

Extra resources

Rees Howells - Lyfe Story

Born: October 10 1879 in Brynamman, Carmarthenshire, Wales

Died: February 12 1950 in Wales

Rees Howells seemed destined for a typical life in a small mining town in Wales. He was the sixth child of eleven, and at the age of twelve, he left school to follow in his father's footsteps as a miner. However, even the remote town of Brynamman began to change when Wales experienced a revival in 1904 and 1905.

Along with many others, Rees was caught up in this powerful move of God. He began to sense that God was calling him to leave the mines. In what was to become a hallmark of Rees Howells life, he declared to God, "I believe you are able to keep me better than that mining company." He began to realize the importance of intercession for sustaining the new converts that resulted from the revival. Early in his journey of faith, he understood the significant impact, both personal and social, of a prayer-filled life.

Rees Howells married in 1910, and soon after he and his wife felt called to be missionaries to South Africa. This was a deeply challenging vocation for them as, at that time, this would mean having to leave their newly-born son in Wales. Despite the pain this caused, they decided to leave for South Africa. There, they soon began to experience the same sense of God's presence as during the Welsh revival. The Howells travelled 11,000 miles throughout South Africa, seeing many thousands making decisions to follow Christ.

It seemed that the next logical step would be to establish a global 'revival' ministry. However, it became clear that God was asking them to follow a different path. They were to return to Wales and establish a bible college. This seemed an impossible task, as all they had was two shillings. Following in the footsteps of George Muller, they prayed that God would provide. After many instances of miraculous provision, they were able to purchase a number of properties and establish a thriving Bible college. A record of accounts from 1939 shows that the college's income, mostly resulting from gifts, matched its expenses down to the last penny.

Despite seeing so much happen in South Africa with those that did not know Christ, Rees began to feel called to a more 'cloistered' life as an intercessor. With a rise in faith resulting from seeing his prayers for provision for the Bible college answered, he began to lead the college in a lifestyle of prayer on behalf of events, people and nations throughout the world. Rees Howells developed eight principles of intercession that continue to have a wide influence on the church. For him, intercession was not an optional isolated activity, but rather the result of following the crucified Christ. He said, "As the crucifixion of the self proceeds, intercession begins." He joins a long list of contemplatives, beginning with the desert fathers, who saw their chosen life not as a removal from the world, but instead a way of engaging with God on behalf of the world, for the world.

Further resources

Norman Grubb, Rees Howells: Intercessor (Fort Washington, PA: CLC Publications, 2001)