

## Section One

# *Introduction*

## Together in Hope

We live in an incredibly exciting time. Right now the Spirit of God is inciting rampant hope throughout the Body of Christ. And it is hope for nothing less than national and world revival!

Within the Church thousands of pastors and individual believers are becoming messengers of hope” of a Christ-centered revival, coming soon. And in the wake of that spiritual awakening will come a new devotion in the hearts of God’s people that will positively impact the very structures of society. Above all, the Gospel will be extended into many parts of the world, some that have never been reached before. Strongholds of the enemy will be broken apart, and the Lordship of Christ will be recognized by many new believers and many peoples.

What is the most hopeful sign in this cause of world evangelization? We firmly believe it is the emerging movement of concerted, united prayer for spiritual awakening worldwide.

As you look at movements of united prayer from the past, you will see a repeating pattern. Major growth within the prayer movement of the day has taken place prior to every major spiritual awakening in the Church. It follows then, if God is raising up a worldwide movement of united prayer, we are most certainly on the threshold of a worldwide awakening to Christ of unprecedented proportions.

The prayer movement is building so rapidly, it is nearly impossible to keep up with all that is happening. We see many exciting “streams” of prayer—including urban prayer movements, *Promise Keepers*, *Marches for Jesus*, and the many coalitions for Christ-centered racial reconciliation and for intercession against spiritual strongholds blocking the advance of Christ’s Kingdom. One of the purposes of *Concerts of Prayer International (COPI)* is to help dig trenches between these streams. As that happens, they will run together to build a raging river of revival.

How do we explain a movement like this? Just as faith is a gift of God, so prayer is a gift of God. And praying people are a gift of God. And a movement of prayer is also a gift of God. And when God raises up a movement of prayer for spiritual awakening, He intends to answer it. That’s why, at an hour of history when the Church is rightfully filled with a sense of holy *desperation*, we can also be filled with holy *anticipation*.

***The most hopeful sign in the cause of world evangelization is the emerging movement of united prayer for spiritual awakening***

Christ is on the move. He's preparing His people to receive great new works of His Kingdom in revival and mission. And He has not stirred us to seek it in vain.

**God is not only *willing* and *able* to send awakening, He is *ready*.**

Ultimately, the whole world will benefit from this great new fact of our time—a global movement of concerted, united prayer.

## How Do Local Concerts of Prayer Fit In?

As Christians, we experience prayer on many meaningful levels—through personal devotions, in small Bible study groups, at Sunday school, before meals, during worship. But although all these levels of prayer are richly enhanced by a Concert of Prayer, what we're talking about here differs greatly from the rest of these levels of prayer. That is why we give it the distinguishing name of "Concert of Prayer."

In the 1740s, Puritan divine, Jonathan Edwards, defined Concerts of Prayer in the very title of a book he wrote. He called it: *A Humble Attempt to Promote Explicit Agreement and Visible Union of Gods People in Extraordinary Prayer for the Revival of Religion and the Advancement of Christy Kingdom on Earth*. That was quite a mouthful! But as Edwards circulated that book to equip Christians of his day, he helped to under gird the prayer movement that preceded what historians often call The First Great Awakening.

In his book, Edwards borrowed the vision of Zechariah 8, to paint a vivid picture of prayer concerts. Zechariah describes the attitude, the agenda, the impact, and the means for mobilizing such a prayer movement. His vision is echoed elsewhere in Scripture, and has been realized repeatedly throughout Church history and in prayer movements emerging across both North America and within the global Church. And it can be used today.

What makes a Concert of Prayer so unique, and so important to the prayer movement as a whole? Well, for one thing, **a city-wide Concert of Prayer gathers a broader representation of pray-ers**. Christians unite across various boundaries: denominational, institutional, ministry, social, generational, ethnic, cultural, and even across minor doctrinal boundaries. In a local church setting, a Concert of Prayer brings together in prayer men, women, and young people of all different ages within the congregation. Also, as much as possible each area of outreach within the church should be represented. In a Concert of Prayer, **the whole body of Christ in a community or church meets around the larger biblical concerns for spiritual awakening and world evangelization**.

*What makes a Concert of Prayer so different?*

- *A broader representation of pray-ers*
- *Prayers related to "fullness" and "fulfillment."*
- *Unique dynamics*

So, the focus in prayer concerts is quite specific. The agenda is limited to issues that fall under two main thrusts in Scripture:

1. Prayer for God to reveal to His Church the *fullness* of Christ as Lord in her midst (revival, renewal, awakening).
2. Prayer for the resulting *fulfillment* of His global cause through His Church, among all the nations, including our own (missions, world evangelization, advancement of the Kingdom).

Also, **the dynamics of Concerts of Prayer are often unique**. “Concert” means that people are united in sustained commitment to the Lord, to one another, and to the answers they seek until God grants them. Also, Concerts of Prayer, like musical concerts, involve the dynamics of harmonious celebration. It’s like a grand symphony, as pray-ers blend their hearts, minds, and voices by faith in God’s Word. Rejoicing, repenting, and making requests, they intercede in harmony with all God has promised for His Church and for His world. They submit to the Holy Spirit, who “orchestrates” each prayer meeting so that one prayer theme builds on another according to the will of God.

The Concert of Prayer actually becomes a composition of intercession in Jesus’ name which the Father delights to both hear and to answer abundantly. In fact, you could say that Jesus is the “concert master” who makes the prayer gathering a time of real victory.

## You Can Be a Part!

If you are interested in prayer mobilization, then it’s vitally important for you to understand the strategic importance of the Concert of Prayer. A church-wide or citywide Concert of Prayer or prayer rally is a basic way to demonstrate and promote a movement of united prayer for spiritual awakening and world evangelization.

As just explained, one key dynamic of the city-wide Concert of Prayer is the fact that it brings together many different congregations, denominations, and worship traditions across cultural and ethnic lines in a unified symphony of prayer.

Concerts of Prayer are also an effective tool within a smaller group or congregation, helping to give the church a wider Kingdom perspective and enlarged vision for what God is wanting to do.

In either case, the prayer rally inspires faith and hope in all who participate. It releases God’s divine activity on the focus of your prayers.

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And in the case of the city-wide rally, it often mobilizes new elements for the ongoing prayer movement within local bodies and throughout the community.

And what a wonderful testimony to the watching world when scores of churches unite together in the same place for the same purpose! We know from John 17 that the testimony of spiritual unity is important to Christ, as well as to the effectiveness of our Christian witness to the world.

In addition, rallies can set into motion a new effort in prayer mobilization that touches every facet of personal and corporate spiritual life for those involved and for their local churches. In other words, it fosters new momentum in mobilizing the Church for prayer and obedience to Christ's global cause.

Finally, as the whole body in a church, community, or city unites in prayer, seeking wide-spread personal and spiritual awakening, Christ creates new opportunities for His Kingdom. The Body of Christ is preparing to receive together a work of God that is far too comprehensive to be contained by any one group or ministry! (*See resource material on fullness and fulfillment in Appendix.*)

## How to Get Started

In the pages that follow, you'll find a step-by-step guide to organizing and leading a Concert of Prayer in your community. Although these instructions are directed toward community or city-wide prayer rallies, they are the exact same principles you can use to organize a Concert of Prayer rally in your church.

These instructions and "how-to" tips come from many, many years of facilitating Concert of Prayer rallies. In fact, *Concerts of Prayer International* has been directly involved in leading more than 350 city-wide prayer rallies around the world. In addition, this training material was first prepared for a prayer event scheduled for October 21, 1995, involving more than 750 cities world-wide—including 550 cities in the U.S., 80 cities in Canada, 100 cities in Latin America, as well as cities in Cuba, Great Britain, and Europe. Because this movement is growing so rapidly, we feel it is imperative to share what we've learned with others, who will in turn pass this vision for united prayer to others.

Organizing a large prayer gathering requires organization and hard work. But with the guidelines that follow, **you can do it!** The hallmark of an effective Concert of Prayer is simplicity. Once you've read through this manual and watched the training sessions on videotape, you'll be well-

***The hallmark of an effective Concert of Prayer rally is simplicity. You can do it!***

equipped to do all that's necessary to organize and lead a successful prayer rally.

It is very thrilling to be a part of what God is doing through this movement of prayer within His Church worldwide! From experience, we are certain that the results will be well worth your effort. With the step by step guidelines that follow, you can organize a Concert of Prayer in your community or church, helping to build a rhythm of prayer for God's people, focused on the matters closest to Christ's heart—revival of His Church and world evangelization.