

ISSUE THIRTY-EIGHT | OCTOBER-DECEMBER 2019

# PrayerCONNECT

Connecting to the Heart of Christ through Prayer



## CITIES *at* PRAYER

Continuous Intercession in Your Community

Original *FAKE* News | Anxiety-Reducing Prayer  
INSTILL FRESH VISION

”

Prayer is the divine equalizer.  
Some preach, others teach,  
a few sing publicly,  
*but all can pray.*

—Dick Eastman



Introducing Dick Eastman's


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**BILL JOHNSON**

Lead Pastor  
Bethel Church, Redding, CA

---

*I only have a few heroes in the faith, and Dick Eastman is one of them. I'm not sure anyone has inspired more people to pray than Dick, and that number includes me.*

**MARK BATTERSON**

New York Times bestselling author,  
*The Circle Maker*

A MINISTRY OF

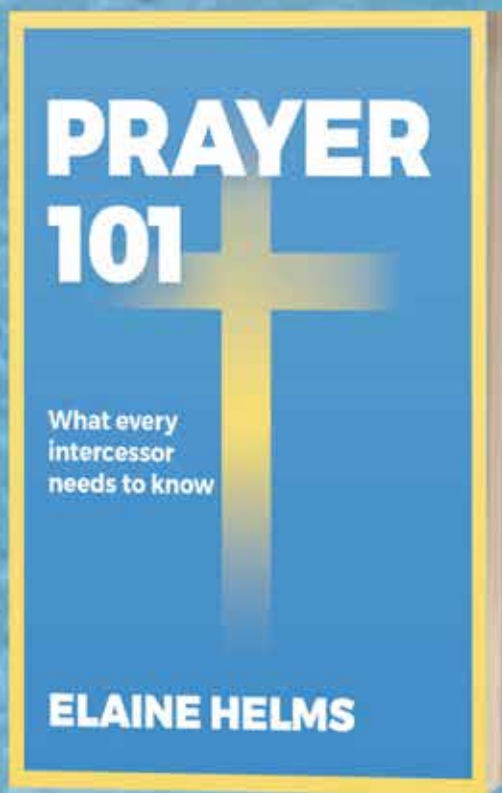
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## *Meet the Author*

Elaine Helms is a recognized voice, and author of multiple books, on prayer. She speaks from practical leadership and teaching in the area of prayer; as she encourages audiences and readers to draw closer to God and live the abundant life Jesus came to give His followers.



# PrayerCONNECT

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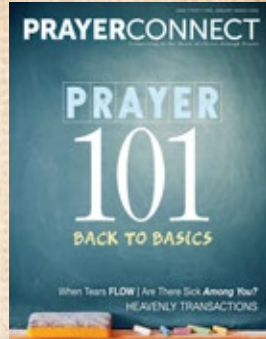
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#### PRAYER CONNECT

Suite 43-L | 2800 Poplar St. | Terre Haute, IN 47803  
812.238.5504 | [prayerconnect.net](http://prayerconnect.net)

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We are looking for general articles, ideas, and news stories on what God is doing as a result of prayer. We are primarily looking for newly written pieces that have not appeared in other publications. Writer's guidelines are available by emailing Carol Madison at [editor@prayerconnect.net](mailto:editor@prayerconnect.net). For news stories, we recommend emailing first to see if we have an interest in reporting on the event or item you wish to write about. Send your submissions to:

Carol Madison  
PRAYER CONNECT Submissions  
4300 West 98th St. | Bloomington, MN 55437  
[editor@prayerconnect.net](mailto:editor@prayerconnect.net)

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[prayerconnect.net](http://prayerconnect.net)  
Joanne Telle  
800.217.5200 or 812.238.5504

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Jonathan Graf  
[jon@prayerleader.com](mailto:jon@prayerleader.com) | 812.238.5504

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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, and mentoring the next generation in prayer. The Church Prayer Leaders Network also has many speakers associated with its ministries. You can find contact information at the respective emails or websites.

Jon Graf | [jon@prayerleader.com](mailto:jon@prayerleader.com)  
Carol Madison | [editor@prayerconnect.net](mailto:editor@prayerconnect.net)  
[prayerconnect.net](http://prayerconnect.net) | [prayerleader.com](http://prayerleader.com)

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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.

**Publisher/Editor-in-Chief**

Jonathan Graf  
jon@prayerleader.com

**Editor**

Carol Madison  
editor@prayerconnect.net

**Art Director**

J. Bridget Rennie

**Editorial Assistants**

Joyce Ellis  
Joan Sherman

**Contributing Writer**

Kim Butts

**Subscriptions/Orders**

Joanne Telle

## Love Your City

When my wife and I moved to Indiana 15 years ago, we settled in a rural area between Terre Haute (a fair-sized city of 70,000) and Brazil (a small town of 6,000). Our workplace was in Terre Haute, and our heart was in Brazil.

Even though we left a major city to move here, our hearts quickly developed a fondness, then a love, for Brazil. We settled in a church there and started frequenting the businesses and restaurants in Brazil, even though they were often more expensive than chain stores in Terre Haute.

We took to heart Jeremiah's charge: "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" (29:7). Though we weren't in exile, we began praying for the community and supported it however we could. Beyond our church, my wife and I have also developed a relationship with a ministry in town, which we try to bless physically and financially as we can.

God loves cities! Jesus wept over Jerusalem. And there is a spiritual dynamic that defines each community. Often intercessors who spend time praying for their communities will research the history to discern that spiritual dynamic.



### God's City Prayer Movement Plan

Recently I have been fascinated by what appears to be a growing move of God as He raises up citywide prayer movements across the country. In multiple locations, communities of varying size—often without any knowledge of God's similar movement in other communities—are starting to see the same things happen. Churches are starting to pray together for their cities: Bellingham, WA; Altoona, PA; Nashville, TN; and Austin, TX, are a few places where unique city prayer movements are either stirring or in full swing.

A few years ago I had the privilege to attend a gathering of national prayer leaders in Austin, and we participated in a monthly all-city prayer meeting. More than 1,000 people showed up that night for a highly focused, dynamic, prayer meeting where people cried out for revival in Austin churches and a spiritual awakening in their city. I saw tremendous unity, humility, and love displayed among Baptist, Pentecostal, and other pastors from various streams of the Church.

It inspired me so much that I soon started pursuing two leaders, Trey Kent and Kie Bowman, to write a book that would both tell about the ten-year journey of the Austin movement and show pastors how this could happen in any city.

Your city! Maybe Brazil, Indiana!

The resulting book is *City of Prayer: Transform Your Community through Praying Churches*. We are releasing the book this month and praying God uses it to fuel the hearts of pastors and prayer leaders across this nation. Be sure to get a copy through [prayershop.org](http://prayershop.org). Or get two and share one with your pastor!

Let's love our communities through prayer.

—Jonathan Graf

## Previously in



We won an award from the Evangelical Press Association! Our "Where Are You, God? Prayer through Suffering" (Issue 35) was acknowledged by our Christian publishing colleagues with an "Award of Merit" for our content, design, and overall quality of the magazine. You can order this issue or back issues of *Prayer Connect* at [prayershop.org](http://prayershop.org).

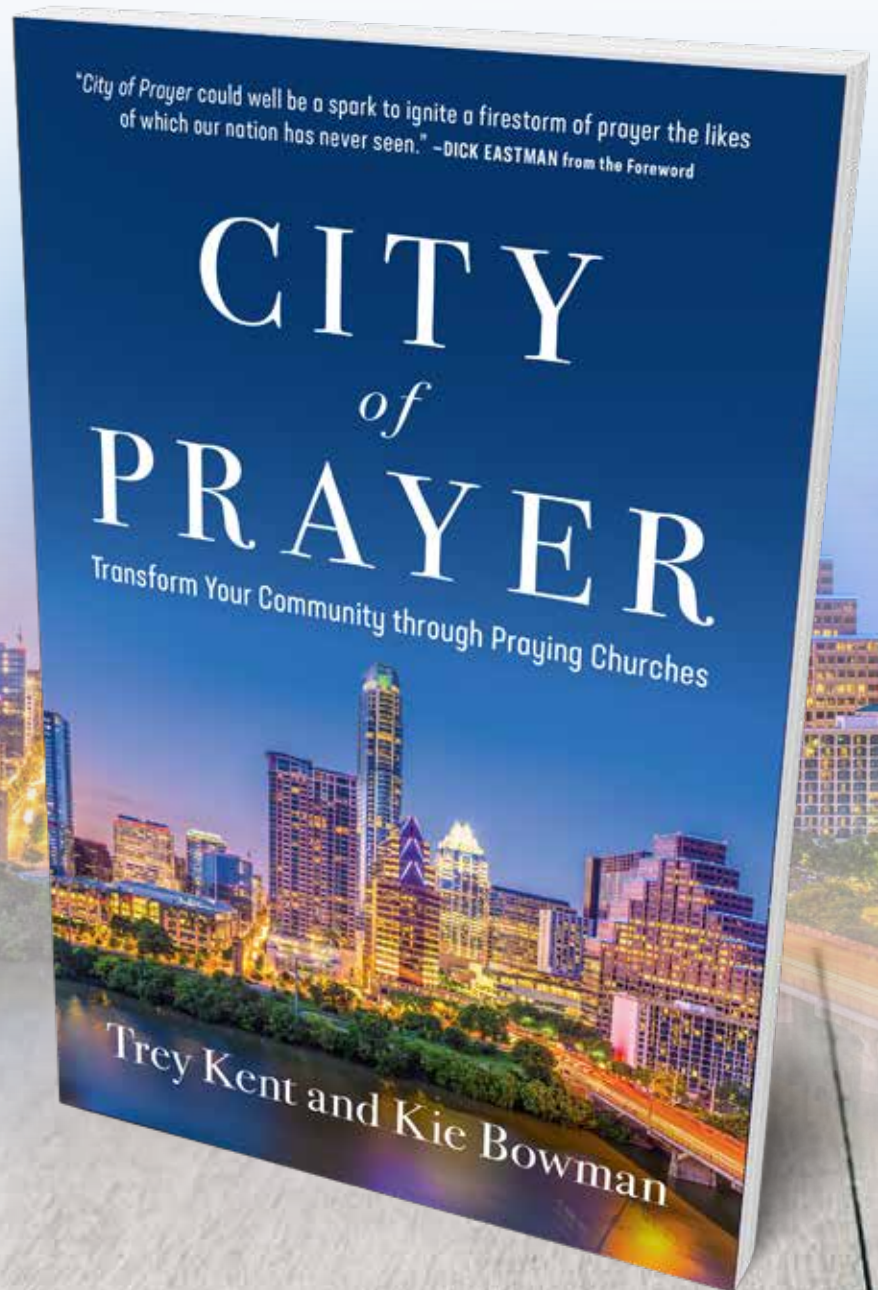
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# Imagine a Move of God in Your City!

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*City of Prayer* shares such a story and shows in a clear, simple way, how this can happen in any city. In your city!

*City of Prayer* needs to be in the hands of every pastor, prayer leader, and believer who desire to see their city transformed.



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Order through [prayershop.org](http://prayershop.org) or any place you get your Christian books. Multiple copy discounts are available at [prayershop.org](http://prayershop.org).



## Pastors Pray with Iowa Lawmakers

A group of pastors from various denominations has formed a team to pray every day at the Iowa State Capitol. The group first meets at a nearby church to pray and discuss what the lawmakers will take up that week. Then they head over to the Capitol and start meeting with elected officials from both sides of the aisle.

This practice, known as the Church Ambassador Program, took shape after the 2012 election when Bob Vander Plaats, president of The Family Leader, saw a need for deep change. “We really did a gut check. We looked at ourselves in the mirror and said, ‘What is this all about?’” Vander Plaats recalls. “That’s when we said we need to authentically engage the church. We need to be about cultural transformation—and the only way we’re going to get cultural transformation is if we lead with the gospel.”

Pastor Trevor Pinneger has been praying at the Capitol for three years. “That’s my role here, is to come alongside to find out how we can pray for . . . people

and how we can lift them up so that ultimately they realize that they matter, and that they matter to God [so] that they will do things with godly intent and godly wisdom.”

Lawmakers have expressed their appreciation for the prayer support. Rep. Ruth Ann Gaines, (D-District 32), told CBN News that the prayers of the pastors have helped with issues in her home life. And she says that has helped her to “carry those issues as I continue to work for my constituents.”

Sen. Craig Johnson, (R-District 32), echoes a similar sentiment. “Whether I get to see [the pastors] personally or whether they’re meeting with someone else, it’s always good to see that moral support out there,” he says.

Greg Baker, who leads the pastors, has seen legislators change their stance after prayer. On a controversial issue regarding abortion, one legislator “completely turned 180 by relationships with pastors,” he says.

Baker maintains that the key to success



is remaining nonpartisan. “Our end goal isn’t policy. It’s not favoring one person over the other. Our end goal is a relationship, and we’ll see where God allows that relationship to go,” explains Baker. “And it’s an intentional relationship, meaning there’s a gospel component to it.”

While hundreds of pastors from around Iowa are involved in the program, only a small group goes into the Capitol each day. The pastors are now regular fixtures in the Capitol, and in the four years of their visits, only five members have turned down the pastors’ offers to pray with them.

Adapted from CBN News ([cbn.com](http://cbn.com)).

## “Unplanned” Movie Birthed by Prayer

The story of Abby Johnson, a former Planned Parenthood clinic director turned pro-life advocate, is powerfully portrayed in the film *Unplanned*, a story birthed by thousands of hours of fervent prayer.

Shawn Carney is the man behind many of those prayers. He heads the 40 Days for Life campaign that began in Texas in the fall of 2004. The organization holds continuous, round-the-clock, 40-day prayer campaigns every fall and

during Lent. As intercessors, they peacefully pray outside abortion clinics, petitioning God to intervene and save the lives of the unborn children and their mothers.

In just 15 years, 40 Days for Life has become a global movement with hundreds of thousands of volunteer intercessors



who pray and keep vigil outside Planned Parenthood clinics like the one where Johnson once worked. That clinic eventually shut down.

When Johnson exited the abortion industry a decade ago, Carney and his wife helped Johnson

find new employment and guided her through the process of leaving the cause she once passionately believed in.

Carney and Johnson remain great friends, and through their faithful prayers and efforts they continue to see clinic employees have a change of heart about abortion.

Johnson posted a request for prayer on her Facebook page about her outreach program to workers who would like to leave the abortion industry. “We

need your prayers at And Then There Were None pro-life outreach,” says Johnson. At this point, at least one or two abortion clinic workers leave their jobs every day.

Johnson’s program is designed to provide financial, emotional, spiritual, and legal support to anyone wishing to leave the abortion industry. The organization

claims it has helped nearly 500 workers leave the profession (*abortionworker.com*).

“Please pray for our staff as we navigate this busy time,” Johnson says. “Big things are happening, and we can confidently state that [the film] *Unplanned* has been a bigger blow to the abortion industry than we could have ever imagined! Change is coming!”

## Three Million Brazilians March for Jesus

Some three million Christians turned out for an enormous “March for Jesus” in the Brazilian city of São Paulo in June. President Jair Bolsonaro attended the vast religious gathering, which gave people an opportunity to pray and worship the Lord in the public square.

The march’s president, Estevam Hernandes, kicked off proceedings, outside one of the main São Paulo metro stations, by delivering a public prayer: “We cry out for Brazil, for the families, for the end of corruption, for the afflicted hearts; our country belongs to Jesus Christ,” he

prayed over the sprawling crowds. “To Him all honor, glory, power and majesty. As it says in Psalm 33:12, ‘Happy is the nation whose God is the Lord’” (CSB).

The march made its way up to the Heroes of the Brazilian Expeditionary Force Square, where 28 Brazilian gospel bands, along with several evangelical pastors, led the participants in worship for ten hours.

Brazil President Bolsonaro personally addressed the immense crowds. Brazil “is secular but its current leader is Christian,” he declared. “You were decisive in helping change the destiny of Brazil. It is very good



to be among friends. And even better when they are friends with God in their hearts.”

About 30 percent of Brazil’s 190 million citizens define themselves as evangelicals.

Taken from Christian Headline News (*christianheadlines.com*).

## Pastors Pray Early Sunday Mornings

Pastors in Altoona, PA, have discovered the optimum time to meet for prayer: 6:30 a.m. on Sunday mornings. For more than a year, pastors have been gathering to pray for each other, their churches, and their city before they minister in their own churches.

Altoona has a history as a city where pastors and churches do not work well together. Even as far back as a Billy Graham crusade in 1949, the event was marred by squabbling, competition, and ongoing dissension among pastors and churches.

But in April 2018, seven pastors determined to pray together. Because they couldn’t agree on a weekday, they chose early Sunday morning. Now as many as

40 pastors and leaders from more than 25 churches pray each Sunday.

They meet in a different church each week, and start their time with the question, “What can we celebrate in your churches today?” They also pray for the city, leaders, people, other churches, etc. After a half hour of prayer, they gather around the host pastor and staff to pray to lay hands on them and pray for their families and ministry—and then head off to their own churches. Pastors now cooperate with each other on other citywide initiatives.

Adapted from an article featured at *prayerleader.com* by Pastor Tim McGarvey, Altoona Alliance Church.

### Prayer Calendar

Day of Prayer for the Peace of Jerusalem  
**Sunday, October 6**  
[daytopray.com](http://daytopray.com)

Tent America 2019—  
50 hours of worship  
**October 17–19**  
[awakenthedawn.org](http://awakenthedawn.org)

Days of Prayer for the Persecuted Church  
**Sunday, November 3 and 10**  
[idop.org](http://idop.org)

Weekend of Prayer to End Slavery and Trafficking  
**January 10–12, 2020**  
[facebook.com/weekendofprayer](https://facebook.com/weekendofprayer)



# CITIES *at* PRAYER

## *Continuous Intercession in Your Community*

Several years ago, my church embarked on an unusual season of prayer. One of the pastors cast a vision for 40 days of nonstop prayer, so a storage room was cleaned out and turned into a temporary prayer room to host the 24/7 intercession. People came all day and throughout the night to seek the Lord on behalf of the church and the community.

Surprisingly, the prayer marathon extended beyond the designated 40 days because people did not want to stop. They had encountered God in a deep way, and they longed for more.

I was not a part of the church until later, but I was so intrigued that I accompanied friends to a late-night prayer session there. I was touched by how the prayer room was filled with evidences of many people spending hours upon hours calling upon the Lord. Prayer journals were filled with expressions of both adoration and pleading. The walls were lined with sheets of butcher paper—prayer requests scrawled all over them. Many people sacrificed sleep night after night to take the early morning hours, and they did so with great delight!

Today we are still seeing answers to those prayers. The storage closet is now a beautiful prayer room, with comfortable furniture, a world map on the wall, and an electric fireplace for heat (necessary for Minnesota winters!). Eventually the church called Bob Bakke, an international prayer leader, as senior pastor. I joined the church soon afterward and was added to the staff as a part-time director of prayer ministries. As a church, we then dreamed of a next-generation prayer

gathering—and this small congregation helped organize and finance the first city-wide prayer and worship event at a university hockey arena. This event became the largest annual, next generation-led gathering on the National Day of Prayer. The sacrifice of a few turned into spiritual fruit touching thousands.

Since that time, we have hosted several 24-hour times of prayer in the prayer room, but we have not experienced a repeat of that continuous, 40-day, 24/7 season of prayer. It's tough for a small church to maintain that kind of extraordinary intercession.

### *Cities at Prayer*


That's why we need the entire body of Christ to join forces in covering a city in 24/7 prayer. By incorporating the simple concept of each church committing to one day of prayer a month, an entire city can quickly be covered by intercessors seeking transformation of their community.

In this issue, Brian Alarid casts a vision for city after city being captured by this saturating prayer. He explains the strategy for America Prays, which is cropping up in cities such as Albuquerque, NM, and Bellingham, WA—and is now spreading across 14 states and eight nations. Kie Bowman and Trey Kent tell the dynamic story of the pastor-led prayer covering Austin, TX. They write about miraculous answers to prayer and ways Austin is being transformed by united, continuous prayer. Steve Hawthorne uses his years of experience in writing powerful prayer guides to show how to script biblical prayers of hope for any city.

As I write this, several churches in Minnesota's Twin Cities area have envisioned 24/7 prayer coverage, but we are still working on how to organize. We trust we will soon join this movement. Perhaps you can be a catalyst for your city. Let's dream. Let's organize. And let's pray. **PC**

**CAROL MADISON** is editor of *Prayer Connect* and author of *Prayer That's Caught and Taught: Mentoring the Next Generation* ([prayershop.org](http://prayershop.org)).





# When AMERICA PRAYS

BY BRIAN ALARID

I was a 17-year-old Bible college student when I read a story that forever changed my life. The story detailed the Moravian prayer movement that began in Herrnhut, Germany, in 1727. A few believers covenanted to start a continuous prayer chain (24 hours a day, seven days a week), with at least two people praying every hour. Little did they know their prayer watch would last more than 100 years. By 1791, the Moravians had prayed nonstop for almost 65 years, and they sent more than 300 missionaries around the world.<sup>1</sup>

Ever since I first read that Moravian story, I've had a burning passion to see every church in every nation become a house of prayer. Jesus clearly expressed His heart for the Church when He said, "My house will be called a house of prayer for all nations" (Mark 11:17).

Fast forward to January 1, 2017. A few pastor friends and I launched New Mexico Prays ([americaprays.org/newmexico](http://americaprays.org/newmexico)), a movement covering our state in 24/7 prayer. Today, 100 churches in 27 cities across New Mexico have adopted a monthly day of prayer. They cover 12 or 24 hours in prayer with people praying 30 or 60 minutes in a continuous chain of prayer.

© Photo by America Prays





### *Prosperity Prayers for Your City*

Adopting a monthly day of prayer is not the end game but a simple on-ramp for making prayer part of our churches' monthly rhythm and for developing a culture of prayer. Unceasing prayer is happening in homes, places of work, college dorms, coffee shops, parks, small groups, and churches. Through united prayer in New Mexico, we are witnessing Jesus transform our economy and confront the abortion crisis. The hungry are being fed and the poor are being served.

We began praying for the peace and prosperity of our state, taking Jeremiah 29:7 to heart: "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." God made it clear that prayer plays a

vital role in the safety and prosperity of a community.

In both 2012 and 2018, New Mexico was ranked the lowest among states at 50<sup>th</sup> in the family prosperity index.<sup>2</sup> It was also ranked 49<sup>th</sup> in the economy, and had the 2<sup>nd</sup> highest poverty rate in the nation. But when God's people pray, God hears from heaven and things begin to change. A state that was facing an expected \$200-million deficit now has a \$1.2 billion surplus. According to a Bloomberg news report, since the beginning of 2017, New Mexico is #1 in job increases and wage increases.

To be clear, new economic policies, a thriving oil and gas industry, and the hard work of many have made this possible. However, the turnaround is too drastic to be

## *A Vision for Every City and State*

explained by natural solutions alone. Only Jesus can get the credit for this stunning change.

Another area where we have seen answers to prayer in New Mexico is on the abortion issue. Albuquerque, the largest city in our state, has been known as the “late-term abortion capital of America.” Since churches began praying 24/7 for an end to late-term abortion in New Mexico, three abortion clinics have closed. Furthermore, for more than two decades, the University of New Mexico (UNM) Health and Sciences Department conducted research on aborted baby parts. But in a remarkable turn of events, UNM has now ended the controversial program.

## *Worship-Saturated Prayers for America*

We launched America Prays on October 7, 2017, to unite and equip 40,000 churches in 24/7 prayer for a national spiritual awakening. This is a Jesus-centered, local-church-based prayer movement that God is using to transform communities. Imagine what will happen when every city, county, and state in America is covered in worship-saturated prayer! Consider this:

- Our strategy is *simple*. Every church in America and around the world can adopt a full day or a half day every month. Whether churches have 20 members or 40,000 members, they can all participate.

- Our strategy is *unifying*. Baptist, Reformed, Protestant, Calvary Chapel, Pentecostal, Catholic, charismatic, and non-denominational churches can all adopt a day of prayer and do it their way at their church. They lead their own monthly day of prayer, then come together in monthly and quarterly gatherings, which produces a greater level of unity and trust between pastors as they cover their city in prayer. We also encourage all churches to participate in their local National Day of Prayer public gathering the first Thursday of every May.

- Our strategy is *pastor-led*. It empowers the senior pastor to lead his church in prayer. It honors the pastor's

authority as God's appointed leader for the church. Most pastors want to lead their congregations in prayer but haven't found a simple, effective model.

- Our strategy is *local-church based*. It engages the intercessors (who are already praying) and also church members who may not attend a corporate prayer meeting. People can pray from home, school, college dorm, or coffee shop. We believe the local church is at the center of God's plan for the redemption of the world.
- Our strategy is *powerful*. When churches in a city and state start praying for the same things, their targeted, focused prayer is strategic and powerful, reflecting Jesus' words about the power of agreement: “If two of you on earth agree about anything they ask for, it will be done for them by my Father in heaven” (Matt. 18:19).
- Our strategy is *sustainable*. Since each church is responsible for only one day of prayer a month (or more if they want), no single church gets burned out. Local churches have been praying 24/7 for ten years now in Austin, TX, and Bellingham, WA. This strategy has staying power. You can't fake 24/7 prayer for ten straight years with churches from across the theological spectrum. Unified, powerful prayer results in growing and thriving churches that make an impact.


This movement has already spread to 14 states through America Prays and to eight nations through World Prays. Dick Eastman, president of Every Home for Christ, who serves on the board of advisors of America Prays, made this statement: “We are thrilled to be part of America Prays. The vision is so doable, so possible, and so Christ-honoring! This is something our ministry wants to be involved in and even take it all over the world.”

## *A Launch for 24/7 Prayer*

We have found five simple, effective steps for launching a church's monthly day of prayer:

1. *Select a time*. Sign up on our website ([americaprays.org](http://americaprays.org)) for a monthly full day (24 hours) or half day (12 hours). Your church will pray the same day (e.g., first or eighth day of the month) or day of the week (e.g., second Wednesday or fourth Friday).

2. *Appoint a prayer coordinator*. The prayer coordinator, a member of the church, serves under the leadership of the pastor to organize, schedule, and provide general leadership for the church's prayer activities (including the day of prayer). Qualifications include an active and healthy prayer life, a good reputation inside and outside the church, and the ability to lead in prayer and mobilize others to pray.



The local  
church is  
at the  
CENTER  
OF GOD'S  
PLAN.



3. *Share the vision.* The pastor shares the vision with the church during Sunday morning services a few weeks before the first monthly day of prayer:

- presenting goals for the day of prayer
- affirming the prayer coordinator and his or her role
- encouraging people to sign up for 30- to 60-minute prayer slots.

4. *Recruit and follow up.* Use prayer commitment cards or signup sheets during or after the service to ask people to sign up for their own time slot. People could also sign up on the church's website. (Signup Genius is a free, easy-to-use online tool that manages time slots, sign ups, and reminders.) Print and distribute suggestions regarding how to pray during the time slots. Include specific and measurable prayer points for the church, city, and state.

The prayer coordinator works on getting all the time slots filled and follows up (through text, email, or the church's preferred method of communication) with those who commit to pray. Coordinators send prayer points, scheduled time reminders, and encouragement.

5. *Pray.* During their selected times on the monthly day of prayer, people can pray wherever they choose—alone or in a small group. When intercessors complete their time slot, it's helpful if they text or call the next person on the schedule as a courtesy reminder. Consistency helps us make prayer a daily lifestyle.

## *Awakening the Battle for Souls*

J. Edwin Orr made this powerful observation: "No great spiritual awakening has begun anywhere in the world apart from united prayer."

I deeply believe that a new Moravian-style 24/7 prayer movement will propel America into the greatest spiritual awakening and harvest of souls in our nation's history. We can only win this

battle for the soul of our nation on our knees. **PC**

<sup>1</sup>Leslie K Tarr, "Prayer Meeting that Lasted 100 Years" (June 2019): [www.christianitytoday.com/history/issues/issue-1/prayer-meeting-that-lived-100-years.html](http://www.christianitytoday.com/history/issues/issue-1/prayer-meeting-that-lived-100-years.html).

<sup>2</sup>For sources for all stats related to New Mexico, contact [editor@prayerconnect.net](mailto:editor@prayerconnect.net).



**BRIAN ALARID** is the president and CEO of America Prays and World Prays, co-chairman of New Mexico Prays, and founding pastor of Passion Church in Albuquerque, NM. You can contact him at [brian@americaprays.org](mailto:brian@americaprays.org) or follow him on Twitter: [@BrianAlarid](https://twitter.com/BrianAlarid).



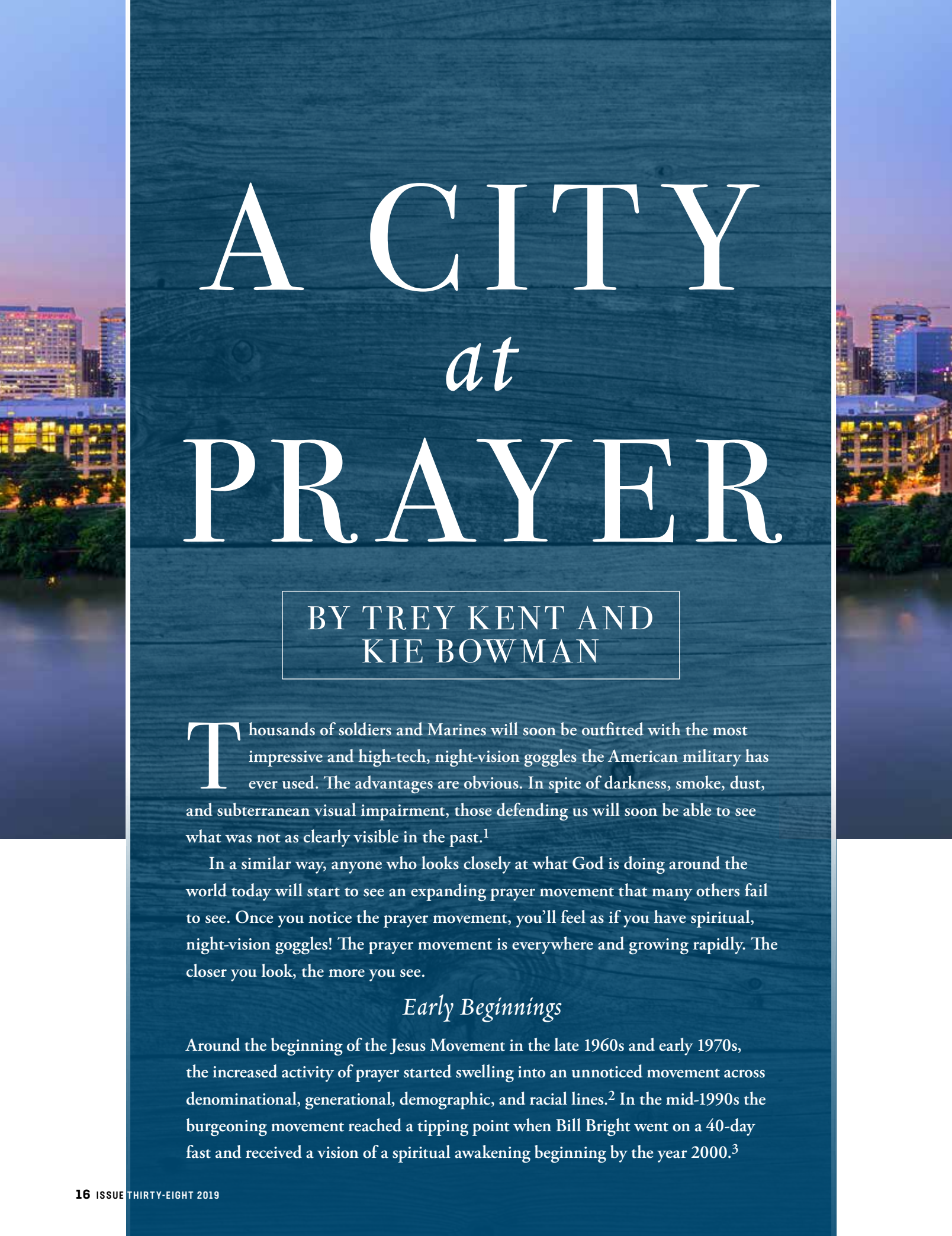
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# A CITY *at* PRAYER

BY TREY KENT AND  
KIE BOWMAN

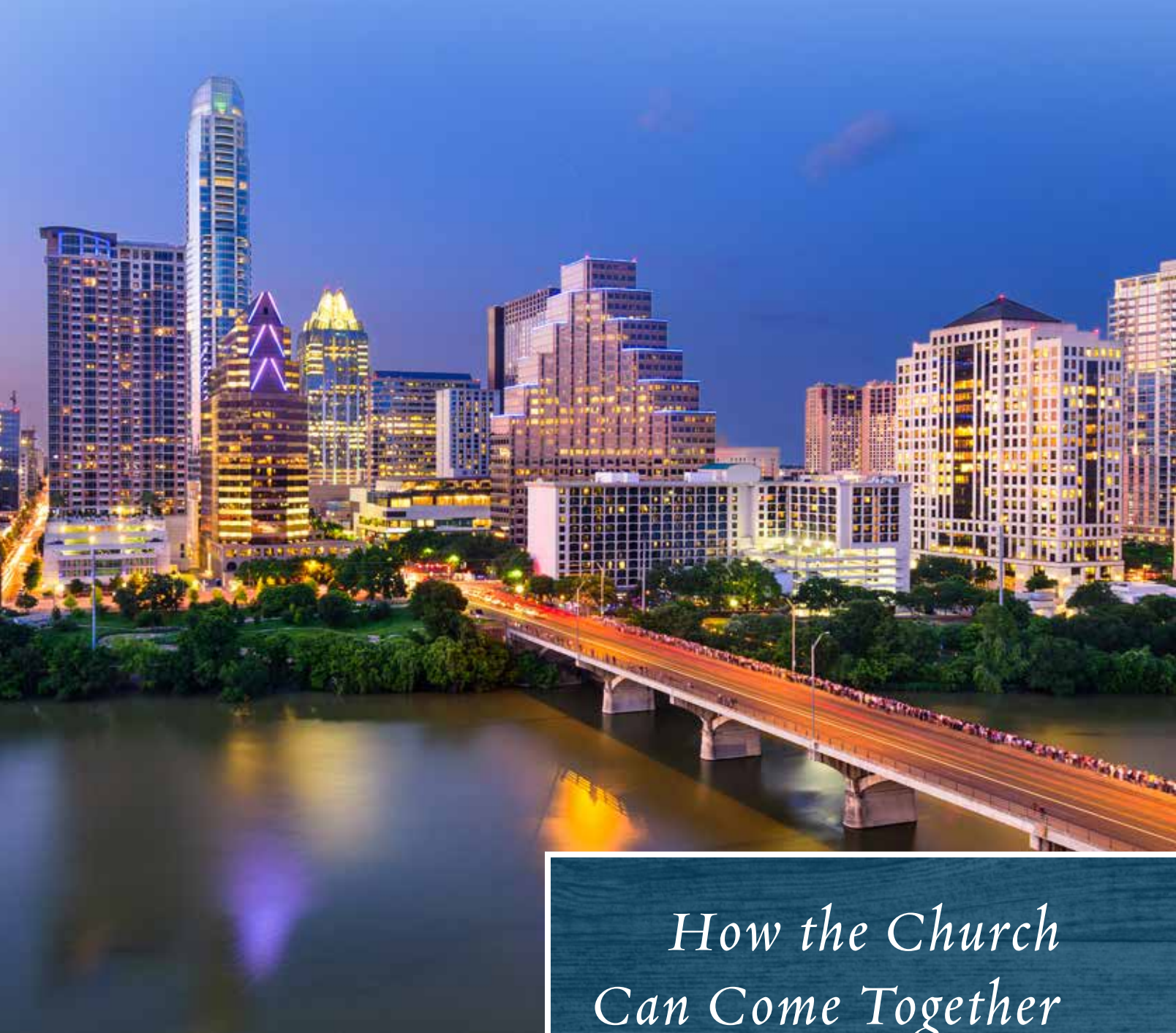
**T**housands of soldiers and Marines will soon be outfitted with the most impressive and high-tech, night-vision goggles the American military has ever used. The advantages are obvious. In spite of darkness, smoke, dust, and subterranean visual impairment, those defending us will soon be able to see what was not as clearly visible in the past.<sup>1</sup>

In a similar way, anyone who looks closely at what God is doing around the world today will start to see an expanding prayer movement that many others fail to see. Once you notice the prayer movement, you'll feel as if you have spiritual, night-vision goggles! The prayer movement is everywhere and growing rapidly. The closer you look, the more you see.

## *Early Beginnings*

Around the beginning of the Jesus Movement in the late 1960s and early 1970s, the increased activity of prayer started swelling into an unnoticed movement across denominational, generational, demographic, and racial lines.<sup>2</sup> In the mid-1990s the burgeoning movement reached a tipping point when Bill Bright went on a 40-day fast and received a vision of a spiritual awakening beginning by the year 2000.<sup>3</sup>





## *How the Church Can Come Together*

By the time the year 2000 arrived, the prayer movement had spontaneously produced the International House of Prayer in Kansas City and the 24/7 Prayer movement from England, each of which started without the knowledge of the other on almost the same day in 1999. Both of these ministries have been praying night and day for 20 years!<sup>4</sup>

A few months into the new millennium, a South African businessman launched The Global Day of Prayer in his country. It quickly grew to more than 200 nations with millions of people involved.<sup>5</sup> These ministries are a small but impressive sample of the rising tide of prayer occurring in every part of the world today.

Is this international prayer movement evidence that

Bright's vision of spiritual awakening was on target? Other explanations seem less likely than the obvious. God is preparing His people for a global awakening, and we should conclude that the prayer movement is the visible first phase of this coming move of God.

One fragment of the prayer movement is close to home for us. More than a decade ago something started spontaneously stirring in the hearts of leaders in Austin, TX.

### *Most-Prayed-For City in America*

We just experienced a decade of unceasing prayer in Austin, TX (87,600 hours of unified prayer for our city).

We will never be the same! We believe this can happen in every city in America and around the world.

The Unceasing Prayer Movement, our name for the Austin-area prayer movement, began when Mary Anne and Trey Kent stood under a light pole while on a prayerwalk in their neighborhood in Austin. Trey heard God say He

wanted His city covered in 24/7 prayer by local churches adopting a day of prayer every month.

The decade ended with Kie Bowman, Mary Anne, and Trey praying together with Asian believers in a 24/7 prayer room in the city of Jerusalem, Israel. During this ten-year period of unified prayer, we have seen God bring unprecedented miracles, unity, and worldwide growth to this movement of prayer. Our vision is *to*

*make Austin, TX, the most-prayed-for city in America!*

This is doable in your city as well. We want to see not only our city transformed by unceasing prayer, but your city turned right-side up by mobilizing churches to pray in unity, 24/7, until Jesus returns.

### *Practical Principles*

God wants His cities changed by the praying church. Here's the promise: "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). What could happen if your city became a city of prayer?

How can it happen? Here are some key principles we've observed through ten years of unceasing prayer:

1. *The prayer movement begins and ends with pastors.*

This was the secret that few seemed to notice or talk about. The prayer movement in America picks up more momentum when pastors begin leading their churches to intercede for revival and awakening in our country. J. Edwin Orr, the leading scholar on awakening and revival, said the Second Great Awakening was birthed as pastors led their churches to adopt one day every month to pray for revival for the nation.<sup>6</sup> God answered in a big way!

We must get back to the rhythm of pastors leading their churches to pray for the city. If only 31 pastors in each city will lead their churches to pray 24 hours a month, the city

will be covered in unceasing prayer—and God will begin to move in unprecedented ways. God promised this!

We have seen this to be true in our city. Unceasing prayer is for every church, no matter the size or denomination. Every church that believes Jesus is the answer to the city's problems is urged to adopt a monthly day of prayer. Our nation needs unceasing prayer more than ever!

2. *Begin by leading your own church to pray 24 hours a month on a given day for a transformed city.* It's easier than you think. Invite 24 people to adopt one hour. You take the most difficult hour and invite others to follow. Soon, you will have a prayer army mobilized in your local church ready to pray one 24-hour day a month for awakening in your church and city.

3. *Gather other pastors and invite them to adopt a day of prayer.* Fill all 31 days of the month. We began meeting with pastors for coffee or lunch and then organized citywide pastors' lunches. We kept this focus until all 31 days were adopted by local churches.

It's vital to keep a long-term vision regarding unceasing prayer. Pastors and churches may need time to warm up to this idea. But if you persevere, you *will* see people praying for your city night and day.

In Austin, as pastors continued year after year, leading their churches to pray, a team of pastors emerged to lead this movement. Our city's prayer movement received a great burst of momentum when a diverse group of Jesus-loving pastors united to lead the Unceasing Prayer Movement! And now hundreds of people are gathering together for citywide prayer meetings once a quarter. These incredible gatherings fuel a passion for prayer.

Your city is full of praying pastors who are ready to be awakened to lead their churches to be houses of prayer.

4. *Don't stop until Jesus returns.* Changing the world for Christ is always linked to a praying person. As Samuel Chadwick said, "The greatest answer to prayer is more prayer."

Imagine what God will do in your city when believers commit themselves to 24/7 prayer over your city. We learned very quickly that unceasing prayer does not mean we never miss a minute, hour, or day. *Unceasing prayer means we don't quit.* Jesus' promises are for the persevering church.

Whatever you do, keep praying and leading your church, family, small group, and community in unending prayer. You and your city will be forever changed.

### *Tangible Results*

Here are some of the clear results of the unceasing prayer movement over the city of Austin. First, the unity of the




body of Christ is obvious. Pastors from megachurches and church plants—Baptists, charismatics, Bible churches, evangelicals, and mainline Protestants—join together to pray for spiritual awakening. The unity and fellowship, which most agree is a direct result of the prayer movement, is palpable.

In addition, the prayer movement continually presses into racial unity and understanding. African American, Asian, Hispanic, and white pastors frequently eat together, pray together, fellowship together, and preach in each other's churches. This growing unity is unforced and is a direct result of the hours spent praying for racial unity in the body of Christ. There is always more to be done to heal racial wounds, but there is no better place to begin the healing than in prayer.

Perhaps the most obvious result of the prayer movement came in the form of rain—lots of it! When Austin and all

central Texas was experiencing record drought in 2014, a thousand Christians gathered to pray for rain. Within days, flash floods were the biggest problem facing the area! Since the initial prayer meeting, the rains have continued. The lake, from which most of Austin's water is drawn, filled up with millions of gallons of needed water in record time and continues to provide the fast-growing Austin metro area with the water it needs. Those involved in the prayer movement have no doubt God reversed the drought as a direct result of prayer.

Despite the darkness of this world, we can clearly see, with the precision of night-vision goggles, that God is moving. The unceasing prayer movement will not rest until we experience spiritual awakening and make Austin, TX, the most-prayed-for city in America! 

<sup>1</sup>Todd South, "Newest night-vision goggle finishes testing. Here's when Army units will get

it," *armytimes.com/news/your-army/2019/04/26/newest-night-vision-goggle-is-finishes-testing-heres-when-army-units-will-get-it/*.

<sup>2</sup>C. Peter Wagner, *Prayer Shield* (Ventura, CA: Regal Books, 1982), 13.

<sup>3</sup>Bill Bright, *America's Call to Fast, Pray, and "Seek God's Face"* (Orlando, FL: NewLife Publications, 1995), 29.

<sup>4</sup>"Night and Day Prayer and Worship," August 21, 2015, *heinspiredme.com*, <https://heinspiredme.com/international-house-of-prayer/>.

<sup>5</sup>"The Global Day of Prayer," *web.archive.org/web/20091103164123/http://www.globaldayof-prayer.com/history.html*.

<sup>6</sup>J. Edwin Orr, *The Re-Study of Revival and Revivalism* (Pasadena, CA: School of World Mission, 1981), 10.



**TREY KENT and KIE BOWMAN** are the authors of the newly released book, *City of Prayer*, available at [prayershop.org](http://prayershop.org). Trey is pastor of Northwest Fellowship, and Kie is pastor of Hyde Park Baptist Church, both in Austin, TX.

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# PRAY GREAT THINGS

BY STEVE HAWTHORNE

**P**raying for one's city makes sense. The basic command to love our neighbors inclines us to pray beyond our own concerns.

But how do we pray for our communities? In the WayMakers ministry, we've learned many things about this practice, but here is the key: encourage focused, united, and sustained praying with written prayers of biblical hope.

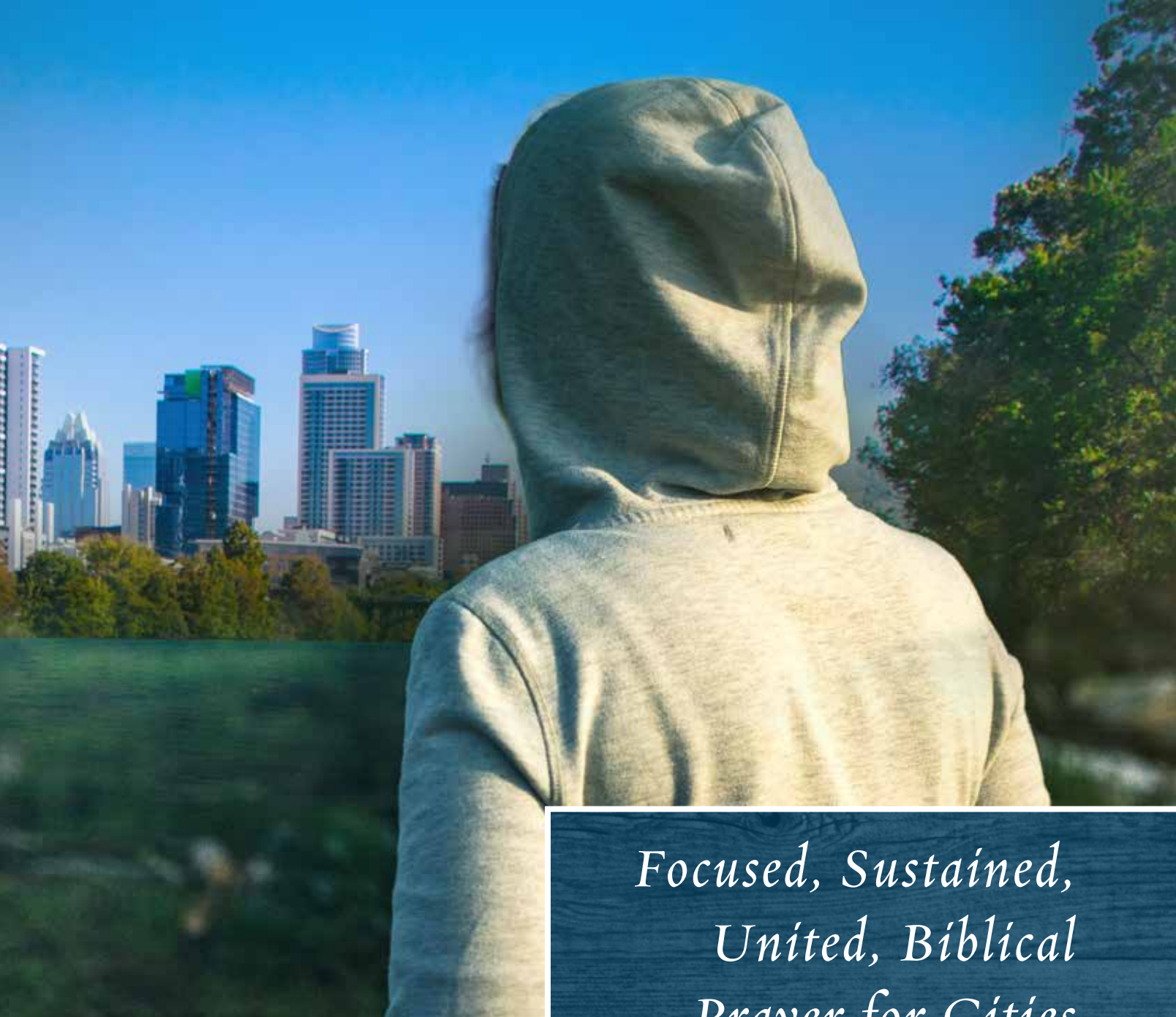
## *Focused Praying: Pray Scripture*

Many are accustomed to praying about specific needs or problems, framed as prayer requests by the persons needing or asking for prayer. If people tell us their requests, we will pray. Many Christians, however, have run that logic backwards: if we don't know their requests, then we won't know what to pray.

Let's help each other learn the art—and the heart—of praying the Scriptures. We can discover so much about the ways and the work of our God from the Bible's stories, prophecies, covenants, hymns of praise, and written prayers. Of course, Scripture can be misinterpreted and misused, but usually the reflective process of actually writing out these prayers helps us stay within the intended meaning of the biblical authors.

By seeking to pray in accord with God's Word, our words will express what we can be sure is God's heart.





## *Focused, Sustained, United, Biblical Prayer for Cities*

### *Sustained Praying: Pray Purpose*

If we pray in accord with Scripture, we'll find that God has promised us far more than help through tough times. He is resolutely pursuing His global purpose that, by the power of the gospel, His Son would be famous and followed, bringing His transforming blessing among all peoples.

God is unfolding this massive, all-encompassing purpose in a multimillennial, generational time frame. It's humbling to realize we are probably doing a feeble job of restating what other saints and grandparents in the faith have prayed. Some of the most important prayers for cities are long-haul prayers for God to fulfill over lengthy time spans. We may be praying 50- or 100-year

prayers—prayers that our great-grandchildren will be glad we prayed. God is not offended if we cry out, “How long?” (Rev. 6:10 and 15 times in the Psalms).

I've learned that our best prayers are those worth *praying more*. It's not a matter of merely praying them again. *Praying more* is the work and the joy of reiterating and refining our prayers. I have sometimes given a particular person the assignment of being a “prayer scribe,” listening to a group that is praying and taking notes regarding the prayers worth praying again. Writing down the main ideas of those prayers gives us a way of pushing those prayers further to deepen, strengthen, and simplify our praying.

Some churches keep written accounts of select prayers

and Scriptures that have been prayed. Reviewing those records gives a congregation solid ground to offer God praise. And, of course, in later years and generations those prayers can inspire others to pray onward. Written, biblical prayers can encourage others to pray with the heart as well as the mind, in spirit as well as in truth.

## United Praying: Pray Together

The prayers we yearn to pray for our cities are not just long—as in the lengthy timelines of prayers offered and answered. The prayers are also large—as in the multitude of issues and complexities of communities of any size. One pastor told me what he thought of some prayers I had written for citywide prayer: “These prayers are too big for us to pray alone. We’re going to have to get other churches praying with us.”

Yes, indeed. And effectively praying prayers of this magnitude demands that people pray in every place, lift prayers in many languages, and intercede in every dimension of community life. God is pleased to hear the prayers of each of the diverse streams of Christ’s people as if we were speaking with one voice.

We’ve enjoyed renewal in our city-wide prayer gatherings in Austin, TX, as we stand before our Lord shoulder to shoulder. Such gatherings to pray as one people are essential, but they take work. And despite our best scheduling and organizing, many may be left out of our gatherings.

One way of uniting in prayer is to publish and distribute simple, biblical prayers that can stimulate even more specific prayers. Because of the unity Christians enjoy in the Bible, we can create effective prayer guides that resound with the Scriptures and focus on the glory of Christ alone.

## Form Helpful Scripted Prayers

For more than 20 years, our team at WayMakers has published a prayer guide called *Seek God for the City*, featuring prayers of biblical hope. Here are a few things we’ve learned:

- **Restate truth with fresh vocabulary.** Paraphrase (“prayer-a-phrase”) essential truths of the biblical text. Avoid churchy jargon. Use different words but words that are accessible. Instead of *divide*, use *fragment* or *split*. Instead of *see*, try *glimpse* or *gaze*.
- **Provide the Scripture.** Do more than print a chapter-verse reference. People rarely look up references, so write out the quotation for them.
- **Confess the truth found in the Scripture.** What does the Scripture say about you or those you are praying for? Keep such statements brief and incisive, setting up what, specifically, you will ask God to do.
- **Ask God to do something.** Choose

Scriptures that reveal God’s ways and work. Use crisp verbs to ask God to act in accord with the Scripture. Beware of expressions such as, “We thank You that. . . .” and then run on saying whatever you want to say. As true as your statement might be, it may not be prayer.

- **A pray-then-write cycle.** Write what you’ve prayed and then pray what you’ve written.

I’m delighted to see many others write biblical prayers that help people unite and focus their praying. Let’s continue to equip and encourage God’s people to pray His purpose.

Following are three sample prayers, using three kinds of Scriptures (from *Seek God for the City*), that can help you write and refine your own prayers:

### 1. Use a Prayer from a Song

The biblical text is a worship song, such as the one below. We use the truths to confess how little God is known and why He has “gone anonymous.” Then we give several rapid-fire requests with active verbs: “do something great; become famous; reestablish Your reputation; stir Your people.” These kinds of prayers are easy to pray and can expand extemporaneously.

Give thanks to the LORD, call on His name.

Make known His deeds among the peoples;

Make them remember that His name is exalted . . .

He has done excellent things;

Let this be known throughout the earth (Isaiah 12:4–5, NASB).

*Living God, although You are heartily praised in our churches, You are lightly regarded, fiercely hated, or utterly ignored by many in our city. For too long You have gone anonymous. People fail to recognize the good things You constantly do for*

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*them. Your goodness is deemed luck or coincidence. Kindness is considered a random thing. Lord of glory, we ask You to do something great for Your name. Become famous for who You really are. Reestablish Your reputation among those who have forgotten You. Stir Your people to tell the story of Your glory in their lives so that You are praised beyond the walls of our churches.*

## 2. Use a Prayer from a Gospel Story

First, we recount part of the story of Jesus restoring a demonized man to his household. His whole city heard the news. The prayer highlights some of the unfamiliar facets of the story. Then we add four sentences, each a request about multiplying “fresh tellings of the gospel.” Jesus told the man,

“Return to your house and describe what great things God has done for you.” So he went away, proclaiming throughout the whole city what great things Jesus had done for him (Luke 8:39).

*One man told his family all about the great things You did for him. Then the news spread beyond his household so that the whole city heard. Do the same thing yet again in our city. May one person relay the gospel to another, and then throughout their households. Make Your Word resound through neighborhoods and networks of friends. Fill our entire community with fresh tellings of the gospel. From our city, send the message to many peoples and places across the face of the earth.*


## 3. Use a Prayer from a Prophetic Promise

A rarely noted or quoted passage promises good things for families. Once again, we can use the Scripture to reveal our need. And then we offer five succinct sentence petitions, each of them expanding the promises.

All your children will be taught by the LORD, and great will be their peace (Isaiah 54:13).

*You have entrusted to parents a great responsibility, that they would become the pattern of life their children follow. Even the best of parents in stable homes can sometimes fail to guide their children well. Children sometimes rebel with no apparent cause. So we approach You, our marvelous heavenly Father. Make Your presence known in our homes. Reconcile wayward fathers and mothers to their children. Restore prodigal sons and daughters to their parents. Open our minds and lives to receive You as our teacher. And may Your peace be great in homes throughout our city.*

These are only a few of the ways we all can pray great prayers for our cities

by using biblical prayers of hope and joining other believers and churches in sustaining unified prayers for generations to come. 



**STEVE HAWTHORNE** is the director of WayMakers in Austin, TX. He is the coauthor of *Prayerwalking* and the author of *Seek God for the City* prayer guides. The prayers in this article are excerpts from the 2019 prayer guide ([waymakers.org](http://waymakers.org)).

## For Further Reading

Check out some additional articles on blogs and websites related to Cities at Prayer at [prayerleader.com/issue-38-extras](http://prayerleader.com/issue-38-extras).

- “Prayer Points for Your City,” by Intercessors for America
- “Praying for Your City,” by 24-7 Prayer

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# Neutralizing Churches by Twisting Their Prayers

# SATAN'S

“W

hat’s the point of resisting the devil?” Darren asked. “Isn’t he ten trillion times more powerful than we are?”

He had a point. The devil is an incomprehensible spirit being with legions of demonic soldiers to command. Horror movies depict demons as well-nigh invincible.

But Darren was missing something.

“You’re half right,” I said. “If it was just you and me against the devil, we’d be toast. But it isn’t. We have the Spirit of God inside us. That makes us stronger than the devil can ever hope to be.”

Darren leaned back in his chair and smiled.

“With one exception,” I continued.

He lost his smile.

“If the devil can trick you into thinking there’s no point in resisting him, then he neutralizes you.”

Darren looked puzzled. Then his face brightened. “It doesn’t matter how strong you are if you don’t fight back.”

“Right,” I said. “Satan can’t match the Holy Spirit’s strength, so he attacks us by lying. And he has many more lies ready.”

## ORIGINAL FAKE NEWS

Fake news began long before modern media. Before humans ever sinned, Satan was already spinning less-than-factual reports about himself and God. Satan sought to destroy humanity, but he didn’t dare come against Eve and Adam with outright attacks. He came disguised as a friend. He focused their eyes on what seemed to be good.

He used the same strategy against Jesus in the desert. It seemed the devil’s best chance to destroy Jesus, so he brought one of his most potent attacks to bear: he tried to end Jesus’ suffering.

Satan saw Jesus wasting away, going six weeks without food. In the most concerned manner possible, he said, “Jesus, aren’t you the Son of God? Why deny Yourself like this? Speak the word and fill your belly. You don’t deserve all this suffering” (Matt. 4:3, my paraphrase).

The devil loves to lie about himself. He insinuates that real spiritual warfare consists of demons hiding in shadows, waiting to pounce, or demon-possessed people twisting





# FAKE NEWS

## Campaign

their heads around backwards. We fear *these* creepy images, but when Satan puts a comforting arm around us and offers to fill our hungry bellies, we don't recognize him.

By pressing this fake-news campaign, Satan blinds the eyes of believers. Entire armies of Christians don't realize they were ever fighting these battles, let alone how badly they've lost.

James, the half-brother of Jesus, wrote to defeated Christians:

What causes fights and quarrels among you? Don't they come from your desires that battle within you? You desire but do not have, so you kill. You covet but you cannot get what you want, so you quarrel and fight. You do not have because you do not ask God. When you ask, you do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives, that you may spend what you get on your pleasures (James 4:1–3).

These believers refused God's authority. They bowed the knee to nothing but their own greed. Satan had no need to attack them openly. They were destroying each other just fine on their own.

Spiritual warfare is subtle. Often a defeated Christian is not one who experiences overt demonic activity, but rather one whose life looks identical to the surrounding culture. The defeated Christian ignores God's vast resources and Spirit-empowered transformation. Divine guidance goes unheard. Supernatural abilities from the Holy Spirit go unused. The destiny for which God designed that believer goes unfulfilled.

### SELFISH VERSUS SPIRITUAL DESIRES

Satan came to these believers as a friend. He pointed out all the cool stuff they could get now that they could ask God for anything in prayer. Greed did the rest.

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**BY KYLE DAVISON BAIR**

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Because of Satan's fake news, we think we'll notice when he attacks us. How hard can it be to spot a demon crouching at your door? In the movies you can't miss 'em.

But the devil tricked these Christians into self-destruction without ever realizing he was there. Selfish desires reigned in their hearts—yet they saw themselves as spiritual. After all, they still believed in God. They prayed constantly. They possessed great faith; they never ceased asking God for more and more stuff.

But they didn't pray for other people. They didn't pray to know God intimately, to love His people better, or to share His Name more effectively with a hurting world. Instead they prayed only for themselves and all the stuff they wanted.

This set God against them. If God gave them what they demanded, He would only drive them deeper into greed, selfishness, and civil war. God had to

refuse their prayer requests. He loved them too much to destroy them.

God wanted to give these believers His supernatural abilities, gifts, and guidance. Yet they wanted none of it. They looked exactly like the world around them: selfish and greedy, limited to their own natural abilities. Their prayers accomplished nothing.

They maintained the outward appearance of Christianity. They gathered together and put on a service, but they had no supernatural power.

## WHEN SATAN COMES KNOCKING

Satan has been bringing these kinds of attacks for thousands of years. He shows no signs of stopping. The question for us, then, is how to handle him when he comes knocking.

The first step is to reject Satan's fake

news. We're not fighting Hollywood monsters. We're fighting deception, which means we're fighting ourselves. If the devil can't trick us, he can't do anything to us. The only power he has for neutralizing us is the power we give him.

The second step is to cling to the truth. Jesus saw through the deception and killed the temptation in one stroke. But to understand the truth that Jesus claimed, read the account of Satan's attack carefully and note what his attack targeted. His trap reached further than satisfying a craving: "If you are the Son of God, tell these stones to become bread" (Matt 4:3).

In other words: "Jesus, use Your supernatural power only on Yourself, only to gratify Your desires."

The believers James was writing to heard this same temptation and agreed lustily with the devil. They seized the supernatural power of prayer and used it only on themselves, only to gratify their desires. And all the power fizzled.

In contrast, Jesus heard that temptation and refused. He denied far more than a single desire. He reoriented the entire issue: "It is written, 'Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God'" (Matt. 4:4).

In other words: "God gave Me more than supernatural power. He gave Me purpose. I will only use My power according to His words. He did not send Me to serve Myself but to serve others."

Defeated Christians look just like the world around them. They focus on their desires first. And all their supernatural powers vanish.

Victorious Christians look just like Jesus. They focus on what God gives and the reason He gives it: to serve others. These are the Christians God delights to lavish His gifts upon because He knows they'll use His gifts as He desires.

## GOD'S YES!

God is eager to fill every believer and

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every church with supernatural power, especially the power of prayers that transform lives. Our Father in heaven longs to say *yes!* to every prayer we offer. Jesus promised it directly: “Truly, truly, I say to you, whatever you ask of the Father in my name, *he will give it to you*. Until now you have asked nothing in my name. Ask, and *you will receive*, that your joy may be full” (John 16:23–24 ESV, emphasis added).

God longs to say *yes!*—but that does not mean He always will. As with the believers James addresses in his letter, God will refuse selfish prayers that would only drive the church further away from Him.

Our Father will say yes, but here is the prerequisite of the promise: asking in Jesus’ name.

This means we ask God to grant Jesus’ desire—not our own. It means making a request Jesus Himself would make. How do we know how to do that? By spending time with Jesus and learning what He desires. Then wherever our desires conflict with His, we lay ours aside.

What, then, does Jesus desire? Which prayers does the Father delight to say yes to?

- Prayers for obedience to His first commandment: to love our God with all our heart, mind, soul, and strength. Make this your first and most eager request.
- Prayers for obedience to His second commandment: to love our neighbors—especially the ones we least want to love—as we love ourselves.
- Prayers to know God as Father and to grasp the love He has for His children.
- Prayers for God to magnify His Name and to satisfy us as we glorify Him.
- Prayers for His Kingdom to come and to make our world more like heaven.
- Prayers for His will to be done on this earth so we live our lives to the fullest.
- After focusing our requests on

Him, then we can ask for personal requests and watch as He eagerly supplies our daily bread.

Don’t listen to Satan’s fake news. When we’re not hindering God’s Spirit within us, we have great power over the devil. God wants each of us to live a supernatural life. He wants our prayers to

move nations. And as we surrender our desires and pray for *His* desires, we can watch His power through us grow. **PC**



**KYLE DAVISON BAIR** is prayer ministries pastor at New Hope Church in New Hope, MN. He is also an active participant in a network of Twin Cities prayer leaders.

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## Anxiety-Reducing Prayer Plan

**O**f all the commands in Scripture, I've disobeyed this one most often:

Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus (Phil. 4:6–7).

I'm astounded when I think about the hundreds of hours I've spent fretting

about tomorrow. What makes this even more ludicrous is that much of what I concern myself with rarely materializes.

However, God has used this verse to begin chipping away at my worries. He has taught me several things about anxiety in general—and about Himself in particular. What is probably obvious to many, wasn't as obvious to me: when the Lord gives a command, He graciously provides not only the means through which to obey it but also a description of the blessing that will result.

### The Command

*Do not be anxious about anything.* It's a straightforward command. We're not to worry about anything, big or small. Straightforward, however, doesn't always mean easy.

I've learned that to *worry less* I need to first *know more* about the Person to whom I'm surrendering my concerns. Among the Lord's many attributes, two stand out for me:

1. He is in control: "Kingship belongs to the LORD, and he rules over the nations" (Ps. 22:28, ESV). God's power to follow through on His promises builds our trust in Him.
2. He wants what's best for us: "We know that for those who love God all things work together for good" (Rom. 8:28, ESV). His desire to exercise that power binds the trust that power builds.

### The Means

*In every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God.* While I've understood the importance of prayer for a long time, I didn't



really know *how* to pray. Prayer is more than telling God our needs. He already knows all of them. He is looking for something far more precious: our heart, our vulnerabilities.

Prayer is, in part, a plea for mercy and grace, a plea that He will show Himself as the loving, sovereign Master He is.

### The Result

*The peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.* As I've made myself more vulnerable in prayer, something extraordinary has happened. The Lord has begun using this means of obedience to make another means of obedience—Scripture—come alive. Rather than simply knowing who God is I'm starting to feel who God is as I read His Word. My affections are starting to catch up with my beliefs.

As I pour out my heart to the Lord, He fills it with an anxiety-reducing assurance of who He is. I still worry, but the emotion's intensity and shelf life have greatly decreased. Peace pushes out fretting. And for that I am grateful.

**GREG GROTEWOLD** lives in Oakdale, MN, with his wife and two sons. He works in the financial services industry.

## GIVE PRAYER a Boost in Your Church

Schedule a **CPLN Speaker** for a Weekend Prayer Emphasis or a CPLN Regional Conference.

EMAIL  
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## Let's Do a Prayer Exchange

“Two years, Sandy,” Lynette says, cringing with pain. “I poured my whole heart into this. Does God even hear my prayers? Can you honestly say you’ve seen a change?” She rubs her swollen leg. “Have you?”

“I don’t know, Lynette. Maybe, subtly. You know *my* struggle—this inability to forgive George. How long has it been? At least five years?”

“We can’t keep doing the same thing,” Lynette says. A lone tear escapes and she wipes it with the back of her hand. “We need a break. Let’s exchange prayers. I pray for you to forgive George, and you pray for God to heal my leg.”

Lynette’s suggestion fit perfectly with the breakthrough prayer prescription from James 5:16: “Confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous person is powerful and effective.”



### A Shift in Perspective

Sometimes, discouragement or exhaustion can block the power and effectiveness of prayer. In time, our consistency wanes, and we forget to seek His face. Prayers can turn from a righteous desire for His will to angry, sad, and discouraged pleas. We make a laundry list of what God should do according to our vain imaginations.

I find that when we pray for someone else, our perspective shifts from self to others. The simple knowledge that someone else is lifting our burdens releases unexpected benefits.

A resurgence of hope develops not only for ourselves but also for our friend. Great expectancy flows as we wait on God’s

movement. We no longer cling to our own solutions when we surrender to Christ’s will. Zeal ignites when we seek God’s input on how to pray. God gives “a message of knowledge” or “a message of wisdom” when we ask for help (1 Cor. 12:8).

During a prayer exchange, vulnerability increases, and a stronger friendship naturally occurs. As we each report what we learn in prayer, the other is rejuvenated. Christ’s love flows and makes a way for forgiveness of self and others. God is faithful to reveal memories of circumstances that need to be forgiven in order to release healing.

As hope and expectancy flourish, praise returns. Expectancy differs from expecting. When we expect, we assume our outcomes. When we wait in expectancy, we rest in faith as we watch the Lord’s great plan unfold. This shift in perspective can change our lives.

### Implementing the Exchange

When approaching a friend to participate in a prayer exchange, first consider how much time you will commit to praying for each other’s burden. A ten-day exchange is a good way to begin. For extra power, add a fast. Agreeing together to fast in a certain way builds accountability into the exchange.

I have found ten days is long enough to soak the issue in prayer but short enough to maintain fervency. If you sense the need for more prayer, consider a prayer exchange with another friend.

The beauty of a prayer exchange is that you can lay down what you have once held so tight—and in turn bless someone else with your faithfulness and determination in prayer.

**HEATHER ROBERTS**, a mother of four, serves with children’s and prayer ministries. She blogs at [tostrengthenamother’sheart.wordpress.com](http://tostrengthenamother’sheart.wordpress.com).

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*The weblink above will contain a clickable map with suggested prayer requests for each country and Focus City.*

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“The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few. Therefore, pray to the Lord of the harvest to send out workers into His harvest.”

*Luke 10:2*

## Every Church a Praying Church

Out of their passion for prayer, spiritual transformation, missions, and the local church, Dave and Kim Butts founded Harvest Prayer Ministries (HPM) in 1993. The mission and vision of HPM, based in Terre Haute, IN, is to equip the local church to become a house of prayer for all nations (Isaiah 56:7, Mark 11:17), releasing God's power for spiritual transformation, in order to see the completion of the Great Commission.

In practical terms, Harvest Prayer Ministries wants to see every church become a praying church. Prayer is God's plan for transforming His people and accomplishing His Kingdom purposes "on earth as it is in heaven." The local church is the vehicle through which God works, so Dave and Kim focus on the intergenerational body of believers: pastors and leaders, individuals of all ages (including children and youth), couples, families, small group communities, and more. Making prayer the foundational strategy can transform the hearts and lives of all believers and increase their passion for the lost.

HPM's website ([harvestprayer.com](http://harvestprayer.com)) contains articles, blogs, videos, FAQs, downloadable materials, devotionals, and a store that offers numerous resources on prayer. Dave and Kim have written many books to accompany their teaching and training. And they also offer a free, short daily devotional on prayer via email. Thousands of people all over the world already receive these devotionals ([harvestprayer.com/connection-prayer-devotions](http://harvestprayer.com/connection-prayer-devotions)).

### National Networking

Harvest Prayer Ministries is also devoted to networking and partnering with other

ministries. Dave has served as chairman of America's National Prayer Committee for 17 years. And working with such groups as the Denominational Prayer Leaders Network, America Prays, Claim Your Campus, Herald of His Coming, and Pioneer Bible Translators has given Dave and Kim unique opportunities to support a growing national prayer movement. Throughout the year, HPM comes alongside local churches to do seminars, prayer weekends, and consulting.

Harvest Prayer Ministries has identified three main focal points for ministry. One is in-house, and the other two are strategic partnerships with other prayer ministries:

#### • Roadmap to a Praying Church.

HPM's flagship teaching for churches covers every aspect of the ministry of prayer in a three-part journey:

1. helping pastors and leaders get a fuller understanding of what it means to become a house of prayer
2. assisting leadership to discern, through prayer, how God wants to develop their congregation into a strategic, praying church
3. providing a variety of tools, as well as targeted training and resources for the entire congregation, to move forward as a praying church.

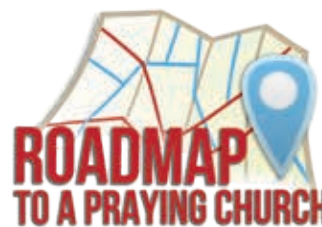
This journey looks different for each local church, so HPM works closely with pastors and leaders all along the way.

• **America Prays.** With a vision to see churches across all 50 states praying in unity 24/7, this ministry encourages participating churches to take one day a month to focus prayer on their

church, community, and nation. Dave and Kim come into areas where unified prayer is already taking place and assist pastors in building sustainable movements of prayer.

- **Claim Your Campus.** HPM is coming alongside the next generations through CYC2020, a powerful prayer event during the July 4 weekend in 2020 to train 100,000 or more middle- and high-school students to lead prayer groups in their schools, serve their schools, and share their faith. Dave and Kim are helping to develop a prayer strategy for this event. **PC**

You can connect with Harvest Prayer Ministries for more information or to schedule speaking or training opportunities at [harvestprayer.com](http://harvestprayer.com) or by calling ministry assistant JoLyn Graf at (812) 230-3130.



Develop a roadmap to guide your church on a journey to become a **House of Prayer for all Nations!**

Let Harvest Prayer Ministries come alongside your leadership team to help you discern and strategize how you can grow the prayer level of your church and develop disciples who impact the Kingdom of God in significant ways.



## How to Instill Vision in Your Prayer Gatherings | By Paul Covert

**H**ave you ever led an agonizingly flat, lifeless prayer meeting?

As I've led prayer gatherings during the past 20 years, each gathering had committed and passionate intercessors with the best of intentions, but it became apparent over time that certain pray-ers were getting tired and losing vision.

The intercessor tribe is small; we need to understand this loss of vision. The answer came on a prayer journey in another nation. Our crew met up with a team that starts underground houses of prayer in the Middle East. Not just any prayer squad—the Green Berets of prayer teams. (They are required to pray a couple hours each day!) God is using them to impact the face of the Middle East in prayer.

When their team leader invited us to join their weekly Wednesday night meeting, we were ecstatic. I welcomed the chance to learn how to keep the vision fresh for intercessors over the long haul.

### Framing the Vision

Their team leader started the prayer time with a vision statement, something like this: "Tonight we have an incredible opportunity. We get to partner with God for this region of the world. What possibilities are before us! You see, intercession is a very important occupation in the Kingdom of God because it is the job Jesus selected when He ascended into heaven. Hebrews 7:25 makes that clear: 'He is able to save completely those who come to God through him, *because he always lives to intercede for them*' (emphasis added).

"Jesus could have taken any mission, but He chose intercession. So it must be important. Tonight, who knows what

God will do because we are partnering with Him in prayer!"

The leader closed with another strategic prayer vision statement from Luke 3:21–22: "When all the people were being baptized, Jesus was baptized too. *And as he was praying, heaven was opened* and the Holy Spirit descended on him in bodily form like a dove" (emphasis added). The leader went on to say, "When we enter into prayer like we have tonight, heaven still opens and great works are accomplished."

Vision communicated!

I know this sounds simple. However, framing a powerful vision first has profoundly motivated our intercessors to persist in their prayers over the years.

### Scriptural Vision Statements

Armed with this basic principle, I started reading the Bible through, looking for additional prayer vision statements. I found hundreds of them and marked each verse with the letters *PV* for *prayer vision*.

Here are a few vision statements you might use in your groups:

- In Acts 4:31, "*After they prayed, the place where they were meeting was shaken*. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke the word of God boldly" (emphasis added). Tell your group, "Tonight we are gathered to agree in prayer. We are looking for God to shake the walls of heaven and this place through authentic and passionate intercession."
- Revelation 5 describes the Lamb, standing at the center of the throne, encircled by the four living creatures and the elders. When the Lamb takes the scroll from God's hand, the four living creatures and the 24 elders fall down before Him. Verse 8 says,

"Each one had a harp and *they were holding golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of God's people*" (emphasis added). I believe the living creatures and 24 elders could have held up anything before the Lord. They could have offered the words of a great preacher or the breathtaking beauty of a cathedral, but they chose instead to hold up the prayers of God's people. Urge your intercessors to recognize how this passage magnifies the value of our prayers to God.

- In Acts 16:25–26, Paul and Silas are in jail when they begin to sing and pray: "About midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the other prisoners were listening to them. Suddenly there was such a violent earthquake that *the foundations of the prison were shaken*. At once all the prison doors flew open, and everyone's chains came loose" (emphasis added). Encourage your group with a vision like this: "Tonight we believe that God will topple the barriers and loose us from the chains that are binding us—all by His power."

Using prayer vision statements may not infuse life into every prayer gathering. But I've found that when leaders cast this kind of biblical perspective, our prayer times can change from agonizing to inspiring. **PC**



**PAUL COVERT** is a prayer pastor, regular conference speaker, host of the Threshold Intensive Prayer Conference, and consultant. He has written two books, *Threshold: Transformational Prayer*, *Transformational Prayer Leadership* and *52 Creative Ways to Pray*, available at [thresholdprayer.com](http://thresholdprayer.com).

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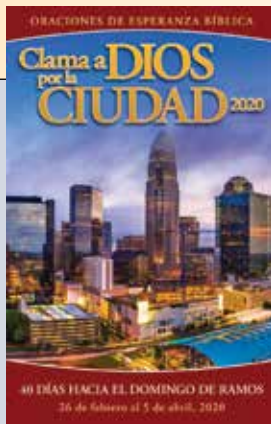
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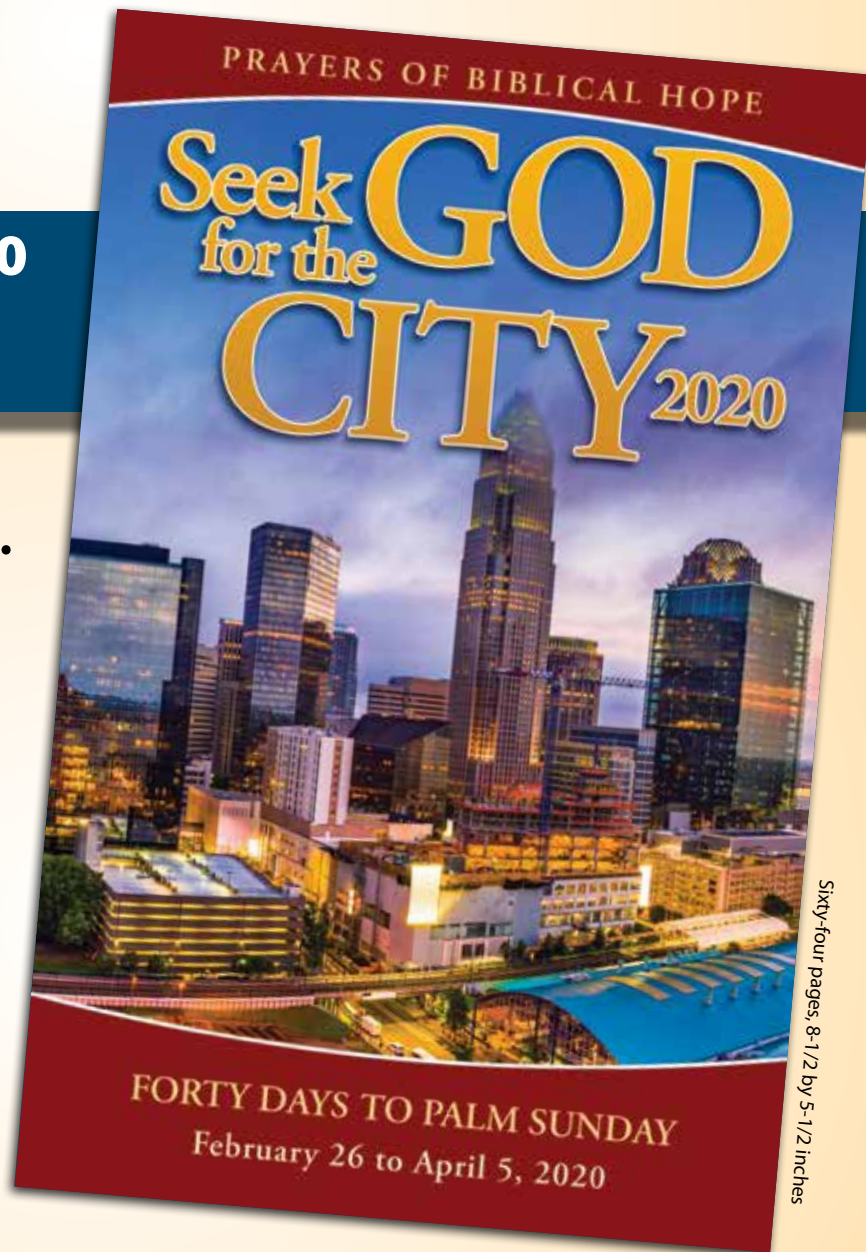
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