

WHY Encounter Intercessory Task Force Prayer Letter October 2017

The Civil War Revival

By the mid 1800s America surely needed prayer. The United States was deep in spiritual, economic and political decline. Faith diminished; rationalism and atheism increased. Now liberal theology became popular particularly in the Northern churches. Institutions of higher learning became cold and indifferent to everything biblical . . . to the existence of God and to eternal truth. Bankruptcy, unemployment and an impending stock market crash stirred financial panic. Agitation over slavery was breeding political unrest, and civil war seemed imminent.

And then, on September 23rd, 1857 an astounding 'Heaven-Sent Spiritual Revival' began in a downtown, New York City prayer meeting. In that Revival God manifested His powerful presence in overwhelming reality. A 'Spirit of Prayer' arose and spread quickly city to city, sweeping many 1000s (50, 000 per week at its high tide) into the Kingdom of God!

Had God not sovereignly, powerfully and graciously sent that 'Spiritual Awakening' the country would have been doomed. As it turned out, it was in the South that the repercussion of that Revival took its greatest course, during the Civil War: 1861-65.

So many people had received Christ in the Revival as it had swept through the Southern states, that when their land was savagely invaded and sacked by Northern troops — a giant evangelical movement was mobilized in the South. Its purpose was to bring the gospel to every Confederate soldier.

Bible Societies were created, raising money to print and distribute millions of tracts, Bibles, small hymn books and lay testimonies. Prayer groups spontaneously sprung up among the Southern regiments — also attended by their Confederate army generals. Hundreds of Southern Christians were mobilized to personally minister to soldiers as they lay wounded on the fields, in hospitals and at campfire meetings. There was no inflaming of malice or stirring up revenge — only the saving story of Jesus Christ. Their message:- *'that Jesus was with them right now — and He could save them from death in the coming battle — and save them forever.'*

More than 200,000 Southern troops were converted to Christ, baptized and given church membership. Many young soldiers sent home letters to their churches testifying of their new faith . . . and then returned home to build new churches and to pastor ministries.

Confederate Chaplains were vigorously recruited for the troops:- 'we want strong men who can suffer physical hardships as men who know Scripture verse by verse and have a powerful sense of conviction of sin, piety, talents and zeal.' These chaplains knew that only God could regenerate the hearts of men totally depraved and hardened. They also knew that if the churches were divided, the nation would be as well.

So life-giving was the Southern Revival — guided within the ranks of the Confederate army - that its widespread effect throughout the South established their Bible Belt, and paved the way for later Revivals in the late 1800s and early 20th Century. Revival begets Revival !

The Psalmist wrote:- **“Wilt Thou not revive us again — that Thy people may rejoice? Show us Thy mercy, O Lord, and grant us Thy salvation.”** Psalm 85:6 God's divine intervention by the outpouring of His Holy Spirit during America's most devastating war, saved their nation's culture and heritage, and preserved Biblical Christianity for generations to come.

A Time of Visitation

Once Jesus referred to a city that had refused 'their time of Visitation'. . . a specific revelation of Christ to the people. Then later, as He spoke to that city, He wept over it saying, '**O Jerusalem, Jerusalem how often I wanted to gather your children together as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, and you would not have it. Behold the day is coming . . . when your enemies will level you to the ground and your children within you . . . because you did not recognize the time of your visitation.' Matthew 23 37 Luke 13:44**

Amazingly, we in the London Region are experiencing a present day 'Visitation' (a revelation of Jesus Christ to the residents) — through the presentation of the WHY Book to 90,000 of our households. The depth and fruit of this Visitation rests upon the work and prayers of God's people. **You have a saying "Four more months and then the harvest." "But I tell you, take a good look at the fields; the crops are now ripe for cutting." John 4:35**

Now it is time for the greatest mobilization of prayer yet. What could happen if, in the next 3 months, small prayer circles spontaneously spring up in the hallways after church , around Tim Horton tables, after our Alpha groups, following meals at home, during noon breaks and even while driving our cars?

For we still need contending prayers from our pulpits, ongoing prayer walking and intentional intercession as we remain in the 'wound' (the archaic Hebrew word for gap) of our people. Ez.22:30

How then do we pray? We pray desperately . . .

"O God in heaven, have mercy upon us Your people . . . for we who are called by Your name have been latent in apathy and habitual busyness — while people all around us are perishing.

We humble ourselves before You today in personal prayers of repentance — (personal repentance -).

Righteousness belongs to Thee O Lord, but we bear the open shame of a society and culture that has moved far away from You and Your commandments and precepts. We have rebelled against You. Daniel 9:5,7

As I continue praying for the people on my route, I ask that they come to understand and pray the prayer of salvation . . . to receive new life in Christ. Let them grow in relationship with Jesus, and in follow-up Christian fellowship.

Please Lord, raise us up as Christian chaplains and missionaries in our own towns, ministering to our neighbours, friends and strangers. We gratefully thank You for this time of spiritual Visitation upon this region. Don't let us miss this!

Lord Jesus, may You protect and invigorate this spiritual Visitation . . . for our children and teens, for young adults and middle-agers and for our seniors. In the name of Jesus . . . Amen"