

Why America's Future Is in Our Hands (and on Our Knees)

America's future does not lie with the next election, a political process or a political party. America's future will be determined by how the people of God respond to the current crises in our land.

Will we humble ourselves and pray, acknowledging our absolute dependence on Him, or will we continue to selfishly pursue our own religious agendas and build our own personal kingdoms? America was formed out of a great spiritual awakening that had been birthed in prayer, and the only thing that will save her is another great spiritual awakening birthed in prayer.

Today, being the National Day of Prayer, offers an opportunity for the Christians of America to begin to fulfill the conditions that are clearly laid out in Scripture for a national healing and awakening. This day, as a National Day of Prayer, was formally enacted by Congress in 1952. However, national and regional days of prayer have been part of this nation's history since colonial times, including the year 1775, when the Continental Congress designated a time of prayer in forming a new nation.

The 1775 designation was not something new but actually an expression of the cultural mindset of the populace. Prior to this, for example, a pastor in New England reported that most of the churches had "set apart days wherein to seek the Lord by prayer and fasting."

In addition, he said, there were "annual fast days appointed by the government." Benjamin Franklin reported that in 1739, his hometown of Philadelphia had been so transformed that one could not walk through the town without hearing prayer and praise coming from houses on every street.

This attitude of prayerful dependence permeated every facet of American life at this time. John Adams (1735-1826), one of the Founding Fathers and the second president of the United States, gave a moving account of the First Continental Congress that convened in September 1774 with Bible reading and prayer.

When Psalm 35 was read, many were moved to tears and spontaneous expressions of prayer to God. Verses 9 and 23 were particularly significant: "My soul shall be joyful in the Lord; it shall rejoice in His salvation" (NKJV) and "Awake, and rise to my defense! Contend for me, my God and Lord" (NIV).

In a letter to his wife, Abigail, about this event, Adams wrote, "Who can realize the emotions with which they turned imploringly to heaven for divine interposition and aid. It was enough to melt a heart of stone. I never saw a greater effect >upon an audience. It seems as if heaven had ordained that Psalm to be read that day."

If this nation was birthed out of prayer and spiritual awakening, can it hope to be preserved by anything less? Many Christians believe that America's best days are behind her and that she will continue to decline politically, spiritually and morally. This was my view as well, until one day in 2010 when I was surprised by the Holy Spirit, who imparted a new hope and expectation in my heart.

It was a hot and sunny Saturday afternoon as I got in my car and began the three-hour drive to Kingfisher, Oklahoma, where I would be speaking the following day for friends in the church they pastored. As I pulled onto the highway, my heart and mind were suddenly and unexpectedly flooded with hope that America could experience another Great Awakening.

I must confess that I had lost hope in America seeing another national revival. It seemed to me that "revival" had

degenerated into the self-serving pursuit of sensational, religious phenomena, rather than being the fruit of a sincere seeking after God. Revival, it seemed, had become a hyped, man-made, religious event rather than a divine invasion from heaven. I could identify with the words of R.A. Torrey, who, almost a century ago, said, "The most fundamental trouble with most of our present-day, so-called revivals is that they are man-made and not God sent. They are worked up (I almost said faked up) by man's cunningly devised machinery—not prayed down."

But as I drove along the highway that day, my hope for America was renewed. My heart was filled with fresh faith and hope for another Great Awakening that would revive and renew the churches of America, impact our culture, and stem the tide of secularism, immorality and false religion that is flooding our land.

I could also see that God had preserved this nation through national spiritual awakenings that happened at crucial moments in our history. The Second Great Awakening (1800-1840), for example, took place just in time to save America from the negative influences of deism and the French Revolution and to tame the bawdy, Western frontier. Then, in 1858-1859, the Great Prayer Awakening came just in time to carry the nation through its most difficult time to date—the Civil War. I could also see clearly that without another Great Awakening, the America we have known will surely cease to exist.

I hope you will join me and many others today in sincerely petitioning God for another great spiritual awakening in our land.

Eddie L. Hyatt is a Bible teacher, historian and author. This article was derived from his book, *America's Revival Heritage*, available from Amazon and his website at .