

Chapter Five: Dynamics

Principles For Sustaining

The Sourcebook
The Vision
Ignition
Mechanics
Dynamics
Projects
Appendices

MANY OF US have shared the experience of beginning a project with great enthusiasm, only to see it slide into oblivion through our failure to sustain interest and commitment. Surely it is much easier to start something than to keep it going. In this section, we'll review some of the principles for maintaining the dynamic of a prayer movement beyond the initial stages. If your local movement of prayer is up and running, here are some proven recommendations to help you sustain it. The areas we'll cover are:

1. Entering into a Covenant
2. Shoring up.
3. Encouragement.
4. Development.
5. Leadership.
6. Prayer Movements in Middle-age Crisis.
7. Taking it to the Church
8. Time Out: Are You Committed?

Entering into a Covenant.

IT'S OBVIOUS, of course, but no prayer movement can be sustained unless there is clear consensus on the person we're praying to and the hope we're praying toward. A covenant can help us develop a theological vigilance.

Agreed On Basic Truths

As our movement grows, our greatest concern is to keep it biblical. Obviously anyone who wants to attend a concert of prayer is welcome. But when it comes to those who minister from the platform, we believe it is essential that we all be agreed on basic truths: the Lordship of Christ, the ultimate authority of Scripture, the nature of grace, the biblical definitions of our central concerns —spiritual awakening and worldwide evangelization. Without this solid foundation in truth, we're convinced our prayer movement will ultimately drift and die.

Urban prayer leader, Canada

Covenants are found throughout the Bible. God made them with people such as Abraham and David. He put a new covenant into effect through the blood of Christ. People also made covenants with each other. David made a covenant with Jonathan. King Asa made a covenant with the whole nation to grow a movement of prayer (II Chronicles 15). A covenant is simply a binding agreement to act in a certain way or to certain agreed-upon expectations. At some point it would be good for your Leadership Team to compose and enter into a covenant with one another. This covenant could then become the basis on which you call people into the prayer movement.

Simply put, this covenant will state those foundations and actions to which your prayer movement is committed. You may give promises from the Word that you will lay hold of through the prayer movement. You may state actions you will take until those promises are fulfilled. In addition, by way of future evaluation, you may list criteria by which you will determine when the prayer movement is achieving its objectives. You may want to read your covenant together at a concert of prayer once a year to affirm your commitment to the prayer movement.

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What the covenant is

Here is a sample covenant from an eight-year-old prayer movement in the USA.

What a covenant might look like

Concerts of Prayer for Global Awakening **A COVENANT**

This is what the Lord Almighty says: Many peoples and the inhabitants of many cities will yet come, and the inhabitants of one city will go to another and say, "Let us go at once to entreat the Lord and seek the Lord Almighty. I myself am going"...In those days ten from all languages and nations will take firm hold of one Jew by the edge of his robe and say, "Let us go with you, because we have heard that God is with you!"—Zechariah 8:20-23

BY THE GRACE OF GOD and for his glory, we enter into a covenant of intercession for spiritual awakening. In doing so, we give high priority and increasing urgency to regular gatherings in concerts of prayer that seek the fullness of Christ in his Church for the fulfillment of his purposes among the nations.

AS WE GATHER in Jesus' name, we will come prepared, in mind and heart, to intercede (by praise, repentance, request) for spiritual awakening locally and world-wide, in the Church and among the nations. Accordingly, we will also join together to look for the following identifiable trends within our Christian fellowship(s), both in our city and throughout the nations, in answer to our prayers:

- 1) The revived and unmistakable sense of God's presence and glory, in holiness, love and power, centered on the Lord Jesus Christ.
- 2) Resulting in the recovery, by repentance and faith, of full commitment, unity, holiness, and love within the Church.
- 3) Leading to the revitalization of the Church's on-going ministries, primarily in evangelism, discipleship, compassion, and justice.
- 4) Culminating in a mighty expansion of these ministries among the billions currently beyond the reach of the Gospel, filling the earth with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord.

RECOGNIZING that spiritual awakening is born in and sustained by a movement of prayer, we will also ask God to raise up others to join us in concerts of prayer, and wherever appropriate invite them to enter with us into this covenant.

Entering Into A Covenant Worksheet

WHILE ENTERING into a covenant is not to be taken lightly, it should not be ignored either. A covenant like the preceding one can be a unifying factor and provide a platform toward which to call the Church in your area.

I. How might writing and using a covenant help your local prayer movement? How would you use it?

2. Think through the drafting of a covenant for prayer. Here are some questions to aid you.

- What is the scriptural basis for your prayer movement? What scriptural promises are you desiring to see

- What is the purpose of your prayer movement? Why do you exist?

- How would your area, your nation, and the world be different if all your prayers were answered? How would you know your prayers are being fulfilled?

- What actions will you take in order to see these requests lifted to the Lord by united prayer? For how long will you take these actions?

- Who will take these actions? Will you seek others to join you? Is multiplication a part of your vision?

Shoring Up

FIRST PRIORITY in any plan to sustain progress is to secure what has already been achieved. The principles which follow come from the reality of prayer movements which have been underway for a good number of years.

Perhaps the most frequently expressed means of consolidating and sustaining a prayer movement is the continual attention to maintaining a broad base of ownership. The greater the sense of ownership, the greater the participation. This is held to be true both of individuals and fellowships. Promoting this sense of ownership is pursued in a variety of ways:

- a. membership of advisory and leadership groups—ensuring a broad spread of representation of such groups helps people to see the spirit of intent behind the prayer movement.
- b. broad, shared, up-front leadership of events—this gives a very public face to the desire for diversity in unity. It ensures that prayer styles are varied, so that everyone can identify with at least one leader and their particular approach.
- c. holding events in different church venues—again this makes a clear statement that the prayer movement desires to serve the local church and to reflect its diversity.
- d. sometimes choosing a less threatening, neutral location such as a downtown arena or civic auditorium in order to broaden the base of involvement from those who would not otherwise come to other church venues.

Moving the concert of prayer from one church to another is an excellent way to discover new pacesetters. Not only does this serve to encourage a wider sense of ownership among the churches of a locale, but it also exposes new people to the prayer gatherings since often people will attend much more readily when something is in their own church building. Through the conversion process, they may join the prayer movement.

This process also tends to ensure the involvement of the busier church leader who feels he must attend when the activity is on his own territory, even if his contribution is relatively small. And finally, this can also help to achieve a theological and ethnic balance in the prayer movement. Perhaps the most successful examples of this have been in involving particular ethnic constituencies which have not otherwise been mobilized.

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**Maintain a broadly
based ownership**

**Meet in different
cultural/church
settings**

Moving Around

We have moved the concert of prayer to different churches throughout the city and the host pastor would be the one to welcome everyone there. We find that as we go from church to church, we pick up a lot of people simply because it's promoted in the church there, but then you go to the next one, and if you get one or two out of that church to follow you, you've really done something.

—*Urban prayer leader, USA*

It is possible for self-contained movements to lose track and relevance. Leaders can become so introspective that they lose sight of the broader issues with which God is challenging his church. To assist in avoiding this kind of problem, it is prudent to maintain reference to other prayer movements. This ensures more objective dialogue and interaction, as well as learning from a broader constituency. It may reveal access to resources which are not immediately available within the locality.

Foster eternal interaction

A prayer movement is consolidated when its events provide a learning environment for the participants. The prayer vision is best “caught” rather than “taught.” When an event’s format teaches the participants by experience, they will be refreshed and transformed by that experience. This is vital in maintaining forward momentum.

Remember that event formats must teach

Prayer Rallies and Concerts are invaluable expressions of the movement of prayer in an area. However, they are not the movement itself. Movements are made of people. This must never be forgotten. It is possible to become so involved with events and overfill the calendar that the events no longer serve but dominate. Events are important but must be kept in perspective.

Keep events in perspective

Vital to preservation is a continuing commitment to prayerful and careful review. Especially as a Leadership Team grows closer together, it becomes more difficult to accept valid outside criticism. The group dynamic can become dysfunctional for the purposes of honest assessment. This is a good reason to ensure that criticisms and suggestions are all discussed with the Lord in prayer as extensively as they are aired in the group. Then have the courage to take action on the criticism and make necessary changes.

Review prayerfully and regularly

Fighting the Good Fight

Within a year, three more cities were added to the first three, and we had grand visions of the initial beginning. We thought it was just going to grow and take over our cities, and everybody thought the same thing—next month was going to be double and triple of what we had before.

It didn't work that way. Rather than growing, we began to see our attendance decrease and this was true with almost every development. Two movements ceased altogether, lacking that firm commitment, and others found that the attrition served to strengthen their commitment to go all the way through to triumph and victory in the promised outpouring of the Spirit of God.

And we've gotten down in some of them to as low as six or eight in attendance. I asked at one Prayer Leaders Retreat how many you could reduce to and still legitimately call it a city-wide concert of prayer. Nobody answered me at that meeting, but I got my answer in one city when we got down to six.

I went to that meeting and thought maybe this would be their last one. I didn't want them to continue just because I wanted it to continue, and I said to them, "How do you feel? Do you think we ought to keep going?" Now there were five churches represented in those six people. There was no way they were going to quit! I never saw a more excited, committed group with full faith that God was going to do this thing in their city.

Now they have grown in size and out of their prayers have come the rallies where fifteen churches will unite for a Sunday evening to focus on spiritual awakening.

—Regional prayer leader, USA

Shoring Up Worksheet

GIVEN HUMAN nature and Satan's intense hatred of prayer, a prayer movement is a delicate thing. It can be led astray or even snuffed out. Like with a relationship, one must work to keep communication flowing and trust building. In fact, a prayer movement is just a great network of relationships all formed around the central focus of the Kingdom. The best way to maintain these relationships is to regularly evaluate.

1. Are there significant constituencies regularly absent from your prayer events? List them. Ask why this is so and what might be done to encourage their participation. Consider inviting a key leader from this constituency to lead a part of the event or requesting that this group host an event.

2. Are new names being added to your mailing list? Are they genuine "converts" to the vision? If the rate of these "conversions" appears to be falling, make this a matter of prayerful inquiry and discussion.

3. Review the event formats which you are currently using. Are they appropriate to what people now need to be learning about prayer?

4. Consider what links you have to other prayer movements, in the region, nation and world. If links are non-existent or weak, how might they be nurtured?

5. Once a year, review the events and communication methods. Ask of each:
 - a. Why do we do this/what is its purpose.
 - b. Is it effective?
 - c. Are local congregations benefitting from this? Do the pastors perceive that their congregations are benefitting?
 - d. Are there more effective ways to achieve the goal?
 - e. Are there cheaper ways of achieving it?
 - f. Do we still need to achieve the goal?
 - g. Could/should we cease any specific activity?

Encouragement

A CRITICAL FACTOR in any long-haul situation is the presence or absence of encouragement. This will certainly be true of a developing movement of prayer. The Barnabas factor needs to be constantly kept in mind so as to sustain a seeking people at prayer together.

The leadership team stands or falls together. Be sure to seek out every way possible to show appreciation for each other's labors, to recite again your faith in God for the prayer movement, and to cover each other in prayer when the battle begins to take its toll in some specific ways. Regular team meetings should allow time for these dynamics to take place.

Encourage yourself and one another by frequently reviewing biblical and historical accounts of God moving in answer to prayer. Remind yourself that the one who did it before is perfectly capable of doing it again.

It's good to look back periodically and note how the prayer movement has grown and progressed—more churches involved, more faith exercised in the prayers prayed, etc. For details about tracking your prayer movement and interpreting the answers, see the section in Chapter Six on developing your own case study. If you feel discouraged, like you're not getting any answers or getting anywhere at all, re-read the section on Remarkable Reasons Why You Should Pray Even If You Feel Like You're Getting No Answers. Evaluate how your prayer movement is growing and progressing in each of these areas.

In sustaining a movement of prayer, it is most important to record specific answers to prayer for spiritual awakening and worldwide evangelization. Such a record is vital to encourage participants.

Frequently answers may not be apparent to the Leadership Team. This is why opportunity for testimony should become an integral part of any Prayer Concert/ gathering. The Prayer Rally in particular provides more time to focus on and celebrate all that God is beginning to do in response to the movement of prayer.

It is important to maintain contact with church leaders as the prayer movement develops. In particular, a key question to ask is whether they feel that the movement of prayer is supporting them and their

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**Nurture one another
on the team**

**Rehearse the ways of
God**

**Keep track of how the
prayer movement is
growing**

**Keep track of God's
answers**

Talk with leaders

congregation or constituency. This often uncovers some very encouraging testimonies, not so much about answers to prayer but about the way in which the pray-ers from their churches are being changed.

It is easy to be discouraged, especially with numbers. Sometimes we become convinced that only huge crowds measure effectiveness. Wisdom must prevail in the measures we establish. Perhaps one of the most crucial statistics and one which may be far more encouraging than attendance figures alone is the number attending as a percentage of the committed believers in a locale. Breadth of representation is also a vital ingredient. Diversity and involvement are much more important to a movement of braver than numbers alone.

Encouragement Worksheet

NO ONE CAN continue in a vacuum. Even God's most dedicated prophets got discouraged when they couldn't see the fruits of their ministry. To keep going, we need to be encouraged. How can you weave principles of encouragement into your local prayer movement?

1. On an annual basis, as a Leadership Team review the significant answers to prayer and outcomes of the prayer movement. Invite people to make you aware of answers they have seen. Ask other leaders to comment on effects on their congregations and ministries. Rejoice and give thanks over these recorded responses.

Take a moment now to jot down some answers to prayer that come to mind.

2. What other benefits do you see coming out of the prayer movement? Refer back to the Remarkable Reasons article, if need be.
3. Make sure that on a regular basis, these stories of God's grace get told. This would include verbal testimony at your prayer events and in written form through your newsletter/publicity items. Where might you schedule public testimonies in to your prayer events? Will you ask for testimonies from the floor or will you select a few people beforehand?
4. Keep records not just of the numbers attending your events, but statistics like the number of new participants, diversity of church background, and numbers of those sensing the call to being pacesetters. Compare them regularly and note your growth. Where you see new churches or new ethnic constituencies added to the prayer movement, jot a note of thanks and encouragement to the pacesetter or prayer leader who was responsible for drawing them in.
5. How can your leadership team become more effective at encouraging each other in the work of serving your prayer movement?

Development

HAVING a strategy for protection and encouragement, you are now ready to move on to development steps. Here are some principles that emerge from some of the more developed prayer movements. However, it must be said that a greater range of diversity is to be found at this stage than at the earlier two. These principles might best be regarded as an exploration of some of the possibilities which God might call you to consider.

Although various prayer events may be the public face of your prayer movement, it is essential that you continue to stress the movement dimension. It is vital that people gain an awareness that they themselves are the movement of prayer. This ensures the broader development of the prayer movement because all that they learn in prayer becomes integrated throughout every other dimension of the body of Christ.

Whereas in the earlier phases events were essential to create and hold interest, at later points, communication networks, smaller groups and more effective church based prayer may emerge as the most significant elements which the prayer movement leadership merely seeks to serve. (See page 90 to review the four major levels of a movement: concert, closet, cluster, congregation.)

An extremely effective means of receiving stimulus and maintaining interest is to develop a relationship with another prayer movement. This might be in the same nation or overseas or even both. To exhort and learn from one another is of great mutual benefit. Often there is insufficient time or opportunity for this in the early life of a movement of prayer, but in mature development such a relationship can invigorate and rekindle vision.

The Sister City Phenomena

Several months after a significant prayer meeting that united many pastors of many traditions, I heard about a similar movement in a capital city, about the size of our city, in another state. I called the chairman of their committee on the phone. We were so greatly encouraged by each other's situation that we decided to adopt one another. As sister cities we reported to each other and prayed for one another.

—Urban prayer leader, USA

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**Foster the movement
mentally**

**Build a sister city
relationship**

We decided we had to get Christians together to pray for our city. Several of us began to pray and eventually we had a sister city phenomena occur also. We heard about a deal going on up in a city 1,000 miles away. So seven of us flew up there to pray and sit at their feet and wrestle through the dynamics of their situation.

—Urban prayer leader, USA

To do this, read the essay on Remarkable Reasons to be Involved in a Prayer Movement and then see how many of these benefits you can identify at this point in your prayer thrust. Share these benefits with pastors not yet involved in the prayer movement. Point out the benefits presently accrued to the prayer movement and express hope for seeing the others blossom.

Highlight the many benefits of an on-going prayer movement

Judging by the experience of many existing city prayer movements, development is likely to occur as new ministries are birthed out of the very prayers of the united gatherings. This in turn feeds the prayers still further. It is important to expectantly pray for such developments. Recently, a six-year-old prayer movement sent out one of its own as a missionary. As he went, he noted, “Be sure that it’s very dangerous to become a part of a movement of prayer like this, because if you pray that God will do a work that will change the world and offer yourself to be a part of it, He’ll take you up on it.”

Pray for new ministries to emerge

As your work grows and you interact with and adopt ideas from other areas, always strive to contextualize these ideas. They must be appropriate to your situation. As a Leadership Team, work on understanding the principles effective in the proposal rather than just the vehicle for those principles. The vehicle may need to be redesigned to fit your context. Such ideas will emerge only from a Leadership Team which commits itself to read and study widely in the matter of united prayer.

Contextualize borrowed ideas

Large scale prayer rallies are very important as a part of maintaining and accelerating the momentum. The prayer rallies of an established movement emphasize and celebrate the outcomes of the prayer movement to that moment. In this celebration, and in the preaching that will accompany it in the rally, the “conversion” process will continue. This is the principle aim of the rally in earlier stages of the development of a prayer movement: to convert people to the hope we’re praying toward and to the call to united prayer.

Use rallies occasionally

Throw Your Net Wide

The larger events are like the net thrown out and drawn in, then the Spirit of God separates the fish. What you may end up with is the smaller band, but it was the larger event that helped draw them in. What happens is that you've now got the diversity in the smaller band that you might not have had if you hadn't thrown out the net wide.

—*International prayer leader, USA*

There is a limit to the growth of a prayer movement implicit in the amount of time that people can give to fostering it. In several existing movements of prayer, further growth has been facilitated by the appointment of a full time coordinator. Not infrequently, this person is one of the initiators.

The responsibilities of such a person would be to:

- a. serve and inspire the Leadership Team.
- b. oversee planning and administration both of the committee and of specific events.
- c. teach and mobilize the churches, including regular visits with the local spiritual leaders.
- d. act as a “broker” for external resources and prayer ministries outside your locale.
- e. represent the movement regionally and nationally.

Another effective way in which to develop a prayer movement appears to be to give it away! By sending out reporters to share the news, a prayer movement can both give birth to other initiatives and learn new insights itself. This is very much a part of one leader's vision based out of a prayer movement in Vancouver and seeking to share from there throughout Canada.

Around Town

We have found that people feel more comfortable in regional meetings. I would be just tremendously blessed if every little church had their own concert of prayer.

—*Regional prayer leader, USA*

We hope to have many concerts of prayer around town in which various areas of the town can meet each other and be together. As a group we coordinate three major city-wide activities a year

Appoint a full time person

Send out mobilizers

—National Day of Prayer, National Week of Prayer, and our Shalom Week of Prayer.

—*Urban prayer leader, USA*

Some prayer movements begin by uniting smaller prayer groups. Others begin with large events and later break out into smaller groups. By breaking down into smaller areas, it is often possible to see the momentum accelerated as the committed find it easier to bring along their less committed friends. Furthermore, this approach enables younger leaders to be developed in smaller scale events in preparation for larger activities ahead of them.

Break down into smaller units as it grows

Here are some tried ways of breaking the movement down.

- a. Geographic subdivision. Here, the Prayer Concert or other vehicle is transferred to a smaller geographic area, so that three or four areas throughout the city replace a centralized event for most of the year.
- b. Multiple levels. With this, there may be several levels or layers. The prayer movement in a southern city has moved to a basic component of individual church-based prayer concerts with a second tier of twice-yearly citywide gatherings.

Development Worksheet

HOW MIGHT you enhance the expansion of the prayer movement in your area? Take a few moments to reflect on the principles given above, then answer the following questions.

1. On a regular basis, encourage members of your Leadership Team to share any reading/research they have undertaken about other prayer movements. Discuss these presentations as a group, aiming to agree upon concepts and formats that might be adapted to your own situation. When was the last time you did this? How might you weave it into the agenda of the next meeting? Will you need to encourage your team to action in this area?
2. Since everyone has a natural tendency to focus on events, appoint someone to have specific responsibility to keep bringing the group back to the support and background functions i.e. the prayer bulletins, a telephone prayer line, church-based prayer programs, seminar program, triplet schemes and any other element in your prayer movement which sustains the movement emphasis. This person should be asked to constantly evaluate the group's suggestions and policies in the light of this dimension. Who might this person be on your Leadership Team?
3. What might be the criteria which you would use to judge whether or not a full-time person is required to assist the development of the prayer movement? Discuss this well ahead of time. In your annual evaluation, review these criteria and the decision.
4. If yours is a prayer movement of three years or more, how might you share with others what God has been doing? How might you most effectively share this experience with the wider Body of Christ? Discuss this with the Leadership Team and make recommendations.
5. Look at the article on Remarkable Reasons To Be Involved in Chapter Two. How are any of these benefits in evidence as your movement continues to grow?

Leadership

GOOD LEADERSHIP is of course crucial to the continued development of any ministry. In considering these principles, there is a very strong consensus of experience. Those reading this manual may be anywhere on the prayer movement continuum from a congregation-wide prayer movement to a major city-wide one. Determine where you are on the continuum and adapt the suggestions which most closely apply to you.

There is a vital link between development and a Leadership Team which prays together. It is in praying together that God reveals much of his heart and purposes. In prayer the Leadership Team seeks to receive what God is currently saying to their area in terms of spiritual awakening and world evangelization. When a Leadership Team finds itself with too little time to pray together, that is the moment to review priorities.

God is creative. He is constantly moving onwards. It is your part in the leadership of a movement of prayer to seek to move with the Spirit. Maintain commitment to the vision. Stand loose with regard to its vehicles.

The future development of a prayer movement depends also upon the nurturing of new, younger leaders. In many countries around the world, God is creating a new prayer thrust among young people. They need to be recognized as the pacesetters they are. Involvement in giving testimonies, assisting and taking responsibility as church representatives, and graduating through shared ministry to leading smaller events are all part of an apprenticeship process that can help establish a new generation of movement leaders. Pray for such leaders to emerge.

Since the prayer movement is a gift of God, it is vital for the development of that movement that the Leadership Team constantly seek God's desires for it. There is a tendency as things become bigger to assume that they will continue exactly as before and almost run themselves. This tendency must be guarded against very strongly. God may well have a specific theme for each concert of prayer. The team must listen together to him to discern how to proceed in leading the next concert to pray around that theme. One way to facilitate the seeking of God's mind is for the team to take a day or a half day prayer retreat annually, bi-annually, or quarterly as needed.

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**A Leadership Team
must pray together**

Stay flexible

**Develop new,
younger leaders**

**Seek God's mind and
heart for the prayer
movement**

Perhaps the most important priority for any Leadership Team in an established prayer movement is to keep the vision for the whole group firmly in focus. Without this, organization and inertia can take over.

Keep the vision clear

Keeping the vision clear means several things:

- a. prayerfully reviewing and learning.
- b. restating and preaching it at the concerts.
- c. clarifying partial fulfillments for the participants.
- d. growing aware of new implications of the prayer movement for the advance of the Kingdom.
- e. reading together books on revival and related issues, such as *The State of the Church* by Andrew Murray. A list of recommended books is included in the appendices.

One key to clarity is this: since we need all of the insights of all of God's children in the light of all Christ desires to do through His whole body to encompass the purposes of God, the more believers committed to the united movement of prayer, the more we will be sure to grasp the vision as God intends it to be.

God Establishes His Leaders

When we began the concert of prayer, we started with five prayer leaders who felt God was calling them to this as a priority in their lives. We found that out of the five, only two truly had a heart or an understanding for revival, and therefore the prayer that the other three were leading was not as appropriate. They would, in a sense, divert into doing their own thing, which ate up a lot of the prayer time. Mainly they fell away on their own for various reasons and others came on the team who really understood the agenda.

—Urban prayer leader,
USA

One of the burdens of any leadership responsibility is the necessity to be willing to decide on initiatives which have to be undertaken. This includes ceasing as well as commencing activities. This can frequently be a difficult, painful and misunderstood aspect of leadership. But if the movement is to go forward, such decisions will need to be taken—sometimes at the cost of misunderstanding.

Leadership must take initiatives as required

Levels of Leadership

We have two levels of steering committees. I have a group of ten leaders in the 25-35 age bracket, some a little older, and they can pull off regional concerts of prayer. That's our

younger leader steering committee. They meet once a month for an afternoon to pray and share about revival, be encouraged by others with the same heart, then go and lead their concerts of prayer on the scale that they can, given the relationships that they have. That's a significant group of people building trust and being knit together. They have just sort of emerged out of being excited about what God is doing in concerts of prayer. They fled into me when we did some of the larger events—that's how we found them and got them involved.

I have another level where I work with the pastors of the largest churches and that's really our base for city-wide concerts of prayer. I personally cannot pull them together in a formal steering committee that meets monthly So here I operate in a much more decentralized fashion. And with the larger, citywide concerts of prayer, we've had pretty much a different committee for each one.

—*Urban prayer leader,
USA*

View local and regional prayer training events as prime opportunities for you to grow and be challenged in your vision. Plan to attend as many as you can fit into your schedule, and be sure it will take that effort on your part! It's beneficial not only to you, but also to the movement You can pass on information gathered as well as evaluate the training event for others.

National prayer events are key opportunities to network with other prayer leaders. Not only a great encouragement, they are also prime strategy-swapping occasions. Check with your national prayer committee as well as with the "Intercessors For..." Network (they network intercessors within a country to pray for spiritual awakening In that country).

Attend regional and national conferences

Leadership Worksheet

A MOVEMENT can go no further than its leaders. You can lead them no further than you have been yourself. Where do you and your fellow leaders stand?

1. Review your last two leadership meetings. Honestly evaluate the proportion of your time which you spent in prayer. If it is less than 30%, discuss together *if* this should be improved. Set a clearly agreed goal.
2. What is the prevailing attitude on the Leadership Team when someone suggests a change in format? A new program? How attached are you to the present vehicles *of* your prayer movement? Would you rate your Leadership Team as more flexible or more traditional?
3. If you haven't done so for at least nine months, compose or review a list of names which you brainstorm of emerging younger leaders for the prayer movement. Prayerfully allocate each of these names on your list to members of your team, with the responsibility to pray with and research potential involvement of these persons.
4. What is the vision statement for your local movement of prayer? If you don't already have one, prayerfully develop one. A half-day retreat may be the perfect opportunity to do this. A covenant would be a good foundation. If you do have one and haven't reviewed it in the last twelve months, do so. Especially take time together to ask God if he is wanting to give you new emphases. Subsequently take a critical look at how this vision is communicated. Encourage a diversity of your leadership to share this vision creatively in public; don't let the same person communicate vision all the time.
5. Ask yourselves the following question at least once every six months: are there any uncomfortable decisions which we have been avoiding? How can we deal with them in a timely fashion?

Middle-Age Crisis

ALL LIVING things develop and grow. Development goes through stages. Each stage carries its own set of crises. The better prepared we are for those challenges, the better able we are to handle them.

It's true for humans. It's also true for a prayer movement. It too is alive, in development, facing crises from time to time. When it reaches a middle-age stage, there are certain complications that must be dealt with if the movement is to remain healthy and keep growing.

What is "middle-age" for a prayer movement? Each situation is different. It may occur after the first couple of years. Sometimes the snags are very apparent, at other times quite subtle. But usually the sign is that the movement has begun to settle for the status quo, and has ceased to be compelled with a sense that there is so much more God is yet willing to pour out on a seeking people.

One diagnostic tool incorporates these three questions on the status quo. How your movement reacts to such probings will alert you to a possible crisis:

1. Is there more of Christ God desires to reveal in and through his Church in this community than we have yet seen?
2. In light of the current conditions of the Church, do we need to seek that fuller revelation of Christ more than we do now?
3. In light of the great challenges facing us in our city and among the nations, can we ever seek that fuller revelation of Christ too much?

You may want to spend a few minutes letting your next concert of prayer grapple with these questions. As a follow up, you might want to read and discuss Andrew Murray's classic, *The State of the Church*.

One caution: not every problem that surfaces proves that you're in a crisis! For example, if your prayer movement has decreased in numbers over the past two years, this may be a good sign. God may be sifting out those who are curious, excitable, transient, unwilling, and unprepared so that he can forge a solid core of prayer pacesetters who will carry the movement forward until God answers in total. Such a forging process is no crisis. It is essential in any prayer movement. With such a core in place, the movement can eventually take off.

As a leadership team, we need to help our prayer movement carefully interpret what God is doing within the ebb-and-flow of that work. We need to be sure that we help the pray-ers to be encouraged in every possible way, while at the same time leading them to realistically confront true crisis where it occurs.

Spiritual warfare is a prime cause in this middle-age crisis. Take a look at the closing verses of Acts 5 and the opening ones of Acts 6. You see the enemy at work without and within the movement. First it's the local

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What Does Crisis Look Like?

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Toll**

authorities persecuting the church. That's quite clearly the enemy. But in chapter six, he uses a much more subtle approach: disunity and division. If he couldn't squelch them from without, he would divide them into camps. But the apostles sought the wisdom of God and de-fused the bomb. The result? The word of God spread.

We need to be aware of the many strategies of the enemy to divide and conquer. Do a study on spiritual warfare in the Bible. Seek to identify ways Satan might try to undermine your prayer movement. As a group, you might also want to work through the 31 studies in *Born for Battle* by R. Arthur Matthews, published by the Overseas Missionary Fellowship.

An unfortunate characteristic of our society is that people do not stay committed to something for long periods of time. To keep people committed and involved, you need two things. The first is careful preparation and variety. Sameness and the lack of creativity often reflect a spirit of laziness on the part of leadership. We must work hard to bring new enthusiasm, forms and people into our movement. Prayer, planning and preparation are ongoing tasks of leadership.

A second necessity is to assure people that their prayers count. This involves focused objective praying and the sharing of results. It also involves clear biblical understanding of the role of prayer. People have choices. They will go where they can sense God is working. Older movements must keep this dynamic alive.

It's easy to let talking and teaching dominate your concert of prayer. As the prayer movement ages, we often tend to begin using it as a soapbox for convincing others of our pet agendas and projects. Gradually the actual praying becomes more like brief bridges between lots of speeches. Many ministers are very good at and comfortable with teaching, while rather unfamiliar and inexperienced with techniques of leading people into prayer. As more pastors get involved, you'll need to carefully brief them on the vision and various formats for leading into prayer. One way to approach the situation is to have someone familiar with the vision facilitate the prayer segments, while the ministers approach the microphone, not to speak, but to pray their concerns.

We must remain vigilant. Be sure that people get praying as soon as possible after they've arrived, so that they sense this is a prayer meeting and not simply a glorified worship service. However, it may be good to break somewhere after the first half hour to have fifteen minutes or so of "vision giving." This gives more specific direction to our praying for the rest of the concert.

Sustaining the drive

Don't let teaching dominate praying

In giving the vision, we must insure that it follows the pattern Jesus preached at the very outset of his ministry: Hope (time is fulfilled, the Kingdom is at hand), repent, and believe (as in: “Through united prayer believe God’s promises and seize the good news that God is on the move to awaken and involve his people by a new revelation of the Lord Jesus Christ and of his advancing Kingdom”).

The use of overheads is a great means of transferring information in the least amount of time possible. Handouts might also be used. Maximize the time set aside for prayer so that the vision-giving time doesn’t seem like one more long speech among a host of others.

Frequency has to be determined by a number of factors. One is the size of the city itself. In a smaller city everyone can come together without any hardship to anyone due to excessive travel. In larger cities, city-wide gatherings need to be more infrequent, such as quarterly, to overcome the hurdle of excessive travel.

Then there’s the factor of local church concerts of prayer. Once congregations have caught the vision for concerts of prayer, we want to see such efforts developed in the life of churches. It may be necessary to have a city-wide concert of prayer rally only once or twice a year, then do the training necessary to be sure that the vision, faith and format of the rally infiltrates every other facet of the Body of Christ in the intervening weeks and months.

Finally, when we do have monthly concerts of prayer, our vision is not to get every Christian in the city to show up. Churches have many other activities. The vision is that every church have a “delegation” that they send to the concert of prayer. If we can get “busy churches” to send delegations, knowing the impact those delegations may have when they return and infiltrate the prayer life of their churches, we can easily leap the hurdle of heavy programming.

One prayer movement has addressed this issue in a unique way. They used to have monthly city-wide gatherings. After several years the leadership team noticed a certain stratification had taken place among the pray-ers. Some were clearly being called to intercede regularly and often for spiritual awakening. Many felt less of a call to this more serious intercession.

To best serve both strata of pray-ers, they turned to having quarterly city-wide Concert of Prayer Rallies. For this they “pull out all the stops” to get as many out as possible, hoping to pull more into the second strata of commitment. During the intervening two months each quarter, they hold smaller Concerts of Prayer to which select “pacesetters” are invited representing the many participating congregations—a few from each. At these smaller concerts, the pacesetters tackle the prayer agenda on a somewhat deeper level and also receive training for mobilizing prayer

Discern the Needed Frequency of the Concerts of Prayer

back in their churches. Finally, they pray and prepare to bring many others with them to the quarterly Rally. This smaller monthly Concert of Prayer may be too frequent for most, but it becomes priority for those whom God has called to act as pacesetters for the entire prayer movement.

Here's a good news/bad news story. You've gone out and broadened the prayer movement just as was suggested. And now you have enough traditions and expressions of prayer and worship that some people there feel uncomfortable with the same expressions that make others feel right at home. And certain leaders draw one crowd while excluding another. Here's a few ideas to help you deal with issues like there.

At every prayer gathering, up-front leadership must again review the fact of the various traditions and prayer styles, and call for sensitivity on the part of all. The goal must be humility, love, acceptance, and maintenance of the unity of the Spirit by every means. One approach that has sometimes helped here is to have Christians from the same prayer traditions sit in the same section of the auditorium. That way they can experience both the "security" of praying with their "own kind" and the thrill of being united at various points throughout the meeting prayer with people from other traditions.

THE QUESTION may arise whether or not a leader's denomination is one with which we desire to affiliate. It would be good to play down the fact that the leader is there as an official representative of a church or particular denomination. We need to promote the platform leadership team as those who are spiritual leaders in the city and who qualify fundamentally by their vision for spiritual awakening and their life of prayer springing from their life in Jesus.

It is important to maintain a wide representation of leaders at the concerts of prayer. In determining who should lead from the platform, we might consider if that leader has shown visible commitment to the need for spiritual awakening. Involve the leader, not only as a pray-er, but as someone who can rightfully lead others to the throne of grace on the two great themes of fullness and fulfillment.

Any promotional literature for the concert of prayer may list simply, "an interdenominational, city-wide event." You might opt to print a disclaimer on the evening program to the effect that: "This concert of prayer is not designed to give an official endorsement to specific churches, denominations or groups represented on the platform. That is not the purpose of this prayer rally. 'This is a special event for Christians of all traditions to meet together around the Lordship of Jesus Christ under the authority of Scripture, to address the great biblical themes towards which

Struggling to blend diverse traditions and expressions

we will pray this night, namely spiritual awakening and world evangelization.”

If the committee believes anyone might be uncomfortable with the possible doctrinal stand of any church leader, the Lausanne Covenant might be used to assure theological harmony in all the basics. Let those asked to lead from the platform read over and give consent to the Lausanne Covenant as a document expressing theologically the focus and spirit of the prayer rally itself.

Mainline Churches

One time, in the Episcopal Cathedral, a woman got up and prayed, “I thank you Lord, here in the Cathedral we’re seeing the Spirit work where we never thought we’d see the Spirit work.” The Bishop was sitting next to me and I thought, “There’s the end of our work with the mainline churches.” He turned to me and said, “Hey man, I never thought I’d see it either!” God had protected us!

—*Urban prayer leader,
USA*

THE CHARISMATIC renewal has penetrated more and more church traditions. Thus you will invariably have charismatics and non-charismatics attending the concerts of prayer as it grows larger. As a Leadership Team, you desire to make all church traditions feel comfortable in prayer together. The problem is each tradition may have jargon, attitudes, prayer styles and physical activity that can be offensive to the other. How can we help each other respect our differences, honor one another, and even appreciate one another in some aspects of those differences, and yet work together to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bonds of love? Both views must be sure not to take over the prayer movement for their unique agendas or peculiarities. Both should seek not to offend the Spirit of God.

As far as the exercise of the gift of tongues in the public prayer setting, part of the answer may be to depend on charismatic leaders leading from the front to give cues to those in the audience as to how they should or should not respond. It may also be good for these respected leaders to say something at the beginning of the concert of prayer about our attempt to “preserve the unity of the Spirit” by not doing anything that will offend or discourage the spirit of unified prayer. At the same time, it’s good to say from up front that we need to learn to honor one another and receive one another, and even learn from one another’s differences.

The Unity of the Spirit

We acknowledge that prayer and revival are movements of the Spirit. And yet sadly, it is over the very work of the Spirit that we divide. I believe that the safe-guard is in Scripture. The focus of our attention must be on the Lamb and obedience to him and on his message going out into all the earth. As our focus is there and we are constantly humbled, broken, and anointed from the throne, then we will need and we will accept in one another the diverse and sovereign gifts that the Holy Spirit gives to bring about his purpose of revival in the Church and evangelism in the world and the reaching of the nations.

—*Urban prayer leader,
Canada*

In both these last two issues, we must do what we can to build bridges between ourselves and those in whose hearts the Spirit of God is moving. The prayer movement is not designed to build relationships between organizations and structures; it is designed to build relationships between those who are believers and seekers within all structures, who are therefore part of the true Body of Christ within the city.

It's His Movement!

Once when we held the city-wide concert of prayer in a large, evangelical church, a pastor sang in tongues from up front. Now our feeling was that some people in the group would be those who speak in tongues, and we're doing a concert so every voice is raised and all the voices should blend. But when we dominate, we alienate, and when we blend, we mend and heal the body of Christ. He didn't blend, he dominated. I was thinking, "This is it, the end of the prayer movement." But the pastor who was the head of the evangelical church thought the man was speaking in Spanish and nothing came of it!"

—*Urban prayer leader,
USA*

What keeps the Church in a city from uniting in anything—especially in a movement of prayer? Here are three culprits:

- 1) We all have a natural tendency to simply want to be around the people "like us" and to avoid those who are different. We want to stay in our comfort zones. Sometimes this may be a deeper issue of prejudice. In any case, we are suspicious, defensive and awkward. And because it's hard to get beyond the differences, we may just be too lazy to try!
- 2) The larger, more successful congregations may have no "felt need" for anybody else. They are quite satisfied and proud how their church currently functions. Even when they have misgiving about their own effectiveness, because of the reputation they hold within

the Christian community they are not about to get involved in a prayer movement where their own desperations and short-comings become common knowledge. It really is a matter of the hand telling the eye that it isn't needed to get the job done. (I Cor. 12:21). After all, what can the smaller, struggling churches possibly add to what the prestigious churches are now accomplishing in reaching the city and the world? Obviously such arrogance cuts the nerve of revival even for the larger church.

- 3) On the other side, many of the struggling, poorer, smaller, less visible, less powerful (organizationally) congregations often wrestle with feelings of rejection, failure, and inferiority. They may actually question what significance they could ever have in a new wave of spiritual awakening. They may feel so far out of the mainstream of God's work in their city—and so embroiled in their own survival issues—that they would never expect to be wanted or included in a movement of united prayer. Embarrassed and insecure about their corporate image, they would rather avoid getting into a situation where they are contrasted once more with the “big guys.” Even in the call to a movement of prayer, they can be heard to say... Because I am not a hand, I do not belong to the body (I Cor. 12:15).

Sometimes after a prayer movement has been around for a few years, it can begin to settle into a comfortable rut. Often these ruts may not run exactly parallel to the original vision of the prayer movement, so imperceptibly it can move off course until it may stray far from original goals, such as leading people into prayer, keeping prayer focused on spiritual awakening and world evangelization, etc. Or it may be that your prayer movement has reached a comfortable size and you are no longer striving to include every church. After all, you may reason, those who are going to join us have already done so.

Similar to a river, in this stage you are in middle life. At the birth of a river, the water flows swiftly and cuts a deep gorge. Later it slows down and begins to widen that channel. The only problem with widening the channel is that silt builds up slowly and after a time, the river hardly flows at all. It is at this stage that one of two things might happen. One, the river slows down and eventually dries up. The other is that there is sudden elevation at the head springs of the river and the water begins to flow more swiftly again, cutting deeper and wider.

When you notice signs of the local prayer movement slowing down, you need to seek elevation of the head waters. It begins with prayer, laying hold of God for a fresh outburst of a spirit of prayer upon the people of God.

Picking up the pace

It includes a strategy to dig deeper wells. This may involve visiting the pastors not yet involved, just as you did at the formation of the prayer movement. Bring them similar information about the vision of the prayer movement and include a listing of answers received so far in response to prayers raised at the city-wide concert of prayer.

It may also include refreshing the vision of the Leadership Team as well as educating or re-educating those ministers participating in leading the prayer gatherings as to the desired format.

You may wish for each member of the Leadership Team to evaluate his or her commitment to the prayer movement. Evaluate as well the amount of time he or she can realistically invest in expanding the movement. This may be the time where you feel the need to release a team member full-time to advance the prayer movement.

Don't be afraid to spawn other concerts of prayer. In large metropolitan areas with greater people density, people may feel more ownership and involvement in a concert of prayer closer to home. Target other small cities or communities near your area and help start a concert of prayer there. Invite those pastors to visit your concert of prayer, to participate in it, and then to start one of their own. Don't fear competition. Once or twice a year have a region-wide prayer rally.

Initiating Concerts

Our city is quite spread out, so we've chosen about six areas in the city and have initiated concerts of prayer with local pastors taking responsibility in their area.

*—Urban prayer leader--
Canada*

Sometimes what seems like a crisis is simply and profoundly the Holy Spirit's signal to the steering committee that the time has come to re-negotiate their commitment to serve the prayer movement. For example, as the movement matures and broadens, it simply requires more time from the committee, both in intercession for the movement as well as time spent in training pacesetters and preparing for up-coming prayer concerts. More time means more sacrifice; it involves the "pain" of re-ordering priorities and of crucifying some of our personal desires and ambitions—for the sake of something greater!

Experience suggests that the point will come when a leadership team may need to commit as much as eight hours a month serving a monthly concert of prayer. That may be twice the time given when the work first began .

**Give Birth to Another
Nearby Prayer
Movement**

**The Leadership Team
comes under the
Cross**

But, because the prayer movement is, in truth, the “frontline” advance of Christ’s kingdom, this increase in effort should come as no surprise.

That’s a substantial price to pay. How would the time be used? Again, from the experience of other committees, it might be divided into

- 1) Two hours a month for the team to be together in prayer over the movement and in discussion and reflection on what God is doing in it and where it needs to grow more.
- 2) Two hours to plan for the next regular concert of prayer (which includes an evaluation of the last one). During this session the leaders lay out the format and themes, determine who will do what at the concert and delegate responsibilities for promotion, etc. Also time is spent identifying a specific passage of scripture from which vision and particular prayer agendas would be presented during the concert itself.
- 3) Further, each of the committee members may need to spend as much as four hours over the month fulfilling individual assignments such as:
 - regular visits to pastors to get their impression of the prayer movement and to find out ways it can serve them better.
 - phoning the pacesetters or contact persons within each congregation to be sure they are doing what needs to happen to get people from the local church to the next prayer event. At times, training may need to be provided (like a Saturday morning one-hour “Pacesetters Workshop”).
 - Contacting those who are asked to give up-front leadership at the next concert, to be sure they are prepared to carry out their roles.
 - sending out mailings—some prayer movements actually publish their own local newsletters—to the growing list of concert participants.

Finally there is one other dimension of the cross that will bear in on the Leadership Team as the movement grows. Increasingly they will feel with Christ HIS burden for awakening and renewed missions to the world. At times the weight of the Church’s frequent indifference to spiritual things and to Kingdom concerns will press in on them. Like Paul in Colossians 1:24, they will be called upon by the Holy Spirit to “fill up what is lacking in Christ’s sufferings on behalf of the Church, which is his body...” God will deal with them as leaders so that the “flesh” is put aside and personal revival becomes an on-going experience. Only then will they serve with full integrity and authority.

Then too, the team will also invade new theaters of spiritual warfare that will take their toll, just as the enemy struck, unsuccessfully, at Christ on the cross. Victory is promised—but so is conflict.

None of these “cross-crises” are to be regretted or avoided. In fact, they are one of our greatest assurances that the prayer movement is on the move!

Many existing prayer movements note that they had to close some activities down at certain points. Several expressed an awareness that until they were willing to “let it go,” the breakthrough would not arrive. If you feel that this more drastic step may be necessary, be sure to express it and carry it out in the following terms:

1. You are dismantling the current effort in order to see it reconstituted in a more effective form and approach.
2. That you’re giving the “official” prayer movement a rest, for a season, but are very open to any ways God may choose to raise it up again in his time.
3. That you intend to keep uniting with others—even if only a few for now—to press on in prayer for spiritual awakening and for the prayer movement locally and world-wide.
4. That your main desire is to see God raise up the work—even from the “dead” as it were—and vindicate the movement, so that he might receive maximum glory as the vision is finally fulfilled.

One leadership team speaks of closing down a Concert of Prayer that had been going in their city for four years. “It had been identified so closely with one church that God spoke a word very clearly that we had to put it to rest. So we ended it. Then we went underground for a while. There were about five or six of us who began to meet in someone’s home. Soon there were fifteen to twenty people representing five churches in the city—that was a breakthrough. And they represented five countries of the world—that was entirely new. We just sensed that God had a new thing to do. Eventually we knew it was time to re-surface and open it for the whole body. Before long we had over thirty churches involved with us.”

One of the great crises every developing prayer movement faces is our need to “see” tangible answers to our prayers. After two or three years of seeking God for spiritual awakening and fresh new Kingdom advances we ask—where are the results? Contemporary American culture intensifies this restlessness, pushing us to look for instant success and undelayed satisfaction. We’re such pragmatists that if we have to spend too long on something that postpones the pay-off, we’re quick to jump ship and move on to something that will get to the “bottom-line.”

Jesus knew we’d have this crisis. So he instructed us to become like a desperate widow (Luke 18:1-6) who lives with the conviction that if the Judge does not rule on her behalf, she has no other option, no other Hope, no other reason to live. Further, he assured us that eventually the answers would come—justice would be done, God would hear and answer us fully

Don’t be afraid to close something down

Dealing with unanswered prayer

(18:7-8). His major concern was whether, on his return, he would find any who had persevered in faith despite the delay of the answers (18:8).

So what every prayer movement must deal with, ultimately, is not unanswered prayer, but unbelieving prayer—prayer that is offered half-heartedly, without the full assurance that the answers must come, and in fact, will come. Unbelief gives up on God sooner or later, and looks in other directions for the answers, or moves in other directions to embrace other priorities.

The Leadership Team also needs to work hard at helping the prayer movement interpret every “sign” that God is already acting on our behalf in awakening and evangelization. Even if the immediate answers can only be regarded as “first-fruits,” they are at least that much, and they do encourage us to keep seeking him for the entire harvest and to settle for nothing less.

Many powerful blessings come to a prayer movement through the actual seeking process. The more we recognize these other positive dynamics in a prayer movement, the easier it will be to persevere until the answers come.

It is a great encouragement to any prayer movement to see tangible answers in a few specific areas. There may come a point when you may want to set before your pray-ers three or four key issues, maybe two under awakening and two under outreach, to pursue relentlessly until God answers. Be careful here; you don't want to become presumptuous with the Father. But it is “by the prayers of the saints that Christ rules the nations.” And he is honored when we link up with his prayers in specific areas where he is ready to manifest his reign with visible results.

A good approach used by some begins with a retreat involving your leadership team and a few spiritual leaders in your community. You may get apart for a half day to seek God together and to get his mind on where he is ready to act. Once you have heard from the King and have consensus on the specific issues that the prayer movement should pursue intensely, then you can return to the next concert of prayer to challenge the pray-ers to “watch and pray” to that end. Certainly the prayer meeting in Acts 4 had this spirit of specific focus and consensus. And look at the ensuing answers (see Acts 4:23-8:4)! Such “breakthrough praying” was encouraged by Jesus himself when he said, “...if you do not doubt in your heart, but believe that what you say will happen, it will be done for you. Therefore I tell you, whatever you ask for in prayer, believe that you have received it, and it will be yours.” (Mark 11:23-24.

**It May be Time for
Breakthrough
Praying**

Middle Age Crisis Worksheet

IN SUSTAINING a movement of prayer, many factors come into play. How has, or how will, your local movement of prayer deal with them? Consider how these factors have effect in your locale.

1. Have a “green light” session: For a set period of time, maybe 30 minutes, list every thing that encourages you about your prayer movement. Also list every way in which you’ve seen God begin to answer some of your most significant prayers.
2. Evaluate your last city-wide concert of prayer. What percentage of the time was given to prayer and what to speaking? Of the time designated for prayer, what percentage was actually spent in prayer and what percentage in instructing the people what to pray for? Compare these figures to a concert of prayer held a year ago. Two years ago. Do you see any changes or trends developing?
3. How often are your city-wide concerts of prayer held? Is that the optimal frequency for your area? Are any congregations holding concerts of prayer now?
4. How have you reached into the various “camps” within the Body in your city? Do they feel comfortable with the leadership they see up front?
5. Evaluate the charismatic/non-charismatic issue. Does it have relevance for your area? How have you dealt with it?

6. How many churches were represented at your last city-wide prayer gathering? Compare that to a year ago. Two years ago. Are you growing or plateauing? How might you expand the number of churches represented? What new steps do you need to take to broaden the prayer base?

7. What were the topics prayed for at the last concert of prayer? How did they relate to either of the two concert of prayer foci—spiritual awakening or worldwide evangelization? How familiar are current participants with the vision of the prayer movement? When was the last time it was clearly elucidated?

8. Has your local prayer movement helped birth any nearby prayer movements? How might you begin to do so or to do so again?

9. At what points are you dealing with disappointments and unfulfilled expectations? How will you regain zeal and courage to press on?

10. In your analysis of the crises, where do you detect Satan's activity through it all? Do you feel "leader attack" at any point right now? How will you better prepare yourself to engage the Enemy of the prayer movement?

Taking it to the Church

MOST CHRISTIANS need a lot more encouragement and training in prayer than we suspect. It's also harder to teach people how to pray effectively because most prayer training is not very deliberate. The idea that it's "more caught than taught" is correct, and if you pray with someone for any length of time, you can probably identify the environment in which they learned to pray. One great contribution the united prayer movement can make to the churches is providing an atmosphere for exchange in the area of prayer training.

The place for follow-through is in the church. Because the prayer events are at best a monthly occurrence, there needs to be more daily practice of the principles of prayer taught at the events. This is the "closet, cluster, congregation" level and is where the teaching is re-inforced. The local church, with its direct influence upon people, can help these principles become a part of the warp and woof of people's life. Go back over the "Tips for Enticing Pastors" (page 88) to get some specific ideas about mobilizing local congregations for follow-through.

Concerts in the Local Church

We're not seeing a lot of people coming out on a week night to come to a church that's not their own. Our new strategy is to work inside the local churches and develop training and provide materials to help them grow their prayer life. Then we'll bring this together into semi-annual concerts of prayer city-wide. We already have four or five local churches volunteering to start a concert in their own church.

—*Urban prayer leader,*
USA

Training needs to be deliberate. Although many will "catch" methods of praying at a periodic area-wide prayer event, real training is needed. Plan prayer training events in order to continue the learning beyond the concert of prayer and prayer rallies. See the prayer resources appendix for a partial listing of available prayer training tools.

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Time Out: Are You
Committed?

The Local Church is the Arena

Plan Training Events

Another significant tool is the small prayer group. This not only models prayer to the participant, it also gives him hands-on, immediate experience. This could easily be linked with the area-wide prayer events or with prayer training events. Ask participants in these events to commit themselves to beginning a small prayer group containing at least one person who did not attend the larger event. This is where the Prayer Triplets strategy becomes very useful.

Small Prayer Groups May Be Significant Training Tools

Training at the Heart

This training idea is really at the heart. We've got to get some kind of a format for training people in prayer in our churches. I think the concert of prayer is a form of training; that's one of the reasons I think it's catching on. You're not just talking about prayer, you're praying. It's kind of an ABC lesson. It's nothing profound or really deep, but it's teaching and training. We've got to get that into the churches. There's got to be some way we can help our churches train their people in prayer, because right now it's like giving steak to a baby, they can't handle it.

—*Urban prayer leader,
USA*

Pacesetters may be used to help people follow through on their commitment to prayer. Have quarterly or semi-annual pacesetter workshops at which you encourage pacesetters in mobilizing small prayer groups in their respective churches, as well as in bringing people to the area-wide prayer gatherings.

Use Your Pacesetters

An on-going vision beyond the area-wide prayer events is also helpful in following up the events. In one city the vision they were working towards was a hundred pastors committed to pray at least once a week with their local leadership, elders, deacons, etc. Also at least monthly, pastors would be clustered with other pastors throughout the city to pray, and at least quarterly, a city-wide concert of prayer to bring it all together. In another city they are seeking to identify 1000 prayer groups to pray regularly for spiritual awakening.

Have an On-Going Vision

Taking It to the Church

Worksheet

FOLLOW-up never just happens. It must be planned. Planning involves evaluation of where your constituency is in relation to prayer, determining before God where they ought to be, then designing a plan and events to move them toward that goal.

1. What prayer training events have gone on at an area-wide level in the past two years? Which have you sponsored? Have any local churches sponsored any prayer training events for the community? For themselves?

2. Assess the prayer level of your area-wide prayer event participants.
 - a. How well do they sustain prayer in small groups? As a large group?

 - b. How much do they use Scripture in their praying? Are they praying along Scriptural guidelines or just repeating the directed requests?

 - c. How free are they to extemporize in prayer or are they restrained to the specific requests given them?

 - d. How comfortable and capable are people in dealing with prayer that focuses on the larger concerns under spiritual awakening and worldwide evangelization?

3. Assess the impact that the prayer movement is having on the local congregations. How can this be expanded?

4. What prayer training event resources are in your area? What other prayer resources might be available to you? Which would meet the needs of your constituency?

5. Which local pastors might you get to co-sponsor a prayer training event with you?

6. How well are you using small prayer groups in local congregations to teach about prayer? How might they be more effectively employed?

7. What are your goals beyond that of holding area-wide prayer events?

Time Out: Are You Committed?

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Encouraging
Development
Leadership
Middle-age Crisis
Taking it to the Church
***Time Out: Are You
Committed?***

SETTING THE pace for a prayer movement takes a major commitment of your time, effort, prayers and energy. And the commitment tends to grow, not dissipate. Where's your commitment level at now?

1. Evaluate your commitment to a unified vision as might be expressed in a covenant for united prayer. Are you committed enough to it to feel comfortable encouraging others to join you in it? Will you be comfortable with this vision and covenant for the next five, ten, twenty years?
2. How do you express your commitment to building a broad base of ownership and participation in the prayer movement?
3. How do you express your commitment to one another in the prayer movement? What encourages you in your commitment in the prayer movement? Will you raise up new, younger leaders or levels of leadership?
4. What does your commitment to developing your prayer movement look like? Are you waiting on God for his direction to expand or implement new ideas? Are you willing to take the risks and invest the time for development?
5. How will your commitment survive the middle-age crisis of contentment with the status quo? Are you willing to increase your involvement as the movement grows or will you tend to relax and decrease your time investment?
6. Since your prayer movement will be stunted apart from strong roots in local congregations, are you committed to the time and energy it will take to grow and cultivate these roots?