



History Belongs to the Intercessors


by Walter Wink

Intercessory prayer is spiritual defiance of what is in the way of what God has promised. Intercession visualizes an alternative future to the one apparently fated by the momentum of current forces. Prayer infuses the air of a time yet to be into the suffocating atmosphere of the present. History belongs to the intercessors who believe the future into being. Even a small number of people, firmly committed to the new inevitability on which they have fixed their imaginations, can decisively affect the shape the future takes. These shapers of the future are the intercessors, who call out of the future the longed-for new present. In the New Testament, the name and texture and aura of that future is God's domination-free order, the reign of God. No doubt our intercessions sometimes change us as we open ourselves to new possibilities we had not guessed. No doubt our prayers to God reflect back upon us as a divine command to become the answer to our prayer. But if we are to take the biblical understanding seriously, intercession is more than that. It changes the world and it changes what is possible. It creates an island of relative freedom in a world gripped by unholy necessity. A new force appears that hitherto was only potential. The entire configuration changes as the result of the change of a single part. A space opens in the praying person, permitting God to act without violating human freedom. All of Jesus' teachings on prayer feature imperatives. (Ex. Lk 11:9 "Ask . . . search . . . knock.") In prayer we are ordering God to bring the Kingdom near. It will not do to implore. We have been commanded to command. We are required by God to haggle with God for the sake of the sick, the obsessed, the weak, and to conform our lives to our intercessions. This is a God who invents history in interaction with those "who hunger and thirst to see right prevail" (Mat. 5:6, REB). How different this is from the static god of Greek philosophy that all these years has lulled so many into adoration without intercession! When we pray we are not sending a letter to a celestial White House, where it is sorted among piles of others.



We are engaged, rather, in an act of co-creation, in which one little sector of the universe rises up and becomes translucent, incandescent, a vibratory centre of power that radiates the power of the universe. History belongs to the intercessors, who believe the future into being. If this is so, then intercession, far from being an escape from action, is a means of focusing for action and of creating action. By means of our intercessions we veritably cast fire upon the earth and trumpet the future into being.

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THEY FOUGHT THE WAR ON THEIR KNEES

"...they saw the power and fruit of extraordinary prayer..."

They Fought the War on Their Knees

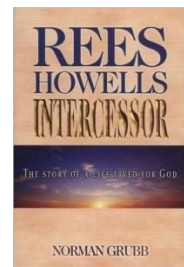
From: *Family Research Council* newsletter, 11/11/15

Rees Howells (1879-1950), born in Wales and a coal miner by age 12, traveled to America in quest of a better life. He met Christians whose vital witness moved him to yield his life to Christ in 1906. Howells and his wife, Lizzie, followed God's call to Southern Africa, where they saw the power and fruit of extraordinary prayer: thousands saved, many healed and years of sustained revival.

Set on a life of intercessory prayer, they were led back to Great Britain to establish the College of Wales and to teach children and adults the principles of prayer and faith they had learned. In 1924, starting with only ten pennies, they trusted God for £millions to build and run the School. Yet Howells is best known today for his students and their bold, faithful stand against Nazi Germany and their day and night intercessions against Hitler and his Nazi Troop movements. These excerpts are from Norman Grubb's biography, *Rees Howells: Intercessor*:

During the four years previous to the outbreak of World War II... the Lord was changing the burden on Mr. Howells from local concerns, centering on the development of the College, to national and international affairs. "We were led to be responsible to intercede for countries and nations." The Lord was preparing in the company at the College a special instrument of intercession for the coming world crisis.

In March, 1936, Mr. Howells began to see clearly that Hitler was Satan's agent for preventing the gospel going to every creature. As he said later, "In fighting Hitler... we were not up against man, but the devil... For several years Mr. Howells stressed the fact that God must destroy him [Hitler], if the vision of the Gospel to every creature was to be fulfilled..."



THEY WERE NOW CALLED

"...to give their lives over 'to fight the battles of the Kingdom!'"

On the day of the declaration of war, he published the following statement: "The Lord has made known to us that He is going to destroy Hitler and the Nazi regime... which is the Antichrist, and release Germany, the land of the Reformation..." The declaration... sent them more determined than ever to their knees. They were now called... to give their lives over "to fight the battles of the Kingdom, as really as if called to fight on the Western Front." God [gave them] responsibility from which they could never come free, until the enemy that God was dealing with should be destroyed "We may," he wrote, "have many a set-back before He does... it may be that we, like the Israelites (Jdg 20), will have to cry out to God in our extremity for the help which will certainly come."

Diaries of the daily College meetings reveal, not a fearful, not even chiefly a praying company, but rather... those already on victory ground... such clarity and assurance that theirs was the victory... If we say God was not with them, we may well ask ourselves this question: "Was there anywhere else in the whole of Britain or America or elsewhere among God's people another such company, maybe a hundred strong, who were on their knees day by day, holding fast the victory by faith, while our soldiers across the water were retreating mile by mile, whole countries surrendering, and the enemy within sight of their goal?" Through all the years of the war, the whole College was in prayer every evening from seven o'clock to midnight, with only a brief interval for supper. They never missed a day... in addition to an hour's prayer meeting every morning... very often at midday... and many special periods when every day was given to prayer and fasting (see Norman Grubb, [Rees Howells: Intercessor](#), 1967)



Howell's students closely followed the war news on radio and in print and prayed over every development. They literally fought the war on their knees. Are not such companies of prayer needed to withstand those who threaten the free world's very existence today? Are not we called to be such warriors? And some to lead such a company or companies? Ought we not to read and reread this story and seek God as to our role in the spiritual battle?

Read the biography:

Grubb, Norman, *Rees Howells Intercessor*. 1952: Lutterworth Press, Fort Washington, PA.