

RE-ACTIVATING THE REMNANT

Autumn 2009

In the early 1980s the Lord called me to come out of the ministry that I loved in the inner-city and start going around the nation with a message of warning and a call to spiritual renewal in the church. Monica and I loved the work we had been doing in the East End of London for many years through which we saw hundreds of lives changed by the gospel. We also saw the positive impact of the gospel upon social structures and organisations. It was not easy leaving the East End where we had raised our three children and where our little Christian community had grown in number and influence.

Revival Expected

Towards the end of the 1980s there were great expectations in many branches of the church in the UK of an imminent revival. I was one of a number of voices who said that this was not what God was promising. I was quite explicit in stating that God was calling for repentance in his church rather than promising the excitement of revival.

I was deeply aware of the destructive social forces at work in the nation that were threatening to destroy marriage and traditional family life, but very few church leaders appeared aware of the danger so there was no great response to calls for repentance or for the church to bring prophetic warnings to the nation. Most of the traditional churches were sleeping peacefully, trying not to notice declining congregations; while the new/charismatic churches were preoccupied with exercising spiritual gifts and enjoying their seclusion from the outside world.

Unpopular Message

The message I took from city to city made me deeply unpopular with many church leaders. I was publicly declaring that there would be no revival during the rest of the 20th century because God was saying to our nation that we had chosen to reject his word and he would allow us to go along the path we had chosen until the situation in the nation became so disastrous that there was widespread recognition that something had gone basically wrong. At the point when people began to cry out, "what's gone wrong?" there would be a new openness to the truth of the gospel.

Turning Point

That point has now been reached, as any reading of the daily newspapers confirms. The BBC TV programme in which I took part last month asked the question, "Can Marriage Heal Broken Britain?" The fact that this question is now being debated in the nation is a sign that there is widespread recognition that the nation is sick. People do not know what to do but the search for solutions to the nation's problems is now on.

Of course, our political masters are blind to any solutions because it is their policies that have largely brought us to this disastrous state where in some parts of the country more than half of all babies are born out of wedlock, where thousands of children are taken into care because of dysfunctional family life, where millions of children have their schooling disrupted and their lives torn apart by family breakdown and teenagers become addicted to alcohol, drugs and sexual practices that lead to sexually transmitted infections.

Grim Outlook

Now that more than 1 million young people under 25 are unemployed we are facing a prolonged period of social dysfunction. It is a generation that has been overprivileged, overprovisioned, overprotected and now faces unexpected hardship for which it is unprepared. It is a situation which, in purely sociological terms, is likely to result in a strong sense of social and economic deprivation which together with a toxic mixture of unemployment plus drugs plus alcohol plus moral anarchy = social breakdown. However much our politicians like to comfort themselves with imaginary 'green shoots', any honest appraisal of the outlook for the next two or three years is particularly grim.

Hope

But always in situations where others lose hope, the gospel flourishes! I am rejoicing that I am privileged to be in ministry for such a time as this! I have longed to see this day when we Christians can bring a message of hope to the nation! Indeed, there is no one else who can bring such a message of hope. Certainly, the politicians, the economists, the bankers and social reformers have no such message to kindle a spark of hope in the nation.

New Day

A new day is dawning! Now is the time for Christians to seize the opportunity that God is providing as the nation is shaken to its foundations. Of course, there must be no triumphalism. God is still looking for a spirit of deep repentance in his church for our share of responsibility for the state of the nation. But he is now sending a similar message to that imparted to the generation of Israel enslaved in Babylon when God was preparing them to return to Jerusalem, to *"rebuild the ancient ruins and restore the places long devastated"* (Isaiah 61.4).

It was not an easy message for Isaiah to deliver because people had lost confidence in the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. Many believed that they had sinned so deeply that God had abandoned them. Others succumbed to a kind of hopeless despair. Psalm 137 tells us how the Babylonians mocked their faith, requiring them to sing the songs of Zion. *"By the Rivers of Babylon we sat and wept... how can we sing the songs of the Lord in a foreign land?"*

Faithful Remnant

Before the prophet could deliver his message of restoration he had to restore the confidence of the people in the God of Creation who held the nations in his hand "like a drop in a bucket". There is a similar need today when many older Christians are depressed and dispirited following 50 years of decline when they have seen so many churches weakened or closed. But God is sending a special message to the faithful remnant who are there in every church and chapel, in every town and village, in cathedrals and new churches, in large congregations and house fellowships. It is, of course, a message of love; but it is also a wake-up call - a call to action - especially addressed to older believers who are so much needed today to give guidance and support to those who are new in the faith and to those who will be coming to faith in the next two or three years.

Heal Our Land

God is longing to reactivate the faithful remnant - to refresh, to re-inspire, to re-envision and to reinvigorate those who have grown weary but who have so much to give in the day of opportunity that is dawning. This is why CCM is putting so much time, energy and resources into sponsoring the new inspirational biblically-based musical "Heal Our Land". Its purpose is to give spiritual refreshment to believers and to prepare the way of the Lord so that his Spirit can begin to move in power across the land.

Times of Refreshment

The message God sent his people through Isaiah was *"Forget the former things; do not dwell on the past. See, I am doing a new thing! Now it springs up; do you not perceive it?" This was followed by the promise, "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"* (Isaiah 43.18-19 and 44.3).

I believe that the prayers of the faithful remnant for 'times of refreshment' to come upon the land will soon be answered. It may not be a time of exciting revival as seen in former generations but it will certainly be a time when many will come to faith in the hard times that lie ahead. That is why God is sending this special message to the older generation of believers - not just for their encouragement but for their active prayer-based participation.

C and M Ministries Trust

registered charity no 1029797

Moggerhanger Park, Park Road, Moggerhanger, Bedford, MK44 3RW

Telephone number: 01767 641006

Fax number: 01767 641515

Website <http://www.candministries.org.uk>