

Chapter Three: Ignition

Principles for Start-Up

A Movement of prayer is a gift of God. He is the divine creator. And yet in his providence, there are patterns which he enables us to discern, common elements for which we may prayerfully seek. These patterns have been gleaned from the observation of some thirty-five prayer movements and therefore can be taken as fairly representative of what God is doing. This section is concerned with setting out some of the principles particularly applicable to the early phases of establishing a prayer movement. These principles are grouped under these headings:

1. Personal Calling
2. Initial Strategic Considerations
3. The Context
4. Sharing with Ministers
5. Sharing with Lay People
6. Area-Wide Consultation on United Prayer
7. Time Out: Is This For You?

Personal Calling

INVARIABLY, a community-based prayer movement begins with a small group of like-minded people, or even with one or two who have a real sense of urgency about local prayer mobilization ministry. Here are some principles by which you may determine if God is burdening you to initiate a prayer movement.

Typically, people who have helped commence a city-wide prayer movement have sensed God's calling upon them for such a ministry. Frequently this has not been something they have either desired or anticipated. Nevertheless, the calling has been clear and insistent. There has been an inescapable sense that God has laid his hands on them and that they can do nothing but call others to this same purpose of seeking the Lord's face.

I have posted watchmen on your walls, O Jerusalem; they will never be silent day or night. You who call on the Lord, give yourselves no rest and give him no rest till he establishes Jerusalem and makes her the praise of the earth.

*Isaiah
62:6-7*

He will sit as a refiner and purifier of silver; he will purify the Levites and refine them like gold and silver. Then the LORD will have men who will bring offerings in righteousness and the offerings of Judah and Jerusalem will be acceptable to the LORD, as in days gone by, as in former years.

*Malachi
3:3-4*

No one takes this honor upon himself; he must be called by God, just as Aaron was. So Christ did not take upon himself the glory of becoming high priest.

*Hebrews
5:4-5a*

Inciting Fellow Leaders

The urban prayer consultations we conducted over the past month in some of the most important cities of Asia was for me one of the most significant experiences of my thirty years of Christian ministry. There is nothing I could want to do more than incite fellow leaders, like myself, to become actively involved in fostering and building movements of prayer where they live. I am so encouraged by what I see happening in almost every city.

*Asian church
leader*

Often preceding or accompanying the sense of calling, initiators have experienced a deep sense of hunger for God and for his glory to be revealed. This can be an experience lasting many years. Sometimes it relates to deep personal desires. Other times it comes as a person views his community. This hunger springs from and is fed by the word of God and the revelation of the Spirit. Many initiators have reported feeling that no one understood or shared this hunger with them, and they often began to fear that they would never find others of like-mind.

The Hunger Increases

The intensity of hunger increases; it doesn't decrease. You think it's part of youthful enthusiasm that you have that hunger, that when you get older you learn to level off a bit. Well, you don't level off at all. The hunger consumes me. . . We wouldn't want to do these things, if we had any sense of natural self-preservation. But the hunger becomes so great, you can't help yourself. You either have to cut God off and say, "Stop talking to me!" or you have to respond.

—*Urban prayer leader,
Canada*

A common characteristic of people used by God to launch a prayer movement has been their depth of commitment to the global cause of Christ. They are people who recognize the scope of God's purposes—they have a missions outlook. Essentially they are people with a Kingdom vision and perspective. This does not render them ethereal and uninvolved in local church ministry; this perspective actually enhances their local contribution. In many ways it is their response to the status quo. They have a desire for more, for all that God communicates in his word.

Missions and the Status Quo

Our culture is very self-help-oriented, very existential, humanistic, pluralistic, and materialistic. It's affected our churches. I think pastors sense this extreme pressure to give messages that just help people cope. The vast majority of people coming to our churches are coming to help themselves cope. So when you talk about getting together to pray for world evangelization, they reply, "Why would I want to do that?" It just does not meet a felt need.

I'm finding that when I speak to people growing with a missions vision, who are undergoing a major paradigm shift and a whole rearrangement of their world view, concerts of prayer make sense. It's totally evident to them why we need to be praying and the part that prayer plays.

—*Urban prayer leader,
USA*

Often God has used people who would not regard themselves as great “prayer warriors” to foster a movement of prayer. Rather, they are frequently people with a sense of desperation. Their hunger and world missions outlook are much more significant characteristics than their initial prayer capability.

The desire of the initiator is to serve a united prayer movement, not as an extension of their own personal reputation, but as an aspect of seeking the glory of God in the community. Frequently there is a real wish on the part of the initiator that someone else would take the leadership as they are not desirous of leading. Often they will find themselves almost forced into taking the initiative because the call overrides the sense of personally wanting to hold back. An initiator knows that he or she is not the prayer movement, but a servant to it.

Spiritual elders and peers invariably recognize that God’s hand is on an initiator for this ministry. This is a significant means of confirming such a call. However, this calling is not always perceived in advance by church leadership, since prayer mobilization is not always considered to be a significant aspect of service. Quite often, such recognition will come only as an initiator invites his or her leaders to prayerfully consider and confirm a call to this work.

Another common characteristic of initiators is that they are people with good networks already established to a wide diversity of people. These relationships depend not so much on denominational ties, but on common vision. In this way, the idea of the prayer movement becomes quickly and widely communicated. This is itself important because the movement needs as early as possible to reflect the vision towards which we are praying, namely, the diverse but united body of Christ, revived to serve the Kingdom together.

Initiators often refer to a period of time when they felt themselves to be “peculiar” in their concern for spiritual awakening and sense of the urgency of united prayer. Many can look back to moments when they felt lonely and isolated. Yet part of the miracle which God has frequently undertaken with new movements of prayer is that he has brought such people together. Just when the individual begins to despair, he finds one or more others who share the same burden. Perhaps they even initially sensed the burden at the same time, though neither knew the other. It is essential that anyone sensing a call from God to initiate united prayer should both pray and look for others with the same vision. Again, such people will

often be those with networks through which they can influence significant portions of the Body in a locality.

The Birth Of A Prayer Movement

For some years we were gathering ministers to pray and seek God for revival for their lives and churches, believing that pastors were the key to revival in their churches. But there was a growing concern upon my own heart, sensing that while pastors were meeting and praying, they really couldn't do it alone. It had to involve the whole body of Christ. God told Joel to gather the elders, but he also said to gather all the inhabitants of the land into the house of the Lord. Right at that time I heard of concerts of prayer for the first time. It just knit so powerfully to my heart.

We began to speak to the pastors meeting for prayer about the possibilities of gathering their people in concerts of prayer in their cities. So that began to happen. We put together prayer training assemblies to mobilize and give some biblical mandate to the largest number of praying people in the cities where we were gathering and they would give birth to on-going monthly concerts of prayer. This happened initially in three cities.

And the vision of this whole thing began to grow and build until I could see and believe that God wanted to establish pastors meeting every week. We challenged them to meet every week for an hour of prayer. I quit accepting the idea that they were too busy—this is really what they need to be busy in! So I quit apologizing for it and challenged them to the teeth to do this.

Meeting weekly, then in monthly concerts of prayer, gatherings in every city throughout our region, I could see wall-to-wall concerts of prayer and pastors meeting all over, blanketing the area. That is our vision.

—*Regional prayer
leader, USA*

Personal Calling Worksheet

You FEEL SOME sense of an urgency for united prayer. That's why you're reading this manual. How is it that God has been leading you? Where are you in the spectrum of characteristics of an initiator? Where are you heading? An honest evaluation using the questions below will help you assess where you are and where you are heading.

1. How do I see the following passages applying to my involvement as a pacesetter for united prayer?

• Isaiah 62:6-7; Malachi 3:3-4; Hebrews 5:4-5; Zechariah 8:21; Acts 6:4; Revelation 5:8.

2. Am I experiencing a growing sense of spiritual hunger, and if so, how would I describe this experience? How is it manifesting itself in my life?

3. How would I measure my commitment to serve world evangelization and spiritual awakening?

- absent
- weak
- average
- strong
- my life calling

4. Do my spiritual leaders and peers recognize this burden and ministry in my life? If so, how have they shown it? If not, how can I share it with them more directly?

5. Are there others in my area who share this same burden? If so, who are they and how best might I contact them? If not, when and how will I pray for such people and how will I attempt to identify them?

6. What do my networks look like? With whom do I interface? How might I expand my networks? Contact other networks? Share my vision with these networks?

7. Do I sense God is calling me to invite others to join with me in a united movement of prayer in this locality? What should be my next step?

Initial Strategic Considerations

ARE many smaller, yet very strategic, aspects in the ignition of a prayer movement. Here are a few for your consideration.

In all your planning, build on the common experience of many existing prayer movements. Most suggest that something akin to conversion is needed to enable people to commit themselves to the vision of united prayer for spiritual awakening. This vision concerns an awareness of and commitment to the global cause of Christ. For many, their initial step of faith is entirely personal. To move from there to the broader sweeps of the vision requires significant growth.

To put this another way, share the vision so as to demand a response. This takes time and is something that God alone can produce. In initiating a movement of prayer, this must be central to your personal prayer agenda.

In many cases, established prayer movements report that large scale events like prayer rallies have often been a very effective means of sowing the seed for such conversion. By gathering together in prayer and worship, people can anticipate something of the blessing of joining in more sustained united prayer. Through the preaching of the vision at such an event, there is an opportunity for people to respond. The vision can be caught at such events. Often one finds the results of a large prayer event to be greater than the apparent sum of its parts. For suggestions on how to use a large event to kick-off a prayer movement, see the section on Prayer Rallies, page 183.

Don't underestimate the value of a large, well-publicized prayer training event, perhaps with a well-known prayer leader or a group like the National Prayer Committee, to get a local prayer movement off the ground. It helps uncover those most interested, often because it uncovers people with a concern for prayer training that's initially stronger than united prayer activity. It also provides good visibility and credibility at the start-up phase. It can help generate funds to promote the prayer movement later on. And it secures valuable training that motivates people for further involvement. The best of all worlds comes when the training event can be coupled with a brief "Concert of Prayer" experience.

However, as important as events like prayer rallies maybe, resist the tendency to become preoccupied solely with planning the activity. This can be time-consuming enough, but remember that we are seeking a movement of prayer, not just some disjointed one-time activities. Plan for the follow through from the event. Consider ways of disseminating prayer news and feedback of answers to prayer. Think about the networks and how they can be appropriately stimulated towards the vision.

Emerging prayer movements today, as has been true in history, desire to demonstrate "explicit agreement and visible union of all of God's people

in extraordinary prayer” (Jonathan Edwards). We do this in order that the world may believe that God has sent his son (John 17:21).

Unity in prayer can be pursued if those involved in the prayer movement are agreed on five things:

- that Christ, our risen Lord and only Redeemer, is the leader of the prayer movement.
- that the Scriptures are the inspired, authoritative and primary source of our agenda and prayer focus.
- that we affirm the doctrinal basis on which we historically agree (the Lausanne Covenant provides a good summary of this).
- that we affirm we have much to gain from one another as servants of Christ, no matter what our traditions.
- that we are willing to let Jesus be the “arbitrator” on the few issues where we still do not agree—to ask him to do the arbitrating even as we seek his kingdom together.

The vision is not just about united prayer. The critical element is the agenda towards which we are praying: spiritual awakening and world evangelization—a new work of Christ in the midst of his church and a new advance of Christ’s kingdom in the midst of the nations. A clear lesson to emerge from recent prayer movements is the priority of ensuring that the content of the praying is explained constantly and kept in front of people. Remember how often Moses and the prophets had to call the people of God back to the original vision. We are all like those people; we forget easily. Keep the vision in front of the people.

A Full Kingdom Agenda

Despite the growth of prayer throughout our nation, we are at a crucial juncture. The challenge before us is this: Will the prayer movement now seek to turn outward, to engage in intercession not only for our own nations, but for the nations and peoples of the whole earth? I fear that, without this, the prayer movement might soon be sidetracked and embroiled in concerns that don’t even prove relevant to the revival God desires to give us. We must press on for a full Kingdom agenda.

*National prayer leader,
Great Britain*

Churches with a strong and active commitment to the missions vision often form the backbone of your prayer movement. While it is essential to build a broad base of support, target these churches early on. Include them as a part of your strategy, involving them in leadership both publicly at events and in preparation. Help them be pacesetters for other churches in the area.

Frequently the largest, most influential churches have been so busy and relatively self-sufficient that they are less enthusiastic for a united prayer thrust. Often it is the smaller churches with relatively fewer programs and ministries which make the most significant commitments and contributions to the prayer movement. This is not to suggest that in the early stages the larger churches should be ignored. However, experience suggests that it is wise not to depend entirely upon these fellowships and that smaller churches must not be overlooked or undervalued.

It is vital to recognize the variety of prayer traditions within the churches of your area. It can be a real problem for the development of united prayer in your locality if people of one tradition perceive themselves to be excluded through the styles adopted at your gatherings, especially early on.

A widely used method of avoiding this problem is to involve leaders from different traditions in numerous ways. For example, leaders from various traditions might be asked to lend their names to your board of reference. You might also ask leaders to lead briefly in prayer from the front on a given topic during an event. This gives confidence to those of that particular tradition. More importantly, it demonstrates the heart of the vision, that from our different traditions we still seek the same Lord and need to unite in our inviting Him to visit us in new ways for the advancement of His kingdom. The prayer movement from the outset must be as broad-based as possible—in leadership, in participating groups, and in those who gather for special events.

Drawing Leadership

My experience has been that leaders of 4,000 member churches will come, as a general rule, to something they have a leadership role in and to practically nothing else. They may just lead in prayer for two minutes or lead in a call to worship, but they have to have a position of leadership to pull them there.

I think that's how we get our diversity too. That's how we really see the Body of Christ come together, because the different leaders from different groups having different gifts lead and share their gifts.

—*Urban prayer
leader, USA*

Frequently, movements of prayer can become preoccupied with how many people are attending events. We cannot stress too much that of far greater importance is the diversity of the Body participating rather than the total number of participants.

Awesome Diversity

The most awesome facet of our prayer movement is that it's not only multi-denominational, but also multi-ethnic and multi-lingual. Sometimes we have to put the people into prayer huddles by language groupings, or we have leaders pray in their primary language with someone else translating. Recently at a concert of prayer rally, about twenty pastors led from the front. They came from five major ethnic streams in our city. All of them confessed that this was the first time they had ever done anything together. What a wonderful place to begin: working together to help their people unite to seek Christ and his kingdom!

*Urban prayer leader,
USA*

It is very important that as an initiator you are perceived as belonging to the whole body, not just a particular segment. Although you are obviously based in a particular local church, it is important that people recognize your openness to and respect for other traditions. They must sense that you serve the wider body.

This sense of ownership also needs to be carried through to any leadership team and advisory body which you might set up. This vision has to move quickly from being your property to that which is embraced by the body of believers in your area.

In developing a strategy, it is important to integrate with what is already happening. This may mean building on earlier activities or collaborating with existing programs so as to avoid conflict and to demonstrate servanthood. Not infrequently, city-wide prayer movements have developed from a united crusade or major prayer teaching conferences in the area.

In developing your strategy, be aware of the wider resources that exist. National and international bodies are able to provide advice and materials. Many prayer movements can testify to the significance of itinerant prayer ministries. Those who teach and preach in this area can often provide an

unbiased, more credible contribution not always possible through local people.

Another important concept here is to visit other prayer movements wherever possible to learn from them, especially in the early stages of development.

Visiting Another Prayer Movement

Seven of us flew up in a corporate jet to observe a prayer crusade effort in Grand Rapids. We sat at their feet, we observed, we analyzed, we tried to figure out how we could learn from this group and have something that would fit our situation in Birmingham. We made several decisions. We would begin with a small group of prayer, though we might work toward an event. We didn't want it to be event-oriented. We wanted simply to have a ground-swell of prayer multiplicity, prayer for revival, for unity, for awakening in the city of Birmingham.

—*Urban prayer leader,
USA*

In presenting your vision and in subsequent gatherings, it is important to avoid words that are loaded or carry “baggage” for certain groups. Words such “revival” or even “evangelization” frequently need to be unpacked and explained. Sometimes it may be necessary to find new words or phrases to provide a commonly accepted and understood dialogue among the body in a locality. For example, the words “fullness” and “fulfillment” are often substituted for revival and evangelization respectively.

There is nothing more likely to persuade people of the value of united prayer than to see the unquestionable sovereign acts of God in response to the cries of his children. To this end, it is important that you, if no one else, look to the Lord for powerful and tangible answers which will vindicate the vision.

Consider, for example, all that flowed out of the prayer rally in Acts 4:23-31. Study the many evidences of God at work in awakening and evangelism as recorded in Acts 4:31-8:4. What is God ready to do in your city?

We confess that too often prayer is offered only for personal physical and material needs, rather than for spiritual and material needs in the church, neighborhood, and world.

We confess that frequently there is a lack of meaningful prayer by the congregation in service of the local church, as well as a general lack of personal and family prayer.

We confess that too often there is not enough emphasis on, training for, and dependence upon prayer from the pulpits and in institutions training Christian workers.

We confess that too often dependence upon the Holy Spirit's role in prayer has been minimized and mobilization of prayer has been without reliance upon him.

We are constrained to call the body of Christ worldwide to mobilize intercession for spiritual awakening in the church and world evangelization.

—*excerpted from A Call to Prayer for Spiritual Awakening and World Evangelization from the 1984 International Prayer Assembly, Seoul, Korea*

Initial Strategic Considerations Worksheet

Tim STRATEGIC tips given have been gleaned from the experience of many prayer movements. How will they play a role in developing a prayer movement in your area? Continue to gather your own strategic hints as you grow with the prayer movement.

1. How would you summarize the vision towards which you are calling people in your locality to pray? What are some ways to communicate and maintain the full breadth of the vision? Have you fully explored the boundaries and possibilities yourself? What do you see them to be? How would you explain your vision in five minutes or less?

2. How well can you remove yourself from the ownership of the vision? How will you balance maintaining the purity of the vision with allowing others to participate in ownership with you? How do you see God's role as the one who ultimately maintains his vision?

3. Which churches/para-church groups in your locality, judging by what you currently know, would share this vision? List these fellowships in three categories: large, medium, and small. Make a note of a key leader already known to you in all of these wherever possible.

Large:

Medium:

Small:

3. What diverse traditions in prayer do these fellowships represent? How could these complement each other in a united prayer gathering?

4. Do you know another prayer movement with which you could form a relationship for mutual encouragement and learning? If so, make a note of a name and a time when you could call to pray and discuss this possibility.

5. Are there prayer teachers/materials to which the churches listed in question 3 would be open and that would stimulate the vision you outlined in question 1? How might you make use of these resources?

6. What outcomes from a movement of prayer in your locality would advance its credibility with key leaders who might otherwise be skeptical? List and pray for these things.

The Context

WHILE INITIATORS base their work on a calling from God, they do not receive this call in a vacuum. Initiators are sensitive to what God is saying and doing in their own locale. In developing a movement of prayer, it is important to pay close attention to the environment or climate of the local context. Developments need to be studied. Barriers and opportunities need to be identified. Here are some critical principles to follow.

Those who have been involved in the emergence of city-wide prayer movements testify to the fact that there is a right and a wrong time to proceed. It is important to invite God to bring that moment and to ask for discernment in recognizing it when it does arrive. In some cities this is evidence in the visible multiplication of prayer bands within many local churches.

Though the initiator may on occasion be a lone voice initially, others will soon confirm the timing of God. In this case, the sense of timing may be a part of the “calling” God gives the founding initiator.

This Crucial Hour

We’re seeing a marvelous prayer movement unfolding here, It began with many small bands. Now thousands are gathering in rallies and thousands more are taking to the street to march in what are called “Make Way” marches, as we traverse a city in hours of prayer for God’s glory to

descend in every part. Thousands have been trained in concerts of prayer too. It could not have come at a more crucial hour!

*National prayer leader,
Great Britain*

One of the evidences that the time has come often is a real desire for unity among the churches of an area or at least among the believers within them. Joining together in prayer is often a means of bringing together very diverse groups of Christians in a less threatening manner.

The history of any area will influence the willingness to unite in extraordinary prayer. There will be earlier united successes or failures. Understanding what contributed to the past success or failure will identify possible pitfalls or helpful advances. You may find relationships that may help or hinder joint activity. Identify those who have had a significant sphere of influence in the Christian community. (See Chapter Two: *Seventh Time Around*)

Spiritually Prepared

In major population centers across the nation we're discovering many who are ready to be called into concerts of prayer. They join together from all the racial and denominational groups here, and it is the young people who are leading the way. The focus is not just for survival. Rather it is for a revival that will lead to justice and reconciliation at home and a whole new missionary focus abroad. This prayer movement is our nation's last, best hope. As God answers us, it will give the gospel renewed credibility world-wide.

*National prayer leader,
South Africa*

Frequently prayer movements recognize that their emergence is indeed in answer to the prayers of faithful disciples within or outside the locality even many years earlier. Search out prayer cells and individuals who for many years may have been asking God to pour out his Spirit in a spiritual awakening in your area. Acknowledge your link to their prayers by giving thanks that your increasing burden is a gracious answer to the requests of others.

Reaping the Prayers

As post-Christian as our nation may be, we're beginning to see the spring thaw. Once again God's people are taking

prayer seriously. In various cities prayer groups are surfacing. Because of the demand for training, materials on prayer are being translated from other languages and seminars on prayer are being conducted around the country. In just a few months—this seems hard to believe for France—a “National Concert of Prayer” will be sponsored by various organizations. Thousands are expected to descend on Paris for this extraordinary event. Truly we’re seeing miracles here!

*National prayer leader,
France*

The recognition of the work of Satan in a community can provide the impetus for united prayer. It is important to identify his strongholds in the community and come against them in prayer. Evil is entrenched in many facets of our society. The strongman must be bound, primarily through united prayer. Spiritual warfare is best accomplished as we stand together. Praying for a general awakening in the Church that leads to a spiritual invasion within the city and beyond will not go unnoticed by the Usurper who has staked an illegitimate claim on the situation. One of his first tactics will be to divide and conquer the prayer movement itself.

Recognizing Satanic Opposition

World evangelization is a sovereign work of the triune God through the ministry of Christ’s church. The forces of darkness which block the spread of truth and the growth of the church cannot be displaced by human plans and efforts. Only the omnipotent Holy Spirit, applying the fruits of the finished work of Christ through a church constantly awakened through prayer, can deliver the lost from the power of Satan (Acts. 26:17-18), as “the Lord adds daily those who are being saved” (Acts 4:47).

*—excerpted from A Call to Prayer for Spiritual
Awakening and World Evangelization from the 1984
International Prayer Assembly, Seoul, Korea*

Every community has its own unique personality. It is vital that you observe, read and keep listening to God so that the movement you wish to develop possesses a relevance to the issues, problems, challenges, and satanic opposition which concern the Kingdom in your community. You will want to give special attention to the various cultural, ethnic, social, occupational, economic, and other “affinity groups” within your city. A vision for a prayer movement in a city with widespread homelessness could never ignore the issue, for instance.

Experience from many city prayer movements suggests that not only is it important to be aware of history but also of current factors inside the Church which may act as barriers to God's people uniting in prayer. Fragmentation, fear, suspicion, and indifference frequently need to be addressed. Some of these will need your attention in action as well as prayer. Where suspicion exists between church leaders, you will need to invest time in meeting with them, getting to know them and being known so as to create the trust that will enable the movement of prayer to proceed.

Prepared for Such a Time

At a major university, I found that for twenty-five years people have been praying in that city for a move of God. And there have been attempts at united movements of prayer before in this city, though I didn't know it at the time, and they had all failed. It wasn't the praying that was wrong, but the Spirit spoke to them saying that what you're doing is not wrong, but you're not seeing the fruit because my time is not come. The university has been prepared. The same is true with the city. It has also been prepared by prayer and the sovereign movings of God there. That's the root of our prayer movement. You can't see it, but that is the root, that is the preparation.

Several years ago God began a sovereign move of the Spirit

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~nontanAOuSIV

began gathering to pray together. God laid on my heart a gathering together, a united movement of prayer that came to fruition a year later. It was such a success and had such a spiritual dynamic that the local churches began to be touched by it through their students. That paved the way. I could go to the pastors and say, "You know, there are 300 students from across denominational barriers meeting for prayer for revival," and it shocked them. They replied, "What are we doing here?" And from that I gleaned seven pastors from the city. They met every Wednesday and in the following spring we began a city-wide concert of prayer.

—*City and Campus prayer leader, USA*

Here are several common barriers to broad-based, on-going movements of united prayer:

Congestion: So besieged by activities, events, and programming, sincere Christians struggle to find time or energy in their busy schedules to do anything "new." Seeking out fellow Christians within the city takes time,

let alone working together. In some ways, a substantial prayer movement may only be initiated when a sufficient segment of the body of Christ in a city is willing to call a “moratorium” on other activities in order to give sufficient time for the prayer movement to take shape and to establish its priority in our corporate life of ministry in the city, even if this initial “moratorium” lasts only six months.

- **Paralysis:** Overwhelmed by the immensity of the task before us in worldwide evangelization and fatigued by our current attempts to work at that task, our faith feels paralyzed. Boxed in by immediate pressures and responsibilities, we have a hard time looking at wider sweeps of the Kingdom. Many feel that sometimes they cannot believe God for a major movement of his Spirit in their own lives, let alone within their city and beyond. Therefore enthusiasm toward united prayer for awakening and evangelization is hard to incite.

An advance case of paralysis is cynicism. This results from trying many good ways to meet the challenge, only to have them end in frustration and failure. That’s when we should be moved to seek God with all our hearts in concert with others who share our same desperation. But if disappointment is not replaced with a biblical hope, leading to a renewed anticipation of God’s work among us, it can gradually make us cynical. United prayer will then appear irrelevant and useless to attempt.

- **Fear:** Some of us believe so much in the power of a movement of united prayer that we actually end up fearing it. We may fear God’s powerful intervention in answer to prayer, because we fear it may mean losing our control over the situation or risking our position or reputation in ministry. When God answers Kingdom prayers, it brings radical transformations of the status quo in the Church and in the world. New wine requires new wineskins. Many of us fear entering into new areas of renewal and mission because it feels unpredictable, unmanageable, open-ended.. .and just plain uncomfortable. Scripture describes prayer as “seeking God’s face.” Do we really want to see his face?

- *Fear of future disappointments*—we’ve sought God before and not seen many results, so we don’t want to go through the heartache again. We’re not convinced prayer will really change the status quo anyway.

- *Fear of shaking our faith in God*—if we get really serious with him about measurable answers toward spiritual awakening and world evangelization, and he fails to come through, our whole confidence in God might be shaken. We don’t want to risk that.

- *Fear that God WILL actually answer us*—What if God does give us full, biblical, spiritual awakening and then move us in new ways to advance Christ’s Kingdom here and world-wide.. .do we really want to live with the answers? Or are we afraid of the changes such a work of God will

bring to our priorities, lifestyle, relationships, as well as our church programs, agendas, and current status? Are we afraid that we'll lose control? Security? Comfort? Reputation?

- *Fear of the consequences and cost*—*There's* a cost in answer to our prayers, as related in the fear given above. But there is also a price to be paid *in the process of the seeking* as God deals with our flesh and our hearts, as he calls us to walk in a manner worthy of what we are seeking, as he calls us to lay down our prejudices in order to embrace more of the Body within the prayer movement, and as he might call us to be a “sacrifice” in the process of how he brings the answers to pass. We may also be afraid of the intimacy and vulnerability we must have with other pray-ers, if we are to pray in true unity.

- *Fear of the enemy*—anyone in their right mind knows that the more serious we become with God in seeking his Kingdom concerns, the more opposition and attack we'll get from Satan's side. There really are “giants in the land” and when we come against Satan's stronghold in our city and our world, it will not be without conflict.

- *Fear of getting serious with God (and vice versa!)*—*In* a moment of prayer we deal with our Almighty King face-to-face as we rarely do in any other situation. And further, Christ comes among a praying people in power, in holiness and in mission in order to gather us up into his life of intercession directly. How often are we avoiding prayer times because we are *afraid* of him—afraid of becoming that serious in our relationship with him?

- **Pride:** One explanation why Christians work independently of one another is our self-sufficiency. We're not sure we need the rest of the body of Christ to accomplish God's purpose for our city. And we think, “If I come to your meeting, even on prayer, I put myself under your leadership.” This calls for a degree of humility still lacking. Furthermore, many of us are so set on building our own “kingdoms,” (for Jesus' sake, of course!), that we don't want to do anything that seems to divert us, especially if the diversions—such as regular seasons of prayer—give equal emphasis to what God is building through others. We need to reclaim the overarching drama of the expansion of Christ's kingdom. Within that great mission all of our individual ministries and structures can have a vital role if we pursue his kingdom together, doing so first of all in visible, united prayer.

God can break through all the internal barriers because he can change the hearts of his people.

As God has begun to put a desire in your heart, you can be sure that he is also at work in the hearts of others. This is a frequent experience of initiators.

How are such people found? Usually by means of:

- a. asking God to reveal them.
- b. actively communicating your burden.
- c. calling people together for prayer.
- d. attending prayer/revival conferences.
- e. researching existing prayer groups.

A leader from the Seattle prayer movement describes how soon after his conversion God spoke to him “You need to be a praying man; pray for revival.” It became frustrating not being able to find anyone else who shared that. Eight years later, he attended an Armin Gesswein seminar. Then he was invited to join other pastors and lay people in Seattle who were organizing a prayer and revival conference! He said, “It seemed like the more people we talked to, the more we discovered little pockets of people who had been praying for revival; who had a hunger for it like we had experienced all of this time.”

Uncovering What God Began

I was asked to serve as president of our city’s Association of Evangelicals which had been defunct for over twenty years, and yet now the leaders felt that this thing needed a revival. I said I would serve in that capacity if the agenda would be prayer. “I know that much will come out of this, but let’s begin with intercession. No more, no less than that,” I said. And these leaders said that’s exactly where we need to begin. I began to call key pastors, presidents of seminaries and Christian colleges and I was amazed to hear them say, “That’s exactly where we need to begin.”

—*Urban Prayer Leader,*
USA

Context Worksheet

YOU BELIEVE a united prayer movement is within the will of God for your city. And you feel it may be just the time for it. But how can you be sure? Well, you never can be 100% sure or you wouldn’t have to exercise faith! But you can take the pulse of your city and determine the context for a local prayer movement.

1. What do you know of united prayer in your area historically or currently? You might interview other leaders and older godly lay people.

What do you know of growth in prayer in local congregations or prayer networks?

2. What would you regard as the devil's strongholds in your area?

3. What barriers to united prayer exist in the area?

4. What issues, trends, or situations in your area grieve God? What brings him pleasure in your area? Public agencies and newspapers are good sources for such information. Think in terms of the Church and of the city.

5. How do you see your area fitting into all that God is doing in the wider sphere of your nation and the world? If spiritual awakening were to take place in your area, what impact might that have on the worldwide advance of Christ's kingdom?

6. What might your area begin to look like if, in answer to your prayers, God began to work fully and mightily in those opportunities and overcome the barriers?

7. How would you explain the context as you now see it to help convince others that the time has come?

Sharing With Ministers

IN ORDER for the prayer movement to grow and endure, it is essential to get area ministers involved. They need to feel the vision is their own and has relevance to their particular church and situation. Initiating one-on-one contact with a minister makes the idea of a concert of prayer less threatening to him.

Spiritual Leaders Lead the Way

It won't be long until we see, I believe, a nation-wide concert of prayer movement. Major national denominational bodies are exploring the vision together. Already many of us believe the goal of fifty city-wide concerts of prayer within the next two years is quite reasonable. What is more encouraging is that the spiritual leaders are leading the way in this. And so many of them are doing so out of a strong missionary commitment.

*National prayer leader,
Costa Rica*

Although very time consuming, there is no substitute for visiting pastors to share your vision for united prayer. Always seek to visit a minister in his office or home as appropriate culturally. In this way, you are modeling to him the servanthood which should describe any movement of prayer.

Ask the minister about his own prayer vision for his church and any prayer events or stirrings there. Give him opportunity to share about his church, their recent successes, difficulties, concerns, etc. Let him share his heart. Often you will win a hearing from him just by listening to him. This will differentiate you from simply being a salesman.

Frequently, ministers have few people who will offer to pray for them and with them. Giving to them in this way is an important extension of the servanthood principle mentioned above. It also enables the minister to hear something of your own heartbeat in prayer, which may communicate more effectively than anything you say directly about your vision.

Several initiators have found it very helpful in approaching ministers to be accompanied by a widely respected leader who is convinced of the importance of united prayer. If it is possible to identify such a person, pray and visit them initially, making your request for their accompaniment in the remaining visits to pastors you will schedule.

A Chief Goal

My chief goal is visiting pastors to help them begin to really understand the priority of all this and to get their churches to appoint prayer representatives (pacesetters) to communicate larger prayer concerns to their congregation. We have a convocation for prayer about every three months and occasionally a day of fasting and prayer for the pastors.

*—Urban prayer
leader, USA*

Frequently, suspicion is mentioned as one of the factors providing a significant barrier to the development of a movement of united prayer in a city. A significant task for any initiator/coordinator is to help build trust between ministers/pastors! church leaders in the locality. Although this may not appear central to the vision, this is in fact a service which will provide the foundation upon which the vision can be developed far more securely.

There are two potential time bombs to undermine trust. One is the issue of theological foundation or framework. The other is prayer styles. Pastors are unwilling to jeopardize their leadership by putting their people in a situation where they feel uncomfortable. A common theological foundation is often important to pastors considering the prayer movement. John Piper, a pastor in Minnesota, has said, “A common theological foundation can be found in the Lausanne Covenant.”

Once you have visited a good number of pastors, the next step is to explore and establish a consensus to proceed. You might convene an open consultation for church leaders, a proven successful method. In such a consultation, it is important to allow time for a full discussion of proposals, the clarification of agreements together, and corporate prayer. Later in this chapter you’ll find a possible outline for a one-day consultation.

Consultation Spawns Prayer Movement

The first Southern California Consultation on Concerts of Prayer was held in Hollywood. I thought, “Can anything good come out of Hollywood?” but the whole prayer movement that we have in this form came from that consultation. About fifty prayer leaders met on that occasion and from it the San Gabriel Valley Committee for Concerts of Prayer was formed.

*—Regional prayer
leader, USA*

Some initiators testify to the value of inviting people from outside the area with established prayer ministries to address such consultations. An important consideration here is that such a person needs to share your burden and be willing not to turn the consultation into a teaching seminar which they dominate.

The Point of Breakthrough

We began with a city-wide consultation in Amsterdam. Out of that came a vision for regional consultations around the nation, which we held about 18 months later. As a result, regional prayer committees have formed and we now have a network of concerted prayer in place. The consultations, which included some teaching and training, were the point of breakthrough. It was also vital that we ended each day-long event with an initial concert of prayer in the evening at each venue.

*Urban prayer leader,
Holland*

In some circumstances, initiators have discovered that a more low key approach than the open consultation has proved helpful. Simply inviting ministers to pray together has provided a means of developing trust among them and with the initiator. This gives the initiator an opportunity to share the vision quite naturally.

The suitability of this approach depends on the extent to which ministers already have forums which provide genuine opportunities for united prayer.

Where ministerial groupings do already exist, seek to cooperate with these networks. Through your earlier visitation of ministers, clarify your knowledge of such groupings. Those who have already indicated interest in your vision will be helpful in providing access for you to make a presentation to the fraternal. Be sure to include a time of united prayer in your presentation.

For many activists, the idea of united prayer can seem almost irrelevant to getting the job done! While we believe differently, we need to help such people understand how a movement of united prayer for revival and world evangelization can actually heighten concern, interest and support for their own ministries. By sharing the breadth of the prayer agenda encompassed by many existing prayer movements, you can enable an activist to sense that involvement could be beneficial. He must be assured that a prayer movement exists to see a new move of God which advances and accelerates active ministries in the city, as well as beyond.

One prayer movement desired to see a particular key congregation brought into the prayer movement. This church was very involved in aiding the homeless. The concert of prayer committee asked to hold the next city-wide concert of prayer at that particular church, and asked the pastor to lead one segment of the concert. He was asked to guide in prayer for the homeless issue, as it related to spiritual awakening (awakened Christians would reach out to the homeless) and world evangelization (the homeless

coming to Christ). This helped the pastor and the lay people to see their agenda in light of spiritual awakening and world evangelization.

Joint Agendas

In my work with numerous pastors for the city-wide concert of prayer, I find it best to understand whatever their vision is and to see that vision represented in the concert of prayer. When they see a vision of cooperation, with churches getting together, and we can make prayer the center of their vision or the means to their vision, then the concert of prayer becomes a servant to them and their vision for the city. It's good to "joint-agenda"—overlap lots of visions and goals and issues people have a heart for. There's a way in which the more of the kingdom that my vision encompasses and the more ways in which I am trying to help their vision of the kingdom, the more this all works together to build trust and ultimately to build the kingdom.

*Urban prayer leader,
USA*

Of course the prayer agenda encompasses the two great broad sweeps of God's heart and concern, namely for the FULLNESS of Christ to be known and experienced in all of his church and secondly, for the FULFILLMENT of all God's purposes in Christ for all mankind, reaching to the very ends of the earth. Yet such an agenda has tremendous local repercussions as God answers.

Many ministers have expressed reservations about "their" people being taken away from their own church to join interdenominational activities which expose them to other styles. Treat this matter wisely. It is important to stress that a movement of prayer in a city exists to serve the local church. Prayer for all the churches of the area will be a primary concern.

Starting With Key Pastors

I had this strong concern for pastors and I knew they would only listen to key pastors. So I began by getting some key pastors on the steering committee. Having done that, together we identified network leaders or a key person able to recruit others who would recruit yet others. And that was basically the strategy—that we would recruit people and get them committed to prayer and to recruiting still others.

*—Urban prayer leader,
USA*

In the early stages of one prayer movement, ministers were sent a card prior to a united prayer gathering, inviting them to nominate specific matters for prayer. This gave them a feel of ownership and left them more willing to release their people to participate.

It is important that the time and frequency of the concert of prayer does not compete with the churches and their regularly scheduled meetings. Of course you most likely will not find a time suitable to every congregation in town. But try to find one suitable to most. Also, note in your discussions with pastors that we ask their churches to be representatively involved. That is, we don't expect every church member there every time, so they need not view it as a meeting competing for all their people.

The spiritual life of church members is often enriched through participation in such gatherings and a new level of prayer is generated. One pastor wrote after a concert of prayer, "The spiritual aftershocks are still rumbling in our church. Several important things happened a new craving for dynamic corporate prayer, a vision for what God is calling us to be and do, a commitment to bathe the entire business of the church in prayer, and a burden with feet on it for the unsaved." After another major rally on the West Coast of the United States, a score of churches reported that prayer bands were springing up everywhere, modeling their approach after all they had learned at the major prayer event.

It's Not My Idea

One barrier with ministers has been, "This has been tried before." I spoke with one minister who pastored the largest church of his denomination in that state. When I met with him, he looked at me and smiled—I could see him thinking, "This poor young guy comes in and thinks he's going to do something, his first church and all." I shared with him and he said, "I've done it all. I've tried in this city. I've tried to form an evangelical ministerial. I tried this fifteen years ago. Who are you?" That's a good question!

And that's when I went armed with the answer, "God is doing something." And he couldn't back down on that. I found it's a major barrier—many men are just discouraged. I think men like that God has to touch or else they've got to see some tangible results, something they can see and their hearts will bear witness with.

—*City-wide prayer leader,*
USA

To insure that the prayer movement really does serve, and that pastors are given every reason to take a second look at it, here are some suggestions based on observing many movements at work.

- Share with your pastor the essay on “Remarkable Reasons to be Involved...”
so that he can be convinced that a prayer movement is for those who consider themselves “activists.”
- Share with him reports on what God is doing with prayer movements elsewhere. This may stir up his imagination about your city too.
- Whether or not a pastor currently participates in the concerts of prayer, you may still want to ask for his evaluation and input along the way. Just a phone call or quick visit, asking for his impressions and suggestions on how the movement can be even more useful to his congregation could go a long way to finally winning his full participation.
- Be sure to study the “activity level” of the churches in your area. It might be better to go with quarterly concerts of prayer and annual prayer rallies, so that your “prayer program” doesn’t feel too competitive with the other programs in each local church. Frequency—whether monthly, quarterly, or annual—can make or break your reputation as a servant to the churches, not a siphon.
- Invite the pastors to have their churches become involved on a representative level. In other words, we don’t need to have every Christian in every church turn out for every concert of prayer! Instead, pastors can hand-pick some from their congregation to attend, to bring into the prayer gathering the concerns of their own local church (for renewal and mission), and to return to fire up other church members with the vision and spirit of prayer gained from the concert of prayer.
- Encourage the pastors to try an “experiment.” This might run for six months, with a concert of prayer each month. Specific representatives from their church would come for the six concerts. If possible, the pastor might also attend one or two. But throughout the six months, the spiritual leaders would be carefully watching the prayer movement, in order to answer one basic question at the end, “Has God given any good evidence that he is, in fact, behind this new movement of prayer?” Most pastors are so overwhelmed with so many programs and demands on their time that only those enterprises that have the clear hand of God on them will ever capture their commitment and involvement. The experiment gives God a chance to convince leaders that the prayer movement is *his* movement. That can go a long way in gaining greater support for the *next* six months!

Help pastors see that there are specific ways that the larger prayer events can be translated back into their own local churches. For example, every concert of prayer is based on seven major components: celebration, preparation, dedication, intercession (fullness), intercession (fulfillment),

testimony, consecration (grand finale). Each of those components can be adapted for use in other prayer times within the local church.

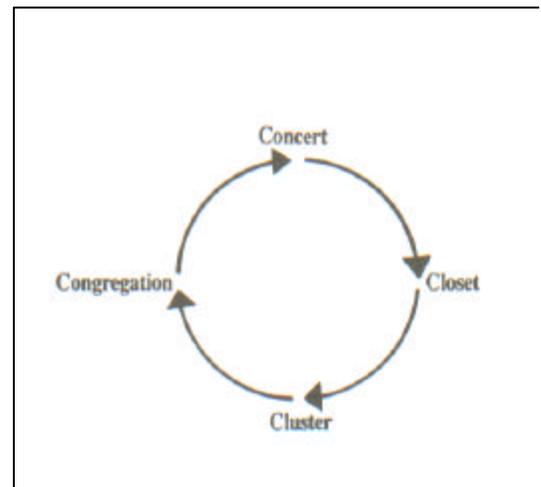
Personal prayer times (the closet level) could be shaped around these same seven components, with one minute given to each component (the testimony part, for example, would be a minutes spent recording in a journal what God is saying during the other minutes). Thus a participant in a monthly, two-hour concert of prayer could return to practice the same approach and vision on a daily basis at only seven minutes a day.

The same could happen in family prayer times and in weekly prayer triplets at church, (the cell or cluster level). Again, the seven minute discipline might be observed as one way of translating the concert of prayer at this second level.

Finally, the whole church could get involved (the congregational level) in two ways: by practicing the seven components within each week's Sunday morning worship service, possibly following the sermon and as a way to apply the sermon; and by having their own "in house" concert of prayer once a month, possibly in place of the Sunday evening service.

Consider the potential of this for a church of 200 adult members. If all 200 would participate on all levels, including attendance at a three-hour concert of prayer rally twice a year, look how prayer would be multiplied over a one-year period:

- Closet Level: 200×5 minutes a day (instead of 7, to make it easier) = 6,083 hours a year.
- Cell (Cluster) Level:
Family prayer (200×5 minutes/day) = 6,083 hours/year
Triplets (200×10 minutes/week) = 1,666 hours/year
- Congregational Level:
Morning Worship (200×10 min/wk) = 1,666 hrs/yr
Monthly local concert of prayer (200×2 hr/month) = 4,800 hrs/yr
- Concert Level: Bi-annual concert of prayer Rally (200×3 hours x twice a year) = 1200 hours/year.



The total for accelerated prayer for that one local church would be 20,298 hours of prayer over a year, focused on spiritual awakening and world evangelization. All things being equal, if a pastor could raise up that kind of accelerated prayer force in his church and do so without scheduling many new meetings beyond the normal church schedule, don't you think he would be interested? And if such prayer was set loose, even just 5-10,000 hours a year, could not that pastor expect a very significant change in his church over the coming year as a result?

If these things could be clearly presented to a spiritual leader, would there not be every reason to anticipate that he would gratefully get some of his people involved in the prayer movement, so that they would be inspired and equipped to carry out such a prayer thrust within his own local church?

Finally, if some thirty churches within a city would take up this strategy over the next year, the result would be over 608,000 hours of prayer for the church, the city, and the nations. If thirty pastors would share in this experience together—looking not only inward for its impact on their own churches, but looking outward for its impact on broader Kingdom concerns—would it not provide a wonderful incentive for them to cooperate in encouraging the local movement of united prayer?

Sharing With Ministers Worksheet

PLANNING a good strategy is the key to productive contact with the ministers of your area. Begin your strategizing with evaluation.

1. Reflect on the church, mission and campus leaders in your area. Based upon what you know of their ministry, consider what you would perceive to be their interest in your vision. In the boxes below, classify these Christian leaders by name. Use a scale where 1 = limited interest, 3= average and 5= deeply committed. Also note how key they are to a wider network of leaders using a scale from 1 to 3 where 3= maximum influence. Those who may come to mind might include the prayer chairman for a recent crusade, a missions committee chairman, the president of the local ministerium, or the staff worker at a local campus.

		Influence		
		3	2	1
I n t e r e s t	5			
	4			
	3			
	2			
	1			

Note that the first leaders to visit will be those who score the highest in both the interest and influence categories. And you may find it more worth your while to spend more time with a leader who scores higher on influence and lower on interest than with one who scores the reverse, for once the leader with influence is gained, you have gained access to a whole network of others.

2. Prayerfully, set aside time periods in your schedule for when you might meet these ministers and telephone them to make appointments. List below the first three ministers you hope to visit with their phone numbers.

3. Identify one or two respected leaders who might accompany you or at least endorse your visits.

4. What will you share with these ministers? Do you have any literature on hand to give to them? Use the outline below to sketch out a tentative presentation.

Introductions:

A. Who I am and why I've come:

B. Tell me about yourself, your church, your denomination:

II. Climate Evaluation

A. How would you evaluate the spiritual climate of our city?

B. What do you sense God is preparing to do in our city? Is spiritual awakening in the offing?

III. Sharing the prayer movement vision

A. Explain your concern for a united prayer movement.

B. Explain the concert of prayer format as one proven model of prayer cooperation. Get his feedback as you go along.

C. Share using some printed concert of prayer materials.

D. Suggest how the prayer movement could benefit the growth of prayer in his own congregation.

IV. Bring to decision

A. Explain what his further involvement might include. *For example, invite him to an exploratory breakfast or a consultation. Or you might ask him to become an informal advisor to you or your committee. Or invite him to identify some pacesetters from his congregation to represent it. Or the pastor might give his public endorsement to the prayer movement.*

B. Ask for a response there or arrange to call him at a later date for his reply.

V. Close in prayer, first remembering his concerns, then praying for the prayer movement concerns.

5. Read the outline on Area-wide Prayer Consultations. Prayerfully consider adjustments you would need to make in holding a consultation with Christian leaders and note them here. For example, if a half-day consultation would be more appealing to local leaders, how would you structure it?

Sharing with Lay People.

MUCH OF what has been noted about sharing with ministers applies as well to sharing with lay people. In sharing your vision with “lay” people, it is important that you recognize that they are actually essential to the fulfillment of your vision. While there is no question that the good will and encouragement of church leaders is essential to the effective launching of a united prayer movement, invariably the people who will give time and effort to see it become a reality will be lay people. These are the people who will mobilize others, who will organize, steward, and administrate. Be convinced as you speak to such audiences of their intrinsic importance in God’s plans for this ministry.

Especially important will be those lay persons who have significant networks among Christians. These might be denominational through service on committees, or interdenominational through joint ministry, education or employment. Such people are extremely valuable because they often influence and mobilize a whole constituency. As you share your vision, there will always be what we might term the early adopters, i.e. those who show significant interest in the vision and awareness of its strategic importance. As you seek the Lord’s guidance about the outworking of the vision, do ask Him to provide, among these early adopters, people with broad networks that can accelerate the dissemination of the vision.

Students as Pacesetters

One of the most encouraging signs I see is the growth of united prayer among university students, both here and abroad, especially throughout Europe. Although many of them come from totally non-Christian backgrounds, their increasing burden for world evangelization, including the reaching of their own campuses, and their absolute conviction that Christ can take them forward victoriously in the mission, is driving them to find ways to get together to spend hours in prayer. They may become the most effective pacesetters for the whole Church. Historically this has happened before.

*National prayer leader,
USA*

Personal Awareness
Strategic Considerations
The Context
Sharing with Ministers
Sharing with Lay People
Area-Wide Consultation
Time Out: Is this for You?

**Find early adopters
with a network.**

Above all, as you communicate the vision, prayerfully look for pacesetters. These are people in whom God is already creating a hunger and burden for his glory to be revealed. They are beginning to sense that there is yet more that God longs to be and do in the midst of his people. They've begun to seek God for spiritual awakening and yet recognize the need to call others to join with them. It is these pioneers who are frequently the "surge" given by God to overcome the apathy and inertia towards united prayer that sadly often exists. And remember that it is the life that prays, not just the words. You are not looking for the "eloquent" pray-ers at the concert of prayer. You are looking for those whose very life is a testimony to the importance of prayer and who lead in prayer by their example.

Look for pacesetters

Pacesetters

We began to concentrate on having each church appoint a prayer representative who would work inwardly in the church to bring about a committed group of intercessors. They would work outwardly by meeting together once a month to pray about their efforts and to fellowship. They also became the distribution arm for our *News For Prayer* letter.

—*Regional prayer leader, USA*

John Mott once said that he who multiplies the laborers does a greater service than he who does the labor. Without demeaning the labor of prayer, this is also true of those who multiply laborers and pray-ers for the prayer movement. Thus you will do the prayer movement a greater service if you do not carry the burden on your shoulders alone, but recruit those to help you. By this we mean pacesetters.

Why Find Pacesetters

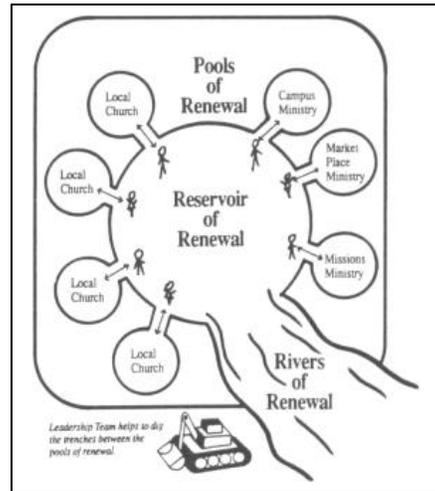
In the study of prayer movements, three characteristics of a pacesetter have emerged. You can identify pacesetters because:

1. They attend the Concert of Prayer and other prayer events faithfully.
2. They report back to the church and to friends with enthusiasm.
3. They bring at least one "first-time" participant to each concert or prayer event.

The Role of the Pacesetter

Developing pacesetters means fostering these characteristics in them.

=Pacesetters



Faithful attendance is key. Often the attendance from concert to concert, from prayer event to event, is made of a large percentage of newcomers. The numbers remain constant, but a good percentage are new people. There is a lack of persistence and importunity.

Attending Faithfully

For a prayer movement to not merely exist in name only, but to also have long-term effect on the area, it is important for people to continue in prayer. One prayer leader has suggested that if you begin praying for spiritual awakening and then ever stop short of its fulfillment, you negate all your prayers for it, as you demonstrate a lack of faith that it will come.

We need pacesetters who will blaze a trail of faithfulness, commitment and faith in a generation that lacks all three. Ask first of your pacesetters that they faithfully attend the concerts of prayer.

Pacesetters report back to their church. A pacesetter may ask his minister for five minutes of the morning service on the Sunday following a monthly concert of prayer or city-wide prayer rally. During these five minutes he may share for two minutes concerning the major concerns prayed for at the concert, then ask the congregation to pray in pairs for a minute, then lead them all in prayer for these concerns for an additional minute and a half, closing with thirty seconds of encouragement for the people to attend the next concert of prayer.

Reporting to the Church

A similar report might be given in an adult Sunday School class. The pacesetter might even make the rounds of the Sunday School classes, each Sunday taking five minutes in a different adult or high school class.

Bible studies or small group prayer meetings are additional opportunities to share all that God is doing through the local and national prayer movements. One of the best ways to report, of course, is by how you model the prayer vision in the ways you lead in prayer whenever you pray with people in your group.

Perhaps the most difficult and humbling thing for a pacesetter to do in our society is to bring someone else. Somehow we have no problem asking someone to attend a sporting event, concert or movie with us, but when it comes to a prayer meeting, we are embarrassed to ask. Encourage pacesetters to bring friends. You might have a pacesetter stand at the concert of prayer and share how they invited a friend who came and how easy it was to ask them. Or ask pacesetters who brought friends to stand and give them a round of applause.

One of the best ways to get pacesetters to bring friends is to have a prayer event that is so full of God and life that they can't help but tell everyone. Exciting meetings have a way of announcing themselves through word-of-mouth. Strive to make your concerts of prayer worth inviting friends to.

It can be costly to be a pacesetter. As exciting as it all sounds, pacesetters will pay a price to birth the kingdom of God in their city. Part of the price will be brokenness over what we see in ourselves, in our church, our nation, and our world that dishonors the name of Christ, hinders his Kingdom's advance, and robs God of his glory.

It also costs a daily discipline that never ceases. To live consistently, pacesetters must develop single-minded devotion to Christ and to his global cause; they must also cultivate a vigilance in lifestyle to reflect all they desire and hope for.

They sometimes pay the cost of being misunderstood. Breaking with the herd mentality in order to serve the Church at this level, they will make many of us uncomfortable at first. Some of us may initially despise them.

Jesus warned of this rejection in Matthew 10. It was one of the reactions his workers could expect when they went to harvest the fruits of the coming revival. By pulling people together in prayerful anticipation of the Kingdom, they may create dissention; pacesetters will suffer rejection and even persecution. Revival seekers, by both their desperation and their hope, challenge the status quo. The call to concerted prayer even when sounded in all humility and love will end in one of two ways: in decisive devotion or in decisive division.

There is also the cost of spiritual warfare. If any group of people will be opposed by the enemy, it will be those who give themselves to prayer. No wonder Paul told the Ephesian Christians to clothe themselves with armor

Bringing a friend

The Cost of Pacesetting

The Challenge of Spiritual Warfare

sufficient for a battle beyond the flesh and blood before they gave themselves to constant prayer for “all the saints” (fullness) and for “ambassadors in chains” (fulfillment) (see Eph. 6:10-20). For more information about spiritual warfare, see the articles in Chapter Two on this subject.

Pacesetters must be prepared for the additional cost involved as they become answers to their own prayers. They themselves may be sent by God to carry the gospel to the unreached peoples for whose sake they have prayed. And that will always be costly for any of us.

Identifying pacesetters is not always an easy task. They don't often jump up and identify themselves. You will need to give instruction as to what a pacesetter is, and then give encouragement for people to commit themselves to this task. Prayer for God to raise up pacesetters is crucial as well.

A number of prayer movements have effectively used surveys to identify pacesetters. In this segment you'll find one you might strategically use. During a concert of prayer, explain the idea of a pacesetter and give examples of what a pacesetter might do. At the close of the concert of prayer, invite those who would like to explore the possibility of being a pacesetter to come forward. Hand out a questionnaire/commitment form for them to fill out.

Pacesetters, like most anyone else, need encouragement and continued training. As you provide means for pacesetters to grow in their vision and to sustain it between concerts of prayer and other prayer events, you will find the grass-roots prayer movement growing as well.

One way to keep your pacesetters enthusiastic and involved is to meet with them every six to eight weeks. This could be on a weekday night or Saturday morning. Or, depending on the group, you might meet from 6-7:30 a.m. one morning. The purpose would be to share break-throughs in promoting prayer in the local church, give testimonies regarding people invited to the concert of prayer and subsequently added to the prayer movement (incorporation and not just attendance is the goal), to discuss difficulties and possible solutions in prayer mobilization, and then of course, to pray.

You might pray about several things, especially for more pacesetters to be raised up, for more people to be committed to prayer, and for more churches to get involved in the prayer movement. Pray specifically for the churches represented by the pacesetters, then pray for specifically targeted

Identifying and Working with Pacesetters

Nurturing Pacesetters

Bi-Monthly Pacesetters Meeting

churches—those not presently involved in the prayer movement, but which you desire to see involved soon.

In one city, at a pacesetters meeting, they gave out a card similar to the one below to help each pacesetter determine others they might pray for and bring into various prayer events.

Operation Prayer

Recognizing that spiritual awakening is born in and sustained by a movement of prayer. I will ask God to raise up others to join me in the Greater Madison Concert of Prayer movement.

Believing that such a movement of united prayer is a gift of God, and that he is already at work in the hearts of others to raise up a people of prayer, I will begin to pray today for the following individuals and endeavor to invite them to come with me to the next City-wide Concert of Prayer Rally.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

A newsletter might be another way of keeping in touch with the pacesetters. You could fill them in on prayer items that fall in the area of spiritual awakening and world evangelization which they could then bring before their church. You might also keep them posted on up-coming events towards which to pray and mobilize attendance. It would also be a great way to deepen their vision by including short historical sketches of revivals—the American revivals, the revivals in Wales, China, South Africa, England, etc. The works of J. Edwin Orr give much help here. Who would take responsibility for publishing it? One member of the concert of prayer committee might have editorial oversight while several of the pacesetters might actually do the writing, typing, production, and mailing of the piece.

A Pacesetters Bulletin

Pacesetters can be of great aid to the concert of prayer committee especially in the areas of running errands and spreading publicity. Again, one committee member might have oversight of publicity, while several pacesetters actually design, print, and mail the flyer, deliver church bulletin inserts, post posters, etc.

The Pacesetter and the Committee

Another group of pacesetters might be responsible for printing a bulletin-type flyer for the concert of prayer, ushering, and taking the offering. Think of ways to get your pacesetters involved in the executing of the concert of prayer. This will help to give them a sense of ownership and will motivate them to get others involved in “their” projects.

Prayer Movement Involvement Survey

THIS SAMPLE involvement survey is a composite of similar surveys used in a variety of united prayer events, primarily Concert of Prayer Rallies. During multiple church events, pacesetters have a prime opportunity for uncovering others who will become pacesetters at various levels helping to foster a movement of prayer where they live.

Prayer Movement Involvement Survey

- I intend to grow more as a man or woman or prayer for spiritual awakening and world evangelization.
- I offer myself to Christ as a prayer pacesetter to serve his movement of prayer, and I will actively seek his guidance as to the specific role he wants me to play.
- I want to become more involved in strengthening the work of united prayer in my own congregation. Please inform my pastor of this and suggest any help or resources that can get me started.
- I am willing to be a part of a regular Concert of Prayer where I live. Let me know about up-coming gatherings.
- I am willing to be a pacesetter who regularly brings others with me to the Concerts of Prayer. Let me know how to do this.
- I would like to host a neighborhood Concert of Prayer. Please contact me.
- I would like to join with others where I work or go to school, for the purpose of concerted prayer. Please contact me to work out the details.
- I am already part of a prayer group focused on spiritual awakening and world evangelization and we would be glad to have others join us. Please contact me to work out the details.
- I am willing to join other pacesetters to help organize and lead regular Concert of Prayer gatherings in my area. Please contact

I am a pastor who is interested in hosting a Concert of Prayer. Please contact me to work out the details.

I am a pastor/spiritual leader and would be willing to take part in a half-day "Consultation on United Prayer" to explore with other leaders in my area the possibilities in an on-going movement of prayer. Please contact me about such an event.

I am willing to grow as a prayer pacesetter. Please contact me about specific training events that will help me in this important ministry.

I offer myself to be a contact person in my church/ministry group, to help publicize future prayer gatherings and prayer training events.

Name (Rev. Mr. Mrs. Ms) _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Telephone (home) _____ (work) _____

Church or Ministry Group Representing: _____

ONCE YOU'VE identified more pacesetters, you'll want to get to know them a bit better. You might hand out a Pacesetter Questionnaire, using the one below as a pattern. Spend 10-15 minutes helping them fill it out, discussing it with them as needed. Plan on calling them later to discuss it in further detail.

Pacesetter Questionnaire

Dear Potential Pacesetter:

The Concert of Prayer Committee is looking for people within every congregation in our city to commit themselves to the Concert of Prayer vision and to help us mobilize prayer on a city-wide and congregation-wide basis in a variety of ways.

Thank you for your interest. Please help us get to know you. In one or two sentences, please answer the following:

- 1) Why did you respond to the call for more pacesetters?

- 2) Why do you believe that the movement of prayer in (the name of your community) is so important?

- 3) If God were to answer our prayer for spiritual awakening and worldwide evangelization, what impact do you believe this would have on our churches? (Give one example.)

- 4) What impact do you believe it would have on our city?

- 5) What impact do you believe it would have on the nations of the world?

Thank you for your input. These questions represent the basic issues that all of us pacesetters must wrestle with as we serve the prayer movement God is giving to our community.

There are many ways in which you can become involved as a pacesetter. Basic to our commitment as pacesetters are three responsibilities:

- To attend faithfully the regular gatherings of Concerts of Prayer.
- To take back to our congregations the vision God is giving to the prayer movement.
- To seek to bring some from our congregations with us each time we attend a Concert of Prayer, so they can experience for themselves what God is doing among us.

Are you ready for this three-fold responsibility? If so, we on the Concert of Prayer Committee are ready to help you. We can help make this an exciting—not burdensome—and fruitful ministry for you. If you are ready to join hands with us and many other pacesetters within our city, please fill out the information below and give this to us before you leave.

Name _____

Address _____

Phone _____

Local Church/Congregation _____

Further questions or comments:

Sharing with Lay People Worksheet

PEOPLE ARE essential to a movement. Not only do they make up the movement itself, but key people carry on and do the work of the movement. We've called these key people "pacesetters." Too often an initiator will be tempted to do all the work himself instead of finding several key workers to share the load with him. Determine that you will find pacesetters to help you.

1. Do you already know some lay pacesetters? If so, consider how they can assist you in sharing the vision even at this early stage.
2. What groups or local congregations might you approach with the Prayer Movement Involvement Survey to uncover some pacesetters?
3. How might you use the pacesetter questionnaire to identify who your pacesetters are and how you might best serve them?
4. One key to keeping people involved is giving them something to do. What do you envision pacesetters might do in local congregations in your city?

What do you envision these pacesetters doing to spread the prayer movement in the city?

5. How will you keep in touch with your pacesetters? Accountability not only makes sure things get done, it also assures the pacesetters that someone is thinking of them and that their role has significance. How will they be held accountable and by whom?
6. How will you nurture and train the pacesetters?

Area-Wide Consultation on United Prayer

Personal Awareness
 Strategic Considerations
 The Context
 Sharing with Ministers
 Sharing with Lay People
Area-Wide Consultation
 Time Out: Is this for You?

ONCE YOU'VE determined that God has called you to initiate a prayer movement in your area and you have made initial contacts with pastors and others, your next step may well be to hold a prayer consultation. This allows them to have immediate input. Invite the area pastors plus any other key Christian leaders or potential pacesetters, especially those who represent networks in your city. Below is a seven-hour format. But this may scare off some in your situation. If so, you may want to adjust it to a three-to-four hour format. What is outlined here has been used on regional and national levels.

Introduction:

Welcome	5 minutes
Scripture Reading	5 minutes
United Hymn and Prayer Time	5 minutes
Overview of the Consultation: Purpose and Agenda	5 minutes
Introductions of Consultation Participants	15 minutes
Case Studies of Current Prayer Movements	45 minutes

Discussion of the Three Proposals:

Presentation of Proposal #1—"A Call for Concerts of Prayer".	10 minutes	Discussion of Proposal #1—What are the needs and opportunities for Concerts of Prayer in our city'	35 minutes
Presentation of Proposal #2—"A Strategy for Concerts of Prayer"	10 minutes	Discussion of Proposal #2—What is the best approach for mobilizing Concerts of Prayer in our city'	50 minutes
Break for Lunch	50 minutes		
Presentation of Proposal #3—"A Cooperative Plan of Action for Concerts of Prayer"	10 minutes	Discussion of Proposal #3—How can we cooperate in practical terms to co sponsor and assist local Concerts of Prayer'	35 minutes
Break	15 minutes		

Forming a Cooperative Plan of Action:

Summary of discussions on Proposals 1,2,3	10 minutes
Discussion: Where do we have consensus for a plan of action?.	60 minutes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • On a time frame for coordinating Concerts? • On an approach toward co-sponsorship of local Concerts? • On an approach toward cooperative assistance of local Concerts? • On ways to measure the quality and impact of local Concerts? • On a <i>facilitating</i> body, such as a steering committee? 	

- On immediate steps following this Consultation?

Statement of Action: Confirmation of a joint committee to a cooperative plan of action 30 minutes

Conclusion:

Mini-Concert of Prayer 30 minutes
Depart to fulfill our commitments.

BASED ON our common vision for and commitment to united prayer for spiritual awakening and world evangelization, the following three proposals are set forth:

A Call for Concerts of Prayer

In view of the great needs facing the Church internally, for revival and awakening:

And, in view of the great needs facing the Church externally, for the evangelization of the world and the worldwide advancement of Christ's Kingdom;

And, in view of the unprecedented opportunities calling the Church to seek Christ's fulness in our life together, for the fulfillment of his global mission;

And, recognizing that the prelude to and sustaining foundation for a new work of God in the Church is united prayer for spiritual awakening and world evangelization;

And, borrowing from history a term used to describe similar movements of united prayer during previous spiritual awakenings (Concerts of Prayer);

IT IS PROPOSED that we here this day commit ourselves as Christian leaders to one another and the Church to call for and help mobilize local concerts of prayer for spiritual awakening and world evangelization.

A Strategy for Mobilizing Concerts of Prayer

Based on our commitment to call for and assist Concerts of Prayer within the Church in our city;

And, drawing from the praying constituents within the three major spheres of churches, students, and mission;

And, looking to local prayer leadership and prayer movements to help steer and galvanize these praying people into grassroots efforts at Concerts of Prayer;

IT IS PROPOSED that we here this day as Christian leaders, cooperate in encouraging and serving our praying people by endorsing and co-sponsoring local concerts of prayer. Linking with local prayer leaders, we will assist our praying people into concerts of prayer within our own community.

A Cooperative Plan of Action for Concerts of Prayer

Rising from consensus on the call for Concerts of Prayer (Proposal 1) and the strategy for mobilizing Concerts of Prayer (Proposal 2), IT IS PROPOSED that we here as Christian leaders take immediate steps toward co-sponsorship of local Concerts of Prayer over the next two years. To be more precise, IT IS PROPOSED:

1. That between (date) and (date), (total number) jointly-sponsored concerts of prayer for spiritual awakening and world evangelization be initiated and assisted where local prayer leadership is already evident.
2. That the movement of prayer be developed in at least four phases:
 - Concert of Prayer *endorsement*: local leaders and organizations in the major spheres of churches, students, and missions make direct contact with their praying constituents, explaining the concert of prayer strategy and encouraging them to become a part of a concert of prayer in their community.
 - Concert of Prayer *event*: Leaders and organizations in the major spheres of churches, students, and missions coordinate with local prayer leaders and prayer committees to draw together their prayer constituents into one initial concert of prayer within their own area.
 - Concert of Prayer *movement*: As a result of the endorsements and rising from the event, on-going, community-wide concerts of prayer emerge under the leadership of a local trans-denominational steering committee, in cooperation with the mobilizing efforts of leaders and organizations from the three major spheres.
 - Concert of Prayer *nurture*: In counsel with leaders and endorsing organizations in the three major spheres, the local steering committee work to sharpen, encourage, strengthen, and expand the community-wide concert of prayer.
3. That, where appropriate, every effort be made to expand the base of supportive, co-sponsoring individuals and organizations.
4. That commitment and accountability for the concerts be kept primarily under the guidance of the local steering committee.
5. That evaluation of the concert of prayer movement be made by sponsoring groups, determining the impact on their own internal objectives with respect to spiritual awakening and world outreach. This should be come at specific checkpoints culminating in a major

evaluation by (date), possibly through another community-wide consultation.

6. That helpful contact should be made with your National Prayer Committee which may suggest resources, facilitate some training, and provide information on the prayer movement nationwide.

THE following is an agenda for consultation used during Prayer '91, after the first ever mass prayer rally held there in April. At the consultation, a plan for the continuation of the prayer movement was presented and discussed, and the county was divided up into four regions for more efficient organization.

<p>AGENDA <i>For</i> CONSULTATION FOR THE ONGOING PRAYER MOVEMENT OF ORANGE COUNTY Sat. May 18, 900 a.m. – noon, South Coast Community Church</p>

- | | |
|--|-----------------------|
| 9:00 .Worship | Mark Nelson |
| 9:15 .Rally Update | Paul Green |
| Overvie w of Agenda | |
| 9:25 .Prayer Huddles | Armin Gesswein |
| 9:40 .Special Guest Speaker: | Peter Wagner |
| 10:05 . Prayer Huddles | |
| 10:15 . Break | |
| 10:30 . Presentation of Suggested Plan
for Ongoing Prayer Movement in Orange
County | Paul Green |
| 10:45 - Group Consultations by regions | |
| 10:50 Asking God for wisdom | |
| 10:55 Questions 1-3 | |
| 11:10 Silent Listening | |
| 11:13 Questions 4-5 | |
| 11:23 Silent Listening | |
| 11:26 Question 6 | |
| 11:30 .Reports from groups | Group Leaders |
| 11:45 .Filling out response forms | |
| 11:50 .Mini Concert of Prayer | Paul Green |
| 12:00 .Close | |

SUGGESTED PLAN FOR ONGOING PRAYER MOVEMENT IN ORANGE COUNTY

I. PASTORS' PRAYER GATHERINGS

"...Gather the elders...and cry out to the Lord" (Joel 1:14)

A. Love Orange County: County wide gatherings for pastors 2-3 times a year, patterned after Love L.A.

B. Monthly/weekly city or regional gatherings between Love Orange County gatherings. These would be more informal times, with greater focus on each city! area. Some are already active.

C. Opportunities for special taming on building prayer in the local church (Including pastors sharing what works in their church). Could these be worked into "love Orange County" gatherings?

II. MASS UNITED CONCERT OF PRAYER RALLIES

"...Gather... all the inhabitants of the land... and cry unto the Lord" (Joel:14)

A. Annual all county mass rally: (In the spring) Including an all-day Pastors Conference, together with a closing rally for church leaders such as we had Jan. 29. This could be "in lieu" of one of the "Love Orange County" gatherings.

B. Four regional mass rallies in the Fall (North, South, Central, Coast)

1. By grouping cities together into four regions, these fall rallies could be major and significant with 400-600 in attendance at each (and when revival breaks out, who knows how many)
2. These could be preceded by a single Key Contact Luncheon in each region to encourage continued recruitment and buildup of prayer huddles in the churches
3. **A Planning Team** would need to be formed for each region, assisted by the Orange County Steering Committee

III. CONTINUED PRAYER BUILDUP ON THE LOCAL CHURCH LEVEL

A. Prayer huddles continuing on weekly basis. It may be that a special evening could be devoted to prayer that would include an hour of corporate praise, worship, brief message, and individuals leading in prayers, testimonies, etc., followed by 15-20 minutes for huddles to focus on the revival agenda. Some churches are already doing this, with great effect.

B. A Sunday devoted to prayer/revival emphasis

1. Biblical vision and hope for spiritual awakening, together with the mandate for united, corporate prayer presented in the a.m. worship service(s)
2. Sunday evening given totally to an All-church Concert of Prayer (*Paul Green, Remco Bromet, Armin Gesswein and others are available to help with this if desired*)

QUESTIONS FOR CONSULTATION

1. IF GOD DESIRES TO POUR OUT HIS SPIRIT UPON THE UNSAVED MASSES OF OUR CITIES/COMMUNITIES - CAN YOU SEE THIS HAPPENING APART FROM AN ONGOING MOVEMENT OF UNITED PRAYER? (By united we mean the whole body of Christ in a given city! community coming together across denominational lines.)

a. In this connection is there a very real sense in which we need each other in the body, even though we may differ on secondary doctrinal issues (1 Cor. 12:12-27)? b. How important do you think it is that the WORLD (unsaved community) SEES that we are ONE and that we fervently love each other?

2. WHAT IS YOUR EVALUATION OF THE PRAYER RALLY HELD ON APRIL 27?

3. DO YOU THINK WE SHOULD PLAN FOR ANOTHER ONE NEXT SPRING?

4. DO YOU LIKE THE IDEA OF ONE MAJOR CONCERT OF PRAYER FOR EACH REGION IN THE FALL?

a. Do you have any suggestions as to how we might more effectively mobilize the churches in each region?
b. Especially the ethnic churches?
c. What month in the fall, and what night of the week do you think would be best for such a Regional Rally?

5. DO YOU AGREE THAT THE MAJOR THRUST ULTIMATELY MUST TAKE PLACE WITHIN EACH OF THE LOCAL CHURCHES? IF SO, WOULD IT NOT BE BEST TO KEEP THE LARGER, INTER-CHURCH VALUES TO A MINIMUM...AND MAKE THEM COUNT?

6. DO YOU HAVE ANY OTHER SUGGESTIONS OR INPUT TO SHARE WITH ALL OF US?

Prayer Consultation Worksheet

A PRAYER Consultation may be just the thing needed to get a prayer movement started in your area. Perhaps you have an existing prayer movement that needs some rejuvenation and affirmation. Either way, you could take steps today towards planning a consultation for ministers near you.

1. Read Proposals 1,2 and 3. Note your feelings about them. How committed are you to these proposals?

How would you convince a spiritual leader of their validity?

What objections might a spiritual leader make to any of them?

How might you answer these objections?

2. List out the spiritual leaders (pastors, campus staff, mission leaders, Christian community leaders) whom you believe would be interested in attending a consultation of this sort. List those who ought to be there but might need some encouragement.

3. When might you hold a consultation? Where? How would you invite leaders to attend?

4. Prepare yourself ahead of time. What are your thoughts on the following steps of preparation for the consultation:

- A time frame for commencing Concerts?
- An approach toward co-sponsorship of local Concerts?
- An approach toward cooperative assistance of local Concerts?
- Ways to measure the quality and impact of local Concerts?
- A *facilitating* body, such as a steering committee?
- Immediate steps following the Consultation?

Time Out: Is This For You?

FROM THE practical experience of those who have preceded you, here are some critical principles to guide your own personal behavior as you seek to be obedient to God's calling to mobilize others into this movement of prayer.

Becoming involved as an initiator means taking risks. It is quite probable that you will be misunderstood. Your motives may be questioned and there may well be disappointments. Begin by realizing that to achieve something strategic in the eternal purposes of God someone must step out from the pack.

A Risky Proposal

We decided to call people together for intensified prayer once a month. It was a risk. I wasn't sure what we would see. We made it a costly proposal: that we would meet on the first Friday of each month, at 10:00 p.m. and pray until 6:00 a.m. the next morning. Maybe it was the cost that caught the interest. In any case, before long we had 600 with us every Friday. They came from a score of churches. And they had the burden for revival and outreach clearly on their hearts. Now we're seeing, among other things, a growing hunger for prayer throughout our nation, just as we've asked the Lord to do.

*Urban prayer leader,
Kenya*

What kind of a risk-taker are you? How comfortable are you with setting the pace? What Bible passages encourage you in times of risk-taking? (For an interesting study, look at Numbers 11:4-32. Examine the people's complaint, Moses' cry to God, and the Lord's response.)

So there is a cost to be paid. Count this cost ahead of time. It is likely to be faced in a number of ways. The time demands will be considerable. It may require altered priorities. Perhaps the hardest thing about your role is the way in which it requires death to self. God may have given you the vision, but somehow you need to take "you" out of it and impart the vision to others in such a way so that it becomes "theirs." And in so doing, it ceases to be totally "yours" and becomes "ours." In the process of this you may be misunderstood, ignored, or even mocked. At times you may feel

Personal Awareness
Strategic Considerations
The Context
Sharing with Ministers
Sharing with Lay People
Area-Wide Consultation
Time Out: Is this for You?

**Someone has to
take the risk of
starting**

**It costs to
coordinate a
prayer movement**

that it's not worth all the humiliation involved in staying humble and servant-like! How will you persevere in this?

Satan will not ignore your concern. The only thing that concerns him more than praying people is those who mobilize more praying people. So there will be spiritual conflict. It may come in the form of disunity on your committee. It may be a key church or denomination scheduling a large meeting the very same night your prayer rally is scheduled for, even though yours was scheduled first; somehow they just didn't realize or hear about it. Mis-communication or confusion is often a strategy of the enemy. The warfare might even involve the physical health of people involved in the concert of prayer. Surely there will be an assignment of hindering spirits on the night of prayer events, designed to keep people from attending..

But we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. We are told, "Greater is he that is in you than he that is in the world." And we have been given the whole armor of God with which we can withstand the onslaught of the evil one. It will be critical that you walk in the full armor of God. And as Paul admonishes us, we should not be ignorant of the enemy's devices. Pray particularly for the enemy to be bound in any areas that he might attack the prayer movement— physically, spiritually, emotionally.

In the midst of all your effort, do remember that prayer, praying people, and a movement of prayer ultimately are gifts of God. While we must do what he shows us in answer to our prayers, he alone can bring such a work to fruition.

A crucial aspect of your role as the movement begins to take off is to constantly imagine and express the potential of all that God might do in your locality as a result of the united prayers of his children. Helping people to anticipate all that God fully purposes to do locally and globally in the future is an important ministry.

**Prepare for victory
over the powers of
darkness**

**A prayer
movement is God's
gift**

**Imagine the wider
vision into your
locality**

The Whole City

When the great crusade took place in our city, it was preceded by a most amazing acceleration of prayer throughout our city. For months beforehand Christians gathered across denominations to pray for the crusade. Usually we stayed within our various language groups. But at times we would all come together by the hundreds and share an evening in prayer (with translation). I guess we all sensed that God was about to do something extraordinary among us. We simply had to pray together. My only regret is that after the crusade we didn't continue in the same way. A

few months later we were back to business as usual—as if when the evangelist left, God left! But so much more must happen in our city still. God is not finished with us yet!

*Urban prayer leader,
Asia*

There will be times when you will feel the need to defend yourself. Remember to resist this temptation. If your calling is truly from God then you can and must rest in the fact that your vindication comes from the Lord alone. It is he who will demonstrate the value and authenticity of your vision. Be prepared for the fact that this may not always come at the time or in the manner you yourself would desire.

- What role does prayer have in trusting God to vindicate his vision? What are you specifically asking God for regarding the emerging prayer movement in your area?

Most initiators can testify to moments when they wanted to give up. When an event is poorly attended, when a key minister fails to give the support you anticipated, when you cannot find a pacesetter for a particular church, frustration can set in. Remember that this will be something accomplished in God's time. His perspective is not dominated by the "instant success" demanded by many twentieth century Christians.

**Trust God to
vindicate the
vision**

Stick with it