

Re-Digging the Wells of Revival: Dutch Sheets' Visits to Cane Ridge and Wales

Scripture makes it clear that the Lord accomplishes His purposes on the earth not through one man or movement, but through the labors and legacy of many across multiple generations (Heb. 11:39-12:2). Working through a divine timeline that extends beyond a single lifetime, the Lord desires that we honor and build upon the foundations laid by those who have gone before us.

In Genesis 26, we are told that when Isaac dug water wells, he didn't get to start with his own. Isaac recognized his hereditary right *and responsibility* to re-dig and restore the ancient wells of his father Abraham, which the Philistines stopped up after he died.

It was after re-digging his father's wells that that the Lord appeared to Isaac and pronounced over him the same blessing previously spoken over Abraham. Not long after that, the Lord allowed Isaac's servants to unearth his very own well.

I have spent more than a decade of my life teaching about the synergy of the ages; exhorting believers that in order for us to move forward in fulfilling God's purposes for our generation, we must reach back to remember, honor and add to what He has done through previous generations. Through a recent sequence of events, however, the Lord once again invited me to tap into some historic wells of revival in order to release a fresh river of His glory to flow into our generation.

A few months ago, I was invited to minister at a small log cabin-style church in Kentucky, which happens to be the site of the historic Cane Ridge Revival of the late 1800s. During

that powerful move of the Holy Spirit, tens of thousands of people came by wagon to the hillsides of Kentucky, hungry to hear the preaching of the Word and bask in the glory of God for days at a time. At these camp meetings, it was common to see dozens of ministers preaching simultaneously across the countryside, while multitudes were strewn along the ground, being moved upon by the extremely weighty presence of God. This revival swept through the southern states and beyond, helping to birth the Second Great Awakening! I found it most interesting that the Lord set up my itinerary in such a way that from Cane Ridge, He sent me to Wales—another extremely significant site of revival history!

Moving From Well to Well

The nation of Wales is the place where revivalist Evan Roberts was baptized in the fire of God and commissioned by the Lord as a leader in the world-reaching Welsh Revival of the early 1900s. So many people were radically saved in that spiritual outpouring, that the nation of Wales experienced societal transformation. Judges had no cases to try, and law enforcement officials had no crime to deal with, so they formed traveling evangelistic singing groups!

The presence of God was so strong among the common people that pubs closed down, sporting events were cancelled, thousands of depressed and drunken miners came to Jesus, and hundreds left everything behind to give their lives on the foreign mission field. It is believed that since the 1900s, there has never been a revival in world history that cannot trace its roots back to the nation-shaking Welsh Revival.

Wales was also home to Rees Howells, another significant contributor to revival history. His life of intercession, chronicled in the biography, *Rees Howells Intercessor*, has greatly influenced many people and movements of prayer, myself included. After being powerfully swept into the Welsh Revival, this former miner-turned-missionary devoted the rest of his

life to serving the purposes of God for his generation—in the place of prayer.

In 1924 Howells founded The Bible College of Wales to train others in what the Lord had taught him. That place soon became a house of prayer for all nations, with students and staff joining Howells in fighting world battles on their knees. What transpired on that small campus unquestionably affected the course of world history, and has left a legacy of prayer that the Lord is inviting us to lay hold of today.

Fighting the Battles of the Kingdom

Howells' intercessors prayed all through World War II, engaging in the spiritual warfare necessary to take down the demonic powers encroaching upon the governments of nations through the dictatorial leadership of men like Hitler, Stalin and Mussolini. They also prayed fervently through the 1948 vote on Israel's status as a nation. Even after Howells' passing, their ardent intercession continued under the leadership of his son, Samuel. They prayed through the Cuban missile crises, the Cold War between the U.S. and the USSR, and also helped pray in the signs and wonders movement of the 1940s, 1950s and 1960s.

Their story could be likened to Moses' hilltop intercession affecting Joshua's frontline battle. Scripture states that as long as Moses held up the staff of God in his hand, Joshua and Israel prevailed, but when Moses let his hands down, the enemy prevailed. Through this prophetic act of intercession—lifting up the rod, which represented the authority and power of God—the Lord faithfully responded by releasing victory on the battlefield (Ex. 17:8-16.) Likewise, Howells and his intercessors continually “held up” spiritual authority in the heavenly realms while soldiers experienced miraculous breakthroughs, enabling them to execute victory on the battlefield.

During WWII in particular, God would give Howells prophetic insight concerning what was going to happen next and where they needed to strategically focus their intercession. After class each day, these devoted intercessors would contend in travailing prayer for hours and hours on end, sometimes praying through the night. They were determined to match in the spirit realm, the level of intensity and self-sacrifice experienced by heads of nations and soldiers on the frontlines of battle.

Impassioned about fulfilling their godly calling, Howells said, "If I am not called up to fight, and I know another way to help them and I don't do it, I ought to be killed instead of them. They are facing death ... for you and me. If they suffer more than we suffer for them, it will be our lifelong shame." Howells and his students gave their lives to fighting the battles spiritually as if they were called to the frontlines of the war. With each new assignment, these hidden intercessors prevailed in their prayers, and the world marveled and breathed heavy sighs of relief at such dramatic turnarounds.

Re-Digging a Well

Despite the rich revival history at The Bible College of Wales, this spiritual well had fallen into disrepair. After the death of Howells' son, Samuel, the directors of the school found it too costly to maintain the campus and keep the school running. For decades, the property went further into decay and was about to be sold to a developer for housing.

The Lord, however, had other plans and saw to it that this spiritual well was preserved and unstopped. He moved upon the heart of a pastor from Singapore, who not only caught God's vision for restoring that place but also was willing to pay the price to make it happen. This pastor raised \$10 million to purchase and restore the historic Bible College of Wales so that people from around the world could drink from this well

of revival once again!

As a student of revival history, a teacher on intercession, and one called to awaken this nation to the purposes of God through prayer, it has always been a great desire of my heart to visit Wales and drink from its spiritual wells. Right after my time of ministry at Cane Ridge, I had the great honor of not only visiting the Bible College of Wales, but also serving as a key participant in the rededication ceremony for this historic well of revival.

During our stay at the Bible College, Ceci and I were assigned to the room of Rees' son, Samuel Howells. This room sits directly above the prayer room where decades of nation-changing prophetic intercession took place—what a privilege! Among the gathering of key leaders from around the world, I was also extended the honor of rededicating Howells' Ebenezer stone of remembrance (1 Sam. 7:12).

Similar to what the prophet Samuel did to commemorate Israel's victory against their enemies, Howells set up a huge stone as a continual reminder of the Lord's providence and provision. Inscribed on one side of its marble top is the phrase, "Faith Is Substance." On the other side, the words, "Jehovah Jireh." When, as part of the rededication ceremony, this remembrance stone was relocated to the center of the campus and anointing oil was poured upon it, we could sense the glory of the Lord.

In that very holy moment, God met with me in a powerful way. I was overcome with the Lord's kindness at gathering us all to this place to drink from this historic well. In that moment, I pledged to help carry on Howells' legacy of prayer and recommitted my life to raising up a movement of prayer to take out the giants of our day and usher in a Third Great Awakening.

The rededication ceremony at the Bible College was not the only special appointment the Lord had planned for me. The same

Singaporean leaders that restored Howells' campus also purchased the little church in Wales where revivalist Evan Roberts met with God.

During the renovation process for converting that church into a house of prayer, the original Bible used by Evan Roberts during the Welsh Revival was found sitting under decades of dust on the pulpit of the church! I marveled at this find. You can see the Bible and the remembrance stone among the pictures below.

Paying the Price

I am so grateful for the Singaporeans who accepted the Lord's invitation to take on the extremely costly and painstaking restoration of this well of revival history. But the investment required for releasing God's river of revival into the nations of the earth doesn't end with restored facilities.

God desires to raise up Roberts-like revivalists and bands of Howells-like intercessors through which He can release a greater awakening and shift the course of nations today. This will require a high level of commitment. These men were so powerfully used of God because they complied with the great extremes God required of them. This is a principle repeatedly seen in Scripture.

As I prayer-walked the grounds of the Bible College of Wales, while I communed with the Lord in the church where Evan Roberts met with God, and even now, I hear Holy Spirit asking, "Who will pay the price in this generation?" God used Howells and his intercessors to contend against and defeat the demonic powers and principalities trying to take over the world.

Today, the goliaths of Islam, communism, human trafficking, abortion and the sexual rights agenda are standing at our door. Never has there been more at stake. We need the same warrior spirit of Howells' era to arise in us—both in the place of prayer and in being a prophetic voice. No doubt, God

has a plan. He always does something great in the face of the impossible!

I believe the Lord allowed for the restoration of these spiritual wells in Wales because He is releasing a spirit of contending prayer and revival into the nations of the earth once again. I believe we will see a new momentum of intercession—appealing to heaven and fighting kingdom battles on our knees, until the greatest Great Awakening the world has ever seen occurs.

You are a part of this! There is a spiritual inheritance available to you. Young people, especially, it is your time to arise! The Lord is anointing you to overthrow the Goliaths of our day and contend for the destinies of nations. The Lord is searching for those who will say, “I will pay the price.” For those who invest their lives in these costly battles of intercession, He will show Himself strong! (See 2 Chronicles 16:9.)

Dutch Sheets is an internationally recognized teacher, conference speaker and author of *The Power of Hope*. He has written more than 20 books, translated into over 30 languages. His first work, *Intercessory Prayer*, sold nearly a million copies and is being used to empower believers worldwide for passionate prayer and societal transformation.

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