricity, Mr Roberts himself becomes powerfully moved and walks up and down the aisles of the chapel in a state of ecstatic fervour.'<sup>27</sup>

'Revival is such a display of God's holiness and power that often human personalities are overshadowed and human programs abandoned. It is God breaking into the consciousness of men in majesty and glory.'<sup>28</sup> Isaiah's response to God's rebellious people who had grieved his Spirit was to call out, 'Oh that thou wouldst rend the heavens and come down, that the mountains might quake at Thy presence ... to make the name known to the adversaries, and that the nations might tremble at thy presence.' Mark the Gospel writer says about Jesus at his baptism, 'And when he came up out of the water immediately he saw the heavens being torn open and the Spirit descending on him like a dove.'<sup>29</sup> Does Mark see Jesus' coming, the breaking open of the heavens and glory coming down, as answer to Isaiah's prayer? When we pray for revival, we are praying for heaven to come down, a tangible expression of heaven on earth. Corey Russell has said, 'Jesus' manifest presence is ... when the holiness of God goes public, when the glory of God goes public, when God's presence breaks in and when God shifts that landscape, where there is a tangible geographical zone, and the Lord breaks into bars and into crack houses.'<sup>30</sup>

## Prayer

We pray for 'the Kurmanji Kurds in Germany, 'the 29th largest unreached people group in Europe, whose language is Kurdish, Northern and whose primary religion is Islam. There are 224,000 and they are 0.2% Christian and 0.05% evangelical.'<sup>31</sup> The Kurds have suffered ill-treatment and violence and many migrated to the West. We pray that this people group, which is one of the largest ethnolinguistic people groups in the world without their own nation, would be received hospitably by the German Church. May your glory that is above come down on the Kurmanji Kurds in Germany, we pray.

## Jesus Christ, the Righteous Judge who vindicates the oppressed

*‘The Lord is a refuge for the oppressed, a stronghold in times of trouble.’ (Psalm 9:9)*

**N**T Wright says that the Psalms are songs and poems that help us not just to understand the ancient worldview but actually to inhabit and celebrate it.<sup>32</sup> This is a worldview in which, contrary to modern assumptions, God’s time, space and matter intersect with ours. Paul in the New Testament says we are God’s workmanship (Ephesians 2:10), which is *poemia* in the Greek. Just as ‘we are called to be living, breathing, singing poems’, and we come in all shapes and sizes, so do the poems in the Bible. These poems help transform our imagination. As we pray or sing the Psalms God’s worldview becomes ours, a worldview that was and is uniquely Jesus’ worldview.

Psalm 9 is a beautiful symmetrical psalm, with a structure that biblical scholars call chiasmic.<sup>33</sup> As I read this symmetrical psalm, and try to ‘live in’ or ‘inhabit’ it, I am reminded of being given a kaleidoscope as a child, putting it to my eyes and seeing a wonderful, symmetrical, colourful picture, then turning it and seeing a different stunning, symmetrical picture, and then turning it again. One second I am confronted with the truth that the Lord Jesus Christ is judge, (vv7–8), the next that he has a heart for the poor and the oppressed (vv9–10), then that he avenges those that shed blood.

I am also reminded of how Jesus addresses the proud and then suddenly addresses the poor, in Matthew 11:20–30 (The Message): ‘Next Jesus unleashed on the cities where he had worked the hardest but whose people had responded the least, shrugging their shoulders and going their own way. “Doom to you, Chorazin! Doom, Bethsaida! If Tyre and Sidon had seen half of the powerful miracles you have seen, they would have been on their knees

in a minute. At Judgment Day they’ll get off easy compared to you. And Capernaum! With all your peacock strutting, you are going to end up in the abyss. If the people of Sodom had had your chances, the city would still be around. At Judgment Day they’ll get off easy compared to you.” Abruptly Jesus broke into prayer: “Thank you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth. You’ve concealed your ways from sophisticates and know-it-alls, but spelled them out clearly to ordinary people. Yes, Father, that’s the way you like to work. The Father has given me all these things to do and say. This is a unique Father-Son operation, coming out of Father and Son intimacies and knowledge. No one knows the Son the way the Father does, nor the Father the way the Son does. But I’m not keeping it to myself; I’m ready to go over it line by line with anyone willing to listen. Are you tired? Worn out? Burned out on religion? Come to me. Get away with me and you’ll recover your life. I’ll show you how to take a real rest. Walk with me and work with me — watch how I do it. Learn the unforced rhythms of grace. I won’t lay anything heavy or ill-fitting on you. Keep company with me and you’ll learn to live freely and lightly.”<sup>34</sup>

It is only after this condemnation of the proud that Jesus switches and starts talking tenderly to the poor. Reading Psalm 9:7–10 through the lens of Jesus Christ the exegete, I see him as a refuge for the poor and oppressed and a stronghold in times of trouble. Like those poor who heard him preach in Matthew 11, we can see he is also the one who judges the world in righteousness and governs the people with justice (Psalm 9:8). In Psalm 2 we saw Jesus as our King, in Psalm 8 we saw him as our Bridegroom. He is our Judge in Psalm 9.

## Prayer

Listen to a song drawn from Psalm 9 and Matthew 11, and pray with Jesus our refuge and Judge.



‘My righteous Judge and refuge’<sup>35</sup>



## The Lord hears the cry of the oppressed today

*'You hear, O Lord, the desire of the afflicted; you encourage them and listen to their cry, defending the fatherless and the oppressed.'* (Psalm 10:17)

**T**he Jewish people were oppressed by the Roman occupation 2,000 years ago. Jesus Christ came to this oppressed nation, which had been living in great darkness, repeatedly occupied and oppressed by neighbouring nations — Babylonians, Persians, Greeks and then Romans. The Lord heard the cry of his people as they waited for the promised Messiah. A light dawned on a nation that had been living in darkness, and a saviour was born. The psalmist wrote in Psalm 10, 'You hear, O Lord, the desire of the afflicted; you encourage them and listen to their cry, defending the fatherless and the oppressed.'

In 1904, the working families in Wales lived dangerous and difficult oppressed lives in mining towns and villages. The life a collier working in the mines in Wales in the 1890s was oppressive. When working underground, conditions were difficult and dangerous. Mines were completely dark, with no light. Tallow candles made from animal fat were the cheapest light available. Miners had to buy their own. Conditions were cramped. Some of the underground roadways were as little to 60–120cm in height. Mine-owners did not want to increase their cost by making them bigger. So small children were often used to push tubs or large baskets of coal on the sleds along the low and narrow roadways. 'The owners of the coal mines needed a workforce that would produce coal as cheaply as possible. A miner was paid according to how much coal he produced, not how many hours he worked. Some miners would take their whole families underground to try to get as much coal as possible, so they could earn more money. Each member of the family would be given a different job to do which help the miner get as much

coal as possible.'<sup>36</sup>

Evan Roberts' father Henry sustained a serious leg injury and was forced to take his son out of school and work in the colliery. It was during this time, when working long hours in the pit, that Evan asked the Lord to forgive him his sins. On one occasion he came home from a long shift underground to bathe and eat and walked to Moriah Chapel. He felt challenged that he should wait faithfully for the coming of the Holy Spirit.<sup>37</sup> By this time Roberts had worked in a mine, served at a school for miner's children and worked in his uncle's forge, and now he felt the leading to prepare for ministry. His motive was 'a passionate desire for the privilege of proclaiming Christ to the lost.' This was at a time of growing expectation of revival in South Cardiganshire in Wales. Many churches were filled with a new energy and vision.<sup>38</sup> In Newquay, a revival preacher came to a little chapel and declared that he believed a revival was coming. A 14-year-old girl, Flory Evans, declared: 'I love Jesus with all my heart': all the teenagers cried out to God for forgiveness because of one young girl who crossed the line in her conviction. There are stirrings of another move of the Holy Spirit among young people in Europe today, at time when we are experiencing a different type of oppression. Lord, hear our cry today!

Today, in Europe, we live under many types of oppression, wars and rumours of wars, coercion into conformity through political correctness, deceptive manipulation of information by media companies, diminishing freedom of expression, the sidelining of biblical vision and values, gender confusion, and extreme emphasis of climate change.<sup>39</sup>

## Prayer

We pray for the Bosniaks in Bosnia-Herzegovina, 'the third largest unreached people group in Europe, whose language is Bosnian and whose primary religion is Islam. There are 1,606,000 and they are 0.03% Christian and 0.03% evangelical.'<sup>40</sup> We pray for your heart, Lord, for the Bosniaks. So many Muslim men and boys were slaughtered in the genocide in Srebrenica in 1995, the worst atrocity in Europe since the Second World War. So very few of the Bosniaks in Bosnia-Herzegovina have accepted Christ. You are a refuge, Lord Jesus, for the oppressed, a stronghold in times of trouble. Hear the cry of this oppressed people today, we pray.

## The Church's one foundation is Jesus Christ, the Righteous One

*'When the foundations are being destroyed what can the righteous do? The Lord is in his holy temple, the Lord's throne is in heaven, for the Lord is righteous, he loves justice, upright men will see his face' (Psalm 11:3,4a,7)*

Watching the TV world news, we are confronted with the reality that we live in stormy times for the Western world. Global pandemics, increasingly threatening signs of war, financial instability and foundational teachings of the Church on sexuality are being questioned. Reading Psalm 11:3 transforms our view of today's world: it disturbs us, the foundations are being destroyed, what can the righteous do? John Bevere says, 'Can you imagine erecting a building without a foundation?'<sup>41</sup> Are there any foundations that you and I need to attend to personally that are being destroyed or even neglected?

### The praying of the Psalms corporately

This is a foundation that has been neglected by many. Eugene Peterson says, 'If we dismiss the Psalms, preferring a more up-to-date and less demanding school of prayer, we will not be without grace, but we will miss the centre where Christ worked in his praying. Christ prayed the Psalms — the Christian community was early convinced that he continues praying them through us as we pray them. The practice of Christians praying the Psalms is straightforward: simply pray through the Psalms, psalm by psalm, regularly. That's it: open our Bibles to the book of Psalms and pray them — sequentially, regularly, faithfully across a lifetime. This is how most Christians for most of the centuries have matured in prayer.'<sup>42</sup> In 1940, Dietrich Bonhoeffer published his final book before his death, *The Psalms: The Prayer Book of the Bible*.<sup>43</sup> He urged Christians to recover the Psalms as the prayer book of Jesus. Bonhoeffer was arrested and imprisoned three years later, and hanged in 1945.

### Teaching on eternal judgment

Bevere quotes Hebrews 6:1–2: 'Therefore leaving the discussion of the elementary principles of Christ,

let us go on to perfection, not laying again the foundation of ... repentance from dead works and of faith toward God and of instruction about washings, the laying on of hands, the resurrection of the dead and eternal judgment.'<sup>44</sup> He says, 'The fact is, all of us will give an account for the way we lived. What transpires at this judgment will last forever — it's eternal! For the believer, it is referred to as "the judgment seat of Christ." At this judgment seat we will not be judged for our repented sins — they have already been eradicated by the blood of Jesus. God has removed our sins as far from us as the east is from the west.' (Psalm 103:12) Again, God says, 'I will forgive their wickedness, and I will never again remember their sins.' (Hebrews 8:12) So what will our judgment entail? We'll be examined regarding how we lived as believers, and both good and bad will be examined. Bevere says, 'I find many believers are unaware of the judgment they will face or at best they are only familiar with the term but haven't investigated it thoroughly. How are believers building their lives on Christ without this elementary truth.'

### Salvation by allegiance alone

In Matthew Bates' provocative book *Salvation by Allegiance Alone*, Scott McKnight says in the foreword, that 'The Church's one foundation is Jesus Christ her Lord. On the absolutely secure foundation of Jesus, the true gospel sits as a secondary substructure and undergirding the universal Church. So when the gospel is compromised, despite its unshakeable foundation, the building leans sways and slides. The superficiality of America's evangelicalism and gospel-obsession with security and assurance has led me at times to wonder if we should not teach justification by discipleship or justification by faithfulness but Bates has landed on a beautifully and biblically sound term: allegiance.'<sup>45</sup>

## Prayer

Psalm 11 and Psalm 62 both seem to emphasise foundations. We will not be a 'leaning wall' or 'tottering fence' (Psalm 62:3) but find our 'rest in God' (v5), our rock and our salvation (v6) in a season when the nations are being shaken. May you be my foundation, Lord Jesus Christ. Lord, hear my cry!

# The Lord consecrates vessels with clean hands and a pure heart

*‘Lord, who may dwell in your sanctuary? Who may live on your holy hill?’  
(Psalm 11:3,4a,7)*

In the spring of 1904 Evan Roberts came into a place of consecration and commissioning. ‘He entered a place of holy separation to the Lord’s purposes. He was pressing into God in the place of prayer. He went into several weeks of what he described as encounters with God. His family would see him go into these encounters with God and see him tremble so much they were concerned for his health. They thought something was happening to him, but he would explain to them after the encounter, “No, this was God!” He had moved now from faithfulness and a burden for revival to a place of being absolutely consumed with the cause of revival and of Jesus being famous in Wales and being worshipped once again. ‘He felt that he had received the filling of the Spirit, and he preached on the text, “Be not drunk with wine, but be filled with the Spirit.” (Ephesians 5:18) He explained the four points in greater detail. 1. Confess all known sin. 2. Search out all secret and doubtful things. 3. Confess the Lord Jesus openly. 4. Pledge your word that you will fully obey the Spirit.’<sup>46</sup> In that season he became so convinced that revival was coming to Wales that no-one could talk him out of it. He began to pray a simple prayer. “God a 100,000 salvations in Wales ... as you pour out your Spirit.” That prayer would be more than answered in months to come. He had gone from radical and faithful to consumed and wholehearted.<sup>47</sup>

Roberts entered training for the ministry in September 1904. He heard stories from a minister, Evan Phillips, of the 1859 revival. There was a conflict growing in his heart between desires to study and longings to witness. He heard some messages from Rev Seth Joshua, who was carrying a burden for revival.

Michael Marcel says: ‘A 7.00am service was closed by Seth Joshua praying, “Oh Lord, do this,

and this, and this, and bend us.” Roberts did not hear any of the words except “bend us”. On leaving the room he prayed that the Lord would bend them. Joshua was full of expectation going into the 9.00am meeting. Roberts wrote, “I felt in going to the meeting that I was compelled to pray. When the meeting commenced many prayed, and I asked the Holy Spirit, ‘Shall I pray now?’ ‘No,’ said the Spirit in answer. Shortly some wonderful influence came over me. After many had prayed I felt some living energy or force entering my bosom, it held my breath, my legs trembled terribly; this living energy increased and increased as one after the other prayed until it nearly burst me, and as each finished I asked, ‘Shall I pray now?’ When someone finished I prayed. My bosom boiled all through, and had it not been that I prayed, I would have burst. What boiled in my bosom? The verse, ‘for God commendeth His love’. I fell on my knees, with my arms outstretched on the seat before me, the perspiration poured down my face and my tears streamed quickly until I thought that the blood came out. Soon Mrs Davies, Mona, New Quay, came to wipe my perspiration, Magdalen Phillips stood on my right, and Maud Davies on my left. It was awful on me for about two minutes. I cried — ‘Bend me, bend me, bend me; Oh! Oh! Oh! Oh! Oh!’ ... What came to mind after this was, the bending in the day of judgment. Then I was filled with sympathy for the people who will have to bend in judgment day, and I wept. Afterwards, the salvation of souls weighed heavily on me. I felt on fire for going through the whole of Wales to tell the people about the Saviour.” It was in this way that Roberts was filled with Holy Spirit and set on fire for Wales.<sup>48</sup>

‘Bend us, O God!’ This little phrase would become the watchword of the Welsh Revival.

## Prayer

We pray for English-speaking Jews ‘in the United Kingdom, the 22nd largest unreached people group in Europe, whose language is English and whose primary religion is the Jewish faith. There are 288,000, 0.5% Christian and 0.1% evangelical.’<sup>49</sup> Lord, the UK is home to the world’s fifth largest Jewish population, reveal Jesus the Messiah to them. The Jewish people are a nation of priests separated for your holy purposes. Remove the veil from their eyes, we pray.

## Jesus Christ, the Living Word, is our heavenly Bridegroom

*‘The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of his hands.’ (Psalm 19:1)*

In CS Lewis’ *The Magician’s Nephew*, Narnia was created. Lewis writes: ‘In the vast, formless void of this new world, (there is) a mystic song. From the darkness, a lion emerges, his voice resounding through the emptiness. This is Aslan, the great lion and the embodiment of good and creativity. Aslan’s beautiful song starts painting brushstrokes of creation, bringing light, landscapes, and creatures to life.’<sup>50</sup> Lewis is clearly inspired by the Bible, with Aslan ‘a type’ of Jesus, the Living Word. It might surprise us, however, that the Orthodox Bible footnotes interpret ‘the word’ in Psalm 19 as Jesus. ‘Creation bore witness to the glory of God revealed in Jesus’ incarnation (verses 1–5) and in his birth from the womb of the virgin. He was likened to the Sun rising from the east, to a bridegroom coming from his chamber, and to a strong man ready to run a race, to bring salvation to the world (verses 6–15).’ Is this a bit of a stretch for the Orthodox Church to interpret Scripture this way?

When the apostle John used the word *logos* in John 1:1 and 1 John 1, he was using a word that had profound meaning. Greek philosophy had such a strong prevailing influence on the world. A fundamental concept for Heraclitus, an early Greek philosopher, was the concept of *logos*, which he coined to mean a universal law that unites the cosmos.<sup>51</sup> When John used the word *logos* in John 1:1 (‘In the beginning was the Word’) he was saying ‘Jesus is the spoken word that created everything’ and also ‘Jesus is the reason why’. This developed the Church Fathers’ reading of the Old Testament and the Psalms. For the Early Church we know from the

story of Cleopas in Luke that the death, resurrection and ascension of Jesus was a huge paradigm shift.

Rowan Williams says, ‘It took 100 years to come to terms with the truth that the Messiah of the Old Testament came as a man and suffered and died a horrifying death.’<sup>52</sup> There had been two puzzles in the prevailing classical Greek understanding of the world that were solved in the coming of Jesus, ‘The first puzzle was the relationship between what the Greeks called the intelligible and the sensible, what we call the spiritual and the material. The other great unsolved puzzle arose from the relationship between what the ancients called virtue and fortune. It seemed that human life even at its bravest and most heroic is finally a losing battle against the irresistible power of fate or fortune.’<sup>53</sup> Through the coming of Jesus, the divine *logos*, ‘the puzzle was solved, the material and spiritual were one in Christ and a perfectly virtuous God become man and conquered fate’<sup>54</sup> and the puzzle was solved. ‘The Early Church Fathers began to see that the gospels portrayed Jesus using the Psalms to explain his identity, his message and above all his passion, and Christians began to read the Psalter as the book of Christ in another way, not only as an objective account that fulfilled prophecy but also as spiritual revelation of his soul, in fact as a virtual transcript of his inner life while accomplishing the work of redemption. Paul particularly taught Christians to read the Psalms as echoes of the voice of Christ.’<sup>55</sup> If Paul did this, can’t we? Or are we disciples of the Enlightenment Epicurean worldview and are we unwilling to change?

## Prayer

Listen to a song drawn from Psalm 19 and read the Psalm as an echo of the voice of Christ.



‘The heavens shout God’s glory’<sup>56</sup>

## The Lord gives victory to his anointed

*'Now this I know: the Lord gives victory to his anointed. He answers him from his heavenly sanctuary with the victorious power of his right hand.'* (Psalm 20:6)

**E**van Roberts, after surrendering to the Lord and calling out to the Lord to bend him, was consumed with the belief that revival would come to Wales. There was a need for Wales to bend back to Jesus in obedience and wholeheartedness. That word was like electricity to Roberts. Having had his life-changing 'Lord, bend us!' encounter, he felt impelled by God to go home from Bible college, and, though still unqualified, to gather helpers and win all who would obey the Spirit. 'Now was the time for Wales.'<sup>57</sup>

On 1 November 1904 he returned to his hometown and to Moriah Chapel. His mother asked why he had returned, saying that there was nothing at Moriah Chapel for him. Roberts said: 'God has called me to this in Wales. God is alive in Wales. We are going to have a meeting in every place.'<sup>58</sup> Rev Thomas Francis, who saw Roberts on his return, said: 'At midday on Wednesday, November 2nd, there hurried towards me someone who at first sight looked like Evan John Roberts. I could not believe my eyes, but it was he. Yet not the same. He had been a reserved, very aloof boy, who was very independent of spirit. Now he was a new man, so supple and flexible. Every muscle and sinew was thrilling with new life abundant, and his face was like a June sun.'<sup>59</sup>

Roberts had laid hold of Jesus' promise that he would send his Holy Spirit. He would teach his gatherings to pray: 'Send the Spirit now ... Send the Spirit powerfully now ... Send the Spirit more powerfully now ... Send the Spirit more powerfully now for Jesus Christ's sake.'<sup>60</sup> He had prevailed in prayer. Daniel 11:32 says 'but the people that do know their God, shall prevail and prosper' (Good News Version). Andrew Murray says, 'Of all the traits of a life like Christ there is none higher

and more glorious than conformity to him in the work that now engages him without ceasing in the Father's presence — His all-prevailing intercession ... You have made us kings and priests unto God. Both in the king and the priest the chief thing is power, influence, blessing. In the king it is the power coming downward; in the priest, the power rising upward, prevailing with God ... In our blessed Priest-King, Jesus Christ, the kingly power is founded on the priestly. "He is able to save to the uttermost, because he ever lives to make intercession."<sup>61</sup>

Wesley Duewel says, 'The great need of our world and nation and our churches is people who know how to prevail in prayer. Moments of pious wishes blandly expressed once or twice a day? ... No! They will bring little change on Earth or among the people ... kind thoughts expressed to him in five or six sentences after reading a paragraph or two of mildly religious sentiments once a day from some devotional writing ... will not bring the kingdom of God to earth or shake the gates of hell and repel the attacks of evil on our culture and on our civilisation ... Results not beautiful words are the test of prevailing prayer. Results not mere words are the test of prevailing prayer. Results not mere sanctimonious devotional moments are the hallmark of the true intercessor. We need mighty answers to prayer ... The vast majority of Christians know very little about prevailing prayer, wrestling in prayer, or prayer warfare. We have seen too few demonstrations of prevailing prayer ... We have known too few prayer warriors who had intercessory power with God and with people ... too few Elijah-type intercessors who were just like us ... (James 5:16–18).'<sup>62</sup>

## Prayer

We pray for the Kabyle Berber 'in France, the seventh largest unreached people group in Europe, whose language is Kabyle and whose primary religion is Islam. They are 710,000, 3% Christian and 1.5% evangelical.'<sup>63</sup> Lord, raise up a missionary witness in France to the Kabyle Berber, who are now immigrants in France. Send the Spirit now ... Send the Spirit powerfully now ... Send the Spirit more powerfully now ... Send the Spirit more powerfully now for Jesus Christ's sake ... on the Kabyle Berber and may your Church in France reach out in love, we pray.



## Jesus Christ, the victorious King over all the earth

*'All the ends of the Earth will remember and turn to the Lord, and all the families of the nations will bow down before him, for the dominion belongs to the Lord and he rules over the nations.'* (Psalm 22:27–28)

On the road to Emmaus with Cleopas and his companions, Jesus said, in Luke 24:25–27, ‘how foolish you are and how slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken ... did not the Christ have to suffer these things and then enter his glory? And beginning with Moses and all the prophets, [he] explained to them what was said in all the Scriptures concerning himself.’<sup>64</sup> Most Bible colleges and theological colleges today focus more on original audience, original author and original situation. Craig Carter argues that if you are trying to read the Bible like any other book, trying to understand what the **original author** meant to communicate to the **original audience** in the **original situation, then your interpretation is wrong or at the very least highly misleading.**<sup>65</sup> He also says the Enlightenment has ‘cast a dark shadow over the Scriptures and their Christological meaning ... in other words Jesus Christ has been hidden and obscured.’<sup>66</sup>

How did Jesus interpret the Scriptures concerning himself on the road to Emmaus? Would it not have been fascinating to have been on that road with him? I wonder which passages in the Old Testament Scriptures he would have explained concerning himself? The Church Fathers interpreted Psalm 22 and Isaiah 53 as prophetically speaking of Jesus and his victory. Nicky Gumbel says<sup>67</sup>, ‘Psalm 22 starts off with despair and suffering (v1) and describes prophetically the death of Jesus, ending with a great cry of victory: “He has done it!” (v31). God “has not despised or scorned the suffering of the afflicted one; he has not hidden his face from him but has listened to his cry for help” (v24). This victory will

lead to people all over the world turning “to the Lord” (v27). All the nations will bow down before him (v27b). This victory will be proclaimed: they shall come and shall declare his righteousness to a people yet to be born — that he has done it.’ If we see Jesus, prophetically revealed in Psalm 22, many years before he walked on this earth, we can be encouraged today that Jesus, at the very lowest point of his life — crucified and God-forsaken — trusted in God to deliver him. The apparent defeat of the cross turned out to be the greatest victory of all time. If you are at a low point, you can draw encouragement that Jesus conquered death. You and I can read of his victory in Psalm 22 and read of his victory in Romans 8:37–39 ... ‘neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present or the future nor any powers, neither height nor depth nor anything else in creation will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.’<sup>68</sup>

For the Church Fathers, not just the Psalms but the Old Testament simply is Jesus Christ — the Word made flesh. Recently, NT Wright wrote a book entitled *How God Became King*.<sup>69</sup> He says that the fundamental problem at the heart of Christianity today in the West, is that we have forgotten what the four gospels are all about. The truth is that Jesus is King, a truth that we have forgotten, he says. Could it be that we have forgotten that Jesus is King and Jesus has been obscured, largely because we have been using an Enlightenment method of interpretation for 400 years, treating the Bible like any other book rather than as a sacred text?

## Prayer

Listen to a song drawn from Psalm 22 and pray with Jesus Christ.



‘Why’ve you forsaken me God’<sup>70</sup>

## No greater ministry and no leadership more influential than intercession

*'You anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows. Surely goodness and love will follow me all the days of my life' (Psalm 23:5–6)*

Andy Byrd describes how Evan Roberts led some meetings in Loughor and asked for permission to request anyone who was concerned for spiritual awakening to stay back after the meeting. He received permission. That meeting extended to 10pm. It was a glimmer of hope but by no means a waterfall of revival. But Roberts knows that God has spoken to him. He is carrying an indefatigable hope. Three days later, on 4 November, he does the same thing; that meeting goes to about midnight. They gather again on 7 November and he makes the first call for salvation: 60 young people cross the line. We are 'all-in' like you are 'all-in'. That meeting goes to 3am in the morning. This is not normal. It is an abnormal meeting. They ended at 3am because of the zeal in their hearts for revival. They met again on 8 November but the meeting was cold and lifeless, and before long everyone left the meeting and only Roberts stayed at the church to say, Lord, you said there would be revival, you promised it. He prayed until 6am. At the same time God was moving in the hearts of the community and by 6am the whole town was awake and they have been struck with a conviction that they left the meeting too early and were missing out on what God was doing. They are convicted of a little bit of lethargy, and apathy that still remains. Two days later the headlines in the newspaper 'the Welsh revival has begun'. Moriah Chapel is filled with over 800 people.<sup>71</sup>

Wesley Duewel says, '(Andrew) Murray wrote we have far too little conception of the place that intercession, as distinguished from prayer for

ourselves, ought to have in the church and the Christian life. In intercession our king upon the throne finds his highest glory. In it we should find our highest glory too ... Whatever gets you too busy for prayer time, whatever distracts you from holy prevailing, whatever robs you of hunger for God, for souls, and for time for prayer warfare is a hindrance to God and His kingdom. You cannot afford it. The great and godly people of the church have always been those who know how to prevail in prayer. There is nothing higher or holier in Christian living and service. Think of it: the very God who raised up Jesus to heaven after his death and resurrection, placing Jesus at His right hand of the throne of the universe, has also "raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms." (Ephesians 2:6) You sit potentially where Jesus sits — on the throne, to share his rule! When? Now! How? By intercession! You have no greater ministry or no leadership more influential than intercession. There is no higher role, honour or authority than this. You have been saved to reign through prayer. You have been Spirit-filled to qualify you to reign by prayer. You reign as you prevail in prayer. Greatest need of the church ... For men and women who know how to prevail in prayer.<sup>72</sup>

Following the breakthrough in Loughor, prayer meetings would spring up throughout Wales in 1905 and crime would become virtually non-existent. Revival began to grip the whole nation; it is as if the heavens had been pulled back. God invaded Wales. Less than six months after that meeting in November 100,000 people had come to Christ.<sup>73</sup>

## Prayer

We pray for the Moroccan Arab 'in Spain, the sixth largest unreached people group in Europe, whose language is Arabic, Moroccan and whose primary religion is Islam. They are 792,000, 0.1% Christian and 0.05% evangelical.<sup>74</sup> Augustine's vision in North Africa was that just as the greatest city of the world, Rome, had fallen, the heavenly city of God from every tribe and nation lives forever. We pray for the Moroccan Arabs, from North Africa but now in Spain, who have been regarded as cheap labour for so long. May the good news of the gospel be heard and received, by this poor unreached people group. May the Moroccan Arabs bow down under your lordship, Lord Jesus Christ, and be part of a heavenly family of nations here in Europe, Lord.

## The voice of the Lord is authoritative, powerful and majestic

*‘The voice of the Lord is over the waters; the God of glory thunders, the Lord thunders over the mighty waters. The voice of the Lord is powerful; the voice of the Lord is majestic. The voice of the Lord breaks the cedars; the Lord breaks in pieces the cedars of Lebanon.’*

(Psalm 29:3–5)

When writing Psalm 29 David was probably impacted by watching a storm, seeing the power at work through an awesome thunderstorm, thick dark clouds, flashes of lightning and rumbling of thunder. But could ‘the voice of the Lord’ be a metaphor subtly referring to the voice of the Lord at creation? Or to the voice of the Father at the baptism of Jesus, saying from heaven, ‘You are my Son, whom I love, with you I am well pleased’? Is there one meaning, or multiple? How do we read Psalm 29, the Emmaus way?<sup>75</sup>

Craig Carter says that as we seek to recover pre-modern exegesis it is important first to read the Bible as a unity, centred on Jesus Christ.<sup>76</sup> The reason the New Testament came into existence is that it embodied the conviction of the apostles that Jesus Christ is the fulfilment of the Old Testament. Carter says, second, that we should let the literal sense control all meaning. The literal sense<sup>77</sup> is the meaning conveyed by the words of Scripture and discovered by exegesis, following the rules of sound interpretation. Alec Motyer says, ‘It is best simply to let the wonder and awesomeness of this psalm sweep and swirl around us until we are so possessed in spirit by the majesty of the Lord that we too cry *Glory*.’<sup>78</sup> According to ancient tradition, one can distinguish between two senses of Scripture, the literal and the spiritual ... the spiritual was divided into allegorical, moral and anagogical. A medieval couplet says, ‘The letter speaks of deeds, Allegory to faith; the moral how to act; Anagogy our destiny’.

So how do we read Psalm 29? Are there allegorical, moral and anagogical meanings, beyond the literal meaning that David was witnessing a thunderstorm? As regards **allegorical** meaning for ‘voice of the Lord breaking the cedars of Lebanon’, lightning striking trees was a common metaphor in Hebrew poetry and a prophecy for God humbling the proud, cutting them down in judgment. As regards a **moral** meaning, the events in Scripture ought to lead us to act justly. Anything that proudly sets itself up against the voice of God is going to be cut down, the whole creation must humbly give allegiance to King Jesus and give him glory. As regards an **anagogical** meaning of this Psalm (ie viewing realities and events in terms of their eternal significance), Jesus is the Word of God incarnate, the living voice of God, and when he humbly came to this earth he continually exposed the proud in the imaginations of their hearts. Eugene Peterson says, ‘Jesus’ parables were ‘powerfully subversive, casting down the proud in the imagination of their hearts. When Jesus spoke, listeners relaxed their defences, they walked away perplexed, wondering what they meant, but the stories lodged **in their imagination**. And then, like a time bomb, they would explode in their unprotected hearts.’<sup>79</sup> Is this the majestic voice that breaks cedars? When Jesus’ listeners went away having heard him tell a parable and then realised he was speaking about them — and the pride of the imagination of their hearts was exposed — was that Jesus’ majestic voice breaking cedars?

## Prayer

Lord, as Jeremiah said, the ‘word of God is a hammer’. As we seek to hear your voice and pray together, seeking to see the Bible translated orally into the language of every mother tongue in the world, I submit to your powerful majestic voice today. Show me my pride and ‘break the cedars’ in the world today that are standing against your kingdom. May your kingdom come gloriously and cover the earth as the waters cover the sea. ‘In his temple may all cry “Glory”’.

## Prevailing prayer

*'His favour lasts a lifetime. weeping may remain for a night, but rejoicing comes in the morning.'* (Psalm 30:5)

For the rest of his life Evan Roberts devoted himself to intercession. He saw the importance of prevailing intercession. Wesley Duewel says, 'mighty intercessors, tireless prevailers, people who will persevere in prayer battle and prayer conquest until heaven's powers are released and God's will is done in the practical situations on earth. God's cause creeps forward timidly and slowly when there are more organizers than agonizers, more workers than prevailing prayer warriors. We need prayer warriors who have seen the heart of God, who have experienced the power and the glory of the cross, who know the Bible meaning and significance of the day of judgment, heaven and hell. We need prayer warriors who feel the slavery, the absence of any eternal hope and the doom of the unsaved; who feel the transforming power, joy and glory from Christ of the saved. We need prayer warriors who pray as though God is God and as though Satan is Satan. Jesus is prevailing day and night and needs our prevailing intercession. He needs our prevailing co-operation. God has ordained to save the nations through prayer (Psalm 2:8). It is part of his eternal decree. Therefore Jesus prays, and therefore we must pray.'<sup>80</sup>

Duewel also says, 'Prevailing intercession is the most Christly of all labour as well as the most Spirit controlled. The Spirit shares with you Christ's passion until you're convulsed by the same heart-cry as the Son and the same groanings as the Spirit (Romans 8:26). It is glory to weep with Christ, love with Christ and burn with the passionate longing of Christ. It is glory to share with Christ the intercessory battle and triumph. Sometimes you begin to sense the power and joy of the coming age (Hebrews 6:5) as your prevailing breaks through to victory. Glory begins as you feel

the Spirit's assurance that your prayer has been heard and answered. The visible results are not always immediately evident, but you know you have prevailed according to the will of God and as you know God's answer is sure. All-prevailing prayer will receive its final and supreme glory when you reach the glory world, with its unveiling of the rewards of answered prayer. What honour awaits God's prevailing prayer warriors at the judgment seat of Christ when the honours and rewards of eternity are announced and conferred. (1 Corinthians 3:11-15; 4:5; 9:25). Then you will be amazed to see how your prevailing was united with the prevailing of others of God's prayer warriors and with the very intercession of Christ, the Son of God.'<sup>81</sup>

Phillips writes that Roberts' 'prayers though silent were extraordinary in power. Another thing I wish to add in this connection is the hold that his prayer takes upon his whole body. In this he is the most extraordinary person I have ever seen. One would think that every word is the product of his whole being, body and soul. His seem to arise from the depths of his spirit and pass along every nerve. From this we can imagine how much agony of soul and physical effort, an hour or two in a meeting cost him. At the beginning of the revival he would utter a short prayer in public, and that often on behalf of those who refused to give themselves up to Jesus. I remember him doing this on behalf of a man who remained obstinate. All the words of the prayer were these: "O Lord, save JD for the sake of Jesus Christ, Amen." As he spoke the last word the man rose to give himself to Christ. At that his short prayers went through the congregation like electricity, and a hundred when they heard them would seek the throne of Grace.'<sup>82</sup>

## Prayer

We pray for the Gujarati 'in the UK, the eighth largest unreached people group in Europe, whose language is Gujarati and whose primary religion is Hinduism. They are 635,000, 0.05% Christian and 0.03% evangelical.'<sup>83</sup> Show us how to share the gospel among the Gujarati! Teach us how to persevere in prayer battle and prayer conquest until heaven's powers are released and God's will is done practically on earth, among these practical, resourceful people.

## Jesus Christ — ‘Into your hands I commit my spirit’

*‘Into your hands I commit my spirit; redeem me, O Lord the God of truth.’*

*(Psalm 31:6)*

Augustine of Hippo is probably less well-known for his huge exposition on the Psalms than for his magnum opus *The City of God*. However, theologian Michael Cameron writes ‘When Augustine read the psalms in the light of Paul’s insights about Christ’s crucified human humility, Scripture opened up to him. One way this happened was that he now saw Christ using the Psalms to explain himself. The Psalms do not merely speak of Christ; rather, in the Psalms, Christ actually speaks. Many of the Early Church Fathers saw that Christ and the church speak through the psalms in this way. In the second and third century writers like Ignatius of Antioch, Justin Martyr and Irenaeus continued this Christological reading; so did Tertullian, Cyprian, Clement of Alexandria, and Origen in the third century.’<sup>84</sup> Craig Carter says, ‘Augustine identifies seven Psalms as “The psalms of the crucified.” Those are Psalms 16, 17, 18, 22, 28, 30 and 31. We have now read all seven of these Psalms. In these seven psalms Christ speaks from the cross. Psalm 22 is the central psalm in this group and could be viewed as the centre or Holy of Holies of the group.’<sup>85</sup> Commenting on Psalm 3, Augustine says, ‘Let us listen out for something our Lord said on the cross: “Into your hands I commit my spirit” (Luke 23:46). When we hear those words of his in the gospel, and recognise them as part of this psalm, we should not doubt that here in this psalm it is Christ himself who is speaking. The gospel makes it clear ... he had good reasons for making the words of the psalm his own, for he wanted to teach you that in the psalm he is speaking. Look for him in it.’<sup>86</sup>

Craig Carter says, ‘Christ exegetes Scripture by fulfilling it. He also gives us verbal clues to its meaning to help us understand it clearly.’ What can we learn from Augustine’s exposition of ‘the psalms of the crucified’ about this type of exegesis and the

way in which the Early Church interpreted the Old Testament? Carter suggests three points which are of the greatest significance: First, Augustine views the validity of this type of exegesis has been grounded in the reality of biblical inspiration and in the unity of the Bible which is centred on Jesus Christ. Second, the literal sense is the controlling sense in that the fundamental and crucial meaning of the Psalms, and in Augustine’s view, is the historical action of God in Christ on the cross of Calvary. Third the self-interpreting character of the Bible is on display here, since Christ indwells the text, it is Christ himself who by the spirit speaks in the text.<sup>87</sup>

Let’s turn back again to Psalm 31 — ‘Into your hands I commit my spirit; redeem me, O Lord God the God of truth.’<sup>88</sup> As far as Augustine is concerned Christ quotes Psalm 31 in Luke 23:46 and does so because these are his own words spoken beforehand prophetically and then spoken appropriately in the fulfilment of the prophecy. NT Wright translates Luke 23:46: ‘Then Jesus shouted at the top of his voice. Here is my Spirit Father, you can take care of it now, and with that he died.’ In this journey through the Psalms we have found Wright describing the reading of the Psalms as ‘living and praying in’, or ‘inhabiting’, a different worldview.<sup>89</sup> It has become clear that the Early Church Fathers were open to reading the Psalms in very different ways than we feel able to today. Seeing the Old Testament and New Testament as a unity is not heresy — it is orthodoxy ... but to hear Christ speaking directly through the Psalms, ‘Into your hands I commit my Spirit’ somehow starts to make my heart burn as if I am on the road to Emmaus with Cleopas. The Psalms do not merely speak of Christ; rather in the Psalms, Christ actually speaks — and he speaks to us in Psalm 31:6.

## Prayer

Lord, unblock the well of the Living Word. Where we have failed to see and hear you speaking personally to us through your sacred Scripture, speak — your servant is listening.



## God is light, in him there is no darkness at all

*'In your light we see light; for with you is the fountain of life; in your light we see light.'*  
(Psalm 36:9)

**P**hillips identifies a number of characteristics of Evan Roberts that made him an instrument for revival:

**1) HONESTY.** Whatever might be wanting Roberts would be honest in every department of his work, honest to his master, his companion, himself and God.

**2) SYMPATHY.** His sympathy with his fellow toiler was so deep that he could not see him have the heavier share of the work. If one part of the work should be harder than the other that was the part he would take.

**3) CONTENTEDNESS.** He was never heard to complain of anything. Quite as happy was he in the midst of difficulties with his work as when things were in his favour. He sang heartily and merrily when engaged in the hardest of tasks.

**4) READINESS.** He was always delighted to help his fellow workman and it gave him pleasure to be of any service to his friend.

**5) OBEDIENCE.** Never was a disability, and when called upon to do anything that was reasonable, he would joyfully obey his companions' call for help.

**6) CONSISTENCY OF CHARACTER.** Roberts was the same outside the work as in it. He was not two-faced. To know him at work was to know him in the house as well. To know him in the chapel was to know him on the street and in every other circle.

**7) NOT WASTEFUL IN SPEECH.** He hated empty chatter which served no good purpose and wasted time.

**8) READING THE BIBLE BEFORE GOING TO BED.** His friend says he used to read (the Bible) every night before retiring to rest.

**9) THOUGHTFULNESS.** His mind was occupied with (spiritual things) in all his meditations. But unlike some, his thoughts did not make him unnatural, but made of him a happy disposition and natural in appearance.

**10) MYSTERY.** After reading a portion of Scripture, his friend would retire to bed. Evans would not do so. He would draw nigh to God in silence and would be in his presence for a considerable length of time. His friend could not understand what called for this, since they had already read and prayed. I could not understand, said he, what was his message to God and some holy fear kept me from asking him. His groans in the silence would terrify me. But I can now understand the mystery. His groans have been heard and answered in the thousands that have come into the church from the highways and byways in these last months.<sup>90</sup>

In 1 John 1:5–7 there is a lifting up of transparent godly character that was evidenced in Roberts' life: 'God is light; in him there is no darkness at all. If we claim to have fellowship with him and yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not live out the truth. But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies us from all sin.'

## Prayer

We pray for the South Asians 'in the UK, the largest unreached people group in Europe, whose language is Hindi and whose primary religion Hinduism. There are 3,062,000 and they are 3% Christian and 1.5% evangelical.'<sup>91</sup> After the Second World War South Asians began to come to Britain in greater numbers, and many more in the early 1970s from Uganda. We now face a huge mission field of South Asians here on our doorstep. Lord, in you there is light and no darkness at all. Shine your light on the South Asians. May a fountain of life break out among the South Asians in the UK.

## Jesus Christ — ‘My ears you have pierced’

*‘Sacrifice and offering you did not desire but my ears you have pierced, burnt offerings and sin offerings you did not require. Then I said, “Here I am, I have come—it is written about me in the scroll. I desire to do your will, O my God; your law is within my heart.”*

*(Psalm 40:6–8)*

Augustine saw Christ speaking through the psalms. He had no trouble seeing how Scripture could be interpreted figurally or allegorically as he was a Platonist ... because he thought actual things are copies of the transcendent. But what was missing in Augustine’s thinking was how this happens in history ... he needed to see that we can read the Bible figurally only because at a certain point in time, salvation was accomplished on the cross. The cross is a sign of salvation but not merely a sign. It is a non-negotiable, nonfigurative description of the very mechanism of salvation.<sup>92</sup>

Christ redeems us on the cross; this is what Augustine learned from Paul’s epistle to the Galatians. Salvation is not something abstract and eternal that is figurally pictured in the cross but something that actually occurred on the cross. When Augustine read the Psalms in the light of these insights of Paul about Christ’s crucified human humility, Scripture opened up to him. One way this happened was that he now saw Christ using the Psalms to explain himself.

“The earliest Christians were convinced that “a few special humans in the past had in fact obtained an otherworldly glimpse into divine affairs—the ancient Hebrew prophets.” These prophets such as David and Isaiah were enabled to overhear conversations between God the Father and God the Son. The prophets took on the prosopa of the members of the Trinity<sup>93</sup> and spoke in character in the writings. Bates begins his book on the importance of prosopological exegesis for the development of the doctrine of the Trinity, by pointing to the way the author of Hebrews identifies the speaker in Psalm 40:6–8 as Christ himself.<sup>94</sup>

‘Consequently when Christ came into the world

he said: “Sacrifices and offerings you have not desired but a body you have prepared for me; in burnt offerings and sin offerings you have taken no pleasure.” David neither abolished the sacrificial system nor sanctified us through the offering of his body. The Messiah did these things. The words of Psalm 40 make perfect sense when we read them as the words of the Messiah, Jesus Christ, which is exactly what the author of Hebrews does. But how can Jesus Christ be speaking in Psalm 40, a millennium prior to the incarnation of God in the birth of Jesus? This is the question answered by prosopological exegesis.<sup>95</sup>

This prosopological exegesis is the kind of interpretation that we described Augustine doing with Psalm 31 last week. Hebrews 10:5 says, ‘a body you have prepared for me’. Psalm 40:6 says, ‘my ears you have pierced’, but otherwise the passages are virtually identical. What is happening here? In the contemporary culture a slave, after he had worked as a slave for six years, could be released ... but he would have been unable to take his wife and children with him if he left. So, alternatively, the slave could choose to be a love slave and serve as a slave for the rest of his life. If he chose to be a love slave, his ear would be pierced by an awl while standing against a door post.

Jesus was saying when he died on the cross that he was choosing to be a love slave, his ears were pierced, his body had been prepared. That is what was happening as he died on the cross as a love slave, redeeming us all. So here is another example of Jesus speaking prophetically through a psalm, before his incarnation, death and resurrection. Salvation is not an abstract doctrine, but an actual event that was revealed prophetically 1,000 years beforehand.

## Prayer

Lord, you chose to be a love slave, your ears were pierced, your body prepared, you died for me.

## My soul thirsts

*‘As the deer pants for streams of water, so my soul pants for you, my God. My soul thirsts for God, for the living God. When can I go and meet with God?’ (Psalm 42:1)*

Philips list four points about Roberts:<sup>96</sup>

### His spiritual desire

Roberts had an intense thirst continually for spiritual subjects and when understood he took them in at once, turning them into spiritual food for his soul. We have heard him relating of this desire and the ways in which he tried to satisfy it. This is the foundation of his spiritual success. Through it, the spiritual life derives its nourishment. The stronger it is the more powerful it is to draw things into the mind, which will aid its development. It would be difficult to find it in a higher degree than it is in Roberts. He longed and longs for spiritual food as does a man who is famishing for want of natural food.

### His spiritual meditation

Even Roberts was wont to deeply meditate on religious things. He often does so to such a degree as to forget everything around him. Anyone associated with him will know this. Sometimes we lose him suddenly — he has drifted into meditation on some spiritual matter.

### Spiritual communion

Often on arriving home, he would have to turn aside into his library to pray and that before speaking to the family or taking his meal. This was the result of his intense thought at work while at work. His desire for more intense and more continual communion with God made him exceedingly fervent. In prayer he thought that it was on his knees that he derived the greatest pleasure and would often forget time and place, and everything else when in communion with his creator.

### Spiritual work

He believed with all his heart that to desire spiritual things, to meditate on them and hold communion with God in prayer was not enough without work. He regarded all as a preparation for doing God’s work.’

Roberts was not an expository preacher. He had not been trained in systematic theology. He did receive criticism and judgment because of this. His teaching emphasised experience. Some of the subjects he focused on included ‘The Baptism in the Holy Spirit’.

He laid hold of Jesus’ promise that he would send his Holy Spirit and this is how he taught gatherings to pray:

‘1 Send the Spirit now. 2 Send the Spirit powerfully now. 3 Send the Spirit more powerfully now. 4 Send the Spirit more powerfully now for Jesus Christ’s sake.’<sup>97</sup>

‘As the tide swept in through towns and villages, Roberts realised that all the denominational barriers had broken down, and that “young people from the Baptists and Independents come to these meetings, and I cannot stop them. I should like it very much if the spirit would descend on other denominations.” The age barrier broke down, and even the sex barrier! Throughout the 19th century, women were banned from any public role in church life, but now they were set free to pray and praise openly. Roberts took the ancient Pentecostal promise literally: “Upon my maidservants, I will pour out my spirit.” (Joel 2:29) Soon he would insist that national and racial barriers should go also.’<sup>98</sup> Roberts’ soul panted for more of the Holy Spirit. Let’s pray as Roberts prayed, ‘Send the Spirit more powerfully now for Jesus Christ’s sake.’

## Prayer

We pray for the South Asians ‘in Italy, the 15th largest unreached people group in Europe, whose language is Urdu and whose primary religion is Islam. There are 412,000, 4.0% Christian and 0.5% evangelical.’<sup>99</sup> Lord, we thirst for a move of your Spirit among the South Asians in Italy. The Italian government has given amnesty to many illegal immigrants from South Asia. Some 1,500 years ago, a Benedictine missionary monastic movement broke out of Italy: do it again we pray in Italy ... this time among the South Asians.

## Jesus Christ is King and he will have a bride

*'Your throne, O God will last forever and ever; a sceptre of justice will be the sceptre of your kingdom. You love righteousness and hate wickedness; therefore God, your God, has set you above your companions by anointing you with the oil of joy.'*

(Psalm 45:6–7)

I went to a wedding last summer, soon after King Charles had been crowned king in England. In the wedding address the preacher said, 'We are living between a coronation and a wedding.'<sup>100</sup> This wedding service was a picture of what will be happening at the end of the age. Jesus has been made king. He is seated the right hand of the Father right now, but the wedding to his bride has not yet taken place. The NIV Study Bible says that Psalm 45 is a 'Song of praise of the king on his wedding day. (This king) undoubtedly belonged to David's dynasty, and the song (Psalm 45) was probably used at more than one royal wedding. Since the bride is a foreign princess (v10,12), the wedding reflects the king's standing as a figure of international significance. Accordingly he is addressed as one whose reign is to be characterised by victories over the nations. As a royal son of David he is a type (foreshadowing) of Christ. After the exile the song was applied to Messiah, the promised son of David who would sit on David's throne.'<sup>101</sup> The writer of Hebrews also sees that Psalm 45:6–7 is a picture of Jesus Christ, and quotes it to prove that Jesus is superior than the angels.

The Early Church Fathers believed that there is another indication that this psalm pointed to Christ. Bradley Jersak, in his book *A more Christlike word: Reading Scripture the Emmaus Way*, says the 70 Jewish rabbis who wrote the Septuagint (LXX) translated (from Hebrew to the Greek) the 'for the choirmaster' notation at the top of many of the psalms as 'unto the end'.<sup>102</sup> St Gregory of Nyssa

wrote a book on the superscriptions observing that 'unto the end' is like a dedication to the *telos* Christ.<sup>103</sup> He believed, as did others, that each song with this notation will always end up either pointing to a messianic *telos* and/or describing the process of the disciple's maturation in Christ.

Peter Enns coins the term 'Christo-telic reading of Scripture'.<sup>104</sup> He says, 'That word comes from Christ and *telos*. *Telos* refers to the "end" or fulfilment or completion of something. On the cross, when Jesus prayed, "It is finished" (John 19:30), he used that word. He said, "Father forgive them" (Luke 23:34) and the Father through Jesus's own mouth replied, "It is accomplished!" The cross represents the fulfilment of Christ's messianic mission, the capstone in the construction of the kingdom of God he was erecting throughout his life and ministry.' 'Unto the end' occurs as a superscription in about 56 of the Psalms in the Septuagint. Psalm 45 is one of those 56 psalms that have this superscription,<sup>105</sup> and Gregory of Nyssa and the Orthodox Church today believe that Psalm 45 therefore points to Jesus.

The Orthodox Study Bible, in its study notes, interprets Psalm 45 as 'a prophetic description of the Word incarnate, the Lord Jesus Christ (the end) and the Beloved one, is the Word himself'.<sup>106</sup> Revelation 19:11–13 in the New Testament refers to Jesus as the Word of God.<sup>107</sup> He is the coming King, and a bride is prepared for him. It seems very appropriate, after reading Psalm 45 in this way, to turn Matthew 25 into song and to pray.

## Prayer

Listen to a song from Matthew 25 and Christina Rosetti's poem 'Advent Sunday'.<sup>108</sup>



'The Bridegroom cometh'<sup>109</sup>

# I will perpetuate your memory through all generations

*'therefore the nations will praise you forever and ever' (Psalm 45:17)*

**T**he Welsh Revival was felt all around the world to some extent, especially in India. The most significant connection to the Welsh Revival was the Azusa Street Revival of 1906 in California, USA. There does not seem to be a recordable direct connection, but the writings of Frank Bartleman leave no doubt that he and others were inspired by what happened in Wales. The Azusa Street Revival began the Pentecostal movement that now numbers in the hundreds of millions worldwide.

'It seems that the high profile of Roberts during the revival was partly due to the press. This was the first revival where the press took such a role. There were many articles written in the newspapers during the 1859 revival, but in 1904 the newspapers followed Roberts around and wrote about him consistently. He was a charismatic, good-looking young man, so small wonder the press followed him more than anyone else. Roberts' first tour started at Trecynon on November 13th and by November 26th the whole of Wales knew about the Revival. At Cilfynydd all the chapels in the town were full and work in the collieries was suspended for the sake of the meetings. The following day ... news came from various directions of many conversions, and open-air meetings were held in scores of places. Within four weeks the revival had started in many parts without the help of Roberts or anyone else. Young people would go onto railway platforms to sing and pray; prayer meetings were held on trains and many were converted. Public houses and beer

clubs were empty; old debts were repaid, family feuds were healed; drunks and gamblers were praying in the services and the chapels throughout Glamorganshire were full every night. Drunkenness declined substantially with convictions falling in Glamorganshire by almost half. It is said that the pit ponies could no longer understand the miner's instructions because of the absence of oaths and curses.'<sup>110</sup>

The **first** spiritual legacy of Roberts was that by acting in full obedience to the Holy Spirit he released vital forces into chapels and churches of his day.

The **second** spiritual legacy is the four principles of preparedness for spirit filling: Cleansing; Confession; Obedience; Public Witness. There are charismatic and other fellowships which have inherited his teaching, not only to obey the Holy Spirit but to offer him our love and praise. In our day Michael Harper, Arthur Wallis and Graham Kendrick have all taught new attitudes of openness to the Holy Spirit.

The Welsh Revival was God's initiative, and Roberts was an instrument of revival in the Lord's hands. Arthur Wallis says, 'In evangelism man takes the initiative with the prompting of the Holy Spirit. In revival the initiative is solely God's. Revival is more than big meetings, and it's more than evangelism. Revival is a visitation from God.'<sup>111</sup> The Welsh Revival can only be understood as a heaven-sent move of God.

## Prayer

We pray for the Gheg Albanians 'in Kosovo, the fourth largest unreached people group in Europe, whose language is Gheg and whose primary religion is Islam. There are 1,500,000 and they are 2% Christian and 0.2% evangelical.'<sup>112</sup> Lord, centuries ago, most Gheg Albanians were converted to Islam by the Ottoman Turks. There has been much suffering with blood feuds over the years. We call out to you, Lord Jesus, to turn around the story of the Albanians in Kosovo. May you receive the reward for your sufferings. Ride forth victoriously on behalf of truth, humility and righteousness, and may many be drawn into your kingdom, Lord Jesus Christ! May the Gheg Albanians be released to obey the Holy Spirit and give you, Lord Jesus, their love and praise, that your memory might be perpetuated through all generations.

## Jesus Christ's presence makes glad the city of God

*'There is a river who streams make glad the city of God, the Holy place where the most High dwells. God is within her she will not fall. God will help her at break of day.'* (Psalm 46:4)

In his children's book *The Wind in the Willows*, Kenneth Grahame tells the story of how Ratty, the water rat, introduces Mole to the 'River'. "I beg your pardon", said the mole, pulling himself together with an effort, "you must think me very rude but all this is so new to me so-this-is-a-River!?" "The River," corrected the Rat. "And you really live by the river? What a jolly life" "By it and with it and on it and in it," said the Rat. "It's brother and sister to me, and aunts, and company and food and drink and (naturally) washing. It's my world and I don't want any other. What it hasn't got, is not worth having, and what it doesn't know is not worth knowing."<sup>113</sup>

Does Psalm 46 speaks of Christ? Does his presence make glad the city of God. Is that how we should read Psalm 46? Hans Boersma, in his book *Scripture as Real Presence*, explains how the Church Fathers read the Scriptures.<sup>114</sup> Jesus had strong words for the Pharisees who idolised the Scriptures but did not see him in them.

You may not be a pharisee ... but are you a Protestant Gnostic?<sup>115</sup> We have seen how Augustine saw Christ in the Psalms. How did Irenaeus read the Scriptures? He was a second-century opponent of Gnosticism, and he said that the unity of the Old and New Testament demands that we see the presence of Christ in the Old Testament. How did Irenaeus see the presence of Christ in the Old Testament?<sup>116</sup> 'Irenaeus is known particularly for the understanding of redemption as recapitulation. Irenaeus saw Christ as recapitulating all of history. He notes that there are four covenants in history: "one prior to the deluge, under Adam; the second after the deluge, under Noah; the third, the giving of the law under Moses; the fourth that which renovates man, and sums up (recapitulates) all things in itself by means of the gospel, raising

and bearing men upon its wings into the heavenly kingdom."<sup>117</sup> Bradley Jersak says, 'Throughout his writings Irenaeus appeals to Christ as the one who recapitulates what had gone before and as the one who thus brought about salvation. This principle of recapitulation means that for Irenaeus the proper way to read the Old Testament is with the question in mind, "How does this passage speak about Christ?" Some Old Testament passages do this, of course, by means of prophetic messianic announcement ... (but) Irenaeus nonetheless insists that almost seemingly straightforward historical narratives have reference to Christ ... For Irenaeus the unity of the two Testaments — the result of the identity of the Father of Christ with the God of the Old Testament — demands that we see the presence of Christ in the Old Testament.'<sup>118</sup>

How does this relate to Psalm 46? The Orthodox Study Bible footnotes on Psalm 46 provide a 'Christotelic' (concerning the End, which is Christ) reading. The notes are as follows: Psalm 46 'is about hidden things concerning the End, who is Christ. These hidden things are "the treasures of wisdom and knowledge in Christ." (Col 2:3) which are now revealed in his incarnation and made known among the Gentiles (Col 1:26,27). Here before his incarnation, the earth was troubled with fear (vv3,4,7), which was the fear of death. But after his incarnation, the church no longer fears death (v3) because his works (v9), that is, his death and resurrection (early in the morning, v6), opened up the torrents of the rivers of God's grace to the church (v5). Thus hatred (wars) ceased among the Gentiles to the ends of the Earth, and the Church was established among them. For stillness in prayer replaced the tumult of hostility between them (v10-12).'<sup>119</sup>

## Prayer

Lord, help me to guard my heart that it might be a well-spring of life. I lay hold of your promise that as I believe in you, rivers of living water will flow out of my heart (John 7:38). You are that river of life in the book of Revelation. I choose to live the jolly life (!), in the river and in you, Lord Jesus.



## Crying out to God for revival

*'Gather to me my consecrated ones, who made a covenant with me by sacrifice.'* (Psalm 50:5)

In 1949, two elderly women, Peggy and Christine Smith, one blind and the other doubled over with arthritis, got on their knees in Barvas on the Isle of Lewis. At 10 o'clock in the evening on Tuesday and 10 o'clock on Friday evening, they waited and prayed until 4 o'clock in the morning, each week for many months. They had but one promise from God — Isaiah 44:3: 'I will pour water on the thirsty land and streams on the dry ground, I will pour out my spirit on your offspring and my blessing on your descendants'. They faced a desperate challenge — no young people in their church. They saw God powerfully answer their prayer, with the glory of the Lord revealed through deep conviction of sin and in a matter of months **a whole community with no unsaved in the parish**.

We face a similarly desperate challenge today, but we can stand on the promises that those two women and Kenneth Macdonald laid hold of, and call out to the Lord to unblock the wells of revival today! We can re-dig the wells of revival dug by our spiritual forefathers and foremothers! Just as Isaac reopened the well that was dug in the time of his father Abraham (Genesis 26:18), today we can re-dig the well of revival that opened in the Isle of Lewis, just over 70 years ago.

It is time for the Lord to pour out his Spirit again on the thirsty land. He will do it, as we unblock the wells of the past. The Lord gave our spiritual forefathers a promise and they stood on that promise ... and they reminded the Lord that he is a covenant-keeping God. John Dawson says, 'Covenant is

much more than a sterile legal transaction. God's covenants are covenants of divine passion initiated with those who have moved his great heart.

Therefore, when we pray, "Lord, remember David (say), it evokes such memories in the Father, of the man after his own heart, that he cannot contain himself. These memories stir him to act." Lou Engle writes that Scripture says that the Lord deals with Gentile nations in 70-year cycles.<sup>120</sup> It is just over 70 years since that awakening broke out on the British Isles, on the Isle of Lewis, following the prayers of two elderly ladies and a group of young men. Let's remind the Lord in prayer that he is a covenant-keeping God, that we live in those same British Isles today, that we are their spiritual descendants, and that we are thirsty for him to do it again today, in our day. Matt Redman wrote a song with the words:

Salvation spring up from the ground  
Lord rend the heavens and come down,  
Seek the lost and heal the lame,  
Jesus bring glory to your name.\*

The Lord is looking for men and women to intercede, to stand in the gap for another youth awakening. He is calling us to perform that priestly function in Joel 2 and weep and confess the sins of our nation, but he is also calling us to pray and intercede like Abraham and Moses did, and like Peggy and Christine Smith and Kenneth Macdonald.

\* Hall, C. EMI Christian Music Publishing (1999).

## Prayer

Lord, we remind you of your word in Isaiah 44:3 that you gave to Peggy and Christine Smith and Kenneth Macdonald over 70 years ago: 'I will pour water on the thirsty land and streams on the dry ground, I will pour out my spirit on your offspring and my blessing on your descendants.' We pray for the South Asians 'in France, the 23rd largest unreached people group in Europe, whose language is Hindi and whose primary religion is Hinduism. There are 273,000, 4.0% Christian and 0.2% evangelical.'<sup>121</sup> Pour out your Spirit! There are now South Asians in France who left the troubles in Uganda in the early 1970s; Sri Lankans working in Iran who came to France in the late 1970s after the Iranian Revolution; Tamil refugees who came to France during the civil war; then in the early 1990s a small Pakistani community came to France. May salvation spring up from the ground. Lord, rend the heavens and come down, seek the lost South Asians in France and heal the lame; Jesus bring glory to your name.

## Avoid sin ... and through a sacrifice of praise, Christ the way of salvation will be revealed

*‘O Lord, open my lips, and my mouth will declare your praise. You do not delight in sacrifice, or I would bring it; you do not take pleasure in burnt offerings. My sacrifice, O God, is a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart you, God, will not despise.’*

(Psalm 51:15–17)

Craig Carter says, ‘A number of years ago I learned an interesting fact about Benedictine spirituality in reading ‘The Rule of St Benedict’. I discovered that the monks have traditionally chanted the entire Psalter in worship every week. “Why the Psalms?” ... Why not the Gospels? Why not Romans? Why not the Bible as a whole? It is because for Augustine both Christ and the church speak frequently in the Psalms.’<sup>122</sup> Augustine and the Church Fathers read the Psalms prophetically, because of their belief in divine inspiration.<sup>123</sup> The notion that the Psalter is a book of prophecy is perhaps one of the distinguishing characteristics of patristic exegesis. Augustine often referred to the psalmist as ‘the prophet’.<sup>124</sup> In his introduction to his exposition of the Psalms, five kinds of patristic Christological interpretation are outlined: (i) a word to Christ; (ii) a word about Christ; (iii) a word of Christ spoken by him; (iv) a word about the Church; (v) a word of the Church, spoken by the Church. Psalm 51 is a word of the Church spoken by the Church, where we as the Church can identify with David in his repentance. This is an exhortation for us to avoid sin. How seriously do you and I take sin as an offence against God?<sup>125</sup> David’s confession of sin is his response to adultery with Bathsheba, and is narrated in 2 Samuel 11–12. David’s confession is genuine and he throws himself completely on God and does not try to make excuses. He realises that his sin goes deep and has

been long-standing and that he is by nature sinful. The Church can pray these words and identify with David.<sup>126</sup> Psalm 51 may be the purest and most profound plea for God’s mercy in all of Scripture.<sup>127</sup>

For Augustine, this psalm carries a double grace, both as an exhortation to avoid sin but also as a means to find the grace of Christ. It is through a sacrifice of praise that we will be shown the way of salvation of God through Christ. Through a sacrifice of praise and through singing the Psalms, the Fathers believed that the Church could grow in virtue. The Church Fathers actually believed that inhabiting the worldview of the Psalms and through harmonious reading of them (eg singing and chanting), virtue would be instilled, and they were quick to ask how the biblical text could instil virtue.<sup>128</sup> St Gregory believed that the aim of the Psalter is to reshape us by means of virtue into the divine likeness so that Christ might be formed in us.<sup>129</sup> The historical order of the text, however, was not of significance to Church Fathers like St Gregory. Several times Gregory draws attention to the fact that the Psalms do not always follow historical sequence. Have we elevated the importance of historical context and adopted an overly rational approach to the Scripture? Is it time to restore the hearts of the Church Fathers to the sons, and return to reading Scripture as a sacred text, that reveals Christ and inspires us to lead a more virtuous life?

## Prayer

Listen to a song drawn from Psalm 51 and pray.



‘Create in me a clean heart’<sup>130</sup>

## Pleading with God

*'Listen to my prayer, O God, do not ignore my plea.'* (Psalm 55:1)

**Every other day there will be excerpts from a sermon by Duncan Campbell testifying about revival in the Isle of Lewis, accessible through [sermonindex.net](http://sermonindex.net).**

**D**uncan Campbell said: 'Revival broke out in Lewis sometime before I went to the island. I thank God for the privilege of being in its midst for over three years. I went at the invitation of one parish minister for 10 days but God kept me there for three years, and I am thankful to God for the privilege, for perhaps in some small way, leading that movement and teaching the young converts in the deep things of God. Now, having said that, I want to read you a few lines from this little book, *The Lewis Awakening*. It will give you an idea of the desperate state of this island prior to this gracious movement. The Presbytery of Lewis met to consider the terrible drift away from the ordinances of the church, especially the drift away from the church by the young people of the island. Now here are words from a declaration that was read in all the congregations: "The Presbytery affectionately plead with their people, especially with the youth of the church, to take these matters to heart and to make serious enquiry as to what must be the end should there be no repentance."<sup>131</sup>

The Presbytery of Lewis recognised the desperate state of the Isle of Lewis, particularly that the young people had drifted away from church. In the UK at present, the state of youth work is at a new low. We can relate today. Campbell said the Presbytery affectionately pleaded with their congregation to take this matter seriously. A number of people did and began to plead with God.

We learn how to plead with God from the biblical examples of Abraham and Moses. Abraham pleaded and humbly argued on the basis of the justice of God. How could God punish the righteous with

the wicked? Abraham also pleaded for the wicked to be spared for the sake of the righteous and again pleaded for God's justice for the righteous (Genesis 18:24). He argued from the righteous character of God. 'Far be it from you to do such a thing — to kill the righteous with the wicked, treating the righteous and the wicked alike.'<sup>132</sup>

Similarly, Moses argued from the history of God's redeeming acts for Israel. He told God that it would be out of character with his great acts of mercy if he destroyed Israel. Moses argued from the glory of God's name. Why should God permit the Egyptians to think Jehovah was like their Egyptian gods, who had evil motives and vile and evil tempers, and who had to be pacified by bribes in the form of sacrifice? Moses argued on the basis of God's faithfulness to his loyal servants, Abraham, Isaac and Israel, and from promises he had given them. He boldly quoted back to God the promise he had made, and held God to his own word (Exodus 32:13).<sup>133</sup>

'There is a sense in which prevailing with God can take the form of holy reasoning — yes, even presenting holy arguments before God. The Bible at times uses court terms for our face-to-face meeting with God. "Come let us reason together," says the Lord" (Isaiah 1:18). This is an invitation to a court-type hearing, a court appeal at the throne of God. God asked Israel to debate its case with him. Spurgeon preached a great sermon entitled "Pleading". He said, "It is the habit of faith, when she is praying to use pleas. Mere prayer sayers, who do not pray at all, forget to argue with God; but those who would prevail bring forth their reasons and their strong arguments ... Faith's act of wrestling is to plead with God, and say with holy boldness, 'Let it be thus and thus, for these reasons.'" He preached, "The man who has his mouth full of arguments in prayer shall soon have his mouth full of benedictions in answer to prayer."<sup>134</sup>

## Prayer

We pray for the Libyan Arabs 'in Italy, the fifth largest unreached people group in Europe, whose language is Arabic, Libyan and whose primary religion is Islam. There are 1,203,000 and they are 0.3% Christian and 0.06% evangelical.'<sup>135</sup> Centuries ago, the Roman Empire controlled parts of North Africa and now North African Muslim migrants have come looking for jobs in Italy. Lord, we plead with you: give the Italian Church a big heart and a big vision for the Libyan Arabs living in their own country.

## Jesus Christ can use our tears in his bottle to fight our future battles

*'You have taken account of my miseries; put my tears in your bottle. Are they not in your book? Then my enemies will turn back on the day when I call; this I know, that God is for me.'* (Psalm 56:8–9 (NASB))<sup>136</sup>

The Brownsville awakening began on Father's Day in 1995 when Steve Hill shared with the congregation about how he had recently had an encounter with the Holy Spirit. Hill quotes<sup>137</sup> AW Tozer, who says, 'The Bible was written in tears and to tears it will yield its best treasure. God has nothing to say to the frivolous man.'<sup>138</sup> The Bible contains more than 700 references to weeping, crying, tears and mourning. Hill reminds us of apostle Paul who referred to the pain of tears in 2 Timothy 1:3–4.<sup>139</sup> Timothy's tears left a deep impression on the mind of Paul. The NASB translates 56:8–9 as 'put my tears in your bottle'. What does this mean? Hill says, 'The idea of collecting tears as a memorial has been going on for centuries. In fact civilizations have actually carried out what we've done mentally, collecting tears in little bottles as memorials to those have died. These little bottles, called lacrymatories, are still found in great numbers in ancient tombs. The custom was to collect the tears of the mourners and preserve them in bottles. These bottles were made of thin glass (or more generally, of simple pottery, often not even baked or glazed) with a slender body, a broad bottom and a funnel-shaped top.'<sup>140</sup>

Every man does own a well — a deep well of tears.<sup>141</sup> A tear is agony in solution. And by divine power it may be crystallised into spiritual wealth and all burdens lifted — in the Lord's bottles we find our tears. God is very interested in our sorrows and he records more than we can possibly imagine. Of all the things God could collect, you ask, why would he store up tears? Could it be to show how

precious they are in his sight and to suggest they are preserved for a future use, in our future battles? This seems to be the implication of verse 9: 'Then my enemies will turn back on the day when I call; this I know, that God is for me.' We live in a day when there is much suffering. As I write this devotional there has just been an accident in Tanzania in which 11 YWAM missionaries died. Darlene Cunningham commented, 'We have not seen a tragedy of this magnitude in all of YWAM's history and we are all devastated.'<sup>142</sup> I have been reading recently about the posture of the bride in the end times. Father Seraphim says, 'The need now is not for prophets to proclaim prophetic messages — some of which were unfortunately misleading and destructive. The need is for prophets who have a special feature that is "making lamentations". But, why is that? It is because Jesus himself is weeping now. Who would partake in his tears or rather, who would partake in the mystery of his tears?'<sup>143</sup>

The storing up of tears, so that they are preserved for future use, makes sense of Revelation 8, which speaks of the prayers of the saints being poured out of golden censers. Maybe the censers in Revelation 8 will be filled with tears from those who have sown in tears, or from those like Jeremiah, whose eyes have been overflowing with tears like a fountain. There is a day ahead when your enemies will be turned back, when you call upon him, because your tears in his bottle will have been filled. The time will come for 'that future use' for which the Lord has been preserving your tears, and those enemies will finally be turned back.

## Prayer

Psalm 56:8–9 (NASB) says: 'You have taken account of my miseries; put my tears in your bottle. Are they not in your book? Then my enemies will turn back on the day when I call; this I know, that God is for me.' Thank you, Lord. I know that you are for me, because my enemies will turn back. I will put my hope in you, you have put my tears in your bottle and I know I will not be disappointed. I put my trust in you.

## Repentance

*‘But for those that fear you, you have raised a banner’ (Psalm 60:4)*

**D**uncan Campbell said: ‘My dear people ... take that to heart ... “should there be no repentance.” And they called upon every individual as before God to examine his or her life in the light of that responsibility that pertains to us all, that happily in the divine mercy, we may be visited with the spirit of repentance and may turn again, under the Lord who we have so grieved, with our iniquities and waywardness, especially would they warn their young people of the devil’s man traps, the cinema and the public house.’ That was a declaration by the Presbytery read in all the congregations and published in the local press.<sup>144</sup>

On the Isle of Lewis, it was recognised in 1949 that there was a need for ‘a spirit of repentance’. Historians say that one of the characteristics of this country, before the Wesleyan Revival broke out in 1739, was the cheap gin. Gin drinking grew exponentially with the production of cheap gin. The Presbytery in Scotland recognised that alcohol was ‘the devil’s man trap’ and there was need for repentance.

What is repentance? Repentance is not an invitation; it is a command (Acts 17:30–31). God commands all men to repent. Repentance is not just ‘feeling sorry’. It is not enough to be sorry about how sin affects you. It is necessary to be sorry for how sin affects God. Repentance is not confession of sin only. Repentance is forsaking all known sin. Before our prayers for our nation, or the youth of our nation, can be effective we should consider the land of our own heart and start breaking up our fallow ground.<sup>145</sup> Charles Finney, in his *Revival lectures*, explains how, in praying for a spiritual

awakening, we should break up the fallow ground in our own hearts.<sup>146</sup> Finney says, ‘If you mean to break up the fallow ground of your hearts, you must begin by looking at your hearts: examine and note the state of your minds and see where you are. Many never seem to think about this.’<sup>147</sup> It is important to draw attention away from other things and also not to be in a hurry. ‘Examine thoroughly the state of your hearts and see whether you are walking with God every day, or with the devil. To do all this you must examine yourselves. Self-examination consists in looking at your lives, in considering your actions, in calling up the past, and learning its true character. Look back over your past. Take up your individual sins one by one, and look at them, NOT as ... a glance at your past life ... a sort of general confession (and asking) for pardon.’<sup>148</sup>

Roy Hession, in his booklet *The Calvary Road*, which came out of the East African Revival in the 1950s, says, ‘if we are to come into this right relationship with him (Jesus), the first thing we must learn is that our wills must be broken to his will. To be broken is the beginning of revival. It’s painful, it’s humiliating but it’s the only way. It is being “Not I, but Christ”. And a “C” is a bent “I”. The Lord Jesus cannot live in us fully and reveal himself through us until the proud self within us is broken. This means that the hard, unyielding self, which justifies itself, wants its own way, stands up for it rights and seeks its own glory, at last bows its head to God’s will, admits it is wrong, gives up its own way to Jesus, surrenders its rights, and discards its own glory — that the Lord Jesus might have all and be all. In other words, it’s down to self and self-attitudes.’<sup>149</sup>

## Prayer

We pray for the Macedonian Albanians ‘in North Macedonia, the 10th largest unreached people group in Europe, whose language is Gheg and whose primary religion is Islam. There are 521,000, 0.0% Christian and 0.0% evangelical.’<sup>150</sup> The Macedonian Albanians are a people struggling to find their identity, excluded from living in many areas. Lord, in your divine mercy, visit the Macedonian Albanians with a spirit of repentance. May they fear you, yield to you and obey you.



## Jesus is the rock that is higher than I

*‘From the ends of the Earth I call to you. I call as my heart grows faint, lead me to the rock that is higher than I.’ (Psalm 61:2)*

Paul very clearly states that Christ is the spiritual rock. He wrote, ‘They were all baptised into Moses, in the clouds and in the sea. They all ate the same spiritual food and drank the same spiritual drink for they drank from the spiritual rock that accompanied them and that rock was Christ.’<sup>151</sup> How did Paul say so definitively that Jesus was the spiritual rock that Israel drank from in the wilderness? How did he make that jump?<sup>152</sup> Richard Hays has dismissed the idea that Paul had any systematic hermeneutical principles, but rather used Christocentric figurative interpretation, using his imagination. This is why Hays wrote *The Conversion of the Imagination*.<sup>153</sup> Is this true: did Paul really have no method of interpreting the Old Testament — just a good (Holy Spirit-inspired) imagination?

Augustine read the Psalms in the light of the insights of Paul about Christ’s crucified human humility, and Scripture opened up to him, but he insistently sought to show that his proclamation of the gospel was grounded in the witness of Israel’s sacred texts. This is not the way that theological departments and Bible colleges read the Old Testament today. Pick up any Bible commentary today and you will find it is primarily focused on trying to understand what the original author meant to communicate to the original audience in the original situation.<sup>154</sup> This is very different from the way that Paul read the Old Testament. So how did Paul read the Old Testament? Matthew Bates suggests that the way Paul read the sacred texts, which we call the Old Testament, was through the received ‘apostolic proclamation’.<sup>155</sup> That was his filter through which he read the ancient texts. Bates also contends that Paul’s own declarations about the Scriptures suggest that he read everything through

the lens of Christ. More specifically, Bates contends that Paul looks at the Old Testament through what he calls a ‘protocreed’, that is 1 Corinthians 15:3–5, 8, 11.<sup>156</sup> ‘For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures, and that he appeared to Cephas, and then to the Twelve ... And last of all he appeared to me also, as to one abnormally born. Whether then, it is I or they, this is what we preach, and this is what you believed.’ Paul looks at the Old Testament and clearly he is very open to use his imagination, figurative interpretation, and the use of metaphors or ‘types’.

This brings us back to Psalm 61:2. Let’s look to the rock. Alec Motyer, a conservative scholar, wrote *Look to the Rock*, which focuses on the Old Testament background to the understanding of Christ.<sup>157</sup> We do not need to have any inhibitions reading this Psalm (as Augustine did) as a Psalm pointing to Christ. If Paul could compare Christ to a spiritual rock, so can we. Let’s drink deeply from Jesus our spiritual rock, the rock that is higher than I, reminded that the children of Israel drank from a rock in the wilderness. Jesus said: ‘Man does not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God’ (Matthew 4:4). The original expression meant ‘is continually coming out of the mouth of God’; it is like a stream pouring forth and, like the stream of a fountain, it is never static.’<sup>158</sup> How hungry and thirsty are you for **Jesus, the Living Word**. If you are in a spiritual wilderness then feed on him and drink deeply from the Living Word. Let’s unblock the well and drink from Jesus our spiritual rock.

## Prayer

Lord Jesus, I look to you today, my spiritual rock. I am thirsty for you, Lord. Fill me up Lord, I pray, with a stream of living water today.

## Suddenly from heaven

*'I have seen you in the sanctuary and beheld your power and your glory.'* (Psalm 63:2)

**D**uncan Campbell said: 'Now you might ask me, "What do you mean by revival?" There are a great many views held by people today as to what revival is. So you will hear men say, "Are you going out to the revival meetings" ... "We are having a revival crusade and so on." There is a world of difference between a crusade, or a special effort in the field of evangelism. My dear people, that is not revival. As I have already said from this platform, I thank God for every soul brought to Christ, through our special efforts and for every season of blessing at our conferences and at our conventions. We praise God for such movements, but, is it not true that such movements do not as a general rule touch the community? The community remains more or less the same, and the masses go past us to hell.'<sup>159</sup>

'Revival is spontaneous in the sense that it is not forced or suggested or caused by outside agency' (Oxford Dictionary).<sup>160</sup> It is the result of divine and not human impulse. Revival can never be explained in terms of activity or organisation, personality or preaching. It is essentially a manifestation of God. It has the stamp of deity on it, something even the spiritually uninitiated are quick to recognise. We cannot explain revival because we cannot explain God. 'The wind blows where it wills.' Revival is different from evangelism. In evangelism man takes the initiative, though it be with the prompting of the Holy Spirit. 'In revival, the initiative is solely God's. In the one, the organisation is human: with the other it is divine ... Revival may break out in the midst of evangelism ... While revival carries evangelism must go on.'<sup>161</sup>

In Acts 2:2, Luke writes, 'Suddenly a sound like the blowing of a violent wind came from heaven and

filled the whole house where they were sitting.' Luke describes the Pentecostal outpouring as coming 'suddenly from heaven'. This suggests two important features. First, the outpouring came suddenly. 'There is the mark of suddenness. God is a man of war and a superb strategist. He makes use of the surprise element by striking suddenly. Revival overtakes men, comes upon them, and takes them unawares. When men fear that God is about to corner them and confront them with his claims, they tend to take avoiding action. But in revival God often moves so swiftly that they are pierced with conviction before they know what has happened.'<sup>162</sup> Second, the outpouring was from heaven: 'Here is the hallmark of the real thing as distinct from that which men commonly call revival, but which may be organised, promoted and so presumably controlled. Did anyone organise, promote or control that which came from heaven on the day of Pentecost. Only God. Certainly not the men of "the upper room prayer meeting".'<sup>163</sup>

Revival is recognised as clearly heaven-sent, when men cannot account for what is happening in terms of human personality or organisation. When a movement becomes organised or controlled by man, it has ceased to be spontaneous — it is no longer revival. 'It is of course necessary that leaders ensure that the work of the Spirit is not infiltrated by false doctrine or practice, but great care needs to be taken that we do not take things out of the control of the Holy Spirit. When God has put his hand on the helm we do well to keep ours off.'<sup>164</sup> It is this distinction between evangelism and revival that Campbell is highlighting. Evangelism is organised by man, revival is heaven-sent.

## Prayer

We pray for the Jewish French 'in France, the 12th largest unreached people group in Europe, whose language is French and whose primary religion is the Jewish faith. There are 442,000, 0% Christian and 0% evangelical.'<sup>165</sup> We pray for a waking up of the Jewish French in France. Lord, blow a trumpet in Zion, and may there be a messianic movement of French Jews coming to faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. Lord, you are a God of enduring covenantal faithfulness. Suddenly from heaven, reveal your love through the person of your Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, and may they behold your power and your glory, we pray!

## Jesus Christ is consumed with passion for his Father's house

*'For zeal for your house consumes me, and the insults of those who insult you fall on me ... But I pray to you, O Lord, in the time of your favour; in your great love, O God, answer me with your salvation.'* (Psalm 69:9,13)

There is something simultaneously awesomely attractive and terrifyingly scary about an active volcano spilling out burning lava and violently ejecting dark plumes of smoke into the atmosphere. The love that Jesus has for his Father's house is a jealous volcanic desire that will spurn everything that gets in its way. How do we make sense of this jealous love? The idea of God being jealous comes up in the Old Testament, but does Jesus have a jealous love in the New Testament too?

David Sliker says,<sup>166</sup> 'There is an old heresy, the idea that the Old Testament is a God of wrath and the New Testament God is a God of mercy. In Exodus 34:5–6, Moses says "Show me your glory", and God declares "I am gracious and compassionate, I am slow to anger and I am faithful ... abounding in loyal faithfulness".<sup>167</sup> Somehow we have re-written "Slow to anger" to mean that he has "no anger" ... but "No!" ... The blood of Jesus does not remove his anger. He is slow to anger but this does not mean there is no anger. In emphasising the Father Heart of God (in the contemporary charismatic Western church) we have ignored really important aspects of his character. His relationship to us and his passion and jealousy relate to our destiny and ... how far he is willing to go to get us to our destiny. He won't stop until all darkness is out of us ... that hidden sense that I know better than God, that I am wiser than God, that I have a better way ... is dealt with. He is love and included in that love is his anger and jealousy. When you yoke your life and when you fasten your life covenantally to a bridegroom God ... you get him ... the whole of who he is, is fastened to you and you get all of him ... the free gift of

righteousness made a way for him to fasten himself to you. You get him ... the God of the Old Testament and New Testament has fastened himself to you.'

We get a picture of God's jealous, volcanic love when Jesus drives out the money changers from the temple and quotes Psalm 69:9a. This is the first of multiple times that Jesus is speaking in Psalm 69. Jesus' disciple Matthew remembered the quote from this Psalm — 'Zeal for your house consumes me' — and quotes it in Matthew 21:12–13. Here in Psalm 69, we find David speaking this verse, 1,000 years before Jesus was born.

Second, Paul says in Romans 15:3 that Jesus himself is speaking in the second part of 69:9. Paul says, 'For Christ did not please himself but, as it is written: the insults of those who insult you have fallen on me.'<sup>168</sup> Here in Psalm 69:9b Christ, the divine *logos*, is speaking through the mouth of David, and Paul is recognising this. Matthew Bates calls it prosopological exegesis.

Third, Psalm 69:21 says 'they put gall in my food and gave me vinegar for my thirst'; this is also Christ speaking, according to Origen.<sup>169</sup> For Irenaeus the unity of the Old and New Testament demands that we see the presence of Christ in the Old Testament. If we don't have that approach, we are in danger of being gnostics.

As we read this passage in Psalm 69, and meet the person of Jesus speaking through David 1,000 years before Jesus was born, the unity of both Testaments Old and New makes sense. The risen and ascended Jesus Christ of Revelation chapter 1, with hair white as wool and eyes blazing with fire, is the same Jesus Christ of Matthew 21:12–13 and Psalm 69:9a.

## Prayer

Thank you, Lord, for the burning passionate love for your bride. Open my eyes to see you, Lord Jesus, and open my heart to burn with passionate love for you too.

## Conscious of the movings of God

*'He will be like rain falling on a mown field' (Psalm 72:6)*

**D**uncan Campbell said: 'But in revival the community suddenly becomes conscious of the movings of God, beginning among his own people. So that in a matter of hours, not days ... churches become crowded, no intimation of any special meeting but something happening that moves men and women to the house of God, and you will find within hours, scores of men and women crying to God for mercy before they went near a church. You have read the history of revivals, the Jonathan Edwards revival in America, that was what happened ... the Welsh revival ... that is what happened ... and the more recent Lewis revival ... that is what happened. When God stepped down, suddenly men and women all over the parish were gripped by the fear of God.'

'Pentecost was intensely personal. The wind bore down upon the disciples filling the house where they were, the tongues of fire sat upon each of them. It was more than God manifesting his power and purity to men; he was coming upon them to make them powerful and pure. Significantly, it was in the semblance of a dove that the spirit came upon the sinless Son. But now God was dealing with his imperfect followers. Though they had prepared themselves in those ten days of waiting, they still needed the purging flame.'<sup>170</sup>

'Men are only made conscious of God by the display of his attributes. They feel God when they sense his greatness, his love or his wisdom. But in times of revival it is especially his power and his holiness that are in evidence. It is these that bring deep conviction of sin among believing and unbelieving alike. In times of revival a man is not only made conscious that God is there, but often it

will seem to him that he is there to deal with him alone. He becomes oblivious of everyone but himself in the agonising grip of a holy God.'<sup>171</sup>

Luke writes in Acts 2:37: 'When the people heard this they were cut to the heart and said to Peter and the other apostles, "Brothers, what shall we do?"' We see this response in the response to 'the ruthless logic of Jonathan Edwards' famous sermon, "Sinners in the hands of an angry God", that he preached in his usual undemonstrative manner during the New England revival of 1741 (which) could never have produced the effect it did, had it not been for the consciousness of God that gripped the hearers. When they went into the meeting house, wrote Turnbull, "the appearance of the assembly was thoughtless and vain; the people scarcely conducted themselves with common decency", but when it came to the sermon, "The assembly appeared bowed with an awful conviction of their sin and danger. There was such a breathing of distress and weeping, that the preacher was obliged to speak to the people, and desire silence that he might be heard."<sup>172</sup>

'Similar is the scene described by Charles Finney, when he preached in the village schoolhouse near Antwerp, New York: "An awful solemnity seemed to settle upon the people; the congregation began to fall from their seats in every direction and cry for mercy. If I had a sword in each hand, I could not have cut them down as fast as they fell. I was obliged to stop preaching." Though the measure of the Spirit's conviction will vary from occasion to occasion, and even from person to person, the explanation is always the same, the manifestation of God in holiness and power.'<sup>173</sup>

## Prayer

We pray for the Bosniak 'in Germany, the 15th largest unreached people group in Europe, whose language is Bosnian and whose primary religion is Islam. There are 435,000, 0.4% Christian and 0.1% evangelical.'<sup>174</sup> The Bosniaks fled as refugees throughout Europe, including Germany, following the ethnic fighting in the Balkans that erupted in 1995. May justice roll down like a river and righteousness like a never-failing stream in the former Yugoslavia. We pray for the refugee Bosniaks in Germany who feel alienated; bring redemption and restoration, we pray. Like the falling of rain on a mown field, fall on the Bosniaks in Germany and grip them with a consciousness of God, we pray.

## Life is but a dream, but Jesus Christ is my portion forever

*‘When I tried to understand all this, it was oppressive to me till I entered the sanctuary of God; then I understood their final destiny. Surely you place them on slippery ground; you cast them down to ruin. How suddenly are they destroyed, completely swept away by terrors! As a dream when one awakes; so when you arise, O Lord, you will despise them as fantasies.’ (Psalm 73:16–20)*

It is easy to pick up a newspaper today and read of totalitarian leaders who seem so evil. In Psalm 73 we read how God sees pride and what the destiny of wicked rulers will be. Below is a summary of a sermon John Wesley preached on Psalm 73.<sup>175</sup>

‘Anyone that considers these verses will easily observe that the Psalmist is speaking directly of the wicked that prosper in their wickedness. It is very common for these utterly to forget that they are creatures of a day; to live as if they were never to die; as if their present state was to endure forever ... How miserable a mistake is this ... but I would at present carry this thought further. I would show how near a resemblance there is between human life and a dream. What is a dream? It is a series of persons and things presented to our mind which have no being but in our imagination. It seems to be an echo of what was said or done when we were awake ... a fragment of life, broken off at both ends, having no connexion with the real things which either precede it or follow it.’

‘Let us illustrate rather than prove the resemblance between transient dreams and the dream of life. Suppose we have before us someone who has just passed into the world of spirits. We talk to this person before us and we say to them, “You have been living on earth for 40, 50 or 60 years.” God has just spoken and said to you, “Awake you who have been sleeping.” Look around you. What is the difference? Where is your body. Where are your limbs, your hands, your feet, your head. They lie cold, insensible. How different, now you

are thoroughly awake, are the objects around you. Where are the houses and gardens and fields and cities which you lately saw? Now suppose this to be the case with any of you and that you are now present before God. It may be so tomorrow; perhaps tonight. Perhaps this night your soul “may be required of you”; the dream of life may end and you may wake into broad eternity. See there lies the poor inanimate carcass shortly to be sown in corruption and dishonour. But where is the immortal, incorruptible spirit? There it stands, naked before the eyes of God! What profit have you reaped of all your labour and care? Does your money follow you? Do your clothes follow you? Where is the honour, the pomp, the applause that surrounded you? All are gone; all are vanished away, “like as a shadow they depart”. See, on the other hand, the mansions which were prepared for you before the foundations of the world! O what a difference between the dream that is past and the real scene that is now before you! Look up! See Jesus! Look down! What a prison is there, its inhabitants gnashing their teeth at him! We might wish that we had a friend with us always whispering in our ear, “Wake up, O sleeper, rise from the dead and Christ will shine on you.” Soon you will awake into real life. You will stand a naked spirit, in the world of spirits, before the face of the great God! See that now you hold fast to that “eternal life which he has given you in his Son.”

The Psalms help us re-orientate to that real world. Life is but a dream.

## Prayer

Listen to a song drawn from Psalm 73 and pray.



‘Wake up O sleeper’<sup>176</sup>



## Revival begins with an encounter with God

*'It was you who split open the sea ... it was you who crushed the heads of Leviathan ... it was you who opened up the springs ... it was you who set all the boundaries of the earth.'*  
(Psalm 74:13–17)

Duncan Campbell said: 'Now how did it happen ... this, to me, is an interesting story and I want to tell it in full ... One evening an old woman, 84 years of age, and blind, had a vision. Now don't ask me to explain this vision, because I cannot, but strange things begin to happen when God begins to move, and this dear old lady in the vision saw the church of our fathers crowded with young people and she saw a strange minister in the pulpit. She was so impressed by this revelation, because a revelation it was ... she sent for the minister and told her story. The parish minister was a God-fearing man, a man who longed to see God working. Oh, he had tried ever so many things to get the youth of the parish interested, but not one single teenager attended the church ... Well what did this dear old lady say to him? I'll tell you what she said: "I'm sure, Mr McKay, that you're longing to see God working. What about calling your office bearers together and suggest to them that you spend two nights a week waiting upon God? You have tried mission, you have tried special evangelists ... I tell you, Mr McKay, 'Have you tried God?'" Oh, I tell you this was a wonderful woman ... so he meekly obeyed and he said, "Yes I will call the session together. I will suggest that we will meet on Tuesday night and Friday night and spend the whole night in prayer.'

George Whitfield was the outstanding preacher of the First Great Awakening in the 18th century, and he recorded in his journal how he was 'filled with the Holy Ghost. Oh, that all who deny the promise of the Father, might thus receive it themselves!' He describes how on one occasion: 'He began to pray a brief prayer ... but to his own astonishment could not stop. Petitions, praises, raptures poured forth from his lips: "A wonderful power was in that room."' Whitfield's prayer was drowned by the cries, which, he was sure, could be heard a great way off ... Cries and groans and quaking had sometimes

accompanied the preaching. 'Thousands cried out so that they almost drowned my voice.' Whitfield did not doubt this time that the Spirit of God was present: men and women dropped as dead, then revived, then fainted again as Whitfield preached on, 'swept up into the contemplation of Christ's all-constraining, free and everlasting love' until 'Whitfield himself fell into a swoon. For a few moments the Tennent brothers believed he was dead. He revived, mounted his horse with their help, and together the three men travelled no less than 20 miles home through the woods, by moonlight, singing as they rode.'<sup>177</sup>

Charles Finney of the Second Great Awakening described his experience of the Holy Spirit, which occurred in 1821. He said, 'The Holy Spirit descended upon me in a manner that seemed to go through me, body and soul. I could feel the impression, like a wave of electricity, going through and through me ... it seemed to come in waves of liquid love, for I could not express it in any other way. It seemed like the very breath of God. I can remember distinctly that it seemed to fan me, like immense wings.'<sup>178</sup> 'No words can express the wonderful love that was shed abroad in my heart. I wept aloud with joy and love. I literally bellowed out the unspeakable overflow of my heart. These waves came over me and over me and over me, one after the other, until I remember crying out, "I shall die if these waves continue to pass over me." I said, "Lord I cannot bear any more," yet I had no fear of death. Later in the evening a member of my choir — for I was the leader of the choir — came into my office to see me. He was a member of the church. He found me in this state of loud weeping, and said to me, "Mr Finney, what's wrong with you?" I could not answer for some time. He then said, "Are you in pain?" I gathered myself up as best I could, and I replied, "No, but so happy that I cannot live."<sup>179</sup>

## Prayer

We pray for the Turks 'in the Netherlands, the 18th largest unreached people group in Europe, whose language is Turkish and whose primary religion is Islam. There are 309,000, 0.0% Christian and 0.0% evangelical.'<sup>180</sup> The unreached are now living in our cities in Europe. Dutch Turks now form the largest minority in the Netherlands, living in large cities in the western Netherlands. Lord, today open our eyes to see your love for the Turks in the Netherlands, and may the Dutch Turks encounter the living God.



## Jesus' death and resurrection are foreshadowed by Israel's 'Grand Story'

*'My people hear my teaching; listen to the words of my mouth.'* (Psalm 78:1–6)

**W**hy did God create man? Was it because he wanted a bride for his son, or was it because God wanted a bigger family? There is a Jewish proverb that says that God created man because he likes stories. In a beautiful passage in John 17, when we hear the heartbeat of God, as Jesus prays to the Father before going to the cross, it seems like God the Father, God the Son and God Holy Spirit wanted to share their love with man, and there is a longing in the heart of God that there might be union and communion, God with man. In Revelation 21:3, the Grand Story becomes clear. 'And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Now the dwelling of God is with man and he will live with them; they will be his people and God himself will be with them and be their God. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away."'

In Psalm 78, the God of the universe shares his heart. He wants to reveal his heart to his children, telling stories. 'Listen to the words of my mouth. I will open my mouth with a parable; I will utter hidden things, things from of old — things we have heard and known, things our ancestors have told us.' A long time ago, I had the wonderful, brief opportunity to home-school my children: the best part was the extended times of reading stories to them.<sup>181</sup> How are we to read the Scriptures? They have been read orally for millennia, read out

loud in company with other people. The God of the universe has shared his heart through stories, and every generation has a responsibility to retell those stories to the next generation.

Hans Boermsa says that Early Church exegesis emphasised reading Scripture: (a) in the light of resurrection; (b) in the community of faith; and (c) as a coherent story.<sup>182</sup> For the past 400 years, however, church leaders have effectively been trained in theological colleges and seminaries to read the Bible by Voltaire and Rousseau, presupposing the Scriptures are a work of man rather than sacred texts. Psalm 78 is one of a number of 'big picture Psalms' (68, 78, 105, 106) 'that tell the grand story usually to encourage Israel to learn from history and not repeat the mistakes of the past. They provide a theological compass for the future.'<sup>183</sup> Reading Scripture in the light of the resurrection, in the community of faith, and as a coherent story is a unifying way of celebrating the diverse expressions of the people of God, whether Orthodox, Pentecostal, Catholic, Methodist or Anglican. Psalm 78 celebrates that the God of Israel made himself known through delivering Israel from Egypt. This foreshadowed Jesus' deliverance of mankind from sin on the cross. There is a Grand Story and God's saving acts in the history of Israel are just the prelude; the climax of that story is yet to come.

## Prayer

Listen to a song drawn from Psalm 78 and pray.



## Appealing to the covenant

*'Return to us, O God Almighty! Look down from heaven and see! Watch over this vine, the root your right hand has planted, the son you have raised up for yourself.' (Psalm 80:14–15)*

**D**uncan Campbell said: 'I tell you dear people; here were men that meant business ... The dear old lady said if you do that, my sister and I will get on our knees at 10 o'clock on Tuesday and 10 o'clock on Friday and we will wait on our knees until 4 o'clock in the morning. I tell you, this puts us to shame ... so they went to prayer, and I want to mention that they had but one promise from God ... and that promise declared, "I will pour water on him that is thirsty and floods upon the dry ground." That is God's promise and in their prayers, according to the minister, they would say again and again, "You are a covenant-keeping God and you must be true to your covenant engagement."' <sup>185</sup>

Intercessors frequently use holy pleas to powerfully and boldly pray before God's throne. It is important to make sure you have a pure heart before God and that there is nothing between you and your God. Lynn Green has said: 'Revelation 3:19 says, "When people are my friends, I tell them when they are in the wrong. I will punish them for it. So, stir up your spirits and repent. I am standing here knocking at the door. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come to them and eat with them and they with me. This will be my gift to the one who conquers. I will sit them beside me on my throne just as I conquered and sat with my Father on his throne."' <sup>186</sup> We are called to be conquerors. "How do we conquer?" We conquer by remaining friends with him. When we are friends, he tells us when we are in the wrong. We must never lose that hunger to be God's friend. Sometimes he punishes us because he wants us to repent; that is how we remain with him on his throne. Do not quit regularly waiting upon God and asking him to search your heart. Don't substitute anything for waiting on God as a team,

as a community. When we enter into prayer with our brothers and sisters we should ask him to reveal any sin in our hearts. The Holy Spirit will begin to convict and it leads to repentance and confession for one another. That is how we secure our place on the throne ... that keeps us where we belong, above the principalities and powers ... You have a friend in Jesus; he wants to work on your behalf ... He may want to correct you first. Get to that point where you are praying and you know what his will is, because we can all have this confidence: if we ask anything according to his will then he hears us, and if he hears we know we have the requests we have made. <sup>187</sup>

Lou Engle says that we can evoke the memory of the covenant. He says that 'appealing to the covenant is more powerful than prayer.' <sup>188</sup> Engle explains that the word 'covenant' means 'to bond or fit together'. The friendship between God and Abraham demonstrates the components of a covenant relationship. 'God says to Abraham, "Give me your son," and Abraham is bound by covenant to do so. As a blood brother of God, he must obey. But then God is bound by the very nature of the same covenant to fulfil his promises as well—including the provision of his own Son to meet our great need for atonement. The thought that God would enter into such a binding agreement is staggering.' <sup>189</sup> John Dawson says, "Covenant is much more than a sterile legal transaction. God's covenants are covenants of divine passion initiated with those who have moved his great heart. Therefore when we pray, 'Lord, remember (for example) David,' it evokes such memories in the Father, of the man after his own heart, that he cannot contain himself. These memories stir him to act.' <sup>190</sup>

## Prayer

We pray for the Iraqi Arabs 'in Germany, the 20th largest unreached people group in Europe, whose language is Arabic, Mesopotamian and whose primary religion is Islam. There are 308,000, 1.0% Christian and 0.3% evangelical.' <sup>191</sup> Lord, you sent the missionary Willibrord to the Frisians, a Germanic people living in North Germany in the seventh century. We pray for a mission movement that will impact the Iraqi Arabs in Germany 1,300 years later. We pray for the re-evangelising of Northern Europe, including the Iraqi Arabs, and that they would learn more fully of who Jesus truly is, and come to obey him. We stand on the covenants made by missionary monks in Germany in the past. Move again in our day, we pray, among the Iraqi Arabs.

## The presence of God in Christ is the heart's true home

*'How lovely is your dwelling place, Lord Almighty! My soul yearns, even faints, for the courts of the Lord; my heart and my flesh cry out for the living God ... Blessed are those whose strength is in you, whose hearts are set on pilgrimage. As they pass through the Valley of Baca, they make it a place of springs; the autumn rains also cover it with pools. They go from strength to strength, till each appears before God in Zion.'* (Psalm 84:1,5,6,7)

Each year pilgrims from all over Israel made their way to Jerusalem for the great festivals. This is one of the songs the pilgrims would have sung on the journey and reflects their impatience to arrive (Psalm 84:2). The Valley of Baca means the 'valley of trouble'. The Lord transforms the place of tears into a place of springs on our earthly pilgrimage if we yield it to him. Benedict, the father of Benedictine monasticism, said in his *Rule*, 'we must be aware that he will only listen to us if we pray not so much at length but with purity of heart and tears of compunction.'<sup>192</sup>

John Wesley, the Father of Methodism,<sup>193</sup> rode 250,000 miles on horseback for 65 years in ministry, preaching the gospel around this country until he died on 2 March 1791. As I write this, I have just completed a Christian heritage tour visiting John Wesley's house in London. Yesterday I was standing in the bedroom where he died. His last words were, 'The best of all God is with us.' Wesley knew where he was going. His heart was set on pilgrimage. In this beautiful Psalm, the psalmist focused on this goal of the believer, which is to dwell with God.

In Wesley's en-suite prayer closet, the custodians have positioned a large Bible and a copy of the Methodist covenant: 'I am no longer my own, but

thine. Put me to what thou wilt, rank me with whom thou wilt. Put me to doing, put me to suffering. Let me be employed for thee or laid aside for thee, exalted for thee or brought low for thee. Let me be full, let me be empty. Let me have all things, let me have nothing. I freely and heartily yield all things to thy pleasure and disposal. And now, O glorious and blessed God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, thou art mine, and I am thine. So be it. And the covenant which I have made on earth, let it be ratified in heaven. Amen.'<sup>194</sup>

In his book *Scripture as Real Presence*, Hans Boersma says he is convinced that 'everything around us is sacramental in the sense that everything God has created both points to him and makes him present.'<sup>195</sup> Baptism and the Eucharist have been viewed as sacramental in the Catholic Church, but the Church Fathers often used the word 'sacrament' regarding the Scriptures. For Augustine, 'Holy Scripture too is a sacrament inasmuch as it renders Christ present to us.'<sup>196</sup> In our earthly pilgrimage, a fresh understanding that the Scriptures are sacramental is of the utmost importance, as the Scriptures render Christ present to us.

## Prayer

My strength is in you, I set my heart on a pilgrimage to Zion. My heart and my flesh cry out to you, Lord Jesus, the living, incarnate, ascended, resurrected Son of God. 'Thanks be to thee. My Lord Jesus Christ for all the benefits thou hast given me, for all the pains and insults thou hast borne for me. O most merciful redeemer, friend and brother, may I know thee more clearly, love thee more dearly, and follow thee more dearly, day by day.'<sup>197</sup>

## Persevering importunate prayer

*I call to you all day long.* (Psalm 86:3)

**D**uncan Campbell said: ‘The praying and meetings continued for several months. Charles Finney in his Revival lectures was clear as to how to prepare fallow ground for times of refreshing from heaven: “There are two kinds of means (required) to promote a revival, the one to influence man, the other to influence God. The truth is employed to influence men, and prayer to move God. Prayer is the essential link in the chain of causes that leads to a revival as much so as truth. The overlooked fact is that truth by itself will never produce the effect without the Spirit of God and that the Spirit is given in answer to prayer.”’<sup>198</sup>

Charles Finney said, ‘A spirit of importunity sometimes came upon me, so that I would say to God that he had made a promise to answer prayer, and I could not, and would not, be denied ... I cannot tell how absurd unbelief looked to me, and how certain it was in my mind that God would answer prayer ... those prayers that from day to day and from hour to hour, I found myself offering in such agony in faith.’<sup>199</sup> Jesus refers to this type of importunate prayer in the Gospels. In Luke 11:8 Jesus says, ‘I tell you he will not get up and give him bread because he is his friend, yet because of the man’s boldness he will get up and give him as much as he needs.’ Luke 11:8 is sandwiched between the Lord’s prayer and the ask–seek–knock teaching, and is an illustration of the sort of prayer the Lord is looking for. The Greek word means ‘utter shamelessness’ and includes the concept of great boldness, an urgency of pressing the request, claim or demand to the real limits, and includes a determination to assist in the boldness until it receives the answer through importunity.

Wesley Duewel says: ‘How long must you persevere? ... How long were the disciples to tarry

in Jerusalem? “Until you have been clothed with power from on high” (Luke 24:49). How long did Moses keep his hands raised to God in prayer? Until Amalek was totally defeated (Exodus 17:13). How long did Joshua hold out his javelin toward Ai while the army attacked? Until Jericho was destroyed (Joshua 8:26). How long did Elijah stay on his knees in prevailing prayer after the three years’ drought? Until rain clouds formed in the sky (1 Kings 18:44). How long did Jesus pray in Gethsemane? Until Satan was defeated. How long did the disciples continue in prayer in the upper room? Until the Holy Spirit came upon them. No matter (the) request, if God has led us to pray for a need that we believe is the will of God, how long should we pray? Until the answer comes!’ Many other men of God attest to the necessity of importunate prayer. Andrew Murray says that importunate prayer begins with a refusal to except denial. It grows to the determination to persevere, to spare no time or trouble, until an answer comes. It rises to the intensity in which the whole being is given to God in supplication, and the boldness comes to lay hold of God’s strength.<sup>200</sup> Richard Stibbes writes, ‘It is atheism to pray and not to wait in hope. A sincere Christian will pray, wait, strengthen his heart with promises, and never leaves praying and looking up until God gives him a gracious answer.’<sup>201</sup> Bengel, the Lutheran theologian who greatly influenced John Wesley, suggested that ‘we do not have God’s permission to quit praying until he gives us some answer.’<sup>202</sup> EM Bounds says, ‘He prays not at all who does not press his plea. Cold prayers have no claim on heaven, and no hearing in the courts above. Fire is the life of prayer, and heaven is reached by flaming importunity rising in an ascending scale.’<sup>203</sup>

## Prayer

We pray for the Turks ‘in Germany, the second largest unreached people group in Europe, whose language is Turkish and whose primary religion is Islam. There are 2,802,000 and they are 0% Christian and 0% evangelical.’<sup>204</sup> Thousands arrived in Germany in the 1950s and more came in the early 1960s, a time when Germany had a shortage of cheap labour. Help us and help your Church in Germany to persevere in prayer for the Turks, the largest minority ethnic group in Germany. Lord, give your Church the courage that you gave Boniface centuries ago when he evangelised Germany. We pray for many Turks in Germany to bow the knee to King Jesus, the coming king, who will be king of all the earth.



## Zion is the city of God — Jesus Christ's dwelling place with man

*'He has founded his city on the holy mountain. The Lord loves the gates of Zion more than all the other dwellings of Jacob ... as they make music they will sing, "All my fountains are in you".'* (Psalm 87:1,2,7)

How could anything good come from cities, I wondered as I studied the Industrial Revolution at school. There was appalling suffering for those living and working in cities in the Midlands of England. I had this unanswered question for many years, 'Why does the Bible end with a city?' How can that possibly be a good thing? We are now confronted by the frequency of the psalmist's reference to Zion, which is a focus of Psalm 87. Zion is an image of the kingdom of God on earth as a city, and it is abundantly clear that God is guiding the universe towards a specific end. Zion, the city of God, appears 33 times in the Psalms (NKJV).<sup>205</sup> The psalmist declares that God loves Zion and chose her as his dwelling place, and he even dwells in her for ever. Tom Marshall, author of *Right Relationships*, said the reason that the Bible ends with a city is that although 'man' lived in a simple garden at the very beginning, it will be necessary in the course of time, for man to reflect and 'image out' the complexity of the Trinity in the form of a garden city, for man to reflect the complexity of the Godhead.<sup>206</sup>

Dr Atef Meshreky says, 'Zion in the Old Testament was the city which God chose as a city of his reign where he desired to dwell among his people as the invisible king of Israel. Likewise, in all generations, the Lord seeks such dwelling places to reign in and among his believers. When a group of believers lives as a spiritual people whose place is heavenly, and according to his Commandments, the Lord dwells among them and his reign is manifested. He is then able to impact those surrounding them, attracting them to himself and causing the earth also to submit to his kingship.'<sup>207</sup> In the Scriptures there is a strong underlying presupposition of

divine providence. God is working his purposes out, and Zion provides a focus and vision for ministry and the culmination of God's purposes in the Bible. Early Church exegesis is grounded in divine providence, the understanding that all that occurs in God's universe happens under his guidance and control. This is very different from the view of deists who believe that God created the universe but natural laws are being played out. But it is this deistic worldview, which was the starting point of Enlightenment thinkers, that has so influenced the modern-day university, theological and Bible training in the West.

The vision of the 'City of God' that occurs frequently in the Psalms inspired St Augustine, Bishop of Hippo.<sup>208</sup> In *The City of God* he examined the ancient pagan religions of Rome, the arguments of the Greek philosophers and the revelations of the Bible. Pointing the way forward to a citizenship that transcends worldly politics and will last for eternity, *The City of God* is one of the most influential documents in the development of Christianity. As tradition is retrieved, evangelicalism renewed and Early Church exegesis restored,<sup>209</sup> a greater acknowledgment of divine providence, and a theistic worldview and not a deistic worldview, should begin to take place. Meshreky says the time will come when the Holy Spirit gathers what he calls 'kingdom units', the spiritual Zion, not necessary physically but spiritually.<sup>210</sup> Through them, the Spirit will fulfil God's final purposes: the final harvest and the preparing (of) the scene on earth for the return of Christ the King. The Lord God of the universe has chosen Zion, the city of God, as Jesus Christ's dwelling place with man.

## Prayer

Lord, you have chosen Zion as your dwelling place. May my life line up with your kingdom purposes, as your kingdom comes on earth, as it is in heaven, I pray. All my fountains are in you, Lord Jesus.

## God uses breakers

*'You have exalted my horn like that of a wild ox.'* (Psalm 92:10)

**D**uncan Campbell said: '... until one night a very remarkable thing happened. They were kneeling in the straw in the barn of a farmhouse, when suddenly one young man rose and read part of Psalm 24: "Who will ascend the hill of God, who will stand in his holy place? He that hath clean hands and a pure heart, and he will not lift up his soul to vanity nor sworn deceitfully, and he shall receive the blessing of the Lord", and he shut his Bible and looking down on the minister and the other men who were kneeling there, he said some crude words (not too crude in Gaelic). This is what he said: "It seems to me just so much humbug to be praying as we are praying, to be waiting as we are waiting if we ourselves are not rightly related to God. Oh, my dear brother, let's take that to heart." He began to pray, "God ... are my hands clean? Is my heart pure?" And that man got no further ... He fell on his knees and then on his face on the straw and within a matter of minutes, three of the elders fell into a trance. Now, please don't come to me at the end of the meeting and ask me, what did I really mean by falling into a trance, I cannot answer that question. All I know is that when that happened in the barn ... now it happened in the Jonathan Edwards revival remember ... that is not by peculiar any means to Lewis ... it happened in America ... it happened in the '59 revival in Wales, not the 1900 revival but the '59 revival ... But this I can say: the moment that happened in the barn, a power was let loose in Barvas that shook the whole of Lewis.'

'One who breaks open the way will go up before them; they will break through the gate and go out. Their king will pass through before them, the Lord at their head.' (Micah 2:13) The Lord used a 'breaker' to break open Argentina into revival. RE Miller was so dissatisfied that nothing seemed to work when he was pastoring a small church. He describes how he had tried everything: 'I said to the Lord, "I have tried everything so I guess I'll try prayer." He prayed

for six-12 hours a day. He prayed for six months. Then he prayed for another 12 months. At the end of that he felt the Lord say that he should have a public meeting to pray from 8pm to midnight every day the next week. He said, "Lord, there will only be three little women who will watch me pray all evening." The Lord said he should do it anyway. So he held the meeting on Monday. The three little women came. They watched him pray for four hours. At the end of the evening a little lady with a backslidden husband said, "I feel like I should come up and knock on the table", but she didn't, and they all went home. The same thing happened every night. Until on Thursday night Miller said, "Here's what we are all going to do, we are all going to get up out of our seats and knock on the table, in hope that the little old lady will do the same." They get up. Miller gets up first, then one by one they go and knock on the table. When they do, the little old lady knocks on the table, the glory of the Lord comes down, and they are all baptised in the Holy Spirit. That was the beginning of the great Argentine revival.<sup>211</sup>

God uses 'breakers' who break open the way. The breaker 'goes up before them and they pass through the gate and then their king passes before them.' The Lord is looking for breakers who will break open the way for many different cities and many different lands. There are to be openings in the heavens and God will come down. As someone touches God and he touches them, God can then enable them to have an anointing of a breaker and to 'go before', with an unyielding tenacity. The breaker will not let go, for he sees everything else as less important. 'We cannot do more than pray until we have prayed. We can do more than pray, but not until after we pray,' says ST Gordon.<sup>212</sup> The two old ladies were the breakers in Lewes, Frank Bartleman at Azusa Street, Miller in Argentina. Will you be God's breaker for your town or city?

## Prayer

We pray for the Moroccan Arabs 'in France, the 13th largest unreached people group in the world, whose language is Arabic and whose primary religion is Islam. There are 441,000, 0.5% Christian and 0.1% evangelical.'<sup>213</sup> May a way be prepared for the Lord in France. Raise up prayer warriors with a breaker anointing to break open the way and to pray for Moroccan Arabs in France who have not as yet made Jesus Lord. Come and take your place as King of the Moroccan Arabs, we pray.

## 'Wake up!' and listen today to the voice of Jesus Christ in the Scriptures

*'Come, let us bow down in worship, let us kneel before the Lord our Maker; for he is our God and we are the people of his pasture, the flock under his care. Today, if only you would hear his voice, "Do not harden your hearts as you did at Meribah as you did that day at Massah in the wilderness, where your ancestors tested me."' (Psalm 95:5–9)*

Over 1,500 years ago, Benedict at the beginning of his *Rule* (see Appendix) also challenged his monks to 'Wake up', and Psalm 95:7–8 was his inspiration.<sup>214</sup> He said, 'Now at last we must wake up ... Let us open our eyes to the divine light and listen carefully to what the divine voice tells us to do when it cries out each day, "If you hear his voice today, do not harden your hearts."' Esther de Waal says that Benedict wrote his *Rule* for monastic living in AD 540, just after the Fall of the Roman Empire, which helped chart many through stormy waters, saying, 'Christians must have looked back with nostalgia to the age of the Fathers and asked themselves if ever again the church could produce a Saint Augustine and a "City of God" to hold out the promise of peace and order and light on a scene which seemed instead to be rapidly descending into chaos. And then on the scene there appeared the man who built an ark to survive the rising storm, an ark not made with hands.'<sup>215</sup> Benedict's call was to a deep and challenging life, focused on prayer and laying down one's life, following biblical Christian principles, living in community with a committed body of believers. It wasn't explicitly evangelistic, but these small groups of believers became like a beacon set on a hill.'<sup>216</sup>

Europe needs another Benedictine missionary monastic movement today. We need to hear Jesus waking us up, speaking to us through both Old and New Testaments. It is Scripture that rouses us.

Scripture is a divine voice. Scripture is sacramental. Early Church exegesis was not primarily about observing, interpreting and applying the text, as is customary in Bible study today. It was about encountering Jesus the divine *logos* in the Scriptures and obeying the divine voice. Benedict's rule consisted of 'instructions of a loving father: receive them gladly and carry them out to good effect so that by the efforts of obedience you may return to him from whom you have withdrawn through the laziness of disobedience. It is to you that my words are now addressed, if you are ready to take up the powerful and glorious weapons of obedience, renouncing your own will with the intention of fighting for the true king, Christ the Lord.'<sup>217</sup> The Scriptures are a sacred text. Scripture is not to be objectively applied in a scientific way. Lesslie Newbigin said, 'the idea of a purely objective knowledge is an illusion ... but it is a prime and dominant illusion of Western culture.'<sup>218</sup> We are all children of a divine heavenly Father and knowledge in the Bible is a personal knowing (*yada* in Hebrew). Have you had the revelation that your Bible — including the Old Testament — should be read in the light of the resurrection, by the community of faith, as a coherent story? Can you hear this call afresh today — to wake up, to encounter Jesus Christ, the divine *logos*, to hear his voice and to obey him in the fear of the Lord?

## Prayer

Listen to a song drawn from Psalm 95 and pray.



'Wake up and hear the call'<sup>219</sup>

## A sudden, sovereign, supernatural visitation from God

*'He is to be feared above all gods. Splendour and majesty are before him.'*

(Psalm 96:4–6)

**D**uncan Campbell said: 'I say "shook Lewis." God stepped down ... the Holy Spirit began to move among the people ... and the minister writing about what happened on the following morning said this ... "You met God on meadow and moorland ... you met him in the homes of the people ... God seemed to be everywhere. What was that? Revival? Revival? Not an evangelist; not a special effort; not anything at all of power; not anything organised on the basis of human endeavour; but an awareness of God that gripped the whole community so much so that work stopped. What was happening? People were meeting in groups ... young men gathering in the field ... They were talking about this strange consciousness of God ... that had gripped the community ... In a matter of days I received a letter inviting me to the island ... I was at that time in the midst of a very gracious movement on the Island of Skye; it wasn't revival, but men and women were coming to Christ and God was glorified in the number of prominent men who found a saviour at that time ... but it wasn't revival.'

John 3:8 says: 'The wind blows wherever it pleases. You hear its sound, but you cannot tell where it comes from or where it is going. So it is with everyone born of the spirit.' Jesus himself compared the operations of the Holy Spirit with the ways of the wind. Mark Stibbe says that spiritual awakenings or revivals 'are seasons in which the wind of the Spirit comes upon a community like a tornado'.<sup>220</sup> In the normal course of Church history, the wind blows quietly and a steady stream of people is gently moved to enter the kingdom. A revival, on the other hand, is a sudden, sovereign and supernatural visitation of God. Revival is like the mighty outpourings of the Spirit on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2) — a mighty tornado from heaven which sweeps thousands into the kingdom in a very short

time. A revival is therefore something exceptional and mysterious. 'Human beings can no more create, manufacture or orchestrate a revival than they can a tornado. Revivals are first and foremost visitations of the Holy Spirit in which whole communities are impacted with the personality of Jesus Christ. Like tornadoes, revivals come suddenly and powerfully. No one knows where they will start, where they will move to, or how long they will last. Everyone hears their effects — shaken institutions, the wailing of the penitent, cries for mercy and so on. But no one can predict their origin or destination.'<sup>221</sup>

Stibbe highlights 10 characteristics of the revivals, based on the biblical account in Acts of the outpouring at Pentecost that he suggests is a prototype of every exceptional visitation of God in the power of the Spirit. The 10 features are:

- (1) 'Divine visitation';
- (2) 'Anointed preaching';
- (3) 'Radical conviction';
- (4) 'Passionate intercession';
- (5) 'Evangelistic worship';
- (6) 'Miraculous works';
- (7) 'Kingdom community';
- (8) 'Social transformation';
- (9) 'Sacramental reality';
- (10) 'Constant conversions'.<sup>222</sup>

The revival in Wales between 1904–05 was a significant 20th-century awakening. The direction of the wind of the Spirit could not have been predicted. It travelled from South Wales to India, America (Los Angeles) and Korea. This is the mystery of revival. God alone knows where the wind of the Spirit will blow.<sup>223</sup> A revival is born not of the flesh but of the Spirit, and its trajectory is set by the wind of the Spirit, not by the will of man.

## Prayer

We pray for the Turkish Cypriots 'in Cyprus, the 28th largest unreached people group in Europe, whose language is Turkish and whose primary religion is Islam. There are 228,000 and they are 0.5% Christian and 0.26% evangelical'.<sup>224</sup> We pray for a sudden supernatural visitation from God on the Turkish Cypriots. The Turkish Cypriots as recently as 1963 were at war on the small island of Cyprus with the Greek Cypriots. This is an unreached people group where there has been deep division between Greeks and Turks. May your gospel go to the Turkish Cypriots, we pray!

## A fire goes before the Lord and prepares believers for the judgment seat of Christ

*'The Lord reigns, let the earth be glad; let the distant shores rejoice. Clouds and thick darkness surround him; righteousness and justice are the foundation of his throne. Fire goes before him and consumes his foes on every side. His lightning lights up the world; the earth sees and trembles. The mountains melt like wax before the Lord, before the Lord of all the earth.'* (Psalm 97:1–5)

This passage from Psalm 97 reminds me of a song from the 1980s, written by Dan Stradwick from 'Scripture in Song', and played by Bob Fitts of Integrity Music. Listen to the song<sup>225</sup> and see the lyrics: 'The Lord reigns. The Lord reigns. The Lord reigns. Let the earth rejoice. Let the earth rejoice. Let the people be glad That our God reigns. Let the people be glad That our God reigns. A fire goes before him, And burns up all his enemies. The hills melt like wax, At the presence of the Lord.'<sup>226</sup>

Joy Dawson in *The Fire of God* says these rather sobering words. 'I believe as God's children, we're all either in a fiery trial (with varying degrees of heat), heading for one and don't know it, or have been in one and need more understanding of how to get through the next one more successfully. I believe the degree of the heat of God's fire in each believer's life is proportionate to the extent of God's plan to use each one for the extension of his kingdom and to bring glory to the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. This is vividly illustrated in the lives of Job, Abraham, Joseph, David, Daniel, Mordecai, Esther, Jeremiah, Mary, Paul and apostle John. In each case the intense heat came when they were living righteous lives before God and men. This means we must never presume on God's purposes for those in the fire. We must never judge.'<sup>227</sup>

Psalm 97 says, 'Fire goes before him', and Daniel 7:10 also says, 'A stream of fire issued and came out from before him; a thousand thousands served him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him; the court sat in judgment, and the books were opened.' Psalm 97 also says righteousness and justice are the foundation of his throne. And

Daniel 7:10, also using same imagery of fire, says, 'the court sat in judgment, and the books were opened.' 2 Corinthians 5:10–11 says, 'For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each of us may receive what is due us for the things done while in the body, whether good or bad. Since, then, we know what it is to fear the Lord, we try to persuade others.' At this judgment seat we will not be judged for our repented sins: they have already been eradicated by the blood of Jesus. Psalm 103:12 says that God 'has removed our sins as far from us as the east is from the west' and Hebrews 8:12 says 'I will forgive their wickedness, and I will remember their sins no more'.

So what will our judgment entail? We will be examined regarding how we lived as believers, and both good and bad will be examined. Often Scripture refers to us as builders. We are sub-contractors of Zion (Psalm 132:13–14). We are created for good works. We are his workmanship (Ephesians 2:16) so that we may walk in them, but are you and I building with his eternal word (see 1 Corinthians 3:12–13)? The fire will show if a person's work has any value. The fire that examines your and my life will be the word of God. If our behaviour starts from obedience to his word, our achievements will last forever. How we used our God-given talents to build God's kingdom is what matters. If the building is burned up, the builder will suffer great loss. The builder will be saved but only like someone escaping from flames (1 Corinthians 3:15). So, why does the Lord use fire in our lives? To grow our character and to examine our work to see whether it has any value. Godly character and virtuous living matters.

## Prayer

Lord, just as St Gregory and many of the Church Fathers believed that godly character or virtue would be instilled through the singing and chanting of the Psalms and the sacrifice of praise, help me to grow in Christian character through devotion to the Psalms. May your fire burn up sin in my life.



## Fear God and give him glory

*'For the nations will fear the name of the Lord, all the kings of the earth will revere your glory.' (Psalm 102:15)*

**D**uncan Campbell said: 'I imagine that in Canada or America they would refer to it as a big revival but it was definitely a move of God. So I received that invitation to come to Lewis for 10 days and I wrote back to say that it wasn't possible for me to do that, because I was involved in a holiday convention on this island and speakers were arranged and accommodation arranged in the different hotels for the people who were coming from all over Britain. I cannot take time to tell you how that convention happened to be cancelled, largely because the tourist board took three hotels over my head for a special "Skye week" that they were going to have, so I had to cancel everything. However, the minister received the letter and he went to the old lady with it and he read the letter to her and she said, "Mr Mackay, that is what man is saying, but God has said something else and he will be here within a fortnight." I tell you the convention wasn't cancelled then, but she knew ... Oh my people, the secret of the Lord is with them that fear him! And she knew God's secret. Well, I was on the island within 10 days, to spend 10 days among the people. I was met at the pier by the minister and two of his office bearers. Just as I stepped off the boat, an old elder came up to me and faced me with this question, "Mr Campbell may I ask you this question, 'Are you walking with God?'" Oh, here were men who meant business, men who were afraid that a strange hand would touch the ark. "Are you walking with God?" I was glad to be able to say, "I think I can say this, I fear God." The dear man looked at me and said to me, "Well if you fear God that will do."<sup>228</sup>

God said that our hearts are wellsprings of life — to be guarded. We are to keep our hearts with all diligence, for it is from our hearts that the springs of life flow. What is the fear of the Lord? It is the hatred of evil. 'The fear of the Lord is hatred of evil.' (Proverbs 8:13) It is seeing sin the way God sees sin. He loves us but he hates sin. Because it pollutes us,

separates us from him and puts us in bondage. The penalty is ultimately death. There is nothing in it that God could tolerate. He hates sin. The fear of the Lord is coming into alignment with how he sees sin. I go to the local farm and I dump a big load of cow manure. What are you going to do? Are you going to say, 'Cow manure! I love this!' and jump in it? 'This is great, have some!' No, you are going to say, 'Aargh let's get out of here', right? It stinks because it is cow manure. And we get deceived into thinking that the cow manure is good. It looks good on the outside but inside is death. The fear of the Lord cuts right through this. It shows us that it is cow poo. It is death, it is cancerous. The fear of the Lord is loving what God loves and hating what God hates.<sup>229</sup>

The second thing about the fear of the Lord is: 'Having a deep respect and reverence and awe, standing in awe of who God is ... as we grow in our revelation of him, we grow in our reverential fear of him, because he is holy, because he is pure, because he is beautiful as we come to understand his holiness. In the counsel of his holy ones, God is greatly feared. "Let all the earth fear the Lord. Let the whole world revere him." (Psalm 33:8) Did you know that in Revelation 14:7 there is an angel who proclaims and preaches the gospel? Do you know what he says? "Fear God and give him glory." That is what he is saying to the earth, "Fear God and give him glory." God is the Holy Spirit. God's Spirit is holy. Interesting, He is not known as the Good Spirit. He is not known as the Nice Spirit or the Loving Spirit or the Kind Spirit. He is known as the Holy Spirit. Because that is the most important aspect of the character of God. Everything flows from the holiness of God. His power is holy. He only uses his power to demonstrate his Holy love. What are judgments? Judgments remove every obstacle to the love of God. That is why he expresses his judgment. God is love and he is Holy. His power is holy, his love is Holy.<sup>230</sup>

## Prayer

We pray for the Turks 'in Bulgaria, the ninth largest people group in Europe, whose language is Turkish and whose primary religion is Islam. They are 503,000, 0.1% Christian and 0.01% evangelical.'<sup>231</sup> The national library of Bulgaria has two statues of Cyril and Methodius. We pray that the Church in Bulgaria would have a missionary burden for the Turks within its borders, just as Cyril had 1,200 years ago for the Arabs, the Khazars and the Slavs. The Turks in Bulgaria need the gospel and they are a large minority as yet unreached. Lord, have mercy on the Turks in Bulgaria. May they fear you and give you glory.

## Father God loves those that fear him — so obey Christ

*‘The Lord is compassionate and gracious, slow to anger, abounding in love. He will not always accuse, nor will he harbour his anger forever; he does not treat us as our sins deserve or repay us according to our iniquities.’ (Psalm 103:8–14)*

For the last few hundred years the Western Church has not been pursuing virtue or godly character. Alasdair MacIntyre said in his book *After Virtue* that the history of philosophy took a wrong turn with what he calls the ‘Enlightenment experiment’.<sup>232</sup> In the last sentence he writes, ‘We are waiting not for a Godot, but for another — doubtless very different — St Benedict.’<sup>233</sup> I am challenged to revisit Benedict’s Prologue to his *Rule* (see Appendix), when looking at Psalm 103, one of the most favourite Psalms. It repeats beautifully what many believers say, that Exodus 34:6–7 reveals ‘The Father heart of God’ in the Old Testament. We sometimes forget that when Psalm 103 repeats these words — ‘As a father has compassion on his children so the Lord has compassion on those who fear him’ — it is all to obedience. Benedict confronts his reader with an urgent wake-up ‘call’ to hear and obey. The word ‘obedience’ is derived from the Latin *obedire*, which shares its roots with the Latin *audire*, which means ‘to hear’. So ‘to obey’ really means ‘to hear and then act upon what we have heard’ or, in other words, to see that the listening achieves its aim. We are not being truly attentive unless we are prepared to act on what we hear. There is a ‘calling’ going out to the whole world, inviting all to come to Christ, and it is an invitation to hear and to obey.

Lectio Divina<sup>234</sup> was a practice used by Benedictine monks and literally means a ‘divine reading’, to obedience. It was a way of reading the Bible practised by monks to cultivate their relationship with God. We are not just passive listeners to what God has said and done in the

past. It is the way of reading that would have been expected by individual monks as they engaged in private Bible reading and prayer. In Benedict’s time reading was not a silent mental activity; people tended to read aloud, even to themselves. There were four stages of *Lectio Divina*: first, ‘lectio’ (I read); second, ‘meditation’ (I reflect); third, ‘oratio’ (I respond); fourth, ‘contemplation’ (I rest). In his book *Reading with God*, Brother David Foster of Downside Abbey calls the four stages Hearing the word, Receiving the word, Praying with the word, Wondering at the word.<sup>235</sup> Esther de Waal says, ‘in some ways Benedict’s rule might be thought of as a ... commentary, a practical working out of the central theme of the primacy of the word. The rule is simply an aid for us to live by the Scriptures.’<sup>236</sup> Benedict says, ‘take up the powerful and glorious weapons of obedience, renouncing your own will with the intention of fighting for the true king, Christ the Lord.’<sup>237</sup>

If our lives are to be transformed by the love of God, fearing him, and obeying Christ, then maybe as MacIntyre says, in the final sentence of *After Virtue*, ‘it is time for another doubtless very different Benedict.’<sup>238</sup> Hans Boersma says that in the Early Church, ‘virtue is the prerequisite for good reading, it is the content of the text, and the aim of the exegetical process.’<sup>239</sup> Early Church exegesis was interested in transformation of character, through hearing and obeying Christ. Through listening and obeying Christ, in the fear of the Lord and through being conformed into the likeness of Christ, we can grow in Christian character.

## Prayer

Lord, you are compassionate and gracious, slow to anger, abounding in love. Help me to hear, receive, pray and wonder at your word. Teach me the fear of the Lord that I might have a heart of wisdom, that I might hear and obey YOU, Lord Jesus Christ, the Living Word.

## God's covenant of divine passion

*'He makes winds his messengers, flames of fire his servants.'* (Psalm 104:4)

**D**uncan Campbell said: "Then the minister turned and said well, 'I'm sure Mr Campbell that you are tired and you must be longing for your supper and supper will be ready for you in the manse. Well, I wonder if you would address the meeting in the Parish church on the way to manse to show yourself to the people. There will be a fair congregation, I am not saying a great number, anything between 2 and 3 hundred. You see there is a movement among us. It will interest you, dear people, that I never got that supper because I didn't arrive at the manse until 5:20 in the morning. I went to the church, now this is the interesting bit ... because it deals with the outbreak of God in supernatural power ... the God of miracles revealing himself in revival. I preached in the church to a congregation of about 300 and there was, I would say, a good meeting, a wonderful sense of God; something I had a not known since the 1921 movement in mid Argyll. But nothing really happened and I pronounced the benediction and I'm walking down the aisle and this young man came to me and said, 'Nothing has broken out tonight but God is hovering over us and he will break through any moment.' Well, I must be perfectly honest, I did not feel anything, but here was a man who was much nearer to God than I was. Well, he knew the secret. I was moving down the aisle and the congregation was moving out and they were all out now, just this man and myself and he lifted up his two hands and started to pray, 'God, you made a promise to pour water on the thirsty and floods on the dry ground. And you are not doing it ... and he prayed, prayed and he prayed again until he fell again on the floor

into a trance ...'<sup>240</sup>

Campbell also testifies that this young man was Kenneth Macdonald and he prayed with great passion, 'O Lord, you are a covenant-keeping God and you have promised revival. You must keep your promise. You dare not fail us, you must not fail us. Your honour is at stake.' Campbell says, 'He is lying there and I am standing beside him for about five minutes and then the door of the church opened and the session clerk came in ... "Mr Campbell, something wonderful has happened, revival has broken out ... Will you come and see the crowd?" And I went to the door and there must have been a congregation of between 600 and 700 people gathered around the church. 700 people arrived outside the church as this man was praying.' Campbell returned to the front of the church, and the 700 came in the building as the service was reconvened. Campbell began to preach again but he was drowned out by the cries of the penitent. Revival had begun in the Isle of Lewis.<sup>241</sup>

Lou Engle in *Digging the Wells of Revival* says God's covenants are covenants of divine passion initiated with those who have moved his heart. He suggests that when praying for revival for a particular nation we should 'find stories of men and women of faith who have covenanted with God in years gone by for that piece of territory, and we should tug on God's heart strings by reminding him of those lovers of God who devoted themselves to him on the altar of love,'<sup>242</sup> for that land. Let's remind the Lord of the covenant he made with Kenneth Macdonald for the youth in the Isle of Lewis.

## Prayer

We pray for the Moroccan Arabs 'in Belgium, the 17th largest unreached people group in Europe, whose language is Arabic, Moroccan and whose primary religion is Islam. There are 344,000, 0.11% Christian and 0.7% evangelical.'<sup>243</sup> Methodius was a European missionary with a high commitment to learn languages for the sake of mission. Lord, raise up missionaries who are willing and able to learn Arabic and witness to Moroccan Arabs in Belgium. We stand on the covenants of divine passion made by missionary monks in the past. We remind you, Lord, of their covenants with you: do it again, we pray!



## Awaken another youth movement, Lord Jesus, from the womb of the dawn

*‘The Lord says to my Lord: “Sit at my right hand until I make your enemies a footstool for your feet. The Lord will extend your mighty sceptre from Zion; you will rule in the midst of your enemies! Your troops will be willing on your day of battle. Arrayed in holy majesty, from the womb of the dawn, you will receive the dew of your youth.”’ (Psalm 110:1–3)*

**HEARING THE WORD** Try different ways of slow reading. Try reading aloud, looking at different versions. Early monks learned the text or portions of it by heart; others carefully copied it down.

**RECEIVING THE WORD** Read slowly enough so you can pick up when and where a sentence or phrase speaks to you, then stop. Repeat it to yourself carefully and often enough to let its meaning sink in.

**PRAYING WITH THE WORD** Open a conversation with God with the phrase or sentence you are reading and let his word begin to build a relationship between you and him.

**WONDERING AT THE WORD** Once we begin to hear the word of God and incline our hearts to it we are ultimately attending to him rather than to it. Be ready to enjoy, rather than to understand.<sup>237</sup>

Psalm 110 is the Old Testament passage that is most quoted in the New Testament.<sup>244</sup> It is directly quoted six times in the New Testament (Matthew 22:44; Mark 12:36; Luke 20:42; Acts 2:34; Hebrews 1:13; Hebrews 10:13), with a total of 25 direct or indirect allusions in the New Testament. There are two main themes in Psalm 110: Jesus’ eternal kingdom and his priestly ministry. First, in verse 1 the Father invites Jesus to sit with him as a king. Second, the

Father gives Jesus spiritual responsibilities as a priest forever.

David, the writer of this psalm, saw his descendant as a heavenly king who would conquer his enemies on earth. He heard the Father’s invitation, a promise to Jesus that began after the resurrection. He invited Jesus to sit at his right hand in the ultimate place of honour and authority in the universe. The Father promised to cause Jesus’ enemies to bow down in defeat before him. Jesus has reigned from this place throughout church history. The Father commissioned Jesus to rule in the midst of his enemies in this age. David sees Jesus’ reign from Zion as mediated through volunteers carrying out his orders in the midst of Jesus’ enemies. To ‘extend the rod’ speaks of releasing God’s authority as Moses did when he extended his rod to release the plagues of Egypt, over the Red Sea or in defeating Amalek. Jesus sits enthroned in heaven releasing his rod against his enemies through intercession and prophetic proclamations. Jesus uses his Church to release his rod of justice throughout history.

This will be seen in a very dramatic way in the end-time prayer movement releasing God’s power and justice as described in Revelation. Kris Vallotton of Bethel Church, Redding, California, USA, prophesied a new dawn is coming to the global Church in 2024.<sup>245</sup> This is a picture of a youth awakening from the womb of the dawn!

## Prayer

Listen to a song drawn from Psalm 110 and pray.



‘From the womb of the dawn’<sup>246</sup>

## Is there mercy for me?

*‘The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom.’ (Psalm 111:10)*

**D**uncan Campbell said<sup>246</sup>: “This dear man stood at the door and suggested that we might sing ... Psalm 102. “When Zion’s bondage God turned back, then men who dreamed were we, then filled with laughter was our mouth, our tongue with melody”, and they sang and they sang and they sang and in the midst of it I could hear the cry of the penitent. I could hear men crying to God for mercy ... and I turned to the elder and said, I think we had better open the doors again ... and the church was crowded at 11:45pm. Now where did the people come from? How did they know a meeting was in progress in the church? I cannot tell you, I saw but this ... from village and hamlet the people came ... Were you to ask some of them today, what was it that moved to you?, they could not tell you. Only that they were moved by a power that they could not explain, and the power was such as to get them to understand and to see that they were Hell deserving sinners and, of course, the only place they could think of where they might find help was at the church. Here they were, between 600 and 700 ... There was a dance in progress that night, in the parish, and while this young man was praying in the aisles, the power of God moved into that dance and the young people, over 100 of them fled from the dance ... as though fleeing from a plague, and they made for the church. When I endeavoured to get up into the pulpit, I found the way blocked with young people who had been at the dance ... I found a young woman, a graduate of Aberdeen University. She was lying on the floor by the pulpit crying out, “Is there mercy for me?” God was at work and Peggy’s vision

now actual and real ... a church crowded with young people ... as well as old.”<sup>247</sup>

Charles Finney tells the story of what took place in Utica in New York. ‘I went to the factory. (There) were a great number of young women ... weaving ... and I could see that they were a good deal agitated ... When I came within 8 or 10 feet of (a young woman), I looked solemnly at her. She observed it and was quite overcome, sunk down, and burst into tears. Mr W, the owner ... said to the superintendent, “Stop the mill and let the people attend to religion; for it is more important that our souls should be saved than this factory run” ... revival went through the mill with astonishing power, in the course of a few days nearly all in the mill were hopefully converted. The glory came down in Utica in New York without even a word being preached.”<sup>248</sup>

Corey Russell tells the story of Daniel Nash, who was a pastor in New York in the early 1800s.<sup>249</sup> During six months when he nearly went blind, he gave himself wholeheartedly to prayer, and after being overhauled by the Lord he was baptised powerfully by the Holy Spirit. After this, Father Nash worked in partnership with Charles Finney. He broke open the way, going ahead of his meetings, preparing the way for the revivalist in prayer and fasting. Corey Russell says we need a raising up of an army of ‘Nasharites’, who he defines as ‘people upon whom rests a spirit of prayer’ who will intercede for revival and the return of the Lord.<sup>250</sup> Lord, have mercy, give us the fear of the Lord, so that we will not miss the opportunity to intercede in these days.

## Prayer

We pray for the Crimean Tatar ‘in Ukraine, the 24th largest unreached people in Europe, whose language is Crimean Tatar and whose primary religion is Islam. There are 253,000, 0.12% Christian and 0.1% evangelical.’<sup>251</sup> The Christian heritage of Ukraine is like a well that has been blocked. We call out to you, Lord, that the spring would bubble up once again, in Ukraine. We pray for the Tatar. In 1944, Stalin’s Soviet regime deported the entire Crimean Tatar population to Central Asia and Siberia, and it wasn’t until 1989 that repatriation to their homeland began. Lord, have mercy on the Tatar in Crimea who are now under Russian government again. Lord, have mercy!

## Those that fear the Lord obey his commands

*'Praise the Lord. Blessed is the man who fears the Lord, who finds great delight in his commands.'* (Psalm 112:1,2)

What was a central characteristic of Jesus? Isaiah 11:3 prophetically describes the Messiah who was to come. 'His delight shall be in the fear of the Lord.' The whole of this Psalm 112 is a description of 'the fear of the Lord'. When NT Wright says we need to inhabit the Psalms and not just read them, I think one of the reasons we should 'live in the Psalms' is that we will grow in, and find delight in, 'the fear of the Lord'. It is referenced 51 times in the Psalms. If you really want to become like Christ, the message is grow in 'the fear of the Lord', as it is the beginning of wisdom. Thomas à Kempis said, 'man has a natural desire for knowledge but what is the good of knowledge without the fear of God.'<sup>252</sup> Growing in Christian character, in the fear of the Lord, is a strong theme of the Christian classic *The Imitation of Christ*, which is perhaps after the Bible the most widely read book in the world.

Joy Dawson says, 'Friendship with the Lord is for those that fear him. Intimacy with God without obedience is like prostitution. Jesus clearly said, "If you love me you will obey what I command." (John 14:15)<sup>253</sup> But what is obedience? It is doing what we are told, when we are told and with the right attitude. When we know what it is right to do and we don't do it, it is sin.'<sup>254</sup> Partial obedience is NOT obedience. How do we stay close to the Lord, in a consumer society that is so indulgent, hedonistic and narcissistic? How do we stay on the narrow path and keep close to the Lord? We keep close to him,

to the degree that we fear God and obey him and repent of our sin. The level of our repentance of sin will depend upon the extent to which we see sin as God sees it and hate it as he hates it.<sup>255</sup>

The deeper the understanding that we have of God's character — his justice, knowledge, wisdom, faithfulness and love — the easier it will be for us to obey him.<sup>256</sup> We also have the fear of God on us, to the degree we are free from idolatry. An idol is that thing we go to for comfort before we go to God. In a consumer society it is so easy for us to make our own will into an idol, as we satisfy our own desires. Anything that takes priority in our lives over the Lord Jesus Christ in our thinking, time, affection, loyalty, and obedience can become an idol. Even our own ministry responsibilities can become a focus of our attention, and the centre of our priorities, along with our possessions, money, food, and sexual gratification.<sup>257</sup> A strong call to obedience in 'the fear of the Lord' is the theme of the Prologue to Benedict's *Rule*. He references Psalm 34 in the Prologue: 'Come to me, my children and listen to me; I will teach you the fear of the Lord.' (Psalm 34:11)<sup>258</sup> Humility, the central monastic virtue, begins in 'the fear of the Lord', which simply means acknowledging the divine omnipresence and acting accordingly.<sup>259</sup> The fear of the Lord was stressed by St Benedict, because he recognised that without the fear of the Lord individuals would become proud because of their own works, and begin to love their own will rather than God's.<sup>260</sup>

## Prayer

Lord, I don't want to love my own will rather than yours. I want to grow in friendship with you, to be fully and not partially obedient. Give me more fear of you that I might have a heart of wisdom and take great delight in your commands.



## More conviction

*'Tremble, earth, at the presence of the Lord.'* (Psalm 114:7)

**D**uncan Campbell said: "That meeting continued to 4 o'clock in the morning ... As I was leaving the church a young man came. He was not a Christian but he was a God-fearing young man ... and told me this story, "Mr Campbell, there must be anything between 200 and 300 people at the police station. They are gathered there and some are on their knees. I cannot understand this." He wasn't in the church you see ... but here a crowd from a neighbouring village, 5 and 6 miles away, were so moved by God that they found themselves moving to the police station, because the constable there was a God-fearing and well saved man and just next to the door was Peggy's cottage. They were there, and this young man begged of me to go along to the police station, and I went along and I shall never, never, forget what my ears heard and what my eyes saw that morning ... Young men were kneeling by the roadside. I think just now of a group of half a dozen, one of them was under the influence of drink and his old mother kneeling beside him saying, "Willy, Willy, are you coming at last. Willy, Willy, are you coming at last." and Willy today is now the parish minister of Ilgui and from the group of young men who sought the Lord that night there are nine in the ministry ... God moved ... my dear people, that's revival ... that is God at work and I will be bold to say in passing that is the crying need of the Christian church in Canada today ... not this effort or that effort, on the basis of human endeavour but the manifestation of God that moves sinners to cry for mercy before they go near a place of worship."<sup>261</sup>

Deep conviction of sin was experienced in the Second Great Awakening also. When Charles Finney arrived in Antwerp, New York state, in April 1825, he said, 'In passing around the village I heard a vast amount of profanity. I thought I'd never heard so much in any place that I had ever visited. It seemed to me as if the men playing ball upon the green and in every business place that I stepped into, were all cursing and swearing and damning each other. I

felt as if I had arrived upon the borders of hell ... I went immediately to the school house ... and it was packed to its utmost capacity ... I let loose my whole heart upon them. I told them that they seemed to howl blasphemy about the streets like hell-hounds, and it seemed to me that I had arrived on the verge of hell ..."<sup>262</sup> Finney rose to preach on, 'Up, get you out of this place, for the Lord will destroy this city ... I told them how exceedingly wicked Sodom became ... I observed the people looking as if they were angry ...' After about a quarter of an hour he said, 'an awful solemnity seemed to settle on them and they began to fall from the seats in every direction and cried out for mercy. If I had a sword in each hand, I could not have cut them off their seats as fast as they fell. I said, "You are not in hell yet; and now let me direct you to Christ." I learned later ... the place was called Sodom, and the old man that invited me there, was called Lot. The people supposed that I chose my subject ... because they were so wicked as to be called Sodom. This was a striking coincidence; but ... altogether accidental."<sup>263</sup>

We live in a season of opportunity to pray for revival in Europe. Will we miss the opportunity to intercede in these days, as the Lord calls us to pray and partner with him in prayer, before he moves in our midst? Father Nash had gone ahead and prayed before Finney arrived in Antwerp and had prevailed in prayer. At the beginning of this devotional, I described Psalm 2 as an invitation to pray with the King. Will we pray for more conviction of sin, for the lost? Lord, we need a spirit of prayer to rest on us, and to pray prayers that prevail as described by Wesley Duewel and as practised by Father Nash. We need an intimacy that comes out of abiding in the Word of God as pictured in Psalm 1, and an authority of lining up with the prayers of King Jesus that are like 'a rod of iron' in Psalm 2. Corey Russell says, 'Here the Father speaks first and then with Jesus, we ask him, what he told us to ask him.'<sup>264</sup> Lord, teach us how to pray.

## Prayer

We pray for the Afghans 'in Germany, the 21st largest unreached people in Europe, whose language is Dari, and whose primary religion is Islam. There are 295,000, 0.04% Christian and 0.03% vangelical.'<sup>265</sup> After the USSR invaded Afghanistan in 1979 there have been numerous waves of Afghan refugees fleeing for safety. Today more are arriving to evade the Islamicist government. Lord, we call out to you that the gospel would be preached in a receivable way to the Dari-speaking Afghans in Germany. Convict them of their sin and may they come to a knowledge of you, Lord Jesus Christ.

## Your words, Lord Jesus Christ, are like honey to my mouth

*'Blessed are those whose ways are blameless, who walk according to the law of the Lord. Blessed are those who keep his statutes and seek him with all their heart — they do nothing wrong but walk in his ways ... How sweet are your words to my taste, sweeter than honey to my mouth!' (Psalm 119:1–3)*

Eugene Peterson in *Eat This Book*<sup>266</sup> gives a wonderful illustration, at the beginning of chapter 1, of his dog growling over a bone. 'Sometimes we could hear a low rumble or growl, what in a cat would be a purr.' Eugene Peterson says, 'Imagine my delight when I came upon a phrase one day while reading Isaiah, "like a lion growling or muttering over its prey..." (Isaiah 31:4) "Growls" is the word that caught my attention and brought me that little "pop" of delight. What my dog did over his precious bone, making those low throaty rumbles of pleasure as he gnawed, enjoyed and savoured his prize, Isaiah's lion did to his prey. The nugget of my delight was noticing the Hebrew word here translated as "growl" (*hagah*) but usually translated as "meditate", as in the Psalm 1 phrase describing the blessed man or woman whose "delight is in the law of the Lord, on which he meditates day and night." (Isaiah 31:2).'<sup>267</sup>

Meditating on the Word is described in similar ways in Psalm 119:103, which says, 'How sweet are your words to my taste, sweeter than honey to my mouth!' Hans Boersma in his book *Pierced by Love* says<sup>268</sup>, 'Reading the Bible as the word of God isn't just like eating, it *is* eating. Our everyday eating and drinking are symbols or types that hint at the real or prototypical eating and drinking that unite us to Christ. The language of eating God's word is prevalent in the Lectio Divina tradition.'<sup>269</sup> Few biblical passages are as suggestive for exploring the metaphor of eating as God's instruction to the prophet Ezekiel: "Then he said to me, "Son of man, eat this scroll I am giving you and fill your stomach with it." So I ate it, and it tasted as sweet as honey in my mouth.' (Ezekiel 3:3)<sup>270</sup>

If we are meant to eat the Scriptures can we link the various steps of Lectio Divina to step stages of

the eating process? This is exactly what Guigo II does in 'The ladder of the monks'. 'Reading as it were puts food into the mouth, meditation chews it and breaks it up, prayer extracts its flavour, contemplation is the sweetness (*dulcedo*) itself which gladdens and refreshes.' How important is contemplation to you when reading the Scripture? In his book *Five Things Theologians Wish Biblical Scholars Knew*, Boersma says, 'action and contemplation together make up the Christian life ... and feed into one another ... The end of Bible reading lies penultimately in action and ultimately in contemplation. Scripture presents models for both Martha and Mary, Leah and Rachel, Peter and John. Saint Augustine favoured contemplation over action. When Saint Gregory the Great turned from monk to Pope he often wrote of his desire to devote more time to contemplation. He wrote to his sister, "I have lost the profound joys of my peace and quiet, and I seem to have risen externally, while falling internally. Wherefore I deplore my expulsion far from the face of my creator." Contemplation is the one thing necessary, that Mary chose.' Nine times in Psalm 119, the psalmist speaks of delighting in God's laws, commands or decrees. In Psalm 119 the Hebrew word for 'delight' (*shaw-ah*) often has the connotation of 'smearing over the eyes' ... here effectively meaning in Psalm 119, 'smearing God's laws over our eyes'.<sup>271</sup> Is that your and my attitude to God's boundaries? Do we want to see everything through the lens of God's word? In a day when our society seems to highly value independence, the idea of delighting in boundaries seems counter-intuitive. We might even call it an oxymoron, that is a phrase or figure of speech that appears to be a self-contradiction.

## Prayer

Lord, as I smear your Word over my eyes, as I choose to obey your commands, and submit to your boundaries over my life, may I delight in your Word like a lion over its prey.

## Preaching through the night

*I call on the Lord in my distress and he answers me.* (Psalm 120:1)

**D**uncan Campbell said: ‘My dear people, that was how it began then; that was how it began ... then it leapt over the bounds of the parish to neighbouring parishes ... we are now addressing meetings through the day ... addressing meetings right through the night ... I can remember once within 24 hours of addressing eight meetings, crowded churches five times ... twice out in a field ... once down on the shore where old men came ... They were so moved that night ... so many of them found the saviour, that we followed them to the shore ... there we sang the songs of Zion at 2 o’clock in the morning ... before they left for their homes ... Oh, my dear people, that was God at work, that’s revival. I remember one man coming to me one night and saying would it be possible for me to visit our parish and I said, well it all depends when I could visit the parish. I think it would be possible for me to go. You could have me between 1 and 2 o’clock in the morning, so it was decided that I should go at 1 o’clock — half past one I arrive there to find a large church, one of the large churches in Lewis, crowded to capacity with many outside ... and I spoke there for an hour and then left the church with hundreds crying to God. I say hundreds crying to God for mercy. I left the church and another young man came to me and said, “Mr Campbell, there must be between 300 and 500 people in a field down there and the elders are wondering whether you could come down and address them, and I went down and I found the crowd and ... Oh! It was easy to address them, because the Spirit of God was hovering over us ... the Spirit of God was moving, and I see a man lying on the ground ... Oh, he is in distress of soul ... in terrible distress and then four young girls, I would say about 16 years of age, and they came

over and knelt down beside him ... And I hear one of them saying, “Listen, the Jesus that saved us last night, can save you now.” And that man was saved when four young lasses prayed around him ... My dear people, that is revival.’<sup>272</sup>

Campbell tells of addressing eight meetings within 24 hours. Revival can be intense and the capacity required of the evangelist huge! In 1781, when John Wesley was very old, he wrote, ‘I must go on; for a dispensation of the gospel is committed to me; and woe is me if I preach not the gospel.’<sup>273</sup> In 1777 he said, ‘I have travelled all roads by day and by night, for these forty years, and never was interrupted yet.’<sup>274</sup> At one point he was nearly in a shipwreck, but was saved from disaster when travelling by sea to Guernsey. Throughout his 50 years of itinerant ministry he was preserved from serious accidents. He travelled with John Nelson for a short while. At one point at St Ives, while sleeping on the floor, Wesley was using Nelson’s coat as a pillow and Nelson was using Burkitt’s notes on the New Testament as his pillow. At 3am, one morning after suffering this hard bed for a fortnight, Wesley turned over, dug Nelson in the ribs and joked, ‘Brother Nelson, let us be of good cheer ... for the skin is off but on one side yet.’<sup>275</sup> Duncan Wright tried to accompany Wesley, but it was too gruelling an experience. He could not keep up: ‘As the exercise was too much I gave it up.’<sup>276</sup> In Wesley’s journal there is an account of the perilous quick sands of the Solway Firth. This may have been too much for Wright, but at this date he was just 30 years of age, while Wesley was 63. Billy Graham tells how he lost 30lbs in weight when preaching at the Harringay Crusade for three months in London in 1954.

## Prayer

We pray for the Azerbaijani (Azeri) ‘in Georgia, the 26th largest unreached people group in Europe, whose language is Azerbaijani, North and whose primary religion is Islam. There are 232,000, 0.0% Christian and 0.0% evangelical.’<sup>277</sup> The Azeris who live in Georgia are mostly in the capital city of Tbilisi. We call for missionaries willing to go to this poor people group in Georgia, willing to demonstrate the gospel in word and deed. May the Azeris know that the love of God never ceases. They have lived as a displaced people for centuries. We call out to you on their behalf. Hear and answer our prayer. Reveal your love and compassion to this people group.

## Pilgrims with a purpose, looking up and looking forward to Christ and his heavenly city

*'I lift up my eyes to the mountains — where does my help come from? My help comes from the Lord, the Maker of heaven and earth. He will not let your foot slip — he who watches over you will not slumber; indeed, he who watches over Israel will neither slumber nor sleep.'* (Psalm 121:1–4)

Psalm 121 is the second of 15 psalms called the Songs of Ascent. They form a chain, a chiasmic structure, with the most important one, Psalm 127, in the middle.<sup>278</sup> 'Historically in Israel the songs were sung by "the faithful" as they walked from great distances up to Jerusalem for the feast of Passover, Pentecost and Tabernacles.' Inspired by these psalms of Ascent, Eugene Peterson wrote a book on discipleship called *A Long Obedience in the Same Direction*.<sup>279</sup> If life is to be compared to walking on a journey is our walk a walk of obedience? How we conduct ourselves as we walk on the journey of life is important. Derek Tidball asks, 'Are you a pilgrim or a spiritual tourist?' He refers to Zygmunt Bauman, who he says has suggested 'that whereas the key symbol of people in previous generations was the pilgrim, today it's the tourist. Both are on journeys passing through other people's territory but there the similarity ends. Pilgrims are purposeful and travel in a group to which they belong, towards a spiritual destination. They journey in a morally responsible way and transform the places they pass through for the better. The journey may take them through inhospitable terrain at personal cost. By contrast, tourists are rich tramps. They've time to fill and are going nowhere in particular. They owe no loyalty to their fellow travellers and they take no responsibility for the territory. They only leave litter behind for others to remove. Since they can pay, they expect others to serve them. And when one journey is over, they look forward to the next. Are we pilgrims or spiritual tourists?'<sup>280</sup>

Two of the Songs of Ascent (Psalm 121 and Psalm 123) begin with the phrase: 'I lift up my eyes'. Every pilgrim must have their eyes set above. Traditionally

in the Church throughout the centuries there has been a strong focus on 'seeing God'. Hans Boersma wrote *Seeing God; the Beatific Vision in the Christian Tradition*.<sup>281</sup> Robert Louis Wilkens wrote *The Spirit of Early Christian Thought: Seeking the Face of God*. He says that Psalm 105:4 — 'Seek his face always' — captures the spirit of early Christian thinking.<sup>282</sup> This verse is cited four times by St Augustine in his work *On the Trinity*. The Orthodox and Early Churches have had more of a pilgrim posture than the current Western charismatic evangelical Church. Metropolitan Kallistos Ware in *The Orthodox Way* says 'the traveller upon the spiritual way, the further he advances becomes increasingly conscious of two contrasting facts of the otherness and yet the nearness of the eternal ... In the first place he realises more and more that God is mystery ... yet in the second place, this God of mystery is at the same time uniquely close to us, filling all things, present everywhere around us and within us. And he is present not merely as an atmosphere or nameless force but in a personal way.'<sup>283</sup> To a charismatic evangelical this all sounds very mysterious! 'Apostle Paul used the word mystery frequently in his epistles. We read that faith is a mystery, salvation is a mystery, Christ is a mystery, the church is a mystery, the gospel is a mystery and even transgression is a mystery; maybe we should not be phased by the word mystery!<sup>284</sup> As we travel as pilgrims on the spiritual way, drawing closer to our personal yet mysterious God and Father of the Lord Jesus Christ ... we can be encouraged by Matthew 13:11 — "it has been given to you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven."<sup>285</sup>

## Prayer

I lift up my eyes to the mountains — where does my help come from? My help comes from the Lord, the Maker of heaven and earth.

## A sign spoken against

*‘Ploughmen have ploughed my back, and made their furrows long.’ (Psalm 129:3)*

**D**uncan Campbell said: ‘I think I ought to tell you a rather amusing incident ... We weren’t in favour with all ... There was a certain section of the church that bitterly opposed me. I was a mad Armenian and I was teaching strange doctrines when I was proclaiming that the baptism of the Holy Ghost was a definite subsequent experience of conversion. My dear people, I believe that ... It was because I believe the people of Lewis grasped this truth, that we know practically nothing of backsliding. Because of that gracious movement years ago; it is because they entered into the fullness; because of that, a stream of men and women went out into full-time Christian service ... Well, we were singing at this meeting when I saw the door of a cottage opening and I saw an old woman coming out with a black shawl on her and she walked over and she got a hold of one of the elders — a tall man, a strong man, a heavy man ... and she said, “I wish you people would go home and let people sleep.” I can still see that dear man going over to her and taking her by the shoulders and shaking her and saying, “Woman get away home, you have been asleep long enough.”’<sup>286</sup>

Campbell said that there was a certain section of the Church that bitterly opposed him. John Wesley experienced opposition to his ministry. In early days of Wesley’s ministry, church after church excluded him because he preached evangelical doctrines. This exclusion had already begun even before Aldersgate. He had begun to preach justification by faith — the doctrine that caused such offence — earlier in the year. On 5 February 1738, at St John the Evangelist, Westminster, he preached on those strong words, ‘If any man be in Christ he is a new creature.’ ‘I was afterwards informed, many of the best in the parish were so offended that I was not to preach there anymore.’<sup>287</sup> He didn’t preach there again. On 26 February he preached three times — at St Lawrence Jewry, St Catherine Cree, and St John Wapping. ‘I believe it pleased God to bless the first sermon most,’ he wrote, ‘because it gave most offence.’<sup>288</sup>

Charles Finney experienced opposition too.

There was a man who accompanied his wife to hear Finney, but he waited to see if he could ridicule him. In the middle of his sermon, Finney observed ‘a person fall from a seat near the aisle, who cried out in a most terrific manner. The congregation were very much shocked and the outcry of the man was so great that I stopped preaching and stood still. After a few moments I requested the congregation to sit still while I went to speak with him. I found him to be (this man) of whom I have been speaking. The Spirit of the Lord had so powerfully convicted him that he was unable to sit on his seat. His loud weeping made it impossible (to carry on with the sermon). I can never forget the appearance of his wife, as she sat and held his face in her hands upon her lap. There appeared in her face a holy joy and triumph that words cannot express.’<sup>289</sup> The preaching of Wesley and George Whitfield were spoken against as well. ‘Some speak against it because of fear and others because of ignorance, opposing it because it does not come as they expect. Just as the Jews rejected the Messiah because he did not conform to their preconceived ideas, so people reject the manifestation of God.’<sup>290</sup> When Simeon held Jesus as a baby he said that Jesus would be a sign spoken against; this prophecy was fulfilled years later when Jesus started his ministry in Nazareth. His audience rejected him and tried to throw him over a cliff. Every true revival has been a sign spoken against uncovering the hidden thoughts of the heart.<sup>291</sup>

In his call for an army of intercessors (‘Nasharites’) to pray for revival, Corey Russell says we need to consider Jesus, ‘who endured such hostility from sinners against himself, lest you become weary and discouraged in your souls.’ (Hebrews 12:3).<sup>292</sup> Intercessors are misunderstood, will lead a life of hiddenness like Jesus, and may be opposed. Effigies of Charles Finney and Charles Nash were burnt by those opposing their ministry. Let’s pray for revival in this season of opportunity in Europe, despite opposition and resistance. There is a place for us to seek the Lord as part of his hidden army of ‘Nasharite’ revival intercessors.

## Prayer

**We pray for the Moroccan Arabs ‘in Germany, the 25th largest unreached people group in Europe, whose language is Arabic and whose primary religion is Islam. There are 237,000, 0.5% Christian and 0.05% evangelical.’<sup>293</sup> Lord, raise up contemporary expressions of mission among the Moroccan Arabs in Germany. The gospel is an offence to many, and a sign spoken against. Heal hurts and divisions between Christians and Moroccan Arabs in Germany.**



## Out of the depths I cry to you, O Lord; hear my voice

*'I wait for the Lord more than watchmen wait for the morning, more than watchmen wait for the morning.'* (Psalm 130:6)

Jesus knew what it was to be in the depths, and we know that we have a God who can sympathise with us. Many characters in the Bible had moments in the depths — Joseph in prison, Daniel in the lion's den, King David on the run from Saul. The psalmist in Psalm 130 is crying out to God for help. In the BBC wildlife programme *The Blue Planet*, there is an episode where a submarine travels 4,000 feet below the surface.<sup>294</sup> Without the submarine the cameramen would have been crushed in an instant. Down at those depths, it is completely black, cold with no vegetation, a stark almost lunar-like landscape with very little life. When we say someone is in deep water we mean he is in trouble. The depths of the sea are like the depths of our troubles. Sometimes when we are in the depths, it feels very dark, very cold, under deep pressure.

John Wesley cried out to God in the depths and drew comfort from Psalm 130. On 24 May 1738 he wrote: 'In the afternoon I was asked to go to St Paul's. The anthem was "De Profundis", based on Psalm 130:1–8.'<sup>295</sup> The music and the words deeply touched Wesley and a seed was planted. Later that day, in the evening, he met with a group of friends who were reading from Luther's *Preface to Romans*, which also spoke of the depths. 'God judges what is in the depths of the heart. Therefore his law also makes demands on the depths of the heart and doesn't let the heart rest content in works; rather it punishes as hypocrisy and lies all works done apart

from the **depths** of the heart.'<sup>296</sup> Wesley suddenly saw for the very first time the extent of his sin despite having been to church, despite having been a missionary. He realised the extent to which God by grace and by grace alone saves us '**out of the depths**'. Wesley famously says: 'I felt my heart strangely warmed.' Another Oxford man, Jonathan Aitken, drew comfort from Psalm 130 when in the depths. He was an Eton alumnus and Oxford graduate, who came close to becoming Prime Minister, but went to prison in the 1990s for libel. He wrote a book called *Psalms for People Under Pressure*.<sup>297</sup>

CS Lewis, in a letter to *The Church Times*, wrote, 'to a layman it seems obvious that what unites the Evangelical and the Anglo-Catholic against the "liberal" or "modernist" is something very clear and momentous, namely the fact that both are thoroughgoing supernaturalists ... perhaps the trouble is that ... whether "low" or "high" Church they lack a name. May I suggest "Deep Church"; or ... "mere Christians".' These words, of 70 years ago, calling for 'Deep Church', may be just as relevant today. Hans Boersma says<sup>298</sup>, 'Early Church exegesis makes space for Deep church and retrieval of orthodox faith which makes possible healing of divisions between Eastern Orthodox and Western, Protestant and Catholic church and global awakening. Augustine said they are very deep in the deep who do not even cry from the deep.'<sup>299</sup> Let's cry out from the deep, and remember our future.<sup>300</sup>

## Prayer

Listen to a song<sup>301</sup> drawn from Psalm 130 and pray.



'Out of the depths'<sup>302</sup>



## Bend that proud and stiff-necked I

*'My heart is not proud, O Lord. My eyes are not haughty.'* (Psalm 131:1)

**D**uncan Campbell said: 'From that meeting, I went back to Barvas, and when we arrived at the manse the minister was with me and we heard that there was a farmer that was in great distress of soul. Now, this man had not been near a church for 12 years; he just lived for his cattle and horses. He lived for the earth, but he had a godly wife and a godly daughter and they were concerned about him. They invited me, prior to this incident, to the farm and I spoke to the old man and he said, "Oh well, I may turn up at the church sometime." Thereto, he was seen after that walking down to the church, and one of the elders saw him and he was in the suit he was married in, and the church was so crowded that he had to sit on the pulpit steps that were quite near to me. God spoke to him and he was in a fearful state and he was crying and repeating, "God, hell is too good for me, hell is too good for me." Oh, that we could see conviction ... There is one thing that I've been crying for, after this conference, that conviction of sin will get men and women prostrated in the presence God ... Oh, give it to us ... give it to us. That night, after being at this field meeting I, along the elder and the minister, went to the farm and we found every room in the farm house packed with people praying. They were praying for the farmer; they were afraid that he would go mental, so I said to his wife, "Where is Donald?" and she said, "He's down in the room; he is in a terrible state. Oh, may God have mercy on him." She was speaking truth, "may God have mercy on a mighty sinner", and we went down the passage and she went gently through the door and there the farmer was on his knees, repenting and saying, "God, can you have mercy on me, I seem to feel that hell is too good for me." There he is, and we are standing at the door and he seems quite unconscious of us being there. Then his wife spoke, and you needn't laugh at this, I'm just stating a fact, the wife spoke and this is what she said, "There's the mighty sinner and may he take his belly full off it!" What does she mean? Oh, she was crying to God

that God would so shake him out of his sin ... that his experience of God would be real ... let him stew in his conviction. In the words of Mary Morris, "Let them stew in their conviction, leave them there." Oh, how often I heard her say that during the Lewis revival ... Leave them there ... Let God deal with it ... I sometimes feel people ... that we take things out of the hand of God by our counselling ... Oh, that we might get to the place where there is an implicit confidence in God ... where we leave the work to him. In the morning God met with him in a glorious deliverance and he asked for a prayer meeting.<sup>2303</sup>

Roy Hession says of the East African Revival, 'As we look honestly at our Christian lives, we can see how much of self there is in each of us. As long as self is in control, God can do little with us. Being broken is both God's work and ours. He brings his pressure to bear, but we have to make the choice. If we are really open to conviction as we seek fellowship with God (and willingness for the light is the prime condition of fellowship with God), God will show us the expressions of this proud hard self that causes him pain. Then it is, we stiffen our necks and refuse to repent, or we can bow the head and say "Yes, Lord." Brokenness in daily experience is simply the response of humility to the conviction of God.<sup>2304</sup> Hession also says, 'We are not likely to be broken except at the cross of Jesus Christ. The willingness of Jesus to be broken for us is the all-compelling motive in our being broken too. We see him, who is in the form of God, counting not equality with God a prize to be grasped at and hung on to, but letting it go, for us and taking upon him the form of a Servant — God's Servant, man's Servant. We see him willing to have no rights of his own, no home of his own, no possessions of his own, willing to let men revile him, willing to let men tread on him and retaliate himself.<sup>2305</sup> We need a greater vision of that love that was willing to be broken for us. Lord, Bend that proud and stiff-necked I, Help me to bow the head and die, Beholding him on Calvary, Who bowed his head for me.<sup>2306</sup>

## Prayer

We pray for the Arabic Algerians 'in France, the 11th largest unreached people group in Europe, whose language is Arabic, Algerian and whose primary religion is Islam. They are 474,000, 0.6% Christian and 0.10% evangelical.<sup>2307</sup> There have been many waves of Algerian Arabs moving to France. We pray for a new wave of missionaries to reach them. We pray for humility and revelation of the love of Jesus, that would bring conviction of sin.

## Jesus Christ alone is our unity

*'How good and pleasant it is when God's people live together in unity!' (Psalm 133:1–3)*

It could be argued that when Martin Luther left his monastery, the Church moved further from the pursuit of godly character, which had been the original focus of monasticism. Alasdair McIntyre convincingly argues that the Western 'Christian' world has no longer been pursuing 'virtue' and godly character, following the Enlightenment.<sup>308</sup> The academy stopped reading the Old Testament in the light of the resurrection, as Jesus did on the road to Emmaus. However, it is not just the Enlightenment that has hindered the Church reading the Old Testament in the light of the New Testament. The Reformation has also been responsible for hindering the Bible being read by the community of faith, together. If character is transformed in community, then when Luther left his monastery, the Church moved further from the pursuit of the Christlikeness, which had been the original focus of monasticism. Not only did the Reformation split the Church, it resulted in the diminishing importance of the monastery and the increasing importance of the university in shaping the modern world, and consequently a less intentional pursuit of godly character fashioned and honed in community.

Eric Metaxes describes the underground remote seminary called Finkenwalde in Germany in 1935, in his biography of Dietrich Bonhoeffer.<sup>309</sup> As Europe descended into chaos and world war with the rise of Hitler and the Nazi party in Germany, Bonhoeffer devoted his time to developing a beautiful Christian community. Shortly before his death he produced two books, *Life together* and *The Psalms*. Bonhoeffer began *Life together* with Psalm 133:1: 'Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity.' He says, 'It is not simply to be taken for granted that the Christian has the privilege of living among other Christians. Jesus Christ lived in the midst of his enemies. At the end all his disciples deserted him. On the cross he was actually alone, surrounded by evildoers and

mockers. So, between the death of Christ and the last day, it is only by gracious anticipation of the last things that Christians are privileged to live in visible fellowship with other Christians. It is by the grace of God that a congregation is permitted to gather visibly in this world to share God's word and sacrament. Not all Christians receive this blessing. The imprisoned, the sick, the scattered, the lonely, the proclaimers of the gospel in heathen lands stand alone.'<sup>310</sup> It is not enough to read Scripture in an ivory tower, it is important to read Scripture in communion with others. More recently, Stephen Fowl and L Gregory Jones emphasise the importance of **embodying Scripture**. They contend that 'because of the distance between biblical context and contemporary contexts, Christians need to develop moral and theological judgment, and that judgment requires the formation and transformation of the character appropriate for disciples of Jesus. They say Christians develop such character in and through the friendships and practices of Christian communities.'<sup>311</sup> Reading in communion with others is important, and not only with the Christian community today, but with the saints that have gone before us.

The world stage is becoming increasingly threatening. The Church needs to seriously address its priorities. Trying to fellowship around right doctrine (after the councils of the Church and after the Reformation) is less important than fellowship as one body around the person of Jesus and reading the Bible as a coherent story with the community of faith in the light of the resurrection. Bonhoeffer ends the first chapter of *Life Together* repeating Psalm 133:1, saying, 'we can rightly interpret the words "in unity" and say, "for brethren to dwell together through Christ". For Jesus Christ alone is our unity. He is our peace. Through him alone do we have access to one another, joy in one another, and fellowship with one another.'<sup>312</sup>

## Prayer

Pray the prayer of St Francis of Assisi: Lord, make me an instrument of your peace: where there is hatred, let me sow love; where there is injury, pardon; where there is doubt, faith; where there is despair, hope; where there is darkness, light; where there is sadness, joy.

## Waiting on the Lord

*'Praise the Lord, all your servants of the Lord, who minister by night in the house of the Lord.'* (Psalm 134:1)

Duncan Campbell said: 'Do you know that out of that prayer meeting ... there are four ministers in the church today? Donald McCloud's prayer meeting ... Well now, I could go on talking to you about incidents and how it began ... but I think I ought to mention one or two of the supreme features of the movement. First of all, of course, it was the awareness of God that to me was the astounding thing; this sense of God. The fear of God in the parish, and in the neighbouring parish. You could speak to any person and you would find them thinking about God and crying for mercy. Now that is a fact that cannot be disputed ... God was everywhere, and because of this awareness of God, the churches were crowded ... crowded through the day ... right on through the night ... until five o'clock or six o'clock in the morning. In revival, time does not exist. You see the presence of God puts to flight programme ... How often I have cried to God that he would so move in our midst that the programmes will go and the Presence takes their place. Well that was what happened. One of the main and outstanding features was the deep, deep conviction of sin. Now, I can't explain this; you would have to be there to see it ... Here are two instances ... one dear old lady came to me one day and she said I have been led to ask you to go to this particular part of this parish. There are mighty sinners there that need salvation. Well, I said to her ... "You know I have no leadings to go there; there are men literally opposing me there" ... and she looked to me and said this, "Mr Campbell if you were living as near to God as you ought to be, he would reveal his secrets to you also." ... I took that as a rebuke and went back to the manse ... I said, "I think we should spend the morning with old Peggy and wait upon God with her in the room," so she agreed and she and her sister knelt with her ... in their little room. And that dear woman began to pray, and I can give you her prayer ... "Lord, You

remember the conversation we had this morning at 2 o'clock and You told me that you were going to visit this part of the parish with revival ... and I've just spoken to Mr Campbell about it but he's not prepared to think of it. You had better give him wisdom because the man badly needs it." Well, that is what the dear woman said ... When we rose from our knees I said, Well, Peggy, where do you wish me to go? Where is the meeting to be held? "Oh you go and God will provide the congregation and the meeting place." ... "Well, Peggy, I will go." ... "You had better ... you had better." ... I went on the following evening and there must've been a congregation of anything between 300 and 400 gathered around a seven room bungalow. I spoke for about 10 minutes when one of the elders came to me and said, "Mr Campbell, will you come round to the end of the house? Some of the leading men in the village are crying to God for mercy. And if you go there, you (will) see those women crying to God on their knees."<sup>313</sup>

Andrew Murray, of the South African Revival at the end of the 19th century, in his book *Waiting Upon God*, refers to Psalm 24:5: 'For Thou art the God of my salvation; on Thee do I wait all day.' He says, just as an army dare not move until it receives final orders from the commander in chief, so there is a deep need in the Christian life to wait for instructions. Peggy Smith waited on God and received instructions at 2am. Murray says, 'As simple as it is, to one who has eyes, to walk all the day in the light of the sun, so simple and delightful can it become to a soul practised on waiting on God, to walk all the day in the enjoyment of God's light and leading. God is the one and only source of wisdom and goodness — yes! This is the one thing we need. If we but saw our God in his love, that he waits to be our life and to work all in us — how this waiting on God would become our highest joy!'<sup>314</sup>

## Prayer

We pray for the Moroccan Arabs 'in the Netherlands, the 19th largest unreached people group in Europe, whose language is Arabic, Moroccan and whose primary religion is Islam. There are 309,000, 0.3% Christian and 0.5% evangelical.'<sup>315</sup> We pray for spiritual awakening for the Moroccan Arabs in the Netherlands. They face a strongly secular culture in the Netherlands and the challenge of maintaining their cultural identity. We pray that they would seek the kingdom of heaven, reject the things of this world and come to a place of hoping and waiting on you for their salvation.



## May I know you, Lord — the power of your resurrection and fellowship with your sufferings

*‘You have searched me, Lord, and you know me. You know when I sit and when I rise; you perceive my thoughts from afar.’ (Psalm 139:1–2)*

### Four Lectio Divina steps focusing on Jesus, the Living Word:

**HEARING** Jesus, the Living Word. **‘You have searched me, Lord, and you know me.’** It is possible to encounter the living God. Are you willing to be known by God — to get know the Infinite, uncreated creator God, who has known you from the very beginning? Are you willing to approach the unapproachable light — to come to him today, the author of life itself? Are you prepared to be transparent? Radical transparency leads to radical transformation: it begins as we are vulnerable to be encountered by him. If there is sin in our hearts or iniquity in our generations, we cannot hide it from him.

**RECEIVING** Jesus the Living Word. **‘You have searched me, Lord, and you know me.’** Here Psalm 139 begins with God knowing us. The (failed) Enlightenment project (as philosopher Alasdair MacIntyre describes it) began with Descartes — ‘I think therefore I am’, rather than ‘God knows me therefore I am’. ‘You know me.’ Lesslie Newbigin, the hugely influential 20th-century Anglican missionary statesman said, ‘the idea of a purely objective knowledge is an illusion ... but it is a prime and dominant illusion of Western culture.’<sup>316</sup> I yield my thoughts to you. I yield my desire for knowledge. Come and know me, know who I am, and know my ways today.

**PRAYING** with Jesus, the Living Word. **‘You have searched me, Lord, and you know me.’**<sup>317</sup> As Jesus said, ‘If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples. Then you will know the truth and the truth will set you free.’ (John 8:31–32) Knowing the truth follows on from walking as a disciple of Jesus, and obeying him. Show me where I have failed to obey aright. Failure to obey is failure to know aright. I share my anxieties and my fears with you today. I repent of my sin: cleanse me, forgive me. May I know you more deeply today and may your truth set me free.

**WONDERING** at Jesus, the Living Word. **‘You have searched me, Lord, and you know me.’** Early Church catechesis focused on learning how to follow Jesus as a disciple; becoming conformed into his image involved cruciformity and theosis. Bonhoeffer said: ‘When Christ calls a man he bids him come and die.’<sup>318</sup> I yield my thoughts to you as you perceive them from afar. ‘Bonhoeffer, the great proponent of costly obedient discipleship, recognised that at the end of the day, discipleship is not about imitation or even obedience to an external call or norm ... it’s about transformation or theosis.’<sup>319</sup> Lord, I wonder what obedience to you looks like today and how it becomes cruciformity and theosis. Show me what it looks like to do your will today.

## Prayer

Listen to a song drawn from Psalm 139 and pray.



## Our God comes and will not be silent; a fire devours before him

*‘Then our sons in their youth will be like well-nurtured plants and our daughters will be like pillars.’ (Psalm 144:12)*

Duncan Campbell said: ‘I went round to the end of the house and there they were ... the men that old Peggy saw ... men who would become pillars in the church of their fathers and today those men are pillars in the church. My dear people, that’s the revival I believe in ... But in the midst of those crying to God for mercy, there were two pipers ... I think most of you know that I was a piper. ... Well, two of them were there ... Now those two pipers were advertised to play at a concert and dance in a neighbouring parish ... The minister of that parish was there ... He was the one who had spoken to me. He and his wife looking at the two pipers ... Oh, they were there, crying to God for mercy. He turned his wife and he said, “Look here ... we will go back to the parish and we’ll go to the dance and we will tell them there what is happening in Barvas.” So, off they went, 15 miles ... They arrived and the dance was in progress ... went to the door and were met by the son of a schoolmaster ... “What do you want, Mr McLennan?” ... “Oh I’ve just come to the dance” ... “Oh, but we know you have not come to the dance to dance.” But, as parish minister, he claimed the right and went in ... They were dancing and they stepped onto the floor, “Young men and young women, I have an interesting story to tell you ... The pipers are not with you; they’re crying to God for mercy in Barvas.” A stillness ... Oh, the stillness of eternity ... (in the words of the minister) came over the dance and then he said, “Young folk, listen; I would like you sing a Psalm with me. I think we ought to sing Psalm 50 where God is depicted as a flame of fire ... He began to sing and he is leading it himself ... When they came to the second verse, suddenly, there was a cry ... A young man fell on the floor and began to cry to God for mercy ... In five minutes, the hall was empty and they’re now in three buses ... coaches that brought young people from other

parishes, and they are in the coaches on their knees, crying to God for mercy ... The young man who fell on his knees that night, was inducted to a parish church just before I came across to Canada.’<sup>321</sup>

Just as brokenness and yieldedness to wait on God were the characteristics of the Lewis Revival, so they were too of the Welsh Revival. The result was drunkards and party-goers being transformed as well. For two glorious years the Welsh churches were crowded out. A hundred thousand outsiders were converted and added to the churches. The vast majority remaining true to the end, says Edwin Orr.<sup>322</sup> ‘The whole of Wales was now affected. Hardened unbelievers were gloriously converted. Drunkards, thieves, and gamblers were transformed. Confessions of awful sins were heard on every sides. Old debts were paid. Miners prayed together before commencing their shifts in the coalmines. Pit ponies, unused to the new kindness and clean language, without the usual kicks and curses, almost stopped work until they got adjusted. Courts had few cases to try. Whole football and rugby teams got converted and fixtures were abandoned. The young men were more concerned with praying than playing! Dance halls were deserted, the pubs were empty and not a few went out of business, but the prayer meetings were crowded.’<sup>323</sup>

Dance halls were emptied in Lewis and pubs in Wales. The times of waiting on the Lord by Evan Roberts were not in vain. For many years revival had been the passion of his heart. He said, ‘I could sit up all night to read or talk about revivals.’ At times he was overwhelmed by the presence of God. For weeks, he enjoyed times of rare and intimate communion with God in night watches. Similarly in Lewis, Peggy Smith and her sister communed with the Lord until 4am on Tuesdays and Fridays. It was not in vain. Yieldedness to God bore fruit. Wales was transformed in 1904, and Lewis in 1949.

## Prayer

We pray for the South Asians ‘in the Netherlands, the 27th largest unreached people group in Europe, whose language is Hindi and whose primary religion is Hinduism. There are 230,000, 4.0% Christian and 1.0% evangelical.’<sup>324</sup> We pray for an overwhelming presence of God to break out among the South Asians, who live mostly in Amsterdam, Rotterdam, The Hague, Utrecht and Almere. We pray that the gospel would be preached and modelled to the South Asians in the Netherlands. Raise up South Asian workers, preachers and evangelists to reach this people group.

## I will sing of your righteous acts of salvation, Lord Jesus Christ

*'Great is the Lord and most worthy of praise; his greatness no one can fathom. One generation commends your works to another; they tell of your mighty acts. They speak of the glorious splendour of your majesty — and I will meditate on your wonderful works. They tell of the power of your awesome works — and I will proclaim your great deeds. They celebrate your abundant goodness and joyfully sing of your righteousness.'* (Psalm 145:3–7)

**Y**ou brought music back into the house ... I had forgotten<sup>325</sup> are the words of Captain Georg von Trapp to Maria, the vivacious nun, after the death of his wife, in *The Sound of Music*. In pre-war Austria, the contrast between foreboding evil, and delightful innocence and gratitude for God, is celebrated in song with seven young children, and is deeply moving. Celebrating God's acts in the past and his goodness, praising and worshipping him in words and in song, for who he is and what he has done is a pervading theme in the book of Psalms. Fee and Stuart say that the Psalms were 'carefully arranged to mirror the story of Israel from the time of David until after the exile ... written for the individual who is aware of being part of the people of God, who together belong to God in covenant relationship and share the same story.'<sup>326</sup> It has been the practice of the Christian Church in Europe for the past 2,000 years, particularly in the monastic expressions of the Church, through thick and thin, to sing, celebrate and remember the abundant goodness of God and joyfully sing of his righteousness and to live in and inhabit the Psalms. Karl Barth says 'it is no accident that of all the books of the Old Testament the Psalter has always been found the most relevant. This is not in spite of the fact, but just because of it, that in so many passages it echoes the people of the covenant trembling for its preservation, in final extremity before its all-powerful enemies. The Christian community always has good reason to see itself in this people, and to take on its own lips the words of its helpless sighing, the cries which it utters from the depths of its need.'<sup>327</sup>

Brueggeman<sup>328</sup> says, 'the songs are a centrepiece of Christian liturgy, piety and spirituality. They have been so from the beginning of the Christian movement for good reason. They have been found

poignant in expression, able to empower believing imagination in remarkable ways. This is evident in the rich use made of the Psalms through the New Testament, most especially in the passion of Jesus. But the use of the Psalms by Christians is not without awkwardness, for the Psalms are relentlessly Jewish in their mode of expression and in the faith claims. And with our best intent for generosity and good faith the different nuances of Jewish and Christian faith are not to be overlooked or easily accommodated. A long-standing practice (going back to the very early Christian interpretation) is to treat the Psalms as claims about Jesus Christ. In the tradition of Augustine, for example, there is a tendency to find hints about the life, ministry, death and resurrection of Jesus at many points in the Psalms. It is not easy to know how to assess such a practice. On the one hand it may seem to make the Psalms more readily available for Christian use. On the other hand, I suggest such "spiritualising" tends to tone down the Psalms and avoid the abrasive and offensive elements. On balance, I believe it is more helpful to avoid such a practice. We will be helped to a more genuine piety and an authentic faith if we engage the Psalms as poetry about our common, particular humanness. Nothing should be done that detracts from that reality. Facing such a Christian alternative we should be more attentive to the rawness of Jewish faith out of which the Psalms speak. But there is another alternative. It is in the prayers of Jesus that we may link Jewish ways of praying and Christological interpretation. For the prayers of Jesus are surely prayers of a Jew. And the entire tradition of Christian prayer and Christian use of the Psalms must be seen in this light. This gives us warrant for Christological interpretation, but the centrality of Jesus can never be far separated from the Jewish character of the material.'

## Prayer

I will remember your abundant goodness in the middle of a sobering time on the world stage.



## Not a single unsaved person in the parish

*'Blessed is he whose help is the God of Jacob ... the Lord who remains faithful forever.'*  
(Psalm 146:5,6)

**D**uncan Campbell said: 'Well, I could go on ... but that was how the movement began ... conviction, distress of soul ... 14 young men discussing in a hall how much beer is to be brought to the parish for a dance on Friday; suddenly, one of them turns to the others and says, "Boys, let us increase the amount. I believe this is the last time beer is going to come to this parish." And another young man was saying, "Are you suggesting that the revival is going to come to this godless parish?" "I cannot say what is going to happen; what is going to come, but something is happening to me," and that was all that he said ... Listen, my dear people ... 14 young men fell on their knees in front of the public hall ... They were there for over an hour and all of them saved, and 11 of them are office bearers in that church today ... and that is one community where you couldn't find a single unsaved person in the parish ...'<sup>330</sup>

Norman Grubb says that the Welsh Revival 'proved what the Holy Ghost could do through a company of believers, who were of one spirit and of one mind as on the day of Pentecost.' This was a distinctive of the Lewis Revival too. Grubb says, 'We had seen over and over again what the Lord could do through a yielded evangelist or pastor, such as Moody or Finney, but in the Welsh Revival it was a divine power manifested through the church.'<sup>331</sup> In the Lewis Revival it was similar, God's presence breaking out across a community. When we pray for revival, we are praying for heaven to come down, a tangible expression of heaven on earth. Corey Russell said, 'Jesus' manifest presence is ... when the holiness of God goes public, when the glory of God goes public, when God's presence breaks in

and when God shifts that landscape, where there is a tangible geographical zone, and the Lord breaks into bars and into crack houses.'<sup>332</sup>

In Lewis there was a community, Duncan Campbell said, where you couldn't find a single unsaved person in the parish ... That was heaven breaking out on earth. It is time to pray! May your kingdom come, Lord!

Corey Russell<sup>333</sup> says, 'God is raising up an army of revival intercessors across the earth, not known by men, but known in heaven. Psalm 2:9 will be the fruit of their intercession. The fruit of their intercession will be the release of the power of God on his Word; revival breaking out and destroying every opposition in its path. The fullness of this reality will take place when Jesus returns to utterly destroy all opposition with the power of his Word. God's word (dashing) sin, sickness, and Satan to pieces like a piece of pottery.' This is how he will rule the nations ... Jesus shares this glorious honour of intercession with his people and we can partner with him in seeing his inheritance come forth in the nations. His 'rod' will come out of the mouth of the Church, destroying the power of the evil one in the earth. Corey Russell says, 'Revelation of the Son's intercession is going to fill the end time prayer movement in a deep way. We are already beginning to see it explode across the earth as God brings together the prayer and mission movements. Churches and ministries ... are beginning to prioritise prayer like never before.'<sup>334</sup> So do you know what time it is? It is time to wake up, to break up the fallow ground and to pray! It is time to prioritise prayer like never before!

## Prayer

We pray for the Turks 'in France, the 13th largest unreached people group in Europe, whose language is Turkish and whose primary religion is Islam. There are 220,000 and they are 0.0% Christian and 0.0% evangelical.'<sup>335</sup> We pray for a disciple-making movement to break out among the Turks in France. We pray for a tangible expression of heaven to come down on earth among the Turks in France — a spiritual hunger that would only be satisfied in a personal relationship with you, Lord Jesus Christ.

## The surpassing greatness of the Lord Jesus Christ

*‘Praise him for his surpassing greatness.’ (Psalm 150:2b)*

I want to close this journey of looking for Jesus in the Psalms by looking at the surpassing greatness of Jesus Christ our Lord. At the end of the film *The Return of the King*, there is a dialogue between Aragorn and the four hobbits that isn’t in the book. Aragorn, the newly crowned king of Gondor, approaches the hobbits, and they bow in his presence. Aragorn lovingly corrects them and says, “My friends, you bow to no one.” We bow to no-one but Jesus Christ. Psalm 22 and Psalm 110 both provide warrant for Christological interpretation, revealing that the apparent defeat of the cross turns out to be the greatest victory of all time. Psalm 110 also speaks of the surpassing greatness of Jesus Christ, who is now lifted to the right hand of the Father, and all his enemies must bow at his feet, quoted in Matthew 22:41–46, Mark 12:35–37, Luke 20:40–44,<sup>336</sup> and Psalm 110 is referenced in Hebrews saying Jesus is superior to angels, high priest, prophets, and every sacrifice.

Andrew Walker says, “To many evangelical Christians the divine calendar with its fasts and feasts celebrated by Catholic and Orthodox Christians all over the world seems mere “religion” with little life.”<sup>337</sup> He says, ‘on the contrary the Christian Year offers a real Christ-centred alternative to the secularised view of time ... when 21st century Christians celebrate Easter they are in one very real sense closer in time to Christians in the sixth century celebrating Easter, than they are to people in ordinary time, the previous year. The Christian year compels the very shape of time itself to bow the knee to Christ. It teaches us to submit the rhythms of our own lives, to the story of Jesus, that our time is not our own to determine. It also takes us through seasons of hope and penitence, of feasting and fasting, of joy and sorrow.’

He isn’t just greater than; he is the greatest. But the right hand is also the position of power and strength. When we call someone a leader’s “right-hand man”, we mean the man who is best at executing the will and purpose of the leader ... And so, when God the Father describes his almighty power, his power for war and for battle, he says it is Jesus, his Son. Jesus is the embodiment of the all-mighty strength of God.’

Although Brueggeman is concerned that treating

the Psalms as claims about Jesus Christ, in the tradition of Augustine, is ‘less helpful’, he does encourage us to see the Jewishness of the prayers of Jesus as he prayed the Psalms ... (and therefore the rawness of Jewish faith out of which the Psalms speak) ‘and therefore a warrant for Christological interpretation’.<sup>338</sup> A number of psalms have been turned into raps in this devotional, helping us engage with the rawness of Jewish faith, a rawness that declares emphatically that Jesus Christ — God became man and revealed as a Jew 200 years ago — is now King. We need a new mission movement that declares and embodies this truth ... and the truth is that ‘the ends of the earth are now on our doorstep!’ Many of the refugees and asylum seekers now in Europe are from unreached people groups. It is time to pray for a new army of missionary monks, like the Benedictine monks and Celtic monks of the past, to be released like wild horses to these new frontiers.

It is also time to rediscover our Orthodox Christian roots and to unblock deep wells of humble pure devotion to Jesus Christ, seeing him afresh in the sacred text. Psalm 2, 22, 110 and 150 all point to the surpassing greatness of Jesus, now seated at the right hand of the Father. We need our hearts kindled afresh with a passion for Jesus the Living Word, as we take the gospel to the least, last and lost in our cities. The supremacy of the Western Church is being displaced by a mission movement from the poorer Southern hemisphere. The gospel is good news to the poor. The poor are now bringing it to the rest of the world. The Lord Jesus is already breaking the nations with the rod of his mouth. Reading the Psalms and singing them as raps helps us engage with the truth that ‘History is a joke and the punchline comes at the end.’ Jesus turns everything upside down in the end when he comes to judge the earth.

Let’s bow the knee to Christ this Easter, and respond to Benedict’s call to listen to Christ’s voice in Scripture. Jesus is coming as Bridegroom, King and Judge. These themes were highlighted in Psalms 2, 8 and 9 but recur throughout the Psalms. As we celebrate Jesus’ surpassing greatness, and his resurrection this Easter Sunday, let’s remember we live in a window of opportunity to pray for revival in Europe. Let’s pray for his return — this time as Bridegroom, King and Judge.

## Prayer

I praise and worship you, Lord Jesus Christ, for your surpassing greatness.

# Epilogue

*'All our days pass away under your wrath; we finish our years with a moan.'* (Psalm 90:9–10)



**'One life, yeah only one'** <sup>339</sup>

(Intro)

Yo, check it, uh, listen,  
Only one life, let's go.

(Verse 1)

Only one life, yeah, only one,  
Time moves fast, soon it's all gone,  
In that day, I'll meet the King,  
Face to face, what will I bring?  
When I stand at the Judgment seat,  
Will I hear 'Well done', or feel defeat?  
So I'm asking myself every day,  
What am I living for? Which way I'll stay?

(Chorus)

Only one life, it's gonna pass,  
Only what's done for Christ will last,  
Yo, I gotta make it count, no time to waste,  
Living for Him, yeah, that's the only chase.

(Verse 2)

The still small voice is calling me,  
Saying, 'Let go on that selfish spree.'  
Leave the ego, leave the pride,  
It's time to walk with Him, step aside.  
No more chasing what the world offers,  
I'm focused on the kingdom, I'm living for the  
Father.  
Can't get caught in the fleeting fast,  
'Cause when it's over, only what's done for Christ  
will last.

(Chorus)

Only one life, it's gonna pass,  
Only what's done for Christ will last,  
Yo, I gotta make it count, no time to waste,  
Living for Him, yeah, that's the only chase.

(Verse 3)

A few brief years, that's what I got,  
With hopes and burdens, yeah, they hit the spot,  
Each day a chance, what will I do?  
Live for myself or live for the truth?  
Life's a gift, I gotta hold it tight,  
Living in His will, that's my fight,  
Yeah, I'm living for the purpose deep,  
In joy and sorrow, His word I'll keep.

(Chorus)

Only one life, it's gonna pass,  
Only what's done for Christ will last,  
Yo, I gotta make it count, no time to waste,  
Living for Him, yeah, that's the only chase.

(Bridge)

When the world tries to pull me down,  
When temptation comes, I won't drown,  
Selfish ways, they try to win,  
But with His strength, I rise again,  
Lord, help me choose the better way,  
Living for You, come what may.

(Chorus)

Only one life, it's gonna pass,  
Only what's done for Christ will last,  
Yo, I gotta make it count, no time to waste,  
Living for Him, yeah, that's the only chase.

(Outro)

Yeah, so let my love burn bright,  
Turning from the world, walking in the light,  
Living for You, that's all I need,  
Bringing You pleasure, planting the seed.  
Only one life, it's gonna pass,  
Only what's done for Christ will last,  
I say, 'Thy will be done,' that's the call,  
Living for Him, yeah, I'm giving my all.

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# Benedict's Rule. The Prologue

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**L**isten my son to the master's instructions and take them to heart. These are the instructions of a loving father: receive them gladly and carry them out to good effect so that by the efforts of obedience you may return to him from whom you have withdrawn through the laziness of disobedience. It is to you that my words are now addressed, if you are ready to take up the powerful and glorious weapons of obedience, renouncing your own will with the intention of fighting for the true king, Christ the Lord.

First of all, every time you begin a good work you should pray to him with total commitment to bring it to perfection, so that he who has already been kind enough to count us as his sons will never be disappointed by our doing wrong. We must always obey him with the good things he has given us, so that he never disinherits his children like an angry father or becomes exasperated by our bad behaviour and hands us over to everlasting punishment as a terrifying master does with his delinquent servants, for refusing to follow him to glory. Now at last we must wake up, as Scripture rouses us to do when it says, "Now is the time for us to rise from sleep" (Romans 13:11). Let us open our eyes to the divine light and listen carefully to what the divine voice tells us to do when it cries out each day, "If you hear his voice today, do not harden your hearts." (Psalm 95:7-8), and also, "he who has ears to hear let him listen to what the Spirit says to the churches." (Revelation 2:7; Matthew 11:15). And what does he say? "Come to me, my children and listen to me; I will teach you the fear of the Lord." (Psalm 34:11)

"Run while you have the light of life, so that the darkness of death does not overtake you" (John 12:35). The Lord looks for his workman among the crowds of people, and repeatedly calls to him, "Who is the man who desires life and who wishes to see good days?" (Psalm 34:12) If you hear him and answer, "I do", God will say to you, "if you wish to have true and everlasting life, keep your tongue from speaking evil and do good. Seek after peace and pursue it" (Psalm 34:13-14). And when you have done this, my eyes will be upon you and I will listen to your prayers. Even before you call on me, I will say to you, "Here I am" (Isaiah 58:9). What can be sweeter to us, dear brothers, than the Lord's voice when he invites us with these words? Look how the Lord in his loving kindness shows us the way of life. And so, clothed in faith and the performance of good works, let us set off along his path using the Gospel as our guide, so that we

may deserve to see him who has called us "into his kingdom" (1 Thessalonians 2:12). If we wish to love in the tabernacle of his kingdom, we will certainly only reach it if we run there by means of good work. But let us question the Lord in the words of the prophet, saying to him, "Lord who will live in your tabernacle, or will rest on your holy mountain?" (Psalm 15:1) After putting this question, brothers we must listen to the Lord's reply for he points out to us the way to this tabernacle. He says, "He who walks without blemish and who acts justly; he who speaks the truth in his heart and does not use his tongue to deceive; who does not harm his fellow man and does not listen to slander said about him" (Psalm 15:2-3). This person has thwarted the Devil in his wickedness by casting him and his suggestion away from the sight of his heart; when the Devil tries to persuade him to do something he takes hold of the Devil's plans before they have time to mature and dashes them against Christ. Those who fear the Lord and do not allow themselves to become proud because of their good works realise that the God that is in them does not come from their own abilities but from the Lord. They praise the Lord working within them, repeating the words of the prophet, "Not to us Lord, not to us, but to your name give the glory" (Psalm 115:1). In the same way the Apostle Paul refused to claim any credit for the success of his preaching, saying "By the grace of God I am what I am" (1 Corinthians 15:10) and "The person who boasts should boast in the Lord." (2 Corinthians 10:17) This is why the Lord too says in the Gospel, "He who hears these words of mine and acts in accordance with them is like a man who built his house on the rock; the floods came, the winds blew and beat upon that house but it did not collapse for it was founded upon the rock" (Matthew 7:24-25). Having made this pronouncement, the Lord every day expects that we should make our lives conform to this holy advice of his.

And so the days of this life are lengthened and we are granted a truce during which to amend our bad ways, as the Apostle says, "Do you know that God's patience is leading you to penitence?" (Romans 2:4). For the Lord in his kindness says, "I do not want the death of a sinner but that he be converted and live" (Ezekiel 33:11). Brothers, we have questioned the Lord about the person who lives in his tabernacle, and we have heard his instructions about living there but it is for us to fulfil the obligations of those who live there. And so we must prepare our hearts and bodies to fight by means of holy obedience



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to his instructions. If our natural abilities do not allow us to do something, we must ask the Lord to grant his grace to assist us. If we wish to escape the punishments of hell and reach eternal life, we must hasten to do now what will profit us for ever, while we still have time and while we are in this body and have the opportunity to fulfil all these things by the light of this life.

And so we intend to establish a school for the Lord's service. In doing so we intend to demand nothing that is harsh, nothing oppressive. Even if, in order to maintain a balance, there are some slight

restrictions aimed at the correction of errors and the preservation of love, you should not for that reason be frightened off and run away from the path of salvation, which has to be narrow at the beginning. As we make progress in our way of life and in faith, as our heart expands with the inexpressible sweetness of love, we shall run along the path of God's commandments, never abandoning his guidance but persevering in his teaching within the monastery until death, so that we may have a share, through patience, of the sufferings of Christ and thereby also a share in his kingdom, Amen.'

## Acknowledgments

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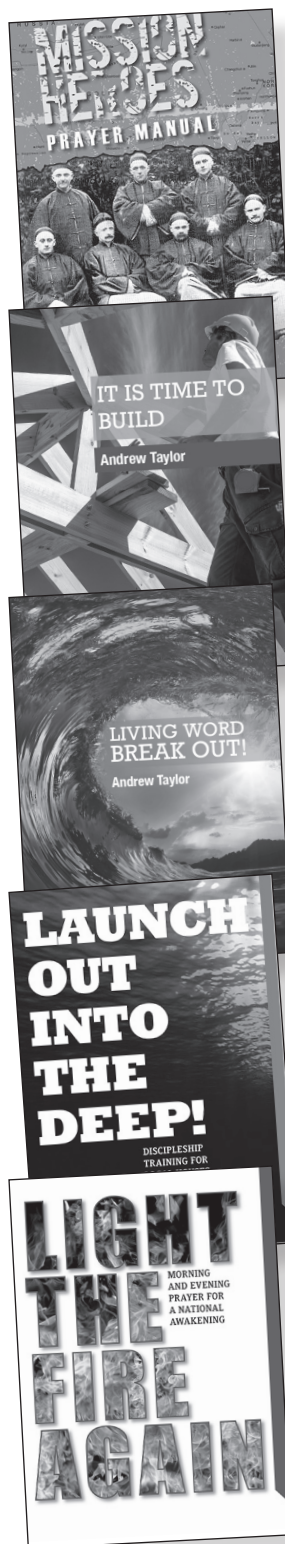
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Please contact him at **[andrew.taylorlivingword123@gmail.com](mailto:andrew.taylorlivingword123@gmail.com)** if you are interested.

# Other Prayer Guides

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## MISSION HEROES

The spiritual fathers of the Christian faith are like wells. As we have failed to draw from their inspiration and example, those wells have become blocked. This guide is designed to remind us of the mission heroes of this nation, and to help us call upon the Lord to open those wells again.

## IT IS TIME TO BUILD

This devotional is a call to wake up to the revelation of Jesus as our bridegroom king and to break up the fallow ground of our hearts. It is also a call to line up with Jesus Christ's burning passion for the nations. He is preparing our hearts to be revival intercessors for the nations. As we partner with him and line up with his prayers and ask the Father for the nations as his inheritance, the rod of his mouth will strike the earth, and everything that hinders his love will be removed, and his kingdom will be built on the earth. It is time to build.

## LIVING WORD BREAK OUT!

This devotional prayer guide — for Lent 2020 — is an aid to pray for God's living word to break out across Europe. It tracks the broad narrative of Scripture: God is gathering one family of nations under his rule and in his presence, and his glory will cover the earth as the waters cover the sea. Currently, there is a significant opportunity, in Europe, for those unreached and those on fire for Jesus to come together as one. The nations are bringing passion back to the Church in Europe.

## LAUNCH OUT INTO THE DEEP!

This discipleship manual is designed to facilitate group prayer and group Bible reading in the context of a local House of Prayer. It is inspired by Benedict's *Rule*, which was written just under 1,500 years ago for disciples following Christ in community. It is also inspired by the principles for developing a passionate community of prayer used by Mike Bickle of the International House of Prayer, in Kansas City. As we respond to the Lord Jesus Christ and his call to follow him into a deeper devotional life with a small group of disciples, He will make us into fishers of men.

## LIGHT THE FIRE AGAIN

This devotional prayer manual is a resource to facilitate group prayer that includes the daily reading and praying of all 150 Psalms over one month. Around 275 years ago, John Wesley, an Anglican clergyman of the 18th century, was used powerfully in a national awakening. This manual consists of inspirational devotionals based on his life, to be read alongside the corporate reading and praying of the Psalms. The theme is 'prayer for a national awakening'. Lord, light the fire again!

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## HOW TO ACCESS

An e-version of these booklets is available on the following website  
<https://unblockthewell.blog/prayer-manuals/>

# WAKE UP TO A WINDOW OF OPPORTUNITY

IT IS TIME TO WAKE UP AND PRAY THROUGH  
THE PSALMS IN LENT 2025!

**W**e have a window of opportunity to pray for revival in Europe. Over 1500 years, ago St Benedict called his monks to listen to Jesus Christ's voice in Scripture. Over the next few centuries, Christianity spread throughout much of Europe through Benedictine and Celtic missionary monks. They were devoted to singing and praying the Psalms. Many refugees are flooding into our continent. Today here in Europe, let's listen to Christ's voice in the Psalms, pray and share the Gospel with refugees and the unreached in our inner cities.



Andrew Taylor and his wife Connie pioneered YWAM Cambridge in 2008. Andrew started a House of Prayer in Cambridge in 2011 and together they pioneered a School of Biblical Studies in 2017. Recently in 2025 they have started a 'God's Story' Discipleship Training School with a particular focus on reaching out to refugees in Coventry, a city in the Midlands of England.

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