

The Intercessors of the Hebrides Revival

~Other Speakers S-Z: David Smithers:

Off the west coast of Scotland is a small group of islands called the Hebrides. Between 1949 and 1952 a wide spread revival swept through these islands in answer to the prayers of God's people. Instrumental in this revival was the evangelist Duncan Campbell. He came to the Isle of Lewis to conduct a two week evangelistic campaign and ended up staying two years. The following accounts are testimonies of the power of intercessory prayer during this mighty move of God.

Peggy & Christine Smith: They Prayed A Promise

In a small cottage by the roadside in the village of Barvas lived two elderly women, Peggy and Christine Smith. They were eighty-four and eighty-two years old. Peggy was blind and her sister almost bent double with arthritis. Unable to attend public worship, their humble cottage became a sanctuary where they met with God. To them came the promise: "I will pour water upon him that is thirsty and floods upon the dry ground," they pleaded this day and night in prayer. One night Peggy had a revelation, revival was coming and the church of her fathers would be crowded again with young people! She sent for the minister, the Rev. James Murray MacKay, and told him what God had shown her, asking him to call his elders and deacons together for special times of waiting upon God. In the same district a group of men praying in a barn experienced a foretaste of coming blessing. One night as they waited upon God a young deacon rose and read part of the twenty-fourth Psalm: "Who shall ascend into the hill of the Lord? Or who shall stand in His holy place? He that hath clean hands and a pure heart; who hath not lifted up his soul unto vanity, nor sworn deceitfully. He shall receive the blessing from the Lord." Turning to the others he said: "Brethren, it seems to me just so much humbug to be waiting and praying as we are, if we ourselves are not rightly related to God." Then lifting his hands toward heaven he cried: "Oh God, are my hands clean? Is my heart pure?" He got no further, but fell prostrate to the floor. An awareness of God filled the barn and a stream of supernatural power was let loose in their lives. They had moved into a new sphere of God realization, believing implicitly in the promise of revival.

But before leaving Peggy and her sister, another story must be told which further illustrates the holy intimacy of this woman with her Lord. When the movement was at its height Peggy sent for Duncan, asking him to go to a small, isolated village to hold a meeting. The people of this village did not favor the revival and had already made clear their policy of noninvolvement. Duncan explained the situation to Peggy and told her that he questioned the wisdom of her request. "Besides," he added, "I have no leadings to go to that place." She turned in the direction of his voice, her sightless eyes seemed to penetrate his soul. "Mr. Campbell, if you were living as near to God as you ought to be, He would reveal His secrets to you also." Duncan felt like a subordinate being reprimanded for defying his general. He humbly accepted the rebuke as from the Lord, and asked if he and Mr. MacKay could spend the morning in prayer with them. She agreed, and later as they knelt together in the cottage, Peggy prayed: "Lord, You remember what You told me this morning, that in this village You are going to save seven men who will become pillars in the church of my fathers. Lord, I have given Your message to Mr. Campbell and it seems he is not prepared to receive it. Oh Lord, give him wisdom, because he badly needs it!" "All right, Peggy, I'll go to the village," said Duncan when they had finished praying. She replied, "You'd better!" "And God will give you a congregation." Arriving in the village at seven o'clock they found a large bungalow crowded to capacity with many assembled outside. Duncan gave out his text: "The times of this ignorance God winked at, but now commandeth all men everywhere to repent." When he had finished preaching, a minister beckoned him to the end of the house to speak again to a number of people who were mourning over their sins - among them, Peggy's seven men!

John: He Challenged God in Prayer

Opposition to the revival was being raised in other parts of the island. An evening was given to waiting upon God in the home of an elder. Around midnight Duncan turned to the local blacksmith: "John, I feel the time has come for you to pray." With his cap in his hand John rose to pray, and in the middle of his prayer he paused, raised his right hand to heaven, and said: "Oh God, You made a promise to pour water upon him that is thirsty and floods upon the dry ground, and, Lord, it's not happening." He paused again and then continued: "Lord, I don't know how the others here stand in Your presence; I don't know how the ministers stand, but, Lord, if I know anything about my own heart I stand before Thee as an empty vessel, thirsting for Thee and for a manifestation of Thy power." He halted again and after a moment of tense silence cried: "Oh God, Your honor is at stake, and I now challenge You to fulfil your covenant engagement and do what you have promised to do." Many who were present witnessed that at that moment the house shook. Dishes rattled in the sideboard, as wave after wave of Divine power swept through the building. A minister standing beside Duncan turned and said: "Mr. Campbell, an earth tremor!" But Duncan's mind, however, was in the fourth chapter of Acts, where

the early Christians were gathered in prayer and, we read: "When they had prayed the place was shaken where they were assembled together; and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost."

Donald: The Boy Who Prayed

Among those converted the following night was a fifteen-year-old boy who became an outstanding helper in the revival. This lad became a "frontline" prayer-warrior. Duncan called at his home one day and found him on his knees in the barn with the Bible open before him. When interrupted he quietly said: "Excuse me a little, Mr. Campbell, I'm having an audience with the King." Some of the most vivid outpourings of the Spirit during the revival came when he was asked to pray. In the police station in Barvas he stood up one night, simply clasped his hands together, and uttered one word - "Father." Everyone was melted to tears as the Presence of God invaded the house. In Callenish, he prayed until the power of God laid hold on those who were dead in sins transforming them into living stones in the Church of Jesus Christ. But the most outstanding example of God's anointing upon him was in Bernera, a small island off the coast of Lewis. Duncan was assisting at a Communion service; the atmosphere was heavy and preaching difficult, so he sent to Barvas for some of the men to come and assist in prayer. They prayed, but the spiritual bondage persisted, so much so that half way through his address Duncan stopped preaching. Just then he noticed this boy, visibly moved, under deep burden for souls. He thought: "That boy is in touch with God and living nearer to the Savior than I am." So leaning over the pulpit he said: "Donald, will you lead us in prayer?" The lad rose to his feet and in his prayer made reference to the fourth chapter of Revelation, which he had been reading that morning: "Oh God, I seem to be gazing through the open door. I see the Lamb in the midst of the Throne, with the keys of death and of hell at His girdle." He began to sob; then lifting his eyes toward heaven, cried: "O God, there is power there, let it loose!" With the force of a hurricane the Spirit of God swept into the building and the floodgates of heaven opened. The church resembled a battlefield. On one side many were prostrated over the seats weeping and sighing; on the other side some were affected by throwing their arms in the air in a rigid posture. God had come!

She Saw A Vision

God communicated to Peter His purpose to bless the household of Cornelius by means of a vision in a trance when His servant was praying. He used similar methods in Lewis. A young woman in particular repeatedly went into trances, in which she received messages concerning those in need which were passed on to Duncan. One night he was staying in Stornoway when this girl saw in a vision a woman in agony of soul twenty miles away. Duncan was informed that he ought to go and see her, and without any thought for his own rest or safety he motorcycled to the village and found it exactly as he had been told. The word he spoke brought deliverance, and introduced the troubled lady to the Savior. Not one message given by this girl through her trance-visions proved false. This was an aspect of the work which Duncan did not attempt to encourage or explain, but he recognized it was of God and refused to interfere with it, warning those who would associate it with satanic activity, that they were coming perilously near to committing the unpardonable sin.

The Praying Butcher

Duncan never left the island without visiting the praying men, who had meant so much to him in the revival, and with whom he had such affinity of spirit. He marveled at their discernment and worldwide vision in this far northwestern island. Calling to see one of them he arrived at the house to hear him in the barn praying for Greece. He could not understand what interest a butcher in Lewis could have in Greece. "How did you come to be praying for Greece today?", he asked him later. "Do you know where Greece is?" "No, Mr. Campbell, but God knows, and He told me this morning to pray for Greece!" Two years later Duncan was introduced to a man in Dublin who told him the following story. He had gone to Greece on a business trip and was asked to speak to an assembly of Christians. The Spirit of God worked so powerfully that he continued preaching for a few weeks and phoned his brother in Ireland with instructions to look after the business until he returned. Duncan compared dates and discovered that the movement in Greece began on the same day that the butcher was praying in Bravas!

The price for heaven sent revival has never changed. Before the floods of Holy Ghost conviction could sweep across the Isles of The Hebrides, strong men were broken before God, travelling in agony of prayer through the long hours of the night for months. To do this, in spite of the demands of home and work, these men had to make time for waiting before God! This is perhaps the greatest problem besetting us today. We have all the modern luxuries of life to make work easier and yet we cannot make time to pray! What a tragic paradox! Dr. Wilbur Smith very aptly stated the matter when he said: "I never get time to pray - I've always got to make it!"