Repentance to Britain as a whole means a return in every way to the position made on Oath to God.

The Call to Prayer among Christians

Christians, above all members of our nation, understand the nature of our nation’s sins. Their call is to commit themselves to prayers of intercession and confession, asking God to send a Spirit of repentance across the nation.

This is not the first time this has happened. Prayer has been the call to God’s people prior to every revival. In revivals God begins to answer prayer by calling His own people to repentance. The testimony of previous revivals is that the Gospel then goes forth afresh and others are called to repentance. There is no limit to the wave of repentance that can then gradually sweep through a nation, with the result that a wave of desire to be restored to God’s ways can ensue.

Returning to God

The principle of Tshuva is to return. At one level this is to return to the ways of God, but this is not the full objective. God is calling His people to return to Him. He longs for our deeper fellowship and He longs for our nation to return both to His ways and to fellowship with Him.

This is the process of repentance that God is calling us to in this very day.

Resources for Prayer

THE PROCESS OF REPENTANCE

Foundations of the meaning of repentance are found in the Hebrew language, the language of the Old Testament and, by implication, the language of the entire Bible. Indeed, the principle of repentance has been a full part of Judaism for many centuries. The key Hebrew word is tshuva, translated to return. When someone has sinned there is a need to stop sinning and return to the ways of God. This can apply to an individual or a community, even a nation. It is a process of turning away from what is wrong and turning to what is right in God’s eyes.

Conviction of sin

The process begins with a conviction of sin. In a framework of law, it is a matter of conscience when a person recognises that laws are being broken and takes steps to put this right. Putting it right could involve making compensation of some kind to someone who has been harmed as a result of the lawless deeds. The Covenant that God made with Israel was based on law and the principle of justice summarised in the maxim ‘eye for eye and tooth for tooth’ which defined the need of justice for those wronged.

In the New Covenant the righteousness of God’s law is not compromised, but the giving of the Holy Spirit brought a
new way of conviction of sin. When a person is first convicted of sin and, as a result, desires to please God, this conviction is a ministry of the Holy Spirit and the process of repentance is empowered by the Holy Spirit.

Whether by the conscience trained by the knowledge of God’s laws, or by the conviction of the Holy Spirit, repentance has the same meaning, an active rejection of wrongdoing, involving sorrow for the sins committed, and a return to the ways that please God. Thus repentance is active and not passive, and it is something that a person can only accomplish for himself. We cannot repent for another person, and we cannot repent for a nation.

Identification and Intercession

Whilst we cannot repent for another person we can identify with their condition, and this is particularly relevant when that person is blind to what he is doing. If we have been forgiven of sin or if we have experienced something that someone else is doing we know where they are and we can “sit where they sit”. We can, as it were, stand by them in prayer and pray for them with heartfelt feeling. This ministry of intercession is also helped by the Holy Spirit. Whilst we cannot repent for a person, we can pray for them in a way that pleases God.

Confession

Daniel’s prayer for his people in Daniel 9 is not a prayer of repentance. It is a prayer which involves confession (Daniel 9:4). It was a prayer of depth, involving supplications and fasting (Daniel 9:3). In Daniel’s case it was a prayer at a time of fulfilment of God’s promise to bring an end to the Babylonian captivity after the 70 years prophesied by Jeremiah (Daniel 9:2). We must, therefore, be careful not to try to extract a formula from this prayer as if simply following the pattern of prayer God will definitely answer in the same way for our own nation.

Nevertheless, there is a pattern for this prayer in which Daniel confessed the sins of his people – sins that had taken them to captivity.

Britain Today

Law changes have contributed to the sinfulness that is rampant in our nation. Laws that protected have been changed to make “legal” what is contrary to God’s laws. All this after the hundreds of years of God’s blessings and protection when, step by step, God’s laws were written into our statute books. Clearly we are a nation that must repent and return to what is good.

Britain does not have the same covenant as Israel and only Israel can seek God according to the answer that God gave to Solomon in 2 Chronicles 7:14. But when Jeremiah visited the Potter’s House (Jeremiah 7) God spoke the following principle that applies to any nation:

“The instant I speak concerning a kingdom, to pluck up to pull down, and to destroy it, if that nation against whom I have spoken turns from its evil, I will relent of the disaster that I thought to bring upon it”. (Jeremiah 18:8-9)

Only God knows whether He inspired the leaders of the nation to cause us to found our constitution in a Coronation Oath. The Oath includes the promise made by the Monarch on behalf of the nation, to the utmost of their power to maintain the laws of God and the true profession of the Gospel, and this Oath puts Britain in a position as close to covenant with God as a Gentile nation can achieve.