

Evangelism Empowered by Prayer

Preparing Hearts to Receive the Gospel

Shelise and I often greeted each other in the parking garage at my complex. And if I saw a car passing me on my early-morning walk—with the window down and an arm sticking out waving—I knew it was Shelise on her way to work. Shortly after the riots and racial tension in Minneapolis in 2020, she pulled up next to me in the parking lot, leaned out her car window, and said, “You have restored my faith in humanity.”

We became passing friends who realized it didn’t take much to be kind to each other.

One day I said to Shelise, “You know, we should have coffee sometime.” So, we arranged to meet each other at the puzzle table near the elevators. “Bring your own coffee, and let’s chat,” I added.

The first time we sat down and finally talked in depth with each other, Shelise shared about a particularly difficult situation in her life. I asked if she would mind if I prayed for her right then. She bowed her head while I asked Jesus to touch her and restore her. That prayer led to more conversation about Jesus. I also shared the gospel with her.

The next time we met, as we finished up our time, Shelise said, “Well, should we pray?”

“Great,” I responded. I paused for a moment, wondering if she would like to pray. After a slightly awkward silence, I prayed for Shelise and her family—and for her growing in faith in Jesus.

“Amen,” she said.

And that was it. I guess when she said “we,” she meant “you.”

As time went on, I watched Shelise grow in her assurance of her renewed trust in Jesus.

In This Issue

A blueprint for evangelism is modeled by the early Church in Acts. Pastor Kie Bowman describes their response to Jesus' command to “go into all the world” by first devoting themselves to prayer. After a non-stop prayer meeting, God poured out the Holy Spirit at Pentecost, which then fueled their evangelistic efforts with power. He encourages a “stop, wait, go” strategy to reach the lost.

Dick Eastman is chief prayer officer of a ministry that has enormous evangelistic impact around the world. He writes about several encouraging examples of people who came to faith in Christ because of prayerful pleas for their salvation, often unknown to them. He even suggests that perhaps no soul is brought to Christ apart from a believer's prayer!

There is power in praying God's Word over your community, and Trey and Mary Anne Kent have developed a prayer guide of biblical prayers to reach the lost. They are witnesses of tremendous outreach success through 100 praying churches in their own community of Austin, TX. We have excerpted a few key prayers from their book that will help frame ways to pray for your own city.

Shelise eventually decided to move to a different community. I miss seeing her in the hallways with her exuberant greetings. But I also have the assurance that our first prayer together opened her heart to receive truth and hope in Christ.

Praying for the lost is undoubtedly the most powerful

evangelistic strategy—and we are all called to engage with confidence and anticipation that God *will* answer.

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