

FIRESTARTERS 5

PRAYER TOOL

Igniting Prayer for Revival in our City • 5 Minutes to Read • 5 Minutes in Prayer

FOR THE WEEK OF March 14th-20th, 2021 - Vol 46

THEME VERSE:

*And this is the confidence that we have toward Him,
that if we ask anything according to His will He hears us.*

1 John 5:14

THE GOD OF REVIVAL:

The 1936 East African Revival: The Kindling Years

Some revivals officially begin and last only a few weeks, and yet somehow their impact echoes deeply across the generations that follow. Other revivals ignite powerfully in one place and then spread out like wildfires across cities and nations and the whole world and burn brightly for decades while leaving soaring evidences of God in its wake. In every situation, God raises up and prepares individuals who are surrendered to His purposes, and He draws His people to come together to pray. The East African Revival was one of those awakenings that would span at least 50 years and touch many many tribes and nations.

The official start for the explosive combustion of this revival is given as June 1936 in Uganda, yet the early surges of revival fire pre-date this by almost a decade. In October 1927 a new missionary recruit, Dr. Joe Church, arrived in Uganda for training in missions work in Rwanda. While training in medicine at Cambridge, he had participated in a movement that longed to see the Church experience a deeper Christian life by the Holy Spirit. Upon his arrival, he discovered that the church in the East African region had tragically fallen into a spiritual coma. The local Christians were immersed in alcohol abuse and immorality and indulged in witchcraft and superstitions. The religious leaders, filled with spiritual pride, had yielded to a weak view of the Word of God and the cross of Christ, and some were not even born-again believers. Christianity was just a veneer of spirituality that was used to hide people's sins from the public eye.

Dr. Joe Church began working in a hospital in Gahini, Rwanda, in June 1928 and served there fervently for more than a year in the midst of a distressing famine. After reaching near the point of exhaustion, physically and spiritually, he traveled to Kampala, Uganda, in September 1929 to get some much needed rest. Secretly, he prayed that God would unite his heart burdens with those of an African brother. One Sunday, while worshiping at the Kampala Cathedral, he started talking with an African standing beside his motorcycle. This young man was Simeoni Nsibambi, a wealthy government employee who was also a local Christian leader. Simeoni confided in Joe that he felt something missing in his own life and in the spiritual life of the Ugandan church. The two agreed to meet together for two whole days to immerse themselves in God's Word and in prayer. During this time, God intensely overwhelmed them with His presence and a fresh vision, and both Joe and Simeoni would unmistakably become the fathers of this unfolding revival.

Joe returned to Rwanda with revived Holy Spirit power in his heart. He would share the Gospel spontaneously, see it take hold throughout the hospital staff, and lead Tutsi chiefs and witchdoctors to the Lord. Meanwhile, Simeoni quit his job and sold most of his possessions to go and tell everyone about Jesus. Despite some resistance from established leaders, he pressed on to evangelize, lead Bible studies, and pray with others. In May of 1930, he organized the first Friday prayer meeting to pray for a revival outpouring. As evangelistic teams went out, they would emphasize the need for being born again, for true repentance, and the power of the Holy Spirit. More and more church leaders surrendered to God's leading and embraced a sacrificial lifestyle for the sake of the cross.

Throughout 1932 and 1933, revival flames continued to spread, not through large services in big buildings, but through smaller fellowships gathered in homes and villages as they shared their life-changing stories of the Spirit on the move. By early 1936, revival fire leapt from one village to another. Joe Church penned several pamphlets that year to stir Christians to pray for the fires to keep burning brightly, and many believers in the African nations and around the world heard the call... and responded. Extraordinary prayers continue

to pour in and to fuel the mighty work of the Spirit. And yet, God was just getting started and would soon release a fireball of His Spirit throughout East Africa.

THE GOD WHO ANSWERS PRAYERS:

- **DISCIPLESHIP.** Praise God that even in the midst of a pandemic, many believers continue to engage in making disciples of Jesus Christ, training others to be more like Christ in their hearts and ready to go share the Gospel and train up new believers to do the same. Praise the Lord the Kingdom marches forward through the expectation for multiplication and breakthrough!

PRAYER REQUESTS THIS WEEK:

FOR THE NEEDS OF THE CITY:

- **BUSINESS CLOSINGS.** Hundreds of businesses in the city have closed their doors since the start of COVID-19, many of them permanently. Pray for God to minister to the business owners, their many employees, and their customers. May God highlight His presence and power personally during this time to those suffering the most. Pray that those businesses that have prospered this past year to be a blessing to our economy and the workforce, and a testimony for the Kingdom.
- **SAFETY IN OUR CITY.** Charlotte has fallen behind other major cities in North Carolina in terms of safety regarding accidents, finances, and crime. Pray that God would deal with the root of these problems, changing the hearts of individuals, leaders, and entire communities. May He restore safety and law and order across our neighborhoods.
- **COVID-19.** Praise God the virus continues to diminish in its effect recently. Keep praying for God's protection and healing power throughout our city and nation. Pray that good vaccines and treatments continue to arise.

FOR THE WORLD AND MISSIONS:

- **JAARS IMPACT.** Pray for the new JAARS Vision Flights to reach and bless people. Aviation is implementing a new weekly flight experience where a person can register for a 30 minute flight with a JAARS pilot. May God instill fresh vision and a burden for the lost to all involved.
- **NEW VIDEOS.** Pray for the Luke and Acts videos which were completed in languages in restricted-access countries by SIL International's media staff. Pray for creative and effective distribution of the videos and that God will use them to change lives for his glory.

FOR MINISTRIES AND REVIVAL:

- **SPARKS OF REVIVAL.** O God, thank you that more people are praying for revival today than in previous generations. As one has prayed, may the "the growing sparks of revival continue to land on dry kindling." We know that revival begins in the church with Christians who are desperate for revival, who come to view sin, shame, injustice, corruption and evil as Almighty God does. They care enough to visit the throne of God and plead and cry out for His divine intervention. Sin is so rampant, perhaps moreso than in the days of Sodom and Gomorrah and as in the days of Noah. Pray that Jesus would come in revival because Jesus is the revival. May the Charlotte prayer warriors focus more intensely upon prayer for revival, and may the sparks ignite the dry kindling in our city quickly. Pray that believers become 'walking revivals' until a wave of love and the Holy Spirit hover across Charlotte as never seen before. Come quickly, Lord Jesus until nothing else matters but you.

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