

PRAYERCONNECT

Connecting to the Heart of Christ through Prayer



THE CRITICAL ROLE
OF PRAYER IN MISSIONS

ASK FOR THE NATIONS

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Need a Speaker for Your Prayer Conference or Event?

There are a number of gifted speakers associated with *Prayer Connect*. Jonathan Graf regularly ministers in churches of varying sizes. Carol Madison is also available to minister in the area of prayer for revival and community transformation. Our parent organizations, Harvest Prayer Ministries and the Church Prayer Leaders Network, have many speakers associated with their ministries. You can find their contact information at the respective emails or websites.

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The mission of **PRAYERCONNECT** is

1. To encourage and equip believers toward a deeper walk with Jesus Christ through prayer—our experiential connection to God.
2. To resource prayer leaders and pastors with tools to help them motivate, disciple, and mobilize believers in churches to be a part of an army that seeks to pray the purposes of God for churches, communities, and the nations.
3. To be a unifying force between prayer ministries, community transformation groups, and churches.

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Previously in Prayer Connect

Have you prayed for revival for years and wondered if God will ever answer your cries? *Hope Undaunted* takes a look at renewing your vision for revival.

You will be encouraged to pray with hope by remembering Scripture and history. You will also be reminded of ancient patterns of revival in God's Word that are still true today. Order this issue and other back issues at prayershop.org.



PUBLISHER'S NOTE



Why Does Unity Matter?

In late August I participated in a prayer conference that was nothing short of amazing—a conference that would not have happened perhaps even a decade ago. The Praying Church Conference was sponsored by Doug Small and Alive Ministries and co-sponsored by the Church of God (Cleveland). It took place at the Church at Liberty Square (COG) in Cartersville, GA, with more than 500 people attending.



What was so amazing about the event was the large number of participants from two vastly different denominations—Church of God and Southern Baptist. Both denominations were well represented in attendance and in the lineup of speakers.

In one of the evening events, Small interviewed a Southern Baptist pastor who had recently experienced a significant move of God in his church. It was both powerful and fascinating to watch these two leaders. Instead of focusing on their traditionally different views on what marks a move of God, they highlighted and praised God for what He was doing among the other group.

Later Small spoke about how believers can be in unity with each other. He commented that there is a core theology we all agree about—especially related to who Christ is, what He has done for us, and what our mission should be (to reach lost people). But we all come from different tribes (in the same way the 12 tribes of Israel were different) with our own idiosyncrasies and emphases. The problem has been that we too often make those idiosyncrasies and emphases our core theology. When that happens, believers are not likely to fellowship together.

In one of the few recorded prayers we have of Jesus, He prayed specifically for unity of His future followers, “that all of them may be one, Father” (John 17:21). Why did He want His Church to be unified? “Then the world will know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me” (v. 23). First Timothy 2:1–4 indicates God's desire is for all men to be saved. That is the heart of Jesus. And, according to Scripture, that happens best when His people are in unity—working, fellowshiping, and praying *together*.

Looking historically at revival and spiritual awakening in the United States, a key element that launched those moves of God was unity. Churches started praying together, seeking God for their communities and nation. In the prayer meeting revival of the late 1850s, believers from many different churches gathered in noontime prayer meetings across cities. They did not care what “tribes” were represented and they were not concerned about mingling with each other. They simply had a common goal and vision in their prayers.

We need to tear down those walls that divide the denominational (and non-denominational) tribes—for the sake of the gospel. Pastors, we need to be less concerned about what intermingling might do to our theological purity and more concerned with what unity will do to rescue lost souls.

A simple starting point is to go to nationalprayeraccord.com and see how you can be involved in this unified prayer rhythm. Then look for ways to pray with pastors and believers from other tribes.

—Jonathan Graf

Announcing **NEW** **PRAYERCONNECT** Schedule

A Note to Our Readers of **PRAYERCONNECT**:

We need to inform you of a slight change to our printing schedule over the next eight months. Due to a significant cash flow situation with our parent ministry, Harvest Prayer Ministries, and a slower than anticipated growth to subscriptions for *Prayer Connect*, we need to save some expenses. Therefore, we are planning to print three issues instead of four over the next eight months. This will save us \$13,000 in cash. Those of you with annual subscriptions will still receive six issues for a year's subscription. We will simply extend the subscriptions by an issue for those who will be affected.

Please understand, we are not in danger of folding the magazine. But like many non-profit ministries that depend on donations, this past summer was brutal with a considerable drop in giving. We need to catch our financial breath and let giving catch up.

Our New Schedule:

Issue 13: Arrives mid-November

Issue 14: Will arrive early February

Issue 15: Will arrive mid-April

Issue 16: Will arrive early July

Then we will be back on schedule for bi-monthly delivery

How You Can Help Us:

1. **Pray.** Notice a new prayer request feature in the Tips & Tools section. Please use this and pray regularly for this ministry. It is no coincidence that the theme of the next issue (now to come in early February) is "Desperate Prayer." We believe Satan always tries to thwart what God is doing, but we are upping the level of prayer for this publication. It is desperation time, and desperate people pray!
2. **Tell a Friend.** We need more subscribers. Word of mouth is the best kind of promotion. Please tell your praying friends about *Prayer Connect*. Perhaps consider buying a gift subscription for your pastor or another praying friend.
3. **Give.** While we are a subscription-based magazine that collects income from subscriptions, we are still a non-profit ministry. The salaries of a number of the staff of *Prayer Connect* are not put into the expense covered by the subscription fees. We raise support for these positions. Any gift to Harvest Prayer Ministries helps to fund the ministry of *Prayer Connect*. Go to prayershop.org and click on "Support Harvest Prayer Ministries" to give online; or mail a check to HPM, P.O. Box 10667, Terre Haute, IN 47801. A gift of any amount helps.

Rest assured we will continue to publish *Prayer Connect*. This is not a sign that we are considering pulling the plug on this needed ministry. Quite the contrary—*Prayer Connect* is needed now more than ever. We will continue to produce *Prayer Connect* and work to expand its ministry of encouraging and discipling individual believers and churches in prayer.



New Ministry Partnership Promotes Transformation

Ministry leaders believe the new partnership between The Sentinel Group and Intercessors for America (IFA) was born in God's providence and is, in a practical way, fulfilling the unique purpose each organization brings to its mission.

Now in its 40th year of ministry, IFA has maintained a twin focus of encouraging and modeling uninterrupted prayer for our nation, along with seeking to mobilize increased numbers of individuals, local churches, and prayer groups to multiply and maintain intercession across the U.S. and throughout the Body of Christ. Through its monthly prayer letter and weekly e-alerts, it consistently encourages strong intercessory prayer for God's mercy on a forgetful and sinful nation, and for the establishment of righteous government—

through the raising up of morally principled local and national leaders.

Meanwhile, since the late 1990s, The Sentinel Group has investigated several hundred transformed communities, ranging from tribal villages to urban metropolises, telling each story. Researchers have spent considerable time analyzing these transformational breakthroughs in an effort to identify underlying patterns and principles. Now, after more than a decade of study, The Sentinel Group, along with IFA, is sharing these findings with communities that long to experience transformation firsthand. The joint effort



teaches and trains leaders to multiply both knowledge and prayer.

Leaders of both groups believe a great harvest is coming. The international stories of transformation, as displayed in the *Transformation* videos produced by The Sentinel Group, are serving as catalysts to awaken the Church. In less than a year a vast network of intercessors, prayer leaders, and ministries have joined hands and hearts with the IFA-Sentinel partnership. The result? David Kubal, president/CEO of IFA, says, "We are in a position to marry the principles of transforming revival with the prayers of the saints across our nation. Our hope and expectation is that God will show up."

For more information, go to transformingamericathroughprayer.com.

God Stirs Again in Wales

Wales is known for a revival in 1904 that resulted in perhaps 100,000 converts to faith in Jesus Christ. But stirrings of God during recent months at Victory Church in Cwmbran, South Wales, have given hope that another move of God is perhaps coming to that nation. Although leaders of the church are reticent to call what is happening today a "revival," they recognize there is a "distinct upturn in the spiritual temperature."

Victory Church was started three years ago by Pastor Richard Taylor, who first encountered God while in prison. After his release from prison, he gave his life to Christ and was freed from his drug habit. Today he leads Victory Church and other ministries that provide support for addicts, former convicts, and the socially disadvantaged. The church continues to

grow and now meets on several campuses.

In April 2013, Taylor was preaching from the Book of Esther, and invited congregation members to bring their needs to the Lord. He began praying for an older man who had been disabled in a car accident. Unable to walk and confined to a wheelchair, the man began moving his legs, then stood—and finally lifted his wheelchair above his head to celebrate his healing. Faith was ignited in people as they offered more prayer for healing. Some people began to receive spontaneous healings, including people who were set free from drug and alcohol addictions.

Leaders consulted with each other and decided to continue the meetings. The presence of God continued to linger in the church. In the coming months, more than 900 people were converted to Christ.

People began coming from around

the region, and even other countries. A group of pastors from Korea had come to Wales prior to the stirrings, believing they were to pray for another outpouring of God's Spirit. They wanted to acknowledge that the spiritual revival in their own nation was the result of a Welsh missionary who came to Korea and was martyred as he brought the gospel message. The Koreans were convinced they were to keep praying for revival in Wales until it arrived.

Prior to this move of God, a pastor in the United States had encouraged Taylor to pursue more of the presence of God. In the months to follow, Taylor personally prayed over each member of the church, from the youngest to the oldest, asking for more of God in their lives. More of this story can be found at daibach-welldigger.blogspot.co.uk.



Guatemala President Declares Christ as Lord

Otto Perez Molina, a retired military officer who has been president of Guatemala since January 14, 2012, made a bold public statement of his faith at Guatemala's first national prayer breakfast in August.

"Today we name Christ as Lord of Guatemala and we declare in His name that each of our generations will be generations that will live in a prosperous Guatemala," said Molina, according to the Hispanic news outlet *acontercercristiano.net*. Molina joins other political leaders (presidents of Kenya and Uganda, mayors of cities in Mexico) in declaring their nations and cities to be under the Lordship of Jesus Christ.

The prayer breakfast was modeled after the U.S. National Prayer Breakfast (observed since 1953), and attended by

Congressmen Robert Aderholt (R-AL) and Randy Hultgren (R-IL). Aderholt commended the group for their efforts to begin an annual observance.

Guatemala has been plagued with corruption in government, civil war, and one of the highest violent crime rates in Central America. President Molina acknowledged the violence and poverty as difficult issues facing Guatemala. "In the morning it's hard to see the news of how many Guatemalans died the day before because of violence," said Molina. "In those moments what gives me strength is knowing that I can do everything through Christ who strengthens me."

Protestantism is growing rapidly in Guatemala, with this nation now having



the highest percentage of evangelicals of any Latin American country. The Sentinel Group featured the story of Almolonga, Guatemala, in one of its *Transformation* videos. This mountainous village of 20,000 people has experienced radical transformation, with estimates of more than 80 percent of its residents practicing evangelical Christianity.

Egyptian Children Pray to Become Change Makers

In a country rocked by upheaval and division, about 1,400 Egyptian children ages 8 to 14, gathered in July to worship and ask God to change them to be the salt and light for Jesus in their communities.

According to a story by Lindsay Shaw for SAT-7, that network aired the first-ever One Thing Kids Festival, which took place at the desert oasis of Wadi El Natroun.

"Our vision is to have this generation praying and worshipping God, and to be filled with the Holy Spirit to be able to change the world," said festival organizers from the Kasr El Doubara Evangelical Church (KDEC) and the children's prayer ministry of the Synod of the Nile of the Presbyterian Church.

Most of the sessions were broadcast live on SAT-7's KIDS and ARABIC channels, as well as on the network's KIDS YouTube Live page. This was the latest

on-location broadcast from SAT-7, which previously has included prayer by tens of thousands at Cairo's Cave Church.

SAT-7 said the Wadi El Natroun area has long been an historic center for Christian prayer by monks and pilgrims. But at One Thing Kids, young children took over that mantle. Many of the children played a prominent role. Some were part of the worship choir, and others helped to lead prayer times for themselves and their nation.

Farid Samir, SAT-7's One Thing Kids Conference Egypt director, said in the SAT-7 story: "In a conference like this we saw kids worshipping and praying



from their pure hearts, hearing God's voice and sharing it. Some kids told their testimonies of special encounters with the Lord."

Samir concluded, "We believe God is going to change things in Egypt because of the faithful intercession of kids, and there will be reconciliation, [and] salt and light, especially at

the communities the kids will go back to."

SAT-7 airs five channels in Arabic, Farsi, and Turkish languages to a known audience of more than 15 million viewers. For more information about SAT-7, go to sat7usa.org/abor-sat-7.

JEREMY RENALDS is senior correspondent for the ASSIST News Service (assistnews.net).



God Answers Prayers for Missionaries' Kidnapped Son

The son of missionaries in Honduras was kidnapped at gunpoint, and ransom demands were made for his release. Within minutes, thousands were alerted through social media, and they began to pray.

Missionaries Allen and Trish Sowers have lived in Honduras since 2001, along with their six children, ranging from 12 to 23 years old. On August 12, as Trish and her youngest son Ben traveled down a road in Gracias, Honduras, they were accosted by two young men with handguns.

Both mom and son were abducted and taken to a remote area, but Trish was released. Then the kidnappers began to make ransom demands for Ben's release.

"We negotiated for over 28 hours and varying amounts were demanded," says Steve Beam, president of The Foundation, the interdenominational mission-sending agency supporting the Sowers family.

But the kidnapper had no way of knowing an army of God's prayer warriors had been released through the Internet. "Through social media, within



12 hours there were over 100,000 people praying," Beam notes. "After 20 hours there were over a quarter million praying. At the end, 300,000 people had logged in to our website and were praying around the globe."

The negotiation—or lack of negotiation—was tense, because Beam flatly refused to pay a ransom. "We kept telling them we're a mission organization, we don't have any money, and we can't pay a ransom," he says. "As an agency, we can never negotiate or pay a ransom."

"They kept lowering the price and

finally came to the understanding we really are a mission organization," Beam notes.

In response to prayer, God moved. "These two young men had a change of heart and finally released Ben and it was over," he reports.

"They don't often end this way," Beam adds. "It was just an incredible move of God. We rejoice that Ben is back with his parents."

On August 13, Ben was released unharmed—though dizzy, confused, and slightly bruised from his travel through the brush—and taken to a local hospital for observation, according to Beam. "God can use social media to activate His people around the globe to pray within a matter of minutes. I believe with all my heart that prayer was the important ingredient. To God be the glory absolutely!"

MARK ELLIS is a senior correspondent for ASSIST News Service (assistnews.net).

Freedom's Cry Tour

A grassroots movement of 30 black college students representing Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) spent the summer touring 12 major cities and visiting 65 HBCUs to pray for revival and spiritual awakening in the black community. The tour was also designated as "a cry for God to send forth laborers into the heart of the inner cities of America and to the ends of the earth, to raise up an awakening of a 24/7 prayer and missions movement."

Some of the cities included Washington, D.C., Atlanta, New Orleans, Miami, Dallas, and Los Angeles. The tour will lead up to the Freedom's Cry Stadium

Prayer in Atlanta on November 2. They are believing God for 15,000 HBCU students and black youth to gather to pray and fast for the black community.

Organizers say, "We will cry out between the porch and the altar, for the spiritual deliverance of African Americans. We will believe God for revival and a massive Great Awakening that will sweep across the youth of this nation!"

At each stop of the tour, the students have prayed for the HBCUs, the ending of abortion, the sanctity of marriage, and a prayer and missions movement in the black community. To follow the completion of the freedom tour, go to myfreedomcry.com.

Prayer Calendar

Children in Prayer
Global Consultation
November 15–18, 2013
4to14window.com

United Nations Prayer Initiative
November 18–20, 2013
globalprn.com

Day of Prayer for the
Persecuted Church
Sunday, November 3
onewiththem.com

Seek God for the City
March 5 – April 13, 2014
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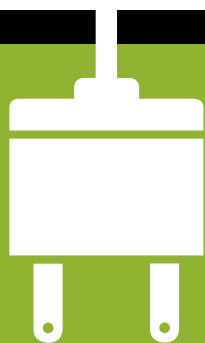
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New Denominational President Starts Term in Prayer

Dr. John Stumbo, newly elected president of the Christian & Missionary Alliance, began his term in a very purposeful way by issuing a call to prayer, inviting Alliance people to join him in seeking God for direction and vision.



"I am inviting you to pray with me," said Stumbo in his initial call to prayer. "Immediately upon election, I knew that I must call the Alliance family together for prayer. This call is an intentional statement of my dependence upon God and is a meaningful way of drawing the Alliance family together."

The August 30–31 event featured people coming to the denominational headquarters in Colorado Springs, CO, to pray. In addition, Friday night and Saturday prayer times were video streamed into more than 300 locations around the world. The video stream featured live chat, and multiple times

through the event Stumbo asked people to respond with how God was speaking to them. Many of these statements from people around the world were shared with the broader audience.

While about 100 people were at the live event (representing 22 states), best estimates from the sites were that more than 4,000 participated at remote sites. More than 700 comments came via live chat from these sites.

While there are no immediate plans for another live-streamed prayer event, comments indicate a desire for this prayer gathering to happen on a regular basis. Pastor Denes House of Trinity Alliance Church in Rochester, NY (a live-stream site), said, "I'd love to see the Alliance live stream a prayer meeting every week from a different Alliance church somewhere in the world. We must not let this first step be the last."

Mexico Mayors Declare Jesus as Lord

Northern Mexico continues to struggle with crime, violence, and kidnappings, which is why the mayor of Monterrey, Mexico, is giving the city over to God: "I, Alicia Margarita Arellanes Cervantes, give Monterrey, Nuevo León, to our Lord Jesus Christ, so that his kingdom of peace and blessing may be established. I open the doors of this municipality to God as the ultimate authority. Lord Jesus Christ, welcome to Monterrey, the house that we have built. This is your home, Lord Jesus, Lord of Monterrey."

Other Mexican mayors are also dedicating their cities to God. According to

the *New York Times*, "It turns out that the mayors of Guadalupe and Juarez, two towns close to Monterrey, and of Ensenada, in Baja California, [have] already done the same."

Mayor Arellanes' speech has caused a stir among many in Mexico, with positive and negative responses from citizens, legislators, and the media. Leaders at BridgeBuilders (which has coordinated prayer for Mexico) see this as a powerful answer to the intercession of thousands in Mexico and the U.S., who have united in prayer to invite God's transforming presence to the nations and the border. For more information, go to bridgebuilders.net.

THE CRITICAL ROLE OF PRAYER IN MISSIONS

ASK FOR THE NATIONS

I HAVE NEVER BEEN TO INDIA—and I honestly don't anticipate traveling there anytime soon. But for nearly four years, I have prayed for India during some late-night prayer sessions with three friends.

We pray especially for this nation because one member of our group was born in India as an “untouchable”—a Dalit—considered the lowest in a degrading caste system. But God miraculously intervened in Madan Valvi's life and redeemed him out of a future destined for humiliation and poverty.

When Madan was a young boy and very ill, his mother walked and carried him all night to seek medical treatment. A Swedish missionary named Svea Mellin welcomed them into her mission, provided treatment, and eventually cared for Madan in a boarding school. She taught him the Bible and prayed for him to become a man of God. Madan promised he would always serve the Lord.

KEEPING A PROMISE

Eventually Madan, his wife, and family came to live in the United States, enabling them to continue their educations. But his desire has always been to return to India to preach the gospel among the Dalits. He wants them to know the love of Christ. He wants to “touch the untouchables,” pray over them, and invite them into a relationship with Jesus.

As Madan, Traci, Mike, and I pray together on those late weekend nights, my heart is more and more drawn to the spiritual needs of these precious people. I long for them to know Christ. My entire church also prays on a regular basis, as we have adopted India as one of our most intentional mission fields.

After years of fervent prayer, God has thrown the doors wide open for Madan to return to India. He now travels there many times a year, training leaders and preaching to

tens of thousands of Dalits at a time in crusades hosted by the local pastors.

I have not heard Madan preach the gospel in his native language. But I have heard him pray. I have listened as he agonizes for his people, laboring in prayer for their souls. I have watched Madan on his knees before his heavenly Father, pleading for the salvation of those he dearly loves. In this glorious way, I have been allowed to join Madan in reaching a nation I may never visit myself.

ASK FOR THE NATIONS

This issue emphasizes not only the critical role of prayer but also the *power* of prayer in missions. As Dave Butts writes in his article, we need to “get vertical” in seeking God before we can hope for a horizontal spread of the gospel through missions. Steve Hawthorne makes the important distinction of going beyond praying *for* missionaries. Truly effective prayer with “super-synergy” means we are a part of their mission by praying *with* them. Dan Crawford reminds us that prayer for missions is the “forgotten command” of Jesus. Every fresh burst of missions energy has always been fueled by prayer.

Remember Svea, the missionary who took Madan in and prayed so faithfully for him? Those two lost track of each other for some 30 years. Svea retired and returned to Sweden, not certain that her life on the mission field had been all that effective. But only weeks before Svea passed away at 93 years of age, God graciously reunited her with Madan when he found her and traveled to Sweden to personally thank her.

God blessed Svea with the honor of learning how her humble prayers for Madan and India are right now touching that nation with the love of Christ.

CAROL MADISON is editor of *Prayer Connect*.



SUPER-



PRAYING WITH MISSIONARIES INSTEAD OF FOR THEM

AS A CHILD I OFTEN HEARD church folks “pray for missionaries.” Missionaries were usually described as struggling in some way, somehow in desperate need. Our prayers, it was often said, were the “lifeline” of the missionaries.

Despite my imagination of missionaries dangling by a fraying rope over crocodile-infested rivers, the “lifeline” prayers intoned in routine fashion seemed particularly lifeless to me. The generic prayers for protection and supply seemed a dreary but necessary duty. Little wonder I grew up with a profound respect for missionaries but no real interest in praying for them.

My attitude toward praying for missions changed dramatically in just one morning when some friends invited me to a Saturday morning prayer gathering. I understood there

BY STEVE HAWTHORNE

SYNERGY

was going to be a prayer time for Asia—and I had recently become a bit interested in that part of the world. I had nothing better to do, so I went, equipped with a convenient excuse for needing to leave early, should the gathering prove to be a tedious bore.

I was surprised. The middle-aged leader with a British accent introduced us to some of his colleagues who were

working at that moment in Asia. He described their personalities with stories about what God had been doing in their midst—replete with hints about their hopes and fears. The morning seemed to fly by as he mixed references to biblical truths with bursts of prayer, and with numerous half-finished stories of what missionaries were struggling to accomplish.

He intentionally left the stories half-finished by telling us what was going on up to the present moment. He guided us to pray as if our prayers were the continuation of the real-time stories unfolding—something like books that have a choose-your-own-ending format. We also did a good deal of anticipatory praise for what God was about to do.

We found that instead of merely

FIVE DANGEROUS PRAYERS WITH MISSIONARIES

BY STEVANIE WILKOS

We send missionaries to dangerous places and often pray prayers based on our understanding that they are vulnerable human beings. If they are to stay the course, it will be because God's people are praying for their protection and provision.

Rather than regarding missionaries as being "*in danger*," I like to think of those of us who pray as being "*dangerous*." Scripture tells us that the gates of hell will not prevail against the Church. We are to storm the gates to Satan's strongholds and open the doors to free the prisoners trapped inside. We should be dangerous people.

What kinds of prayers can you pray with missionaries so that they truly see victory in the assault against the gates of hell?

1. Pray we will be people of prayer. In the battle against the rulers, authorities, and powers of this dark world and the spiritual forces of evil, we are instructed to put on our protective armor and take up the sword of the Spirit, the Word of God. Armed for battle and using our sword, we are told to "pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests" (Eph. 6:18). Prayer is not something we can afford to leave to others on our behalf. It is, more than any of our well-thought-out mission strategies, the way we become effective in battle.

2. Pray we will listen intently and follow the promptings of the Holy Spirit. Jesus told us the Holy Spirit will convict the world of guilt in regard to sin and righteousness. We long to see people turn from sin and be saved, but the conviction required does not come from us; it is a work of the Holy Spirit. Following the Holy Spirit will

lead to victories in the spiritual battle for souls we will not win in any other way.

3. Pray we will see the work of God in our daily settings, and join Him in that work. My life as a missionary seems to be filled with interruptions and challenges not associated with the good works I have planned for my days. Jesus said He could do nothing by Himself, but only what He saw His Father doing (John 5:19). We can transform seeming defeat into victory when we see our challenges and problems as opportunities to give God glory.

4. Pray we will love and move in unity with other believers, even those different from us. Jesus commanded us to love one another (John 13:34). And He prayed that we would be unified (John 17:20–23). Both love and unity have missionary purpose. In a world filled with division, think of the danger a loving, multiethnic, unified, gospel-centered group of believers poses to the kingdom of darkness.

5. Pray that in difficult surroundings we will give praise to God. Wherever God dwells, He is surrounded by praise. It is a strong weapon against the enemy who often flees an atmosphere of praise.

Jesus was a man of prayer. He obeyed the promptings of the Spirit, and did the things He saw His Father doing. He lived to the praise of God, prayed for our unity, and loved us enough to die for us. Often *in danger*, He was incredibly *dangerous* to Satan and his followers. As we follow His example, we are dangerous as well.

STEVANIE WILKOS and her husband Charlie are missionaries in Guinea, West Africa, serving on staff with Pioneer Bible Translators.

praying *for* missionaries, we were praying *with* missionaries. Instead of merely praying about the life circumstances of the workers, we were praying that the work itself would be accomplished. We were praying for the mission itself, not just the missionaries. By praying the very prayers that the missionaries themselves were probably praying, we gained a tangible sense of expectancy. We were playing a part in what the living God was enacting on the other side of the planet.

And that's why praying with missionaries can be so important. By praying *with* missionaries, you begin to realize that you are co-working with them. And beyond that, those who pray with missionaries find themselves co-working with the living God.

SUPER-SYNERGY

Paul urged some friends in Corinth to pray about a very difficult mission situation. He had faced opposition so horrific that he wasn't sure he would survive. He had every right to ask that Christians pray *for* him to survive the dark circumstances. But instead, he urged them to pray *with* him: "On him [God] we have set our hope that he will continue to deliver us, as you help us by your prayers. Then many will give thanks on our behalf for the gracious favor granted us in answer to the prayers of many" (2 Cor. 1:10–11, brackets added).

In the phrase, *as you help us by your prayers*, Paul used a rare and potent Greek word to describe his praying friends as co-workers with him. The word is *synupourgeō*. It's very close to an English word we use today that comes directly from Greek: *synergy*. It describes the dynamic of working together. The word *synergy* comes from two Greek parts: *ergeō*, "to work," and *syn*, "with." Paul embellished this word in 2 Corinthians 1:11 by adding a third piece to the word: *hupo* meaning "under" (*synupo-urgeo*). This extra bit adds a huge

dimension of serious, supportive collaboration.

Paul was assuring his friends in Corinth that while they were praying, they were accomplishing load-bearing effectual labor, just as if they were right beside him carrying the weight. The word Paul chose was effectively describing what we might call "super-synergy."

By praying with Paul, they were collaborating with him in a profound and substantial way.

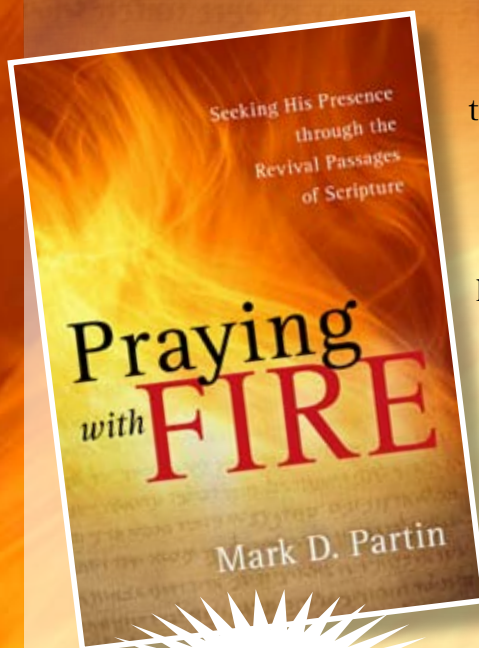
EXPECTED SURPRISE: GOD MOVES IN MIGHTY GRACE

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First, there would be a move of God's own favor and power "granted" to Paul's missionary team. It would be a spiritual gift (the Greek word *charisma*) that would be recognized as the operative power of God.

What shall we pray when praying with missionaries? We are accustomed to focusing on prayer points and specific requests. We may pray for specific actions and ask with precise timing in mind. This is wise and right. We should be as specific as we can in our praying. But ultimately God gives us better than we ask. We almost always find that God answers our prayers differently and better than we prayed. How does He always outdo our best praying?

God's mighty acts of grace (Greek, *charis*) among the nations can often be described as a specific gift (Greek, *charisma*) of His operative power working through the people He sends. When we do not know what to pray—and even when we know what we need—our best prayer may be for God Himself to move by His gifting, loving, powerful grace.

PURPOSE: GOD RECEIVES GLORY IN THANKSGIVING

The second outcome of many people collaborating in prayer with Paul is that there would be a great deal of thanksgiving. Why is this significant? God's ultimate purpose in His global mission is to be loved, honored, and glorified in every place and people. If that's the final goal, then it should be no surprise that God orchestrates His dealings so that He can be recognized, honored, and explicitly thanked.

The joy of giving God glory is certainly part of why He even designed His mission to be accomplished by prayer—not by a few superhero saints but by many ordinary people super-synergizing with God by their prayers. When many people pray, and when they pray many prayers, only then can there be many expressions of thanks to God. He can

be thanked to the extent that they call upon Him in prayer. Those who pray get front-row seats to view the move of God's hand. They become personally invested by their praying so that they are not merely glad to see God's work but personally grateful and gratified, as if God had been doing His deeds for them.

It may help to state what should be obvious: We are not necessary. God could use angels to do all the necessary evangelism and probably evangelize the whole world in a weekend or less. Think about it. Angels, made to be messengers, have what we would call superpowers, so they easily take on cultural particularities and travel with lightning speed. They seem to be fluent in all languages. They're not in short supply. God has myriads of them.

But I've never seen in the Bible or heard anyone report an instance of an angel presenting the gospel to a human. There are many stories of angels telling people where to go to meet with the humans God has pre-arranged to present the gospel to them. People are often evangelized by Jesus Christ Himself, appearing either in vision or dream, speaking the words of life. But I have yet to hear about angels doing evangelism.

Why is this significant? Because God has reserved the honor of evangelism for His people. We are not enlisted into God's mission because we, or our prayers, are somehow necessary. Instead, God is generous to grant us a part in His mission because those whom He loves, He desires to honor.

ALL ABOUT GOD'S GLORY

Praying with missionaries will position us to pray for the fulfillment of God's mission. As we pray, we discover our summons into a vital, collaborative role alongside missionaries and with Christ Himself. It's crucial that we pray. But the more we pray, the more we realize God Himself is acting before and beyond our prayers. He is fulfilling His ancient promise. His mission is defined by His promise

to bring forth worshipping communities of Christ-lovers amidst all peoples.

These movements will bring transforming blessing everywhere for the glory of His Son. God designed His mission to be accomplished by His Son, with many accomplices co-working with Him. This is what Paul assures his Corinthian friends as he discussed his own shaky plans in God's mission: "For no matter how many promises God has made, they are 'Yes' in Christ. And so through him the 'Amen' is spoken by us to the glory of God" (2 Cor. 1:20). The risen Christ is actually the one who fulfills God's promises, and thus God's mission, as He works amidst His people. Co-working with our Lord in prayer exalts us to the astounding honor of beholding Christ at work and glorifying Him in real time.

PRAYING OUR WAY INTO THE STORY

A friend (let's call him Dave) set out to work where Christ was still unknown in a Muslim country. I remember praying with him, just as he had asked, that he would encounter responsive people who would not only receive Christ but lead their families to follow Him. Only a few months after Dave asked for that kind of prayer, he began to run into a few people who had dreamed of a man in bright white who spoke to them with great love, urging them to turn and follow Him. They weren't seeing angels. They knew that they were meeting *Isa al-Masih* ("Jesus the Messiah" in Arabic). Very fruitful evangelism ensued.

After that, Dave began to actively look for people who recently had similar dreams. One day he got in a taxi, asking the driver to take him across town. During the drive Dave told the driver about the dream that others were having. He asked if the taxi driver knew anyone else who'd had such a dream. If so, Dave suggested, perhaps he could explain who the person in the dream was and how to follow Him.

Almost every time Dave has done this, the taxi driver has known someone who's had a similar dream. Fruitful evangelism almost always follows. And it has sometimes turned out to become a breakthrough in an entire family or neighborhood.

Perhaps most of us have heard astounding stories of dreams in the Muslim world. But after hearing this report from my friend, it's hard not to believe God is giving these dreams partly in response to my prayers. I prayed something simple. God answered in ways better than I had asked. I didn't exactly ask for dreams, but I did ask for something marvelous to come about. Now it's easy to thank God.

At the same time, I have also prayed *for* Dave and his family more than ever before. He has kids who have special needs. The family has struggled getting visas. Finances have been tight. Somehow

praying *with* them has convinced me to also be vigilant in praying *for* them in these kinds of challenges.

CONSIDER IT JOY

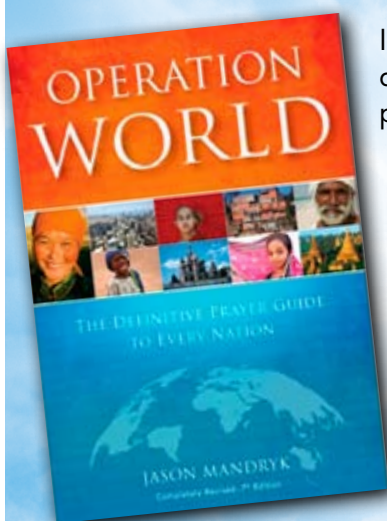
Consider it an honor to pray for great things to be fulfilled among the nations. Consider your praying with missionaries to be God's way of setting you up to be grateful in a very personal way for what He does in distant lands. Consider it joy to be engaged in the unfolding of matters of such immense significance. **PC**



STEVE HAWTHORNE is the director of WayMakers in Austin, TX (waymakers.org). He is the designer of the *Perspectives* course about global mission. For years he led research and prayer teams in Asia and the Middle East called "Joshua Project." He is the author of the annual *Seek God for the City* prayer guide and co-author of *Prayerwalking: Praying On Site with Insight*.

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GOING VERTICAL

BY DAVE BUTTS

GOD'S PRESENCE IS THE STRATEGY FOR MISSIONS

IT DOESN'T SOUND EXACTLY LIKE THE Great Commission of the New Testament (Matt. 28:16–20), but God put Israel on mission. He told them, “Go up to the land I promised on oath to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob” (Ex. 33:1). The land promised to Israel was already inhabited—and it was going to take an immense amount of effort to dislodge the current inhabitants and establish Israel’s Promised Land. Moses had the wisdom to realize that could not happen unless God Himself went with them on their mission.

In one of the more amazing conversations in Scripture, Moses and God talked about how important it was that the people of Israel have the Lord’s Presence with them if they were to accomplish their purpose. As you read this passage, carefully consider how Moses’ insight regarding the Lord’s Presence might impact the effectiveness of your own mission today.

continued on page 21

CHANGES

HORIZONTAL

PRAYER AND GOD'S SUPREMACY IN MISSIONS

INSIGHTS FROM JOHN PIPER

- Life is war. . . . Prayer is primarily a wartime walkie-talkie for the mission of the church as it advances against the powers of darkness and unbelief. It is not surprising that prayer malfunctions when we try to make it a domestic intercom to call upstairs for more comforts in the den. God has given us prayer as a wartime walkie-talkie so that we can call headquarters for everything we need as the kingdom of Christ advances in the world. . . . The one who gives the power gets the glory. Thus, prayer safeguards the supremacy of God in missions while linking us with endless grace for every need.
 - You can say the mission is to "bear fruit," or you can say the mission is to "set captives free." The point stays the same: Prayer is designed to extend the kingdom into fruitless enemy territory.
 - When Paul tells us to pray for peace precisely because God desires all men to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth, he is not picturing prayer as a kind of harmless domestic intercom for increasing our civilian conveniences. He is picturing it as a strategic appeal to headquarters to ask that the enemy not be allowed to draw any firepower away to decoy conflicts of flesh and blood.
 - We simply must seek for ourselves and for our people a wartime mentality. Otherwise the biblical teaching about the urgency of prayer and the vigilance of prayer and the watching in prayer and the perseverance of prayer and the danger of abandoning prayer will make no sense and find no resonance in our hearts. Until we feel the desperation of a bombing raid or the thrill of a new strategic offensive for the gospel, we will not pray in the spirit of Jesus.
 - Prayer puts God in the place of the all-sufficient Benefactor and puts us in the place of the needy beneficiaries. So when the mission of the church moves forward by prayer, the supremacy of God is manifest and the needs of the Christian troops are met.
 - The unity of these two goals—the glory of God and the joy of his people [John 14:13 and 16:24]—is preserved in the act of prayer.
 - Prayer is the turning away from ourselves to God in the confidence that he will provide the help we need. Prayer humbles *us* as needy and exalts *God* as all-sufficient.
 - I believe the proclamation of the gospel in Word and deed is *the* work of missions. Prayer is the power that wields the weapon of the Word, and the Word is the weapon by which the nations will be brought to faith and obedience. . . . The New Testament pattern is: "Take . . . the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God, praying. . . ." (Eph. 6:17–18).
 - Perhaps we should speak of prayer as God's instrument to *release* the power of the gospel, for it is clear that the Word of God is the immediate regenerating instrument of the Spirit. . . (1 Peter 1:23; James 1:18).
 - The return to prayer at the beginning of the twenty-first century is a remarkable work of God. It is full of hope for the awakening of the church and the finishing of the Great Commission. Looking back on the way God aroused and honored seasons of prayer in the past would enlarge our expectation that wonderful works of power are on the horizon.
 - The war will be won by God. He will win it through the gospel of Jesus Christ. This gospel will run and triumph through prevailing prayer—so that in everything God might be glorified through Jesus Christ.
- Excerpted from pages 65-91, *Let the Nations Be Glad!* by John Piper, published 2010 Baker Academic. Used by permission. All rights to this material are reserved. Material is not to be reproduced, scanned, copied, or distributed in any printed or electronic form without written permission from Baker Publishing Group. Scripture quotations are from English Standard Version.

Moses said to the LORD, "You have been telling me, 'Lead these people,' but you have not let me know whom you will send with me. You have said, 'I know you by name and you have found favor with me.' If you are pleased with me, teach me your ways so I may know you and continue to find favor with you. Remember that this nation is your people."

The LORD replied, "My Presence will go with you, and I will give you rest."

Then Moses said to him, "If your Presence does not go with us, do not send us up from here. How will anyone know that you are pleased with me and with your people unless you go with us? What else will distinguish me and your people from all the other people on the face of the earth?"

And the LORD said to Moses, "I will do the very thing you have asked, because I am pleased with you and I know you by name" (Ex. 33:12–17).

This man of great leadership skills, Moses, understood that the Lord's Presence was the key to the success of their mission. To put it in another way, he realized that focusing on the *vertical* accomplished what God was calling them to do *horizontally*. Moses' strategy for success was to look to God and plead for His Presence. As long as God was with them, they could not fail in the long run.

OVERWHELMED BY THE IMPOSSIBLE

It's easy to be overwhelmed by the horizontal—the size of the task before us. Israel's mission was huge! Maybe yours is too. When we focus on the horizontal—the people and the mission in front of us—we can wear out from the immensity of the task. In today's world, literally billions do not know Jesus as their Lord. Even using the word *billions* can cause us to want to curl up and watch TV instead

of giving ourselves to a calling that seems impossible.

When we think of world missions, we almost always focus on the horizontal. We show videos and pictures of people in great need, physically and spiritually. The statistics we present of those without Christ move us to compassion. The possibilities of reaching the world for Christ galvanize us to action. There is nothing inherently wrong with looking horizontally at the great needs around us. But focusing on the horizontal will not sustain and empower us to finish the task.

Like Moses and the people of Israel, what we really need is the Presence of God. Our focus must be vertical in order to be successful horizontally. The author of Hebrews commands us to "fix your thoughts on Jesus" (Heb. 3:1). That's a vertical focus! It's not a command to pay attention to what you are doing for

Jesus, but to actually look to Him. Isn't it very possible that our attention is in the wrong place?

Have you wondered how modern-day Christian leaders might have led Israel on their mission to take the land? After forming their team of key leaders, they would certainly have opened with prayer. Then they would have embarked on writing their mission/vision statement, followed by developing their one-, three-, and five-year strategies. Budget and staffing issues would also take quite a bit of the discussion time.

In the same way, for the leaders of Israel to organize a nation for conquest and then settle into new lands would take a great deal of training and strategic thinking. Even then, they probably thought it could begin happening in a matter of months. Only God knew it was going to take 40 years to get them ready for the task!

How did the Apostle Paul DO IT?

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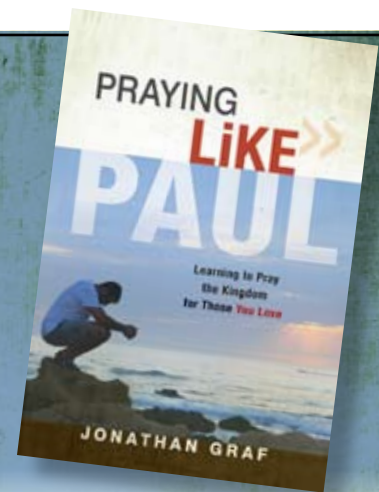
Written by the publisher of *Prayer Connect*, Jonathan Graf, *Praying Like Paul* can radically change the way you view prayer and how you pray for others.

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Please don't misunderstand. All of those elements of planning and preparation are good—and often necessary. You can find many of those issues in the rest of the Book of Exodus. But Moses correctly started with the essential and then moved to the peripheral. The one thing that distinguished Israel and the leadership of Moses was the Presence of God. Moses models this strategy: Go vertical before the Lord prior to any horizontal move you might make!

WE CAN'T DO IT ALONE

Jesus also taught us much about this, using the illustration of the vine and the branches. Jesus is the vine and His followers are the branches. We often think that our job as branches is to produce fruit (horizontal thinking). But that's not the case. The vine produces everything needed to bring about fruit on the

branch. The branch just needs to stay attached (vertical thinking). Jesus made it very clear, "No branch can bear fruit by itself; it must remain in the vine" (John 15:4). To emphasize His point, Jesus then said, "Apart from me, you can do nothing" (v. 5).

Though Moses had not heard these words of Jesus, in a very real sense, his response to God fit within this teaching. It is as though Moses said, "Lord, I want to stay attached to you, our vine. We can't do what You want us to do on our own. We are branches incapable of producing fruit. The only thing that distinguishes us as branches is that we are attached to You."

The Presence of God going with Israel in Moses' day, and the branch staying attached to the vine in our day, are both about the same thing. We can't effectively do the work of God without God Himself! Our vertical focus on

God will produce the horizontal fruit He desires.

OUR STRATEGY: PRAYER

I've served more than 20 years on the board of a great mission organization, Pioneer Bible Translators. It has always been a good, godly ministry that honors the Lord and serves Him with integrity in Bible translation, literacy work, and church planting. Seven years ago we brought on a new president who brought a new strategy to the ministry. It was very simple: *Prayer is our strategy*. A vertical focus.

The results have been amazing. The number of missionaries has doubled. Our stateside structure has been greatly strengthened. The number of portions of Scripture translated has skyrocketed. Finances have grown steadily, matching the growth.

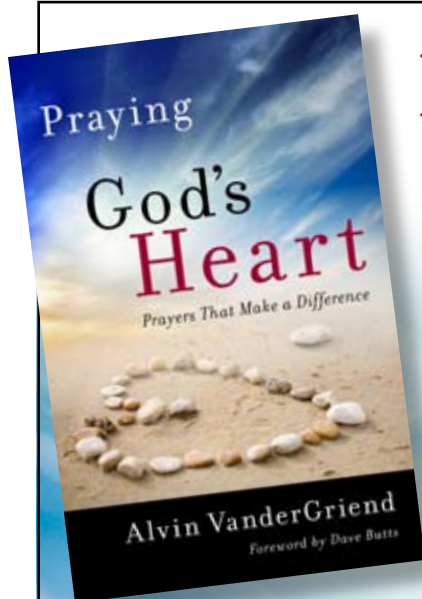
Without a doubt, before this emphasis we had prayed and served and had experienced good growth. But with a new, radical, vertical prayer focus, we have seen an explosion in our horizontal effectiveness.

What is the land God is calling you to take? What mission does He have you on? Determine not to go anywhere without Him. Go vertical before you go horizontal!

"If your Presence does not go with us, do not send us up from here. How will anyone know that you are pleased with me and with your people unless you go with us? What else will distinguish me and your people from all the other people on the face of the earth?" (Ex.33:15–16). **PC**



DAVE BUTTS is president of Harvest Prayer Ministries and chairman of America's National Prayer Committee. He will serve as president of the 2014 International Conference on Missions, an annual event that draws thousands of missions-minded people each year.



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THE FORGOTTEN

BY DAN CRAWFORD

PRAYER FUELS BURSTS OF MISSIONARY ENERGY

‘VE OFTEN WONDERED WHAT PROMPTED Jesus’ disciples to ask Him to teach them to pray (Luke 11:1). Many things happened between their call to follow Him and their request to be taught prayer—the cleansing of a leper, healing people miraculously, engaging in controversies over fasting and the observance of the Sabbath, setting forth the Beatitudes, teaching through parables, raising of the dead, stilling a storm at sea, casting out demons, feeding thousands with bread and fish, and being transfigured before their eyes.

In Luke’s Gospel, just one chapter prior to the disciples’ request, Jesus described the harvest as *plentiful* and the laborers as *few*, and then He told them to pray (Luke 10:2). Since He was sending 70 of them into the harvest,

continued on page 27

COMMAND OF JESUS

WHAT HAPPENS WHEN WE PRAY FOR THE PERSECUTED CHURCH?

BY BOB FETHERLIN

With much toil in seed-sowing and cultivating, missionaries of The Christian and Missionary Alliance (C&MA) poured out their lives in love for Christ and the peoples of Vietnam from 1911 to 1975:

- translating and publishing the Bible into several languages
- establishing medical clinics, including a leprosarium to care for lepers
- planting churches, training and equipping leaders.

The work of Christ in that land took root and grew. Local churches, led by local leaders in the local language, reflected the glory of Christ through the local culture—all reasons for encouragement, even rejoicing.

Then came the Vietnam War. Thousands of Vietnamese followers of Christ endured suffering, including the destruction of their property, serious injury, imprisonment, and even loss of life.

Two C&MA missionaries were marched off into the jungle, never to be seen again by their loved ones, local partners, and missionary colleagues. Seven more C&MA missionaries were killed during the Tet Offensive in 1968. By 1975, all C&MA missionaries had left Vietnam, leaving behind about 60,000 Vietnamese followers of Jesus.

In the years that followed, news of the state of the churches in Vietnam was sparse. Many questions and deep concerns remained. Would hardship result in a massive falling away from faith in Christ? Would pressures on the churches result in believers being scattered? Would pastors and church leaders be persecuted for their faith?

Although we could not find clear answers to these questions, we knew one thing we could do: *pray!* The C&MA family of churches in the United States joined together with sister churches in many other nations to pray for the churches of Vietnam.

After more than 25 difficult years, increasing openness in that country provided an opportunity for C&MA leaders from the United States to visit Vietnam. It was an overwhelming honor for me to be a part of this. Sitting face to face with the leaders of the C&MA sister churches of Vietnam, we sought to listen, encourage, and learn. I'll never forget the moment when we asked them, "About how many

followers of Jesus are now a part of your church family?"

"We're now at more than one million believers," they responded.

We all sat in awe of our marvelous God and what He had done. In fewer than three decades, the 60,000 believers (at the time when C&MA missionaries left in 1975) grew to more than one million! Tears rolled down my cheeks as this incredible reality sunk in. I looked into the faces of these Vietnamese church leaders who had been through extremely trying times, and I knew they represented thousands of others who had suffered.

While those hostile to the gospel may believe they can oppress, even destroy the Church, we learned that the Church infused by the resurrection power of Jesus Christ could not be contained. Contrary to the intentions of some, the final chapter for the Church in Vietnam had not been written. In the midst of difficult times, the Church stood strong and even flourished! There were—and are—many more chapters to come.

AN OPPRESSED CHURCH WILL GROW

Exodus 1:12 says, "But the more they were oppressed, the more they multiplied and spread." The context is the account of God's people enslaved in Egypt. The important principle embedded in that account is this: Try to suppress or destroy the Church, and it will multiply and spread. This has happened over and over again in history. Jesus reinforced this principle when He said, "I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not overcome it" (Matt. 16:18).

May we be faithful in praying for the persecuted Church. Yes, church buildings can be closed, even destroyed. Followers of Jesus can face all kinds of difficulty, including torture, jeers, flogging, imprisonment, and even death (Heb. 11:35–37). Yet because of bold, rock-solid faith birthed through prayer, because of God's passionate, tender care of His people, because of His relentless, uncompromising commitment to His own glory, and because of the resurrection power of Christ at work, God can turn the weakness of His people into strength!

BOB FETHERLIN is vice president for International Ministries of The Christian and Missionary Alliance.

two-by-two, they might have been surprised that He included prayer in His outreach strategy. They obviously understood the commands to go, serve, share, minister, teach, and preach. But the command to pray? This may have been the most confusing command of Jesus. Today, in many circles, it is the forgotten command of Jesus.

The Bible supports this command of the Lord by instructing us to pray for the harvest. The psalmist records God's decree, "Ask me, and I will make the nations your inheritance, the ends of the earth your possession" (Ps. 2:8).

The Apostle Paul writes, "I urge then, first of all, that petitions, prayers, intercession and thanksgiving be made for all people. . . . This is good, and pleases God our Savior, who wants all people to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth" (1 Tim. 2:1, 3–4).

Although there is no mention of

prayer in the Great Commission (recorded in Acts 1:8), the narrative of the early Church continues with these words: "These all with one mind were continually devoting themselves to prayer" (Acts 1:14, NASB). The early believers went directly from receiving the commission to praying for their world. Within a matter of days these disciples had "filled Jerusalem" with their teaching about Christ (Acts 5:28). The model is clear—from the upper room (with unity and prayer) to every room (with salvation and disciples).

Read through the Acts of the Apostles and you will easily note the growth of the early Church. Extraordinary praying accompanied the expansion of the Church. The first Christian spiritual awakening resulted from ten days of united prayer. The 120 disciples were praying, and God added 3,000 people to the church (Acts 2:41). The disciples continued praying (Acts 2:42), and God

"added daily" to the church (Acts 2:47). "Many who heard the message believed; so the number of men who believed grew to about five thousand" (Acts 4:4). As the believers continued further in prayer (Acts 4:31–33), "multitudes of men and women" were continually being added to the church (Acts 5:14, NASB).

By the year 100 A.D. an estimated five percent of the Roman Empire had become Christian. This could largely be attributed to the faithful praying of the early Church.

BURSTS OF MISSIONARY ENERGY

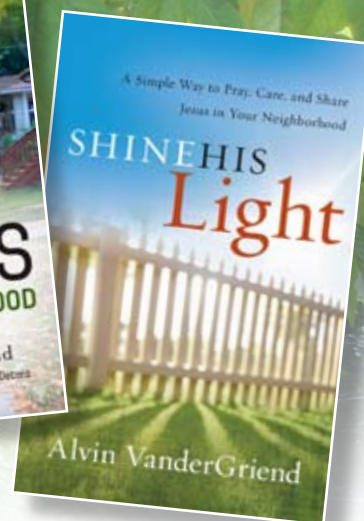
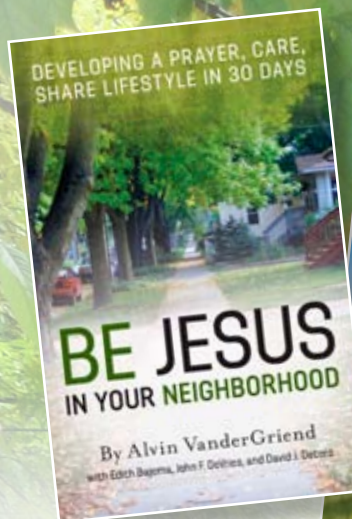
In addition to Scripture's connection between prayer and missions harvest, Christian history likewise offers further support. Every fresh burst of missionary energy has been preceded by believing prayer.

In 1723 Robert Millar, a Presbyterian

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minister, wrote *A History of the Propagation of Christianity and the Overthrow of Paganism*, in which he advocated intercession as the primary means of converting “the heathen.”

In the summer of 1727, the Moravian Brethren held a “round-the-clock prayer watch” seven days per week, which continued for approximately 100 years. This was the beginning of the modern missionary movement as young men out of the Moravian faith answered God’s call to begin missionary work in the Virgin Islands—all in response to the intercessory prayer of other Moravians.

In 1747, Christians in Boston entered into a seven-year “concert of prayer” for missionary work. The following year Jonathan Edwards responded with a call for all believers to engage in intercessory prayer for the spread of the gospel throughout the earth.

In 1783, a call went out to all Baptists

to set aside the first Monday of each month for united intercessory prayer for “the heathen of the world.”

In 1806, missions crossed the Atlantic and landed at Williams College in Williamstown, MA. There, a group of students led by Samuel J. Mills covenanted to pray together and study the Bible. On a Wednesday afternoon, in a thunderstorm—and under a haystack for protection—the group committed themselves to missions to the ends of the earth. They signed a pledge to be America’s first foreign missionaries. Thus began the Student Volunteer Missions Movement—the beginning of missionary activity from within the United States.

Later in the nineteenth century, Hudson Taylor founded the China Inland Mission. And during his 50 years of service, it was said the sun never rose in China without finding Hudson Taylor on his knees.

The Shantung revivals in China may well be the most important event in the history of world missions. John Abernathy writes, “In all the churches was held daily an early morning meeting for prayer and Bible study. . . . The revival came about as a result of earnest prayer by groups and individuals.”¹

These are but a few examples of the relationship between prayer and world missionary activity. Whatever else a study of missions history tells us, it demonstrates that behind every outburst of real mission in the life of the Church, we find those who prayed until the Spirit of God came upon them. Then in the Spirit’s power they went out to witness the mighty acts of God. In every case the new movement to world missions parallels the waiting, praying group of disciples in the upper room at Pentecost, as they lived out the command of their Lord to pray for the harvest.

DISCIPLE YOUR PEOPLE

TO PRAY GOD’S WORD

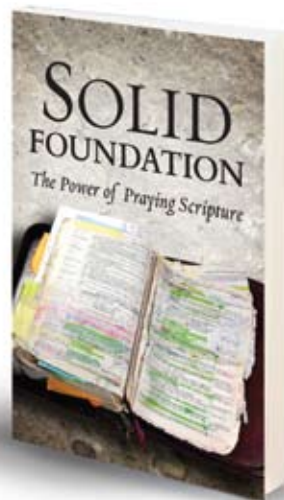
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REVIVAL OF PRAYER

The relationship between prayer and world missions cannot be overemphasized. Truly the evangelization of the world waits first of all upon a revival of prayer. Deeper than the need for missionaries—deeper far than the need for finances—is the need for prevailing, worldwide prayer.

Consider the example of Presbyterian missionary John “Praying” Hyde—slow of speech and hard of hearing—who served Christ in India during the 19th century. Hyde was a praying man, but he realized that the Mohammedan priests were praying at 5:00 a.m. each day. So Hyde began to pray from 4:00 a.m. to 5:00 a.m. daily. He prayed, “One soul per day or I die,” and at the end of the first year, more than 400 became Christians as a result of his ministry. Then Hyde revised his prayer to “Two souls per day or I die.” At the end of the second year more than 800 had become Christians. Further challenged, Hyde prayed, “Four souls a day or I die.”


During that year Hyde died of a “displaced heart,” meaning that his heart had moved within his chest. He lived the last months of his life under terrific stress. But it was John Hyde who said, “I’d rather burn out than rust out.”²

Many people think of missions as ministry performed somewhere else, even to the remotest part of the earth. In reality, missions may be ministry right where you live. Whether your concept of ministry is something nearby or far off, we must move beyond our normal prayer lives to pray for “the ends of the earth” and those who live and work there.

S. D. Gordon reminds us, “Prayer puts us in direct dynamic touch with the world. A man may go aside today and shut the door, and as really spend a half-hour of his life in India for God as though he were there in person. Surely you and I must get more half-hours for this secret service.”³

I have heard, read, and been a part of the planning of more mission strategies than I can remember. Those saturated with prayer were in the minority.

It must have thrilled Jesus to be asked about prayer, especially after everything the disciples had experienced since their call—and on the heels of His command to go to the harvest field. And it would no doubt thrill Him today if we made prayer more a part of our harvest-field strategy.

Away in foreign fields,
they wondered how
Their simple word had power—
At home, some Christians,
two or three, had met
To pray an hour.
We are always wondering—
wondering how,
Because we do not see
Someone—Perhaps unknown
and far away—
On bended knee.⁴ 

¹ John A. Abernathy, *The Shantung Revival, The Church Proclaiming and Witnessing*, ed. Edwin L. McDonald (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Book House, 1966), 81-83.

² See also Francis McGaw, *Praying Hyde* (Minneapolis: Dimension Books, 1970).

³ S.D. Gordon, *Quiet Talks on Prayer* (Old Tappan, N. J.: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1903), 15, 82.

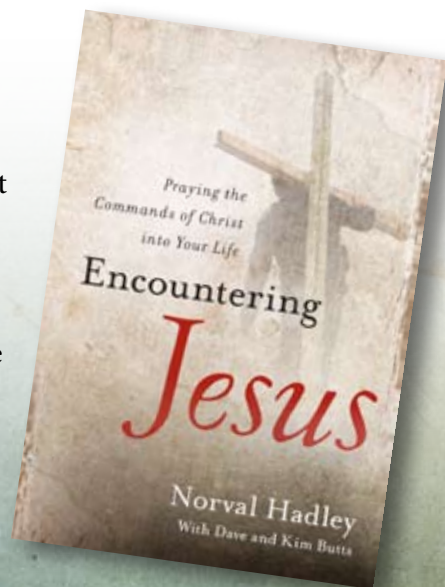
⁴ Quoted by Frank C. Laubach, “The Power of Intercession” in *Prayer: The Mightiest Force in the World* (New York: Fleming H. Revell Co, 1946), 40.



DAN CRAWFORD is senior professor (retired) at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary. Portions of this article were adapted from *The Prayer-Shaped Disciple* by Dan R. Crawford, Hendrickson Publishers, Inc., 1999, especially chapter 16: “As You Go . . . Pray” and chapter 17: “Praying to the Ends of the Earth.”

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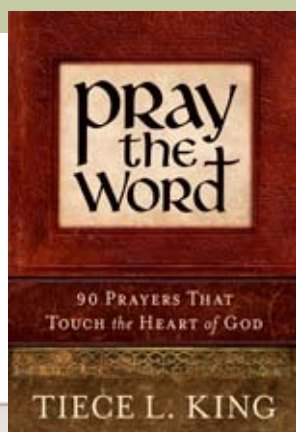
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Sample Prayer:

Day 8 Overcomer

Father, Your Word says that I am an overcomer because of the blood of the Lamb, the Lord Jesus Christ, and the word of my testimony—that in Jesus, all the fullness of the Deity lives in bodily form and I have been given fullness in Christ and share in His authority over every spiritual power and authority! But I confess that I do not feel like an overcomer and I often give in to the influence of this world instead of submitting to Christ.

O God, save me from myself! May I be full of Your Spirit and Your mighty power—the power of the resurrection! Teach me and use me, that I might be one who sees strongholds demolished in my life and help others to walk in freedom. Thank You Father, that because I belong to You in Christ Jesus, You surround me with Your presence—that You are a wall of fire around me. You O Lord are my refuge and my strength. In every situation and struggle, You are with me. I will not be afraid for my trust is in Your Name.

Like Joshua, may I be confident that You are with me and

will never leave or forsake me. By Your Spirit at work in me make me to be strong and courageous, to not be afraid or discouraged, but always mindful that You are with me wherever I go. Use me to take back ground that the enemy has stolen. Help me to be self-controlled and alert, knowing that the enemy of my soul is prowling, looking for an opportune moment.

In Jesus' name, strengthen me to submit to You, resist the enemy and to stand firm in my faith! Give me I pray, Your perspective of the situations I face and may I live victoriously, as a conqueror, because of Jesus and His love for me. May I be full of faith, and Your Word, for I belong to You Lord Jesus, and You have overcome the world!

Revelation 12:11; Colossians 2:9-10; Ephesians 6:10; Philippians 3:10; 2 Corinthians 10:4; Psalm 125:2; Zechariah 2:5; Psalm 46:1-2; Psalm 20:7; Joshua 1:5,9; 1 Peter 5:8-9; Romans 8:37; 1 John 5:4

ASK FOR THE NATIONS

A BIBLE STUDY BY SANDRA HIGLEY

Note: *This Bible study is formatted for small group open discussion. If you use this study by yourself, we suggest you journal your answers to the discussion questions. Also, please use suggested translations where indicated. Biblegateway.com is an excellent source for translations you may not have on hand.*

I HAVE A FRIEND AT CHURCH WHO HAS a grasp of the Father's heart for Egypt. She ministered there many times and financially supports missions projects. But her current health problems and other issues have kept her from returning. In a recent discussion I encouraged her to see how her compassion for the Egyptian people, combined with firsthand experiences of being "in country," have uniquely positioned her as an intercessor who can pack a wallop with prayer power for that region.

Too frequently we view our intercessory position as a second-best "I'll-pray-because-I-can't-go" circumstance. When we do that, we're not seeing prayer as God sees it.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Dan Crawford reminds us of a quote by S.D. Gordon: "A man may go aside today and shut the door, and as really spend a half-hour of his life in India for God as though he were there in person." Share your thoughts on this idea. Is it a new one for you?

What do Psalm 2:8 and Luke 10:2 tell you about God's position on prayer and missions?

Read the following passages and discuss the correlation between prayer and the growth of the early Church (Acts 1:14, NASB; 2:41–42, 47; 4:4, 31–33; 5:14, NASB).

Bob Fetherlin tells of C&MA missionaries who were forced to exit Vietnam in 1975, leaving behind 60,000 Vietnamese followers of Jesus. Distressed at having to leave these believers to fend for themselves, they put together a worldwide prayer initiative to pray for Vietnam. After 25 years, C&MA leaders were allowed to return for a visit. They discovered that prayer had "grown" the 60,000 Vietnamese Christians into a staggering one million believers.

Share similar stories you may have heard regarding prayer for missions. (If your group is unaware of such

testimonies, try doing an online search for inspiration—for instance, *blog.godreports.com*.) How does hearing inspiring prayer/missions stories stimulate your missions-focused prayers?

Lack of inspiration was a key factor in Steve Hawthorne's feelings about praying for missions as he grew up. He says that endless generic prayers for protection and supply reduce prayer for missions to a dreary but necessary duty. But Hawthorne shares about the super-synergy of praying *with* missionaries instead of merely praying *for* them. By praying for the mission itself and not just missionary needs, a co-worker status emerges. "By praying the very prayers that the missionaries themselves were probably praying, we gained a tangible sense of expectancy. We were playing a part in what the living God was enacting on the other side of the planet." Explain the difference between praying *for* missionaries and praying *with* missionaries.

How does Paul's request in 2 Corinthians 1:10–11 indicate that he was urging believers into this synergistic "load-bearing, effectual labor"?

Another prayer-for-missions inhibitor is having a horizontal focus on the immensity of the task. Dave Butts writes, "Billions do not know Jesus . . . even using the word *billions* can cause us to want to curl up and watch TV instead of giving ourselves to a calling that seems impossible." The solution is to focus on our vertical relationship with God to accomplish what He calls us to do horizontally.

Read Exodus 33:12–17. How does this passage show that Moses understood this principle?

What do the following passages say about focusing vertically in order to be successful horizontally? (John 15:4–5; Heb. 3:1)

ACTION STEPS

Stevanie Wilkos talks about being a "dangerous" pray-er, an intercessor who—like Jesus—is seen by the enemy as incredibly dangerous to the kingdom of darkness. On a scale of one to ten (ten being dangerous intercession), how would you rank your current involvement in prayer for missions? Why do you see yourself that way?

Wilkos lists five prayers that can launch us into the dangerous category. Look up each associated passage and turn it into your own petition.


1. Pray we will be people of prayer (Eph. 6:18).

2. Pray we will listen intently and follow the promptings of the Holy Spirit (Rom. 8:26–27; 1 Thess. 1:4–6).

3. Pray we will see the work of God in our daily settings and join Him in that work (John 5:19).

4. Pray we will love and move in unity with other believers, even those who are different from us (John 13:34, 17:20–23).

5. Pray that in difficult surroundings we will give praise to God (2 Chron. 20:22).

Pick a country and take a virtual, dangerous, super-synergistic prayer journey there this week through prayer with the missionaries of that area. Become part of what God is doing to expand His Kingdom! 

SANDRA HIGLEY is an intercessor, author, and editor. She currently works as an editor for David C Cook Ministries in Colorado Springs, CO.



Clarifying Our Terms

There seems to be much talk about revival among pastors and leaders of denominational and parachurch ministries. Desperation for another significant move of God's Spirit is on the rise in the Church today.

However, a great deal of confusion exists as to what we mean when we use the term *revival*. We have additional confusion with another term that many incorrectly use as a synonym for revival: *spiritual awakening*.

Three other issues associated with revival add to the confusion: Some churches have used the term for years to mean a set of special meetings; other groups that rally prayer for a nation will use the term to mean the spiritual renewal of that nation, and some groups equate revival to mean a display of outward manifestations. All of these uses can cause misunderstandings when we speak of revival.

We Need Clarification

Revival. Revival is something that happens to the church and to believers. You cannot be revived if you are not already alive in Christ. In the truest sense of the word, revival means God is doing a sovereign work of grace among His people. He moves in a powerful way to bring about repentance of sin and complacency, empowering believers in a fresh way with His Spirit to live as they should.

Spiritual awakening. A spiritual awakening occurs when an unusually large number of unbelievers come to faith in Jesus Christ. Confusion over using this as a synonym for revival comes because of two factors: 1) Great numbers of lost people coming to Christ always happen in the midst of a revival because the Church gets right with God and comes together in greater unity. Then people always come to Christ as a result.

2) In almost every church there is likely a significant percentage of people sitting in the pews who have never experienced true conversion. They are often the first people converted in a revival.

Transformation of society. Many past revivals were widespread enough that society changed for the better. In the Welsh Revival of 1904–05, jails closed and policemen had to do other things to pass the time because there was virtually no crime. This transformation is a wonderful thing, but it is not revival. It is the result of revival. History shows there have been significant smaller revivals where there was not a noticeable change in communities or regions. Though many revivals have spawned large enough spiritual awakenings that society has changed, that is not a given.

When praying for a nation, it is more accurate to use the terms *spiritual awakening* or *community/national transformation*, rather than *revival*, to describe what you are praying toward. If you make the distinction that spiritual awakening will not happen unless God's people are revived—and that is why you are calling for prayer for revival—then you are correct in doing so. Even in ancient Israel, it was God's people who got right with Him first (*revival*), and then as many did, the nation was changed (*transformation*).

Revival meetings. Most who have grown up in the church remember revival meetings—when a church holds special meetings (usually once a year) to challenge their people toward a deeper

walk with God. Some churches still hold them. Actually, there is justification to call these revival meetings because they are a chance for people to get away from their routine and focus their hearts on spiritual things. Many people “do business” with God and get right with Him in these meetings, which is individual revival. The confusion comes because people have a mental picture of *meetings in a church* when they hear the term *revival*.

Manifestations. Some groups think true revival has not happened unless there are unusual manifestations—people shaking, making strange noises, gold dust in the air. In some significant revivals of the past, there were indeed unusual occurrences. People overcome with the Spirit of God shining light on their sins caused many to groan in unusual ways. Others were known to shake or roll (hence the term *holy rollers*) under the power of the Spirit.

But none of these things has to be present as the mark of true revival. Churches that hold up these manifestations as an “ought to happen often” during a genuine move of God, begin to point people away from Christ to seek a specific manifestation. If lives are not changed by believers getting right with God and going deeper in their walks with Him, it is not revival.

The point is that people are often all over the map when they use the term revival. All the things mentioned are related to revival. But if we want to pray in agreement over revival we need to, as much as possible, use the same language and definitions. **PC**

To learn more about developing a rhythm of prayer for revival in your church, go to national-prayeraccord.com.

Training Pra



for a yer-athon

How to Develop Your Intercessory Muscles

A couple of years ago, my husband and I ran our first 5K race together. During his military service, he had done a lot of running, including 5K races. Me? For most of my life I had avoided running.

But we were in the midst of a marital crisis, and I felt God leading me to start running with my husband in preparation for a 5K race. So we used a popular program with a gradual running and walking schedule that promised we would be running three miles by the end of nine weeks.

I had my doubts, but it worked. I discovered that I actually liked running.

We may not all be training to run a physical race, but we are running a spiritual race. And if my prayer life is at

all typical, I'm guessing that many of us are seriously undertrained.

It doesn't have to be that way.

Casual Prayer Warrior

I would reluctantly call myself a runner. I'm more of a casual jogger. In comparison to those who run marathons, I'm not very good at it.

I wouldn't call myself a prayer warrior, either. Most days, my prayers are limited to written pleas during my Bible-reading time. I might add some "flare prayers" when I'm in trouble. I usually include regular mealtime thanksgiving prayers and an end-of-the-day prayer with my husband after the house is quiet.

By Lisa Bartelt

Most days, I feel guilty about that kind of schedule.

The Bible calls me to “pray without ceasing,” and words like *intercession* intimidate me. *I could never be like that*, I think. But I never thought I’d enjoy running three miles, either.

Train Yourself

If prayer is a spiritual discipline, it shouldn’t surprise us prayer involves training. Yet too often I feel like I should wake up one day with a desire to pray for hours at a time. But I wouldn’t wake up one day and decide to run a 26.2-mile marathon. I’d go into training. So why do I think I can become a marathon pray-er overnight?

The Apostle Paul said this to the church in Corinth: “Everyone who competes in the games goes into strict training. They do it to get a crown that will

not last, but we do it to get a crown that will last forever” (1 Cor. 9:25).

For most of us, becoming a prayer warrior—or someone with a consistent prayer life—won’t happen on its own. Some people are gifted pray-ers. The rest of us need to work at it.

Here are some steps to help us train our spiritual prayer muscles for the race we’re in:

Start small. The running program my husband and I followed started with a couple of weeks of alternating jogging and walking. Similarly, with prayer, we can take a lesson from the early Church. They paused throughout the day for times of prayer. Instead of vowing to pray for one straight hour, break up your time. Maybe you’ll pray three times a day for a couple of minutes. Or you might pause every hour to briefly thank God. Eventually, it will become ingrained in your daily life, and you can

add more (or longer) times of prayer.

Schedule it. To keep on track with running, I plan which days I can run, factoring in schedule changes and weather fluctuations. When I plan to run, and plan it into my day, I’m less likely to skip it. In the same way, schedule your prayer time. Yes, it’s good to pray spontaneously when the Spirit leads. But I know if I only prayed that way, I wouldn’t find the time for quality prayer.

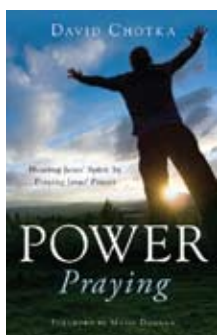
Soak up the Word. Staying hydrated with water makes the run easier. I learned this the hard way. One day, I drank too much coffee and too little water before I ran, and I had difficulty finishing my run. The same is true of my prayer life if I’m not consistently nourished by the Word of God. Drinking the Living Water equips our prayers for effectiveness. As John writes in his first letter, “This is the confidence we have in approaching God: that if we ask anything according to his will, he hears us” (1 John 5:14). We can ask according to God’s will when we commune with Him in the Word.

Spur one another on. When my husband and I trained together, we encouraged each other to keep going. When it was raining and cold and we didn’t want to run, we held each other accountable for the training. My husband had knee surgery recently, so I now run by myself. But I find it harder to stay motivated when I want to quit. In the same way, however, you can make it work—email or in person, once a week or once a day—find someone who can encourage you to keep going when you want to quit.

Set a goal. Our first training program began exactly nine weeks before a local 5K. We were registered to run—and if we didn’t stick with the program, we would be underprepared for the race. Give yourself a realistic goal for your prayer life. Maybe you won’t be praying for two hours a day by the end of a month, but you might end up praying three shorter times a day.

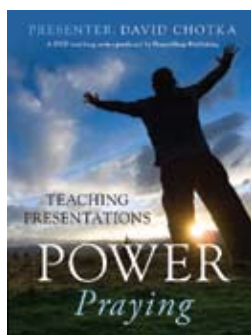
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Stretch. Stretching helps me loosen my muscles before I run. Similarly, you may need to loosen up your ideas about proper prayer and try different positions and methods. If you find yourself falling asleep while praying, try standing instead of sitting. Take a walk and talk to Jesus. Lie face down. Kneel. The Bible contains many examples of ways to pray. If you find yourself struggling, don't limit yourself to one way. Experiment with others that may work for you.

Stay focused. When I'm running through my neighborhood, I can get distracted by dogs, traffic, and other people. I can also find myself focused on the pain, my breathing, or how much farther I have to go. But none of those things help me accomplish the goal. If too many things distract you while you pray, you might become discouraged. Peter encourages the church to "be alert and of sober mind so that you may pray"

(1 Peter 4:7). If your mind wanders because you have too many things on your "to do" list, then write those things down. Doodle on paper as you pray. Try the ancient practice of repeating a word or phrase such as, "Come, Lord Jesus" or "Speak, Lord, your servant is listening," to focus your mind.

Beyond Lifetime Benefits

Paul instructs Timothy, "Train yourself to be godly. For physical training is of some value, but godliness has value for all things, holding promise for both the present life and the life to come" (1 Tim. 4:7-8). As with physical training, godly training will be painful at times and won't come easily. But the benefits will last longer than a lifetime.

My husband and I turned to running when we desperately needed a change for our marriage. It was a last resort. Without

the program guiding us through the first small steps in running, I wouldn't have stuck with it. I would have missed out on an experience that changed our marriage relationship.

Many of us, including myself, also turn to prayer as a last resort. Training for a "prayer-athon" requires small steps and the discipline to practice praying. It's easy to become discouraged and pray haphazardly or only when there's a crisis. But prayer can be so much more when we learn perseverance, commitment, and teamwork. The benefits will outlast our physical bodies and carry us into the life to come. **PC**



LISA BARTELT is a freelance writer and frequent blogger (lmbartelt.wordpress.com). Her work has appeared in *The One Year Devotional of Joy and Laughter* (Tyndale) and in curriculum for Group Publishing.

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A Cha

Does God Invite Our Prayers about Weather?

ng IN THE FORECAST

The states of Florida and Georgia desperately needed rain in the spring of 2007. More than 215 wildfires burned across Florida, creating lots of smoke and ashes in the air. The Bugaboo Scrub Fire in south Georgia was so big it placed a cloud of smoke over Atlanta and Birmingham.

My denomination (Florida Baptist Convention) called for a *Day of Prayer for Rain* on Sunday, May 27, 2007. We sent an eblast to pastors, publicized it through our *Witness* state paper, and broadcast the call to prayer on the radio. Many joined in seeking God for relief from the dire situation.

On Monday, a low-pressure system formed south of Key West. By Friday, June 1 (beginning of hurricane season), tropical storm Barry began pouring what became three to seven inches of rain from Key West to South Georgia, dousing all the fires and giving a 90 percent containment to the swamp fire. Jacksonville reported the wettest June 2 since weather records have been kept, back to 1873.

BY RICK SHEPHERD

Weather has often played a part in seeing God's will accomplished.

WEATHER AND GOD'S PURPOSES

We often ask, "What's tomorrow's weather?" Rain, sun, ice, snow, searing heat, or frigid cold? Can the forecast change? Obviously, it changes often. Can prayer have a part in that?

Should we pray about the weather? How does that fit in with God's will and God's ways?

Scripture has much to say about the weather, and often weather has played a part in seeing His will accomplished. Remember the days of the judges in the Old Testament? In Judges 4, we read of the people of Israel being oppressed by Jabin for 20 years. Through the prophetess Deborah, the Lord commanded Barak to gather an army at the River Kishon in the Jezreel Valley to battle Sisera (Jabin's general) and his 900 chariots of iron. Barak and his troops obeyed and won. But how?

Judges 5 records the victory song of Deborah and Barak, recounting how the Lord gave victory: "*the heavens poured, the clouds poured down water*" (5:4, emphasis mine). Judges 5:21 tells us the cloudburst came, and "the river Kishon swept them away." God sent a rainstorm, a swollen Kishon River, and muddy fields. Iron chariots became useless, leading to the full defeat of those forces and the victory of Israel's troops.

Here's another example: In 1 Kings 17:1, Elijah's forecast predicted no rain for years. More than three years later, the Lord commanded, "Go and present yourself to Ahab, and I will send rain

on the land" (1 Kings 18:1). First Kings 18:41–45 records Elijah's time in prayer and the downpour God sent.

Seeking God in prayer makes a difference. As He did in Elijah's day, God uses weather in communicating and fulfilling His will. This series of prayers and events was so significant that the Holy Spirit focused on it in the New Testament to encourage "the effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man" or woman (James 5:16–18, NKJV).

DIFFERENT BACK THEN?

In Jesus' life and ministry, He spoke of the Father giving sun and rain to the righteous and unrighteous (Matt. 5:45). On the Sea of Galilee He calmed a fierce storm as His disciples first cried out to Him in fear and then bowed in worship at His power (Luke 8:22–25).

Some might say, "That is the record of Scripture. It was different back then." But consider some examples of God working in history since then.

Attempting to dethrone the Protestant Queen Elizabeth I of England, the Catholic King Philip II of Spain sent his "invincible armada" to England in 1588. Storms and winds first delayed them and ultimately a fierce storm and winds in the North Atlantic left the armada in ruins. That year several medals were cast to celebrate the defeat. One pictured a family on their knees, praying. It read, "Man proposes; God disposes." The reverse side pictured a Spanish ship sinking and read, "The Spaniards flee and perish, no one pursuing." God worked

through prayer and the weather.¹

More than 100 years later, Napoleon, while looking over the fields of Waterloo before his upcoming battle with Wellington, proudly declared that after this battle England would be at the feet of France and the Duke of Wellington would be his prisoner. His commanding officer reminded Napoleon of the truth that man proposes and God disposes. In his unwise pride, Napoleon responded, "Napoleon proposes and Napoleon disposes."

Victor Hugo summarized the situation this way: "From that moment Waterloo was lost, for God sent rain and hail so that the troops of Napoleon could not maneuver as he had planned, and on the night of the battle it was Napoleon who was prisoner of Wellington, and France who was at the feet of England." God works through weather.²

WEATHER EVENTS CHANGE HISTORY

In his book *And Then They Prayed*, Barry Loudermilk recounts several events—including some weather events—that changed history and lives.³

In the fall of 1746, the French fleet sailed for New England with 13,000 troops to capture and destroy many coastal towns including Boston, MA. Governor William Shirley called for a day of prayer and fasting. The people met and prayed on October 16 in the Old South Church. Reverend Thomas Prince interceded before the Lord, "Deliver us. . . . Send Thy tempest, Lord, upon the waters to the eastward!"

As he prayed, dark clouds and strong

winds moved into the city. Pounding rains struck the church building. The winds caused the church bell to ring with a wild, uneven sound. What could all this mean? A hurricane in the North Atlantic struck and sank or damaged most of the French fleet, leaving only about 1,000 soldiers. Henry Wadsworth Longfellow recounted these events in *The Ballad of the French Fleet*. God answered prayer and stopped disaster from striking many American towns.

Here's another example: Today in Andersonville, GA, an engraved stone marker identifies Providence Springs, a spring of pure water that has been flowing since 1864. Loudermilk penned how this came about, a story of answered prayer.

The springs are on the grounds of a Civil War prison camp where more than 33,000 prisoners crowded into 26 acres with a muddy stream as their latrine and only water supply. One hundred prisoners died every day. Private William Tannahill organized a prayer meeting, and they began seeking God for rain and water.

After more than an hour of praying, a thunderstorm and driving rains struck the camp. The Stockade Creek flooded as the rainwaters washed out the disease-laden water. Then a thunderous bolt of lightning struck the ground inside the camp, and a spring of clear, clean water began bubbling up, providing all the water the camp needed and sparing hundreds of lives. That spring still flows today. It's an answer to prayer and evidence that God works through weather.

CORRECTION AND MERCY

Can we really say God works through weather? Job 37:13 records three tracks on which God uses the weather: 1) for **maintenance** on earth (sun, rain, and so forth), 2) for a **measure** of correction (*"the rod"*), and 3) for **mercy** on earth.

God measured out correction *and* mercy in the spring of 2007, when we prayed for relief from the fires in Florida and Georgia. Fast forward to that fall, when 21 of the 50 states experienced drought, some extreme. Atlanta reported severe drought. Experts surmised there would be no drinking water for Atlanta within 90 days. Reservoirs began drying up. As each lake receded, boat docks and lake-front property were now several yards from the water's edge. Calls to prayer surfaced from various sources.

Governor Sonny Perdue proclaimed November 13 a Day of Prayer for Rain, despite a media frenzy labeling it a violation of separation of church and state. Mark Stirling, former consultant for prayer and spiritual awakening in the Georgia Baptist Convention, issued information to pastors throughout the Georgia Baptist churches. The convention website posted instructions on how

to pray for rain. Governor Perdue prayed, as did others.

What happened? Many opined, but when all was said (or prayed) and done, the weather changed. God brought rain in answer to prayer. Many rejoiced. Records show December 2007 as one of the wettest Decembers in Atlanta's history.

CHASTENING AND WAKE-UP CALL

Many see unusual weather patterns as part of the remedial judgment of God mixed with His mercy and willingness to answer those who call on Him. Without question, our nation needs spiritual awakening. Too many are saying, "God, leave us alone and let us do what we want!" Many in churches

START THE DISCUSSION

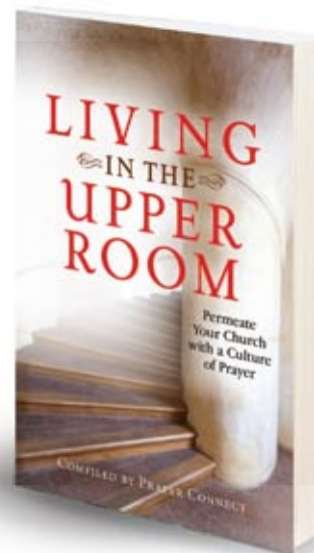
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seek to do “church life” without prayer.

Almost 3,000 years ago the Lord said, “When I shut up heaven so that there is no rain . . . if my people . . . humble themselves and pray . . . I will hear . . . I will forgive . . . and will heal their land” (2 Chron. 7:13–14). Remember that *7:14 praying* is based on *7:13 chastening*. God is ever at work, ready to restore. Are we cooperating?

Is the weather an intensifying wake-up call? Think about it. Since 2007, we have seen an increase in weather issues in the United States. For the record, 2008 saw nine separate billion-dollar natural disasters, and the number of such events exceeded 150. In 2009, we had more than 200 events. Then, 2010 broke all records with 247 events. Both years saw ten billion-dollar disasters (each cost a minimum of a billion dollars; some had a two- or three-billion-dollar price tag). In 2011, the disastrous October snowstorm

in the Northeast shattered every weather record, with costs estimated at more than three billion. The total for 2011 was 14 billion-dollar disasters with a total cost (at a minimum) of more than 50 billion dollars. In 2012, Superstorm Sandy alone cost more than 50 billion.

Many are wondering—and others are debating—what is going on. The August 11, 2012 issue of *World* magazine carried the cover article “Praying for Rain: The widest drought in over half a century blankets more than half the nation.” Many others have added their thoughts, opinions, articles, and blogs.

To these testimonies, I must add one more note. Erwin Lutzer, in his book *Where Was God?*, wrote that while God is sovereign and works through weather, we cannot understand all His ways. We must certainly show compassion for those who have been involved in weather calamities.⁴

SYMBOLIC OF OUR NEED

With that, we can attest that the weather issues (droughts, fires, floods, tornadoes, blizzards, hurricanes) of the past six years are signals and symbols of the needs of the churches in

America. Many are experiencing spiritual drought and need the refreshing rains of the Spirit of God. We need to intensify praying together for the physical, material, and *especially* the spiritual needs we see all around us. Any need is a call to pray. And praying together is a much-needed ministry that often brings deeply longed-for answers and blessings.

God is at work on many levels. Many are turning to Jesus as Lord and Savior while many others are intensifying their rebellion against God. The bottom line for today is this: We should not only rehearse the *facts* of the past but move beyond them to the insight God is giving. Let's be *fascinated* with who God is and with what He is doing. Then, we need to join Him in active *faith*, praying alone and together (Jer. 29:7, 33:3; Eph. 6:17–19; 1 Tim. 2:1–8).

God is working. We should trust Him, rain or shine. **PC**

¹W.H.K. Wright, ed. *The Western Antiquary*. Vol. 7. Plymouth: W.H. Luke, Printer, 1888, 289. www.history.com/this-day-in-history/spanish-armada-defeated.

²Alan Carr, “The Gospel According to Nebuchadnezzar,” [www.sermonnotebook.org/old%20testament/Daniel%204_34-37\(2\).htm](http://www.sermonnotebook.org/old%20testament/Daniel%204_34-37(2).htm).

³Barry Loudermilk, *And Then They Prayed* (Campbell, Cal.: Fast Pencil, 2011), ebook.

⁴Erwin Lutzer, *Where Was God? Answers to Tough Questions about God and Natural Disasters* (Carol Stream, Ill.: Tyndale, 2006).



RICK SHEPHERD is team strategist for the Prayer/Spiritual Awakening team, Florida Baptist Convention. For a download of the booklet *Praying about the Weather*, go to fbaptist.org/prayer/prayerresources.aspx.

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A Simple Prayer Covenant

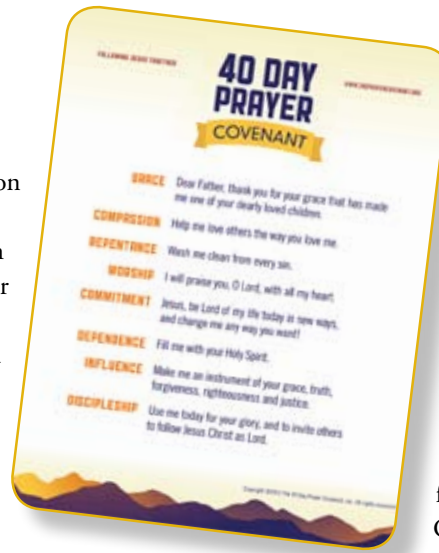
Dr. Jerry Kirk's prayer life was profoundly transformed in 1967 when a businessman invited Kirk to enter into a 30-day prayer covenant with him. Every day each man would ask Jesus to be Lord of his life—and then pray that same prayer for the other. Since that first invitation, Kirk has entered into prayer covenants with more than 9,000 people!

The simple prayer has grown over the years. Kirk says the essence of it now is, "Jesus, be Lord of my life today in new ways, and change me any way You want." And now Kirk extends the covenant to 40 days. "I wanted Jesus to know I really mean it," explains Kirk.

It is a simple concept of inviting at

least one other person to follow Jesus with you by starting each day with a prayer for yourself—and then for that person. You commit to pray with each other for 40 days, and then enter into the covenant with new people.

A prayer card is available with simple instructions, including the prayer that invites the Lord to help you love others, be cleansed from sin, be filled with the Holy Spirit, and be used for God's glory. These cards can be downloaded for free



from the website or ordered in bulk for small groups or an entire church—to enter into prayer covenant relationships.

The vision of the 40-Day Prayer Covenant is to see it used as "a catalyst for an awakening to Jesus Christ as Lord throughout the United States and the

world." The prayer card is also available in Spanish, Russian, Mandarin, Hindi, and Arabic. There is also a Messianic Jewish version.

To learn more or to order cards, go to theprayercovenant.org.

Prayer in Real Time

Follow a friend on Facebook and Twitter who is involved in a national ministry of evangelism. He has a heart for prayer and revival—and I believe he is one of the most effective leaders at inviting people to join him in prayer as he travels and speaks.

His Facebook posts are usually simple: "Please pray. I'm about to preach the gospel to 15,000+ people in Michigan." "I'm in Portland now, about to speak to 100 young evangelists. Let's ask God to revive and ignite their hearts for revival." "Please pray now - we are about to rock the campus of NYU with the message of Jesus."

When I see one of his posts, I stop immediately to pray—and then click "Like" to let him know I'm standing with him. As I follow him, the number of likes and comments he receives indicates several hundred other "friends" are doing the

same thing. I feel engaged in his ministry and privileged to uphold him in prayer. He regularly asks for prayer—and receives it instantaneously!

If your church or ministry has Facebook or Twitter or other social media outlets, turn these tools into instant calls to prayer. Help your congregation and friends feel more involved in your ministry. People often post inspirational and helpful quotes on Facebook, but you can offer your followers even more.

Give them an opportunity to be fully engaged in the ways God is moving in your ministry by calling them to prayer.

CAROL MADISON is editor of *Prayer Connect*.

Will You Pray with Us?

Prayer Connect magazine is devoted to encouraging the growth of the prayer movement. We're hoping you'll lift us up in prayer about the following:

- Increased subscriptions to keep the magazine moving forward.
- Effective working relationships between our design, circulation, and editorial staff, who are dispersed across Colorado, Minnesota, and Indiana.
- Gifted writers who will submit helpful prayer articles.
- Fresh creativity for our designer Bridget and editorial wisdom for our editor Carol.
- Sensitivity to the Holy Spirit as the editorial team determines future themes.

Send us an email and let us know if you are praying—and if you are hearing or sensing anything from the Lord (editor@prayerconnect.net). Thank you for keeping us in your prayers!



Getting Your People Comfortable with Prayerwalking

I remember when my pastor and I first tried to introduce prayerwalking to our congregation. We announced a week or so in advance when we would prayerwalk the church neighborhood. We shared a little about what prayerwalking means—“praying on site with insight,” walking while praying for each home, praying aloud with others, etc.

That night just the two of us showed up! We planned for another time, thinking perhaps people didn't really understand. When we announced the next prayerwalking night, we did a little skit—actually praying while walking across the stage. Our designated night came, and this time my pastor and his wife, my wife and I, and one single woman and her dog showed up. We gave up.

Prayerwalking is a powerful method

of spiritual warfare. Churches and believers need to do it more. But it is hard to get people to practice it. I know one church that has devised an effective way to get people used to prayerwalking by bringing the concept into their weekly prayer meeting—without calling it prayerwalking.

When they gather, they usually worship for a short time. But when they go to prayer, people do not stay in one place. As prayer needs and prayer points for various ministries are scrolled on the screen, people start walking and praying. Some never leave the sanctuary, but keep walking around—to the stage, around the seats, etc. Others head to different parts of

the building as they pray, often in teams of two. The children's wing and youth room get prayerwalked every week.

The staff offices, foyer, and fellowship hall are bathed in prayer as well.

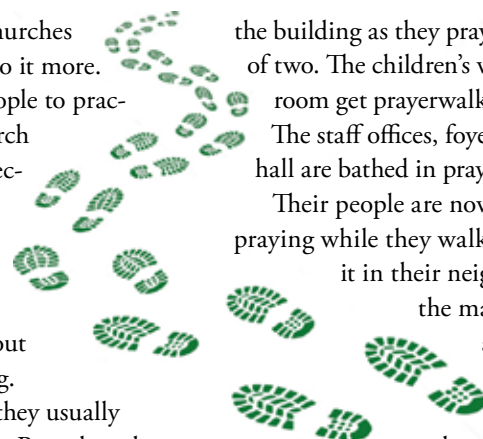
Their people are now comfortable praying while they walk. So now they do it in their neighborhoods, at the mall, and in other strategic places.

This is a great practice

to break up routine

prayer meetings and teach people to walk and pray. From time to time encourage people to pray throughout your building as part of your prayer meeting. Then challenge them to do this in their neighborhoods, at work, or wherever they walk.

JONATHAN GRAF is publisher of *Prayer Connect*.



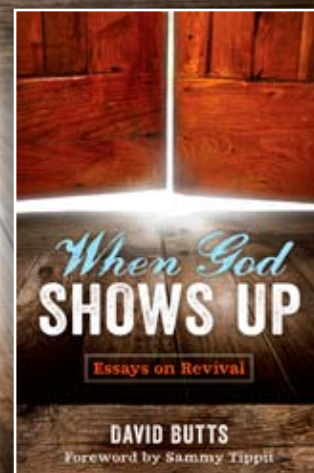
Revival...

What is it?

Do we need it?

“Revival is not strange or mystical,” writes Dave Butts in his new book *When God Shows Up*. “It is simply the church waking up to the presence of Christ in her midst.”

In this series of essays, Butts shows us what true revival is, how the church needs it, and how to effectively pray for revival. If you hunger for more of God's presence in your church, read *When God Shows Up*.



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WayMakers: Praying Toward Purpose

WayMakers is an extraordinary prayer mobilization and missional ministry focused on the desire to see the glory of the Lord cover the earth. Their easy-to-navigate website (waymakers.org) provides an abundance of teaching and resources to help you and your church to pray differently and hope differently toward the Kingdom purposes of God. They seek to come alongside leaders and local movements of united prayer focused on seeing entire communities prayed for, evangelized, transformed, and awakened to the glory of Christ Jesus.


WayMakers equips people to develop a vision and a great hope and passion for living in a prayed-for community and ultimately a prayed-for world. The site offers a variety of tools, teaching, and resources for engaging people in “saturation prayer”—prayer that covers the world locally and globally.

From the Home page you can navigate to several important areas of the website. However, because the Home page is fluid (changing content often), we will focus mainly on the Pray dropdown menu. Here you will find a powerful array of opportunities for creative praying that is Kingdom focused and Christ honoring. The following is a brief synopsis of some of what is available:

- **Praying Toward Purpose:** In this section the reader will learn that God is already on the move and that perhaps answered prayer is His favorite way to be glorified. Prayer is the avenue He has chosen and designed for His people to accomplish His purposes on the earth. There are a variety of articles by Steve Hawthorne, WayMakers director, to excite and encourage readers toward
- pursuing God’s purpose.
- **Seek God for the City:** This is an amazing prayer guide for a season of sustained, hope-filled prayer for 40 days leading up to Palm Sunday. It is produced by WayMakers each year with a Spanish translation, a children’s version, and a mobile app. The guide is an easy-to-use tool that encourages united prayer in a variety of contexts. Users will be well prepared for Easter week by praying for their communities and the world.
- **Prayer-Care-Share:** WayMakers advocates this powerful way to pray for lost people in your community. It moves hearts to look for ways to show God’s love, opening doors to share the gospel. This prayer lifestyle fits well with many national initiatives, including Mission America’s LOVE2020.
- **Prayerwalking:** This is described as praying “on site with insight.” According to WayMakers, “It’s simply praying in the very places that we expect God to bring forth His answers.” The website has easy and helpful tools to get you started in prayerwalking around your neighborhood. Steve Hawthorne co-authored a book on prayerwalking and helped to coin the word.
- **Ways to Pray:** This section offers practical resources to help inform and enliven your prayers through pocket-sized prayer guides. Learn to pray powerfully where you live, work, or play. The website allows you to see sample pages of the prayer guides.
- **Fresh Prayer:** This free, single-page prayer guide is newly released every two months. Fresh Prayer uses Scripture to help you pray specifically for

those who are far from Christ. There is a leader’s guide in each issue to assist pray-ers to stay focused and strategic. Many back issues of the prayer guides are available online.

- **Global Day of Prayer:** Each year on Pentecost Sunday, thousands of believers and churches around the world join to pray in one accord. Believers can pray the same “prayer for the world” as a movement of prayer goes through each time zone. Prior to Pentecost, there are ten days of continuous prayer to kick off this global movement. A PDF prayer guide is available to help focus prayers. Following Pentecost comes 90 days of blessing that encourages Christ followers to bless their communities with loving action.
- **30 Days of Prayer for the Muslim World:** During the season of Ramadan, WayMakers makes available a prayer guide produced by worldchristian.com so that Christians can focus their prayers as they pray for Muslim neighbors and nations.

All of these resources are well written and scripturally based. To learn more, go to waymakers.org. 

What’s Not to Like?



Here are some prayer pages on Facebook we encourage you to “Like.” (Add www.facebook.com before the / on each address.)

Prayer Connect

[/prayerconnect](https://www.facebook.com/prayerconnect)

Harvest Prayer Ministries

[/harvestprayer](https://www.facebook.com/harvestprayer)

New Life America

[/newlifeamerica](https://www.facebook.com/newlifeamerica)

Making Sense of All Those Days of Prayer | By Jonathan Graf

What's a prayer leader to do? There seem to be too many days of prayer: National Day of Prayer, Global Day of Prayer, International Day of Prayer for the Persecuted Church, Day of Prayer for the Peace of Jerusalem, and Day of Prayer for Children at Risk. And those are just *some* of the events clamoring for our participation.

Then there are the initiatives—Seek God for the City, Praying through the 10/40 Window, 30 Days of Prayer for the Muslim World, 30 Days of Prayer for the Hindu World, PrayWorld. And what about the ongoing calls to prayer—First Friday, the Presidential Prayer Team, Hollywood Prayer Network—to say nothing of denominational prayer emphases your church should highlight?

A church can only focus on so much. As a prayer leader, how can you make choices about what you should participate in—and what you can forego?

Each church will be different in its needs, so my broad answer is that you need to genuinely seek God for His desires for your church. But let me suggest some guidelines that may help you discern what events your church should participate in.

1. Use the National Prayer Accord principles. The National Prayer Accord was originally devised by Jonathan Edwards and others prior to the First Great Awakening. Their thought was that each church would pray around the same basic theme of revival. But churches would also pray weekly or monthly in their own circles, quarterly with other churches in their community, and nationally once a year. A prayer rhythm focused this way is a pattern easily handled.

Make participation in the

National Day of Prayer and/or the Global Day of Prayer as your once-a-year emphasis. Then look for three other times you can join with other churches in your community for a prayer event. Select a concert of prayer to highlight praying for your community, or choose some of the other days to participate together.

2. Select by tiers of importance. What seems to be a fit for the personality of your church? Is your church a strong missions church? Then you will want to use at least one missions focus. Does your church seem to have a strong heart for Israel? Then certainly highlight the Day of Prayer for the Peace of Jerusalem.

3. Select by levels of effort. Another way to proceed is to choose at least one or two initiatives that take some effort to organize—and then add anything else that can be done with ease. For example, select a prayer initiative like Seek God for the City or one of many 40 Days of Prayer. These will take some promotional effort, but the rewards of participation are enormous for your church. A prayer initiative for your congregation will bring long-term results of more interest in prayer.

As a prayer leader, however, you can only handle one or maybe two

prayer events per year that require this level of effort. But you can highlight other events throughout the year that do not take effort. For example, even if you can't spearhead a National Day of Prayer event, you can certainly publicize other prayer gatherings in your community on that day. While you might not be able to do a big event around the Day of Prayer for Children at Risk, you can get information and prayer guides to people who might be interested in participating. And praying for Hollywood might not involve your entire church, but you can provide guides for those who have a burden for the entertainment industry.

4. What does your leadership want? Another possible plan of attack is to gather your pastor(s) and key leaders each fall and review all the possible prayer events you can participate in during the coming year. Before such a meeting, gather all the information you can on every possible day and be ready to make your recommendations. Talk as a group about each one, and together map out the year.

One possible starting point for gathering information is past issues of *Prayer Connect* magazine (or the website prayerconnect.net). Many of the possible prayer events in a calendar year are listed.

While there are a lot of possibilities, don't be overwhelmed! Seek the Lord and plan ahead. Then watch what happens as you take advantage of these calls to prayer. ☞

JONATHAN GRAF is publisher of *Prayer Connect*.



The Holy Spirit and Missions | By Andrew Murray

It has often been remarked that true mission work has always been born of a revival of religious life in the church. The Holy Spirit's quickening work stirs up new devotion to the Blessed Lord and new concern for the lost.

The indwelling of the Holy Spirit, and the Presence and Rule of the Lord of Glory which He maintains, must again become the chief mark of the Christian life. The origin, the progress, the success of missions are all His. It is He who awakens in the hearts of believers the jealousy for the honour of their Lord, the compassion to the souls of the perishing, the faith in His promise, the willing obedience to His commands, in which the mission takes its rise.

It is He who draws together to united effort, who calls forth the suitable men to go out, who opens the door, and prepares the hearts of the heathen to desire or to receive the Word. And it is He who at length gives the increase, and even where Satan's seat is, establishes the cross, and gathers round it the redeemed of the Lord.

Holy Spirit Makes Us Fit

Missions are the special work of the Holy Spirit. No one may expect to be filled with the Spirit if he is not willing to be used for missions. No one who wishes to work or pray for missions need fear his feebleness or poverty: the Holy Spirit is the power that can fit him to take his divinely appointed place in the work.

Let everyone who prays for missions, and longs for more of a missionary spirit in the church, pray first and most that in every believer personally, and in the church and all its work and worship, the power of the Indwelling Spirit may have full sway.

Blessed the church and blessed the

mission which the Spirit originates, where He is allowed to guide, and where the blessing is waited for from Himself alone. Ten days' praying and waiting on earth, and the Spirit's descent in fire: this was the birth of the church at Jerusalem (Acts 1–2). Ministering and fasting, and then again fasting and praying, and the Spirit sending forth Barnabas and Saul: this was at Antioch the consecration of the church to be a Mission Church (Acts 13:1–4).

*Be of good cheer!
The Holy Spirit
is with thee,
is in thee.*

May I say to any missionary who reads this in his far-off home: Be of good cheer! The Holy Spirit who is the Mighty Power of God, who is the Presence of Jesus within thee, the Holy Spirit is with thee, is in thee. The work is His: depend on Him, yield to Him, wait for Him; the work is His, He will do it.

May I say to every Christian, be he director, supporter, contributor, helper in prayer or in any other way, in the great work of hastening the coming of the Kingdom: Be of good cheer! From that time of waiting before the Throne, and that baptism there received, the first disciples went forth until they reached Antioch. There they paused, and prayed, and fasted, and then pressed on to regions beyond. Let us from these our brethren

learn the secret of power. Let us call on every Christian who would be a mission friend and mission worker to come with us and be filled with the Spirit whose is the work of missions.

The need of the church and the world is believers who can testify to an indwelling Christ in the Spirit, and prove it too. The Spirit does still come as of old in power. He does still move and send forth; He is still mighty to convince of sin and reveal Jesus, and to make thousands fall at His feet. He waits for us. Let us wait on Him, let us welcome Him.

A Prayer for Missions

O God! Thou didst send Thy Son to be the Savior of the world. Thou didst give Him power over all flesh, that He should give eternal life to as many as Thou hast given Him. And Thou didst pour out Thy Spirit upon all flesh, commissioning as many as received Him to make known and pass on the wondrous blessing.

O our God! We stand amazed, and abased, at the sloth and neglect of Thy church in not fulfilling her Divine commission; we are humbled at our slowness of heart to perceive and believe what Thy Son did promise, to obey His will and finish His work. We cry to Thee, our God! Visit Thy church, and let Thy Spirit, the Spirit of the Divine Sending, fill all her children.

I humbly plead with Thee, give me and all Thy children to be so mightily strengthened by the Holy Spirit that Christ may possess heart and life, and our one desire be that the whole earth may be filled with glory. Amen. PC

ANDREW MURRAY (1828–1917) was a South African pastor and writer on prayer and the deeper life. He considered missions to be “the chief end of the church.” Excerpted from *The Spirit of Christ*.



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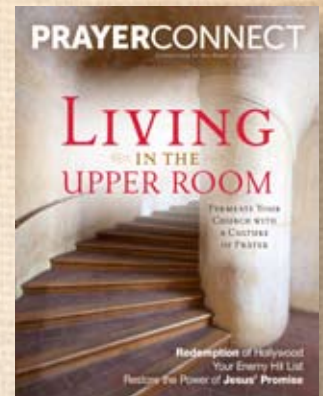
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