ISSUE TWELVE, SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER 2013

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Carol Madison

Prayer Connect Submissions 4300 West 98th St. | Bloomington, MN 55437 editor@prayerconnect.net

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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.

Jonathan Graf | jong@harvestprayer.com Carol Madison | editor@prayerconnect.net

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PRAYERCONNECT

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The mission of **PRAYER**CONNECT 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

Jesus prayed often while here on earth, but it wasn't just because He wanted to leave a model for us to follow. He prayed because He was *compelled*



to seek His Father in all things. The July/August 2013 issue offers several views of Jesus' prayer life, including His dangerous prayers and how He is still interceding for us today. Order this issue and other back issues at *prayershop.org*.

PUBLISHER'SNOTE



God Won't Break In!

his past summer I attended a denomination's convention. During one of the business sessions, there was an "open mic time" for people to offer their thoughts, suggestions, etc. to the leadership. An interesting thing started to happen. Everyone who spoke shared a common concern about the need for repentance and revival in the denomination.



People started sensing a divine moment. In fact, one

gentleman went out to gather people who were milling around the ministry booths next door so they could be a part of what was stirring. An announcement came that a late-morning tellers' meeting was cancelled so that participants could stay on the convention floor.

At one point, the denomination's president approached the moderating secretary to ask if he could address the convention. He was given the microphone and the opportunity to encourage those gathered to "not miss the moment of what God was doing." He said he had asked Fred (one of the denomination's prayer leaders) to lead them in a time of prayer—which everyone assumed would happen immediately. There was silence, but no one emerged to lead them.

Next, the secretary pointed out there were still people at the microphones stationed throughout the convention floor, and they would start letting them speak again. The first man spoke up, saying that he hated to break the spirit of the moment—but then he did. He challenged the group not to drop a statement against drinking from a proposed document.

After that, the secretary cut off other opportunities for people to speak. The meeting moved ahead with the planned business that included an interview with presidential candidates up for election later in the afternoon.

The moment was gone. I was next to the wife of a leader in the denomination. She turned to me and said in a sad, concerned voice: "What just happened?" Indeed! What *did* just happen?

To the credit of the leadership, they offered a prayer time for revival an hour or so later, led by the prayer leader. Several hundred people (out of 2,000) gave up their lunches and stayed to pray. I certainly understand it would have been a logistical nightmare if the leaders had gone straight into a prayer time and cancelled the number of paid-for luncheons that were already scheduled.

But this is exactly what keeps us from revival in so many circles. We stop God from breaking in because we cannot give up our agendas. Churches schedule services down to the minute, knowing they need to "clear the parking lot for the next service." It demonstrates how God is limited to moving according to *our* time.

I need to confess that I, too, forewent the prayer meeting (at least some of it) to go to a college alumni luncheon where my younger brother was being honored as "alumnus of the year." I returned to the prayer meeting as soon as David received the award, but still—I made my choice.

Somehow, we must surrender this Western flaw of controlling the schedule if we want to see God come in revival. It *is* a choice.

-Jonathan Graf

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Cross-country Bike Ride for Revival

arlier this year, Paul Gruber believed God wanted him to sell all of his belongings and take a cross-country bike ride from just south of Grand Rapids, MI, to Key West, FL to pray for revival. He biked through hundreds of communities, praying as he went through each town. Often he stopped and knelt on a sidewalk or street corner, drew a circle on the ground with chalk, and said a prayer for revival. He also drew crosses in the circle and invited people to dialog or pray with him.

In July, Paul reached his first major

goal—mile marker #1 in Key West. He hoped to ride a circumference around the nation, reversing his course to ride north and west—and deciding he would ride "until God tells me to stop." He ended his ride in late July at Grenada, MS, after 3,600 miles.

His motivation was "the pain in my heart" he feels when he sees what is happening in the U.S. "We live in a world that's hopeless . . . and I believe they need God in their lives. I'm going



to do my little piece and let God do the rest." Gruber documented his journey on Facebook and Instagram (PaulGruber123).

Operation Rolling Thunder: The Whatcom Story

peration Rolling Thunder (ORT) has been rolling in Whatcom County in Washington—the northern- and western-most county in the United States—since 2005. ORT is a city- and county-wide transformation strategy, rooted in prayer and based on Psalm 18:6–18, a portion of Scripture describing God's "thunderous" response to David's prayer for help.

Through this concerted prayer effort, God is moving in some extraordinary ways. A recent report revealed that in the last eight years 50-plus new churches have been planted in the county, first-time commitments to Christ have increased by 40 percent, abortions have decreased and adoptions have increased sharply, homeless numbers have dropped by more than 25 percent, crime rates have gone down by 15 percent, and unemployment rates are the lowest in the state.

The strategy, conceived by Tim Taylor and described in his book by that title, encourages regional church leaders to assemble seven strategic teams to focus



attention on seven spheres—business, education, health care, government, media/arts and entertainment, family, and religion/church—and to ask God what He wants to do in each sphere.

Role of Churches

The operational goal for the "rolling thunder" prayer plan is to identify 31 or more local churches in a given city or county, each of which agrees to take one day a month to pray for the seven spheres, asking God what's on His heart. Churches are urged to pray first for their own congregations and second for the needs in their cities/counties.

Participating ORT churches receive prayer suggestions touching each of the

seven spheres. These churches organize their "prayer day" activities in a way that fits the prayer culture of their church. Some use a prayer vigil format with members taking 30- or 60-minute prayer shifts. Some facilitate prayer and worship activities for the day in their church's prayer room. Others opt to include prayer prompts for city/county intercession in their church's regular prayer guide, challenging their members to pray privately for the city/county on their church's day.

Participating churches appoint prayer coordinators to organize and schedule their church's ORT prayer ministries. These coordinators meet four times a year to share testimonies, clarify vision, and receive training.

Prayer Center Ministries

In addition to the churches, other prayer strategies are organized out of the Light of the World Prayer Center in Bellingham, WA. Director Jason Hubbard and Prayer Center personnel oversee seven transformation team leaders who, in turn, work

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"Please share a huge thank you and praise with your team. . . . Our small group saw revival tonight as I have never witnessed in our church. Half of them were not even at the conference, but those that were shared with such testimony and passion that the entire group went to prayer on our knees . . . in humbleness and repentance and brokenness before the Lord. We made a commitment tonight to be the start of Spiritual Awakening in our church, community and beyond."

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NEWS**&EVENTS**

with their own team members to discern and pray into the Father's transformation agenda for each sphere.

Each team meets quarterly to discuss prayer items and ongoing transformation strategies. Leaders of the seven transformation teams also come together periodically for sharing, for across-theseven-spheres vision casting, and for encouragement.

Other Whatcom County prayeroriented ministries include:

- approximately 100 hours a week of prayer and worship at the Prayer Center.
- three groups of senior pastors who meet every month for city/countyfocused prayer.
- 50 lead pastors meeting quarterly to pray together on behalf of the county.
- 30 youth pastors who meet monthly

at the Prayer Center for spiritual bonding and prayer.

- three weekly county-wide ministries for men, which involve men from 40 different local churches. One of the ministries has a membership that tops 200.
- 1,000-plus students and 70 faculty members from Western Washington University working and praying together for Kingdom advances.

Other counties in Washington are now developing ORT ministries that follow the Whatcom County model. For a video version of the Whatcom story, go to YouTube: *The Whatcom Story: Waves of Glory.* You can find additional information at *ortprayer.org.*

ALVIN VANDERGRIEND is the co-founder of the Denominational Prayer Leader's Network.

Middle East Prayer Assembly

n "invitation only" gathering of ministry leaders from the nations of the Middle East will be held in Larnaca, Cyprus, October 1-4, 2013, to pray about the ongoing conflict in the region. The gathering is sponsored by the International Prayer Council and World Prayer Assembly, and will include prayer leaders of other nations who will support the gathering.

According to the website (*middleeast-prayerassembly.org*), sponsors believe that "from times of the Bible till now, God has used the united prayer of His people to change the history of nations. He has delegated immense authority to believers to make a difference.

"The current status of conflict, war and suffering in the Middle East region is not God's purpose, but the result of human and demonically inspired antagonisms that pit nations, ethnic, and religious groups against one another for the misery and destruction of all. The Lord wants His peace, healing, love, justice and goodness to cover the region. Our united prayers, supported by many others around the world, will facilitate a new day for this important area of our world."

Each national group will present the current situation and needs in their nation (political, economic, cultural, and spiritual), then the leaders will go to the Lord together for in-depth sessions of prayer, listening, and interceding.

Some objectives of the gathering include building stronger, deeper relationships among ministry leaders from all three Christian traditions (Catholic, Orthodox, and Protestant) for greater cooperation in prayer and action, as well as enlisting the support of the international prayer movement. The sponsors of the gathering believe there is a calling for Christian leaders "to meet under the Lordship of Jesus Christ and to pray with unity, faith, and authority He has given us for the healing and transformation of the nations of the Middle East."

NEWS**&EVENTS**



Kenyan President Seeks God's Covering

enya has been a nation struggling with issues that have tried to divide it, as Islamic terrorists are killing Christians with increasing frequency. Muslims have tried to shut down Christian gatherings and houses of worship, especially near the country's borders with Somalia.

Prior to the presidential election on March 4, 2013, "there has been great opposition from the Islamic agenda against the Christian Church," says Dr. Sammy Ngaho, founder and president of Ngaho International Ministries. "Through much prayer and faith all over the country, all resistance is coming down."

Dr. Ngaho notes that the election in March was the first peaceful election without bloodshed in more than 50 years. "This is all because of what God did to answer prayer as we had very organized prayer across the entire country. Every county was fasting and praying. Every county was formally dedicated to God and an altar to God was planted there as well," he says.

Newly elected President Uhuru



Kenyatta and Deputy President William Ruto both profess to be Christians. They declared Kenya to be a Christian nation at Kenya's 11th annual National Prayer Breakfast.

At the breakfast, President Kenyatta stated, "It is said that prayer is to the soul what food is to the body. This is indeed true. On a personal level, I am convinced that there is nothing more valuable than praying to God, for prayer unites us with our Creator.

"This National Prayer Breakfast is unique, as it is the first one in our Jubilee year. As we celebrate our Jubilee anniversary this year, let us profess that it will be our year of restoration, renewal, and repentance in the spirit of the biblical year of Jubilee."

He also asked his nation to repent of their sins. "As we come before the Almighty God in prayer, I call upon Kenyans to seek forgiveness and repent for our wrong doing. Let us also forgive one another and pray for reconciliation and healing in our country. I urge Kenyans to remember that we are all equal in the eyes of God, and we must forge ahead as one, united people."

As President Kenyatta considered enormous challenges facing the country, he said, "I would like to assure all Kenyans that we are determined to deal with any internal and external threats to our peace and security. However, as we endeavor to deal with these challenges, let us also remember the words of the Psalmist in Psalm 127, that 'except the LORD keep the city, the watchman waketh but in vain.'"

MARK ELLIS is a senior correspondent for ASSIST News Service (*assistnews.net*) and the founder of *godreports.com*. Melissa Nordell also contributed to this article.

Children in Prayer: North American Summit Meets

Prayer leaders who specialize in mobilizing children to pray, held a summit in May in Minneapolis, MN. They focused on children from ages 4 to 14 (the 4/14 Window) who are in a strategic time in their lives to be used by God in authentic ministry.

Tom Victor, who leads the North American regional team for the 4/14 Window, spoke of how God is raising up children around the world as powerful and anointed pray-ers—and the desire for North American churches recognize this in increasing ways.

"As people see God visiting and encountering children, it's breathtaking through their beauty and their innocence, and how God uses them to change whole communities," said Victor. "It's so obvious that God is at work through their prayers. Children aren't just our future; they're our *now*."

The North American leaders acknowledge that the children's prayer movement in the U.S. is lagging behind other key nations of the world, including Indonesia and India. But they also hope this conference is historic in releasing children in prayer.

John Robb of the International Prayer Council told the leaders, "I'm convinced it will be the prayers of children that save





NEWS**&EVENTS**

America. We need to put up a wall of protection, and children are key. They will affect the destiny of the U.S."

Robb shared the example of 20,000 children in other nations who are trained as intercessors and participated in the May 2012 World Prayer Assembly in Indonesia. These children provided prayer support for this international gathering, and were also in prayer for the North American Summit. In addition, thousands of child intercessors were in day-and-night intercession for revival at

an International Children Intercessor Conference in Chennai, India, in July.

Children are also invited to participate in an International Prayer Initiative for the United Nations, November 18–20, 2013, in New York City. This gathering will precede the U.N. Universal Children's Day with strategic prayer for children and youth to become partners in the growing global prayer movement.

Victor summarized the hope of prayer leaders: "I'm absolutely convinced that God is launching His Church globally into a time of acceleration in a way that none of us can even anticipate what this will look like. And I'm convinced the children will lead us!"

For more information on the prayer movement, go to *4to14window.com*.





Cry Out America Wednesday, September 11 awakeningamerica.us

See You at the Pole Wednesday, September 25 syatp.com

> Day of Prayer for the Peace of Jerusalem Sunday, October 6 daytopray.com

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

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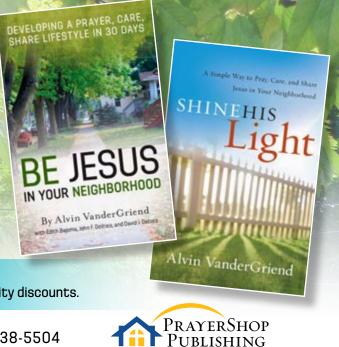
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• THEME INTRODUCTION •



his summer I stopped by city hall and asked for a map of my community. I intended to prayer walk as many streets as possible, especially during my church's designated month of prayer and fasting. As I walked, I prayed for a Christ-awakening to come to every household. My tennis shoes grew a little more worn and my map filled up with blue highlighter as I marked off the streets I covered.

I have prayed this way for several years, asking God to send revival and spiritual awakening to my community and this nation. Yet the spiritual darkness only seems to increase. I wish I could say my hope is *undaunted*, meaning "not intimidated or discouraged by difficulty, danger, or disappointment." But at times I struggle with discouragement.

Yet, God has allowed me to see the very thing I'm praying for—and that keeps the flicker of hope alive in my heart. In 2004, I traveled to Almolonga, Guatemala, to walk the streets of a community that has experienced the reviving presence of Jesus Christ. I witnessed God's power to radically change people and society in answer to desperate prayer.

A HOPELESS PLACE

-2-2-1

Almolonga was once devastated by spiritual darkness. Rampant drunkenness and crime created overcrowded jails. The people worshiped demonic spirits. Poverty and abuse enslaved the town. People were hostile toward any attempts to share the gospel. A sense of hopelessness had settled on the townspeople.

When thugs threatened the local pastor's life, he did the only thing he knew to do. He called his small church to prayer. Desperate prayer. Late-night prayer. Contending prayer. Prayer that doesn't give up until God answers.

As the believers cried out to God, He met them in miraculous

ways. Families were restored. Crime almost ceased. In fact, today the police no longer carry guns—only whistles to manage the traffic. Some 30 bars were replaced by the same number of churches. It is estimated more than 80 percent of the people in this community of 20,000 are now followers of Jesus Christ!

I heard testimonies of how God healed many of the people so they could work in their fields. Not only did He restore them to health and hard work, God also increased their crop production in dramatic ways, earning Almolonga the nickname, "Valley of Miracles."

These believers asked me to share a message with my own church and community. "Prayer is what we do—it is our work. God gets all the glory," they said repeatedly. The pastor implored me to make it clear to others back home that revival is not a program or strategy: "You must humble yourselves and pray. There is no other way."

HOPE UNDAUNTED

So I continue to pray for my community and nation. I invite others to pray with me. I still feel disheartened at times, but I often ask the Lord to renew my vision for revival.

I pray this issue will do the same for you. Jim Jarman writes about staying encouraged even when hope for revival is deferred. Dan and Melissa Jarvis describe the biblical pattern for revival in Scripture, reminding us of historical moves of God, and encouraging us to trust Him and to pray expectantly. Mark Partin offers revival-directed prayers of returning to our first love, based on the Church of Ephesus in Revelation 2.

You must humble yourselves and pray. There is no other way. I believe this. I pray my hope is strengthened and undaunted as I look toward another great move of God.

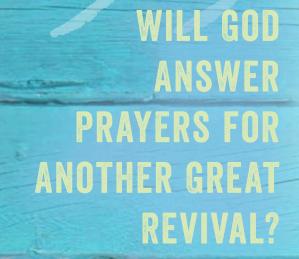
CAROL MADISON is editor of Prayer Connect.



William MacDonnell is my friend. As a follower of Christ from a home where faith was a contentious subject, Will's prayer request at our weekly Bible study was almost always the same. "Will you pray for my mother, Mary? She doesn't know the Lord and she doesn't want to talk about it."

There were weeks when Will hesitated to ask again. You could see it in his face. "I know I keep asking, but will you pray for my mom? She doesn't know the Lord. Will you pray she accepts Christ?" We prayed for Mary again prayers of expectation, prayers of hope.

For several years, our Bible study group prayed for Mary MacDonnell—and we weren't the only ones Will had asked. Will himself had prayed a lot longer than the rest of us. How could God ignore all these years of fervent prayer by so many?





When Mary became terminally ill, Will's requests intensified and so did our prayers on her behalf. His parents lived almost 200 miles away. The physical and emotional distance between mother and son increased Will's concern and his desire for God to answer.

"God, we have asked You for Mary for a long time. Please, please save Will's mom!"

And of course, from Will himself the pleas of a son praying for a dearly loved mother, "God, please let my mom come to know You before it's too late."

And then the word came, but it was not what Will wanted to hear. Mary died. Oh, how it broke Will's heart. Years of hope. Countless cries and requests. Mary had slipped into eternity and there was nothing more to pray.

Will had placed his reliance in God. We had, too. We continued to trust God by bringing other requests to Him, but something changed in our fervency. The loss dampened our expectations.

WHEN HOPE SEEMS LOST

Hope can be defined as *the belief or expectation that something can or will happen.* Proverbs 13:12 describes it this way: "Hope deferred makes the heart sick, but a longing fulfilled is a tree of life."

How do we pray when hope seems lost, when a situation deteriorates rather than coming to resolution? How can we keep from becoming discouraged and giving up when our nation slips further and further into darkness? How do we maintain confidence in the grace and love of God when judgment, logical consequences, and the downward slope of destruction seem inevitable?

Let's face it: Isn't it difficult to maintain endurance in our prayer lives—to intercede for years only to see no progress,

START THE DISCUSSION

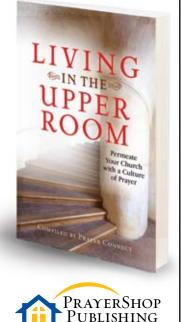
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or worse, regression? Prayer is often described as a battle—a fight we sometimes wonder if we're losing. God told the Prophet Jeremiah to stop praying for Israel (Jer. 14:11–12) because in His displeasure, He had deemed it was too late. He was sending judgment.

Should we do the same when it seems our nation also deserves judgment? When hope for revival is deferred or other prayer longings go unanswered, it doesn't just make our hearts sick. It also makes our guts wrench, our muscles weak, and our minds confused.

Prayer is supposed to be offered up in faith. But if faith is the "assurance of things hoped for" (Heb. 11:1, ESV), what do we do when our hope has gone?

We often give up hoping—for our own self-preservation. If we don't dream, then we won't be disappointed. If we want to play catch with Dad, but Dad's always working, eventually we decide baseball isn't so important. If we long for revival, yet we don't see repentance on the horizon, we believe our prayers for revival are wasted.

There is a reason Paul reminded the Church at Rome: "May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit" (Rom. 15:13). The God of hope wants us to overflow with hope, but it will require the power of the Spirit in our lives. Just imagine: complete joy, total peace, and an abundance of hope! Isn't that what we need?

Here's how to maintain hope for the long haul:

REMEMBER SCRIPTURE

Paul wrote: "For everything that was written in the past was written to teach us, so that through the endurance taught in the Scriptures and the encouragement they provide we might have hope" (Rom. 15:4). The Scriptures give us hope. They show us the heart of God—His faithfulness, goodness, grace, and mercy—and, yes, even His justice and judgment.

When Solomon dedicated the temple (1 Kings 8), he prayed fervently to God on behalf of his people.

"God, when wrongs are committed and when we sin and turn our backs on You, when You have judged us and shut up the heavens so it does not rain, or famine and plague come to the land . . . God, when we get what we deserve because of our sin, but then repent and turn to You, O God, will You hear from heaven, Your dwelling place, and forgive us and bless us once again?" (vv. 28– 30, 47–48, author's paraphrase).

Why does Solomon, in his wisdom, pray like this? He knows "there is no one who does not sin" (8:46), but that God is faithful to keep His "covenant of love" (8:23) if the right conditions are met.

One of the most interesting accounts of intercession in Scripture is found in Genesis 18. Abraham contends with the Lord for his nephew Lot and the city of Sodom. He asks God, "Will you sweep away the righteous with the wicked?" Abraham's pleas and God's response are worth noting.

"What if I find 50 righteous people? Will You spare the city?"

Yes. "What if I find only 45?" Yes. "What if I find only 40?" Yes. "What if I find only 30?" Yes. "What if I find only 20?" Yes. "What if I find only 10?" Yes.

The destruction of Sodom is well known. God did not find ten, but He gave Lot and his family a chance at freedom. We often read this story and focus on the outcome. God *did* judge and destroy Sodom. Yet the story of Sodom is as much an account of grace as it is judgment. Notice the length to which God will go to save. Time and again, He agrees to spare the city.

The Apostle Peter reminds us that while there is a day of judgment, we should never forget *this one thing*: God is patient, "not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance" (2 Peter 3:3–9). This gives me hope and keeps me praying for revival. When people come to Christ, society *may* change. But the goal of revival is not the restoration of a society, but the preservation of a people for God Himself. God's heart is that none should perish—and often great moves of God come during the darkest hours of a nation.

God called my wife Lynn and me to Sweden where less than one percent of the population attends any church. One congregation closes its doors every week. At this rate, evangelicalism will be dead in the country by 2054—that's just 41 years from now! One Christian leader said she looks to Sweden today to see where America will be in 20 years, barring God's intervention in either country. Yet, we hope for revival among the Swedish people, a hope rooted in God's goodness and grace. We have that same longing for our fellow Americans. In fact, the darker the circumstances seem, the more hope we have.

Jesus references the story of Lot just before He tells His disciples a parable to convince them to "always pray and not give up" (Luke 18:1). He says that the end of days will be just like the time of Lot.

But then He immediately teaches them about prayer that keeps on hoping. He uses a story about a widow who persistently seeks justice and a judge who couldn't care less about her case. The judge finally rules in the widow's favor just to get her to leave him alone.

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LET THE SHAKING BEGIN IN ME BY JIM JARMAN

he year was 1950. The famous revival on the windswept Isle of Lewis in the Scottish Outer Hebrides was already underway. It began when two elderly sisters fervently prayed. Peggy Smith was 84 and completely blind. Christine, her younger sister by two years, could hardly walk and was bent over double from arthritis.

With a deep burden in their hearts, they began praying. Twice a week for many months, they went down on feeble knees at 10:00 p.m. and did not rise until 3:00 or 4:00 a.m. In the midst of their prayers, God gave them a vision of a man they had never met, a man God would use to change the island. The man's name was Duncan Campbell—and God brought him to the Hebrides to preach and shepherd the revival.

SUPERNATURAL MOVEMENT OF GOD

People on the island were inexplicably drawn to Christ. Without publicity, telephones, or Internet, they awoke in the middle of the night and felt compelled to gather in a farmer's field or at a local parish church. Sometimes they did not make it—and instead simply fell by the side of the road, confessing their sins to God. Bars and dance halls shut their doors for good. Starting with the small town of Barvas, the entire Isle of Lewis turned from darkness to light. Entire towns were being converted to Christ, with the exception of the stubborn little parish of Arnol.

Arnol defiantly resisted the gospel. No one wanted to hear what Duncan Campbell had to say. In fact, the citizenry held opposition meetings to denounce the revival. Campbell and his fellow leaders knew the only answer was prayer.

They gathered one evening in a farmhouse and began to pray, earnestly appealing to the promises God had made in the Bible. At midnight, Campbell asked John, the local blacksmith, to pray, which he did for more than two hours. Near the end of his prayer, with his cap in his hand, John looked heavenward and said,

"God, do You know that Your honor is at stake? You promised to pour water on the thirsty and floods on the dry ground. . . . I stand before You as an empty vessel and I am thirsty—thirsting for Thee and for a manifestation of Thy power. I'm thirsty to see the devil defeated in this parish. I'm thirsty to see this community gripped as You gripped Barvas. I'm longing for revival and, God, You are not doing it! I'm thirsty and You promised to pour water on me. God, Your honor is at stake, and I take it upon myself to challenge You now to fulfill Your covenant engagement."

At that moment, the house shook violently. A jug on the sideboard crashed to the ground and broke. Those who were present said that wave after wave of power swept over the room.

At the same time, the town of Arnol was awakened from its slumber. Lights went on. People came into the streets and started praying. Others knelt where they were and asked God to forgive them. Men carried chairs and women held stools, asking if there was room for them in the church. At 2:00 a.m., revival came to this last resistant town on the island.

ANOTHER SHAKING

As I reflect on this historic account, I wonder why my prayers don't seem to shake much except my own confidence in prayer itself. How can I connect with God in such an intimate way that I can pray with absolute certainty that God has both heard and will answer? Why do I so willingly accept a "No" from God and chalk it up to His all-knowing nature instead of taking the time to understand His heart so that He can respond "Yes" to me?

There is no question that our society needs a shaking from God, a response that manifests His presence and His power, a deliverance that restores communities and nations. But I sense that any outward shaking will be preceded by an inward one that changes the very core of my being.

Before I can challenge God to remember His covenant, it is God's prerogative to challenge me on the condition of my heart. Does my pulse stay in sync with the rhythm of His? Do I know God's heartbeat well enough to pray His will so that He can say, "Yes"?

The history of revivalism shows that prevailing prayer precedes all major moves of God's Spirit. "Lord, do not callous my heart. Callous my knees." This is my longing as I pray. Jesus says that if an unjust judge will do this, "will not God bring about justice for his chosen ones, who cry out to him day and night? Will he keep putting them off? I tell you, he will see that they get justice, and quickly" (18:7–8). But then He adds these haunting words: "However, when the Son of Man comes, will he find faith on the earth?" (18:8).

When we implore the throne of heaven on behalf of a prodigal loved one—or when we cry out for revival for a prodigal nation—we are petitioning the courtroom of God. For everyone who believes, the justice of God has been met on the cross. God wants lost people to be found.

When your hope in prayer seems elusive, remember Scripture.

REMEMBER HISTORY

What God has done in the past, He can do again. This encourages me.

On the southeastern edge of Glasgow, Scotland, is the suburb of Cambuslang. In the 1740s, it was a small farming, weaving, and mining town. During that time, prayer movements were starting throughout Britain and Scotland, and Cambuslang's local pastor, William McCulloch, authorized one to begin in his parish. Afraid of emotional outbursts, he wanted the prayer meetings strictly controlled and only preapproved congregants could participate. God often has a different agenda.

For several months, the prayer group met when finally, on February 14, 1742, the conversion of one woman broke the dam of resistance. People started coming under conviction and being saved—in very emotional ways uncommon in the church.

Crowds converged on the little parish from all over. Other ministers came in to help with the revival. Finally, Rev. McCulloch asked George Whitefield to come and preach. The crowds grew to more than 30,000 people! The events were called "Holy Fairs" and culminated with the celebration of the Lord's Supper for new believers. This was the result of one pastor who gathered a small group to pray.

Sometimes prayer doesn't just precede a revival. Sometimes prayer *is* the revival. It seemed to be a normal Tuesday in February 1970, when students of Asbury College in Kentucky filed into Hughes Auditorium at 10:00 a.m. for their regular, required chapel service. Some, however, sensed the presence of the Spirit upon entering—almost as if the room was being transformed into holy ground.

Custer Reynolds, the school's academic dean, was in charge of the service that day. He decided not to preach, but instead gave his testimony and then invited the students to come and share what God was doing in their lives. One student came, followed by another and then another. The 50-minute chapel service lasted 185 hours non-stop, 24 hours a day. It was not planned in advance. There was no predominant leader. No one wanted to leave.

Students were weeping, publically confessing their sins, praying in small groups, seeking out and asking forgiveness from others they had wronged. Some sang quietly in small groups. Everyone was polite and orderly.

As students prayed that week, they sensed the Spirit telling them to take the revival to other schools. Teams were formed and during the first week of travel, students went to churches and schools in 16 states and saw more than 1,000 conversions. By the summer of 1970, teams had gone to some 130 other colleges, seminaries, and Bible schools from New York to California to Latin America. Everywhere they went, revival followed. Weeping. Repentance. Conversions. Prayer.

I personally experienced this renewal because my college was one of the first schools that the Asbury teams visited. My life has never been the same. When my own personal hope seems to vanish, I remember what God did in the past and what He has done for me.

IT'S NEVER TOO LATE

My friend Will's confidence in God's grace remained steadfast—even after his mom died. And that confidence was rewarded. One Sunday night when Will showed up at our house for our regular study, he had an uncontainable earto-ear grin, a famous smile we hadn't seen in awhile. He was so excited; he couldn't wait to share his news. Unexpectedly, Will received a call from the woman who had cared for Mary in her final days.

"Will, as I cared for your mom while she was dying, she asked me what she had to do to be born again. I explained to her what it means to know Jesus. We prayed together and Mary asked Christ to be her Savior."

Words cannot describe the joy Will experienced. His mom was in heaven! God had heard our cries! Hope deferred was now a longing fulfilled. As long as we have life and breath, and the person we're praying for has the same—it is not too late.

Arms raised. Knees bowed. Face down. Hearts broken. It is never too late to ask the God who longs to redeem to do the seemingly impossible. There is a renewed sense of hope that God might answer our prayers for revival in the nations of the earth. By His Spirit, He is stirring His people to pray in greater numbers than ever before. If Jesus is still interceding for us, how can we possibly stop praying for others? This is the hope we have for our nations, cities, friends, and loved ones.

I sense that somewhere out there, in the place we call "Eternity," Mary Mac-Donnell is shouting, "Amen!" 🖸



JIM JARMAN and his wife Lynn are international intercultural church planters and have been appointed to serve in Sweden with Converge Worldwide and New Life Church,

Stockholm. Their hearts long to see God ignite a flame of revival among Swedes—and they invite you to pray with them. If you would like prayer updates, contact them at jim@newlife.nu.



If you knew God only wanted you to do two things before blessing you with a revival of His presence—would you do them?

What if they required real sacrifice? A rearrangement of priorities? What if you'd have to give up things in your life, your household, your relationships, and even in your future?

AN ANCIENT PATTERN FOR REVIVAL

The Bible is full of such calls to absolute commitment: "deny yourself and follow me," "give up everything you have," "sell your possessions and give to the poor," or even "pray without ceasing." So what if the road to revival is paved with the same kind of surrender—radical, full-life obedience?

Old Testament history reads like a textbook for revival.

BY DAN & MELISSA JARVIS

We find many examples of wayward souls returning to God, from individuals to an entire nation. And, upon study of these spiritual transformations, a pattern emerges—not a "formula," not "revival in bottle," but a pattern that holds true 100 percent of the time.

Every time God moves to restore His people, *every* time there is a fresh wind of blessing and power in their midst—two components emerge. Grab your Bible and journey with us through seven revival moments in Israel's history. You'll quickly see the biblical pattern.

REVIVAL #1: NO MORE TRICKS

God called Jacob to go to Bethel (Gen. 35:1–15) to worship. Jacob immediately turned to the members of his household: "Get rid of all your pagan idols, purify

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yourselves, and put on clean clothing" (v. 2, NLT). God gave Jacob's band of family members and servants a special umbrella of protection so that they could safely return to this special place. Jacob built a new altar to the Lord, and it was also here that Jacob was renamed "Israel," *beloved of God.*

When God called Jacob to worship, it wasn't enough to bow in prayer, or even to lead his household in praise. No, he needed to do something before the worship could begin. He had to get rid of the idols. Once those were gone, once his household was purified, the real blessing and power of God showed up in force, even sending "a terror" upon Jacob's potential enemies.

REVIVAL #2: CHANGING THE GAME

When a prophet approached King Asa, he brought a message of mixed news from God (2 Chron. 15:1–15): "The LORD is with you when you are with Him" (v. 2). Clear enough. Asa immediately "took courage and removed the detestable idols from the land of Judah and Benjamin . . . He repaired the altar of the LORD, that was in front of the portico of the LORD's temple" (vs. 8).

The people obeyed God and "entered into a covenant to seek the LORD, the God of their ancestors, with all their heart and soul" (v. 12). God's blessing descended upon them, just as the prophet promised. Scripture tells us, "They sought God eagerly, and he was found by them. So the LORD gave them rest on every side" (v. 15).

REVIVAL #3: REFRESHED COVENANT

Jehoiada the priest seized the moment after a coup against an evil queen (2 Kings 11-12). He anointed a new king (Joash, a child just seven years old) and he "made a covenant between the LORD and the king and the people that they would be the LORD's people" (11:17). This priest meant business. He led the people to demolish the altars dedicated to Baal, smashing their idols to pieces. Then, as the young king Joash grew up, he and Jehoiada arranged to repair the temple so that worship could once again commence in Judah.

Imagine these scenes playing out today: bands of joyful, recommitted followers of God eagerly seeking out and destroying any vestiges of evil in their land, then uniting in great offerings over several years to refurbish God's temple. For a brief period in this usually dark segment of biblical history, a faithful priest stood up against the evil he saw and a spiritual revival resulted!

REVIVAL #4: FAITHFUL IN EVERYTHING

Hezekiah began ruling in Judah, and unlike so many leaders at the time, "He did what was right in the eyes of the LORD, just as his father David had done.... He held fast to the LORD and did not stop following him; he kept the commands the LORD had given Moses. And the LORD was with him; he was successful in whatever he undertook" (2 Kings 18:3–7; 2 Chron. 29–30).

This king went directly to the source of evil in his nation. He removed the idols and shrines dedicated to pagan gods, and he did more-he destroyed them. Moreover, he set out to restore the temple and to reinstitute worship and Passover celebrations. He sent runners throughout the land, announcing the joyful news of God's presence and blessing. After the seven-day celebration of Passover-singing and feasting and joy-the people were so enthralled with God's truth that they extended the Passover celebration for an additional seven days. It was written, "There was great joy in Jerusalem, for since the days of Solomon son of David king of Israel there had been nothing like this in Jerusalem" (2 Chron. 30:26).

REVIVAL #5: FUNDAMENTAL CHANGE

Manasseh was among the most evil kings in Jerusalem's history. His son Josiah was the opposite. He pleased God, even though his nation had strayed far from the truth. One day, during a restoration of God's temple that Josiah had ordered, workers found a copy of God's Law (lost until then) in the ruins. Upon hearing it, Josiah immediately humbled himself and sought to be a faithful king. He eradicated idols from the land and called on the people to follow the Law of Moses (2 Kings 22–23; 2 Chronicles 34–35).

After reading the Law to his people, King Josiah took his place of authority and "renewed the covenant in the presence of the LORD" (2 Kings 23:3). He pledged to obey the Lord by keeping all His commands, laws, and decrees with all his heart and soul. Later in the chapter we read, "Neither before nor after Josiah was there a king like him who turned to the LORD as he did—with all his heart and with all his soul and with all his strength, in accordance with all the Law of Moses" (23:25).

REVIVAL #6: PROPHETS WITH GOOD NEWS

When Haggai and Zechariah began preaching a renewed commitment to rebuilding the temple in Jerusalem, they immediately aroused the suspicion of faraway imperial leaders. However, upon working through the bureaucracy and history of the matter, King Darius not only agreed to allow the project to continue, but even offered to fund it out of the royal treasury (Ezra 5–6). This pagan emperor ended up decreeing to his regional governor that, "you are to help these elders of the Jews as they rebuild this Temple of God. You must pay the full construction costs, without delay, from my taxes collected. . . . May the God who has chosen the city of Jerusalem as a place to honor his name destroy any king or nation that

violates this command or destroys this Temple" (Ezra 6:8, 12, NLT).

Shortly thereafter, the returned exiles observed a massive Passover celebration. The people once again had a place where they could worship God freely. They repented of their immorality in order to seek God once again. "There was great joy throughout the land. . ." (v. 22, NLT).

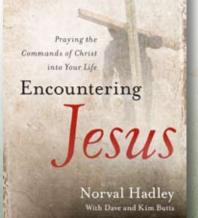
REVIVAL #7: A MONTH OF TRANSFORMATION

When Ezra stood to read the law, the moral climate of Israel began changing rapidly. With fasting and prayer, the people gathered to confess their sins, separated themselves from the foreigners who had led them into wickedness, and repented toward God. One of their

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812 238-5504 www.prayershop.org ceremonies involved six hours of Scripture reading and confession (Neh. 9–12). Then, the leaders called out to the people, "Stand up and praise the LORD your God, who is from everlasting to everlasting" (9:5).

The congregation of God's people

was filled with a sense of commitment. They made a solemn promise before God to "obey carefully all the commands, regulations and decrees of the LORD our Lord" (10:29). They concluded their vow: "We will not neglect the house of our God" (10:39).

THE OBVIOUS PATTERN

So, can you see it? Can you identify the two-part pattern evident in revival movements?

First, something had to be destroyed. Then worship had to commence. From



n response to our desperate need for revival in the Church and a spiritual awakening in our country, America's National Prayer Committee, the Awakening America Alliance, and OneCry are issuing a call to believers to join a national Rhythm of Prayer.

The National Prayer Accord was first issued during the First Great Awakening in the United States during the 1730s and '40s. This Prayer Accord is now reissued in this dark hour as a simple pattern of prayer we can embrace in unity to ask Jesus Christ to once again pour out His Spirit on the Church.

The National Prayer Accord

In recognition of:

- Our absolute dependence on God
- The moral and spiritual challenges facing our nation
- Our national need for repentance and divine intervention
- Our great hope for a general awakening to the Lordship of Christ, the unity of His Body, and the sovereignty of His Kingdom

We strongly urge all churches and all Christians of America to unite in seeking the face of God through prayer and fasting, persistently asking our Father to send revival to the Church and spiritual awakening to our nation so that Christ's Great Commission might be fulfilled worldwide in our generation.

We resolve to promote as an ongoing Prayer Rhythm:

- Weekly—one-half-hour to one-hour private or small group prayer
- Monthly—one- to two-hour individual church prayer gatherings
- Quarterly—one- to two-hour local, multiple church prayer gatherings
- Annually—The National Day of Prayer (first Thursday of May), Cry Out America prayer gatherings (September 11).

For more information, go to nationalprayeraccord.com.

Coming Next Issue IN ONE ACCORD

As a way to show our support for the National Prayer Accord, *Prayer Connect* will launch "In One Accord," a new column starting next issue. This column is designed to provide encouragement and challenge to those who have hearts to pray for revival. It will also provide prayer points we can pray together in unity. We believe revival is desperately needed in the Church today—and that it is God's heart to pour out an awakening. We encourage believers everywhere to join us in seeking God for spiritual revival. Jacob to Ezra, when Israel was called to return to God's love and God's law, they first obliterated their idols. Then they set out to worship with the best of their music, architecture, prayer, and obedience. Revival wasn't just a theory or a theme or a set of special meetings, *it was a new life and new commitment that changed everything*.

Can we pray for this sort of spiritual transformation today? Times are different, to be sure. God's people and God's plan look very different from the ancient monarchy of Israel. But the principles of revival still ring true, do they not? Are we still tempted to cling to idols, holding back the best of our worship from God? Do we still look for security in earthly things, setting them up as "gods" we hold in high esteem? Would it not be appropriate for us to "destroy" the idols in our hearts and homes, then return to worship God in spirit and in truth?

MAKING IT PERSONAL

Here is a prayer assignment to help you incorporate this pattern for revival into your own life.

1. Walk through the Scriptures mentioned in each of our seven examples. Pray that God will give you wisdom to equate these ancient accounts with the hereand-now spiritual needs you face.

2. Ask God to search your heart for any idols that remain in your life. If His Spirit reveals an idol, take immediate and drastic action to destroy it. Don't let anything stand between you and the rich relationship with God you were created to enjoy forever. Jesus must be first place in your heart.

3. Ask God to show you what it would look like for you to rebuild and renew your worship. If you need revival, you may have failed to give Christ the worship of your heart and soul for months, years, or even decades. Like God's people in ages past, repent and then give your very best to Him.

4. Extend this prayer pattern to your church and your nation. After you have dealt personally and thoroughly with God on these matters, begin praying for your church and your nation to experience the same kind of life-changing, history-altering, joy-inducing revival as the Old Testament reports. If God inspired and empowered that kind of change *then*, He certainly can do it *now*.

Let's destroy our idols, worship God with all we have, and pray for revival!



DAN AND MELISSA JARVIS serve on the leadership team of Life Action Ministries (*lifeaction.org*), a group that helps believers and

churches seek God for revival. Follow Dan on Twitter @danjarvisus.

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*.





As one of our Sunday worship services ended and the last prayer was prayed, Mrs. Helen lingered behind, leaning on her walker. Mrs. Helen is a 77-year-old widow who has been a part of our church for many years. She is a godly, Godfearing prayer warrior—a woman of deep faith.

"Revival is coming," she said.

When Mrs. Helen speaks, I listen. I thanked her and rejoiced as I hurriedly made a note of the date and the encouraging words she spoke.

PRAYING THE REVIVAL SCRIPTURES

The following week, a faithful man in our church dropped by my study and said, "God told me revival is coming. We better be ready." My heart leaped with joy and again I wrote it down and dated it.

I heard those words more than a year ago. Although revival has not happened yet, I pray daily with expectancy for true revival to come to our lives, our church, and our country.

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STIRRING REVIVAL A MOVEMENT OF GOD ON IVY LEAGUE CAMPUSES BY MATT BENNETT

verything began changing in our ministry to Ivy League schools in March 2009. That was when members of Christian Union (CU), a ministry at that time serving Princeton and Harvard, began praying together two hours a day. Previously, the full-time ministry workers with Christian Union (called Christian Union faculty) prayed as a group once a week for an hour. But, inspired by revival history, the international Church, and a burden from the Lord for His power to be released, Christian Union faculty began meeting for prayer every morning from 9:00 to 11:00 a.m.

They spent some of that time talking through biblical and theological issues, addressing why they should devote so much time to prayer. But most of the time they focused on prayer itself. The Princeton and Harvard teams, united via conference call, wrestled with God to release His power and blessing.

The first tangible result of all that prayer came at the beginning of the school year six months later. CU held a retreat for the Princeton campus. Many of the CU faculty had read historical accounts of the Holy Spirit falling on people, but had never experienced Him personally in that way. At this retreat, the Spirit came into the room so powerfully that, unprompted, some students fell on their faces confessing their sins. Others fell on their faces, unable to stop praising God.

What began during that retreat continued through four years of student conferences, on-campus worship nights, and even during midday prayer meetings. Both Christian Union faculty and students began receiving dreams from the Lord, visions, and even angelic visitations. For a group of conservative evangelicals, some have had difficulty processing these miracles. But there's no doubt God manifested Himself in this way in the Scriptures and in Church history, so why would it be any different today?

Before the outpouring of the Spirit, the ministry had been growing steadily on campus. After it happened, we saw a radical upshot in student interest and involvement. During the freshman welcoming campaign at the beginning of the academic year in September 2009, the atmosphere totally changed from previous years. Before, students got involved in the ministry, but it was laborious work to connect with them and encourage them to participate. After the beginning of the prayer movement, the ministry actually had to start turning students away from some of our programs. Of course, all students can attend the weekly lecture series held on campus, but the Bible courses we offer filled up. Every year since then we've had to turn students away, even as our capacity has increased.

For the 2012–13 academic year at Princeton, more than ten percent of the freshman class participated in the ministry's Bible courses. Decisions for Christ also radically increased. Previously, three to five students came to faith every year. But for the 2009–10 year, we saw ten come to faith, then 20 the next year, and for the last two years, 30 students per year came to faith, just on the Princeton campus. Harvard started to see a similar increase in ministry fruit, although it took a year and a half of prayer (instead of six months at Princeton) to see a comparative breakthrough.

By God's grace, the ministry has expanded to Yale, Columbia, Dartmouth, and Cornell. This fall, a chapter is opening at the University of Pennsylvania. We praise God for what He is doing through the faithful prayers of the group. As one Christian Union faculty member said, "We'll never go back to the time when we didn't pray so much. I now see students' lives change as much in a semester as I would have hoped to happen over four years in the past."

We praise the Lord for His grace and favor. To see a five-minute video featuring the ministry at Princeton, go to *christianunion.org/university/ministries/princeton*.

MATT BENNETT is founder and president of Christian Union.



PRAYING WITH EARNESTNESS

Every revival throughout history has been directly related to prayer. When followers of Christ become desperate and long for God to move in revival, we will cry out to Him. God responds to the cries of His people. And, I have found the best way to cry out to God in prayer for revival is by praying Scripture—His very Word—for that revival.

Are you desperate enough to do whatever it takes? Are you willing to pray with earnestness according to God's promises? How does a church or an individual go about praying for revival? Make no mistake about it—the primary venue God uses for revival is the local church.

My own church experienced a mighty outpouring of God's presence in 2006 when a four-day meeting turned into six weeks. We met every day for 40 days, seeking the face of God together. Services began at 7:00 p.m. and lasted until 11:00 p.m. or later each night during those 40 days. The "afterglow" lasted 11 months. Many people arrived at the church at 8:00 a.m. to pray; others stopped by during their lunch breaks. Everyone brought a hunger to desperately seek the face of God. They came longing for God and for His presence.

And God responded by coming into our midst in a powerful way that refreshed and revitalized us.

EVEN SO, COME

The Book of Revelation is a book for revival. The ending verses offer a clarion call: "Even so, come, Lord Jesus" (Rev. 22:20, NKJV). Revival is about Christ coming into our lives, our churches, and our land.

Much of what happened in the Church of Ephesus in Revelation 2 shows a church in desperate need of revival.

"To the angel of the church of Ephesus write: These are the words of him who holds the seven stars in his right hand and walks among the seven golden lampstands. I know your deeds, your hard work and your perseverance. I know that you cannot tolerate wicked people, that you have tested those who claim to be apostles but are not, and have found them false. You have persevered and have endured hardships for my name, and have not grown weary. Yet I hold I this against you: You have forsaken the love you had at first. Consider how far you have fallen! Repent and do the things you did at first. If you do not repent, I will come to you and remove your lampstand from its place" (Rev. 2:1-5).

The Church of Ephesus was much like our churches today. It was a busy and hardworking church that did not tolerate false teachers or false doctrine. It was also a discerning and persevering church. However, it left its first love. It was busy, but barren—substituting routine for relationship. Even with all its good attributes, this church needed a fresh touch, a fresh awareness of God. It needed revival.

There are several revival principles in this admonition to the Ephesus Church. Some are evident, while others lie beneath the surface. We can clearly see the principles of remembering, repentance, and repeating the first works. We remember who God is: He is sovereign, holy, and majestic. We remember His mighty acts and His salvation. We bow before God in repentance, turning from our sin, and crying out to Him for forgiveness and cleansing. We return to those things we did at first, which were motivated by love for God and fulfilled by yielding to the Holy Spirit.

Also included in this passage are the revival principles of humility, confession, seeking God, and abiding in Christ making it a helpful template for scriptural revival prayers. If we want to see revival come to our churches and nation, we must learn to pray biblically and with the expectation that the Lord longs to renew and restore His Church.

PRAYERS OF HOPE

Here are some principles and sample prayers that are biblically based and filled with hope that God might move again throughout our churches and in our nation with another great awakening.

• Pray for Christ to be in our midst, and for His presence to be real and moving among us:

Father, I come to You, seeking to align my life with You. Oh, God, I plead with You to show me any area where I have failed You. As You examine my life, show me how I have left You as my first love. All of my good works and ministry mean nothing if I do not love You fully. All of my doctrinal soundness is worthless if I have forsaken my first love, the Lord Jesus. My discernment is useless if my love for Christ is not foremost in my life.

Your Word does not say that I "lost" my first love—but that I "left" my first love. I am responsible. I have sinned. We, as Your Church, have sinned. I am listening and my heart is ready to receive Your truth, Your rebuke, and Your restoration. Show me the error of my ways and make a path for me to return to You.

continued on page 29

REVIVAL FROM HEAVEN BY JOHN WESLEY ADAMS

he spring season illustrates revival and new life. Spring comes each year. Not so with *revival from heaven*. God requires us to "prepare the way" (Isa. 40:3) for His visits.

Hosea's prophetic word to Judah is God's prophetic word to us now:

"Come, let us *return* to the LORD. He has torn us to pieces but he will heal us; he has injured us but he will bind up our wounds. After two days he will *revive* us; on the third day he will *restore* us that we may live in his presence. Let us acknowledge the LORD; let us press on to acknowledge him. As surely as the sun rises, he will appear; he will come to us like the winter rains, like the spring rains that water the earth" (Hos. 6:1–3, italics added).

If God is to "come to us" like rain from heaven, we must "return to the LORD." When *we* return, God promises to heal, revive, and restore. If we press on to know Him, He will come to us like the spring rains that replenish the earth with life. We need revival from heaven to replenish spiritual life in our communities!

Revival from heaven is the fire of God's manifest presence descending on the Church. Revival is always preceded by desperate prayer, accompanied by public confession of sin, and followed by great joy. The impact of revival on society is preceded by conviction of sin, fear of God, and His judgment. It is accompanied by revelation of God's love and mercy, confession and repentance of sin, and people turning to Jesus Christ for salvation, resulting in community transformation.

When revival from heaven occurs, the fire of God's Spirit descends and sweeps through the Church and society like a cleansing flame.¹ What does this look like?

Revival from heaven is—when men in the streets are afraid to speak godless words for fear that God's judgment will fall! When sinners, aware of the fire of God's presence, tremble in the streets and cry out for mercy! When the Holy Spirit sweeps across cities and regions in supernatural power and holds people in the grip of terrifying conviction! When every store becomes a pulpit, every heart an altar, every home a sanctuary and people walk carefully before God! This is authentic *revival from* heavens!²

The following account from the great Hebrides revival (1949, off the west coast of Scotland) shows the correlation between desperate prayer and supernatural scenes of revival.

The moment people took their seats, the Spirit of God began to sweep through the church in powerful conviction. Hardened sinners began to weep and confess their sins. As the meeting was closing, an excited messenger hurried up to the preacher, exclaiming: "Come with me. There's a crowd of people outside the police station. They are weeping and in awful distress. We don't know what's wrong with them. But they are calling for someone to come and pray for them." When describing the scenes outside the police station, scenes that reminded one of the amazing days of Charles Finney and of the Welsh Revival, the minister declared: "I saw a sight I never thought was possible; something I shall never forget. Under a starlit sky, men and women were kneeling everywhere, by the roadside, outside the cottages, even behind the peat stacks, crying for God to have mercy upon them!"

Nearly 600 people had been making their way to the church when suddenly the Spirit of God had fallen upon them in great conviction—like Paul on the way to Damascus—causing them to fall to their knees in repentance.³

The Hebridean revival came as a result of the earnest intercession of a pastor, his seven lay leaders, and the two Smith sisters in their 80s, who in desperation had prayed till the heavens opened and the spring rains of revival began. God calls us to humbly return and stubbornly persevere again in intercession for revival!

¹John Wesley Adams and Rhonda Hughey, *Revival: Its Present Relevance and Coming Role at the End of the Age* (Kansas City, MO: Oasis House, 2010), 21.

²John Wesley Adams and Owen Murphy, *The Fire of God's Presence* (Kansas City, MO: Ambassadors Press, 2004), 13.

³Adams and Murphy, *The Fire of God's Presence*, 32.

JOHN WESLEY ADAMS is professor of Biblical Studies at All Nations Training Center in Kansas City, MO, and co-author of *The Fire of God's Presence.* I pray this for Your Church, as well. Allow Your Church to understand how we have left our first love. We can be so busy serving You and yet barren of any lasting fruit. Walk in our midst and expose our sin. Forgive me. Forgive us. Fill us with Your holy presence. Revive us to the fullness of Christ in our midst.

• Pray that we will remember God's greatness and glory in our lives:

Oh, Father, help me to remember Your greatness and majesty. Transform my mind so that I keep my focus on You. Enable me to remember when You saved me and sealed me with Your Holy Spirit. Remind me of the joy of Your love. Awaken my love for You—not for ministry, not for another Bible study, not for fellowship with other believers—but a hunger for You. Unleash a desire to be with You. May I rest in You and know You with greater intimacy. Through my repentance, may I know Your joy, peace, and strength. Oh, Father, send revival to Your Church—and begin in me.

• Pray in repentance and brokenness:

Heavenly Father, teach me repentance. Show me how my ways are empty and full of sin. My theology, my ministry, my works and labor all fall short of You and Your glory. It is so easy for me to believe that my works are not evil or wicked and therefore acceptable to You. They are not. Anything I have done in my flesh or initiated on my own reeks of sin. Isaiah 64:6 describes my best works as filthy rags: "All of us have become like one who is unclean, and all our righteous acts are like filthy rags; we all shrivel up like a leaf, and like the wind our sins are swept away."

Father, forgive me—forgive us, Your Church. We become program-driven and purpose-driven, but we fail to be Person-driven. Show us how to repent and corporately confess our sins. Show Your Church our pride, unbelief, greed, bitterness, and stubborn rebellion. Oh, Father, enable me to humble myself before You in honesty and brokenness, confessing these sins so I can be cleansed and forgiven by the blood of Christ.

• Pray that the lampstand, the illumination of Christ, abides with us:

Father, Your Word says if we do not repent, You will remove Your lampstand from our midst. Lord, have we been meeting in the dark and not realizing it? Have we been moving by momentum and machinery, but not by Your Spirit? Your lampstand distinguishes us from every other humanitarian society in the world. Your lampstand illuminates, directs, and warms us. Father, help us repent so we will not lose Your illumination.

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May I repent completely so that I am not lighting my own fire: "But now, all you who light fires and provide yourselves with flaming torches, go, walk in the light of your fires and of the torches you have set ablaze. This is what you shall receive from my hand: You will lie down in torment" (Isa. 50:11).

I may appear religious and devoted

on the outside, but be barren and empty on the inside. Father, it is only by Your Holy Spirit that I can know the conviction of sin and the conviction of true righteousness. Let Your Holy Spirit move freely, illuminating, directing, and giving understanding to my heart and to Your Church. I pray for a Spirit-initiated and Spirit-led revival.

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• Pray for the Holy Spirit to be the One producing the works:

Father, teach me to return to the first works that You did through me by Your Holy Spirit. Lord, let me understand that in the energy of my flesh I cannot produce anything that will last or bring You glory. Everything I do on my own is wood, hay, and stubble in Your eyes. You are only impressed by what Your Holy Spirit does through me.

Father, I am Your "workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works" (Eph. 2:10, NKJV). These good works are produced from lives empowered by the Holy Spirit as we walk in fellowship with Christ. Oh, God, let me walk in fellowship with You and know the fullness of Your Spirit. Let me do good works that can only be done in the power of the Holy Spirit. If I fail, I lose my testimony. If the Church fails, it loses its testimony to the world and You will remove the lampstand.

• Pray with desperation for God to move:

Father, I am desperate for You. Your Church is desperate for You to move in our midst in revival power. Apart from Your reigning presence, power, and glory—we have no hope. I pray as the Apostle John did, "Even so, come, Lord Jesus" (Rev. 22:20, NKJV).

Though revival has not yet returned to bless us again, I remember the words of Mrs. Helen: "Revival is coming." We will continue to pray the truth of God's Word with expectation and anticipation.



MARK D. PARTIN is the chief officer and field director of Minister to Minister International, a ministry devoted to taking the message of revival to pastors around the world

(ministertominister.org). He is also the pastor of Indiana Avenue Baptist Church, Lafollette, TN, and the author of *The 40-day Reign of* God. His newest book, *Praying with Fire: Seeking His Presence through the Revival Passages* of Scripture, was released in August 2013 by PrayerShop Publishing (prayershop.org).

with

RENEWIGEN A VISION FOR REVIVAL 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. The website Biblegateway.com is an excellent source for translations you may not have on hand.

ears ago, I experienced a taste of what true revival may be like. As an intercessor daily involved in prayer, worship, and the Word—I couldn't have been more surprised when God gave me this unexpected "deeper glimpse."

Invited by a friend to hear a highly recommended guest speaker, I went full of expectations. To tell the truth, I don't remember the speaker's name now or what she taught on. On the drive home I was feeling blessed—but unsatisfied. I asked the Lord to reveal what He wanted to teach me from the service.

Suddenly, the power of the Holy Spirit overtook me in a wave of conviction that left me gripping the steering wheel to keep from veering off the road. I suddenly saw myself really saw myself—and discovered there was not one thing I did that was not somehow tainted by self-promotion or self-centeredness. The passage "all our righteous acts are like filthy rags" (Isa. 64:6) became crystal clear. I labored under a powerful conviction that was so strong my dearest friends said they were afraid to get physically near me for fear they would "catch" whatever I had.

Simultaneously, I felt an intense awareness of God's love—a bittersweet dichotomy of conviction and blessed assurance. Although I wept for a solid 24 hours, I didn't want it to lift. I long for it to return. It forever changed my perspective on what our hearts truly look like apart from the redemptive work of Jesus.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

As we watch the moral free-fall of our society, many have cried out to God for personal and national revival. Jim Jarman talks about the change in fervency and dampened expectations that define some of our intercession because the answer has been delayed. Hope seems lost. What do the following verses tell us about the importance of hope and maintaining vision? (Job 6:11; 30:26; Ps. 33:20; 62:5; 119:81; 147:11; Prov. 13:12; 29:18a; Jer. 29:11; Rom. 15:4, 13; Heb. 11:1)

Thinking on your own prayers for personal spiritual renewal/ revival (as well as the prayers of others), what stifles or encourages your hope?

Read Luke 18:1–8. What does this parable tell you about Jesus' thoughts on maintaining hope—especially in the end times?

When revival comes, it may not look like what we envisioned. History tells us that revival is marked by conviction and repentance. Jarman says he senses any outward shaking of revival "will be preceded by an inward [shaking] that changes the very core of [our] being." How do the following passages bear witness that he is praying God's heart when he prays, "Lord, do not callous my heart. Callous my knees"? (Ps. 51:10; Isa. 35:3–4; Ezek. 11:19; 36:26–27; Heb. 12:11–12)

Dan and Melissa Jarvis cite several examples of calls to absolute commitment in Scripture. Read the following verses, and share your thoughts on whether the road to revival may be paved with the same kind of surrender. (Matt. 19:21; Luke 9:23; 14:33; 1 Thess. 5:16–18)

The Jarvises point out that every time God restored His people with a fresh wind of blessing and power, two components emerged: they destroyed their idols, and they began to worship in a new way. Divide into small groups and assign each group one of the following passages. Read and highlight confirmation of these two components in these revival scenarios. Share your findings with the larger group and discuss: What idols do we cling to today? In what ways are we withholding worship from God?

- Genesis 35:1-15
- 2 Chronicles 15:1-15
- 2 Kings 11–12; 2 Chronicles 29–30
- 2 Kings 22–23; 2 Chronicles 34–35
- Ezra 5–6
- Nehemiah 9–12

The Church at Ephesus desperately needed revival. It was "busy, but barren—substituting routine for relationship," according to Mark Partin. Read Revelation 2:1–6 and pinpoint its good attributes as well as the things Jesus held against them.

This same passage includes a prescription for revival. Partin identifies this remedy as remembering, repentance, repeating first works, humility, confession, seeking God, and abiding in Christ. Discuss where these principles come into play in the verses you just read.

ACTION STEPS

Wesley Adams reminds us that the revival in the Hebrides came as a result of the earnest intercession of a pastor, his seven lay leaders, and two sisters in their 80s who prayed in desperation until the heavens opened and revival began. Read Isaiah 40:3 and Hosea 6:1–3. Spend some individual quiet time asking the Holy Spirit to show you what He wants you to do to personally prepare the way for revival.

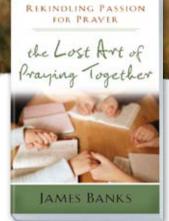
I believe the Lord is asking me to:	
How will you respond?	
Signature and date:	

SANDRA HIGLEY is a freelance editor and author living in Colorado Springs, CO.



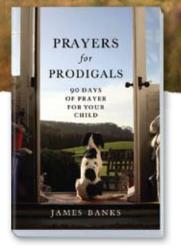
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Back from the Far Country

ow's *your* son?" "He's OK, thanks. Could be better, could be worse. See you around!" I said rather abruptly.

It was a bumper sticker of a conversation in a supermarket parking lot. My friend had been telling me how his son was an honor student at his university—and wanted to know about my own son. I couldn't peel myself away quickly enough.

The *whole* truth was I had just returned from sitting in a courtroom in my son's college town. Too much partying. Too little studying. What started out as a "good time" for him turned into a tough year for all of us.

Parents of prodigals know how these

awkward conversations go. When other parents share good things about their kids' achievements and it's your turn to respond, you find yourself searching for words. You walk away wondering where you went wrong.

Even talking to God can be difficult. When you're the parent of a prodigal, you know you need to pray. But sometimes you feel so tired and discouraged that you may wonder if it makes any difference. You find yourself repeatedly covering the same ground in your prayers: "Please, Lord, *do* something! Please Lord, change her heart!"

And if little seems to change, you find yourself praying with David, "How long, LORD, *how long*?" (Ps. 6:3, italics added).

By James Banks



The Journey

of Praying a

Prodigal Home

Crushed Dreams

Few things challenge a parent more than praying for a son or daughter who is walking away from God. We dreamed different dreams for our children. My wife Cari and I prayed for our son before he was born, asking God that he would know and love the Lord with all his heart, mind, and strength (Luke 10:27). We held him in our arms and gave him to God before we even left the hospital. Parents don't hold their child for the first time and say, "This one will grow up to be a prodigal."

Ours was a loving home where we shared Jesus with our children, raised them in church and Sunday school, disciplined them, and taught them right from wrong. We never saw the prodigal years coming. But even through our crushed dreams, God was faithful. He helped us learn life-changing truths about His kindness in difficulty, His undeserved mercy, and the importance of persevering in prayer for those we love.

Prodigal Lessons Learned

Here are some of the lessons He has helped us learn along the way:

God loves our children even more than we do. He wants us to pray passionately for them, reaching for what He alone can do. Jesus said that His mission was "to seek and to save the lost" (Luke 19:10). Others may judge them, but Jesus loves our kids so much that He *died* for them. He calls us to join His search-and-rescue mission to bring them home.

That's why prayer matters so much. Try as we may, we can't change their hearts. Only God can. "... no one can say, 'Jesus is Lord,' except by the Holy Spirit" (1 Cor. 12:3). He alone knows the

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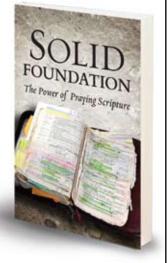
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way back from the "far country" (Luke 15:13, κ JV) where hearts hide. Only He can reach them when our own efforts have fallen short; He knows exactly what it will take to turn their hearts to Him.

God wastes nothing. The choices our prodigals make challenge us and break our hearts. But they don't discourage Him because "in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose" (Rom. 8:28).

History tells us that Monica pleaded with her son Augustine not to sail to Rome. She anxiously prayed about it because she was deeply worried that the corruption there would take him even further away from God. He lied to her and left without her knowledge. The very thing she prayed wouldn't happen, did. But it was in Rome that Augustine came to Christ and became one of the most vital witnesses in all of history.

The Kingdom of God was greatly impacted because of a mother's prayers, even though there were times it seemed her prayers were getting nowhere. When we pray for prodigals, we live "by faith, not by sight" (2 Cor. 5:7).

God's silence doesn't mean He isn't listening. When a Canaanite woman came to Jesus, desperately asking for help for her daughter, "Jesus gave her no reply, not even a word" (Matt. 15:23, NLT). Jesus seemed to deny her requests, but she persevered in asking until He finally responded, "Woman, you have great faith! Your request is granted" (Matt. 15:28). Parenting prodigals prompts us to pray more than we ever have before, helping us learn new dependence on God.

When answers to prayer seem slow in coming, the love He's placed in our hearts for our children compels us to call out to Him again and again. Our love for our children brings us to our knees, the best position for help to come because "God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble" (1 Peter 5:5, NKJV). As we pray for our children, we become conduits of His grace and Spirit into their lives.

God changes our hearts when we pray. When our children are lost and making bad choices, it's easy to become frustrated and angry—especially if we didn't stumble over the same things. When my son struggled with substance abuse, it hit me directly in my pride. I didn't realize how critical I had been in my spirit of those who struggle with that challenge. I felt I was somehow "above it." Because I didn't struggle with it, I thought he shouldn't, either.

It took awhile for God to show me that my own pridefulness was equally destructive. It led to anger at my son's actions, and that became a stumbling block for him to come closer to God. No matter how much I reasoned with him or "preached" to him about his need to change, an edge remained. I was reminded that "human anger does not produce the righteousness that God desires" (James 1:20).

But spending time on my knees softened my heart and changed me, helping me to understand my need for repentance, forgiveness, and grace. The change in me helped soften my son's heart, as well.

God is faithful and gives us His peace as we pray. Parents of • prodigals carry more than their share of worries. They know what it's like to think the worst when the phone rings in the middle of the night and their child hasn't come home. They also know the pain of standing by and watching their children live through the dire consequences of their actions. But even in the middle of heartache, Jesus' promise of peace remains: "Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid" (John 14:27).

There is a peace only Jesus can give. Our deepest need is to be in union with Him so that we can receive it and appropriate it in the most difficult moments. When nerves are raw and emotions tense. simply taking time in His presence by praying and resting in the promises of God's Word changes everything. "For he himself is our peace" (Eph. 2:14). His peace "exceeds anything we can understand" (Phil. 4:7, NLT). The peace of Christ guards our hearts and minds as we live in Him.

There is no better way to love our children than through our prayers. As we pray, we move in God's strength and ability to make things happen. We stop depending on our own strength. Even when our inadequacies overwhelm us, His power is "made perfect in weakness" (2 Cor. 12:9). Nothing is too hard for Him.

I'm deeply grateful that after many years of our very imperfect prayer, God in His mercy has saved our son

and brought him home from "the far country." Today, our son lives for the Lord and is free from his addictions. The change has been so significant that I, with my "little faith" (Matt. 6:30), sometimes can hardly believe it even when the answer to my prayers is standing right in front of me.

Not long ago, when I was worrying about my son, I reminded him that we have a powerful adversary.

"You're right, Dad," he responded. "He has power, but he has no authority."

I cling to the truth that Jesus told us, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given me" (Matt. 28:18). And He still "welcomes sinners" (Luke 15:2).



JAMES BANKS is a pastor, speaker, and author on the topic of prayer (jamesbanks.org). His books Prayers for Prodigals and The Lost Art of Praying are available at prayershop.org.

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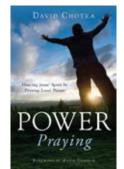
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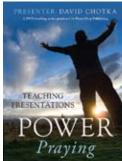
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Nhat hat 500 P WHEN WE PRAY

By Alvin VanderGriend

Something happens when we pray that would not have happened if we hadn't prayed.

That statement summarizes a lot of what the Bible says about prayer. It is also a reminder of how much our prayers affect God's way of ruling in our lives and in the world.

Though I resonate with this maxim, I also realize it is true only if we add further qualifications. For example, it only applies to true believers. Billions of people in the world will not find something happening when they pray because they have no access to the Father's throne.

It's also only true if "pray" means *true prayer*, addressed to the true God, in true faith, and from a pure heart. Those who expect results from thoughtless, perfunctory, or rote prayer will be disappointed.

And it's only true if "happens" does not mean that we expect all of our difficulties will be quickly resolved by a "fix-it" God who jumps at all our requests. What happens when we pray will always be for our good, and it will come in God's own time and way. It will come from a heavenly Father who, in His love *wants* what is best, in His wisdom *knows* what is best, and in His power *does* what is best.

5

Even with those qualifications, it boggles the mind to think of the difference true prayer makes in God's work in our world.

Here's What Happens

Let's take a closer look at seven things that happen when we pray.

When we pray, we enjoy God. No joy on earth can compare with the joy of knowing God and meeting Him in a love relationship. David had a taste of it when he said to the Lord: ". . . you will fill me with joy in your presence, with eternal pleasures at your right hand" (Ps. 16:11). The Westminster Shorter Catechism rightly asserts that the chief end of man is to "glorify God, and to enjoy him forever."

Seven Benefits of Prayer

Prayer is a pathway to joy. It's impossible to talk with God or listen to Him and not, in the end, experience joy. In Old Testament times, prayer and joy came together in His "house of prayer." God said of foreigners who bind themselves to Him, "... these I will bring to my holy mountain and give them joy in my house of prayer" (Isa. 56:6-7). We can experience the same joy in prayer today. We don't have to go to a "house of prayer" to meet Him. We can meet the Father anytime, anywhere, about anything through Jesus Christ, the Father's Son. That is joy, pure joy! The more we pray, truly pray, the more we will enjoy God.

When we pray, we win over sin. Sin is our worst enemy. C.H. Spurgeon called sin "the world's worst tyrant." Sin is a terrible, misery-producing, down-dragging force. It's an enemy that wants to destroy us and drag us down to hell.

Freedom from the guilt of sin becomes ours when we trust Jesus Christ as our Savior and Lord. We can also gain freedom from the power of sin-its power to harm and hinder us in the midst of our daily lives. Jesus wanted His weak, sleepprone disciples to gain victory over sin as they waited with Him in Gethsemane. He said, "Watch and pray so that you will not fall into temptation. The spirit is willing but the flesh is weak" (Matt. 26:41). If we are not watching and praying to overcome the world, the flesh, and the devil, we shouldn't be surprised if we fall into temptation. I pray a simple win-oversin prayer at the beginning of each day. It helps me gain important victories.

When we pray, God gives us "good gifts." Jesus emphasized His Father's willingness to give good gifts to His children by comparing Him to earthly parents who know how to give good gifts to their children.

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He added, "... how much more will your Father in heaven give good gifts to those who ask him!" (Matt. 7:11).

The "good gifts" Jesus spoke of are spiritual blessings like grace, wisdom, joy, peace, power, and holiness. God wants to give His children these gifts. He doesn't promise to give us everything we ask for. But when we ask for "anything according to his will, he hears us" (1 John 5:14–15). "He hears us" means He agrees to grant what we have asked for.

When our youngest son was old enough to read, he came into my study and said, "Dad, can I have a Bible?"

I asked, "Why do you want a Bible, Son?"

He answered, "Because if I have my own Bible, I can mark and remember the verses we are learning in Sunday school."

He had his Bible within 24 hours!

Why did I get him a Bible so quickly? Because he asked for something that I wanted him to have. God wants us to have His "good gifts" and eagerly gives them to those who ask. Be a confident asker! Trust God to be a generous giver.



When we pray for others, God releases His grace and power into their lives. After

commanding Christians to "pray for each other," James goes on to say: "The prayer of a righteous person is powerful and effective" (James 5:16). Prayer makes a powerful difference in the lives of those we pray for.

Prayer itself has no power. When you pray for another person, no vibes, force, or grace flow from you to them. All the power in prayer is God's power. He acts in powerful ways in response to our prayers. R.A. Torrey, enthralled by the enormity of this power, states in *The Power* of *Prayer*, "Prayer is the key that unlocks all the storehouses of God's infinite grace and power. All that God is, and . . . has, is at the disposal of prayer. Prayer can do anything God can do, and as God can do anything, prayer is omnipotent."

Prayer can move mountains. It can change hearts and shape families. It can

transform neighborhoods and even nations. It's the ultimate source of power because it is the power of Almighty God. This power is available to the most humble Christian. James reminds us that Elijah was "a human being, even as we are." He prayed that it would not rain, and it didn't rain because God heard his prayer (James 5:17-18). Your prayers can make a difference in people's lives!

When we pray, God enables 5 us to do great works. When Jesus told His disciples He was leaving them, they were shaken. He allayed their fears by promising them a supernatural power to continue His work. He said, "Very truly I tell you, whoever believes in me will do the works I have been doing, and they will do even greater things than these, because I am going to the Father. And I will do whatever you ask in my name, so that the Father may be glorified in the Son" (John 14:12-13).

In other words, they would do their ongoing work of building the Church in partnership with Jesus. As they worked on earth, He would work from His heavenly throne. Prayer would be the connecting link.

Jesus didn't limit this promise to the disciples who would do works like He had done. He promises the same thing to "whoever believes in me." That includes you and me, doesn't it? What a powerful combination-the Almighty Son of God working from His throne on high in tandem with millions of Spirit-filled, Christindwelt believers here on earth, building His Kingdom. We ask, He acts, and the work gets done-great works to the glory of God the Father.

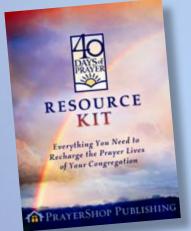
When we pray, society becomes more livable. God promised in the Old Testament to deliver "peace and prosperity" in response to prayer. As the Jewish exiles

headed toward captivity in Babylon, God said, "Also, seek the peace and prosperity of the city to which I have carried you into exile. Pray to the LORD for it, because if it prospers, you too will prosper" (Jer. 29:7). Sometimes it feels as if there is nothing we can do to change our world. But God reminds us that we can make a difference in our cities and nation if we devote ourselves to prayer.

If we honor God and others with our prayers, we should also be able to "live peaceful and quiet lives." Paul urged believers to make "petitions, prayers, intercession and thanksgiving . . . for all people—for kings and all those in authority that we may live peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness" (1 Tim. 2:1-2).

That's God's ideal—an ideal He wants us to attain through prayer. God shapes society through the prayers of His people. By God's design, our intercessory

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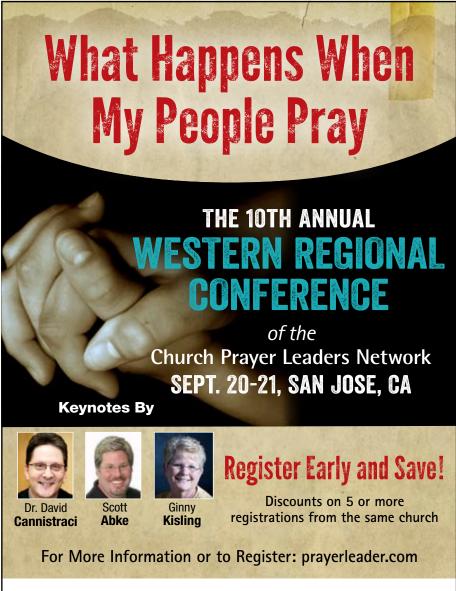
ning Your Prayer Life

prayers release grace, foster peace, restrain evil, protect innocent people, avert disasters, enforce justice, and increase harvests. Helmut Thielicki writes, "The globe itself lives and is upheld by Atlas arms through the prayers of those whose love has not grown cold. The world lives by these uplifted hands, and by nothing else" (*Our Heavenly Father*, p. 109).



When we pray, *the devil trembles.* Jesus taught us to pray "deliver us from the evil one" (Matt. 6:13). Prayer is the primary way we receive the Father's help in overcoming the devil. Jesus also tied devil-defeating activity to prayer when His frustrated disciples couldn't cast out a demon. He said, "This kind can come out only by prayer" (Mark 9:29). And knowing that the devil would come against His disciples after His departure, Jesus twice prayed that they would be protected from the evil one (John 17:11, 15).

Luke summarized Jesus' life and



CHURCH PRAYER LEADERS NETWORK



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ministry by saying, "... he went around doing good and healing all who were under the power of the devil" (Acts 10:38). John stressed that the Son of God appeared "to destroy the devil's work" (1 John 3:8). Paul challenged believers to be alert to the devil's schemes and to "always to keep on praying for all the Lord's people" (Eph. 6:18).

Prayer is our supreme weapon against evil. By prayer, we can thwart Satan's attacks, foil his schemes, and lessen his effectiveness. By prayer we assault the devil's strongholds, build the Kingdom of God, and send workers into the harvest field. Prayer—real prayer—is Satan's undoing.

One of my favorite quotes on spiritual warfare comes from *The Kneeling Christian*: "There is nothing the devil dreads so much as prayer. His great concern is to keep us from praying. Someone has wisely said, 'Satan laughs at our toiling, mocks at our wisdom, but trembles when we pray" (p. 17).

But I have to ask, "Does the devil *re-ally* tremble when *I* pray?" The answer is, "Yes, not because of me, but because my prayers move the hand of God." It's what God does in response to our prayers that makes the devil tremble.

The Greater Work

What an amazing and gracious gift, this gift of prayer. With this one gift God makes it possible for us to find joy, win over sin, gain spiritual riches, unlock storehouses of grace for others, do great works, transform society, and defeat the devil. Because of prayer, God places the gifts and powers of heaven at our disposal.

What an awesome privilege for followers of Christ. What a huge responsibility!



ALVIN VANDERGRIEND is the co-founder of the Denominational Prayer Leaders Network. He served many years as a pastor and denominational prayer leader. His books *Pray*-

ing God's Heart and *Love to Pray* are available at *prayershop.org*.



Head-to-Toe Prayer for a New Grandbaby

am a grandmother. At 2 a.m. on January 13, Campbell Wayne Dean made his appearance.

Many of you grandparents have been telling me for years how amazing it would be. But, truthfully, I thought you might be exaggerating. Now I think you were underplaying it.

Sara's parents, Kim and Nora Campbell, along with Sara's sister Emily, and I were there. Of course, my son Kennedy was there too. We were all in the room through the hours of labor, watching the monitors that measured Sara's contractions and telling stories about the births of Kennedy and Sara.

We relocated to the waiting room when the time for the birth came, except for Kennedy. After a short stint, a picture popped up on our cell phones (sent by Kennedy) and we had our first look at Campbell. I suspect our stampede back to the birthing room registered on the Richter scale.

Truth be told, a newborn baby looks like a newborn baby. Unless it is *your* newborn baby. For the few days I was able to stay after Campbell's birth, I inspected him head to toe, marveling at every detail. I am utterly entranced, taken, and enchanted with my grandson.



As I inspected and memorized every detail—from the way his little forehead wrinkles up as he strains to open his eyes to the way his tiny toe joints feel so small and delicate—I began to pray over him from head to toe.

Head: "My son, if you accept my words and store up my commands within you, turning your ear to wisdom and applying your heart to understanding indeed, if you call out for insight and cry aloud for understanding, and if you look for it as for silver and search for it as for hidden treasure, then you will understand the fear of the LORD and find the knowledge of God. For the LORD gives wisdom; from his mouth come knowledge and understanding. He holds success in store for the upright, he is a shield to those whose walk is blameless, for he guards the course of the just and protects the way of his faithful ones" (Prov. 2:1–8).

Eyes: "Let your eyes look straight ahead; fix your gaze directly before you. Give careful thought to the paths for your feet and be steadfast in all your ways. Do not turn to the right or the left; keep your foot from evil" (Prov. 4:25–27).

Mouth: "The mouth of the righteous is a fountain of life" (Prov. 10:11).

Heart: "Above all else, guard your heart, for everything you do flows from it" (Prov. 4:23).

Hands: "Diligent hands will rule" (Prov. 12:24).

Feet and Legs: "Trust in the LORD with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways submit to him, and he will make your paths straight" (Prov. 3:5–6).

I am committed to praying for Campbell and any yet-to-be siblings from head to toe. I invite you to do the same for your grandbabies.

JENNIFER KENNEDY DEAN is executive director of the Praying Life Foundation (*prayinglife.org*).

Crafted Prayers in Times of Need

couple of months ago, a friend was anticipating major surgery. It was a rather new procedure that, if successful, would significantly improve his quality of life. But if not successful, well, let's not go there. My friend had tons of hope. However, he also admitted very honestly that he had a good deal of fear. But he dealt with it in a wonderful

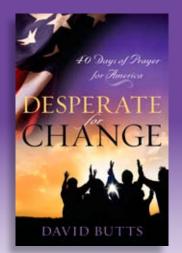
way, I think. He asked for prayer.

This was not just ordinary, casual, "Will you pray for me as the Lord brings me to mind?" kind of prayer, though. He let his friends know that he very much appreciated having personal, written prayers sent to him before the surgery. That way the words of our prayers could encourage his heart and his faith as he waited.

I love that idea. Often when people ask me for prayer, I say, "Sure, I'll pray for you." And I do. But my friends don't usually get to hear the prayers I pray. Plus, when I pray for people on my own, I don't always put the thought into it that I put into a crafted prayer that I actually write down.

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When I wrote my prayer for my friend, I asked the Lord what to pray. I listened to His reply. I sought Scriptures that supported the things He led me to pray. The resulting written prayer included phrases and ideas from God's Word that I hoped would encourage and comfort my friend, as well as strengthen his faith.

And, the written prayer, sent weeks ahead of time, could be read and prayed many times in the days leading up to the surgery day. He could pray it, and I could pray it. Somehow, the discipline of writing that crafted prayer seemed to place my friend more firmly in my heart. I remembered to pray for him more often, and with more faith.

I probably won't be writing out prayers for every person who asks me to pray for him or her. But for loved ones experiencing the high levels of hope and fear that anticipated surgery typically prompts, I think it's a wonderful idea. It's exactly what I would want—and need—if I were in that situation.

CYNTHIA HYLE BEZEK is the former editor of *Pray!* magazine. She currently serves as editorial director for Community Bible Study and also writes a weekly blog about prayer, Let's Talk, at *http://cynthiaprayblog.wordpress.com/.*

Prayer Twist on a Powerful Practice

ost churches have some form of Scripture reading during a morning worship service. It may be in the form of a responsive reading, a recitation by the congregation, or a leader or lay person reading a passage from the platform. The declaration of Scripture is a powerful practice. But with a simple twist from time to time you can add a dynamic prayer element that can teach people to pray Scripture.

The idea is not just to recite Scripture or hear it read (there's nothing wrong with that practice, of course), but to add an element where people pray those Scriptures into each other or themselves, or their city, neighborhood, etc. This can be done in a variety of creative ways.

Responsive Prayer

Instead of having a leader recite a phrase and the congregation read the next phrase in unison as in typical responsive readings, have the leader read a verse or two, then have the congregation recite a prayer, based on those verses.

Go back and forth a few times with three or four sections. This not only allows the congregation to hear God's Word, but it teaches them to pray it.

Outward Praying

After reading a passage relevant to God transforming a community, such as Jeremiah 29:4–7, have the congregation pray prayers related to the content of the passage. You can either provide specific Scripture-based prayers to pray or let them pray their own.

Praying the Pastor's Passage

Another dynamic practice that can solidify the points of your pastor's sermon is to pray Scripture at the close of the message. Ask your pastor to give you his sermon passage and the applications he wants to leave with people. Then develop some personal prayers that people can pray for themselves. You can put it on the screen, write it out ahead of time for the bulletin, or pass it out as people leave. Providing time at the end of the service to pray in response to the sermon allows people to solidify the scriptural application in their hearts.

If you feel weak in developing Scripture prayers for your congregation, there are several prayer guides you can use to prompt your creativity—available at *prayershop.org*.



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Prayer for the Persecuted Church

early 70 percent of the world's population lives in areas with severe religious restrictions. Many of these people are Christians whose lives are marked by oppression and darkness on a daily basis as they stand for Jesus. However, the enemy is losing ground as God's people around the world effectively intercede for their brothers and sisters in Christ!

Sunday, November 3, 2013, is the International Day of Prayer for the Persecuted Church. Many organizations focus on the persecution of Christians, but the following websites use prayer as a primary strategy to assist those who struggle to stand firm in the midst of threats and acts of violence.

Check out these sites for information on how to do spiritual battle through informed intercession and for some additional ways to get involved in praying for those who are suffering persecution for their Christian beliefs.

Voice of the Martyrs

Voice of the Martyrs (VOM) gives a global perspective on the persecution of Christ-followers, and offers perhaps the most comprehensive and compelling reasons why prayer is so important. Go to *persecution.com* and click on the "Pray" dropdown. There you will find resources, articles, and prayer updates for informed intercession. You can also sign up for weekly updates via email. VOM is active on Facebook and Twitter, and there is a prayer app that you can download on iTunes Store or Android Marketplace.

Open Doors

Open Doors works in the world's most oppressive countries. They focus on

strengthening Christians to stand strong in the face of persecution by equipping them to shine Christ's light in these dark places. Their website *opendoorsusa.com* gives you several options for praying for persecuted believers all over the world. By choosing the "Pray" dropdown, you can sign up for weekly or monthly prayer alerts, and/or a daily devotional focusing on people in the most oppressed nations. You'll also find regular prayer alerts that you can filter by country.

One With Them

One With Them[™] is an Open Doors initiative designed to bring awareness to the reality of Christian persecution. It inspires believers in the United States to stand with those who share our faith in Christ Jesus without our religious freedoms (*onewiththem.com*). You can purchase a barbed wire wristband on the site for \$1 as a tangible reminder to pray for our persecuted brothers and sisters. You might want to order quantities of the wristband to promote the International Day of Prayer for the Persecuted Church (Nov. 3) in your church.

World Watch List (Open Doors)

At *worldwatchlist.us*, you can take the 5-5-5 Challenge: five minutes of prayer for one nation per week. Besides prayer, you may commit to sharing the challenge with five other people and giving \$5 toward fighting persecution. You will see a world map on this site. You can click on a nation and learn how to intercede for the persecuted people there.

The 2013 World Watch List highlights the 50 nations where believers experience the highest levels of persecution. You can also download a free prayer guide.

International Christian Concern

International Christian Concern (ICC) acts as a bridge between believers in free countries and believers in persecuted countries. This bridge carries encouragement, prayers, and aid into the country while news, requests, and love flow back over the bridge. The bridge also allows for the Church to hear the voices and concerns of the persecuted so that we might move the rest of the world to action on their behalf.

The website is *persecution.org*. Go to the "how you can help" dropdown and click on "pray" to find more specific information.

ICC invites you to check the site weekly for new prayer points that focus on persecuted believers. You can sign up to receive the prayer points by email that can easily be printed or forwarded to others.

Stand in Solidarity

As you search these sites for important prayer points, please consider how the Holy Spirit may be urging you to get involved in tangible ways to help those who are suffering for standing upon their belief in Jesus Christ. Ask the Father to strengthen your heart to stand in solidarity with them.

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* **Harvest Prayer Ministries** */harvestprayer* **New Life America** */newlifeamerica*



PRAYERLEADER Encouragement for Prayer Mobilizers

Unique Prayer Needs of the Military By Rebecca Shirey

uring my husband's 26year military career as an Army chaplain, I fell in love with the military lifestyle and people. I especially enjoyed the close-knit camaraderie of the on-post neighborhoods, worshiping as a community in base chapels, and the seeming ease of families to assimilate into yet another new assignment. Even with these shared bonds, the typical military family defies description. They represent a range as diverse as the U.S., but a few characteristics come to mind: resilient, mobile, adaptable, resourceful, tired.

After ten years of war on multiple fronts, the American military and their families are exhausted. Grasping the pressures of war the military faces can be better understood if, as praying people, we apply the realities of spiritual warfare to our prayers. This will help seasoned prayer leaders guide and mobilize churches to pray more effectively for the military. Here are specific ways to pray:

Pray life and wholeness. The number of suicides by service members in 2012 outnumbered the troops lost in combat that year. Despite many programs to stem this trend, the numbers remain almost the same so far this year. Programs aren't the answer. John tells us, "The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full" (10:10). At-risk members of the military need to grasp this promise of abundant life made possible through Jesus Christ! But not every hurting person considers suicide. Many returning service members provide examples of courage and faith. Pray for their strength and continued healing.

Pray for re-integration into civilian life. It's easy to see how multiple deployments can take their toll, but reintegration can be just as challenging. With the drawdown of the war and the decreasing numbers of U.S. forces, the civilian workforce must now accommodate service members returning home. Pray for increased opportunities and financial peace. Financial issues remain a leading cause of family breakdown.

Pray for healed families. Long separations present challenges to the husband or wife serving, as well as the family remaining behind. Physical and emotional wounds, death, divorce, and disappointments cause havoc in any marriage and family. These realities face many military families. Pray for the chaplains serving as marriage and family counselors. Pray for wisdom to speak hope into tough situations.

My husband Lou and I recently conducted breakout sessions at Ancora, a training event at the Army War College in Carlisle, PA. One keynote presenter recounted how she was left with four children to raise after losing her husband in an explosion in Iraq. She said, "The bomb went off in Iraq but the shrapnel hit our home." This family now models the hope and healing possible through faith in Jesus. Pray that many more will be able to testify to God's grace.

Pray for religious freedom of expression. Attempts to restrain religious expression, especially Christian witness, are not challenges limited to the military. It is a reflection of the climate of our country. Contrary to what many believe, within chapel settings, Jesus is proclaimed. Chaplains are required to uphold all the teaching and beliefs of their endorsing denominations. Many military bases have vibrant religious programs and outreaches. Nevertheless, financial constraints and political concerns have hampered and eliminated strong programs uniting families and growing disciples of Jesus. Pray for wisdom and favor as chaplains navigate these new policies.

Pray for revival. The military brings together people from multi-denominational backgrounds. Imagine how a move of God throughout the military community could quickly spread to denominations throughout the United States. The military is a forerunner in many areas. They led the way in integration with the Tuskegee Airmen. They were among the first to include women in the workforce. Many medical advances came as a result of urgent needs on the battlefield. The military can also be a forerunner in a great awakening. The challenges facing military personnel create fertile ground for revival.

Pray for victory over difficult circumstances. When King Jehoshaphat and the Israelites faced terrorizing threats from an enemy, the people cried out to the Lord. He heard their prayers, bringing them an encouraging message through a prophet. "This is what the LORD says to you: 'Do not be afraid or discouraged because of this vast army. For the battle is not yours, but God's"" (2 Chron. 20:15).

The vast issues facing the military today present no challenge for God. Pray for God's intervention as war comes home. And pray that He will be glorified in the midst of the challenges.



REBECCA SHIREY travels internationally as a speaker at conferences and retreats. She served as an advisor from 2006–2010 for Protestant Women of the Chapel International. She and

her husband Lou also serve the denominational prayer ministry of the International Pentecostal Holiness Church.





Groaning Because of Our Spiritual Condition | By C.H. Spurgeon

las, many of us lack revival, but few of us feel that we lack it. It is a blessed sign of life within when we know how to groan over our departures from the living God. Christians will sometimes lose a sense of intimate fellowship with Jesus, but they will always groan and cry when they lose Him.

The true believer, when he discovers that he needs revival, will not be happy. He will begin at once that incessant and continuous strain of cries and groans that will at last prevail with God and bring the blessing of revival down. He will, days and nights in succession, cry, *"O Lord, revive Thy Work. . . !"*

Groaning Times

Let me mention some groaning times that will always occur to the Christian who needs revival:

1. A Christian will always groan when he looks upon what the Lord has done for him in the past. If he is what he should be, he will always weep when he remembers God's loving-kindness of old.

When he hears a sermon that relates the glorious experience of the believer who is in a healthy state, he will put his hand upon his heart and say, "Such was my experience once, but those happy days are gone. Oh, that I might again behold Him! Oh, that I might once more see His face!" He will weep when he remembers how the Lord was precious to him, how He laid bare His heart and was pleased to fill his heart with the fullness of His love.

2. A Christian who lacks revival will groan during participation in religious exercises. He will go up to the house of God but he will say to himself, "Ah! How changed! When I once went with the congregations to keep the holy day, every word was precious. When the song ascended, my soul had wings. When the prayer was offered, I could devoutly say amen. Now the preacher preaches as he did before, but the sermon is dry and dull to me. I know the fault is in myself. The song is just the same, but my heart is heavy. My harp strings are broken and I cannot sing."

The Christian will return from those blessed means of grace sighing and sobbing because he knows he needs revival. Then the Christian will begin to groan again, "O Lord, revive Thy work!"

Do You Cry Out?

Those of you who know that you are in Christ but feel that you are not in a desirable condition because you do not love Him enough or have the faith in Him that you desire to have, I would ask you this: Do you groan over it? Can you groan now? When you feel your heart is empty, is it an aching void? When you feel that your garments are stained, can you wash those garments with tears?

When you think your Lord is gone, can you hang out the black flag of sorrow and cry, "O my Jesus! O my Jesus! Are You gone?" If you can, then I bid you do it. May God be pleased to give you grace to continue to do it until a happier era will dawn in the reviving of your soul.

Perhaps some of you will say, "Sir, I feel my need of revival. I intend to set to work this very moment to revive my soul." Do not say it and above all things, do not try to do it, for you never will. Make no resolutions as to what you will do. Your resolutions will be broken as certainly as they are made, and your broken resolutions will but increase the number of your sins.

I exhort you, instead of trying to revive yourself, turn your groaning into prayer. Say not, "I will revive myself," but cry, "O Lord, revive Thy work!"

And let me solemnly tell you that you have not yet come to know how sad your estate really is if you would talk of reviving yourself. If you but knew your own condition, you would as soon expect to see the wounded soldier on the battlefield heal himself without medicine, as you would expect to revive yourself without the help of God.

Give Up Hope in Yourself

I bid you not to do anything, nor seek to do anything, until first of all you have addressed Jehovah Himself by mighty prayer—until you have cried out, "O *Lord, revive Thy work!*" Remember, He that first made you must keep you alive, and He that has kept you alive must restore more life to you. He that has preserved you from going down to the pit when your feet have been sliding can alone set you again upon a rock and establish your goings.

Begin, then, by humbling yourself giving up all hope of reviving yourself as a Christian, but beginning at once with firm prayer and earnest supplication to God: "O Lord, what I cannot, please do! 'O Lord, revive Thy work!'"

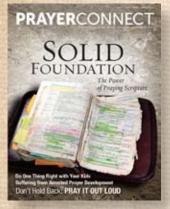
CHARLES HADDON (C.H.) SPURGEON

(1834–1892) was known as England's best preacher, becoming pastor of London's famed New Park Street Church at age 20. When his congregation built the Metropolitan Tabernacle, he preached to thousands weekly for more than 40 years. In his lifetime, he preached to ten million people.

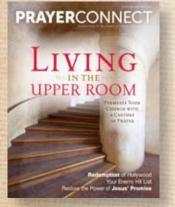




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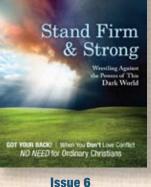


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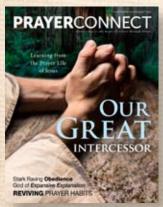


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