

IN FOCUS: God listens for our cries for revival

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I hear more people say, "We need revival." Perhaps they are concerned that we are becoming "one nation without God" rather than "one nation under God." Others focus on the darkness and instability of the world with heightened fears of terrorism and weapons of mass destruction. Yet many are crying out for God to do something new and powerful within the church.

God told King Solomon: "And if my people who are called by my name humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, will forgive their sin and will heal their land" (2 Chronicles 7:14).

Randel Everett

Revival does not come through the courts, or the state house, or Wall Street, or public schools. It comes when God's people get right with him.

God reminded Solomon that we must first humble ourselves before God. Our greatest sin is self-centeredness. Everything is about us. Does the church meet my needs? Why doesn't God answer my prayer? We rely on our resources, our ingenuity and our influence. Even our prayers often focus more on us rather than God.

All things have been created by him, through him and for him (Colossians 1:16-17).

It is not about us; it is about God. We are God's people because he made us. He called us. He justified us. He sanctifies us, and he will glorify us.

Revival will not come until we humble ourselves, pray and seek God's face. The word translated "pray" in 2 Chronicles 7:14 is used for a prayer of repentance. Conviction doesn't come by thinking back over the day and acknowledging every instance where we slipped up. The Holy Spirit convicts us of our sin when we come into the presence of God. As we recognize his holiness, we are painfully aware of our sinfulness.

Too often, the church gathers to decry the sins of the world. Yet we are to come into God's presence and confess our own sins.

As Christ followers, we must be honest about our greed, our fears, our doubts, our bitterness, our complacency, our lust. We must cry out to God for his cleansing. Then we must deliberately, willfully, intentionally turn away from the sins that so easily entangle us. We must be disciplined to run from the temptations that snare us.

God wants to bring revival to his church. His promise to Solomon is also true for us, "Now my eyes will be open and my ears attentive to the prayer offered in this place" (7:15).

A parent with teenagers understands what it means to have eyes open and ears attentive. When your children are out at night, your ears become like antennae. You listen to every sound. Sleep doesn't come until the door closes and the child is safely home.

God is bent over listening carefully for the cries of his children.

He is waiting for us to cry out in brokenness.

God wants to forgive our sin and heal our land.

When will this become our most desperate cry?

Randel Everett is executive director of the Baptist General Convention of Texas Executive Board.

