



PRAYING

ON THE MOUNTAIN

Dr. J. Chris Schofield

Director, Office of Prayer for Evangelization and Spiritual Awakening, Baptist State Convention of North Carolina

In Psalm 147:11, the Psalter declares, “The Lord takes pleasure in those who fear Him, in those who hope in His mercy.” “Takes pleasure” means that God delights or is well pleased with His people who stand in awe and fear of Him. The word “hope” describes someone who is eagerly expecting or sincerely longing for His great mercy.

Combined, these terms describe someone who, in fear, humbles himself before God, knowing they are guilty and deserving of His wrath. Yet at the same time, with their whole heart they are longing for God to pour out His great loving kindness and mercy. This verse describes where I find myself more and more each day as God grows my desire and burden to seek Him for a great revival and spiritual awakening in my life, the church, America and beyond.

The Lord actually sparked this desire early in my ministerial journey after I read Dr. Lewis Drummond’s book *The Awakening that Must Come* in 1988. Later that year, as a young pastor in my first church, God gripped my heart and deepened the burden for revival and spiritual awakening while attending a conference where Henry Blackaby was speaking. I sat in the back of the conference room and wept for 1 ½ hours. I could hardly speak or move. I encountered God in one of the most powerful ways in my entire life. I repented of any known sins and told God I would serve Him in any way. At that point, I knew that I not only needed to seek the Lord personally for revival and spiritual awakening, but I also needed to encourage and challenge others to seek Him for a definite move of His Spirit through revival and spiritual awakening.

Since that time, I have prayed and sought to encourage and challenge pastors, leaders and churches to unite in one-accord prayer toward revival, spiritual awakening and the mission. And through the years, while I have served as a pastor, revivalist, adjunct professor and denominational prayer leader (e.g., North American Mission Board, seven years; Baptist state convention, 16 years), I have encountered many people who have responded to God’s call and were praying toward a spiritual awakening.

However, over the last 3-5 years, I have noticed a significant increase in the interest and numbers of believers, and especially pastors, who are burdened and sense God’s call to pray and lead others to pray for a great revival and spiritual awakening.

Is God Beginning to Hear from Heaven?

Despite these encouraging trends in prayer, we all know that America’s only hope and cure for the spiritual famine that has overtaken our land is the mercy of God through genuine revival in



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the church and spiritual awakening in the culture at large. We are, as the church and a nation, in desperate need of God and His manifest presence through revival and spiritual awakening!

Because of this, I can honestly say my heart is overjoyed at what I see God doing through the burdened heart of a 95-year-old retired pastor, associational missionary and World War II hero by the name of the Rev. Fred Lunsford. Through Fred Lunsford's Praying on the Mountain call to prayer, I believe that God, unlike I have ever seen, is beginning to hear from heaven and stir His people throughout North Carolina, America, and beyond to genuinely return to Him in holiness and passionate prayer for a mighty outpouring of His mercy through revival and spiritual awakening.

This is certainly true in my life personally as God is using Fred Lunsford to deepen my own hunger for the Lord's mercy in revival and spiritual awakening. Through phone conversations, prayer times, meetings and a conference where Fred Lunsford was one of our speakers, God continues to expand His work of personal revival in my own heart and life. For this, I am eternally grateful!

2019 Fanning the Flames Conference

In November 2018, while having lunch at the Annual Meeting of the Baptist state convention, I met Kenny Adcock, the new director at Truett Conference Center and Camp. When I told Kenny what my role was at the convention, he immediately expressed an interest in having a conference on prayer sometime in 2019. I told him this was an answer to prayer as I (and others in North Carolina) had been praying for many years that God would raise up a desire and hunger for prayer across the state. We began praying about the conference and scheduled a time in February 2019 to meet with Al Hood, associational missionary for the Truett Baptist Association, and plan the conference.

In January 2019, Milton Hollifield Jr., executive director/treasurer of the BSCNC, called me to tell me about his conversation with Fred Lunsford. I was familiar with the Rev. Lunsford and had met him a few times over the years at prayer gatherings, conferences and meetings. As we talked, Milton told me that Fred was greatly burdened about the need for spiritual awakening and that Fred wanted me to call him.

That afternoon, I called Fred Lunsford. He told me that he had read an article in the *Biblical Recorder* that I had written on the united prayer meetings that took place during the 1857-59 Layman's Prayer Revival. Fred said, "I just wanted you to know I agree with you and believe that today we need to see a revival of united prayer meetings like the ones in 1857." He then said, "Let me tell you what God is doing in my heart and life."

Fred shared how God had burdened his heart after his wife died to start a prayer meeting in his home. He then shared that while at his prayer garden near his home, God clearly spoke and showed him that his last assignment on earth was to pray earnestly for revival and spiritual awakening and lead others to do the same. He said that he had always had a burden for revival but it had intensified



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greatly over the past two years, as he answered God's call to devote the rest of his life to pray and call others to pray for revival and spiritual awakening.

During our conversation, the Lord drew near in a special way as we prayed, wept and shouted together. During the prayer time, I had an overwhelming sense that God wanted me to ask Fred Lunsford to speak at the Fanning the Flames Conference we were doing at Truett Conference Center and Camp Sept. 7, 2019. After we concluded our prayer time, I asked Fred and he agreed to come and speak.

Sometime in July 2019, Fred Lunsford called me to tell me that he had lost the sight in his good eye and despite his treatments, did not think that he would be able to come and preach at the conference at Truett Camp in September. Now usually, I would have said to anyone in that position that I completely understood and would not want to burden him with speaking when he was not well or did not feel comfortable speaking. But, I honestly could not say those words to Fred Lunsford.

Despite his condition, I felt compelled by the Lord to ask Fred, if he was willing and able, to just come and share a prayer testimony at the conference. I told him we could have someone drive him and help him get there if needed and that he would not have to read or preach, but just share from his heart and wealth of experience what the Lord has done in his life through prayer. He asked me why I was so insistent on him speaking. I told him it was because I believed strongly that God wanted him to speak at this conference. He agreed to come despite his condition, and how grateful to God I am now for his perseverance and willingness to come.

Fanning the Flames Conference and Beyond

God did draw near at the conference on Sept. 7 as Marvin Green, Fred Lunsford, David Horton and I all shared our hearts with the participants. The next day, as I was traveling home, I called David Horton, president at Fruitland Baptist Bible College, to thank him for his message and willingness to come and preach at the conference. As we talked, he began to share with me that over the last year he had felt somewhat dry in his spiritual life and had actually been looking for a spiritual life conference to attend.

Then he said, "Chris, I came to preach at the Fanning the Flames Conference at Truett Camp and because of that, the Lord has forever changed my prayer life. When Fred Lunsford shared his story about being a 5-year-old boy who encountered a local preacher named Uncle Doc as he was praying in a laurel thicket, my heart was gripped by God's Spirit. I'll never be the same because of God's work through Fred Lunsford and that story."

Then David shared that because of that encounter with God, now his main priority as a minister is to be known as a man of prayer who walks with God and preaches in God's power. Before we hung up,



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we prayed and David asked for Fred Lunsford's contact information because he wanted to go visit him sometime soon and talk with him more extensively about his prayer life.

Sometime later, David called Fred Lunsford and they scheduled a day to visit. David invited his son, Michael, Greg Mathis and J.D. Grant to join him on his visit with Fred Lunsford. As they met and prayed, God manifested His presence among them in a very powerful way. Out of that meeting and encounter with God, God birthed the pastors' Praying on the Mountain call to prayer, which ultimately developed into the Praying on the Mountain call to prayer that continues to grow as a genuine movement of God today. To God be the glory!

Final Words

I will conclude with two thoughts. First, I will always be eternally grateful to God for the privilege to know, pray with, serve with and learn from the Rev. Fred Lunsford. I have grown to love and treasure him and the gift of God he is to me personally and to the kingdom. The times of prayer I have had with Fred Lunsford and others like Greg Mathis, David Horton, Milton Hollifield Jr. and our state prayer initiative team members in recent months have been and continue to be rich times when God manifests His holy presence and draws near as we pray.

Second, I believe what God has begun through the Praying on the Mountain call to prayer, and through men like Fred Lunsford, Greg Mathis, David Horton, Don Wilton and many others — is a significant work of God. As I have prayed for, studied, and served in the disciplines of revival and spiritual awakening for the last 32-plus years, I have never before seen as many pastors and people who are as receptive and eager to participate in a call to prayer for revival and spiritual awakening as I have with the Praying on the Mountain call to prayer. Every time I share the story of Fred Lunsford and the call to prayer, it seems that God has already prepared hearts to receive with joy the challenge to pray. That is something that only God can do!

I have also never seen such an increase in the intensity and focus of pastors' prayers for revival and spiritual awakening as I have over the last several months. Many pastors and leaders are longing and weeping with unusual earnestness and brokenness over their sin, the spiritual famine in America, and for revival and awakening as they pray. This is certainly the hand of the Lord at work through His manifest presence in and among His people. It is also exciting because it is a hallmark of revival and spiritual awakenings biblically and historically. Oh God, do it again!

In Psalm 90:16, Moses prayed, "Let Your work appear to Your servants, and Your glory to their children." May we, like Moses, continue to respond to God's revelation and call to seek Him in this generation, so that by His grace and mercy, our children and the next generation may experience His glory and majesty through revival and spiritual awakening! To God be the glory for the great things He has, is and will continue to do as He calls His people to pray through Praying on the Mountain.