

Passing a Prayer Torch from Church to Church

Revival. Renewal. Transformation. Holiness.

These words express the vision and goal for the churches in the Mid-Atlantic District of The Christian and Missionary Alliance. But there is a sense these things aren't happening. Programs aren't doing it. New initiatives have stirred some interest, but they quickly fizzle. Hard work by the pastors and church leaders doesn't seem to be working, according to Randall Corbin, district superintendent.

He identified the problem this way: "We have a desperate need for the manifest, tangible presence of God in our churches and among our people that will take us to holiness and a drive to proclaim the gospel here, there, and everywhere."

As he wondered how this could happen, he saw a news article in a 2012 issue of Prayer Connect about a prayer torch taken from church to church in a particular community.

Corbin says this birthed an idea for a 28-week, district-wide prayer effort using a prayer torch that would travel from church to church throughout the Mid-Atlantic region (Maryland, Delaware, Virginia, and Washington, D.C.). As the vision was rolled out, pastors and church leaders began to share the excitement of hosting the prayer torch in their churches for a week of concentrated Kingdom prayer.

The theme Scripture (Isa. 60:1-5) sparked great enthusiasm and hope—quoted here in part: "Arise, shine, for your light has come, and the glory of the Lord rises upon you. See, darkness

covers the earth and thick darkness is over the peoples, but the Lord rises upon you . . . Nations will come to your light.”

In a short time various churches signed up to cover all 28 weeks of prayer. But additional churches wanted to participate, so a second prayer torch had to be developed for a second track of prayer.

The prayer torch was commissioned during the closing service of the annual district conference of pastors and lay leaders (October 2013). Delegates gathered around the lit torch, crying out to God that this Kingdom-prayer focus would stir the hearts of the people in the district to revival, renewal, transformation, and holiness. There was a growing sense that “Aslan is on the move. The winter is thawing. Spring is coming” (a reference to C.S. Lewis’s *Chronicles of Narnia*).

In Corbin’s role as district superintendent, he took the prayer torch to the first church and commissioned it in a service, anticipating what God was going to do in their midst as they focused on Kingdom prayer. At the close of the week, that church’s pastor carried the prayer torch to the next church and commissioned it, sharing what God had done. “Wow!” the pastor exclaimed. “God really blessed us this week as we sought His face. . . . It was amazing to see God’s people confessing their sins one to another and being open about their struggles.” In the congregation’s brokenness, they tangibly felt God’s presence, he said.

At the close of the 28 weeks, the prayer torch will be carried back to a gathering of pastors for a Solemn Assembly of prayer and testimonies.

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