

PRAYER CALL.

In October 1744 a number of evangelical ministers in Scotland had committed themselves, together with their congregations, to pray regularly and corporately for revival. Regular times were spent in prayer to God for “abundant effusion of his Holy Spirit” so as to “revive true religion in all parts of Christendom” to “deliver all nations from their great and manifold spiritual calamities and miseries” and to “fill the earth with His Glory”. These ‘Concerts of Prayer’ ran for several years.

Jonathan Edwards, the great revivalist of Northampton, Massachusetts, sought to implement similar prayer gatherings in the New England colonies. In a sermon he gave in February 1747 on Zechariah 8:20-22 Edwards demonstrated how the text supported his call for a union of praying Christians. He followed this up by writing his famous paper “An Humble Attempt to promote Explicit Agreement of God’s people in Extraordinary Prayer for the revival of real religion and the advancement of Christ’s Kingdom on earth, pursuant to Scripture promises and prophecies concerning the last Time.” Edwards adopted the Scottish practice of calling for a quarterly united effort, and where possible for ministers, for a definite period each week.

“An Humble Attempt” fired the zeal of the Baptist Pastor in Olney, John Sutcliff, who undertook a reprint. This proved a tremendous encouragement to the Baptist churches of the Northamptonshire Association in the whole matter of praying for revival, and led to issuing ‘The Prayer Call of 1784’. This Prayer Call saw the launch of monthly gatherings for prayer throughout the Association which carried on well in to the following century. They also served as the foundation stone for the forming of the Baptist Missionary Society in 1792 and the launching of the ‘modern mission movement’ which has led to the transformation of societies and nations.

ROOTS AND SHOOTS!

This is the theme of this series of simple leaflets that we have prepared to further strengthen the rising tide of prayer and action in Carey’s Patch.

Today, we are praying in faith for a move of God in our communities and churches tomorrow! How many of us realise or know of the ways and the people through whom God has moved in this area’s yesterdays?

*“Isaac reopened the wells that had been dug in the time of his father Abraham” Gen 26v18
What God has done before, He can do again.*

We want to celebrate our heritage in Him by reflecting on the impact made on society in past generations through the translators, hymn-writers, teachers and emancipators raised up in this area.

Written by various local Christians with knowledge of their subject, these leaflets will remind us of what God has raised up in Carey’s Patch through faithful servants in previous generations.

These leaflets are made freely available to the Body of Christ.

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Centre for the Nations

P0 Box 6220, Wellingborough, Northants, NN8 3YU, U.K.

Tel/Fax: (+44) 1933-223454

E-mail: ebcftn@lineone.net

Nations Trust

a company limited by guarantee, registered in England & Wales No. 3505690

*Registered Office: 2a Glanmor Road, Llanelli, Carmarthenshire SA15 2LU,
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ROOTS AND SHOOTS!



No: 6 PRAYER CALL OF 1784

*One of a series of leaflets
highlighting our local Christian
heritage*



WELLINGBOROUGH

A NETWORK OF INDIGENOUS MISSION MOVEMENTS

The Prayer Call of 1784

as presented by John Sutcliff to the
Baptist Association assembled on 2-3 June 1784.

Upon a motion being made to the ministers and messengers of the associate Baptist churches assembled at Nottingham, respecting meeting for prayer, to bewail the low estate of religion, and earnestly implore a revival of our churches, and of the general cause of our Redeemer, and for that end to wrestle with God for the effusion of His Holy Spirit, which alone can produce the blessed effect, it was unanimously RESOLVED, to recommend to all our churches and congregations, the spending of one hour in this important exercise, on the first Monday in every calendar month.

We solemnly exhort all the churches in our connexion, to engage heartily and perseveringly in the prosecution of this plan. And thus it may be well to endeavour to keep the same hour, as a token of our unity therein, it is supposed the following scheme may suit many congregations, viz, to meet on the first Monday evening in May, June and July from 8 to 9. In Aug. from 7 to 8; Sept. and Oct. from 6 to 7; Nov. Dec. Jan. and Feb. from 5 to 6; March from 6 to 7; and April from 7 to 8. Nevertheless if this hour, or even the particular evening, should not suit in particular places, we wish our brethren to fix on one more convenient to themselves.

We hope also that as many of our brethren who live at a distance from our places of worship may not be able to attend there, that as many as are conveniently situated in a village or neighbourhood, will unite in small societies at the same time. And if any single individual should be so situated as not to be able to attend to this duty in society with others, let him retire at the appointed hour, to unite the breath of prayer in private with those who are thus engaged in a more public manner. - **The grand object in prayer is to be, that the Holy Spirit may be poured down on our ministers and churches, that sinners may be converted, the saints edified, the interest of religion revived, and the Name of God glorified. And at the same time remember, we trust you will not confine your requests to your own societies, or to your own immediate Connection; let the whole interest of the Redeemer be affectionately remembered, and the spread of the Gospel to the most distant parts of the habitable globe be the object of your most fervent requests.**

- We shall rejoice if any other Christian societies of our own and other denominations will unite with us, and do now invite them most cordially to join heart and hand in the attempt.

Who can tell what the consequence of such an united effort in prayer may be! Let us plead with God the many gracious promises of His Word, which relate to the future success of His Gospel.

He has said

“I will yet for this be enquired of by the house of Israel, to do it for them, I will increase them with men like a flock” Ezek 36 v 37.

Surely we have love enough to Zion to set apart one hour at a time, twelve times in a year, to seek her welfare.