

Chapter Two: *The Vision of Prayer Movements*

THIS CHAPTER on vision is the most important chapter in the Sourcebook. Experience has proven over and over that a movement of united prayer will not go anywhere unless people are clear on the vision they are praying toward.

What is the compelling vision at the heart of prayer movements emerging worldwide? It is a vision of Hope, a vision of Christ, a vision of unity, and a vision of movement. Like the facets of a diamond, these four elements taken together comprise the dazzling vision of a prayer movement for spiritual awakening and world evangelization. Let's take a closer look at each facet.

First of all, the vision is a message of Hope. Christians are looking beyond the futile condition of our world in order to seek God together—to see things from God's heart—and to care about the people and forces shaping God's world. With a biblical perspective on the character of God, praying people everywhere have hope that God can and will overthrow the status quo by answering us through an enduring spiritual awakening in our generation. That's the hope they pray toward. That's the hope that ignites and sustains the growing prayer movement at this hour. It is a vision that compels them to pray—and to call others to come with them.

Most of all, the vision of the prayer movement is a message of Christ. He is the primary issue in spiritual awakening and renewed mission among the nations. The very existence of accelerated prayer worldwide testifies to how Christians are increasingly convinced of three things:

1. There is a greater revelation of Christ to and through his Church that God desires to give those who seek it.
2. In light of the great needs of the Church, we must seek that greater revelation far more than we now do.
3. In light of the great needs of our world, we can never seek this fuller revelation of Christ too much.

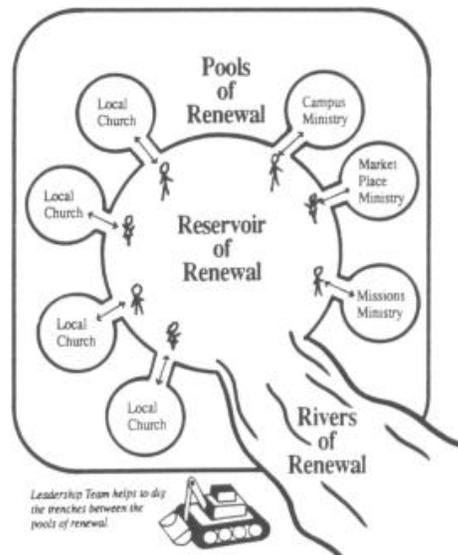
The awakening of the Church and the nations to the person, presence and power of our Redeemer King is the only hope held out to this generation. "Christ in your midst, before the nations, the Hope of glory" (Col. 1:27) must be the supreme focus of every work of united prayer today.

The vision carries a message of unity. When we choose to unite in prayer across all the boundaries that have so long separated true believers, we are making a statement. We are confessing that “God’s whole vision for this whole world (including each community and situation that makes up the world) can only be fulfilled through the whole Body of Christ, and therefore the whole Body must somehow pursue God’s vision together.” The most strategic way we can ever pursue God’s vision for our community and our world is through a movement of united prayer that seeks Christ and his Kingdom in true spiritual awakening. If we don’t unite together to pursue God’s vision in prayer, first of all, we probably won’t unite to pursue it any other way either.

Finally, the vision is a message of movement. One sign that a movement is taking place is a sense of divine direction that precludes simple human construction. There’s no doubt that the movements of prayer surveyed in preparing the Sourcebook evidence their origins in God. After all, just as faith, prayer and praying people are gifts of God, so is a movement of prayer. Networks are forming as God sovereignly connects up life to life, church to church and group to group to seek and find true spiritual awakening.

An expanded view of the prayer movement being mobilized in many cities and communities today can be seen in the diagram to the right. There are several levels of activity which might be called:

- **pools of renewal**—pockets of hope and concerted prayer found in different local churches and ministries within a city. This is the beginning of awakening.
- **reservoir of renewal**—a broad spectrum of the pools of renewal coming together in regular, city-wide or regional gatherings of prayer. The awakening grows.
- **rivers of renewal**—a new missions thrust that touches the church, the city and the unreached peoples of our world as a result of God’s answer to a sustained movement of united prayer for spiritual awakening.



Movement also implies faithful, consistent obedience. Beginning in united prayer, it presses the pray-ers into a decisive devotion to Christ and his Kingdom that causes them to become part of the answer to their own prayers. A prayer movement for the world must be linked with action toward the world, or the movement will eventually shrivel and die. A vision for movement insures that all action springs out of and is undergirded by united prayer. That is God’s proper order.

The following essays rehearse for us the vision behind a united prayer movement for spiritual awakening. We will be drawn into the rich history of prayer movements and be given a sense of destiny to fulfill. These essays are not only good tools for unpacking one's vision, but they make excellent reading if you have become discouraged in your vision. Read them often in order to keep refreshed!

Please don't skip over these articles! They are foundational for all that lies ahead in this source book. Work through them using the questions given before and after the articles. Seek to identify the four messages delineated above. Only in grasping the vision here will you be able to lead others through the practical steps that the notebook contains. And passing this vision on to others may well be the most important work you do.

As you read these essays, consider these questions:

1. What might be some biblical themes large enough to encompass and motivate a great movement of united prayer? How might you communicate them?

2. Why is mobilizing prayer and prayer movements so critical at this juncture in world history?

3. How has spiritual awakening been historically linked with taking the gospel to the nations? What implications does this have for us presently?

The Role of Prayer in Spiritual Awakening

How God Brought About (And Answered)

The Concerts of Prayer of History

Dr. J. Edwin Orr

Dr. A. T. Pierson once said, "There has never been a spiritual awakening in any country or locality that did not begin in united prayer." Let me recount what God has done through concerted, united, sustained prayer.

Not many people realize that in the wake of the American Revolution there was a moral slump. Drunkenness became epidemic. Out of a population of five million, 300,000 were confirmed drunkards: they were burying fifteen thousand of them each year. Profanity was of the most shocking kind. For the first time in the history of the American settlement, women were afraid to go out at night for fear of assault. Bank robberies were a daily occurrence.

What about the churches? The Methodists were losing more members than they were gaining. The Baptists said that they had their most wintry season. The Presbyterians in general assembly deplored the nation's ungodliness. In a typical Congregational church, the Rev. Samuel Shepherd of Lennox, Massachusetts in sixteen years had not taken one young person into fellowship. The Lutherans were so languishing that they discussed uniting with Episcopalians who were even worse off. The Protestant Episcopal Bishop of New York, Bishop Samuel Proovost, quit functioning: he had confirmed no one for so long that he decided he was out of work, so he took up other employment. The Chief Justice of the United States, John Marshall, wrote to the Bishop of Virginia, James Madison, that the Church "was too far gone ever to be redeemed." Voltaire averred, and Tom Paine echoed, "Christianity will be forgotten in thirty years."

Take the liberal arts colleges at that time. A poll taken at Harvard had discovered not one believer in the whole of the student body. They took a poll at Princeton, a much more evangelical place: they discovered only two believers in the student body, and only five that did not belong to the filthy speech movement of that day. Students rioted. They held a mock communion at Williams College; and they put on anti-Christian plays at Dartmouth. They burned down the Nassau Hall at Princeton. They forced the resignation of the president of Harvard. They took a Bible out of a local Presbyterian church in New Jersey, and burned it in a public bonfire. Christians were so few on campus in the 1790s that they met in secret, like a communist cell, and kept their minutes in code so that no one would know.

In case this is thought to be the hysteria of the moment, Kenneth Scott Latourette, the great church historian, wrote: "It seemed as if Christianity were about to be ushered out of the affairs of men." The churches had

**Conditions Before
the Great Awakening**

Awakening Out of Concerts of Prayer

their backs to the wall, seeming as if they were about to be wiped out. How did the situation change? It came through a concert of prayer.

I must go back a little. There was a Scottish Presbyterian minister in Edinburgh named John Erskine, who published a Memorial (he called it) pleading with the people of Scotland and elsewhere to unite in prayer for the revival of religion. He sent one copy of this little book to Jonathan Edwards in New England. That great theologian was so moved he wrote a response which grew longer than a letter, so that finally he published it as a book, entitled: "A Humble Attempt to Promote Explicit Agreement and Visible Union of All God's People in Extraordinary Prayer for the Revival of Religion and the Advancement of Christ's Kingdom on earth, pursuant to Scripture Promises and Prophecies concerning the Last Time." That was the title of the book, not the book itself.

But do not miss its message: "A Humble Attempt" (New England's modesty) "to promote explicit agreement and visible union of God's people in extraordinary prayer for a revival of religion and extension of Christ's Kingdom." Is not this what is missing so much from all our evangelistic efforts: explicit agreement; visible union, unusual prayer?

This movement had started in Britain through William Carey, Andrew Fuller and John Sutcliffe and other leaders who began what the British called "the Union of Prayer." Hence, the year after John Wesley died, the Second Great Awakening began and swept Great Britain. In New England, there was a man of prayer named Isaac Backus, a Baptist pastor, who in 1794, when conditions were at their worst, addressed an urgent plea for prayer for revival to pastors of every Christian denomination in the United States.

Churches knew that their backs were to the wall. So the Presbyterians of New York, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania adopted it for all their churches. Bishop Francis Asbury adopted it for all the Methodists. The Congregational and Baptist Associations, the Reformed and the Moravians all adopted the plan, until America like Britain was interlaced with a network of prayer meetings, which set aside the first Monday of each month to pray. It was not long before the revival reached the frontier in Kentucky, it encountered a people really wild and irreligious. Congress had discovered that in Kentucky there had not been more than one court of justice held in five years. Peter Cartwright, Methodist evangelist, wrote that when his father settled in Logan County, it was known as Rogues' Harbor. If someone committed a murder in Massachusetts or robbery in Rhode Island, all he needed to do was to cross the Alleghenies. The decent people in Kentucky formed regiments of vigilantes to fight for law and order, fought a pitched battle with outlaws and lost.

There was a Scotch-Irish Presbyterian minister named James McGready whose chief claim to fame was he was so ugly that he attracted attention. It was reported that people sometimes stopped in the street to ask: "What does he do?" "He's a preacher." Then they reacted, saying: "A man with a face like that must really have something to say."

McGready settled in Logan County, pastor of three little churches. He wrote in his diary that the winter of 1799 for the most part was “weeping and mourning with the people of God.” Lawlessness prevailed everywhere. McGready was such a man of prayer that, not only did he promote the concert of prayer every first Monday of the month, but he got his people to pray for him at sunset on Saturday evening and sunrise Sunday morning. Then in the summer of 1800 came the great Kentucky revival. Eleven thousand people came to a communion service. McGready hollered for help, regardless of denomination. Baptists and Methodists came in response and the great camp meeting revivals started to sweep Kentucky and Tennessee, then spread over North and South Carolina, along the frontier.

Out of that second great awakening after the death of John Wesley came the whole modern missionary movement and its societies. Out of it came the abolition of slavery, and popular education, Bible societies and Sunday schools, and many social benefits accompanying the evangelistic drive.

Conditions had deteriorated by the middle of the nineteenth century. Why? It sounds familiar, the country was seriously divided, as by the Vietnam War, over the issue of slavery; and, second, people were making money lavishly.

In September 1857, a man of prayer, Jeremiah Lanphier, started a prayer meeting in the upper room of the Dutch Reformed Church Consistory building, in Manhattan. In response to his advertisement, only six people out of the population of a million showed up. But, the following week, there were fourteen, and then twenty-three, when it was decided to meet every day for prayer. By late winter, they were filling the Dutch Reformed Church, then the Methodist Church of John Street, then Trinity Episcopal Church on Broadway at Wall Street. In February and March of 1858, every church and public hall in downtown New York was filled. Horace Greeley, the famous editor, sent a reporter with horse and buggy racing around the prayer meetings to see how many men were praying: in one hour, he could get to only twelve meetings, but he counted 6100 men attending. Then a landslide of prayer began, which overflowed to the churches in the evenings. People began to be converted, ten thousand a week in New York City alone. The movement spread throughout New England, the church bells bringing people to prayer at eight in the morning, twelve noon, six in the evening. The revival raced up the Hudson and down the Mohawk, where the Baptists, for example, had so many people to baptize that they went down to the river, cut a big hole in the ice, and baptized them in the cold water: when Baptists do that, they really are on fire.

When the revival reached Chicago, a young shoe salesman went to the superintendent of the Plymouth Congregational Church, and asked if he might teach Sunday School. The superintendent said, “I am sorry, young

Another Movement of Prayer

fellow. I have sixteen teachers too many, but I will put you on the waiting list.” The young man insisted:

“I want to do something just now.” “Well, start a class.” “How do I start a class?” “Get some boys off the street, but don’t bring them here. Take them out into the country and after a month you will have control of them, so bring them in. They will be your class.” He took them to a beach on Lake Michigan and he taught them Bible verses and Bible games; then he took them to the Plymouth Congregational Church. The name of the young man was Dwight Lyman Moody, and that was the beginning of his ministry that lasted forty years.

For instance, Trinity Episcopal Church in Chicago had 121 members in 1857; in 1860,1400. That was typical of the churches. More than a million people were converted to God in one year out of a population of thirty million. Then that same revival jumped the Atlantic, appeared in Ulster, Scotland and Wales, then England, parts of Europe, South Africa and South India, anywhere there was an evangelical cause. It sent mission pioneers to many countries. Effects were felt for forty years. Having begun in a movement of prayer, it was sustained by a movement of prayer.

That movement lasted for a generation, but at the turn of the twentieth century, there was need of awakening again. A general movement of prayer began, with special prayer meetings at Moody Bible Institute, at Keswick Convention in England, and places as far apart as Melbourne, Wonsan in Korea, and the Nilgiri Hills of India. So all around the world believers were praying that there might be another great awakening in the twentieth century.

Now, some people say that we are in the midst of another great awakening today. I certainly believe that the tide has turned, that we are on the move again, but I do not think that we have reached anything like what God has done in the past. Take examples, from the student world, and the community.

In the revival of 1905, I read of a young man who became a famous professor, Kenneth Scott Latourette. He reported that, at Yale in 1905,25% of the student body were enrolled in prayer meetings and in Bible study. I live next door to U.C.L.A., which has a population of 36,000, and I do not believe that there are 9,000 enrolled in Campus Crusade, InterVarsity and other evangelical groups, or in all of the church groups put together. We have not reached that yet.

As far as the churches were concerned, the ministers of Atlantic City reported that, of a population of 50,000, there were only fifty adults left unconverted. Take Portland in Oregon, 240 major stores closed from 11:00 till 2:00 each day to enable people to attend prayer meetings, signing an agreement so that no one would cheat and stay open. Take First Baptist Church of Paducah in Kentucky: the pastor, an old man, Dr. J.J. Cheek, took in a thousand members in two months and died of overwork, the Southern Baptists saying, “a glorious ending to a devoted ministry.”

The Revival of 1905

That is what was happening in the United States in 1905. But how did it begin? Most people have heard of the Welsh Revival, which started in 1904. It began as a movement of prayer. I knew Evan Roberts personally (of course, I met him thirty years later), a man devoted to God. Seth Joshua, the Presbyterian evangelist, had come to the Newcastle Emlyn College where Evan Roberts was studying for the ministry. Evan Roberts, then 26, had been a coal miner. The students were so moved that they asked if they could attend his next campaign nearby, so they cancelled classes to go to Blaenauferch, where Seth Joshua prayed publicly "O God, bend us." And Evan Roberts went forward, where he prayed with great agony, "O God, bend me."

Upon his return, he could not concentrate on his studies. He went to the principal of his college, and explained: "I keep hearing a voice that tells me I must go home to speak to our young people in my home church. Principal Phillips, is that the voice of the devil or the voice of the Spirit?" Principal Phillips answered, very wisely, "The devil never gives orders like that. You can have a week off."

So he went back home to Loughor and announced to the pastor, "I've come to preach." The pastor was not at all convinced, but asked: "How about speaking at the prayer meeting on Monday?" He did not even let him speak to the prayer meeting, but told the praying people, "Our young brother, Evan Roberts, feels he has a message for you, if you care to wait." Seventeen people waited behind, to be impressed with the directness of the young man's words. Evan Roberts told his fellow members; "I have a message for you from God. You must confess any known sin to God and put any wrong done to man right. Second, you must put away any doubtful habit. Third, you must obey the Spirit promptly. Finally, you must confess your faith in Christ publicly." And by ten o'clock, all seventeen had responded. The pastor was so pleased that he asked "How about your speaking at the mission service tomorrow night? Midweek service Wednesday night?" He preached all week, and was asked to stay another week; and then "the break" came.

I have read the Welsh newspapers of the period. In them were snippets of ecclesiastical news, such as: "The Rev. Peter Jones has just been appointed chaplain to the Bishop of St. David's." "Mowbray Street Methodist Church had a very interesting sale." But suddenly there was a headline, "Great Crowds of People Drawn to Loughor." For some days a young man named Evan Roberts was causing great surprise. The main road between Uanelly and Swansea on which the church was situated was packed, wall to wall, people trying to get into the church. Shopkeepers closed early to find a place in the big church.

Now the news was out. A reporter was sent down and he described vividly what he saw, a strange meeting, which closed at 4:25 in the morning, and even then the people did not seem willing to go home. They were still standing in the street outside the church, talking about what had taken place. There was a very British summary: "I felt that this was no

ordinary gathering.” Next day, every grocery shop in that industrial valley was emptied of groceries by people attending the meetings, and on Sunday, every church was filled. The movement went like a tidal wave over Wales, in five months there being a hundred thousand people converted throughout the country. Five years later, Dr. J.V. Morgan wrote a book to debunk the revival, his main criticism that, of a hundred thousand joining the churches in five months of excitement, after five years only 75,000 still stood in the membership of those churches. The loss of 25,000 could be explained by a drifting away of unsympathetic people, or of others attracted to mission halls and the emerging groups of Pentecostals after glossolalia in 1907, or emigration.

It was the social impact that was astounding. For example, judges were presented with white gloves, not a case to try; no robberies, no burglaries, no rapes, no murders, and no embezzlements, nothing. District councils held emergency meetings to discuss what to do with the police now that they were unemployed. In one place, the sergeant of the police was sent for, and asked: “What do you do with your time?” He replied, “Before the revival, we had two main jobs, to prevent crime and to control crowds, as at football games. Since the revival started, there is practically no crime, so we just go with the crowds.” A councillor asked: “What does that mean?” The sergeant replied: “You know where the crowds are. They are packing out the churches.” “But how does that affect the police?” He was told: “We have seventeen police in our station, but we have three quartets; and if any church wants a quartet to sing, they simply call the police station.”

As the revival swept Wales, drunkenness was cut in half. There was a wave of bankruptcies, but nearly all taverns. There was even a slowdown in the mines. You say, “How could a religious revival cause a strike?” It did not cause a strike, just a slow down, for so many Welsh coal miners were converted and stopped using bad language that horses that dragged the trucks in the mines could not understand what was being said to them, hence transportation slowed down for a while until they learned the language of Canaan.

That revival also affected sexual moral standards. I had discovered through the figures given by British government experts that, in Radnorshire and Merionethshire, the actual illegitimate birth rate had dropped 44% within a year of the beginning of the revival. That revival swept Britain. It so moved all of Norway that the Norwegian Parliament passed special legislation to permit laymen to conduct

Communion because the clergy could not keep up with the number of the converts desiring to partake. It swept Sweden, Finland and Denmark, Germany, Canada from coast to coast, all of the United States, Australia, New Zealand, South Africa, East Africa, Central Africa, West Africa, touching also Brazil, Mexico, and Chile.. .yet until 1973, the extent of that revival was unknown.

As always, it began through a movement of prayer, with prayer meetings all over the United States as well as the other countries; and soon there came the great time of the harvest. So what is the lesson we can learn? It is a very simple one, as direct as the promises of God in Scripture:

“If my people, who are called by My name, shall humble themselves and pray, and seek My face, and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and will heal their land.”

What is involved in this? As God requires us to pray, we must not forget what was said by Jonathan Edwards: “To promote explicit agreement and visible union of God’s people in extraordinary prayer.” What do we mean by extraordinary prayer? We share in ordinary prayer in regular worship services, before meals, and the like. But when people are found getting up at six in the morning to pray, or having a half night of prayer until midnight, or giving up their lunchtime to pray at a noonday prayer meetings, that is extraordinary prayer. But it must be united and concerted. A Baptist does not become any less a Baptist, or an Anglican less loyal to the Thirty-nine Articles, or a Presbyterian to the Westminster Confession. But they recognize each other as fraternal intercessors.

The Lesson to be Learned

We thank thee that thy Church unsleeping,
While the earth rolls onward into light,
Through all the world her watch is keeping
And rests not now by day or night.

As o’er each continent and island
The dawn leads on another day,
The voice of prayer is never silent,
Nor die the strains of praise away.

So be it Lord, thy throne shall never, Like earth’s proud
empires, pass away; Thy kingdom stands, and grows
forever, ‘Til all thy creatures own thy sway.

—*John Ellerton (1826-1893)*

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Just For Thought

1. What are signs today that we need revival as in earlier periods of American history?
2. Why was united prayer the only hope at those times? Does it remain our hope today?
3. How might you communicate the movings of God in past revivals to people in your community to help them envision what God desires to do again in the midst of his people?
4. How would you define extraordinary prayer? How much extraordinary prayer do you find going on in your community? How much of it is united and concerted prayer? How could this be improved upon?

Concerts Of Prayer Signal New Hope For The Nations

David Bryant

SPEAKING TO 18,000 delegates at InterVarsity's Student Missions Convention, Dr. Eric Alexander, Scottish pastor and missions leader, observed of the apostolic mandate in Acts 6:4: "The frontline in world evangelization is the Word of God and prayer." Strategically speaking, increased united prayer *is* our best hope.

The greatest challenge any of us will ever face in the global cause of Christ is to grow as men and women of prayer and to mobilize others with us into a movement of prayer for the world. Furthermore, the greatest contribution any of us will ever make to the glorious task of advancing Christ's kingdom among earth's unreached is, again, to grow as men and women of prayer and to mobilize others with us into a movement of prayer for the world. Other things wait to be done, but this is the greatest

Capturing this sense of the strategic importance of united prayer, missions professor George Peters stated:

We have become in missions so wrapped up in technology and methodology that we have forgotten that missions is number one, the releasing of divine dynamics.. Reaching the unreached will, first of all, mean for us not only to lay hold of it in faith, but to develop thousands and thousands of prayer cells that will commit themselves wholeheartedly to prayer until the victory will be won. We need spiritual mobilization.

Well there's good news! Such a united prayer movement, "releasing divine dynamics," is currently underway! And, across the globe within most prayer movements the concern is very similar. These prayer efforts seek to address two great sweeps of the Scriptures: spiritual awakening and worldwide evangelization. Our contemporary pattern happens also to be very historical.

EIGHTEENTH century Puritan scholar Jonathan Edwards, in his own call for "concerts of prayer," reported the trend in his day in a stirring treatise: "*An Humble Attempt to Promote Explicit Agreement and Visible Union Of God's People in Extraordinary Prayer for the Revival of Religion and the Expansion of Christ's Kingdom on the Earth.*" (That's the title, not the table of contents! But it says it all.) This comprised the divine pattern in his day; it is repeating itself in our own.

All of this renewed prayer momentum should fill us with tremendous hope for the advance of the gospel. As a global Christian community, we desire to reach for Christ the billions of earth's unreached Muslims, Chinese, Hindus, Buddhists, Communists, Capitalists, Tribals, Secularists, and others. We face the task of planting millions of new churches within thousands of national, linguistic, cultural and other social groupings where none currently exists.

This requires of us a major new mission thrust, but there's no reason to fear. It can be done if God releases "divine dynamics" within us in answer to our prayers. Edwards knew this, and pointed the way to the mobilization of united

**A Voice From the
18th Century**

prayer in his day. Today, many are calling the church to lay hold of the same key—to unite in prayer for revival among God’s people and for the advancement of Christ’s kingdom among the nations.

MUCH OF THIS was seen as 1,000 Christians from 70 nations together with 2,000 Korean Christians met at the International Prayer Assembly for World Evangelization (IPA) in 1984, in Korea, under the banner of “Seeking God’s Face for a Movement of Prayer for the World.” Subsequent national and international consultations have ratified this worthy goal. For the first time in the history of the church, Christians from throughout the world joined to concentrate for a week on two objectives: to pray together for the nations, and to plan how to encourage the church worldwide to press on in united prayer. That week we sensed the Spirit is raising up servants in the global body of Christ to provide direction to a God-given movement of prayer.

Over the next few years I helped to facilitate city-wide “consultations on United Prayer” in a number of cities around the world. What we discovered was a growing burden among Christian leaders to see the church in their cities united on a regular basis in a prayer movement to change their cities and the world. In many cases “continuation committees” have developed to begin networking the many localized prayer gatherings already pursuing this vision.

What is all this accelerating prayer activity about? It is nothing less than the foundation of a new mission thrust. It is the springs of awakening for worldwide evangelization. It is a sign of God’s grace, because prayer, praying people, and a movement of prayer for the world are all gifts from God.

If in fact God is raising up this prayer movement, then we as his people need to be in it together. We must help the growing force of seekers to find one another; to get on with the crucial ministry God has given us to do in prayer; and to successfully mobilize many others to join them.

Prayer for the Nations

IN FACT, if you study the great outward movements of the gospel over the past 300 years, history suggests there is a divine pattern in every new surge of world missions. It has five phases:

1. A movement of united prayer begins.
2. The Spirit pours out a renewed vision of Christ and his kingdom.
3. The church-at-large is restored in unity and in resolve to obey Christ as Lord.
4. An ensuing revitalization of existing ministries and outreach takes place. Society at large feels the impact.
5. This leads to new dreams and visions with new obedience that brings an expansion of the gospel among those yet untouched by God’s love and justice.

In the face of tremendous evangelistic tasks, and with seemingly insurmountable barriers (both human and spiritual), God’s primary strategy is to bring his people together in prayer. They often gather in specific geographical locations within the body of Christ (like your campus or your city), in order that they might seek him unitedly. They pursue in prayer a fresh revelation of the glory of God’s Son, so as to penetrate all levels of society with the gospel, and to launch new mission thrusts to the ends of the earth. Often, these movements of prayer begin with just a few who are willing to set the pace. A few catch the

The Foundation of a New Missions Thrust

vision of the priority that prayer must hold in the advancement of Christ's kingdom. They get in step with the divine pattern, and in so doing, encourage many others to join with them. What may be rather imperceptible in its beginnings, becomes in the end a widespread movement of prayer, involving a significant portion of the body of Christ.

IT IS MY conviction, and many share this with me, that our generation is on the threshold of a major spiritual awakening within the body of Christ—of a fresh revelation of Christ's glory in the church and among the nations. I have been in a number of gatherings over the past three or four years of what I would call "spiritual seismologists." People who live on the West Coast of North America know what a seismologist is. They are scientists who study the tremors of the earth to determine where the next major earthquake might strike.

In the same sense, these spiritual seismologists—scholars, mission strategists, historians, and other Christian leaders—have gathered in consultation from around the world to analyze new tremors in the body of Christ. They have sought to determine if another major spiritual shaking might be taking place among us. Without exception, it has been their conviction that we are on the threshold of something wonderful that may be unprecedented in the history of the church. All of this, of course, has direct implication for the fulfillment of the Great Commission.

One of the major evidences that we are on such a threshold is the growing concern for united prayer in the body of Christ worldwide. Prayer has taken a mighty leap forward in the consciousness of the church, even over the past five years alone. There are many evidences of this on every hand. Let me name a few.

IN MOST CASES these current prayer efforts are termed "concerts of prayer." This phrase comes from the history books. Many of the past movements of prayer that undergirded and sustained new missions thrusts were called, literally, "Concerts of Prayer."

"Concert" meant people were gathered together—united, concerted. But, of course, the word "concert" also reminds us of music. A group of musicians who are each playing different instruments with varying sounds are still united. Under one conductor they play from the same musical score in order to create a glorious symphony that fills the concert hall. I've had experiences like that as I've joined others in united prayer for spiritual awakening.

Though the way we expressed ourselves verbally differed, in the same way a violin differs from a flute, we were led by the same conductor, the Lord Jesus. We were giving expression to the same score. The symphony, composed by our one Conductor, consisted of nothing less than God's kingdom purposes revealed in his inspired word. And our time of prayer was filled with the joy of great expectation.

Taking Paul's picture of an army in Ephesians 6, we might call a concert of prayer a marching band! That being so, what are we marching toward? In other words, what are our expectations for this movement of prayer?

On the Threshold of a Spiritual Awakening

Movements of Prayer in the United States . . . and Beyond

We're praying toward spiritual awakening. What is that? Let's look at it.

THROUGHOUT history, whenever God gives spiritual awakening, it comes something like the picture in Isaiah 60:1-3:

Prayer for Spiritual Awakening

Arise and shine, for your light has come and the glory of the Lord has risen on you. See, darkness covers the earth and thick darkness is over the peoples. But the Lord rises upon you and his glory appears over you. Nations will come to your light and kings to the brightness of your dawn.

In other words, spiritual awakening is when God rises before his people, gives them a new vision of his glory in Christ, so that they come awake to him with new zeal, love and readiness to do his will. In turn, Christ is revealed through his obedient people before unbelievers. The end of it all is that nations-the unreached peoples-who were sitting in deep darkness, are drawn to seek the Lord themselves.

That's the heart of world evangelization. In spiritual awakening, the saving work of God that has been unfolding among the nations in and through Christ's disciples, intensifies and accelerates in new advances of his kingdom.

Here's one simple definition of spiritual awakening as I've come to understand it in my studies of the Scriptures: spiritual awakening is *when God awakens his people to see Christ's fullness in new ways, so that together they trust him in new ways; so that they love and obey him in new ways; so that they move with him in new ways for the fulfillment of his global cause.*

YOU WILL notice in my definition two key words: *fullness* and *fulfillment*. Those are the two major dimensions in spiritual awakening. They are also the dimensions toward which we are praying.

Two Major Facets of Spiritual Awakening

By *fullness*, I mean what God does in the church as he wakes us up to the fullness of the person of Jesus Christ and causes the life of Christ to fill his people with his presence and glory. We might use the word revival or renewal or some other term, but I think fullness captures best for me what the Scriptures mean when they describe God's people restored in faith, hope, love and holiness in order to serve him effectively in the world.

Fulfillment, on the other hand, refers not to the fulfillment of our own desires or plans, but rather to the fulfillment of what God has purposed to do by Christ Jesus throughout our society and among the nations.

Sometimes historians call this a general awakening. In other words, it speaks of God's work in the world. As the Spirit reveals Christ's fullness within the church, he then is able to mobilize the church to take action with Christ to fulfill God's work of redemption among all the peoples of the earth. We enter into all God is doing to bring hope, repentance and a turning in faith to the Lord Jesus among those who are still in the kingdom

of dark-ness. And in it all, God will surely lead us to give priority to those currently beyond the reach of the Gospel—the unreached peoples.

If you study the Lord’s Prayer, you will see this is precisely the direction in which Jesus is calling us to pray. The first three requests of the Lord’s Prayer— make your name holy; let your kingdom come; accomplish your will on earth as it’s done in heaven—are fulfillment prayers, prayers of God’s work throughout the planet.

But the second three requests—meet our daily needs; keep us bound together in forgiving love the way you have forgiven us; help us to move forward with your victory over the evil one—are prayers for what God does in the life of his people. In other words, we ask him to release the fullness of his life in us.

Even in Ephesians 6, where Paul discusses our moving together as an army in prayer, we find both agendas. He not only calls for prayer for all the saints (that’s praying for fullness), but also for people like himself—ambassadors, in chains—in order that they might testify powerfully for the gospel (that’s praying for fulfillment). Yes, praying for fullness and fulfillment is frontline action. We’re turning the Word of God into prayer. I have found if I am going to make the Word of God my primary resource for prayer (as it should be), then it is necessary that I pray two agendas: a new work of fullness in the body of Christ, as well as the fulfillment of his kingdom purposes throughout the earth.

DO WE WANT a healthy prayer life? If we’re looking at fulfillment issues only, we could burn out. If we’re seeking fullness only, we might cop out. Only as we bring the two themes together, can we begin to leap out into God’s eternal plan with balanced intercession and daily walk in healthy obedience to Christ.

Do we want a practical prayer strategy? As I have shared these concepts with others, a very simple diagram has emerged to help make the ideas useful in any prayer situation. The twenty triangles in the grid incorporate all that we could ever pray for. That’s it. All in one picture!

Many have found the grid a good way to develop a balanced prayer strategy, both for their personal lives as well as for their prayer group. It can help a prayer band or a prayer movement to think through what they intend to pray toward even before they begin, and then to “see” where they have been at the end of the prayer meeting as they evaluate how fully they covered their prayer “mission.~~

Rejoice, repent, resist, request, recommit—these are the five movements in any good “concert of prayer”, whether in large city-wide rallies or in prayer triplets within a local church. We *rejoice* in all God is already doing as well as in all He has yet promised to do in awakening his Church (fullness) and advancing his Kingdom worldwide (fulfillment). We *repent* of all the ways we are currently hindering and even resisting his work of

Balancing Fulfillment and Fullness

fullness and fulfillment (whether individually or corporately). In a spirit of brokenness, we need to turn from our disobedience and unbelief and lay hold of the Hope of spiritual awakening and worldwide evangelization. Then, in a united front, we turn our intercession to focus on all the ways Satan is attempting to frustrate the work of revival and blockade the cause of world-
evangelization. We *resist* him by calling on the name of the Lord to bring down all of Satan's strongholds.

Out of rejoicing, repenting and resisting we enter into *requesting*—the glorious work of intercession for ourselves, our churches, our cities and our world. Once more, our agenda embraces the twin concerns on God's heart—fullness and fulfillment. Finally, we take steps to present ourselves to God in prayer as we *recommit* our lives to the service of Christ. Having done all else, we now submit ourselves together to the Lord of our prayers. We invite him to use us anyway he chooses, to make us a part of his answer to our prayers for the Church and for the nations. We also seek him to fill us afresh with the Holy Spirit so that we can live lives consistent with all that we have said to God during our times of rejoicing, repenting, and requesting.

Someone has suggested these five "R's" could be spelled "PRRAY"—P(raise), R(epent), R(esist) A(sk), and Y(ield). That's a good way to remember these important dimensions for a concert of prayer. Whatever terms you use, be sure each theme finds expression every time you pray or lead others in united prayer.

Finally, notice that for every one of the ten boxes in the grid, we have divided the *issues* we might pray about into two main categories: local and global issues. For example we can rejoice in how God is fulfilling his missionary purpose within our city (local) or within India, for example, which is global. Or, we could repent of the disunity in the Church in our city (local) or we could stand in solidarity with the Church at large as we repent for how self-absorbed and uncaring the Church often is in so much of the West (global). Or we might recommit ourselves to Christ to reach out to our neighbors in the coming month (local) or to write a letter to a missionary friend in Pakistan to encourage her as she works among Muslim women (global). The point is this: there are approximately sixteen different categories here that help shape a fully developed prayer meeting. Over a period of months, we leaders need to work hard at making sure that our praying people are learning to pray effectively in all aspects of concern and vision that make up a concert of prayer.

Do we want to do some gutsy praying? Praying for fullness and fulfillment puts us in touch with the real world. As we pray for spiritual awakening and world evangelization, we will toughen our faith and resolve to obey. Eventually we will give birth to new visions and new missions that lead to actions that change the world. It's risky to put the full counsel of God into

our prayer life particularly as we openly pray together for all that God might do!

ANYONE concerned with mobilizing the church for missions, activating more laborers for the harvest, and revitalizing a sending-base to launch them must remember this: the greatest barriers we face in missions today are not the external barriers of language or culture or prejudice or politics. The greater barriers are the internal ones, the ones within the church.

The Challenge Before Us

REJOICE	global issues local issues	global issues local issues
REPENT	global issues local issues	global issues local issues
RESIST	global issues local issues	global issues local issues
REQUEST	global issues local issues	global issues local issues
RECOMMIT	global issues local issues	global issues local issues

The foremost barrier within the church is our paralysis of faith especially as we face the billions yet to be reached. That's why we need, in the words of Colossians 1:27, a new revelation of Jesus Christ in the midst of his church, showing himself to us as the hope of glory, and doing so convincingly before the eyes of a dying but watching world. To that end, Paul said he was determined to struggle and wrestle in prayer (Col. 1:28-2:3; cf. 4:12-13). We can do no less!

Truly the greatest single contribution any of us will ever make to world evangelization will be to give ourselves to prayer and to the mobilization of a movement of united prayer for spiritual awakening where we live. There is nothing more strategic than to foster prayer for the release of the power of God within the church of Jesus Christ.

It's Strategic

Everywhere I travel I see the crying need to increase unified prayer. I'm convinced that the concert of prayer movement is one of the most strategic things happening at this hour for the cause of world evangelization.

International Missionary Leader

Just For Thought

1. In what ways do you see a growing burden among Christian leaders in your area for Christians and churches to unite on a regular basis in a prayer movement to change their cities and the world? Are there signs of accelerating prayer activity in your community?
2. What in your community might suggest that you are on the threshold of a spiritual awakening? Where is God already at work preparing the way—even giving foretastes?
3. How have you incorporated the twin concerns of Concerts of Prayer—spiritual awakening and world evangelization—into your personal prayer life? How do you practice the four “R’s”—rejoice, repent, request, recommit—in your own prayer times?
4. How might you educate Christians in your church and your community to incorporate in their praying the local and global dimensions of the four “R’s”—rejoice, repent, request, recommit?
5. If a concerted prayer movement would develop in your community or your church, what do you think it would look like? Be specific.

Sixteen Characteristics of United Prayer Movements

This article was first written at the request of participants in a consultation on united prayer held in Hong Kong. It reflects what the consultation facilitator, David Bryant, was discovering as he surveyed prayer movements worldwide. This article is taken from Movements of Prayer for the World: what marks this most hopeful sign of our time? by David Bryant, reprinted from Chinese Around the World, August 1986, published by the Chinese Coordination Centre of World Evangelism, P0 Box 98435, TST, Hong Kong)

WHAT ARE the keys that will encourage healthy united prayer efforts in the communities where God has placed us? Based on insights gained from others over past years of travel, and sharpened more recently by the consultations with leaders in Asian and North American cities, I have a few practical suggestions.

I call them sixteen characteristics. I find them either operating in the emerging prayer movements, or dominant in the plans of those giving leadership to the beginnings of united prayer. Each mark can be illustrated by various prayer movements around the globe. Not every prayer movements is experiencing all of these at the same time. Every situation must grow and mature and each will have its own distinctives. But as more of these characteristics comes into play in the development of prayer movements (even if only a few churches or groups are involved at the beginning), the work will be sustained and grow. A biblical and historical accounting of past prayer movements would also bear this out. Let me describe each characteristic briefly.

THERE MUST be a sense of celebration and rejoicing as a prelude to and an ingredient of true intercession. Each prayer gathering, therefore, should take time at the beginning to celebrate the character and ways of God, and to acknowledge His presence and promises, using words and music to praise, rejoice and give thanks. Because the prayer movement is itself a miracle of God's grace, we must never cease to praise Him together even when we concentrate on other aspects of prayer, such as repentance and intercession.

In fact, our recruitment of others into united prayer should have this spirit of praise about it. That's why in some places, the phrase "concerts of prayer" (used in previous awakenings over the past 300 years to describe monthly prayer events) has proven so helpful. Immediately, people picture

What Marks Strong Prayer Movements?

Worship

a prayer experience that is anything but dull and boring. Rather, friends are inviting friends to a time of celebration both of victories won and victories to come in Christ's global cause.

Emerging prayer movements are developing an objective vision of what we are praying toward. Based on the character and ways of God, and based on what all the Scriptures give us a right to expect from Him, praying people will ponder together what the impact of Christ and His Kingdom might look like in their city and in the world. They seek to formulate this vision in as specific and practical terms as possible. Then, they formulate their list of issues to pray about regularly based on what they sense God is calling them to pray toward the overall vision.

Though prayer often springs out of desperation, our desperateness needs to be matched by an equal sense of anticipation. Biblically, hope is one of the primary motivating factors in the Christian life. So, it must be at the forefront of our leadership in a movement of prayer. I have found, for example, that pastors are usually too busy to give much thought to a one time inter-denominational prayer meeting, let alone support actively an on-going prayer movement, unless the effort is fragrant with clear purpose and direction, and with a promise of direct relevancy to the revival in their own churches, and to their own dreams for ministry to the city.

Hope

OUR HOPE, and therefore the scope of our praise and intercession, is nothing less than the just and redeeming reign of Christ. Already I've described his reign as having two dimensions: revival (awakening, bringing the Church alive to the fullness of Christ as Lord); and evangelization (the advancement of Christ's Kingdom on all levels, fulfilling his purposes among the nations). Thus, every emerging prayer movement must be helped to focus on the primary concerns of the Kingdom—the issues in which we all have a stake regardless of our denomination or organization. And these issues must become the bulk of our prayer agenda each time we meet.

In a number of Asia consultations, we asked leaders to discuss the following question to help them get a handle on the Kingdom perspective of intercession. We asked: "If Christ and his Kingdom were to become the focus of attention in our city, in answer to a movement of united prayer, what might be the impact of this work of God on four key areas: on individual Christians, on local churches, on the city at large, and ultimately on the nations of the earth?" The exercise identified quickly some of the specifics involved in Kingdom praying.

Kingdom

MANY EMERGING prayer movements are marked by a strong, holy dissatisfaction with things as they are, and a determination not to rest until things become what God intends them to be (see Isa. 62:1-7). As one evangelical theologian has put it “Prayer is rebellion against the status quo.” Rebellion? Yes, but not against God; against the status quo. Together we join in an aggressive pursuit of an intermediate fulfillment of what God’s Word says about his purposes for the church, the city, the nations. “Waiting on the Lord” means persistently seeking changes that only he can initiate. We must encourage a sense of urgency to “lay hold” of a God-given revival, not just for the purpose of survival, but to transform the church and society, and to propel a new missionary movement in the process. I see this Spirit increasingly evidenced in a number of urban prayer movements.

Restlessness

PRAYER MOVEMENTS also grow as those involved recognize that there are direct relationships between the current spiritual state of the church and the spiritual condition of the city (for example) in which the church finds itself. In united prayer we come to confess some significant portion of responsibility for the plight of our city and world, and as God’s servant people we assume a corporate burden for future changes. Through prayers of repentance we identify and confess the ways we have hindered the advancement of Christ’s Kingdom in our midst—both personally and corporately—so that we can more freely pursue the hope that God has set before this generation. Unitedly we deal with everything that is blocking the revelation of God’s glory before the eyes of unbelievers.

Repentance

In prayer movements in the States, many increasingly sense that God is pressing us to be sure this mark of repentance takes root. Many believe that a real cause of the spiritual declension in our land is God’s judgment brought against the Church because of unconfessed corporate sin. The prayer movement offers the forum for us to learn corporate confession once again.

A healthy prayer effort, however, will regard repentance not as the ultimate focus for its people, but rather as the *hinge* that swings us around to focus together on God’s mission to the world.

HISTORICALLY we see that prayer leaders desired to help the church demonstrate (in the words of Jonathan Edwards) “explicit agreement and visible union in extraordinary prayer.” Through concerted prayer we can fulfill the vision of John 17:21 as we visibly display oneness of intention, purpose and action—oneness with the Father, the Son and each other in the bonds of the Spirit. The witness of united prayer itself can help convince the world that God has sent his Son. Leaders in countries like

Unity

India and Japan, where the non-Christian population is such a sizable majority, have told me they cannot afford the luxury of anything less than visible, united prayer. Even if unity cannot be achieved on any other level right now, it can be reached in the arena of prayer.

But is unity in prayer possible, given so many Christian distinctives?

Many prayer movements find it is if those involved can agree on five key points:

- (1) Christ is our risen Lord and Redeemer.
- (2) The Scriptures as the inspired Word of God are the authoritative and primary source of our agenda in prayer.
- (3) We hold in common the great, historical doctrines of the Church (the Lausanne Covenant can be very useful here).
- (4) We have much to gain from one another as disciples of Christ as we serve his cause together. God's whole vision for our whole city or whole generation can only be fulfilled as the whole Body pursues it together.
- (5) On the few issues where we do not agree, we are willing to let Jesus arbitrate among us. We will keep listening to him even while we seek his Kingdom together in prayer.

ALONG WITH a call for unity, prayer movements also desire to explore and uncover the beauty of the diversity of the Church—in its strengths, gifts, traditions ministries, experiences. Through concerted prayer for the world, we acknowledge that the whole body is needed to fulfill God's whole vision for the whole world (and for our whole city). Here is where we learn about how much we need each other's distinctives.

Our strength of diversity can be illustrated by returning to the theme of hope. In many emerging prayer movements, traditional evangelicalism may often bring to the gathering a stronger *theology* of hope, whereas pentecostal/charismatic participants may contribute a richer *spirit* of hope. Both are needed.

We can illustrate this by thinking of an orchestra. It has many different sounding instruments. But with one music score and under one conductor, they blend together to perform a glorious symphony that can be heard no other way. Unless they exploit their diversity and play on in harmony, the composition will sit lifeless on the page. Still, concerted prayer releases God's work into the Church and out among the nations in a way that requires that we honor and draw on our diversity even as we pray together.

Diversity

MOST PRAYER movements today are constructively interfacing spiritual leaders from four primary spheres within each city: the local church sphere (primarily the nurturing sphere), the mission sphere (primarily those involved in outreach and ministry to the world), the marketplace sphere (primarily business people, professionals and workers who

Networking

penetrate the fabric of a society on a daily basis), and the youth sphere (primarily those in preparation to be leaders for the coming years, when many of our prayers will have their ultimate answers). In this way, an effort is made to build mutual trust, co-sponsorship and a sense of joint venture among the participants in the prayer movement. Involving spiritual leaders from each of these spheres in the leadership of the prayer movement can foster the networking in a natural way.

From one perspective, this networking is the best approach to an “ecumenical movement,” because it brings Christians together at the grassroot level around the twin-concerns we share in common: spiritual awakening and world evangelization. Furthermore, as we network existing prayer groups from various churches and organizations, we are digging “trenches,” as it were, between these smaller pools of renewal within each sphere, allowing them to merge together periodically in a mighty demonstration of renewal within the city. The recent Luis Palau Mission in Singapore did this, as over the previous months hundreds of prayer bands from different language groups, gathered for monthly prayer rallies.

FROM THE beginning the prayer movement must see itself, and should be perceived locally, as a servant to the four spheres of church, mission, marketplace, and youth. It serves the whole body, so that God’s purposes for the whole might go for-

ward. This means prayer movements should be characterized by humility, because they exist for the sake of something beyond themselves.

One point at which prayer leaders can best serve is to encourage pastors to step into positions of leadership in the overall prayer mobilization effort.

Of course, the prayer leader will shoulder the bulk of organizational and logistical work. But the pastor is key, because the prayer movement must strengthen local churches in their ministries to the city and the world. If it is truly to be a prayer movement, then regular “concerts of prayer” must serve to inspire and mobilize prayer at every other level of the life of the Body all year round.

Servanthood

THE CALL to united prayer is not, first of all, a call for prayer events, but rather to a prayer process that includes certain events. Seen as a process, the prayer movement is God’s means for taking the cause of Christ forward from where we are to where he wants us to be.

As a movement, united prayer may have many dimensions— monthly rallies, weekly prayer “triplets,” quarterly days of prayer, prayer vigils, etc. The Evangelical Alliance in England is developing a nationwide prayer movement that includes all of these approaches on a regular basis. In fact, they are the ones who originated the “prayer triplets” idea—three

Movement

people meeting once a week to pray for their churches and for nine (three apiece) non-believing neighbors. To tie together all these approaches, they have even sent out traveling teams to hold evenings of prayer in major cities there.

But none of this programming should replace the prayer process, a process that consists of forging lives to Christ, to each other and to a vision of the Kingdom through united prayer. We are involved in a long-term ministry of prayer seeking long-term results through prayer.

How does one preserve this mark called process or movement? The prayer movement leaders are key, as they constantly ask themselves: what does God intend this work of united prayer to look like in our city? Where do we think he wants to go with it. What does he want to achieve through it? How should it be characterized in areas like unity and diversity, or focus and agenda, or in its direct contributions to the penetration of the city with the Gospel? Practically, how do we guide the prayer movement from where it is to where God intends it to be? And how do we insure that the movement ultimately infects the whole Body of Christ?

CITIES ARE complex communities. They differ from place to place, from country to country, from region to region. Thus a city, and the body of Christ within a city, have distinctives in terms of needs, challenges, current issues and concerns. In the same way, the movement of prayer within each city must contextualize itself—not only in terms of the make-up of the pray-ers, but also in its agenda, its format (often culturally shaped), its frequency of meetings, and even in terms of most immediate issues for prayer regarding revival and mission. It must also contextualize the

Contextualization

The Sourcebook. ~aae 27

specific mobilization strategies. Prayer mobilization in Tokyo —where less than 1% are Christian—will look different from what is now taking place in Manila, where millions uniting in prayer played a major role in the outcome of the recent revolution. The prayer agenda in Soweto, South Africa, will be very different (though still Kingdom-oriented) from that in Vancouver, Canada, where their prayer movement was focused recently on the World's Fair in their city.

EVEN THOUGH the movement grows informally by the inter-linking of life to life, church to church, and vision to vision, still strategy planning is important in the overall process. Sometimes united prayer will key off major evangelistic events within the city (as with the Luis Palau Crusade in Singapore). Sometimes prayer leaders may need to sponsor training

Strategy

seminars or produce training materials (as the Evangelical Fellowship of India has done, often in conjunction with its annual National Prayer Assembly). Sometimes the prayer movement may need to become multi-faceted, offering a variety of ways for unified gatherings (as the five major prayer movements in Hong Kong have done).

But the strategy, even in efforts at recruitment and networking, should never replace a total dependency on God's leadership, his timing and his way for developing the prayer movement. If we depend on our strategies alone, it will spell the death of our work.

MANY SUCCESSFUL prayer movements seem to benefit from periodic times of re-evaluation and re-commitment. There are points along the way where the shape of the prayer movement is reviewed and the impact determined. It is at this point that special prayer rallies can be of great help in measuring the strength of the work, as has happened in Hong Kong through their two "Trayer and Fasting Rallies." If the prayer movement has divided the city up into monthly regional gatherings, there may be a need, once or twice a year, for all these efforts to come together, such as on Pentecost Sunday, or the International Day of Prayer for World Evangelization. This happened recently in Chicago as four "concerts of prayer" there united for three hours of celebration and intercession with 1,000 present.

Periodically as well, prayer leaders should discuss together whether the time has come to cease the movement in its current form, or whether God may be calling for a re-commitment to united prayer for another length of time. In previous awakenings over the past 300 years, prayer movements has set checkpoints for recommitment anywhere from two years to as much as seven years! Of course, this is a risky proposition. Recently I joined prayer leaders who discussed the situation and decided to disband the prayer gathering. It has since resurfaced, stronger than ever. The break allowed people to find out how vital the monthly rally was. And it allowed new leadership to emerge.

THE PRAYER movement should define itself as a ministry *of* prayer and *through* prayer—an active, aggressive, pioneering ministry in Christ's global cause. Beyond prayer for the work, united prayer is the work. We must be convinced that it is our most strategic labor for city-wide and worldwide evangelization.

United prayer is the base of operations *for God's mission in at least five ways*. And every prayer movement should keep this before its people.

(1) It equips those who minister. It gives them renewed vision, enlivened hope and faith, expanded love and compassion, and greater authority and boldness in ministry as a result of releasing these essential qualities within the prayer-ers through the very work of united prayer itself.

Measurement

Mission

(2) It helps the pray-ers to rededicate themselves to go forth to live daily lives that are consistent with what they have prayed. It affects how seriously we take Christ's call to discipleship.

3) It also helps the pray-ers to offer themselves more wholeheartedly to God, to be used by him in any way he chooses to bring about answers to their prayers. Therefore, united prayer is a great spawning ground for more laborers for the harvest; it's the best approach to recruitment (Matthew 9:37-38; Acts 13:1-4).

(4) In a number of emerging prayer movements there is a conscious effort to link up in practical ways with specific evangelistic, justice and church planting ministries. In that way, the movement becomes a launching pad for such ministries. As someone said in the Jakarta Consultation: "In many ways the church is sitting on a 'tinder-box.' God has given us so many good resources and strategies, but much of it is still in need of spiritual ignition. The call to united prayer is a call to God's people to seek the source of this ignition as our first step in our mission to the world." One prayer effort in Jakarta, the Lydia Prayer Movement, requires that following a season of united prayer, the participants must travel to nearby villages to share Christ with Muslims.

5) Finally, through united prayer, praying people prepare the way for all other ministries, inside and outside the Church. Why? Because God goes before them as he actually does answer their requests.

In south India, the Friends Missionary Prayer Band (FMPB), with 30,000 gathering weekly in over 1,500 prayer bands, spends one evening a week fasting and praying for revival in the churches and the reaching of the 700,000,000 Hindus in India. One of their prayers is that God will raise up out of each prayer band someone to be sent into the mission field, as the rest of them give sacrificially to send them. Over 350 have been sent so far. And the others find themselves more actively involved in evangelism right where they live because of what they have prayed.

NOT ONLY are prayer movements marked by talking with God, but a number are increasing their times of listening to God as well. After all, prayer is a two-way conversation. In the midst of a prayer movement God often speaks, giving birth to

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gether to fulfill those dreams (this has been the experience of the FMPB mentioned above). It is in united prayer that the Spirit reveals new things about the Father's plans, about Christ as Lord of the church, and about his mission to the world. Therefore, effective prayer efforts provide periods of time in the meeting for all participants to wait silently before the Lord, giving him opportunity to answer them individually and corporately, and

Listening

then sharing with one another any new insights or understandings that the Spirit has given.

In many prayer rallies and concerts of prayer they take two or three minutes to listen to God at least three separate times throughout a two-hour gathering. Then, at the end, for five to ten minutes people report anything significant they believe they have “heard,” and how they intend to respond.

IN EVERY emerging prayer movement I know of, I can identify some who at the beginning saw many of the previous fifteen characteristics and were compelled, as a result, to begin working toward the formation of united prayer. Burdened for their churches and organizations, and deeply concerned with the reaching of their city and the world, they also realized they could not go forward on these matters alone. And so they became the catalyst to call others into a prayer movement. Described in Zechariah 8:20-22, they say “Come, let us go at once: I myself am going.”

However, don’t be fooled. Such pacesetters are not necessarily those with reputations as “prayer warriors,” though we need them, too. In fact, these pacesetters may feel a desperate need in their own prayer life that requires them to seek out others to join company with them. Their weakness in prayer, therefore, can become their strength for leading a movement of prayer. It is their honest confession of needing others that attracts many into the effort.

Sometimes, the most likely candidates for pacesetters are those who have such a vision for mission at various levels, a sense of hope and of the Kingdom, that they feel compelled to pray and to call others with them into united prayer for nothing less than spiritual awakening. A powerful way to release a God-given prayer movement, then, is to identify these pacesetters, help them understand their unique calling, get them together with other pacesetters at the outset, and then give them a way to act on their God-given calling within the life of the Church. Recently, Youth For Christ International, at work in 95 nations, has taken this challenge to heart. Right now they are seeking actively to identify 600 pacesetters, among staff and students, who they believe will be the key to unlocking the vision God gave them to help raise up a “world-wide youth prayer movement.”

Pacesetters

THOSE ARE the sixteen marks normally present in emerging prayer movements around the world. None of them are as fully developed within any given prayer thrust as they might be. But increasingly leaders are recognizing the importance of these ingredients and are seeking to

The Divine Pattern Calls Us

strengthen them locally. We should remember them in whatever leadership we give to united prayer where we live. These marks are: Worship, Hope, Kingdom, Restlessness, Repentance, Unity, Diversity, Networking, Servanthood, Movement, Contextualization, Strategy, Measurement, Mission, Listening, and Pacesetters. Such marks have been in evidence in past prayer movements as well. So we should take courage—if God has done it before, surely he is willing and able to do it again. Recall what he did with the Moravian missionary community in the 1700s. Not only did they set up a 24-hour chain of united prayer, lasting for 100 years, but they also used that prayer base to launch hundreds of missionaries around the world. Furthermore, they sent out “renewal teams” to the Church in other parts of Europe to summon others to pray corporately for awakening and the advancement of Christ’s Kingdom. John Wesley was saved in one such Moravian prayer meeting in London!

On the 250th anniversary of the Moravian Prayer Movement, *Hourly Intercession*, an editorial in *Christianity Today* (February 18, 1977) presented the challenge to us:

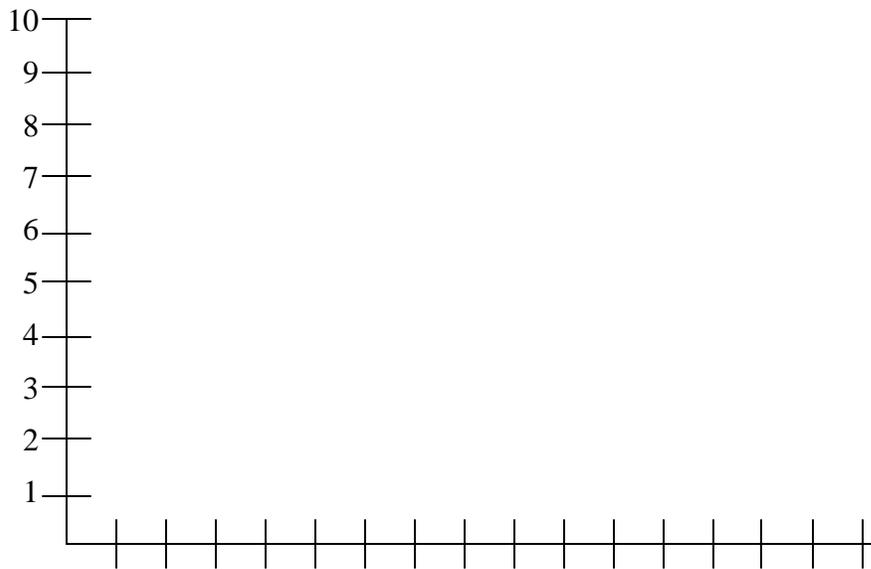
Whoever believes the biblical record must agree that weak and ineffective Christians and a faltering Church are characterized by prayerlessness. It is fair to say that the Moravian’s prayers along with those of others played an important part in making the 19th century the greatest of all centuries since Pentecost for the Christian faith. Nothing like the magnitude of the Christian advance between 1727 and 1900 is happening today. And nothing like that will happen unless God’s people get back to their knees. Perhaps the time has come to pick up the challenge of the Moravian Brethren and begin another hundred-year prayer effort. God called special servants of his among the Moravians to give themselves to this prayer ministry. Surely there are believers around the world whom the Spirit of God will lead to devote themselves to this prayer effort. And they will be able to pray others into the same ministry until there is an unbreakable chain of hundreds of thousands of believers who will not stop shaking the gates of heaven until the churches are revived and the gospel of Jesus Christ is preached to every creature.

Yes, I concur. Surely such believers do exist today. They are God’s special gift to the Church for such an hour as this. Maybe you’re one of them. Don’t be too quick to say “no.” Somebody has to get it started where you live. If not you, who? Anybody out there want to start something?

Just for Thought

1. Think through the sixteen characteristics: Worship, Hope, Kingdom, Restlessness, Repentance, Unity, Diversity, Networking, Servanthood, Movement, Contextualization, Strategy, Measurement, Mission, Listening, and Pacesetters.

a. To what extent do you see each present in united prayer in your community and city? Plot it on this graph with 10 being high and 1 low.



b. How might you share the vision of these sixteen characteristics with spiritual leaders in your community?

2. How might you mobilize prayer out of each of the four primary spheres within your community:
- the local church sphere (primarily the nurturing sphere).
 - the mission sphere (primarily those involved in outreach and ministry to the world).
 - the marketplace sphere (primarily business people, professionals and workers who penetrate the fabric of a society on a daily basis).
 - the youth sphere (primarily those in preparation to be leaders in the coming years).

Remarkable Reasons Why You Should Want to be Involved in A Movement of United Prayer for Spiritual Awakening and World Evangelization...

Even if God Never Answers Your Prayers

(Or at least if it feels that way sometimes!)

by David Bryant

HISTORICALLY, prayer movements have often persevered for many years before the answers came. In *The Puritan Hope*, Ian Murray describes how those who first used the term “concerts of prayer” in the late 1600’s and early 1700’s held a theology that could not be discouraged. They were convinced that, like the incense burners in Revelation 5, each concert of prayer continued to fill God’s throne room with the prayers of the saints. Eventually, they firmly believed, God would remember every prayer and every concert of prayer, and bring the answers down upon the earth in renewing, awakening power. In fact the Puritans said they were so certain of this they were willing to pray for forty years if need be before the answers be-came visible.

Now that’s faith! And all of us who give leadership to a movement of prayer must come to terms with such faith. Do we have it ourselves?

The fact of the matter is—as the title of this essay suggests—it can *seem* as if our prayers for the advancement of the Kingdom may never be answered. Are we prepared to press on—and to inspire those in the prayer movement with us to press on—even if the *process* by which God answers us fails to give us tangible results as soon as we might like?

Well, to help us I want to come at this issue of unanswered prayer in a very different way. As I’ve studied prayer movements around the world, I’ve uncovered great benefits for those involved—immediate benefits—quite apart from the actual answers (whenever they come). These God-given gifts found within the prayer movement itself can keep us encouraged, involved, and enthusiastic, until God *does* answer us as fully as he has led us seek him to do.

These remarkable reasons can be categorized under the two major agendas for a Concert of Prayer: FULLNESS and FULFILLMENT.

Fullness Benefits

Our vision of who Christ is becomes enlarged as we seek the greater implications of his Lordship in our lives and the life of his Church. Also, by praying with Christians from many different traditions, our prayers synthesize a larger vision of Christ based on the variety of ways he has

An Enlarged Vision of Christ

been revealing himself within each of the traditions. During a concert of prayer, the prayers for revival offered from diverse traditions end up painting for us a perspective of the Christ we seek that no one group could ever uncover by itself. (Colossians 3:1-4; Revelation 5:8-12)

Our relationship to God is clarified as we confront the issues in revival that we know can only be accomplished by his direct intervention. Through the prayer movement we learn a greater level of dependency on God and on his promises. And we turn from every other thing that might keep us from casting ourselves fully on Christ to deliver us and bring us into his fullness. This is often called repentance and brokenness. (Joel 2:12-17; 27-28)

We are filled with a new spirit of hope and celebration as we embrace the larger vision of what God will do to revive his people and reach his world. The hopeful vision is “caught” more than “taught.” And it sticks with us long after a concert of prayer is over. It invigorates all we do. (Romans 8:22-27, 31-37)

A deeper hunger for God’s glory increases in all participants. The more people pray for true awakening, the more convinced they become that it must happen! Therefore hunger begets hunger. And there is nothing that makes a person more ambitious to grow spiritually than to be driven by a hunger and thirst for righteousness that totally re-orient their values and priorities. Furthermore, as the hunger grows, the intensity of prayer—both private and corporate—will grow. And God will have even larger requests to respond to as a result. (II Chronicles 15:9-15)

A united prayer movement builds our sense of family and our experience of visible unity. There is probably no better way for the Body of Christ within a city to begin finding new ground on which to learn from each other, receive one another, build up one another, and uncover ways to work together, than in a movement of united prayer. If we can’t attain visible unity here, we probably won’t find it in a lasting way by any other means. (I Peter 2:4-6; 9-10)

Existing pray-ers are revitalized as they find a place to be refreshed in their own prayer lives and to be connected with others from many other parts of the Body who have the same desire to seek God for spiritual awakening and world evangelization. All of this will keep them praying in the days in between each concert of prayer. (Isaiah 46:31; 57:15)

Our Relationship to God Clarified

A New Spirit of Hope And Celebration

A Deeper Hunger for God’s Glory

Our Sense of Family And Our Experience of Visible Unity Builds

Existing Pray-ers Revitalized

United prayer movements accelerate congregational prayer. Those participating in a concert of prayer return to share the vision, to lead others in prayer towards the same two-fold concern, and to recruit others to come with them to the next concert of prayer. The concert of prayer provides an approach to prayer that is easily transferable back to each local congregation. It also provides a place where those not yet enthused about prayer can come to be “infected” with the vision and the call to deeper prayer. (II Chronicles 29:20-31)

**Congregational
Prayer
Accelerated**

Although the ultimate answer to our prayers for revival and mission may still await a future point, the very dynamic of an on-going prayer movement encompasses many facets of an awakening in a more intermediate experience. These intermediate foretastes of awakening are enough to spoil us for anything less than a full outpouring of the Spirit. (Acts 1)

**A Foretaste of
True Spiritual
Awakening**

Fulfillment Benefits

Our vision of what the Kingdom is all about will be enlarged, just like our vision for the King himself. (see above) The more we pray for city-wide and worldwide concerns, the more we can envision what it would look like for God’s Kingdom to break through injustice, healing, and redemption. (Jeremiah 33:1-3ff)

**An Enlarged
Vision of the
Kingdom**

Our consecration for ministry and missions will deepen as we offer ourselves at the conclusion of each concert of prayer to be used in any way God chooses to answer our prayers and to be filled with the Holy Spirit to lead lives consistent with what we’ve prayed. Actually, the entire concert of prayer draws out of each prayer a greater desire to be as fully committed to the work of the Kingdom as possible. (Malachi 3:1-4)

**Consecration for
Ministry and
Missions
Deepened**

A united prayer movement undergirds, sustains, and protects existing ministries and missions, as we build protection around the enterprises and, more importantly, the laborers represented among our praying people. What better environment can we provide those involved in outreach than to surround them with a prayer movement? (Ephesians 1:15-19)

**Existing
Ministries and
Missions
Undergirded**

New strategies for outreach and ministry are stimulated as those who pray for specific needs and opportunities begin to see—in an environment full of hope and faith—specific steps they might take to get involved. A prayer movement is a most creative atmosphere for unleashing new dreams and visions. (Acts 13:1-4)

**New Strategies
for Outreach and
Ministry**

You will see networks for ministry and missions expanded as those from different organizations, churches, and enterprises begin to hear from one another through what is prayed. As we pray for one another's efforts in outreach and love, we enter into a new level of concern for one another and of ownership of each other's callings. In turn, this builds trust and respect which, in the midst of the praying, can release us to see new ways in which we can work together to help each other accomplish our tasks more effectively. Often in a concert of prayer people with similar burdens for ministry will connect up as they discover, through the praying, that there are others in the gathering who carry the same burden and desire for specific kinds of involvement in the Kingdom. (Haggai 1 and 2)

Networks For Ministry And Missions Expanded

A united prayer movement launches workers for the mission as those participating in a prayer movement return to the movement to ask for their continued backing as they begin to take up new ministries. Most Christian workers struggle with feeling alone and misunderstood as they enter into a new work. But in a concert of prayer they can be assured of continued support and encouragement as the other pray-ers recognize them to be a fruit of the prayer movement and thus desire to back them in prayer all the way. (Mt. 9:35- 10:1)

Workers for the Mission Launched

The unity of the prayer movement is itself an act of warfare by which we cast down the enemy. Our very assembling together declares the coming of the Kingdom of God and Christ's authority over our city. Moreover, the blessing of God is commanded in the midst of our unity. (Ephesians 6:10-13,18-20; cp. Philippians 1:27-28)

An Act of Spiritual Worship

There is a witness to the city at large, in keeping with Jesus' prayer in John 17. What better way to show the world the visible unity for which Jesus prays, and by which he says the world will come to believe in him, than to show a city that the whole body is willing to unite to pursue God's whole vision for that city in a movement of united prayer. The prayer movement is actually doing evangelism! (Acts 4:31-33; 5:12-14)

A Witness to the City at Large

The meeting itself provides an arena where evangelism takes place, as nominal Christians and curious unbelievers attend special city-wide prayer events. Here the Gospel is not so much preached to them. Rather, they hear the Gospel become the basis of people's conversation with God. They see Christians united in the conviction that God is real, that he is present, that he is full of grace and power, and that Jesus opens up direct, life-giving fellowship with him. And they see Christians who are talking with God together not so much for their own sakes, but for the sake of the

An Arena for Evangelism

world itself, and doing so with the conviction that God will hear, answer, and bless in saving ways. The entire environment of a prayer gathering provides a wonderful context to bring non-Christians to personal faith in Christ. (Zechariah 8:20-23)

THOSE ARE certainly remarkable reasons to get involved in a prayer movement, even before any answers come. But, on top of such glorious benefits is this absolutely dependable reality: *God will answer the united cries of his people when they pray about the concerns most on his heart.* The day is surely coming when that movement of prayer will receive—beyond all they could ask or think—God’s gracious work in Christ. He will answer them with fullness and fulfillment—with spiritual awakening and world evangelization. (Hebrews 6:12-20; 10:19-25)

Facing all this encouragement, how can we afford NOT to be faithfully involved in a movement of united prayer?

**Ultimately, The
Seekers Become
the Receivers ...
For the Sake of
Many Others**

Just For Thought

1. How have you seen some of these benefits so far in your own experiences in united prayer? Be specific. Can you think of other benefits not listed here that you've experienced?

2. If you were to present these "Remarkable Reasons" to your pastor or another spiritual leader—in order to gain their deeper interest in a movement of united prayer—how would you go about doing it?

Seven Ways Prayer is Changing the Church in America

By John Quam

1. PEOPLE

A KIND of pragmatic secularism has crept into the church in America. While people continue to maintain a belief in a supernatural God, they have planned and directed their lives and the ministries of their churches in ways that appear to short-circuit that belief. Little time and energy is given to developing strategies for overcoming the supernatural influences of evil through the work of Satan and his demons. While Christians in many other countries experience daily the implications of these supernatural realities, American Christians seem overly fascinated with new facilities, programs and materials. However, there appears to be a change on the horizon. Evidence of this is seen in the popularity of Frank Peretti's novels entitled "This Present Darkness" and "Piercing the Darkness". These books, which have become unprecedented hits for an unknown author, represent this supernatural world view and make prayer an essential fulcrum upon which the victory for God's people hinges. Prayer puts us in contact with our supernatural God and brings his resources into play to impact on the circumstances and realities that surround us.

Prayer is calling people to a supernatural world view

Dr. JOHN PIPER addressed this issue at the ACMC National Conference in Denver in 1988. In his message on prayer, which has since become the most distributed message ever by the Hosanna tape ministries organization of Albuquerque, he focused on the central purpose of prayer and the kind of God we approach when we come to Him in prayer. One illustration referred to his own church elders as they prayed over a girl before she was to receive surgery the next day. When the doctors examined her they found no signs of the tumor they were to remove and no surgery was needed. Dr. Piper said that his elders were ecstatic at the news, not because they had great faith, or because they really didn't expect anything to happen, but because of their discovery of their great, supernatural God. Prayer is a channel between our personal, physical world and the supernatural realities that surround us. The more we pray, the more our horizons are expanded and the more we come to expect from a supernatural, miracle working God.

2. PASTORS

IN ACTS CHAPTER 6, the early church leaders found themselves facing a dilemma. All kinds of disputes and difficulties were arising that required their attention. Particularly, there was a dispute between the Grecian and Aramaic widows concerning the equitable distribution of the church's resources. The Apostles were becoming saddled with many administrative responsibilities. It soon became evident that this would be detrimental to the spiritual health of the church and that a change needed to be made. In response to this need, gifted individuals were appointed to assume responsibility over these administrative tasks in order that the spiritual leaders of the church (Apostles, or if you will, pastors) might give themselves to two things: prayer and the ministry of the Word. From my experience in seminary in the 1960's and following the work and role of pastors through the '70's and '80's, I have discovered that the American church is reliving these experiences of the early church in Jerusalem.

Administrative tasks

and congregational expectations are overwhelming pastors to a degree that many, if not most, pastors have little time for study of the Word and for prayer. In fact, the average time per day spent in prayer by pastors across the US is reportedly little more than a couple of minutes.

AS WE SUGGESTED in our first point, prayer represents our supernatural world view. When we short-circuit prayer we give our lives and ministry a secularistic or humanistic framework within which to work. Even though our language sounds biblical and evangelical, without prayer people may know what is right and be biblically literate, but when the chips are down and the decision needs to be made, they often make decisions contrary to what they know.

Living the Christian life requires supernatural, spiritual power, and without prayer this power just is not at work in us as individuals, or, for that matter, in the church as a whole. But, I am happy to report that some changes are on the scene. Groups of pastors are beginning to gather in cities around the country. They are beginning to reassess their role in the church and the power and the power that is at work within them. They are beginning to insist on more time for prayer in the ministry of the Word and to delegate other responsibilities to gifted people in their congregations. It is a small beginning and prayer is the key to an accelerated and growing understanding of this important principle.

**Prayer is Helping
Pastors
Understand Their
Role in the
Church**

3. PROGRAM

AS I VISIT churches around our country, I often am very curious about their bulletins, particularly the list of activities and ministries that compose the life of the church. Frequently I am disappointed to find that collective prayer is not mentioned anywhere as one of the key activities for the church's ministry. Even large, well-known churches have no time for the congregation to gather for concerted, united prayer on behalf of their people and their mission. On the other hand, aerobics is often mentioned as a regular activity. Sometimes two or three well attended exercise oriented groups are active each week. Something is desperately wrong with our churches when the people will flock to physical activities such as aerobics, softball, basketball, or bowling, but very few show any interest at all in the spiritual activity of corporate prayer. We should not be surprised then, when our well attended, prosperous looking, evangelical churches are being besieged by problems of divorce, family breakdowns and immoral and ethical crises on all sides, particularly in leadership and pastoral positions. One evangelical congregation in California went through six youth pastors in the last 10 years; each one having to be dismissed for moral or ethical reasons.

**A Growing
Number of
Congregations
Are Making
Prayer a High
Priority**

SOME PASTORS and congregations, however, have recognized the problem and are making some drastic changes. They are bringing prayer back into the center of the life of the church. Churches are having weeks of prayer to start out the year. They are dedicating days and nights to concerted, united prayer. Churches are enlisting families and individuals, asking for commitments. One church has a number of prayer groups that meet at 5:30 in the morning and another one that meets at 5:00a.m. You have to be faithful at the 5:30 a.m. prayer groups before you are invited to the 5:00 a.m. group. Another church has 300 people signed up and they come in regularly to the sanctuary to pray.

All day long there are people in there praying for the life and ministry of the church. Other churches have designated a room where people gather for prayer during worship services on Sunday morning. They pray for the power of the Holy Spirit to be evident through the program and the preaching of the Word. They pray that Christians will be built up and that non-Christians will be converted. Other churches have large groups that gather and pray in depth for the missionaries and mission outreach of their congregation and for unreached peoples around the world. The percentage of these kinds of churches is small, but it is growing. Prayer is changing the program of the church.

4. PURPOSE

IN THE ADDRESS by Dr. Piper mentioned earlier, he summarizes some of his thoughts in the simple phrase: "If you don't believe that life is war, you don't know what prayer is for". Unfortunately, many people in our congregations have no working idea of the warfare of the church or the purpose of the church. For many people, when they became Christians, someone said "God loves you and has a wonderful plan for your life". Without further explanation of the right kind this can be very misleading. A person might easily confuse the wonderfulness of God's plan with his own personal desires and expectations. It's a short step from there to believing that God and the church exist to meet our needs and to make us happy. This, of course, is very far from biblical Christianity. The question is: Does God exist to help fulfill our plans, or do we exist to help fulfill the plans of God?

PRAYER helps us to focus on the true missions of the church. When the early church gathered for prayer, they then went out and spoke the Word boldly, even though that might bring persecution and difficulty for them personally. Prayer helped them focus on their mission. Jesus looked on the world as a great harvest field, ready to be reaped. He exhorted those that were following to pray that the Lord of the harvest would thrust out laborers, people who would give themselves to this important work. For this reason the Concert of Prayer movement focuses on spiritual awakening and world evangelization.

That is why, in Luke 24, in his last words it says that Jesus opened their minds so they could understand the Scriptures. And then he said they would be witnesses. First we must get a new glimpse of who Christ is and be awakened and then we must be thrust out into the mission he calls us to. He warns us, however, to wait until we have been clothed with power from on high. The church does this waiting in prayer. Prayer launches us out into our mission. It helps us focus on our purpose. When we pray for personal needs and concerns for loved ones and relatives it is in order that we might be able to work effectively for the accomplishing of his mission for us and for his church. Our prayers echo back to God his own concerns, even for us, as a loving Father. He is central. His will is everything. Our purpose is to serve Him and His cause.

5. POWER

THERE IS A DIFFERENCE between doing right things and doing things right. We are commissioned as Christ's witnesses, but what does it mean to be an effective witness? In Luke 24:45-49 we have an important Great Commission passage. First, Jesus opens their minds to understand the Scriptures. Secondly he commissions them to preach in his name to all nations. Thirdly he tells them to wait; wait for power. Effective witness is

**Prayer is Giving
Focus to the
Mission of the
Church**

**Prayer Gives Us
Power for
Witness**

dependent on the power of God's Spirit. In Acts 1:8 Luke continues the same theme. Jesus promises them the power of the Holy Spirit to be his witnesses from Jerusalem to the ends of the earth. How did they wait? Acts 1:14 gives us the answer. They met together constantly in prayer. There is a direct relationship between prayer and the power of the Holy Spirit.

THE BOOK of Acts records the rapid growth of the early church in spite of a hostile environment. That growth was related to the power of their witness and that witness was preceded by regular, consistent, persistent prayer. See Acts 2:42,4:31, 12:5,12. No amount of training, materials, programs, technology or the like can substitute the concerted prayers of God's people.

CHARLES SPURGEON was once asked what was the secret of the success of his ministry. He took that person down to the basement of the church and said:

'When I am in the pulpit preaching, 300 people are down here praying'. Whether it is through preaching or sharing our faith in the streets, the secret of success is still the same. The Prayers of God's people.

TODAY, a growing body of evidence is showing a close connection between the prayers of the people in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union and the effective witness that is drawing hundreds of thousands to Christ in those areas. The church in China and Korea has also been a clear illustration of this truth. In Argentina, concerted prayer for specific cities is opening up doors for the gospel. A number of churches here in America have learned this lesson and have made prayer the foundation of their evangelistic outreach. Youth groups that go out to witness on the streets of Chicago hold a percentage of young people back in concerted prayer for the effectiveness of their outreach.

EVANGELISTIC organizations are also increasing their commitment to prayer before each city-wide crusade, often calling for concerts of prayer preceding and following the crusade itself. One worker for the Billy Graham organization told me that 15 years ago, women were mainly responsible for organizing the prayer support for a crusade. About seven years ago, men began to get involved and today pastors want to take the leadership in prayer.

6. PROGNOSIS

CHARLES COLSON in his recent book entitled "Kingdoms in Conflict" describes a poignant scene of the dying moments in the life of Winston Churchill. This great man who had led the way in the struggle for freedom during WW II, surveyed the world before him and said: "there is no

**Prayer Changes
the Prognosis for
the Future**

hope". Many young people who are questioned about the future express deep apprehension and fear of the powerful forces that are at play in the world today. It is this apprehension that often drives them to an existential, "get it now", approach to life.

JEREMIAH 29:10-14 strikes a positive note for the people of Israel, even though the situation looked bleak for the moment. God wanted his people to be a people of hope and when they came to an end of trusting themselves and truly began to seek God in prayer hope would rekindle in them and through that hope God would restore them to their inheritance. There is a powerful connection between prayer and hope. Through prayer we recognize the promises of God and place our trust in them. Prayer engenders hope and hope puts us in a position to receive God's promises.

THE APPLICATION of this principle is wide and varied including our own physical condition or that of another. James 5:13-18 instructs us in how we ought to pray even over physical illness. Although this passage does not teach that no one should ever be sick or that all sickness will be healed, it does say that we should look first to God for help and there is reason to hope for his healing. This hope, however, does not supplant our ultimate hope in eternity with him free from pain or death.

ULTIMATELY the hope in our prayers has to do with the accomplishment of God's purposes. John 16:24 instructs us to ask for things in Jesus' name and we will have the joy of receiving them. We are tempted to think this means to say "...in Jesus' name" at the end of all our prayers. That is not the meaning of this verse. It means that when we ask for the things that Jesus would want, on his behalf (in his name) then we will have them. It is the same as praying according to his will. This truth is reinforced in James 4:2-3. The closer we are to the Lord, and the more we perceive his purposes, the greater our hope in answered prayer.

7. PARTNERSHIP

ONE OF THE MOST destructive realities of the American church is its divisiveness. As churches compete with one another for the attention of the surrounding community and dispute with each other over traditions and biblical interpretations, they contradict one of the central themes of Christ's prayer for the church -that we might be one, even as He and the Father are one. In another place He expresses his desire that we might be known as his followers by the way we love one another. This is, in fact, the very thing the world searches for in the church and the absence of this love is probably the greatest obstacle to people who would otherwise take seriously the claims of Christ. Once again, however, positive changes are taking place through prayer. In community-wide and city-wide prayer

**Prayer Is Uniting
Congregations
As They Move
From Polarization
To Partnership**

rallies across the country churches are coming together to unite in prayer for spiritual awakening and world-evangelization. These Concerts of Prayer represent a dramatic step towards partnership and away from the polarization that has existed in the American church for a number of decades.

IN 1990 AND '91, several cities hosted prayer rallies with thousands participating and hundreds of churches involved. A growing number of cities hold regular opportunities for the pastors of the area to unite for 3 or more hours of prayer. Local prayer movement steering committees are active in approximately 100 different communities around the United States for the purpose of uniting congregations together in collective, concerted prayer. Together, they are celebrating their common convictions in the Lordship of Christ, in the mission of His Church, while setting aside their differing interpretations in specific aspects of the practice of the church.

In some places, even the secular media has reported these new signs of unity in the evangelical body of Christ. Prayer, united, concerted prayer is a means of expressing our partnership in the greater causes of the kingdom of God.

The following principles will help us gain Victory in Prayer

a. Prayer is spiritual warfare. Because of this fact we can be sure of two things. First, we will experience opposition to our desire to pray. Forces will seek to keep us from actually getting to prayer. All kinds of unexpected events or interruptions will appear. We will feel that there is no time for prayer even though we have dearly made it a high priority. And, if we get to prayer, we will be distracted or tempted to pray for the wrong things. These are the effect of the spiritual forces that hate prayer and are the most threatened by the power of prayer. Second, we can know that if we do pray we have the potential of unleashing the power of God for the binding of Satan and the releasing or freeing of his possessions. This is the secret of evangelism as well as the release from depression, oppression and demon possession. It is through prayer that the Kingdom of God advances against the Kingdom of Satan.

b. Prayer involves persistence. In Luke 18:1-8 we have a key teaching on prayer. This is the story of the persistent widow. Her persistence demonstrated her conviction that the judge was able to fulfill her request if he would, so she continued asking until he did. Jesus says that God will not ignore his children who call on Him day and night. However, he warns that a time may come when the Son of Man cannot find faith on the earth. This faith is represented in the willingness of people to call out to him day and night with the conviction that only He can fulfill their need. Our

persistence demonstrates our faith. It is for this reason that all of our prayers are not answered immediately.

c. Finally, prayer is both public and private. When Jesus condemned the public prayer of the Pharisee it was because his praying was a show for others while he had no personal, private prayer relationship with God. He was a hypocrite. However, public gatherings of the church need to demonstrate their relationship to God in prayer just as individuals do. The early church was characterized by constantly meeting together in prayer. If prayer is not clearly visible in all aspects of our corporate church life, new believers will falsely be led to believe that it is not a necessary component to the church. How tragic! Yet this appears to be exactly what has happened to the American church.

How Do You Pray for a City?

DAVID BRYANT says prayer is the mission in urban and cross-cultural outreach. If there is such a thing as a prayer “expert,” David Bryant qualifies. The author of *Concerts of Prayer* and *In the Gap* (both by Regal) is working to foster urban prayer movements worldwide. He’s a member of both the National Prayer Committee in the U.S. and the Intercessory Advisory Committee for the Lausanne Committee for World Evangelization. In an interview with Latin America Evangelist, Bryant discussed prayer as it relates to urban and world missions.

How can a person really pray for a city?

First, there’s a very practical response, and that’s to read some of the good books being published for the average layperson like myself to understand what the city is.

Two books that have been very helpful to me are Ray Bakke’s *The Urban Christian* (InterVarsity Press, 1987) and Harvie Conn’s *Clarifying the Urban Vision: Dispelling the Urban Stereotypes* (Zondervan, 1987). Both act like a preliminary textbook in medical school, helping you understand the anatomy of a city so you can begin to understand where sickness lies or where life is vibrant.

The more I understand the city and how it works, the better prepared I am to do the kind of Biblical intercession for the city that will again, in the mystery of it all, move the hand of God to draw out the vibrancy and let it permeate the whole, and then to bring healing where there’s sickness.

Like Nehemiah, we need to do our research and understand how the city is put together and where the walls are crumbling down. Then we can carry out the mission of intercession in the most effective way possible.

But what if we’re asked to pray for a city like Medellin, Columbia and we have no real opportunity to study it?

That was going to be my second answer to your question. This involves a more general approach. You see, the most effective praying we do is when we pray God’s Word back to him.

In the final analysis, God’s answers to my prayer do not depend on whether or not I’m an urban expert. God’s final response to my prayers is dependent on whether I have seen what his Word says is in his heart to do.

If I find myself being challenged to pray God’s heart into a particular city with just some brief introductory facts, I would ask myself this question: If Christ and his Kingdom were to become the focus of attention in this city in answer to a movement of prayer, what would be the impact of that work of God?

My prayer would be based on everything I know from what Scripture shows me God has done in these four areas: 1) in the life of the individual

Christians in that city; 2) within the churches of that city; 3) in the life of the city at large; 4) and, ultimately, on all the nations of the world.

What Scriptures might we use to pray for a city?

Two key passages, among many, would be Jeremiah chapter 33 and Acts chapter 4. Read through that vision (of the city) in Jeremiah 33 and think about any city,

Your city. Think what would happen if the Lord would do such a work of righteousness in the city. And if you study the prayer meeting in Acts chapter 4, you see six or seven kinds of results that immediately follow out of that prayer meeting.

If I were a pastor guiding a group to pray for a city in Latin America, I could look at these passages. People could open up their Bibles to Acts 4 and Jeremiah 33 and see what God wants to do in a city in answer to prayer. They could see what it means to make Christ and his Kingdom the focus of attention, and then begin to seek the Lord for the particular city mentioned that night. I think God honors this!

First let's give people the biblical vision for this city they know little about. Then let's get them to pray for that city in the broad sweeps of God's desires for it. And let's motivate them to walk out of that prayer meeting and find out a little more about that city because now they've begun to love it in God's way.

Think of the new missionary going into a tough urban ministry in Latin America. How can he or she establish a meaningful disciplined prayer life?

To have a meaningful prayer life, pray the Scriptures. Before you get bogged down praying for all the details of your schedule that day, praying through all of the problem people you're trying to deal with, or praying through all the Satanic barriers you feel yourself up against day by day, begin with God's Word and pray his Word back to him.

Almost all of the prayers modeled for us in Scripture are prayers in generalities, not specifics. These are general prayers for specific situations.

For instance, Jesus' prayer in John chapter 17 is for the specific disciples in that room and for those who will believe through their word. But the themes of his prayer are really grand and in generalities. You know, "Glorify your Son, that your Son can glorify you." I ought to pray that, then, into the city.

In our mechanistic culture, we're looking for all these buttons we're supposed to push. We think we've got to work with nuts and bolts or we're not really being effective. But if we get lost in the twigs and fail to see the forest, eventually we're not going to have a meaningful prayer life. It's going to become drudgery, and it's going to become overwhelming. Our lists are going to grow and grow to where we can't even find the motivation to get started.

There's a place for lists. But I think we need to look at the forest before we look at the twigs.

How can we develop a disciplined prayer life?

There's no other answer than you've got to find some others to pray with you. Begin with your spouse. I have a disciplined prayer life, because my wife and I discipline each other to get down together before the Lord. With my travels and everything, we still have a disciplined schedule of prayer. Then there are others I pray with, including the people in the monthly Concerts of Prayer.

If you're a brand new missionary in a city of very few Christians, you can find at least two or three Christians to pray with. Maybe you can form two kinds of prayer cells: one with national Christians and another with fellow missionaries. Hold both of these on a regular basis.

To me, that's the secret; find others to pray with. You study the advance of the Kingdom in church history, and you find these little prayer cells littering the road of the history of the church.

How can prayer become a real priority in our missions endeavors?

The issue of priorities has to be dealt with before the missionary ever gets to the field. Someone has said, "The front line of world evangelization is the Word of God and prayer." Do we really believe that?

The issue isn't praying for the mission; prayer is the mission. Are we convinced of that? Are we convinced that everything else must become subservient to being a seeking people?

In Acts 1, the believers had a prayer meeting that so filled them with expectations of what God was going to do in answer to prayer, they then held a committee meeting to plan how to handle the answers when they came.

But the way we do it in missions, both in the home office and on the field, is we have committee meetings. We come up with all of these great ideas, and then we have a brief prayer meeting to ask God to bless all these ideas. And even though the ideas may be well intended, they may not fit at all into where God is going.

Once we're linked up with God, then we can have our committee meetings. Then we can plan our evangelistic strategies for the city. Then all that we develop will spring from what God has shown us he's willing to do and from what we are trusting him to do.

What has God been teaching you lately about prayer?

God has been encouraging me that we are on the threshold of a major movement of prayer in his Church. I see it on every hand. And I think that a lot of people are still struggling to know what to do with the call of the Spirit. In other words, there's always a struggle to try and insert prayer into our busy schedules.

I've come to the conclusion that the best word currently to use as the synonym for the biblical word "repentance" is the word "dismantle."

In our Christian and missionary organizations, for example, we're going to have to ask: Is God calling us to repentance? In other words, is God calling us to dismantle? Is God calling us to tear down a lot of the systems and programs and activities that we've developed, even just for a period of time? Should we call a moratorium and come before the Lord and become a prayer movement for a time?

Is God calling us to ask, "Lord, what things [in our program] should go? What things should stay? What new things do you want to do that we haven't even dared to ask of you?"

So the hard thing is to dismantle, to quiet ourselves before the Lord, to lay all the cards on the table and say, "Lord, now you decide how we go forward. We're going to give you a period of time to deal with us as leaders about those issues."

We haven't reached this stage yet. It maybe painful for an organization to strip down to where it can start rebuilding it into a prayer movement with everything else flowing out from that. But that's what God's saying to me. And missions leaders are hearing it and struggling to figure out where to go with that. Even the struggle is a very encouraging sign.

Seventh Time Around

Breaking Through A City's Invisible Barriers To The Gospel

By John Dawson

CORDOBA, Argentina is a city of proud and fashion-conscious people. Position, possessions, and appearance are of prime importance to 1.1 million living here, who are largely of German and Italian descent.

The Youth With A Mission team I led to Cordoba was made up of Christians from more than 20 nations. We were dressed simply, struggling with Spanish and carrying gospel literature. We really felt like nerds.

The crowds were there. Thousands of Argentines from all over the country had come to see the world soccer playoffs. But our witnessing seemed to lack power. No one was coming to know Christ. The next day, all 200 of us met for prayer in a rented monastery on the edge of town. We cried out to God for answer.

During that day of prayer and fasting, the Holy Spirit began to reveal the nature of the unseen realm over Cordoba. We realized that our timidity and weakness in proclaiming the gospel was partly due to satanic forces at work in the culture. We discerned a principality attempting to rule the city with “pride of life.” The only way to overcome a spirit of pride is with the humility of Jesus. So, with the Holy Spirit guiding, we decided to come against the principality in the opposite spirit.

The next day our entire group went downtown. We formed smaller teams of about 30 and walked into the open-air malls. We knelt down right there in the midst of the fashion parade, surrounded by expensive bistros, sidewalk cafes, and boutiques. With our foreheads to the cobblestones, we prayed for a revelation of Jesus to come to the city.

Breakthrough was immediate—breakthrough in us and breakthrough in the city. Large crowds of curious people began to gather around each group.

I vividly remember how Christ strengthened me when I set aside my dignity and knelt in the street. The intimidation of the enemy was broken along with our own pride. As the crowd became larger, I stood to my feet and began to explain through an interpreter why we had come to the city. As I lifted my voice to communicate to the people at the edge of the crowd, the boldness and compassion of the Lord filled me.

All over downtown Cordoba that day, team members preached to attentive audiences. We reaped a harvest of souls. The people were receptive to the point of insisting that we autograph the gospel tracts we gave them! This warm response continued for several weeks until our departure.

Now tell me: how could a city so resistant to the gospel suddenly become a place of harvest? Satan holds the cities and nations by accusation and deception. These are his only weapons. When we minister in a city, we are hindered by that which is deceiving the people. In Cordoba, we were hindered by the spirit of pride that filled the city.

How do we overcome the enemy? We discern the nature of his deception and come in the opposite spirit. Being careful to resist temptation ourselves, we continue in united prayer until authority is gained and God breaks through.

Remember the story of Jericho? Militarily it made no sense to march around the city wall of seven days. But spiritually the Israelites were gaining authority through the exercise of faith, obedience, and self-control. The fact that they had to

If they had responded to the insults and mockery hurled from the walls, a spirit of contention, pride, and anger might have been let loose among them. Instead, they walked in silent self-control until the victory shout, and by God's power the walls came tumbling down.

On a personal level, we go through this when a Jehovah's Witness or Mormon comes to our door. They are often empowered by a spirit of religion controversy. But the Bible says, "We fight not against flesh and blood..." So our contest is with the deceiver—not the deceived (but sincere) person standing in front of us. In other words, if you get into an argument about the trinity and win, you lose. Far better to come in meekness as one who has a testimony of Jesus' mercy in your life.

What about spiritual oppression over nations? How do we approach the battle for South Africa, for instance? Apartheid is a spirit, not just a political phenomenon. It is a spirit that goes deep into African colonial history, with its roots in idolatry. When a good thing like cultural heritage is made into an idol, then injustice is the result. How do we shatter the power of the spirit behind apartheid? Through yielded rights and humble servanthood. We can rebuke the devil all day long and still be powerless unless we apply faith and obedience to a God-directed strategy.

A year ago I preached to a large, multi-racial gathering at the Durban Convention Center in South Africa. I spoke on the sin of unrighteous judgment and closed the message by leading us in repentance of racial stereotypes and prejudice. We each then washed the feel of someone of another race. Thousands of Afrikaners, Zulus, Indians, English and Colored wept in each other's arms as a spirit of reconciliation spread. This

may seem like a small victory, but political reformation will grow only out of territory gained in the unseen realm. God's promise is: "If my people, who are called by my name, will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then will I hear from heaven and forgive their sin and will heal their land" (2 Chron. 7:14).

All over the world, praying Christians are agreeing about the nature of the battle for individual cities. For example, the prayer warriors of London believe they are battling a spirit of unrighteous trade that has influenced the world for hundreds of years through that great city. David exhorted the Israelites to "pray for the peace of Jerusalem" (Psa. 122:6). I believe this was a strategic instruction, directing them against a spirit of religious controversy which had taken up residence in the holy city.

There was a time prior to the rise of today's nationalism when much of the world consisted of clusters of city-states like Venice or Luxembourg. Today, apart from Hong Kong, Singapore, still-surviving Luxembourg and a few others, the world consists of entities we call nations, which often have several world-class cities within their borders. In reality, a nation is a geo-political alliance among its cities. Cities are where the national myth is largely enshrined. The land between is relatively empty and serves only to sustain the life of the city. A nation is the sum of its cities.

As we dream of discipling nations, we need to understand their urban makeup. The gospel must transform the spiritual, philosophical, and physical life of a country's cities. If it does anything less, we have failed to win the battle.

The early days of the Salvation Army are a graphic example of the power of the gospel transforming the life of the city. General Booth and his followers clearly identified the satanic bondages prevailing at the time, including alcoholism and prostitution. They employed city-side strategies which resulted in city-wide victories.

To effectively penetrate the city with the gospel, we must understand some truths of spiritual warfare:

- 1.. Satan's kingdom is a limited hierarchy of evil spirits.
2. High ranking, supernatural personalities, referred to as principalities and powers in Ephesians 6, seek to dominate geographic areas such as the city, with all its peoples and subcultures.
3. We as believers are taught by God's Word to treat such beings with respect, but to "take captivity captive" —to tear down the rule and authority of the evil one. Our authority is the result of Jesus' victory on the cross.
4. God's power is strategically applied by discernment of the unseen realm.

5. We must overcome the enemy before employing other methods of ministry among men and women.

In a given battle for a person, a family, a church or a city, discerning the nature of the enemy's lie is half the battle. Only after his deception is exposed can we exercise the authority of Scripture to thwart his schemes. Jesus resisted the devil this way during his time of temptation in the wilderness.

Whole countries are kept in darkness by satanic lies that have become cornerstones of a particular culture. For example, take the struggle with rejection and the fear of authority experience by many Australians. Entering through the cruel roots of Australian history, Satan has been able to create a general distrust of all authority figures, including the highest of all—God himself. The truth is that Australia is not a nation founded on rejection and injustice, but a chosen people with as much dignity and potential as any people in history.

Isaiah 60 says that the people of the earth sit in gross darkness. Can you imagine walking into a darkened room filled with people who have spent their entire lives sitting there watching the TV images flickering in front of them, thinking that is all there is to reality? Imagine flipping the light switch on and asking everyone to examine them mundane equipment responsible for the illusion. Satan is a projectionist, and illusionist, as deceiver, the father of lies. The Bible says that one day we will look upon him in amazement saying, "Is this the one that made the nations tremble?" (Isa. 14:16). He will be seen in reality as being small and impotent.

How can you contribute to victory in the battle for your city or nation? Begin by identifying the spiritual opposition and its unique manifestations.

1. Look at your city's secular history. Ask yourself the question, "Why is this city here?" Is it just the project of geography and commerce, or does God have a redemptive purpose in mind? Jonah was surprised at the way God looked at Nineveh. You, too, may be surprised when you discover what is oppressing people today. Psalm 115:16 says, "The heavens belong to the Lord, but he has given the earth to all mankind." In other words, this is our planet and the only authority that Satan has stolen is man's authority. He initially gains this authority when, at some

point in history, human beings believe his lies and are seduced into allegiance to his plan. An obvious example would be the spirit of greed let loose during the California gold rush that still dominates much of San Francisco.

2. Look at your city's Christian history. Research the life of God's people in your city, particularly during times of revival. If you live in Los Angeles, a study of the Azusa Street revival would give you insight into today's battle. During times of revival, the supernatural realm is seen with great clarity, and often, records are kept which contain important insights.

Ours is a covenant-keeping God, and you may be amazed at the promises received by past generations—your spiritual forefathers engaged in the same battle. It is an important principle of humility to acknowledge and honor those who have gone before. It also inspires our faith. Because of God's covenant with David, Josiah's generation lived in a time of revival rather than judgment.

3. Identify your city's prophets, intercessors and spiritual elders. In every city there is what I call a hidden eldership—a group of saints that you will not find listed in any book. It consists of God's circle of mature believers who "stand in the gap" until victory comes. Isaiah 62:6 says, "Upon your walls, O Jerusalem, I have set watchmen; all the day and all the night they shall never be silent. You who put the Lord in remembrance, take no rest and give Him no rest until He established Jerusalem and makes it a praise in all the earth." Some of these "watchmen" are obvious, such as veteran pastors. Others may be intercessors in obscurity or prophetic people with a premonition. If there is a common theme among those who are sensitive to the Spirit's guidance, you're on to something. God always confirms a strategy through several witnesses, and this is particularly important when dealing with demonic forces.

4. Study your city's demographics. It is amazing to me how ignorant we often are of the basic realities around us. Where do the people live? How many are in poverty? Why are they in poverty? Are there subcultures, ethnic groups, changes in the economy, an aging population--what's really going on?

Spiritual warfare doesn't operate in a vacuum. Jeremiah 29:7 says, "Seek the welfare of the city where I have sent you into exile, and pray to the Lord on its behalf; for in its welfare you will have welfare." This is an exhortation to Jews in Babylon who, like some modern believers, had a tendency to dream of a distant Jerusalem instead of recognizing the task at hand. Be grateful for your city. Study its potential, and you will receive the insight you need.

Once we know what we are up against, what should we do?

1. Begin with worship. Everything born of God goes through a very natural process. Worship is like an act of love that is followed by conception, gestation, travail, and birth. So always begin with worship. It is in the place of thanksgiving and praise that God conceives within us his mind and heart for our city.

2. Wait on the Lord for insight. Don't rely on finite reasoning or human cunning, what worked at Jericho didn't work at Ai. Learn to listen to God with childlike dependency, and he will guide you into victory. The Scriptures are full of exhortations about waiting on God. Psalm 40:1 says, "I waited patiently for the Lord; he inclined unto me and heard my cry." We are promised that God will speak if

we seek him. “My sheep hear my voice and they follow me” (John 10:27). 3. Identify with those you want to reach. When Nehemiah prayed for the restoration of Jerusalem, he didn’t pray for the city as though he were not a part of it. He said, “I and this people have sinned” (Neh. 1:6). Ezra went even further when he said, “Oh my God, I am ashamed and embarrassed to lift up my face to thee, my God, for our iniquities have risen above our heads, and our guilt has grown even to the heavens” (Ezra 9:6). Both were righteous men. You, too, may be a righteous person who is not involved with your city’s vices. But we can all identify with the roots of any given sin. Take, for example, the shedding of innocent blood in the act of abortion. You may never have participated in an abortion, but all of us have been guilty of the root sins—lust, the love of comfort, the love of money, rejection, unbelief. These common struggles can help us identify honestly with the sins of our city when we ask for God’s mercy.

4. Minister in the opposite spirit. Is the enemy tempting you to be stingy or greedy? Come against it with exuberant generosity. Overcome pride with humility, lust with purity, fear with faith. Paul said, “I can do all things through him who strengthens me” (Phil. 4:13).

5. Travail in prayer until God’s purposes are birthed. That which is conceived by God eventually comes to birth. Just as the contractions of the uterus herald the beginning of labor, there are times when our souls are stirred by God’s Spirit to seasons of intense prayer. Anyone who earnestly seeks God experiences such travail, but when the united Christians of a city are at this stage, it signals impending revival.

How do you perceive God? How big is he? The size of your God is revealed by your plans and expectations. His objectives are plain enough. Envision this, for example: God’s heart for the city becomes your heart. You and your teammates begin a city-wide prayer movement. There is revival in the local churches, followed by an awakening among non-Christians, reformation of society, and new expressions of world mission.

Is your God big enough for that? He waits for people who will see him as he is and then follow him to victory.

Reflections on Spiritual Warfare and the Ministry of United Prayer

by David Bryant

Introduction

“IF YOU DON’T KNOW that life is war, you won’t know what prayer is for”. In this fashion Dr. John Piper summarized a foundational truth about the Christian life. Life is war, a spiritual battle that colors everything that happens to us from the day we were born till the day we die. This personal spiritual struggle is part of a larger conflict being played out in the heavenlies. The outcome of this battle is already determined and all who have placed their faith in Christ will eventually participate in His victory.

During our lifetime however, we will all come face to face with three enemies of our soul: the world, the flesh and the devil. The Scriptures teach us how to overcome these evil forces and live effective, productive Christian lives.

Along with the Scriptures, God has given us another important resource wherewith we can live victoriously: *Prayer*. Prayer is a lifeline, a line of communication with our Victorious General. He will instruct us in the ways of spiritual warfare and as we share our fears, He will strengthen us and give us hope.

Through prayer we can avoid stepping on the mines planted by the enemy, call in reinforcements when we are being overpowered, direct God’s artillery to difficult enemy strongholds and discover His strategy and direction for ourselves personally and for the church.

Life is war, but by prayer and the Word it can be waged victoriously creating great faith and hope. I trust the following pages will reveal how this can be true for you.

‘Lord of Hosts, we rejoice in the triumphs of your grace. We enter the spiritual battles of this life with confidence in Christ, by whose blood the victory has already been secured. We dedicate ourselves to the strategic purposes of our Commander-in-Chief and promise to keep our communication lines open to Him for His direction and supply. Fulfill in us and through us all that you have intended and protect us from the evil forces that battle against your will and your people. We look forward to the day when we will rejoice with all the saints in the ultimate defeat of Satan and the full reign of your righteousness.’

An Overview

I HAVE SPENT some very stimulating and helpful days meeting with leaders of many ministries focused in very special ways on what might be called “spiritual warfare praying”. I have been helped greatly by the interaction. It is my intention here to lay out some of my reflections and conclusions on this tremendously important topic. What I relate to you is not in any sense exhaustive on the subject, nor exhaustive on my own thinking about spiritual warfare. However, I do feel this is a good starting point for me, and I hope it is helpful for the reader as well.

Let us look at the following headings:

- A few general observations on spiritual warfare
- How Christians are called to respond (apart from prayer)
- The role of revival in spiritual warfare
- The role of united prayer in spiritual warfare
- Raising a few cautions
- The points on which all of us agree

A Few General Observations on Spiritual Warfare

- Warfare is a pattern of conflict and conquest from either direction, whether God toward Satan or Satan toward God. Ultimately Christ is the Victor, however! Warfare always requires a “power encounter” at some point, through which the power of Christ is seen to be greater than the power of darkness.
- The primary battleground for engagement in spiritual warfare is the area of RELATIONSHIPS .Satan attempts to drive a wedge in our relationship with Christ and our relationship to one another (and even to Creation). A wedge starts with the slightest dislodging, but then as it pushes forward it widens the gap...until one is faced, in spiritual terms, with a “stronghold” of Satan (personal, church, social, political, etc.)
- One of Satan’s primary strategies is one of “divide and conquer”. Some of his primary weapons include accusation and deception, to break down our relationship with the Father, or to break down our

relationship with each other. His purpose is to take dominion and bring destruction.

- Satan's primary opposition is against the mission of Christ. He intends to prevent God from receiving glory among the nations. The ultimate objective in the Church's engagement with the Powers is world evangelization. The sign of effectiveness in spiritual warfare is how fully we have plundered the Enemy camp .measured best by how many new bases of operations for the Kingdom are being planted (i.e. local churches) where Christ has had none before, especially among the Un-reached.
- The warfare takes place on a number of levels: (1) Personal (2) Corporate (3) Systemic (4) Territorial, at times. Comprehensive strategies for spiritual warfare must be prepared to engage the powers in all areas, if there is to be liberation and consummation.
- We must remember that we are not talking about two Kingdoms battling it out. Christ has all authority and power. Satan's power was broken at the Cross. The only power he currently has is to deceive the nations .

How Christians are Called to Respond to Spiritual Warfare (Apart from Prayer)

- I like Peter Wagner's illustration, comparing the Emancipation Proclamation (that ended slavery once and for all) and the Civil Rights Movement (to press the truth of this freedom into every fabric of our society). Our involvement in day to day spiritual warfare is very much like the latter.
- If a prime weapon of Satan is deception, then our primary counterattack is through *revelation* of the glory of Christ and His Kingdom. This alone will roll back the darkness. That is why walking in the light is one of the best offenses against the Darkness. And that is why spiritual awakening deals such a defeat to Satan's efforts, because it comes with an in-breaking of Christ's glory and His glorious Kingdom, that ultimately impacts both the Church and the nations with fresh, life-giving revelation.
- Biblically speaking, the weight of warfare is on many fronts (world, flesh, devil) and requires a wide variety of activities in addition to that of intercession. All these activities are designed to increase the fuller revelation of Christ before all peoples. Thus, intercession must be accompanied with (1) holy living (let your light shine); (2) The preaching of the message of Christ (which always brings revelation); (3) Restoration in the church through repentance and forgiveness; (4) Visible unity in the Body of Christ (According to Philippians 1, our unity is a sign of our Enemy's destruction. Also remember Paul's exhortation in Ephesians 4, not to give the devil a foothold in our relationships.) (5) By the church exhibiting an

“opposite spirit” to the spirit that may be evident in a city (for example, if greed is a dominant force in a city, the Christian community would show a spirit of lavish generosity toward others); (6) more than prayer per se, according to Revelation 12, it is our passion for Christ and our overt witness before the world that brings the down throw of Satan (of course, all passion will ultimately express itself in prayer above everything else).

- Yes, we are called to be aggressive against the kingdom of darkness in many ways, foremost of all through prayer. But other issues are critical:

such as proper timing, proper motivation, accurate information on the battle itself; holiness of life before the Lord (dealing with revealed sin); uncovering the Word of the Lord for a specific conflict (as Jesus did in the wilderness); etc. All of this calls for the *strategy of silence*, (which is part of prayer), where we do as much waiting on God and listening to God as anything else in the battle.

- Thus, spiritual warfare is *a way of life*. We are automatically in spiritual warfare the moment we are delivered from the dominion of darkness. We are called to bind and to loose. Binding Satan and his powers in a situation or territory can be positive and active: speaking the Word of

the Lord, or simply exalting Christ by life, worship, Christian fellowship, and witness. At times binding is more passive (resist the devil) or negative (get behind me Satan). All binding should be accompanied by prayer, of course. But the immobilization of Satan by confronting his lies and schemes involves the *total* life of the Church.

- The whole book of Ephesians testifies to this way of life. Chapter 1 sees Christ exalted above all powers, and filling the Church. In chapter 2 *we* are exalted in the same place with Him - this is where the Church is an exhibition of God’s plan in Christ before all the powers. In chapter 3 Paul tells us more about how we testify to the powers, and calls on the Church to pray for the fullness of the life of Christ to be demonstrated in everything we do, because of this great engagement in heavenly places. In chapter 4 we are told not to give Satan foothold. In chapter 5 we are called to live as children of light and thus expose and neutralize the works of darkness. In chapter 6 we are told to dress up in the full revelation of Christ and to stand in Him as we wrestle with the powers. *Then*, we are encouraged to *pray* for all the saints and for Christ’s ambassadors sent out from us into the far reaches of battle.
- The sum total of the teachings of Ephesians, as well as the rest of the Scriptures, might properly lead us to conclude that our victories in spiritual warfare may take place only to the degree that Christ first comes and conquers US! He may need to come to the Church and perform a corporate “exorcism” on US! All of this points us to

revival (which I will look at below). Like Jacob in Genesis 32, we are faced with a formidable enemy (like Esau) who wants to usurp the inheritance that is rightfully ours (and wholly for the glory of God). And like Jacob we already have two great armies with us: one of believers (Jacob's family) and one of God's angels ("And he called the place "Two Camps"...for he said, this is the camp of God" - referring to the angels that met him). But like Jacob, our greatest need as a Church is our need to *wrestle* with God until we see His face fully. Then, as Jacob did in chapter 33, we'll be able to see His face in the midst of our enemies ("He said to Esau: "to see your face is like seeing the face of God.") This may be one of the most crucial insights that needs to be articulated in all of the discussions going on around spiritual warfare and the tearing down of strongholds, and the dispelling of territorial spirits. Our most strategic confrontation is not, first of all, with Satan (which in some ways, would delight him if that is what we chose to do). Our first confrontation is with the Lord of Glory himself, as we humble ourselves under His mighty hand, so that He may exalt us at the right time and accordingly through us resist the enemy so that he will flee from us. Let us look a little more carefully at this phenomenon, often called revival.

The Role of Revival in Spiritual Warfare

- There is *another spiritual battle* going on that is even more crucial than our battle with the powers. It is God's battle with His people - the ways we are fighting Him! For example, Joel calls for prayer for revival because the locusts were GOD's army, bringing GOD's judgment against GOD's people. Jesus told the church in Pergamum that if they did not stop fighting Him, he would come and war against them with the sword of His mouth personally. In true revival this warfare *inside* the camp is brought to an end. Christ comes and conquers us afresh. We are consecrated to His purposes.
- In such a revival, we take up the best position to examine Satan's schemes effectively because we have discovered and dealt with the points at which Satan has been applying pressure to me and to our corporate life together as a church. Now we will have the spiritual perspective to do "spiritual mapping" - to see the invisible through what is visible in a history and life of city or a nation that we desire to reach for Christ. And we'll be in a position to clearly hear from God HIS strategies for taking a city or nation for Christ - because He who has thoroughly conquered us can now lead us in His victory procession to conquer others.
- In the end, submitting and drawing near to God, cleansing our hands (James 4) is actually *how* we resist the devil.; it is the high point in

every battle plan against the powers of darkness. As Charles Kraft observes, it is garbage that attracts the rats. If you remove the garbage, the rats will go away. And as Ray Bakke observes, 8 or 10 of the main barriers to reaching our cities for Christ are actually made up of garbage inside the Church rather than outside.

Therefore, in the final analysis, it is how we respond to the barriers and garbage inside the Church that determines whether or not our confrontation with the powers is won or lost. In many ways, the condition of our cities and world must be laid at the feet of the Church; our internal defeats in the battle have allowed the powers to remain entrenched and effective in their dominion over communities, structures, territories, and peoples.

- Biblically and historically, it can be substantiated that “revival dynamics” seriously weaken the strongholds of the enemy. If “strongholds” be defined, in part, as “a mind-set that causes us to accept as unchangeable something that contradicts what we know to be the Word and will of God”, (Ed Silvoso), then the saturation of revelation of God’s glory that comes with true revival, is the greatest anti-dote to this mind-set.
- Historically we have seen that the door is shut on the devil in the moves of God in revival. However, in most revivals this was not understood at the time. In fact, there is no historical record of a revival which was preceded by spiritual warfare through deliberate intercession. And yet, those who pressed ahead to seek and receive revival can be seen -in retrospect- to have engaged in powerful and effective warfare. The spirits were bound and routed by the coming of God’s Spirit upon His people, bringing a fresh experience of His “manifest presence” in Jesus Christ.
- Furthermore, revival also releases from Heaven all that must be raised up once the house has been “swept and cleansed” lest 7 demons worse than the first return, as Jesus taught. After battle with the powers, what is to be put in the place of the strongholds, both inside the Church and in the world? Only if the Church is experiencing true spiritual awakening can it effectively supply the replacements found in Christ’s Kingdom. All of this begins with displacing the works of Darkness by the exaltation of Christ through praise, prayer and the proclamation of the Truths of the Kingdom (both to the Church and to the world). Furthermore, out of revival God releases the workers to press the victory of Christ into every corner of the Enemy’s camp, until Christ reigns among all peoples.

The Role of United Prayer in Spiritual Warfare

- Thus it appears that no more significant intercession could go on in the midst of our battle against the powers, than to pray for revival and

to do so unitedly, like a mighty army set on overthrowing, first of all, the status quo inside the Church, thus taking back the major points of entry for Satan, the fundamental condition for the strongholds.

- A study of the actual content and focus of the New Testament prayers reveals that their primary focus was on the Church, and more particularly for insight, wisdom, and revelation in the life of the Church. This balance must be kept in mind in modern-day calls to intercession and spiritual warfare. For surely the early Church was engaged in warfare of great intensity, yet the strategy and style of prayer was much more in line with “revival praying”.
- Prayer is also to be for world-evangelization. In this dimension of the intercessory strategy in spiritual warfare, we actually call in the power of God to break the forces of darkness and to bring Christ’s light to the peoples (like ground troops calling in the air cover before they try to advance on the ground). This is how so many battles are pictured for us in the Old Testament.
- As I study praying in the New Testament, I see the following things going on that relate specifically to on-going spiritual warfare. They gained victory over the powers, because *as they prayed*:
 - * Their *hope* in Christ was *clarified*
 - * Their *illusions* about themselves, the world, Satan and most of all God, were *rectified*
 - * Any residual forms of *idolatry* were *identified*
 - * Their *allegiance* to Christ and to each other was *solidified*
 - * Their *passion* for the mission of Christ was *revived*
 - * Thus, through prayer as a *mighty army*, they were *mobilized*
 - * As a result, by united prayer, the *powers* were *defied* and *exorcised*
 - * And in God’s answer to their prayers, *Christ* was *glorified* among the nations
- That is why we need to learn as a Church to be far more *proactive* in our praying, rather than reactive. We need to have God give us wisdom as to where the battle fronts are (both inside and outside the Church) so that our praying can be “history making” prayer (Dawson). We need to ask God to help us anticipate what will take place next, so that our intercession truly goes *before* the works of God against the powers of darkness.
- Good questions to ask ourselves as we move into intercession within the battle include: (1) Who is going to do the praying? (2) Who are we going to pray for (both inside and outside the Church)? (3) What are we to pray about (both for revival and for advance)? (4) How do we go about the work of praying itself (strategies and logistics may vary depending on whether we are praying for revival or for advance)? Some of these questions were stimulated by George Otis

Jr. Another question to add to this: What will our intercession require of us as we take action on other forms of spiritual warfare?

- We also need to pray for discernment (I call this “the strategy of silence”) as to other directions God might have us go in specific prayer against the work of specific principalities and powers. we also need to receive His directives in listening prayer as to how He wants us to obey Him in all other forms of spiritual warfare as we confront the world, the flesh as well as the devil.
- Obviously, this whole emphasis on prayer for revival as it relates to spiritual warfare, both through the biblical teachings and models as well as through historical precedence, requires that we work hard at helping the Church to pray *together* about this. We face a common enemy, we are pressing toward a common victory, we do so under a common Supreme Commander. United we stand, divided we fall. And it is clear that God’s whole victory for the whole Body of Christ against all the forces of Darkness requires that the whole Body of Christ be moving forward like a mighty army. Standing shoulder to shoulder for the sake of the Gospel by our life of prayer together - truly this is what Paul had in mind when he wrote Ephesians 6.

Raising A Few Cautions

- There are many ministries that God is raising up today that are focused on the concern for spiritual warfare and prayer. Over the past few years I have attempted to listen very carefully to what many are saying. I have gained important insights from each stream. And I know that I have much more to learn. But even so, there are a few cautions that I feel must be raised, about which many of us are in discussion at this very moment. I list them here only for whatever help they may be to the reader:
- I believe we need to have a much more thorough discussion of the subject on three major levels:
 - Theological
 - Experiential
 - Tactical

Those of us wrestling with this issue throughout the Church today are much more compatible at the theological level than we are at the other two. The greatest part of confusion and division comes over the wide range of personal experiences in spiritual warfare, and personal choices in the tactics we use to wage war, especially when it comes to the broad range of opinions on the place of prayer in warfare like this. In fact, it is my impression that our failure to interpret the mounting data on the basis of these three categories has permitted an unfortunate blurring to take place, so that often

the reports on the experiential and tactical are given as theological statements, or they are at least perceived as stated in theological terms. Unless this is cleared up, I believe that the whole topic could become a major divisive issue in the Body of Christ.

- Satan's number one scheme in the battle may be to turn spiritual warfare into a divisive issue (Ed Silvoso). Satan might seek to get us to overemphasize only one aspect of effectual spiritual warfare (intercession) to the neglect of the many other and equally crucial dimensions of the battle plan God has given us (such as unity, holiness, worship, witness, passion, martyrdom, etc.) If Satan cannot keep the issue of spiritual warfare (and especially intercession in the warfare) "out of sight", then he will seek to get it "out of control" (extremism, imbalance, etc.). With that, Satan is determined to get us more centered on himself than on the Lord for whom we are fighting. To paraphrase one of Satan's temptations toward Christ: "I'll give you the Territories if you but worship me". But Jesus responded: "the Territories are not the is-

Therefore we must not become fascinated with the names of the powers, but rather with the names of Almighty God Himself!

- We must be careful that no single approach or tactic becomes interpreted as normative. Every battle strategy is unique to the particular confrontation involved. In addition, we must be careful not to systematize a particular process or formula for doing warfare - especially in the area of intercession - lest it disintegrate into a neo-pagan form of "Christian Magic". Satan would love nothing more (and the flesh also gravitates in this direction - see the list of flesh-works in Galatians 5).
- On another point: I must confess that up to this point I am personally not satisfied that sufficient biblical support for every one of the various perspectives that are shared regarding the "territoriality" of spirits over cities and nations. Some suggest, for example, that Satan delegates control over territory to a hierarchy of evil spirits to prevent God from being glorified there. I am still attempting to substantiate this sufficiently from Scripture to satisfy many leaders in the Evangelical Church. It seems that many of the passages used to support the concept of territorial spirits are records in the Bible on what pagans thought on the subject. "Territoriality" as a theological concept or Biblical principle makes sense to a degree, but may still need more biblical fortification. Fortunately, many respected leaders are truly attempting to do this.
- All of this is also to say that those involved in teaching the Church on spiritual warfare and prayer must do a much better job communicating the concepts, once we've done an adequate job of defining them theologically. Certain terminology already creates dis-ease within parts of the Body. Maybe we need new terminology at certain points. For example, some are

uncomfortable with the term “warfare praying or militant intercession”. To be sure, our prayers do overthrow the powers of darkness! To be sure, prayer and intercession are crucial - even the foundation - for all our strategies and confrontations with Satan. Yes, we are to be militant! *But*, from my reading of Scripture and my experience in the current prayer movement, I see prayer as fundamentally seeking *God*.. Then, as a fundamental consequence of doing this, God moves upon and through the Church in prayer to overthrow the powers (as *we* find Christ in more and more of His fullness). Out of that victory, God’s Spirit can then move mightily by intercession and all other means to confront the powers and overthrow them among the nations as well. Again, as I outlined above, I see this beautifully illustrated by the prayers recorded in one of our primary sourcebooks on spiritual warfare: Paul’s letter to the Ephesians.

- One other point of caution here needs to be raised: The spectacular reports given of success in spiritual warfare, especially relating to the defeat of “territorial spirits” (and some of those reports are most convincing) can sometimes be described in terms that are beyond the experience of the vast majority of committed Christians. This has the potential of creating a sense of two camps: those “in the know” and those who are “outsiders”. Satan would love nothing better than the perception of such a “spiritual elite”, the existence of which creates division and mistrust.
- In summary, *I caution us* that the renewed interest in spiritual warfare could affect the current move we see toward united prayer for revival in three ways: *diversion* (getting the Lord out of focus; confusion; obsession, *division* (people competing over power strategies or power gifts; others feeling disqualified; concerns over biblical substantiation; debate over terminology, etc.) or *discreditation* (the other two areas - diversion and division - will create a backlash, so that parts of the Body will react negatively to the call of spiritual warfare. And thus, the very effort to mobilize the troops will prove counterproductive because of how we sought to do this.)

The Points On Which All Of Us Agree

PRAISE GOD, that on so many points there seems to be growing greater clarity within the Body of Christ, so that we are able to reach very important agreements among the various perspectives on spiritual warfare and prayer. We all agree that:

- (1) Our primary focus remains on the character and ways of God

- (2) Praising God is the key to breaking down any of Satan's strongholds; everything must flow out of praise.
- (3) Our primary objective is to let in the Light. We agree that when the light shines in the darkness, the powers will be dispelled
- (4) The bottom line in strategic intercession and spiritual warfare is the revelation of the glory of Christ, especially through revival, and then through local and global evangelism. If spiritual warfare does not result in the fulfillment of the Great Commission, it has not succeeded.
- (5) We will not allow ourselves to be seduced by the enemy, by being more enamored with the process of spiritual warfare than we are with the results, and above all with the One who fights with us
- (6) We take seriously the role of human responsibility in the existence of Satan's strongholds and are committed to dealing with the entry points inside the Church, out of our own disobedience and rebellion. To that end we are committed to seeking God for true revival.
- (7) We also recognize that we are up against tremendous forces arrayed against the kingdom of Christ, and that those forces must be directly faced and confronted by biblical strategy and by the power of Christ alone.
- (8) Still, we have discovered that our primary fascination as prayer leaders, as those involved in concerns of spiritual warfare, is not with demons or demonic activity, but rather with what GOD is doing around the world to defeat the powers and to bring all things to their consummation.
- (9) And we agree on the absolute essentiality that, beyond all our theologizing, strategizing and debating, we must give ourselves wholeheartedly to Christ and in love to one another. And to that end, we must do everything we can to preserve the unity of the Spirit in the Church at large, especially as we call it to go forth as a mighty army into spiritual warfare as a way of life.

Hallmarks of the Multi-faceted Prayer Movement

*Christ Centered Kingdom driven Hope Filled
Unity in Spirit Diversity in Approach*

AS WE HAVE LOOKED at the growth of the prayer movement in major metropolitan areas, we have discovered that it is multi-faceted and heterogeneous, drawing its strength from a variety of churches, agencies, interest groups, etc. And it expresses itself in a variety of ways. We have drawn the following diagram to help express visually this multi-faceted prayer movement.

VISION:

A Multi-faceted Prayer Movement Uniting Large Numbers of People together in Concerted Prayer for Spiritual Awakening and World Evangelization so that God would be pleased to answer their prayers and revive His Church for the World-wide advancement of His Kingdom



THE VARIOUS facets of this multi-faceted movement of prayer in a given community can be described as follows:

1. Region Wide Prayer Rally (Grand Concert of Prayer)

This event unites the largest number of individuals and churches in a given region in 2212 to 3 hours of concerted prayer for spiritual awakening and world evangelization. It demonstrates to the Lord and the watching world humility, unity and hope.

2.Small Group Prayer

The prayer movement seeks to identify small groups which are already meeting for prayer (such as women's groups, men's groups, marketplace groups) and encourage them to pray for spiritual awakening in their community and for the growth of the prayer movement itself. Special requests are sent to these groups on a regular basis to network them into the larger movement.

3. Special Focus Prayer Gatherings

A number of cities are calling for united prayer gatherings in key locations where there is much sin and suffering. In some cases, churches are appointing special teams to pray in these situations that call for spiritual warfare praying against the strongholds of Satan. Sometimes these prayer gatherings take the form of marches or rides around a certain area.

4. Campus Prayer Movements

The history of spiritual awakenings of the past has been closely tied to prayer on college and university campuses. A number of campuses are calling for united prayer between all the Christian groups working in their midst so that God's Spirit might work mightily in evangelism and discipleship.

5. Special Days of Prayer

Many communities recognize special days of prayer such as the National Day of Prayer or the Day of Pentecost. These days can help focus the total community on prayer and provide a variety of settings during the day and evening for united prayer.

6. Special Times of Prayer

The Lausanne Committee has called for prayer for world evangelization at sunrise every morning. The National Prayer Committee has called for five minutes each noon for our nation. Concerts of Prayer International has called for five minutes of prayer every evening at 10:00 p.m. for spiritual awakening in the church.

Hallmarks Of The Multi-faceted Prayer Movement:

Christ Centered

Kingdom Driven

Hope Filled

Unity in Spirit-Diversity in approach

7. Radio Concerts of Prayer

People in many communities are being united in prayer through the medium of radio. COPI distributes two different formats, one short for people during their workday and one longer where people can take a half hour to pray with others around the nation.

8. Prayer Fests

In some larger metropolitan areas several concerts of prayer are planned during a one-week period. This format has been especially effective in New York City where it is difficult to unite the various boroughs together in one event.

9. Prayer Training Teams

Some communities have identified special teams who are available to consult and train the leadership of local churches in the development of a prayer ministry in their church. They may also go out to smaller neighboring communities to help them develop a community-wide prayer movement.

10. Mission Prayer Groups

Many groups are organized specifically to pray for missions (local and global). These may be within a given local church or inter-church. Some focus on prayer for specific missionaries, people groups, mission agencies, social needs, or their church's own program. It is important to network these groups into the overall prayer movement as well as that they pray also for spiritual awakening in the church. They should receive regular requests about the prayer movement.

11. Women's Prayer Ministries

Many areas have a high number of women's prayer groups. They are often willing to add spiritual awakening to their agenda, praying for specific needs in the prayer movement itself. Often they have a well-developed system of communication and a quick response time to specific needs.

12. Prayer Pacesetter Gatherings

Every city has a growing number of prayer leaders which we are calling "prayer pacesetters". It is extremely beneficial for them to get to know each other, receive spiritual training and have times of prayer together.

13. Pastor's Prayer Movement

A number of cities are already developing a pastor's prayer movement. They are holding special prayer retreats for pastors and provide special times on a regular basis when pastors of their area can unite together in concerts of prayer.

14. Denominational Concerts of Prayer

Several denominations are already including concerts of prayer as part of their church calendar. Some are holding concerts of prayer at their annual meetings and others are making it a focus in their missions program. Churches of a given denomination in a specific city are also finding it beneficial to unite together in concerts of prayer.

15. Youth Concerts of Prayer

A number of national youth leaders have made it their priority to develop a movement of prayer among the youth in churches, and on Christian school and college campuses. They are organizing and holding concerts of prayer for youth, often in conjunction with the city-wide rally of their area.

16. Community Concerts of Prayer

These concerts of prayer are often monthly or quarterly and represent the desire of several churches in a given area to unite regularly in one of the church buildings for united prayer.

THE PRAYER LEADERSHIP COALITION

While each of the above has its own leadership and emphasis, representatives of each of these groups meet regularly in a leadership coalition to first of all pray for the ongoing prayer movement and secondly to give oversight and coordination to major events.