

On a cold November day, a small prayer group gathered under some sugar maple trees in a public park in our community to pray, repent of generational sins, and rededicate our city to God. We had determined to believe God for His promise of 2 Chronicles 7:14, which declares that He will heal our land if we walk in humility and repentance. We desperately wanted to see God heal our own community of a multitude of sins, and this powerful moment began a series of prayer walks throughout our city of 20,000 people.

By praying 2 Chronicles 7:14, we were asking God to fulfill a promise He had originally given to Solomon centuries ago. Upon completion of the building of the Temple, Solomon posed several situations before God, asking if He would each time hear from heaven and forgive the sins of His people if they truly returned to Him (2 Chronicles 6). Solomon was praying toward the future, inviting God to continue to show His mercy. God listened to Solomon's prayer, and then responded with a covenant promise: "if my people, who are called by my name, will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then will I hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and heal their land."

### **God's Intended Purposes for the Land**

God's original purpose for His creation (including the land) was that it glorify Him, as well as bless and sustain its inhabitants. He declared heaven to be His throne and the earth to be His footstool (Isa. 66:1). God's intent was that both man and land be intimately connected with Him as Creator. But His purposes for creation were interrupted by man's sin, which defiled the land and fractured the relationship between God, man, and the land. God made it clear to Adam: "Cursed is the ground because of you" (Gen. 3:17).

Today the ground continues to be cursed and defiled by man's sin. God is very specific about the sins that defile the land:

- Sexual immorality (Lev. 18:24-28)
- Murder and vicious atrocities (Num. 35:33-34)
- Idolatry and occultism (Ps. 106:34-37) <sup>1</sup>

Many of these defiling sins have been committed in some form over the generations in our nation and communities. Romans 8:20-22 describes the defilement of creation—as well as its hope for healing and restoration: *"Against its will, everything on earth was subjected to God's curse. All creation anticipates the day when it will join God's children in glorious freedom from death and decay. For we know that all creation has been groaning in the pains of childbirth right up to the present time."*

We live under curses that have affected our land because of generations of sin. We know that ultimately the new heaven and new earth will be established upon Christ's return, but God promises that we can experience a taste of the glorious restoring of His creation here and now. That is the promise God gave to Solomon in 2 Chronicles 7:14—a healing of the land if His people walk with humble, repentant hearts. The Prophets Isaiah and Joel both confirm that repentance releases God's blessing on the land, which in turn blesses God's people (Isa. 30:19-26; Joel 2:13-14, 21-24).

### **Living in Covenant with God**

God gave the covenant promise of 2 Chron. 7:14 to the nation of Israel. It applies to us, too, as New Testament believers because Jesus Christ came not to destroy the Old Testament covenant

promises, but to fulfill them and bring them to realization (Mt. 5:17; Luke 24:44). In fact, Jesus makes the definitive declaration that everything in all of Scripture must be fulfilled in Him (Mt. 5:18).

God's biblical promises are placed within the framework of a covenant. A covenant is defined as "a promise under seal between two or more parties specifically for the performance of some action." Throughout Scripture, God offers covenant promises to those who love Him and call Him their one and only true God. God promises to fulfill His part of the agreement if His people fulfill their part. Many times over, God promises that He will bless and honor those who love Him and obey all of His commands (Exodus 34:10-11; Deuteronomy 7:12-14; Joshua 1:6-9).

Second Chronicles 7:14 is probably one of the most well-known covenant promises, as well as the most frequently quoted verse about the hope for revival. There is a growing awareness in the church today of our desperate need for repentance that might attract God's manifest presence, favor, and blessing. We are beginning to truly believe the principles of humility (denying self and declaring dependence on God alone), praying and seeking God (a fervent prayer that persists until God answers), and turning from wicked ways (brokenness and true repentance) as prerequisites for revival. Although I believe the truth this covenant promises, it has been a journey for me to go from belief to intentionality in how I pray and live my life with hope for the healing of our land.

I recently attended a conference about revival and transformation, and I sensed God speaking so clearly to me that I had to write it down: "*Live your life according to 2 Chronicles 7:14 as if other lives depend on it.*" God impressed on me the seriousness of His covenant promise, but He was also convicting me that I was not living it out in my own life. I believed in principle, but my heart had not yet been permeated in such a way that it changed everything about how I live. I recommitted my life to believe God that repentance is the key to the healing of my land and community—beginning with my own heart!

### **Steps to Restoring and Redeeming Land**

Because of our personal sin and generations of sin, we are responsible for defiling the land. Therefore, it follows that we are critical to the healing and restoring of the land. God prescribes the answer to our predicament when He offers repentance as the means of restored covenant with Him.

Repentance in your own heart means inquiring of the Lord of everything that needs cleansing and restoring through God's forgiveness. This means learning to live a lifestyle of repentance that is always inviting the Lord to speak into your life.

Then God invites us into repentance on behalf of others, a prayer expression that has been termed "identificational repentance." Daniel, Nehemiah, and others repented on behalf of the sins of their people and nation, even though they were not personally guilty of the sins.<sup>2</sup> God is looking for people who are willing to identify themselves with sins of the past, and then humbly repent on behalf of those sins. Ezekiel 22:30 reveals God's heart on this: "I looked for someone who might rebuild the wall of righteousness that guards the land. I searched for someone to stand in the gap in the wall so I wouldn't have to destroy the land, but I found no one" (Ezekiel 22:30, New Living Translation).

When Nehemiah repented of the sins of his people, God gave him favor with the king to gain the supplies and permission he needed to restore the walls of Jerusalem. Then God gave him the wisdom and leadership to mobilize the people to complete the task. Because of both Daniel and Nehemiah's willingness to repent, God released the Israelites from captivity to return to their land

(Daniel 9:4-19). Old Testament reformers like Hezekiah and Josiah repented and cleansed the land from defilement—and they prospered (2 Chronicles 29-31, 34-35).

Praying and repenting on behalf of community sins that have occurred over generations requires accurate historical and spiritual research. This research allows “informed intercession” based on objective information-gathering (often called “spiritual mapping”) that includes the origins of a community, religious roots, history of crime and sin, etc. By combining this research with Holy Spirit-led prayer and attention to what God reveals, you can pray accurate prayers of repentance regarding the defilement of the land in your community.

In Uganda, the president of the nation invited pastors and intercessors to stand in the gap on behalf of the land. After years of civil war and the inability of the army to make headway in capturing the rebels, the president realized the place of desperate prayer. Leaders in the Christian community helped the president understand some of the defilement of the land and its direct effect on the ability of the rebels to thrive. They pointed out the occult practices of the rebels and its impact on the nation. In response, the president used government troops and helicopters to escort intercessors and pastors to “high places” of occult activity so that believers could repent of the occult sin and ask for God’s cleansing. As the believers prayed, the government troops began to make progress in pushing back the rebels and their reign of terror in the country.<sup>3</sup>

### **Real-time Stories of Healing of the Land**

In various places throughout the world you can find pockets of transformation that started with the faith and prayer of a few believers. These believers are taking God’s covenant promise of a healed land as a literal promise for today, and are seeing amazing demonstrations of God’s blessings.

I have been inspired by the stories of healing of the land from different places around the world. From Almolonga, Guatemala, to the frigid Canadian Arctic, to the nations of Fiji and Uganda, people of God are dedicating themselves to living out the conditions of 2 Chron. 7:14.<sup>4</sup>

- In Fiji, people are overjoyed at how God is responding to their humble pleas of brokenness and repentance. In one of the villages, God showed the people their need to repent for the generational sin of cannibalizing the first Methodist missionary to Fiji. The Fijians invited the descendants of the missionary to come and receive their humble apologies for the sins of their ancestors. In turn, the family offered their forgiveness in a moving ceremony that was covered by CNN.

Since then, many villages have experienced the healing of their land as the believers inquired of the Lord and repented of absolutely *everything* God showed them. They took whatever time was needed to seek God and made certain that they left no sin unconfessed and no reconciliation incomplete. Not only have they experienced healing in relationships, they are also witnessing the restoration of the coral reef and the return of an abundance of fish.

In the village of Nuku, a toxic stream that had been poisoned for 40 years was suddenly purified as a result of identificational repentance for generations of sins. Whereas once people developed brain lesions from the water, the people are now able to freely drink from the stream. What is even more amazing is that the stream is still polluted above and below the village, but clear and healed as it flows through the community!<sup>5</sup>

- In the Canadian Arctic, a very moving reconciliation ceremony was held between original inhabitants of the land and those who came afterwards to settle the area. As they repented and rededicated a particular plot of land, they were overwhelmed with God's immediate response. Although caribou (a mainstay of life) had been scarce in the area for nearly four years, suddenly 15,000 caribou showed up two days later. The caribou "spontaneously" gathered on the very spot where the land had been rededicated and restored to God.<sup>6</sup>
- The mountain village of Almolonga, Guatemala, has been in a state of community-wide transformation for years after desperate people sought God and pleaded for His healing of their land. Once known for idolatry, drunkenness, crime, and poverty, it is now estimated that more than 85 percent of the residents are followers of Jesus Christ. The jails have closed, churches have replaced bars, and the people are experiencing a healing of the land through shortened growing cycles and crops of vegetables that are of biblical proportions. I had the chance to walk the streets of Almolonga and talk with the people. They did not hesitate to stop and pray with us and declare God's glory. They made certain that we understood that to experience this remarkable transformation, "You must humble yourselves and pray. There is no other way!"<sup>7</sup>

### **Believing God for My Own Community**

Why did our prayer group pray under sugar maple trees? We were women of different backgrounds joined together by a willingness to pray on behalf of our land. We researched the history of our community and learned that the town was originally settled by believers who wanted to live in a community that reflected their Christian values. But through a variety of situations that represented a threatening and intimidating spiritual environment, the first established church was moved to another community. The first believers essentially "abdicated" their places of standing on behalf of the land. After that church moved, the community was void of another church of like faith for the next 100 years!

Upon discovering this, we researched the place where we believed the original church was established. As best we understood through prayer and research, we went to the piece of land that is now a park. We stood beneath sugar maple trees (as the early believers did according to historical documents) and rededicated the land back to the Lord. We thanked the Lord for the faith and vision of the original believers, but then asked forgiveness for how they folded under the pressures of spiritual intimidation. We asked God to redeem and restore the community to the original vision of a city that reflects biblical values. We asked Him for the courage to stand on behalf of the land, that we might fulfill His intended purposes for the community.

### **Hallelujah to God!**

On one of our prayer walks, some of our group felt led to enter the temple of a cult organization that has its international headquarters in our community. Several people who are members of the cult had flown in from around the world to be at the temple that day to meditate. While our group was quietly praying in the temple and asking God to redeem the people and restore that specific land, the cell phone of one of our members began to ring. Normally she is so careful to silence her phone, but this time she was horrified to hear her phone breaking the silence of the temple with her ring tone set to the "Hallelujah Chorus"! While fumbling for the phone for a very long time, she found herself repenting to the Lord for being so careless. But suddenly she heard the Lord's words of comfort to her: "*I did that*. This is the first time there has been praise and worship offered to *Me* in this place!" We later laughed and rejoiced at God's hand of favor and encouragement.

With a humble heart, I have learned to walk in confidence in my community by offering prayers of repentance and worship to the Lord Jesus Christ. I do not know what healing of the land will look like in my city, but we know it will be clear evidence of God's manifest presence. I believe God will respond as He has promised!

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<sup>1</sup> *Rededicating the Earth to God*, by G. J. Wiese. Unpublished doctoral dissertation.

<sup>2</sup> Daniel's identificational repentance delivered the Jews from the demonic principalities of Persia and Greece (Daniel 9:4-6, 11). Nehemiah's repentance led to receiving favor from the king and permission to rebuild the walls of Jerusalem (Nehemiah 1:5-9).

<sup>3</sup> *An Unconventional War*, a documentary on Uganda produced by The Sentinel Group, Seattle, WA ([www.sentinelgroup.org](http://www.sentinelgroup.org)).

<sup>4</sup> These stories are documented in a variety of videos produced by The Sentinel group.

<sup>5</sup> *Let the Sea Resound*, a documentary on the transformation of Fiji, produced by The Sentinel Group.

<sup>6</sup> Account taken from report by Roger Armbruster on his ministry website ([www.canadaawakening.com](http://www.canadaawakening.com)).

<sup>7</sup> From firsthand accounts during personal trip to Almolonga, Guatemala in January 2004. Also documented in *Transformation I*, produced by The Sentinel Group.

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