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O Lord, Do It Again!

This month's newsletter is an excerpt from a booklet published in 1981 by the Sunday School Board of the Southern Baptist Convention. It was written by John F. Havlik and Lewis A. Drummond and the words are as relevant today as they were in 1981.

Would you really like to see awakening come to our nation of lust and license, of crime and carnality, of frills and finery? Would you really like to feel the wind of the Spirit blow across our nation and our world? This was the prayer of Habakkuk when, on a feast day, he went to his watchtower and prayed:

"Lord, I have heard the report about Thee and I fear. O Lord, revive Thy work in the midst of the years,
In the midst of the years make it known;
In wrath remember mercy.
God comes from Teman, and the Holy One from Mount Paran. (Habakkuk 3:2-3)

This prayer gives us the "three Rs" of awakening—REPORT, REVIVE, REMEMBER.

Teman and Mount Paran were the scenes of some of God's mighty acts in history. Awakening involves REPORT. Some awakenings have come as a result of reading about awakening. Hunger was created in the human heart for "times of revival...from the presence of the Lord" (Acts 3:19, NASB). Each believer can be one of God's reporters. God doesn't have an ABC, NBC, or CBS network to report the news about what He has done. Christians are the only reporters He has. If we really want God to bring widespread awakening again, we can work with God in creating the hunger by telling what he has done in the past and by praying that awakening prayer, "O Lord, do it again!"

Habakkuk prayed that God's work would be REVIVED. Conviction for sin is a work of God.

Renewal of the church is a work of God. Salvation of a person through faith in Christ is a work of God. The content of the awakening prayer is for God to do what we cannot do. We cannot turn this nation around. We cannot in our own strength defeat the confederated powers of evil. We cannot, by saying the word, revive God's people and transform the lives of persons who do not know Christ. All of that is God's work. We can "hunger and thirst for righteousness." We can long for and look for awakening. We can pray for the wind of the Spirit to blow across the "dry bones" of churches that are dead in formalism, dead in orthodoxy, and dead in institutionalism. We cannot do what God alone can do, but we can do what we can do. We can try to discover what God is doing in His world and get with Him to pray, preach, and minister until either awakening comes or He comes.

The third "R" of awakening is REMEMBER. Remembering includes a prayer for the mercy of God when we, and the world He made, deserve wrath. It is a prayer to the One who "knows His sheep by name" and calls them and leads them in green pastures. It is prayer to the One who had mercy on a dying thief, a barren woman, and a godless old man when they prayed, "O God, remember me!" A prayer to God to remember the nation you love is a prayer for awakening. A prayer for God to remember you in your spiritual barrenness and lack of joy and peace is a prayer for awakening. A prayer for God to remember those you love who do not know Christ and are forever lost is a prayer for awakening. A prayer to Him to remember the work that goes so slowly when there are millions of lost who have never heard is a prayer for awakening. Can we now frame our own awakening prayer using the prayer of Habakkuk as a model?

O God, our Father, we have learned what you have done in the past.

You awakened your people, Israel, "in the midst of the years."

At Pentecost you awakened disciples that had given you up after your Son and our Savior died by crucifixion.

You used ordinary Christians like us to turn the world upside down in the first century.

In 1734, in 1800, in 1858, and in 1970 you sent awakening to our country.

We have heard reports of what you have done.

Your work so desperately needs revival.

Too few really pray and believe you can do wonders.

O God, remember us. Do it again!

Awaken this nation that we love so much.

Awaken Southern Baptists to be the people you want them to be.

My church, God, needs awakening.

I myself am so cold, so indifferent,
so uncaring.

Remember me, Lord.

O God, do what you have done in the past.

Revive your work.

Awaken the churches.

Save the lost.

O God, do it again.

In Jesus' name.

Amen.