

Indonesia: A Little-Known Revival Site

We are familiar with the great revivals of the past. We love reminiscing about stories of the Welsh Revival and the Azusa Street Revival in the early 1900s. We study the lives of past revivalists to learn the lifestyles they led and the lessons from their downfalls. With the rise of global communication, we can even follow a revival event happening in real time throughout different parts of the globe.

Have you ever heard of the revival in Indonesia? In case you're wondering, Indonesia is the largest Muslim nation in the world, in terms of population. Indonesia is a strange place for a Christian revival to occur.

Then again, God loves to do strange things all throughout history. One of the early occurrences of revival in the Old Testament happened, out of all places, in Nineveh, the ancient pagan city of the Assyrians. Through a reluctant prophet named Jonah, who came to the city with an edict of judgment, the entire population of Nineveh, from royalty to animals, fasted and repented. There were other cities in Israel and Judah that could have benefited from a revival, but God chose a pagan city belonging to Israel's enemy to create a movement. Around 250 years after, the city went back to their evil ways and finally suffered God's judgment, but that revival saved generations of Ninevites who would have otherwise suffered destruction.

We can also consider the rise of the church of Ephesus, which was planted by the apostle Paul and twelve converts. Filled with the Holy Spirit, they taught, performed miracles and rebuked evil spirits. The city was overcome with fear and awe that new converts confessed their sins publicly and surrendered their scrolls of sorcery to be burned. This

behavior would have been out of place, considering that Ephesus was the center of the worship of Artemis, with her temple in the city being recognized as one of the Seven Wonders of the Ancient World. Despite intense persecution that followed, the church of Ephesus grew and was thought to be one of the first megachurches in history.

Which brings us back to Indonesia, the largest Muslim nation on earth. In September 1966, there was a revival movement in the town of Soe, in the island of Timor. The remote location and distance from the capital city of Jakarta nearly stopped the movement from receiving more exposure than it deserved. Additionally, the revival happened merely days before the communist coup against the government that almost plunged the entire nation into turmoil.

But the Timor Revival was nothing short of powerful! It started from a regular prayer meeting, which was transformed when the Holy Spirit visited the place of meeting in the form of a mighty rushing wind and a vision of fire engulfing the building. The congregations began worshiping in different languages, such as French, German, English and even Hebrew.

Miracles began to break out, many of which are found in the Bible. Reverend Marion Allen, a missionary in the city of Kupang, Timor, reported that every type of New Testament miracle had been repeated during the Timor Revival, which included healings, water turning into wine, walking on water, even raising of dead people. From Soe, countless evangelists were sent out to surrounding cities and islands to spread the gospel. There were missionaries from Indonesia being sent to other nations as well.

Mel Tari is a native from Timor and an eyewitness to this revival event. He has been telling the story of the Timor Revival all over the world, both in person and through his book, *Like a Mighty Wind*.

Studying the Timor Revival challenged my stereotype of revivals, just like the stories of Jonah's ministry and the church of Ephesus. God does not work according to our own understanding, expectation or limitation. The calling of Nathanael illustrated this principle:

"Now Philip was from Bethsaida, the city of Andrew and Peter. Philip found Nathanael and said to him, 'We have found Him of whom Moses in the law, as well as the prophets, wrote, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph.'

"Nathanael said to him, 'Can any good thing come out of Nazareth?'

"Philip said to him, 'Come and see'" (John 1:44-46).

God alone chooses where, when and how He will stir the movement that will lead to a revival. So where will the last revival before the Lord's return start? I pray that wherever, whenever and however the Spirit moves, we all have the hunger and humility to do what Nathanael did, which is to come and see. {eo}

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