

# PRAYERCONNECT


Connecting to the Heart of Christ through Prayer

## OPEN HEARTS, OPEN DOORS

Preparing the Way through Prayer Evangelism



Gripping *God's Way* | Time Is WASTING  
The Bible's **FIRST INTERCESSOR**



# Imagine What God Would Do ...

If we cried out with one voice ...  
With a unified voice desperate for change.

---

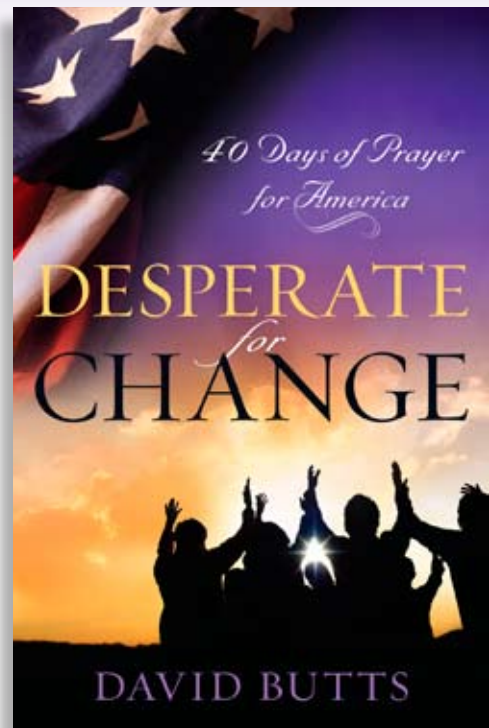
Millions are seeking God for our nation in these days.  
With humble repentance and a plea for mercy and  
blessing, we are storming heaven on behalf of America.

Many are using the prayer guide

***Desperate for Change:  
40 Days of Prayer for America***

## WON'T YOU JOIN THEM?

Each day includes challenging devotional thoughts,  
a Scripture, prayer points and a prayer to pray for  
our nation. Use it as an individual or get copies for  
your congregation, small group or Sunday school  
class. Multiple copy discounts are available.



---

812 238-5504 • 800 217-5200  
[www.prayershop.org](http://www.prayershop.org)

 PRAYERSHOP  
PUBLISHING





# PRAYERCONNECT

November/December 2012 | Vol. 2, No.6

# 24

## OPEN HEARTS, OPEN DOORS

Preparing the Way through Prayer Evangelism, p. 11

### Features

#### 31 **By Faith**

Lessons from the Bible's First Intercessor  
By Andrew Wheeler

#### 34 **From Griping to Praise**

Starting Where We Are  
By Joyce K. Ellis

#### 38 **A Life Given to Prayer**

Setting Your Sights on the Eternal Purposes of God  
By Sammy Tippit

#### 12 **Reaching Out by Reaching Up**

The Power of Prayer Evangelism  
By Alvin VanderGriend  
*Plus: Bless Your Neighbors; My Journey into Prayer Evangelism*

#### 18 **Loving Your Neighbors to Christ**

When We Pray and Care, God Opens the Door to Share  
By Paul and Jeannie Cedar  
*Plus: Preparing the Soil through Prayer; Indonesia Ministry Adopts Streets; The First and Last Answer*

#### 24 **A Simple Way to Reap**

The Harvest Is Ready and Time Is Wasting  
By Nick Hall  
*Plus: Prayer and Audacious Goals for Evangelism and Translation Work*

#### 29 **A Bible Study**

*Prayer Evangelism*  
By Sandra Higley

# 31



# 12

### Departments

#### 5 **Publisher's Note**

Prayer Changes Your Heart

#### 7 **News & Events**

- Thousands in Charlotte Sign Declaration to Pray for Revival
- Global Day of Worship Broadcast from Jerusalem
- Historic Prayer Gathering Planned in Malaysia
- Arizona's "Enough Is Enough" Initiative
- Cry Out America Draws Thousands of Participants
- Prayer Follows Up the Olympics

#### 43 **Tips & Tools**

- Prayer Evangelism for the Family
- Keep the Sermon on Their Minds
- Add a Prayer Station to Your Outreach

#### 45 **Surf's Up**

Your Go-to Website to Pray for the Nations

#### 46 **Prayer Leader**

"But Lord, I've Never Taught Children Before!"

#### 47 **Classics**

The Loudest and Loftiest Praises





www.prayershop.org

**Visit the Largest Prayer-Only  
Store on the Internet**

**We're Everything Prayer!**

- Corporate Prayer ■ Bible Studies/Small Groups
- Personal Prayer ■ Intercession ■ Prayer Guides
- Spiritual Warfare ■ Prayer Ministry Teams
- Church ■ Women ■ Children ■ Youth ■ Men
- Conferences ■ Prayer Evangelism and
- 24 other categories

*Join the CPLN*  
**and save 20-40%**  
**on all products**

*Take an  
Additional  
15% Off One Order*  
Use Code PCPS1112  
at Checkout to Receive  
Discount

www.prayershop.org

*Sponsored by*



# CONTACTUS

## Business and Shipping Address

**PRAYERCONNECT**  
3525 S. 3rd St. | Terre Haute, IN 47802  
812.238.5504 | [prayerconnect.net](http://prayerconnect.net)

## Article Submissions

We are looking for general articles, ideas, and news stories on what God is doing as a result of prayer. As a start-up magazine, we are primarily looking for newly written pieces that have not appeared in other publications. Writer's guidelines are available by emailing Carol Madison at [editor@prayerconnect.net](mailto:editor@prayerconnect.net). For news stories, we recommend emailing first to see if we have an interest in reporting on the event or item you wish to write about. Send your submissions to:

Carol Madison  
Prayer Connect Submissions  
4300 West 98th St. | Bloomington, MN 55437  
[editor@prayerconnect.net](mailto:editor@prayerconnect.net)

## Subscriptions

*Prayer Connect* is a bi-monthly publication, available in Church Prayer Leaders Network (CPLN) Membership (\$30 per year), Print (\$24.99 per year) or Digital (\$19.99 per year) formats. Both CPLN and Print subscriptions include access to the Digital version. To subscribe, go to [prayerconnect.net](http://prayerconnect.net). We also have multiple copy discounts available for individuals or churches who want to purchase copies for a prayer team or small groups:

[prayerconnect.net](http://prayerconnect.net)  
Joanne Telle  
800.217.5200 or 812.238.5504

## Permissions

Jonathan Graf  
[jong@harvestprayer.com](mailto:jong@harvestprayer.com) | 812.238.5504

## Reprint Permissions

If you are making copies for your small group or for church use, you have blanket permission to make up to 100 copies without asking for permission (as long as the copies are not sold or in a for-sale product). Please include the phrase: "Copied from *Prayer Connect* (Issue #). Used with permission." Contact us to gain permission for all other uses, including posting articles on the Internet. We do encourage you to put links on Facebook and Twitter to articles that are open to the public at [prayerconnect.net](http://prayerconnect.net).

## Advertising

If you would like information on placing an ad in *Prayer Connect*, or if you have concerns or questions about our ads, please contact:  
*Prayer Connect*, 3525 S. 3rd St., Terre Haute, IN 47802  
[advertising@prayerconnect.net](mailto:advertising@prayerconnect.net) | 812.238.5504

## Need a Speaker for Your Prayer Conference or Event?

There are a number of gifted speakers associated with *Prayer Connect*. Jonathan Graf regularly ministers in churches of varying sizes. Carol Madison is also available to minister in the area of prayer for revival and community transformation. Our parent organizations, Harvest Prayer Ministries and the Church Prayer Leaders Network, have many speakers associated with their ministries. You can find their contact information at the respective emails or websites.

Jonathan Graf | [jong@harvestprayer.com](mailto:jong@harvestprayer.com)  
Carol Madison | [editor@prayerconnect.net](mailto:editor@prayerconnect.net)  
[harvestprayer.com](http://harvestprayer.com) | [prayerleader.com](http://prayerleader.com)

**Sponsored by**

America's National Prayer Committee  
Denominational Prayer Leaders Network  
International Prayer Council

**Published by**

Church Prayer Leaders Network  
Harvest Prayer Ministries  
PrayerShop Publishing

The mission of **PRAYERCONNECT** is

1. To encourage and equip believers toward a deeper walk with Jesus Christ through prayer—our experiential connection to God.
2. To resource prayer leaders and pastors with tools to help them motivate, disciple, and mobilize believers in churches to be a part of an army that seeks to pray the purposes of God for churches, communities, and the nations.
3. To be a unifying force between prayer ministries, community transformation groups, and churches.

**Publisher/Editor-in-Chief**

Jonathan Graf  
jong@harvestprayer.com

**Editor**

Carol Madison  
editor@prayerconnect.net

**Art Director**

J. Bridget Rennie

**Editorial Assistants**

Joyce Ellis  
Joan Sherman

**Contributing Writer**

Kim Butts

**Subscriptions/Orders**

Joanne Telle

## Previously in Prayer Connect

Scripture tells us that we are clearly “wrestling against the powers of this dark world.” The September/October issue, “Stand Firm and Strong,” encourages believers to recognize spiritual warfare. Articles by Dave Butts, Marcus Warner, and Carol Madison will teach you to put on the armor of God, stand in authority, and pray persistently for all the saints. This issue will equip you to pray with faith and confidence in Christ. Order at [prayerconnect.org](http://prayerconnect.org).



## Prayer Changes Your Heart

I have never been an overly social person. So the idea of connecting with neighbors was never a high priority with me. I like the electric-garage-door-opener culture that is middle America.



But a number of years ago, when my wife and I built a home, things changed. Our house was the second one completed in our subdivision. So we could easily see when someone new moved into the neighborhood.

I was editor of *Pray!* magazine at the time, and, as a staff, we often talked about the Lighthouse Prayer Movement and its core principles of praying, caring for, and sharing Christ with our neighbors. So I decided to put this strategy to the test. I started praying for my neighbors.

What happened next was interesting. One day I saw a neighbor, who had moved in a few days earlier, go to our joint mailbox area to get his mail. I impulsively decided to go get my mail (even though I had already retrieved it two hours earlier). A conversation developed, and I spent 15 minutes talking with him.

Another day I saw a different neighbor laying sod in his backyard. I went over and helped. That was not my typical response—but it was Jesus in me.

As I prayed for my neighbors, I naturally received God's heart for them. And then I naturally reached out to them. I saw my neighbors differently. I got over my antisocial behavior because I was willing to pray for them.

### Make It Easy

Churches have tried for decades (maybe centuries) to motivate their people to share Christ with unbelievers. Most evangelism-training efforts and guilt-laden sermons engage only a few believers for a short time. It is a rare person who makes telling others about Jesus Christ a lifestyle. Most of today's efforts to inspire witnessing have not tapped into the most significant thing that can change hearts and attitudes in this area—prayer. Oh, most evangelism methods mention that prayer is important. And a few, like Evangelism Explosion, work it into the mix in a significant way. But prayer tends to take a lesser place to what we say when we speak to others about Christ.

If churches will start out simply promoting consistent, targeted prayer for neighbors, the caring and sharing components will inevitably and absolutely happen. Praying for neighbors is doable, nonthreatening, and easy. But it needs to be stressed, promoted, and encouraged with prayer guides or (gasp!) a program that keeps it in front of the congregation.

Encourage your people to pray for five or ten neighbors or friends daily. Give them guides like BLESS (see sidebar on page 15) or *Paths of Gold* (find this resource at [prayerconnect.org](http://prayerconnect.org)), and then keep gently reminding the people of your church that prayer is their best first step. The rest will fall into place—guaranteed! You will see people start to come to faith in Christ through the ministry of your people and your church.

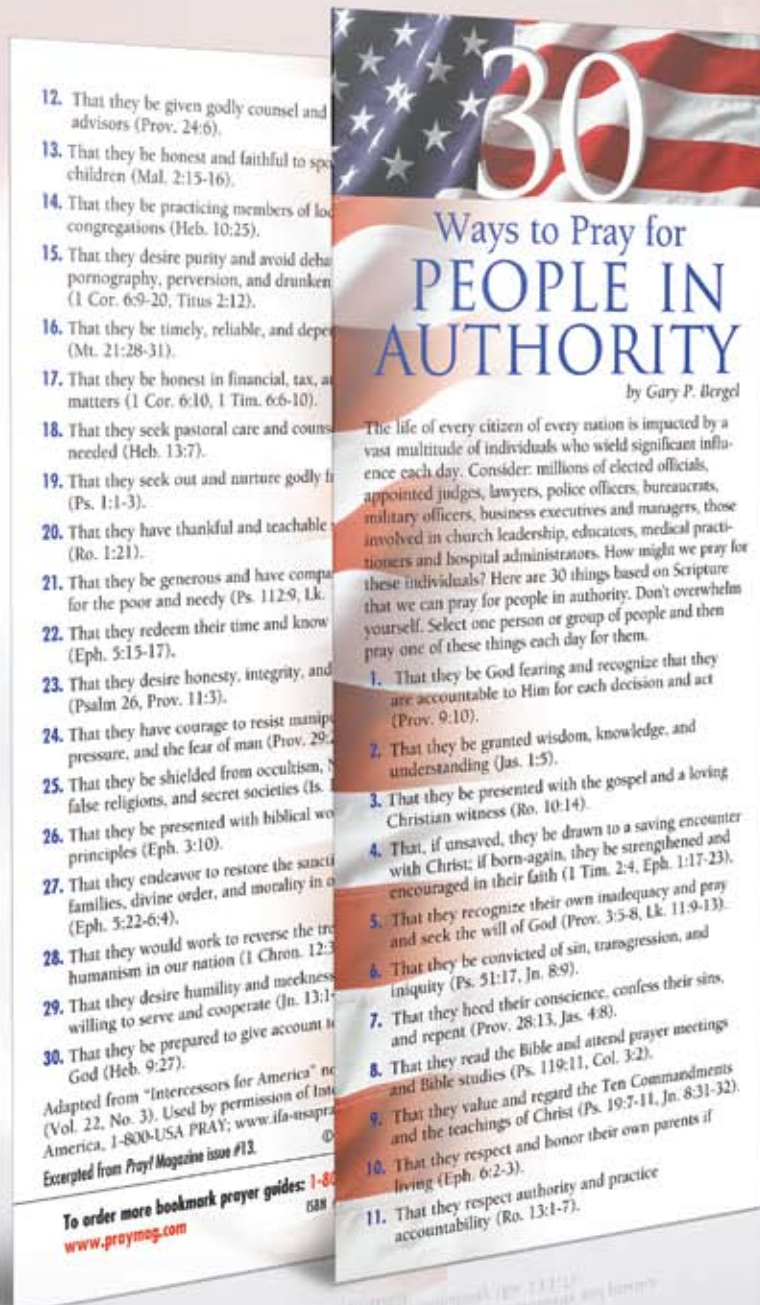
Why? Because prayer will change the hearts and passions of your people for the lost around them better than any sermon or evangelism training ever could.

—Jonathan Graf



# 30 Ways to Pray for PEOPLE IN AUTHORITY

*Use these Scripture-based prayers to pray for our leaders.*



People in positions of influence face situations and decisions we may never know about.  
Use these Bible-based prayers to lift up those in authority to our loving Father.

Use code G33A1D3A6 for **30% OFF ALL PRAYER CARDS**

**NAV PRESS**

Discipleship Inside Out®

NAV PRESS.COM | 800-366-7788



## Thousands in Charlotte Sign Declaration to Pray for Revival

Thousands of people came forward on September 2 to sign a Declaration of National Spiritual Emergency at Charlotte714, a city-wide prayer and worship assembly held at Verizon Wireless Amphitheatre in Charlotte, NC. (Charlotte714 derives its name from 2 Chronicles 7:14.) The event was timed to coordinate with the Democratic National Convention in Charlotte that week.

An estimated 9,000 people representing more than 100 churches attended Charlotte714. Organizers emphasized



that ultimate answers to America's problems are not found in a political light, but rather by exalting Jesus Christ.

"Today, I awake more encouraged . . . that perhaps the Church of the Lord is showing signs of spiritual awakening," said Dr. Mark Harris, senior pastor, First Baptist Church of Charlotte, referring to the prayer gathering. "As the Body of Christ is beginning to repent and truly seek God's presence before we seek His hand, we will see incredible results."

David Benham, lead organizer of Charlotte714, also expressed excitement about the event. "It was amazing to catch a glimpse of the Charlotte expression of Christ's Church bowing in repentance and unity, seeking the face of God," he said. "Last night's gathering was simply step one in a citywide mobilization of the one spiritual church in Charlotte."

Charlotte714 organizers are planning more gatherings of churches in Charlotte to pray and, they hope, impact the region. They are partnering with the OneCry national initiative to offer assistance to leaders seeking to replicate the prayer gathering in other cities around the United States. Leaders say they have



already heard from people around the country who heard of Charlotte714 or watched the webcast and would like a similar gathering to come to their communities. Both groups say they share a common vision to see gatherings like Charlotte714 spark another Great Awakening in the United States.

"[Charlotte] is one of many places around the nation where individuals and churches are coming together to pray for God to revive our hearts and heal our land," said Aaron Paulus, OneCry movement coordinator. "As a partner with Charlotte714, we were thrilled to see people of all denominations and races come together to lift high the name of Jesus."

The Declaration of National Spiritual Emergency can be found on the OneCry website ([onecry.com](http://onecry.com)), where anyone can sign up and post their prayers for God to revive the church and transform the culture. To review a list of "Ten Commitments of a Jesus Revolutionary," go to [charlotte714.com](http://charlotte714.com).

## Global Day of Worship Broadcast from Jerusalem

The third annual Global Day of Worship will originate in Jerusalem, Israel, on 12.12.12. Organizers invite the world's believers and followers of Jesus Christ, the Messiah, to give thanks and declare His goodness, faithfulness, and salvation as well as deliv-

erance over lives, families and nations—with a special emphasis on Israel.

The Global Day of Worship will take place in 24 time zones around the world from 7:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. in each zone. A wave of worship beginning in New Zealand will span the globe. The

aim is to unify many denominations while embracing and celebrating the differences in expressions of love for Jesus.

You can join the gatherings around the world by going to [globaldayofworship.com](http://globaldayofworship.com) or create a gathering of worshipers in your area.



## Historic Prayer Gathering Planned in Malaysia

In an historic moment for Protestant churches in Malaysia, church and prayer leaders from all over the country (representing most major prayer networks) met on July 5, 2012, to discuss God’s urgent call for united prayer for churches and the nation.

As participants voiced their concerns, they agreed that Malaysia is facing many

critical issues—and the Church needs to come together in prayer. The meeting reflected a great sense of unity and hope for a national prayer initiative. The resulting PRAYER UNITED organization will set up a prayer movement that will identify key strategic issues for prayer and communicate them clearly and quickly to all prayer networks and churches.

A special focus is the National Jubilee Celebration that began on September 16, and will continue through the next year, acknowledging 50 years of Malaysia’s existence as a nation. The movement’s prayer focus is that God will usher in a new season of peace, prosperity, freedom, and justice for the land.

*Taken from International Prayer Connections.*

## Arizona’s “Enough Is Enough” Initiative

A special 20-day prayer initiative, launched on June 15 by BridgeBuilders, called for prayer and fasting for the dismantling of drug cartel leaders and their criminal organizations, with a special focus on the southwest and Arizona borders. The call for prayer also

highlighted the Mexican elections because of the great impact the outcome will have on the U.S. economy, immigration, and the continuing “war on drugs.”

During the prayer initiative, the newspaper *Milenio* reported that Mexico’s killings related to drug violence in June fell 17 percent compared to the month before, reaching its lowest level of the year. The Mexican elections were conducted without any reports of drug-related violence or election fraud. And from June 15 to July 4, U.S. and Mexican law enforcement arrested several significant leaders within Mexico’s cartels.

In addition, two days following the conclusion of the “Enough Is Enough” prayer initiative, authorities raided some homes in Phoenix and Tempe, AZ, and discovered that one of those homes was an office for one of the cartels. Three drug-smuggling tunnels were also found. “We’ve cut off the head of the snake,” said Tempe Police Lt. Noah Johnson. “This definitely makes it a lot harder for our children and residents to get drugs.”

Drug-related violence is falling along the southwest border, according to a recent statement by Mexican government officials. Murders by criminal gangs in the most violent city of Ciudad Juarez fell by 42 percent in the first six months of this year compared to the same period last year. Gen. Emilio Zarate, the Mexican Army



commander, told reporters the Juarez cartel has become so weak that it is having trouble paying its members.

According to President Felipe Calderon (who serves through 2012), homicides in Mexico dropped 15 to 20 percent in the first six months of this year compared to the same period in 2011. “Today, violence related to rivalries between criminals is declining,” Calderon said in an interview with *The Wall Street Journal*. He also reported that drug-related murders in Mexico fell by 12 percent in the first five months of this year.

Prayer is continuing that President-elect Enrique Peña Nieto will sever all ties with leaders of criminal organizations and take a strong stand against organized crime. Fifty-three percent of all cartel money is funneled through Arizona—an estimated one trillion dollars.

BridgeBuilders (a ministry based in Arizona) invites believers to pray that the flow of drugs, weapons, and human trafficking between the two nations will cease. For more information, go to [bridgebuilders.net](http://bridgebuilders.net).



**prayerconnect.net**

**ALL YOUR PRAYER CONNECTION NEEDS IN ONE PLACE.**

Connect with **Jesus**  
 Connect with **resources**  
 Connect with **praying people**





## Cry Out America Draws Thousands of Participants

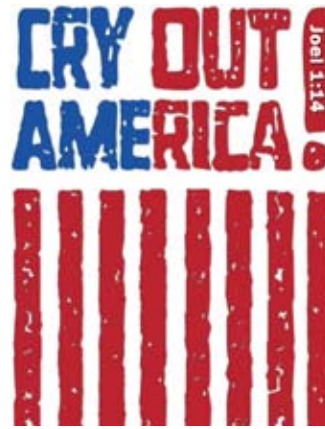
September 11, 2012, was a day of united, consecrated prayer commemorating 9/11 through the participation of more than 1,700 churches and 2,600 interdenominational, public prayer events involving city and county officials, first responders, and committed laity. Cry Out America (COA) events took place across all 50 states, Puerto Rico, the U.S. Virgin Islands, and in all 38 U.S. counties with populations of more than one million. Gatherings averaged an attendance of 100 people and represented 250,000 intercessors crying out for a spiritual awakening in America.

Dr. Billy Wilson, executive director for the Awakening America Alliance, says, “There is hope for America! That hope has been exemplified across the nation at more than 2,600 prayer points with 900 countywide services as Christian believers gathered to pray for the spiritual condition of our nation. Without fanfare or glaring lights, these believers simply united their hands and hearts across denominational lines to cry out for God’s mercy on our nation. If the only hope

for America is a deep, transformational spiritual change that begins at the grassroots—and it is—then Cry Out America signals that hope.”

Positive, moving reports are pouring in from the various COA 9/11 prayer gatherings. Kay Horner, COA national coordinator, says, “Our hope is that the Cry Out America 9/11 prayer gatherings will be an ongoing effort across our nation throughout the year. Many counties are already planning continued united gatherings that will ultimately lead to cooperative evangelism and service initiatives in their communities.”

Peggy Scarborough, South Carolina state coordinator, adds, “This is the third year that South Carolina has had all of its counties participating. I desire to see every county in America in prayer on 9/11/13. Prayer is the only thing that will save America. I’m here to stand with



Cry Out America and serve our state and nation until America has a real revival and a return to God.”

Dr. Wilson concludes: “As we move from 9/11 and a presidential election, we believe that our trust does not lie in the economy, not in military might and not in

politics. Many Christians are lured into thinking that politics are the answer, but the one and only answer is Jesus. Cry Out America comes at a crucial time in our nation’s history.”

Cry Out America preceded America For Jesus—a national call to prayer on September 28–29 at Independence Mall in Philadelphia, PA. This launched 40 days of prayer and fasting leading up to national elections.

To read more reports or to learn how to get involved in Cry Out America 2013, go to [awakeningamerica.us](http://awakeningamerica.us).

## Prayer Follows Up the Olympics

Tens of thousands of Christians gathered for the National Day of Prayer and Worship on September 29 at Wembley Stadium in London. It was the culmination of six years of stadium and borough prayer events and 24/7 prayer organized by the Global Day of Prayer (GDOP) London.

As crowds were flocking to the Olympic Stadium for the Opening Ceremony of the Games, Global Day of Prayer London trustees were already preparing for this historic prayer gathering to be held nine weeks later. Organizers acknowledged that in the weeks leading up to the event, they had never witnessed

such expectation and momentum of unity among all denominations.

“It’s wonderful to think [of] celebrating as one church at Wembley Stadium all that God [has] done during the Olympics and beyond,” says GDOP London Convener Jonathan Oloyede.

Artists helping to lead worship included Noel Robinson, Graham Kendrick, Matt Redman, Tim Hughes, Guvna B, and the RCCG Mass Choir. In addition to united prayer and worship from all streams in the British Isles, several thousand young people were commissioned towards evangelism, missions, and transformation of their communities.

### Prayer Calendar

---

40 Days of Prayer for America  
**September 28 – November 6**  
[40daysofprayer.net](http://40daysofprayer.net)

---

Prayer for the Persecuted Church  
**Sunday, November 11**  
[idop.org](http://idop.org)

---

ReignDown USA  
**Saturday, December 8**  
[reigndownusa.com](http://reigndownusa.com)

---

Global Day of Worship  
**Wednesday, December 12**  
[globaldayofworship.com](http://globaldayofworship.com)

# God heals broken marriages

. . . strengthens young and old marriages  
. . . and can put life back into a marriage.

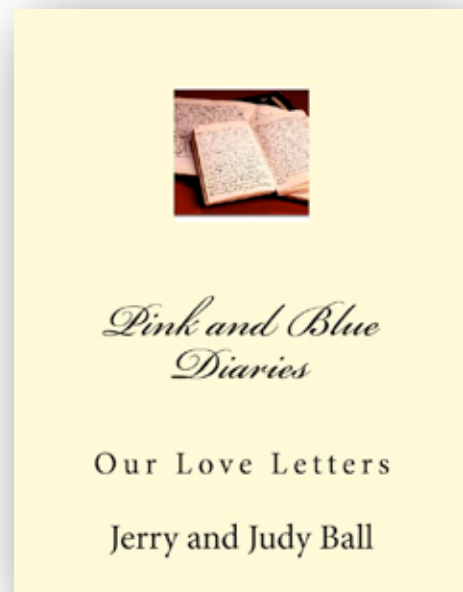
Are you or someone you love going through some trials in your marriage?

Are you or someone you love getting married soon?

Do you or someone you love just need a little spark put back into your marriage?

Then *Pink and Blue Diaries: Our Love Letters* is the perfect gift for that person . . . or for yourself.

One of the first things that God tells us in the Bible is that He created Adam and Eve in His own image and joined them together as husband and wife (Genesis 1:27-28 2:21-24). Through this blessed union God established the family and provided for the physical and spiritual upbringing of children. Thus marriage is the basic building block of our human society. Jerry and Judy Ball have been married more than 50 years. They have kept diaries of their love for each other over the years and now have published this book of love letters to inspire others.



Available for sale on [www.amazon.com](http://www.amazon.com)  
or [contact us directly](#)

We would love to hear from you. To find out more about us and Breaker of the Dawn visit us at our website:  
[www.breakerofdawn.com](http://www.breakerofdawn.com) or contact us by phone or email.

To request information about upcoming events please email us. We will respond to you as quickly as possible.

**Breaker of Dawn**  
MINISTRIES

704.528.0861  
[jjprayer@gmail.com](mailto:jjprayer@gmail.com)



OPEN

“When Nick gets up to preach the gospel message, we want you to crawl under the stage and pray.”

“What?” The arena was pulsating with music so loud my earplugs barely made a dent in the volume.

“We had the idea of you crawling under the stage to pray directly beneath Nick while he shares the gospel.” Perhaps the PULSE staff didn’t notice that I’m 50-something, and they are all considerably younger.

Yet the idea thrilled me. At that moment, thousands of college students were gathering in a university field house to listen to rock bands at a PULSE outreach event. The music, designed to draw crowds and capture attention, prepared students for the moment when Nick stepped onto the stage to challenge them with the truths of Jesus Christ.

So at the right time, I crawled under the stage with my nephew Brad, who had been praying backstage with me. We cried out to God as the crowd began to hush during the key moment of Nick’s preaching. When he called for a salvation response, we were overwhelmed to hear hundreds of students pray out loud and commit their lives to Jesus Christ.

It was worth the crawl!

I repeated this under-the-stage prayer crawl a few more times in other

HEARTS,

venues as I supported these outreaches on various college campuses. This is a ministry that believes the power of prayer will awaken students and our culture to the desperate need for Jesus. As a staff they call out to God fervently for Him to move in unprecedented ways.

In this issue, you will read an article by Nick Hall, founder of PULSE, that speaks to the urgency of our day and the ripeness of the harvest fields.

### NEIGHBOR TO NEIGHBOR

God uses large events to capture the hearts of students, but He also uses the persistence of individual believers and couples who pray faithfully for their neighbors. Paul and Jeannie Cedar write about the impact prayer has had in their neighborhood as the “prayer, care, share” model helps prepare the way.

I have personally witnessed Paul and Jeannie’s hearts for the lost. Jeannie is irrepressible in her enthusiasm to find ways to share the gospel. And she and Paul are some of the most faithful pray-ers I know. Their love for their neighbors has spilled over into many acts of kindness. And God has answered their prayers by spiritually transforming the hearts of people around them.

In this issue, you’ll also find a more

### *Preparing the Way through Prayer Evangelism*

in-depth explanation of prayer evangelism in an article by Alvin VanderGriend, who models prayer evangelism through his life, his writing, and his influence as a denominational prayer leader. He helps frame exactly what prayer evangelism means, how it works, and the effect it can have in opening previously closed hearts and doors.

Personally, I am praying for my own neighbors to come to faith in Christ. I’ve had them in my home, and so far they think I am “nice and religious.” But I pray that one day the Holy Spirit will awaken them to Christ and give me the boldness, the words, and the favor to speak of the power of the gospel. The door is open a crack.

Perhaps very soon Jesus Christ will be welcomed into multiple homes, cities, and nations because God’s people have prayed. Ask Him to warm your heart even more toward the lost—and then use your prayers to open those doors.

**CAROL MADISON**  
is editor of  
*Prayer Connect.*

OPEN

DOORS



# REACHING OUT

## *The Power of Prayer Evangelism*

A California pastor led his family to pray for yet-to-be-followers of Christ who lived in five neighboring homes. Within the first eight weeks of prayer, one of their neighbors began asking faith questions and ended up committing her life to Christ. Another neighbor wanted to give up drug dealing and asked for prayer help. A non-churched couple next door asked the pastor to start a neighborhood Bible study.

The family continued to pray.

By the six-month mark the couple who asked for a Bible study had given their lives to Christ. A Buddhist family across the street was coming to church regularly, and one member of that family had become a Christ-follower. The children of both families participated in the church's education classes.

**BY ALVIN VANDERGRIEND**



# UP BY REACHING

This pastor's family discovered the power of prayer evangelism.

## WHAT IS PRAYER EVANGELISM?

Prayer evangelism is a form of evangelism in which God moves in the hearts and lives of yet-to-be-followers of Christ in response to the earnest prayers of believers. Intercessors, with access to the throne of God, plead with the Father on behalf of those who lack that access.

And then, believers with access to prayed-for persons who do not know Christ, now stand ready to share the good news with those prepared to hear.

## WHY PRAY FOR THE UNSAVED?

Scripture demonstrates in several ways that God wants us to pray for unsaved individuals:

- Christ modeled prayer for yet-to-be-believers. The day before He was crucified, He said to the Father, "I pray also for those who will believe in me through [the disciples'] message" (John 17:20).

# LET YOUR CHURCH BE A PRAYER CATALYST

## HOST A REGIONAL



### CHURCH PRAYER LEADERS NETWORK EVENT

Fire up your people to pray

Position yourself as a regional church

Bless your community with an  
excellent prayer resource

A recent conference host-church prayer leader reported:

"Please share a huge thank you and praise with your team. . . . Our small group saw revival tonight as I have never witnessed in our church. Half of them were not even at the conference, but those that were shared with such testimony and passion that the entire group went to prayer on our knees . . . in humbleness and repentance and brokenness before the Lord. We made a commitment tonight to be the start of Spiritual Awakening in our church, community and beyond."

**WE ARE CURRENTLY LOOKING  
FOR HOST CHURCHES FOR 2013**

#### WHAT'S INVOLVED?

The CPLN brings in two keynote speakers and additional workshop teachers, you provide the facilities, worship and local logistics. Depending on which package you select, your costs beyond facility use range from free to \$2,000.

Contact the CPLN today for more details.

Email [jong@harvestprayer.com](mailto:jong@harvestprayer.com)  
for information.

[www.prayerleader.com](http://www.prayerleader.com)

• Paul was moved to pray for his fellow countrymen: "Brothers, my heart's desire and prayer to God for the Israelites is that they may be saved" (Rom. 10:1).

• God's Word urges us to make "requests, prayers, intercession and thanksgiving . . . for everyone," with the awareness that, "God our Savior . . . wants all [persons] to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth" (1 Tim. 2:1–4). Prayer for unsaved persons is a high priority in Christ's Kingdom.

**P**rayer is the way Christ chooses to work in the world today. When the disciples worried they would fail if Jesus left them, He assured them that they would do "even greater things" than He had done, because He said, "I am going to the Father. And I will do whatever you ask in my name" (John 14:12–13). When Christ *acts* in response to our prayers, people get saved.

#### WHY PRAYER EVANGELISM WORKS

Not only is prayer evangelism biblical, it is also powerful! There are several reasons combining prayer with evangelistic efforts produces great results:

*Praying for others changes the person praying.* Praying for others changed me. To be effective for God I needed to become more deeply concerned for the spiritual well-being of others, more aware of God's heart for them. I found that the more I prayed for yet-to-be-followers of Christ, the more I cared. The more I cared, the harder I prayed. The harder I prayed, the more I wanted God's best for them, and the more effective I was in reaching out to them.

Prayer doesn't just change things. It changes people—especially the people who pray.

*Prayer for others builds relationships.* Most people who come to Christ come because they have a relationship with a

bona fide Christian—a relationship in which the love of Christ is not only communicated but demonstrated. Intercession builds relational bridges. Bridges of love connect us to the persons we pray for and connect the persons we pray for to Christ.

*Prayer gains access where hearts are closed.* People may refuse to open a Bible. They may turn a blind eye to what can clearly be seen in the things God has made. They may brush off the testimony of believers and spurn the church. They may close their hearts and minds to the gospel. But they can't keep the Spirit from moving in their hearts—the Spirit who moves when God's people pray.

The unknown author of *Kneeling Christian* said it best: "Men may spurn our appeals, reject our message, oppose our arguments, despise our persons, but they are helpless against our prayers."

*Prayer evangelism is simple, flexible, and doable.* I can pray for yet-to-be-followers of Christ whether I am alone, with my family, with a small group, or with my whole church. My prayers can focus on friends, family members, neighbors, or coworkers. I can pray at home, in a restaurant, at my workplace, or on the move. Prayer evangelism is simply a matter of talking to God about the "lost sheep" who are all around us; lost sheep that Christ wants to bring home. No one can honestly say, "I don't know when, where, or how to pray." Opportunities are everywhere.

#### WHAT PRAYER EVANGELISM REQUIRES

*Prayer evangelism requires a burdened heart.* Burden is one of our strongest motivations to pray for unsaved persons. Jesus' call to pray for harvesters arose out of His burden for "harassed and helpless" sheep. Paul's fervent prayer for fellow Israelites sprang from his "heart's desire . . . that they might be saved" (Rom. 10:1).

Prayers without burden are lifeless and perfunctory. When Salvation Army workers reported their failure to win souls, their leader William Booth proposed



a two-word solution: “Try tears.”

Burdened hearts love the lost. Burdened hearts weep. Burdened hearts pray fervently and powerfully.

*Prayer evangelism requires perseverance.* Jesus applauded the shameless perseverance of the man who pleaded with his neighbor for bread for a midnight visitor. So I am sure Jesus also applauded the persevering evangelistic prayers of George Mueller. In 1844 Mueller began to pray daily for five individuals who did not know the Lord. One by one they came to the Lord as Mueller persisted in prayer. The last of the five came to faith shortly after Mueller’s death, more than 63 years after he first began to pray.

Mueller understood perseverance. He didn’t quit.

*Our best evangelistic prayers are Scripture prayers.* Since “no one can come to [Jesus] unless the Father . . . draws him,” through Scripture prayer we pray that the Father will draw them (John 6:44). Since the evil one snatches away gospel seed sown in the hearts of people, Scripture prayer means praying that they will hear the Word and understand it (Matt. 13:23). Since the “god of this age” blinds the minds of unbelievers, Scripture prayer also means praying that the unsaved will be unblinded and will “see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ” (2 Cor. 4:4). God loves to hear us pray His purposes back to Him.

*Prayer evangelism is spiritual warfare.* Satan—the strong man—is determined to keep his captives bound. Christ, who is able to bind the strong man, wants them set free. Warfare prayer, according to Wesley Duewel is, “joining Christ in driving out and defeating Satan and in setting his captives free.”<sup>1</sup> We do the praying. Christ does the freeing. It’s not prayer that defeats Satan. It’s Christ who defeats Satan in response to our prayers. He binds the strong man and sets captives free.

*Prayer evangelism requires the Word of God.* It’s not enough just to pray. A spiritual harvest requires people hearing the Word of God. “Faith comes by

hearing” said Paul, and “hearing by the word of God” (Rom. 10:17, KJV). People can’t “hear” the word unless the Holy Spirit opens their ears and their hearts. Our prayers move the Spirit to do just that. And that word, God decrees, “will not return to me empty, but will accomplish what I desire” (Isa. 55:11). That’s a promise—God’s promise!

## WHERE PRAYER EVANGELISM WORKS

*It works person to person.* Norm began praying regularly for John, an annoying neighbor he didn’t like very much. The first thing God did as Norm prayed was to change Norm’s own heart. He began to feel genuine concern for John.

In a “chance” meeting John mentioned that he had started going to church.

“Great!” Norm responded. “I want you to know I have been praying for you.”

Next, John asked Norm to suggest a

Christian book to read. Norm gave him *More Than a Carpenter* by Josh McDowell. Then, to Norm’s surprise, John accepted the Lord, joined the church, and was reunited with his divorced wife who had also come to know the Lord.

**N**orm says, “I am grateful that through prayer God not only changed John’s life for eternity, but He also changed me.”

*It works family to family.*

A family placed the names of each of their neighbors in a jar. Each day at dinner they pulled out a name and prayed as a family for that neighbor. One week they pulled out the same neighbor’s name three days in a row. Wondering if God was sending them a message, they visited this home and found that the father had abandoned the family three days earlier. With this new awareness they prayed fervently for the needs of the abandoned family. Not long afterward the

*continued on page 17*

## BLESS YOUR NEIGHBORS



It is helpful to develop a pattern of prayer if you want to sustain that prayer over a long period of time. One such pattern, using the acronym BLESS, was developed a number of years ago by Alvin VanderGriend. The idea is to focus prayer for God’s blessing on specific neighbors or coworkers in the following areas:

- B**—Body: Pray for good health, protection, and strength.
- L**—Labor: Pray for their work experience and their financial security.
- E**—Emotional: Pray for emotional health and a good quality of life; for joy, peace, hope.
- S**—Social: Pray for their relationships with their family and friends.
- S**—Spiritual: Pray for their salvation, that they will come to faith in Jesus Christ.

A suggested pattern is to pray these five blessings, for five neighbors, for five minutes each day.

Taken from *Shine His Light: A Simple Way to Pray, Care, and Share Jesus in Your Neighborhood* by Alvin J. VanderGriend. © 2012 PrayerShop Publishing.

# MY JOURNEY INTO PRAYER EVANGELISM

By Phil Miglioratti

*I'm* grateful I was introduced to prayer evangelism as a process, not a program; a strategy rather than a series of events. At some point in the 1990s, prayer and evangelism were reintroduced to one another and became the “prayer evangelism movement,” with notable messengers and a myriad of new ministries.

God only knows every tributary that flowed together to form a great river of renewal and a return to “Book-of-Acts basics” by the end of the decade. But certainly the following must be included:

- For decades, the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association’s Operation Andrew has used *Look Around, Look Up, Look Out, Look Forward, Look After* as a simple plan to encourage Christians to pray for, build bridges to, and invite lost persons to a citywide crusade and then disciple them.
- John Stott introduced the vision of “The whole Church, taking the whole gospel to the whole world,” at the First International Congress on World Evangelization in Lausanne, Switzerland, in 1974. It became a banner for integrating prayer with holistic ministry as essential components of evangelism.
- Several denominational leaders helped lead the emerging prayer evangelism movement in the late 1980s and early ’90s, including Lon Allison and Dallas Anderson of the Evangelical Covenant Church and Alvin VanderGriend of the Christian Reformed Church.
- In 1992 the Mission America Coalition (U.S. Lausanne Committee) devoted a year to seeking God’s vision to accelerate evangelism in the United States. Led by Paul Cedar, and drawing from a wide spectrum of denominations and ministry organizations, the coalition quickly identified God’s Spirit at work in an emerging prayer movement and in citywide collaborations of holistic evangelism.

As God was setting the stage of the prayer evangelism movement, He was rearranging my perspectives as well. Like so many pastors and Christian leaders, I was being schooled in what was becoming a new *prayer-care-share* lifestyle paradigm.

- David Bryant’s concerts of prayer and Bill Bright’s prayer and fasting conferences encouraged the Body of Christ to pray for “John 17 unity” with Christians from other denominations.
- International Renewal Ministries, led by Joe Aldrich, introduced a new style of corporate prayer to communities across the United States. Pastors and leaders spent three to four days in Spirit-led, Scripture-fed praying. This “no agenda, no preaching” approach resulted in cleansed

hearts, relationships forged by the Spirit, and a vision for increased collaboration.

- In God’s perfect timing, the technology explosion brought email and Internet ministries, making it possible for new ideas like the National Pastors’ Prayer Network to communicate instantaneously with pastors’ prayer groups across the country. New technology also gave birth to the Mapping Center for Evangelism, enabling outward focused, neighborhood-based prayer to flourish. Transformation videos produced by George Otis revealed God’s heart to transform communities.
- March For Jesus brought millions of Christ-followers out of their seats and into the streets, demonstrating the power of combining people, prayer, and praise in presence-based proclamation.
- Steve Hawthorne’s *Seek God for the City* prayer guide equipped Christians to pray for lost persons and nations with hope-filled, Scripture-based prayers.
- Francis Frangipane crossed the country, challenging pastors to meet together to pray for their cities.
- Evelyn Christenson asked “What Happens When Women Pray?” and encouraged the formation of prayer triplets to pray specifically for unbelievers.
- Bill Bright called us to prayer and fasting.

The call to “pray for, care for, and share the gospel with every man, women, and child in our nation by year end 2000” swept many of us into the prayer evangelism movement.

- Radio station KTIS in Minneapolis introduced many to this lifestyle via several radio marathons devoted to starting neighborhood lighthouses of prayer.
- For more than a decade, in their monthly Lighthouse Report on radio stations across the country, Campus Crusade (now Cru) has been broadcasting stories of people living the prayer-care-share lifestyle.
- H.O.P.E. ministries, led by Alvin VanderGriend, produced resources to serve lighthouses.
- Ed Silvano’s books, *That None Should Perish* (1998) and *Prayer Evangelism* (2000), along with *Pray!* magazine’s articles by various authors, gave credibility and definition to the prayer evangelism movement.
- The first City Impact Roundtable in 1988, facilitated by Glenn Barth and Jarvis Ward of Mission America Coalition, convened 46 leaders from 28 cities, sharing best practices on prayer, community development, and outreach.

**PHIL MIGLIORATTI** is COO of Mission America Coalition. His passion is to network pastors, prayer, and city transformation movements through *Philsblog.net*.



father returned home and reunited with his family. Prayer can change families.

*It works in small groups.* A prayer triplet is a small group in which each person presents the names of three persons he or she knows who have not yet committed to following Christ. Praying daily, on their own, for the nine persons named, the triplet members come together once a week for mutual prayer.

**A**ny existing small group can choose to use prayer triplets. Group members agree to pray faithfully for those named, to report progress to each other, and to plan activities that might appeal to those being prayed for. God is pleased to hear our “agreeing” prayers.

*It works in neighborhoods.* The Olive Knolls Nazarene Church in Bakersfield, CA, planted eight prayer cells in high-need apartment complexes near the church. As prayers mounted, things began to change. Residents of the complexes began helping each other. An out-of-control boy got turned around. Drug dealers moved out. A prostitute was converted and gave up her lifestyle. Several of the residents started going to church. Eighteen young people became involved in the church’s youth ministries. A couple of new Bible studies started in the complexes. Ten persons made commitments to Christ. Crime rates came down so dramatically that the police asked the church to consider planting prayer cells in other neighborhoods.

*It works in whole churches.* The leaders of Calvary Community Church in West Lake Village, CA, challenged its 1,200 members to pray for family members, friends, neighbors, and coworkers who were not yet followers of Christ. The church provided prayer guides and regularly encouraged outreach prayer in their worship services. As a result the church began to see a steady stream of new converts. At the end of one full year of outreach prayer, they had recorded 430 new commitments to Christ. Most

of these converts had been prayed for by name by church members. Their prayers were the key to effective evangelism.

*It works in whole denominations.* Some years ago the Evangelical Covenant Church, a fellowship of about 110,000 members, initiated a denomination-wide emphasis to pray by name for yet-to-be-followers of Christ. At the denomination’s annual conference, members submitted the names of 394,000 persons who were being prayed for. One year later the denomination reported 11,600 decisions for Christ, which represents 11 new faith commitments for every 100 members. That is a conversion rate approximately seven times greater than the average in America. Prayer paved the way.

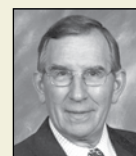
## RAPID AND FEARLESS PACE

Something happens when people pray for unsaved persons in their spheres of influence—something that wouldn’t

have happened if they hadn’t prayed. I think E.M. Bounds had it right when he said, “The gospel moves with slow and timid pace when the saints are not at their prayers early and late and long.”

If that is true, then wouldn’t it also be true to say that the gospel will move at a rapid and fearless pace when God’s people *are* at their prayers early, late, and long? I think so! ☞

<sup>1</sup> Wesley Duewel, *Touch the World through Prayer* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1986), 208.



**ALVIN VANDERGRIND** is the co-founder of the Denominational Prayer Leaders Network. He served for many years as a pastor and denominational prayer leader. His

books *Praying God’s Heart* and *Love to Pray* are available at [prayershop.org](http://prayershop.org). PrayerShop recently released two updated versions of his books that shaped the prayer-care-share movement: *Be Jesus in Your Neighborhood: Developing a Prayer, Care, Share Lifestyle in 30 Days* and *Shine His Light: A Simple Way to Pray, Care, and Share Jesus in Your Neighborhood*.

**ONECRY**  
A Nationwide Call for Spiritual Awakening

**TURN // PRAY // UNITE**

in humble repentance from every sin God reveals to us // with urgency for spiritual recovery and awakening // with other believers in spreading the hope of revival

To learn more about OneCry and to join the movement, visit [www.onecry.com](http://www.onecry.com)





# LOVING YOUR NEIGHBORS TO CHRIST

*When We Pray and  
Care, God Opens  
the Doors to Share*

It all started in Minnesota. After serving pastorates in southern California for more than 20 years, Paul was called to serve as president of a denomination whose international offices were located in Minneapolis. We moved into a new townhouse in a growing neighborhood in the Twin Cities area.

While Paul was ministering throughout the world, Jeannie was beginning a prayer ministry in our neighborhood. It turned out to be a very significant ministry in the lives of a number of women.

A small group began meeting weekly in our kitchen. As they prayed and shared together, they reached out with love to a number of neighbors. Over the next few years, the group grew in size and influence. Several women came to faith in Christ while others grew in their faith.

**BY PAUL & JEANNIE CEDAR**

# PREPARING THE SOIL THROUGH PRAYER

By  
Earl Pickard

God's work involves both the land (soil) and the people (heart). In Jesus' parable of the seed and the sower, the seed refers to the Word of God, and the soil refers to one's inner being, the heart. And Jesus speaks of four types of heart soil: hard soil, rocky soil, thorny soil, and good soil (Mark 4:8–20).

I have learned that praying on site—whether prayer walking, prayer journeys, or prayer missions at targeted locations—not only prepares the soil of hearts but can remove spiritual obstacles. In Ephesians, Paul indicates that praying for God's will and work helps open hearts to hear, see, and understand the mysteries of His will, of Christ, and of the Church and the gospel (Eph. 1:18–21; 3:8–21).

Effective evangelism is more than an activity or program, more than sharing our faith. It involves planting the gospel in receptive hearts (our harvest field). We go beforehand in prayer, helping prepare the way of the Lord—on the land and in the hearts.

I believe the Lord sends out harvest workers to receptive people in response to our sending pray-ers who pray both beforehand and as we are evangelizing and discipling in the locations. We must not only care about going into every nation to share the gospel but also be praying on site in every nation for His Kingdom to come.

In the 1970s, a multi-dimensional evangelism outreach called "I Found It," swept across major cities in the United States. As the director in Denver, I chose to prepare the soil by conducting prayer training in more than 60 churches, with three-hour prayer workshops. As a result, the ratio of the number of people who heard the message and those who indicated they invited Christ into their lives was greater than in other cities that conducted only the outreach campaign (without incorporating the prayer workshops). I believe God used the emphasis on prayer in Denver to prepare the hearts of the 6,500 people who received Christ.

During the shakeup and dismantling of the USSR in 1991, I was part of a ministry team in one of the Baltic republics. We were there to help prepare, through prayer, the way for the church to arise during this nation-building transition. My prayer partner and I ended up in a city that had been off-limits to foreigners for 51 years. At one point we were invited to speak in a high school assembly to more than 400 students.

I led out with prayer. Then the principal stopped me and asked if I had just prayed. I was surprised, but I responded with a firm yes.

The principal exclaimed that they had never before experienced prayer in the school. She excitedly asked me to pray *again!*

We could sense the openness among the students after those prayers. The Spirit of God moved us to sing a couple of heartfelt worship choruses and give a salvation message. At the end of the high-school assembly, most of the students responded to receive Christ. Glory!

**EARL PICKARD** has been involved in strategic prayer ministry as a 30-year staff member of Cru. He is a member of the executive team of America's National Prayer Committee.

A few years later, God called us back to southern California when Paul became chair of the Mission America Coalition/U.S. Lausanne Committee. As we moved into a new neighborhood, the Lord nudged Paul to become involved with Jeannie in reaching out with Christ's love to our neighbors. Of course, our neighbors are not only the people who live close to where we live. Our neighbors include our associates at work, classmates, the checkout persons at the grocery store, our doctors—any person God brings into our lives.

Over the next few years, the Lord used various partners of the Mission America Coalition to teach us three basic principles for loving our neighbors. The Lord has used these principles in our lives and in the lives of so many others—leading to the formation of the Lighthouse Movement that has reached literally tens of thousands of people with the love and good news of Jesus Christ.

The principles are simple and practical—and spiritually potent. When we put them into practice, God uses them in powerful ways. They are *prayer*, *care*, and *share*.

## PRAYER FOR OPEN DOORS

Shortly after we moved into our neighborhood, we began to take regular prayer walks, quietly praying for the residents in each house—even if we did not know their names. As we walked and prayed, the Lord gave us natural opportunities to get to know our neighbors. It was truly amazing how the Holy Spirit opened doors.

One late afternoon as we were prayer walking, a man suddenly walked out of the front door of his house. He greeted us, and we began a conversation. We visited for a few minutes and then he said, "Why don't you come in and have a drink." Within five minutes of meeting him, we were sitting in his living room, sipping iced tea and getting acquainted with him and his wife.



God did it that day and has done it over and over again. When we pray, God opens doors!

Prayer evangelism is exceedingly powerful. We have witnessed that not only in our geographical neighborhood, but in literally every sphere of our lives. We have also observed that rarely is just one person involved in praying for the salvation of a given person. As the Apostle Paul observed, one or more of us may plant the initial seeds of the gospel through prayer and other means, several of us may water that seed through acts of love and kindness, but only God can bring the increase (1 Cor. 3:6).

After we had lived in our neighborhood a few years, a new couple moved into the house across the street. They were initially friendly to us until the husband found out we were involved in ministry. Then he backed away. We continued to pray for them and to seek uncontrived opportunities to love them.

**O**ne Saturday morning as we were working in our front yard, he suddenly came out of his house and began a very friendly conversation with Paul. He said that his brother had recently invited him to attend a men's retreat with a group of men from his church. He added that he had never done anything like that before but enjoyed it a great deal.

Then he asked a totally unexpected question. He asked if Paul would help him find a Bible study. Obviously the Holy Spirit had been moving in his life and had led him to ask the question. We began a neighborhood Bible study, and soon he committed his life to Christ and his wife made a recommitment.

This is a wonderful example of a team effort. His Christian brother had been praying for him. We had been praying for him. Only the Lord knows how many others may have been praying for him. The Lord graciously used those prayers and now this man is serving Christ.

*We cannot open the spiritual doors  
into the lives of others.*

*Only God can do that.*

All of us can be used of God in praying for our neighbors!

### **CARE WITH LOVING HEARTS**

Praying for lost people is only the first step in this wonderful lifestyle. As we

begin to seriously pray, the Lord opens opportunities to reach out to them with unconditional love. We are not talking about a mere human endeavor. We are talking about an authentic and loving lifestyle of praying, caring, and sharing with others.

## **INDONESIA MINISTRY ADOPTS STREETS**

**I**ndonesia has the largest Muslim population of any country in the world. The believers of Indonesia recently hosted the World Prayer Assembly (May 2012), with 9,000 prayer leaders from around the world coming to pray, worship, and cry out to God for spiritual awakening. More than 100,000 Indonesians filled the stadium in Jakarta for a closing prayer rally that was broadcasted to 375 cities in various stadium venues throughout Indonesia.

The Church in Indonesia was already united in an extraordinary way, but this new wave of prayer became the catalyst for greater unity. Reports came back that in city after city *the whole Church came together*—evangelicals, mainline churches, Pentecostals, and Catholics all joined in prayer.

### *Game Changer*

Because of the greater unity in the prayer movement, the My Home Indonesia project was launched. It calls all believers in the nation to adopt their streets, neighborhoods, workplaces, and classrooms—to pray, reach out in compassion, and share God's love.

During the stadium prayer meeting, hundreds of thousands of Christians across the nation used their cell phones to text commitments to My Home Indonesia. The momentum continues to build as entire denominations are signing on to adopt streets in all the cities.

The goal for the next two years is to see 15 million Christians adopt their streets through daily prayer and acts of kindness to their neighbors. Indonesia is a country that faces many challenges: drugs, prostitution, anarchist demonstrations, gangs, and gambling. But the believers in this land are rising up together to see transformation—and not just through prayer, but also by loving and reaching out to their neighbors and their community. For more information, go to [myhomeindonesia.org](http://myhomeindonesia.org).

Jesus has taught us that we should love the Lord our God with all our hearts and souls and minds and strength—and that we should love our neighbors as ourselves (Mark 12:30–31). This is not merely an option for true followers of Jesus. Nor is it a suggestion. It is the Great Commandment of our Lord Jesus Christ.

A powerful, effective way for us to

love our neighbors is to pray for their salvation and then look for the Holy Spirit to provide natural ways for us to love them. It is truly remarkable to see how creative the Lord can be in providing wonderful opportunities for us to lovingly care for our neighbors.

As we pray, the Holy Spirit lays certain individuals on our hearts and gives us

the opportunity to love them and to care for them. In fact, that is what caring is. It is love in action!

Jeannie met an older woman who lived not far from our home who was going through a difficult time. The woman, feeling hurt and anger, needed someone to love her and listen to her. It took time but soon she accepted a few cookies, a warm meal, an extra pie that Jeannie had baked, and then a Scripture passage on a 3x5 card to encourage her. Later she received a large-print Bible, eager to learn more of Jesus. What a joy it was to see God's love move in her heart and give her the assurance of her salvation shortly before He called her home.

**A**s we begin to sincerely and fervently pray for our neighbors, some will respond to us almost immediately. For others, it may take months or even years. But we need to keep praying and caring. The key is for us to be sensitive to the leading and moving of the Holy Spirit. We cannot open the spiritual doors into the lives of others. Only God can do that.

Jeannie has discovered that when God places on our hearts a new or fresh way to reach out to someone, we must obey quickly. It requires intentional effort to take a meal to someone, share a special book, or lovingly care for that person in an appropriate way. *Do it now!*

All of us are surrounded by people who are hurting in various ways. Like Jesus, we need to see people as He sees them—"harassed and helpless," and spiritually lost "like sheep without a shepherd" (Matt. 9:36). What a joy and privilege to respond to them with the love and the compassion of Jesus!

People are not born again by our methods. They are born again of the Holy Spirit (John 3:7–8). When we begin to pray for lost people, the Holy Spirit somehow graciously responds to our prayers and begins His ministry of wooing, drawing, and even convicting (John 16:8).

This is a mysterious spiritual truth.

## THE FIRST AND LAST ANSWER

**A** young man studying to be a priest returned home after a long absence to visit his family. He was shocked at the changes he witnessed. He knew his mother and sister had been living promiscuous lives, drinking excessively, and bringing disgrace and shame on the entire family. But what he found when he returned was almost a complete reversal.

He asked what caused the dramatic changes in their lives. Their response astounded him. They said a woman who visited them explained that they were destroying their lives. They did not want to listen, so she simply said, "I will pray for you every day." Then she left.

After a few days the mother and daughter began to feel convicted about their lifestyles. The pleasure they used to feel in their sinful living began to disappear. They grew tired of waking up sick in the morning, bringing upon themselves the ridicule of neighbors and shame of the family. At first they did not understand what was happening. Then one day the same woman came by to see them. When they asked her what she had been doing that might have been influencing them, she said, "Just praying."

At that point the women began listening as she taught them the simple truths of faith and trust in Jesus. Eventually they made a commitment to Christ, asked to be baptized, and then found a good church to attend.

After seeing this change in the mother and daughter's lives, both the son and his father were deeply touched. The father gave his permission for the women to be baptized because he had never witnessed this kind of transformation. The son also began searching for spiritual answers and chose to follow his mother and sister in a declaration of faith in Christ through baptism.

Prayer is an integral part of the daily lives of Christians here in the Democratic Republic of Congo. Most begin to pray before they get out of bed in the morning and pray for every event as it takes place during the course of the day. No issue is too big or too small that prayer is not the first and last answer. God has responded in amazing ways to many of the prayers of His children. They may have things to learn, but they also have things to teach us as we grow together in our relationship with our heavenly Father.

**ED AND BRENDA BUELL** are missionaries with ACM International in the Democratic Republic of Congo.



Jesus explained, “No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him” (John 6:44). Reaching out to others with the good news of Jesus Christ is not something we do for God. It is something that the Holy Spirit will do through us when we invite Him to do so.

## SHARE THE GOSPEL

We find it interesting to see how the Lord works and how His Spirit draws people to Himself. Sharing flows naturally out of the life of praying and caring. And sharing Jesus’ love is so much a matter of praying, waiting, and listening for what His Spirit wants us to do next.

We can begin to share in many ways—often simply making ourselves available to people. As we pray and care, we can listen to their pain, respond with authentic love to their needs, answer their questions and, within that context, share the good news of Jesus Christ.

Sharing the gospel in deed and word can be as simple as inviting our neighbors to a church service, a Bible study, a movie, a concert, or another special event where the gospel message will be shared. Or we may guide them to an evangelistic website, a book, or a DVD. We can also share our personal testimony or engage them in a spiritual conversation.

**W**hen someone’s heart seems to be opening to the things of God, Jeannie loves to share something like the devotional booklet *Our Daily Bread*.

That often leads to an opportunity to ask how we can pray—or simply let them know we are praying! Then we wait for new opportunities to express our love in Jesus’ name.

Sometimes it seems to take forever. We once waited 16 years before we saw evidence of God’s Spirit doing remarkable work on a heart. But now that new Christian is seeking to grow in Jesus.

As we pray and care, the Lord wonderfully opens opportunities for us to

share in very loving, natural ways. Jeannie became friends with a sweet neighbor who grew very close to Jeannie’s heart. They shared tea, took some trips to the store, and enjoyed other activities together. One day the neighbor saw a verse on our kitchen table and asked, “Do you understand that?”

The verse was Philippians 4:6. Jeannie found her Living Bible and read the verse to the neighbor, who was so pleased and said, “I understand.”

Jeannie asked the neighbor if she would read the Living Bible if Jeannie bought her one. The neighbor agreed, and she loved how clear God’s Word was to her. The two women learned some verses together and talked about them. They even memorized Romans 10:13: “Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.” She did—and He did! And this precious neighbor is now with Jesus.

Of course, our neighborhood is not

static. Several of our neighbors moved away before we had the opportunity to become well acquainted or see them seek after Jesus. We attempted to love them, listen, and pray for them—and now we are trusting that the Holy Spirit has planted them within boundaries of others who will continue the ministry of sharing Jesus with them while we continue to pray for them.

Without a doubt, one of the greatest privileges of our life and ministry is to love our neighbors. We don’t always do it perfectly. Yet it is a wonderful, joyous, and fulfilling journey. **PC**



**PAUL AND JEANNIE CEDAR** make it their high priority to minister together to their neighbors. In addition, they partner in the ministries of the Mission America Coalition, where Paul serves as chairman ([missionamerica.org](http://missionamerica.org)).

*Praying Scripture*  
**BACK TO GOD**

*So-That*  
**PRAYER**

The Apostle Paul, more than any New Testament writer, wrote “So-That” Prayers. He prayed a Spiritual Truth, “So-That” a Practical Reality would occur. Today, CTM has captured these for you in an easy to use, easy to carry 25 card assortment

**TO ORDER:**  
VISIT OUR WEBSITE AT  
[www.CTMPrayer.org/12](http://www.CTMPrayer.org/12)

**COMMON  
THREAD  
MINISTRIES**

mark@ctmprayer.org • 404-606-2322

Size:  
3.5" X 2.5"  
Price \$7.00 packet

# A SIMPLE







# WAY

# TO REAP

*The Harvest Is  
Ready and Time  
Is Wasting*

*Her name is Michelle. As she stood shaking before me with tears in her eyes, my heart broke. Michelle is a classic example of what has happened with the youth of our day. She is jaded by organized religion, wounded by those closest to her, hurting, abused, looking for love, desperate for meaning, searching for something solid to build her life upon. Michelle didn't realize it when she walked into our event that night, but she was looking for Jesus.*

*continued on page 27*

**BY NICK HALL**

# PRAYER AND AUDACIOUS GOALS FOR EVANGELISM AND TRANSLATION WORK

By  
Greg Pruett

*A*t the end of 2006, Pioneer Bible Translators set the audacious goal of doubling in size over six years to meet all our current needs and enter four new fields.

The previous ten years had shown a steady cycle of growth and attrition in the number of people we maintained overseas. Some years we would grow well but never quite fast enough to meet the needs we had identified. In some cases, Bibleless peoples had been pleading for more than a decade for us to translate the Bible into their languages.

We couldn't continue business as usual in the face of the desperate need for Scripture all over the world. We decided to do something extraordinary to stretch ourselves, break the cycle, and meet the spiritual needs of the people hungering and thirsting for God's Word.

So we set higher goals than we ever dared before. Goals like these:

- By the end of 2012 we would increase the number of our teammates from 185 to 385.
- By 2014 we would be translating the Bible in 69 languages for 33 million people.
- We would buy our first property in the U.S. and construct our first permanent building.

We knew that none of these things would happen without doing something special. We needed a strategy.

## *The Strategy*

We searched Scripture and found these promises of Jesus:

- God answers persistent prayer: Luke 11:9–10.
- God answers prayers of faith and faithfulness: Mark 11:24.
- God answers prayer in Jesus' name: John 14:11–14.
- God answers unified group prayer: Matthew 18:19.
- God answers specific prayers that build faith: Matthew 21:21–22.

Instead of praying about our strategies, we decided to *make prayer the strategy*. We set out as a united team to persistently petition God, in faith, for goals consistent with Jesus' name and nature.

## *The Power*

None of us anticipated the miracle power God would rain down on us.

- During the worst economic period in recent history,

our overall income increased from 4.2 million dollars in 2006 to 7.5 million in 2011.

- By the end of 2011 the number of our teammates had risen from 185 to 325. I don't yet know if we will end 2012 with the envisioned number of 385 teammates, but last year alone the number of overseas career missionaries shot up from 88 to 109, an increase of nearly 25 percent!
- The number of countries we work in surged from 5 to 11.
- We were able to purchase 22 acres and build our first permanent facility in North America, and we have already begun to receive funds for our next building.
- In 2006 we were translating the Bible in 35 languages spoken by 9 million people. Now we translate the Bible in 53 languages spoken by at least 19.3 million people. This is a conservative estimate because we cannot fully document two populations: one language may be spoken by as many as 20 million people, and another by at least 200 million. The potential impact of our ministry continues to escalate to the point that we no longer are sure how to report its full scope accurately.

God has released an explosion of power. I believe this movement of the Holy Spirit has come because we are centered on prayer as our primary strategy.

## *The Future*

Looking back at the astonishing results of championing prayer as our strategy, we are now asking the question, "If God can do that, is anything impossible for Him?" The time has come to set our next six-year goals, and we can't help but think exceedingly big. We have decided that Pioneer Bible Translators will follow the Spirit's lead to fill the gaps in the Bible translation movement so that we and our partners will see churches with Scripture transforming every language group on earth by 2050. It doesn't seem humanly possible, but Jesus has shared His secret with us: "Anyone who has faith in me will do what I have been doing. He will do even greater things than these, because I am going to the Father. And I will do anything you ask in my name" (John 14:12–13).

We know that as we persevere in unified group prayer, crying out in faith to God for needs carefully aligned with the name and character of Jesus—nothing will be impossible. Prayer *is* the strategy.

**GREG PRUETT** is president of Pioneer Bible Translators ([pioneerbible.org](http://pioneerbible.org)).



*As we shared the gospel each night, I was blown away by the spiritual hunger: more than 160,000*

*people responded to Jesus!*

For the past ten years, I have been on a mission to reach the Michelles of our world. I travel 200 days out of the year, racking up the miles by car or plane. Already this year I have spoken to more than 650,000 people (mostly youth). I speak at conferences and churches, but I spend most of my time with events and initiatives focused on reaching those who have distanced themselves from God. Today, that represents the majority.

**T**o those 50 years and older, I am an evangelist. But to my primary audience of teens and young adults, I am a hybrid between Ryan Seacrest (host of *American Idol*) and a peer who really loves Jesus.

I am not ashamed to say that God has changed my life. No, I am not a drug addict or ex-con. Actually, I had a simple childhood in a Christian home. I didn't party, and I was a virgin when I married my wife Tiffany. However, like the majority of youth culture today, I became disenchanted with "status quo" Christianity. Then an on-fire youth pastor showed me that being a Christian didn't have to be boring. In fact, this leader (and others who came after him) showed me that following Jesus is the least boring thing on earth.

Today my driving passion is to share Jesus with this generation, retelling the simple gospel story in a way they can understand—while not shying away from the radical implications it has for our lives. There is no such thing as a halfway Christian!

## PRAYING FERVENTLY

Before speaking at events, I walk the venues and pray for those who will attend. "God, what do You want to do tonight? Holy Spirit, draw this crowd to the hope of Jesus. Channel Your love through me. Help me connect with each person as a friend. Bring them to the cross."

As programs come to a close, I stay long afterward to talk, listen, and pray for those who line up to speak with me. We laugh. We cry. We pray. It is exhausting and incredible all at the same time. Even at home, I stay up late, wading through emails and Facebook messages from those crying out for help or just wanting someone to listen to their stories.

Today's generation is desperate for the hope that can only be found in Jesus. As His followers, it is our task to get His message out.

*Like many who line up after our events, Michelle had a story to share. "I came tonight skeptical that anything good would happen. I hate my life and have tried to kill myself numerous times over the past few years." As she shared about the abuse she experienced, she expressed her lifelong conviction: If there is a God, He definitely doesn't care about her.*

*As I looked into this young woman's eyes I could feel the weight she had carried for so long.*

**I**n Luke 10:2, Jesus said, "The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field."

Everywhere I look today, I see God's harvest ripe and ready to be brought in. Students are lining up across the nation, asking our PULSE team to come alongside them to reach their friends, families, schools, and communities with God's love.

In the past few years, we have witnessed unprecedented response to the gospel—even in hostile environments. During the fall of 2011, we held an outreach at a secular university in Minnesota where more than 30 percent of the thousands in

attendance responded to the gospel! In the spring of 2012, PULSE went on tour with ten bands to 47 cities across America. As we shared the gospel each night, I was blown away by the spiritual hunger: more than 160,000 people responded to Jesus!

## RIPE FIELDS EVERYWHERE

The fields are ripe and ready to be harvested—and not just among our young people. The fields are ripe in cities where people from all corners of the world are converging upon urban centers. For those of us living in a metropolitan area (and even for many who do not), God has brought the nations to our doorstep.

*The fields are ripe in rural areas.*

While negative influences can often plague smaller towns, one family can have an incredible impact by praying and proactively planning positive gatherings and events. In my home state of North Dakota, I have seen the power of passionate, persistent, praying parents and teens willing to take a stand for Christ. Things are changing!

*The fields are ripe in schools.* While many complain about all that is not happening in our schools, God is on the move. Students are gathering to pray for peers and work toward after-school outreach activities. Parents are interceding for entire campuses, faculty, and staff. Teachers and professors are coming to know Jesus and teaching differently.

*The fields are ripe in the marketplace.* While it is true there is a long list of things we cannot talk about at most jobs, it is also true that we cannot be discriminated against because of religion. At a

time when most people are terrified to speak up about faith, a humble and timely witness has never had more impact. I know of major corporations where lunchtime Bible studies and spiritual discussion groups are exploding all because someone took Jesus' words seriously.

*The fields are ripe in our politics and social issues.* While most want to paint Christianity into a corner of finger pointers and name callers, we have an unprecedented opportunity to model the love of Jesus to those who need it most. Believers are praying over those they may not understand, rather than judging. They are building friendships instead of casting stones. They embody Jesus rather than the Pharisees. Outcasts are experiencing love and community. The lost are being found, and prodigals are coming home.

I don't want you to miss this: *The harvest is ready!*

## ALL EYES ON JESUS

Jesus knew something about the harvest. He encouraged His disciples to pray with faith and urgency for believers to join Him in the harvest of souls. Jesus was on mission 24/7.

*Jesus' message is clear.* He wants us to know that, like the harvest in the farming season, there is a spiritual harvest, and *its time is now.* Furthermore, He makes it very clear that this harvest is God's. In other words, we must keep our eyes focused on our leader, not distracted from our primary work of completing the task.

Our greatest joy is to pray—and put feet to prayers—that God will send people into the harvest fields to minister the gospel.

*Jesus' life models this message.* Jesus didn't come to earth for comfort. Rather, He abandoned comfort for the sake of this great harvest. With His words He offers us a new way to live. With His actions He demonstrates the love of God for each life. When Jesus shed His blood on the cross, He paid for the sins of the world. After He rose from the grave, He

unleashed His Holy Spirit on earth and commissioned His followers to carry the gospel forward.

*Our mission has not changed—and the days are urgent.* While most professing Christians do not share their faith, there is no form of biblical Christianity that does not involve running with God after those lives that are distant from Him. And today, there has never been a greater opportunity to join God in this mission.

I truly believe you and I can play a part in completing the Great Commission and ushering in our Lord's return.

So what can you do now?

## WHY WOULD YOU NOT PRAY?

It all begins with prayer. At PULSE, we say that the backbone of every move of God is prayer. We frequently remind leaders that we are either prayerful or we are prideful. Do you pray every day for the lost people in your life? If not, why not?

**T**o encourage prayer for those who need Jesus in our lives, we developed a card we call "Keep 5." If you don't currently have a strategy for praying for the lost, I encourage you to grab a recipe card or small piece of paper right now and write out the names of five people in your life who need Jesus. Once the card is filled out, place it in a visible place you will see numerous times in a day (on your refrigerator, in your Bible, or on the dashboard of your car). As you see the card, pray for your five friends and ask God for opportunities to share Jesus with them. We believe—and have seen evidence to the fact—that when we pray for opportunities to share Jesus, God actually gives us opportunities to share Jesus! (I know—crazy, right?)

Beyond personal prayer, consider joining with others to pray for lost people in your life, neighborhood, or community. Begin gathering with others weekly to pray specifically for those who need Jesus. Pray for each other's Keep-5 names and hold each other accountable

to actively seek opportunities to engage these relationships spiritually.

Once you've laid a firm foundation of prayer, begin to step out in faith toward seeing your friends come to know Jesus. Invite them to coffee. Have meaningful discussions. Take them to events or movies that deal with deeper issues. Pray and be intentional.

*As Michelle shared her story, I witnessed her countenance completely changing. With tears welling like small pools in her eyes, I began to see hope fill her face.*

*"Tonight, something happened. Tonight, for the first time I experienced something powerful. As you were speaking, it was like I knew that God loved me and that Jesus died for me."*

*With a trembling hand, she held out her fist toward me with something clasped inside. "I have worn this necklace for years. Every day I have put it on and it has reminded me that I am worthless." Michelle opened her fist to reveal a razor blade on a chain.*

*She said, "After tonight, I don't want to wear this any longer. I don't want to see myself the way the world sees me for one more minute. From now on, I want to see myself the way God sees me. I want to follow Jesus."*

*I opened my hand and received Michelle's necklace. God had set her free.*

There are Michelles all around us. They are looking for Jesus. Will you be the one to bring them the good news? Now is the time. The fields are ripe. The harvest is ready.

Let's bring it in. **PC**



**NICK HALL** is the founder and chief communicator of PULSE ([pulsemovement.com](http://pulsemovement.com)), a student-launched prayer and evangelism initiative that has spread to dozens of college campuses and communities. He is a partner evangelist with the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association and the Luis Palau Association.



# PRAYER EVANGELISM

## *A Bible Study*

*Note: This Bible study is formatted for small group open discussion. If you use this study by yourself, we suggest that you journal your answers to the discussion questions. Also, please use suggested translations where indicated. Biblegateway.com is an excellent source for looking up passages in translations you may not have on hand.*



One of the things that impressed me during a prayer journey to Indonesia in 1997 was how easy it was to pray for the lost when you can look into the faces of the poor, the hurting, and the suffering. The hopelessness was tangible. Prayer for their salvation was a natural response to the visible desperation everywhere around us.

But without those haunting, first-hand prompts toward compassion, does prayer for the lost always seem so urgent? Many of us live with friends and neighbors who appear on the outside to be doing as well as we are, or perhaps even better. Often prayers for immediate needs—a job, a troubled marriage, communication problems with a teen—prompts more immediate prayer attention than the unsaved who are going through the motions of everyday “looks-okay-on-the-surface” living.

But those are the very people who need our prayers most desperately. They are without hope. The same tragic end awaits them as their third-world counterparts.

**BY SANDRA HIGLEY**

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

In what ways do you see Scripture demonstrating that God wants us to pray for all the unsaved? (John 14:12–13, 17:20; Rom. 10:1; 1 Tim. 2:1–4)

---

---

---

Alvin VanderGriend says that “to be effective for God [we need] to become more deeply concerned for the spiritual well-being of others, more aware of God’s heart for them.” Based on that assessment, how would you rate your spiritual effectiveness right now?

---

---

---

VanderGriend goes on to say, “I found that the more I prayed for yet-to-be-followers of Christ, the more I cared. The more I cared, the harder I prayed. The harder I prayed, the more I wanted God’s best for them, and the more effective I was in reaching out to them.” What evidence do you see of this truth in Hosea 10:12?

---

---

---

He lists three requirements for prayer evangelism: a burdened heart, perseverance, and the Word of God. If your effectiveness rating is not what you wish it to be, identify which of these three things holds you back (it may be more than one):

---

---

---

Discuss the elements of a burdened heart seen in the following passages: Isaiah 53:12; Mark 12:30–31.

---

---

---

What part does perseverance play in prayer for the lost? (1 Kings 18:42–45; James 5:17–20)

---

---

How is the Word of God essential in prayer evangelism? (Isa. 55:11; Ezek. 37:3–5; Rom. 10:17(κβν); 1 Peter 1:23)

---

---

---

How are you prompted to pray for an increase in these areas for yourself?

---

---

Paul and Jeannie Cedar have observed that rarely is just one person involved in praying for the salvation of a given person. Based on the following Scriptures, how do you see evangelism as a collaborative effort between people and the Holy Spirit? (John 3:7–8, 16:8; 1 Cor. 3:6; Eph. 3:8–21)

---

---

---

## ACTION STEPS

In response to Jesus’ words in Luke 10:2, Nick Hall urges us to see the ripe harvest of souls ready around us: “Everywhere I look today, I see God’s harvest ripe and ready to be brought in. . . . In the past few years, we have witnessed unprecedented response to the gospel—even in hostile environments.” He sees ripe fields among young people, in schools, in the marketplace, in political and social arenas, etc. Pinpoint some harvest fields in your realm of influence:

---


---

---

Now list some specific people you can pray for within the areas you identified above.

---

---

Once your evangelism prayer targets have been defined, begin to pray from Scripture over each one. Remain open to the Holy Spirit’s leading on specific Scriptures to pray, but here are some suggestions to get you started: Psalm 95:7–8, 119:18; Isaiah 43:1; Jeremiah 24:7; Ezekiel 11:19; Mark 4:8–20; Luke 24:45; John 9:25; Acts 2:37, 17:30; 2 Corinthians 4:3–4; Ephesians 1:7, 17–18; 2 Peter 3:9; Jude 1:21–22. 

**SANDRA HIGLEY** is the editor of *Real Life Downloaded*, an online Sunday school curriculum supplement for youth produced by David C Cook Publishers.





---

## Lessons from the Bible's First Intercessor

---

**P**ayer doesn't always come easily for me, even when I'm praying about important things. When I first learned to intercede for others, I prayed for my family's salvation. I knew God wanted to draw them to Himself, but I didn't know how to pray effectively. On those few occasions when I tried to share my faith with family members, the conversation tended to degenerate into an argument.

Years later my dad told me God had been working in his life over a long period, stirring an interest here and a curiosity there. Unseen to me, as I was praying, God was drawing my dad to Himself. Eventually, through an evangelistic series at a nearby church, God broke through to both of my parents and brought them into His Kingdom.

As intercessors, as we grow in our understanding and practice, we inevitably begin to ask questions about the effectiveness of our prayers. We want to collaborate with God in the work He is doing, but what is that work? We want to pray in God's will, but how do we know His will? And we long to see answers to our prayers, but what happens when those answers don't match our expectations?

While no single example of prayer in the Bible has all the answers, I believe a look at the Bible's first intercessor can help with a few of these questions.

Abraham's intercession for Sodom—and God's reply—form Scripture's first example of intercessory prayer. Genesis 18:16–33 recounts God's revelation of His plan to Abraham and Abraham's response in prayer.

But the story begins long before that.

---

By Andrew Wheeler

# God isn't looking for perfect people. He's looking for people who will be faithful to Him through the years.

## BY FAITH: Preparing for Intercession

The Lord said of Abraham, "I have chosen him, so that he will direct his children and his household after him to keep the way of the Lord by doing what is right and just, so that the Lord will bring about for Abraham what he has promised him" (Gen. 18:19).

When God chooses us, He chooses us for a purpose. Our response to God determines our ability to hear His voice calling us to intercession.

God chose Abraham both to bless him and to make him a blessing to all peoples on earth (Gen. 12:1–3). Abraham responded to God's call in faithful obedience. "By faith Abraham, when called to go to a place he would later receive as his inheritance, obeyed and went, even though he did not know where he was going" (Heb. 11:8).

God initiated the relationship with Abraham, but Abraham's faithful, obedient response kept him in God's will. As a result, God confirmed His covenant with Abraham several times (Gen. 15, 17) and revealed His intentions to bless Abraham and use him to bless others.

To be sure, Abraham wasn't perfect. He lied to Pharaoh about Sarah (Gen. 12:10–20) and wavered in his faith, thinking he had to help God out by producing an heir by Hagar, Sarah's servant (Gen. 16).

But God isn't looking for perfect people. He's looking for people who will be faithful to Him through the years and whose faith will show itself in continued obedience. He found such a person in Abraham, and this set the stage for God's revelation of His plan to Abraham in Genesis 18.

As intercessors, it's important for us

to hear God's voice so we can pray His will. Hearing God's voice begins with living a life of faithful obedience and putting ourselves in a position of partnership with God. This is where God will speak to us.

## BY FAITH: Interceding for God's Glory

"The Lord said, 'Shall I hide from Abraham what I am about to do?'" (Gen. 18:17).

We normally picture intercession beginning with us, as we bring our requests to God. But intercession actually begins with God—though we may not always see that part of the story. God brings to our minds the name of a friend or a situation needing His touch. He speaks to us through Scripture, revealing His heart. By these and other promptings, God leads us to intercession.

In Abraham's case, God determined to reveal His judgment to Abraham, and He initiated the conversation: "The outcry against Sodom and Gomorrah is so great and their sin so grievous that I will go down and see if what they have done is as bad as the outcry that has reached me. If not, I will know" (Gen. 18:20–21). Thus God invited Abraham's intercession in response.

But what about us? Has a close family member or friend of yours ever been threatened by an imminent disaster, such as a hurricane or flood? How did you pray? Were your thoughts consumed with that person's safety? Did you pray for the city? These are the thoughts that first occur to us, and praying for our loved ones in danger comes naturally.

Disasters often bring poignancy to our prayers. Fear and uncertainty combine

to focus our thoughts on loved ones in harm's way.

My cousin was working in London at the time of the subway bombings. I knew he took public transportation, but because I wasn't familiar with the system, I had no way of knowing whether or not he had taken one of the targeted trains. My prayers quite naturally focused on his safety—and God answered those prayers (along with the prayers of millions of others, I'm sure).

But Abraham's prayer focused not on his nephew or even on the city of Sodom, but rather on the character of God. His heart cry, "Will not the Judge of all the earth do right?" (Gen. 18:25) revealed his primary concern—God's glory and reputation.

Abraham wrestled with God, trying to understand the interaction of God's judgment and His mercy. He prayed passionately but humbly, not making demands but asking God to reveal more of His character.

Much of our intercession focuses on immediate circumstances. When we pray for others, we tend to pray fix-it prayers—prayers that assume God always plans to fix the immediate problem, such as health concerns, financial issues, and relational breakdowns.

Abraham's intercession revealed a different priority. His prayer for Sodom wasn't primarily about sparing the people or the city. It was primarily about God acting in accord with His righteous character. For Abraham, intercession wasn't primarily about people or circumstances. It was about God.

The conversation ended as it began—with God's initiative. "When the Lord had finished speaking with Abraham, he left, and Abraham returned



home” (Gen. 18:33). Effective intercession starts with God, ends with God, and focuses on God.

## BY FAITH: Trusting God’s Goodness

Abraham didn’t have to wait long for God’s answer: “Early the next morning Abraham got up and returned to the place where he had stood before the Lord. He looked down toward Sodom and Gomorrah, toward all the land of the plain, and he saw dense smoke rising from the land, like smoke from a furnace” (Gen. 19:27–28).

The smoke told him all he needed to know. Sodom and Gomorrah were gone. What did he think when he saw the smoke rising from the plain? Did he mourn for Lot? Was he angry at God? Did he wonder why he had bothered to intercede for Sodom?

How do we respond when God doesn’t answer prayer the way we expect? How do we handle it when we can’t see how God works?

Not long after my parents found faith in Christ, my mom went into the hospital for cancer surgery. Our family prayed earnestly for her healing and recovery, but—despite a period when it seemed God had granted that request—she passed away several months later. Dad and I went through the doubts that often plague intercessors in the wake of unanswered prayer: *Did we not have enough faith? Were we not praying “right”* (whatever that means)? We knew God could have healed her. Why wasn’t that His choice?

Scripture doesn’t tell us Abraham’s immediate reaction to God’s answer, but it does reveal his long-term response. “By faith Abraham . . . was enabled to become a father because he considered him faithful who had made the promise. . . . By faith Abraham, when God tested him, offered Isaac as a sacrifice” (Heb. 11:11, 17).

Abraham apparently didn’t spend much time wallowing in doubt over God’s “no” regarding the sparing of Sodom. Rather, Abraham continued to

live as he habitually did—by faith.

Scripture also shows us that God wasn’t *unconcerned* about Abraham’s personal involvement: “When God destroyed the cities of the plain, he remembered Abraham, and he brought Lot out of the catastrophe that overthrew the cities where Lot had lived” (Gen. 19:29).

God is not limited by our intercession. Abraham’s prayer focused on God’s character and glory and did not mention Lot. But this didn’t stop God from acting out of love and mercy for Abraham. The God “who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine” (Eph. 3:20), who is capable of grand miracles, is also concerned with our very personal needs.

We don’t know whether Abraham ever found out about this part of God’s answer. Scripture records no meeting between the two after this episode.

But we do know that Abraham

continued a life of faithful obedience after this encounter. Like others in Hebrews 11’s “hall of faith,” Abraham saw many of God’s promises only from a distance, yet he was still living by faith when he died (v. 13).

“Success” in intercession is not so much about getting God to do what we want. It’s about putting ourselves in a position to hear His voice, responding in prayer focused on Him, and believing in His goodness regardless of how He chooses to answer.

In short, it’s about a relationship with God characterized by faithful obedience. **PC**

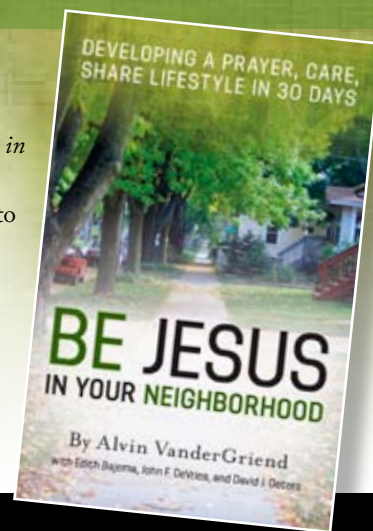


**ANDREW WHEELER** is co-director of the prayer ministry at Willow Creek’s regional campus in McHenry County, IL. He is the author of *Together in Prayer* (*togetherinprayer.net*), which is available through *prayershop.org*.

# Inspire Your People to Pray for the Lost

Most people need gentle reminders and encouragement to faithfully pray for the salvation of neighbors and coworkers. *Be Jesus in Your Neighborhood* and *Shine His Light* are two complementary books that encourage people to make “prayer, care and share” a lifestyle.

*Shine His Light* will inspire people of the possibilities and *Be Jesus in Your Neighborhood* is a 30-day devotional to equip and motivate them to pray for, care for, and share Jesus with those around them.



Developed by prayer evangelism expert, Dr. Alvin VanderGriend, these two products are available in mid-November.

[www.prayershop.org](http://www.prayershop.org)  
800-217-5200 • 812-238-5504



# FROM GRIPING TO

When I was a young mom, I felt confused about how to pray. Growing up, I was taught we must always start all our prayers by praising God for how great He is. Bible teachers cited Jesus' pattern prayer because it begins with a note of hallowing—praising—God's name. And what a wonderful way to come into God's presence! So I tried to begin each prayer and each prayer journal entry that way—praising God.

But frustration often gnawed at me when I tried to follow that pattern. Sometimes stresses took a toll on my praise life. A deep hurt or a heavy heart or some family catastrophe left me slogging toward God, trying in vain to praise Him. Some days, to be honest, I felt that praising God first was like trying to butter up God so He would listen when I finally got around to telling Him what I really wanted Him to know.

Now, after decades of following Christ, I have come to believe that if we're going to use a prayer from Jesus as an example, we might

also want to remember His prayer on the cross.

In three torturous hours, in total darkness, our Lord Jesus Christ suffered an eternity's worth of punishment for the sins of each human being—past, present, and future. And in His infinite agony, He didn't feel obligated to shower God with praises. He blurted out His true feelings: "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" (Matt. 27:46)—surely the most excruciating lament ever prayed.



# RAISE

Starting  
Where We  
Are



BY JOYCE K. ELLIS

In the blackest hole in all of history, He screamed out His pain, holding nothing back. He is, indeed, our example for the most honest, intimate outpouring of emotions before our Father.

And He allows *us* to “start where we are.” We, like the psalm writers of old, can write or voice our laments (complaints) to God—and He’s OK with that.

## The Bipolar Book of Psalms

Some might accuse Israel’s hymnbook, the Psalms, of being bipolar or manic-depressive—swinging like a pendulum from ecstatic highs to suicidal lows.

King David wrote this:

I will exalt you, my God and King, and praise your name forever and ever. . . . Great is the LORD! He is most worthy of praise! No one

can measure his greatness. Let each generation tell its children of your mighty acts; let them proclaim your power (Ps. 145:1–4, NLT).

But the same man, described in Scripture as “a man after God’s own heart”—perhaps partly because he wrote honestly from his own heart—also began penning a prayer this way:

O LORD, how long will you forget me? Forever? How long will you look the other way? How long must I struggle with anguish in my soul, with sorrow in my heart every day? . . . Restore the sparkle to my eyes, or I will die (Ps. 13:1–3, NLT).

Scripture’s hymnal deals with life as it is, not as we’d like it to be. God created us with emotions as well as minds and bodies, spirits and souls. He walks

with us in our *feelings* as well as every other aspect of life.

## Complaints or Grumbling?

But if God wants us to express our emotions honestly (He knows them anyway), and if He sanctions complaint (lament) psalms by including them in Scripture, why did He get so angry at the post-Red-Sea Israelites for complaining? (See Exodus 15–16; Numbers 14, 16, 17; Deuteronomy 1:27, and Joshua 9:18.)

*Attitude.*

*Attitude and direction.*

The emotions weren’t wrong. How the Israelites acted in the midst of these emotions was wrong. In the passages above the Israelites engaged in heavy God bashing, grumbling *against* Moses and Aaron, *against* God Himself. They didn’t go *to* God with heart in hands and ask for help.

Imagine the mob psychology as they undoubtedly grumbled with one another and discontentment grew. Imagine the disgruntled Israelites sitting around, muttering under their breath. Imagine the volume growing louder and louder until they got the whole camp riled up.

What should the unhappy Israelites have done? What is the best way for *us* to handle things when we’re stressed out or deeply hurting or wondering why we’re wandering today’s impossible wilderness?

## Gripping God’s Way

The psalm writers give us some patterns—flexible patterns—for bringing our complaints to the right place: *to God*. Not only are lament psalms God-ordained and God-inspired, they also comprise the largest number of psalms in Scripture. And if we follow the biblical pattern for this type of psalm, we’ll find God-ordained riverbanks to channel our deluge of thoughts and emotions.

As I see it, the basic elements of a lament—or complaint—psalm break down this way:

# DISCIPLE YOUR PEOPLE

## TO PRAY GOD’S WORD

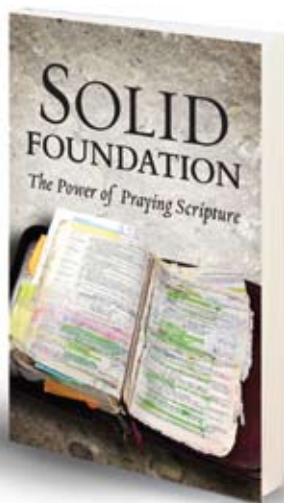
MOVE THEM AWAY FROM VIEWING PRAYER AS A FIX-IT TOOL.

*Give it to your small group.*

*Solid Foundation* is a 48-page, 4 x 6 booklet that includes the theme articles of *Prayer Connect* Issue 3. It offers simple, practical help that will equip and motivate the average believer to pray Scripture. Set your congregation on fire as they learn this dynamic prayer method together.

### Multiple Copy Discounts:

1 copy: \$2.99 • 2 – 9 copies: \$1.99  
10 – 24 copies: \$1.49 • 25 – 99 copies: \$.99  
100 or more copies: .59



[www.prayer-shop.org](http://www.prayer-shop.org)



1. Help!
2. Enough!
3. I trust You.
4. I choose to praise You.

Notably, almost all of the lament psalms end on a positive note of praise or confidence in God. But how do they get there? First, they allow us to start where we are—calling for help, fed up, at the end of our rope. Then we can get to the good part.

## Turning Points

A former church choir director of mine delighted in pointing out obscure (to me, anyway) musical terms. One that stuck in my mind is the *Picardy third*. When a piece of music has been in a minor key and then strikes a major chord at the end, that switch is called a Picardy third.

I couldn't help but think of this as I noticed some abrupt turning points while studying lament psalms. For lines and lines, we're in a sad-sounding minor key. Then suddenly we hear a major chord of hope at the end. The psalmist happily praises God, affirming his trust.

It may take a while for us to get there. We may have to pour out a lot of anger and pain before the Lord can heal. But it's a good thing to keep listening for the major chord He wants to strike in our hearts.

In Psalm 13, David's turning point comes in the passage following the portion quoted previously. He says, "But I trust in your unfailing love; my heart rejoices in your salvation. I will sing to the Lord, for he has been good to me" (vv. 5–6, NIV, emphasis mine).

Sometimes we can't find the freedom to praise until we've poured out to Him all our heart's junk. And sometimes we may find release only by praying words of praise we don't mean at the moment. Does that sound like hypocrisy? Perhaps it's not.

A friend of mine, a former missionary, suffered extreme stress as her husband battled deep depression for months. One

evening she had to get away, so she went out to their car and just sat there, singing over and over the praise chorus, "The Joy of the Lord Is My Strength."

"I had to keep singing that song for a half an hour before my soul would believe it," she admits. But as the truth of the song sank in, she gradually felt God's peace, sufficient for another day. Her emotions soon followed the vocalization of her convictions rooted deeper than emotions.

That's why I sometimes call the corporate Sunday worship experience my "attitude adjustment hour." Sometimes when I arrive, I don't feel like singing praises. But the deep reality of the truths about God transforms my attitude. Feelings follow.

That's the turning point—the Picardy third—the major chord of hope in whatever minor chords fill our lives. Instead of complaining and grumbling to others, we can let our emotions slosh out to the

only One who can do anything about our difficult situations.

Spiritual and emotional maturity develop as we begin to understand that conflicting emotions can coexist in the grace-filled arms of God.

So now, instead of trying to begin every prayer journal with praise, I start where I am. Sometimes I'm ready to praise my Creator as I look out my window at the stunning beauty of all He has made or as I revel in answered prayer. But I also have freedom, when needed, to honestly gripe—God's way—before eventually finding my turning point of praise. **PC**



**JOYCE ELLIS**, author of more than a dozen books and hundreds of magazine articles, participates in personal and local-church prayer ministries. She also speaks to women's groups nationally and internationally ([joycekellis.com](http://joycekellis.com)).

## RESOURCES FROM PRAYER LEADER

# Evelyn Christenson and United Prayer Ministry



More than  
**4,000,000**  
COPIES  
SOLD!

Also available:  
**A Study Guide  
for Evangelism Praying**



This resource—taught worldwide—will:

- Fuel your evangelism ministry.
- Encourage you to reach people for the Kingdom through triplet praying.

Evelyn Christenson once asked the Lord to let her teach the world to pray—and He graciously answered that prayer! Now her ministry carries on through seminars, workshops, and dynamic teaching on her books—all made available through United Prayer Ministry.

*Learn from a lifetime of prayer experience.*

**[www.unitedprayerministry.org](http://www.unitedprayerministry.org)**



# A LIFE

**Y**ears ago as I was traveling in a communist country in Eastern Europe, I met an elderly man who had spent several years in prison for his faith. After being released from prison, his life was continually in danger because of his ministry. Although he constantly faced the threat of death, his life remained pure and loyal to Jesus.

He was a man who understood the nature of prayer. When he went to prison, he knew that although his sons were top students in their schools, they would not be allowed to study in universities. Upon graduation from high school, his oldest son went to work in a factory.

# GIVEN P



# Setting Your Sights on the Eternal Purposes of God

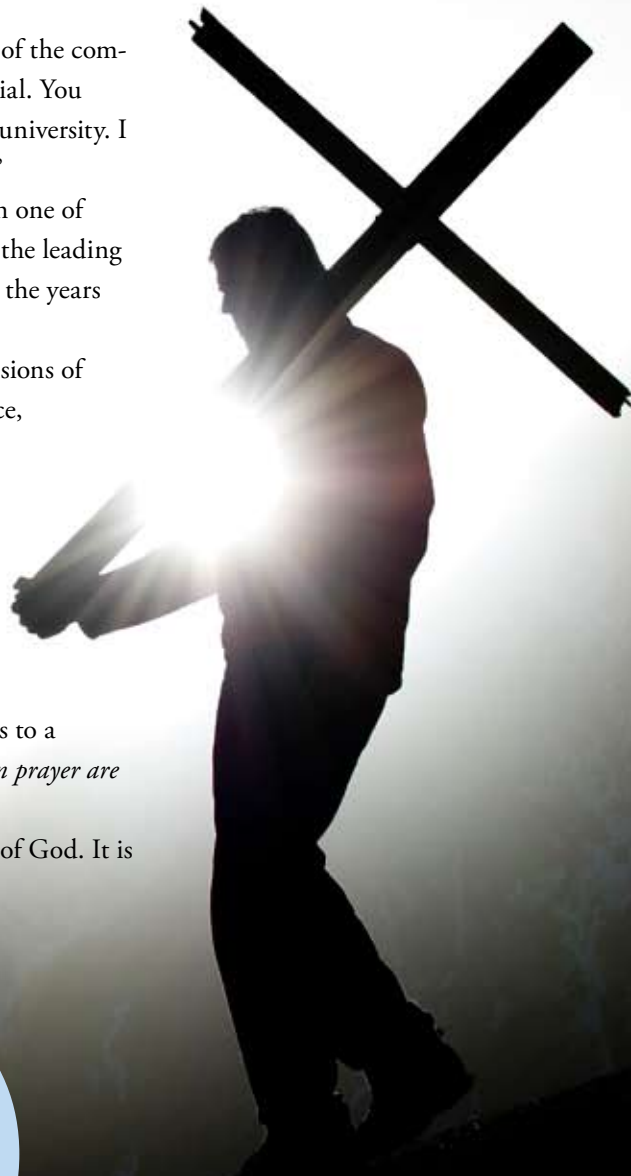
His father prayed from his prison cell. One day the head of the communist party in the factory said to his son, “You have potential. You would be of more benefit to our nation if you studied in the university. I am going to recommend that you be allowed to study there.”

The son not only studied in a university, but he studied in one of the outstanding universities in the world. He became one of the leading scholars in that nation and a committed Christian. Through the years that father prayed every one of his sons into the university.

I wondered how this man’s prayers could change the decisions of government leaders. He said with tears running down his face, “Many people come to my country and want to make a big fire for God. I do not want to make a big fire for God. I want to be consumed by God’s fire until I am ashes. When I am ashes, then I will see the glory of God.”

I wanted to say that I understood. But I knew that the man understood the holiness of God in a way that I did not. He experienced a depth in his prayer life that I desired. My encounter with this godly man opened my eyes to a tremendous truth about prayer: *Holiness of heart and power in prayer are inseparable.*

A life that prays is a life that is wholly yielded to the will of God. It is a life that has power and authority in prayer.



# TO

BY SAMMY TIPPIT

# PRAYER

## TRUE PRAYER PRODUCES HOLINESS OF HEART

True prayer will always produce holy living. And holy living produces powerful praying. One might wonder which comes first—holiness of heart or power in prayer. I believe that the answer is simple: neither and both.

Powerful praying and holiness of heart are not achieved by human efforts. They transpire when one encounters a holy God. Study the great men of faith. They became great only by the sovereign grace of God. God sought them, and when they encountered His holiness they were never the same.

Moses was such a man. He was not

seeking God while he was shepherding his flock on Mount Horeb. But God was seeking Moses. Moses saw an ordinary bush made extraordinary by the fire of God. When God had the attention of Moses, He called him by name. God told Moses to take off his shoes because he was standing on holy ground.

When we encounter a holy God we must bow before Him. His fire will consume the sin that stains our hearts and separates us from Him. Our hearts will no longer belong to the world; they will belong to God. It is impossible to hold onto a holy God with one hand and the world with the other. When we let go of the world and cling to God with both hands, we will not only be on holy ground, but we will be on praying ground.

Moses' life was never the same after his encounter with God. His heart was set apart for God's divine purpose. He became known as the friend of God. Exodus 33:11 says, "The Lord would speak to Moses face to face, as a man speaks with his friend."

A friend of God will have the imprint of holiness on his heart and the tool of prayer in his hand. He will live every day with a separated and seeking heart.

"I know of no better prayer idea than an all-church prayer initiative to get the most people involved in prayer." —JONATHAN GRAF

## GET YOUR PEOPLE PRAYING WITH AN ALL-CHURCH PRAYER INITIATIVE

### Start One This Fall, or Begin the New Year with a Month of Prayer

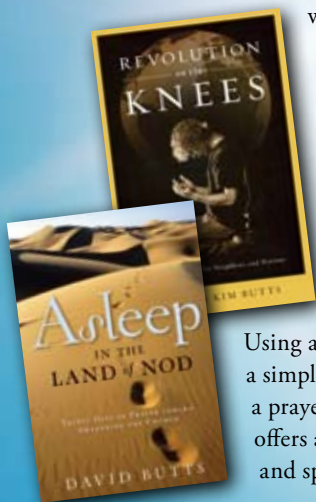
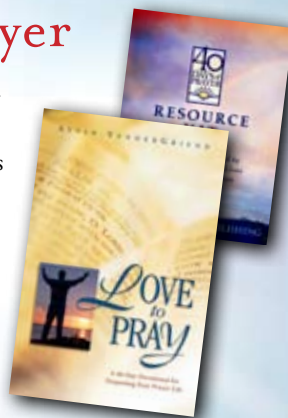
#### Introducing Three Tried and True Initiatives

This 40-day prayer initiative has been used by hundreds of churches and more than 100,000 individuals. It is by far the most developed prayer initiative on the market today. *Love to Pray* has teaching DVDs, a planning kit

with promotional materials and everything you need to put on an effective prayer event.

Subtitled "30 Days of Prayer for Neighbors and Nations," *Revolution on Our Knees* focuses entirely on outreach. It will get your people thinking kingdom rather than "fix this" with their prayers.

Using a revival-based theme, *Asleep in the Land of Nod* includes a simple daily pattern with Scripture, a devotional thought and a prayer to pray. In its fourth printing in three years, *Asleep* offers a quick way to get a congregation focused on revival and spiritual awakening.



All initiatives have significant multiple copy discounts.

[www.prayer-shop.org](http://www.prayer-shop.org)  
812-238-5504



## TRUE PRAYER PURSUES THE WILL OF GOD

Prayer was a priority in the lives of many Romanian Christians during the communist era. Many of them learned to pray with their whole hearts. I have met young men and women who diligently searched Scripture in order to understand God fully. I also learned never to ask them what verse of Scripture they were memorizing; it was more appropriate to ask what chapter or what book of the Bible they were memorizing.

A young Romanian singing group traveled with me as I preached in evangelistic campaigns. In order to be a part of the singing group, the singers had to memorize 1 John, James, and 1 Peter. When they sang, they would quote a

chapter of Scripture between songs. They would continue in this manner throughout their musical program.

The most powerful, praying Christians I have met were some of those Christians in Romania. They understood the nature and the character of God because they filled their minds with Scripture.

It was inspiring to go to a prayer meeting in Romania. Not only did many pray with an understanding of the Word of God, but many were free to pray with their emotions. They wept when they prayed for non-Christians. They rejoiced when they thanked God for the good things He had done.

But there was one outstanding characteristic of those Christians that challenged my prayer life. They prayed with a heart that was set on doing the will of God. Although the will of God often brought suffering and persecution into their lives, they prayed with a will that

was bent toward God. They learned to search for God with their whole hearts.

Most Christians in the Western world pray with only part of their hearts. Although many have a good knowledge of the Bible and the attributes of God, they pray with only their minds. We must learn to weep as Jesus wept over a lost humanity. We must learn to hurt as Jesus hurts for the non-Christian world. We must not fear praying with our emotions.

I am not referring to emotionalism; I am referring to praying with the passion of Christ. It is biblical to weep for souls. Perhaps we have lost our ability to weep for the lost. Perhaps our hearts have been far from the heart of God.

On the other hand, there are Christians who pray only with their emotions. Their prayers are rooted in experience and feelings. Many love to have a mystic feeling but have little understanding of the attributes and nature of God.

Christians must learn to pray according to sound biblical principles. Experience and emotion will always come under the searchlight of God's Word. They must live up to the truth. However, there is one element of prayer that has been lost by many Christians today: *the will*.

Perhaps the deepest and most powerful moment in the prayer life of Jesus took place on the Mount of Olives. Jesus was about to face death. He knew He would have to face the sins of people from every generation. Under those circumstances He prayed, "My Father, if it is possible, may this cup be taken from me. Yet not as I will, but as you will" (Matt. 26:39).

The man who is broken and bent in his will becomes mighty with God. The man who searches for God with his whole heart (mind, will, and emotions) will find God. And the man who finds God also finds a keen sense of God's purpose. That

# read your favorite prayer blogs in one location.

Prayer Connect Currently Features the Blogs of 8 Popular Prayer Teachers



**Dave Butts**  
Prayer  
Awakenings



**Kim Butts**  
Prayer as  
Everyday Life



**Cynthia Bezek**  
Let's Talk



**Jonathan Graf**  
Prayer  
Points



**Daniel Henderson**  
Strategic Renewal  
E-Devotional



**Carol Madison**  
Just Carol  
Pondering



**Phil Miglioratti**  
Prayer Leader



**Beth Rudy**  
Prayer Pal

— PLUS A DAILY PRAYING SCRIPTURE BLOG —

View them at [prayerconnect.net/blogs](http://prayerconnect.net/blogs) or have them automatically emailed to you.  
Be encouraged or challenged in prayer every day!

**PRAYERCONNECT.NET**



person will be on a mission from God. That person's life will move people because it has been transformed.

## TRUE PRAYER EMBRACES SUFFERING

To pray with a will surrendered to God is to risk our lives for God. Too many

in this generation seek comfortableness. Too many use prayer as an escape from what is difficult.

Often prayer and suffering go hand in hand. Suffering ushers us into a new realm of dependence upon God. In our sufferings we experience His sufficiency.

Prayer can accomplish four major tasks in suffering. First, prayer delivers

us from that which we suffer. God will, on occasion, work a mighty victory in our lives. We find freedom from our suffering by the power of God obtained in prayer. Second, prayer delivers the grace of God to us in our suffering. That grace enables us to endure the suffering. Third, prayer delivers us into the hands of God's comfort. Jesus said, "Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted" (Matt. 5:4). Finally, prayer delivers the character of God into our lives when we suffer.

Our problems need to be dealt with in the light of God's eternal purpose. When Jesus prayed in the Garden, He was not looking for a temporary reprieve from His pending problem. He prayed for God's eternal purpose and will. That kind of prayer is powerful. E.M. Bounds said, "Prayer is no little thing. It does not concern the petty interests of one person. The littlest prayer broadens out by the will of God till it touches all worlds, conserves all interests, and enhances man's greatest wealth, and God's greatest good."<sup>1</sup>

True prayer, then, is submission to the will of God. One cannot effectively enter into the secret chamber of prayer with any strings attached to his own will. The true man or woman of prayer will enter that chamber with the words of Jesus, "Not as I will, but as you will" (Matt. 26:39).

Comfort is not the issue to the person of prayer. The man or woman of prayer has set his or her sights on the eternal purpose of God. That life will be a holy life. It will be a life given to prayer. ☞

<sup>1</sup> E.M. Bounds, *The Reality of Prayer* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1980), 13 (p. 64).

# One factor can revolutionize your life ... your church ... and our society.

## THE PRAYER FACTOR

*The Prayer Factor* includes 12 chapters of stories and instruction with study questions that show readers how to move from hindrances and failure to possibilities and victory in prayer. Learn the great truths about prayer, and make your life a testimony to a God who hears and answers prayer.



\$14.99

PRAYERCONNECT *Reader Special*

**33% off** at [prayershop.org](http://prayershop.org) (Use Code **PF1112** at checkout)

Available through your Christian bookstore or [www.prayershop.org](http://www.prayershop.org)  
(discount only available at PrayerShop)

Also available for Kindle.



800-217-5200



**SAMMY TIPPIT** is an international evangelist, author, and speaker on topics that include prayer and revival ([sammytippit.org](http://sammytippit.org)). This article is adapted from *The Prayer*

*Factor* © 2009 Sammy Tippit. Used with permission. It is available at [prayershop.org](http://prayershop.org).



## Prayer Evangelism for the Family

Here are a few practical, creative ways to involve your whole family (even the smallest child) in reaching the lost as “prayer missionaries.” God may not call your family to another country, but you can pray for people in your neighborhood, school, or around the world—and thus participate in Jesus’ command to make disciples of all nations (Matt. 28:18–20).

**1 Make a ten-most-wanted list.** Create a large poster displaying photos of family members and friends who need to know Christ, and place the poster where only your immediate family members will see it. Let every member of the family select at least one person to include. Commit, as a family, to pray each day for the salvation of each person. Whenever one of your most-wanted

comes to Christ, have a celebration and write “Found!” next to his or her picture.

**2 Make a missionary notebook.** Gather prayer cards and pictures for missionaries supported by your church. Put them on colorful paper in a three-ring binder. Send an email to them to let them know you are praying, and keep their responses or any other newsletters in the binder. If you see an article in the news about the country where they serve, clip it out and use it as a way to pray.

**3 Pray for those in authority.** Find out the names of government officials in your city, state, and nation. Adopt one or more of them to pray for specifically as the Lord leads. Let them know you are praying for them, and invite them to share prayer needs with you. Pray that their hearts will be turned to Christ and their leadership will be based on His guidance.

**4 Sponsor a child in another country.** World Vision and Compassion International offer great programs to enlist people to pray for and correspond with a sponsored child. Not only can you provide for financial needs, you can also pray regularly for the child’s physical, emotional, social, and spiritual needs.

**5 Start prayer walking in your neighborhood.** Prayer walking is “praying on site with insight.”

As a family, take a walk around your neighborhood and pray for your neighbors. Teach your children to look for and pay attention to the needs they might see as they walk and pray—with eyes open!



## Keep the Sermon on Their Minds

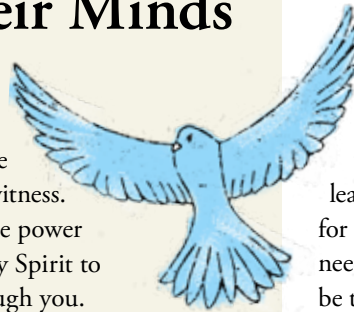
Most pastors recognize that they preach their hearts out on Sunday, only to have many people not remember much about it later that day! Pastor Rich Laskowski of Christ Community Church in Brazil, IN, has solved that in a powerful way. He gets his congregation to pray the sermon all week.

In a recent series relying heavily on Acts and Luke, Pastor Rich put together a simple prayer journal that supplemented his messages. His “Shake the Place Prayer Journal” included a two-page overview of what he would be covering in Acts, instructions to read a chapter of Luke each day, and then some directed prayer points that focused on the power of God in their lives and the life of Christ Community. Everyone received a 20-sheet, 8.5 x 11 spiral-bound journal that had 16 blank pages for people to write down what the Lord was saying to them. His prayer instructions:

1. Pray every day (with a goal of 30 minutes a day).
2. Pray to be filled with the Holy Spirit every day.
3. Pray to be set in place in this church body—that you will enter

into community.

4. Pray for the power to witness.
5. Pray for the power of the Holy Spirit to work through you.
6. Pray that as you read through the Gospel of Luke you will see Jesus with new eyes.



The genius of this simple guide is that it opens people to the work of God in their lives as they pray. It also increases the excitement in their hearts about what the message will be each week.

If you are a pastor, consider putting together a simple prayer guide that goes along with your sermons. Even handing out prayer points on a half-sheet will increase the prayer in your church and help people engage with your message more.

If you are a prayer leader, consider how you might come alongside your pastor and put guides together for him or her. They will be a powerful addition that can increase the effect of the spoken word in people’s lives.

**JONATHAN GRAF** is the publisher of *Prayer Connect*.

Would you like to see  
the people of your  
church more excited  
about prayer?

Would you like to see  
them focused on  
praying for God's  
Kingdom concerns?

Invite

JON GRAF

TO IGNITE THEIR  
PRAYER LIVES.

His Learning to Pray with Faith and Purpose seminars are being used across the country and around the world to change people's prayer lives and make them effective Kingdom pray-ers in their churches. A gifted communicator, Jon has been discipling in prayer for the past 15 years. His message motivates the average believer toward a deeper prayer life.

Contact him now to talk about  
the possibilities.

Go to [harvestprayer.com](http://harvestprayer.com)  
and click on

Teaching-Teachers-Jonathan Graf  
for more information.

[jong@harvestprayer.com](mailto:jong@harvestprayer.com)

812 238-5504

Publisher *Prayer Connect*

Author of *The Power  
of Personal Prayer and Praying Like Paul*.

President of Church Prayer Leaders Network



CHURCH  
PRAYER LEADERS  
NETWORK



Harvest Prayer

## TIPS & TOOLS

**6** **Cover schools in prayer.** Pray for each school attended by one of your family members. Pray by name for administrators, school board members, teachers, janitors, etc. Encourage your children to learn the names of these leaders and to greet them appropriately.

**7** **Look for prayer assignments.** Prayer assignments are people God puts into your path each day. It might be a server at your local fast-food place or the checker at your grocery store. Teach your

children to pay attention to people and recognize that everyone needs prayer.

The entire world, as well as the people surrounding you in your neighborhood, can be your mission field through your prayers. Even as you look into the sky, you can pray for astronauts in the space station, asking God to reveal Himself as they study His universe. The possibilities are endless!

**KIM BUTTS** is co-founder of Harvest Prayer Ministries.

## Add a Prayer Station to Your Outreach

The next time your church has any kind of an outreach open to the public, try setting up a simple, welcoming prayer station. All you need are a table and chairs in a corner with a banner that says "Prayer," along with sensitive, Spirit-led intercessors to staff it.

For instance, if your church sponsors a carnival, garage sale, or any other event that might draw people from the surrounding community, offering prayer is an easy way to open a door toward evangelism.

This is not a time to be overly aggressive in seeking out people needing prayer. Rather, just rely on the movement of the Holy Spirit and your obvious presence to draw hurting people to request prayer. In the course of sharing a prayer need, the conversation may turn toward evangelism, but the goal is simply to bring that person's need to Jesus.

Use intercessors who are sensitive to God's Spirit, who are good listeners, easy conversationalists, and able to pray focused prayers for the needs expressed. To create an atmosphere of safety and comfort for someone who is perhaps unfamiliar with personal prayer, avoid using more intense, overly expressive intercessors at your prayer station.

Train other volunteers helping with the event to listen for needs expressed in casual conversations during the outreach. The

volunteers can make an easy transition, saying something like: "I'm sorry to hear of that struggle. If you would like prayer, we have some people over there who are very good at praying about these things. I can take you to them and introduce you."

Some visitors may be intrigued enough or experiencing enough hurt in their lives to have the courage to approach the prayer station on their own.

Encourage volunteers to take turns stopping by to receive prayer, too, so visitors can see the station as a nonthreatening, casual, even inviting place. Offering free bottles of water or candy at your table can also break down barriers.

As you have success with your prayer station at outreach events associated with your church, you might consider "going even more public." Some churches seek permission from authorities to set up prayer stations in more unlikely places, such as on a public sidewalk at a busy intersection or at a citywide festival or concert.

It's helpful to have a church business card ready to hand out if questions arise about your church's affiliation or if there is potential for follow-up contact.

You may be surprised at how open people are to receiving prayer. A visible prayer station can help connect people with the idea that your church offers hope in Christ.





## Your Go-to Website to Pray for the Nations

If you have a heart to pray for the world, now you can find, on one website ([globalprn.com](http://globalprn.com)), as much information and as many resources as you can imagine. The heart cry of Global Prayer Resource Network (GPRN) is to offer the most current information to help Christians pray effectively and powerfully for the nations and global issues. Isebel Spangenberg of South Africa, who has worked with Global Day of Prayer for the past 11 years, recently founded this new website to continue to fuel the global prayer movement. Updated on a daily basis, GPRN is an information hub to network and partner with prayer ministries and organizations from around the world to keep prayer information unique and current.

The praying community can sign up for free biweekly newsletters and urgent prayer bulletins that will keep pray-ers well informed on a continual basis.

### What You'll Find

Here is a brief description of what you will discover as you explore the three main areas of the website:

**Prayer Events and Initiatives:** In this drop-down tab you will find upcoming events and initiatives happening all over the globe, beginning with the most recent. Each will link you to the appropriate website and provide links to more resources to assist you in praying.

For example, as this "Surf's Up" is being written, GPRN has posted suggestions for praying for Muslims participating in Ramadan. There are also prayer points for the evangelistic outreach and training happening now at a regional consultation in Rwanda. Many websites and prayer opportunities are listed related to the Olympic Games. Prayer is also being



organized for the Balkan Prayer Day, the Like No Other conference, 24/7 prayer and worship hosted by the Children's Prayer Network of Australia, 40 days of prayer for the U.S. national elections, and many more prayer initiatives.

**Prayer for the Nations:** On this page you will find each continent represented, allowing you to choose which area of the world you want to focus your prayers on. For example, if you click on Asia, you will be greeted by Operation World's data, showing that Asia has a population of 4,166,741,314 (and counting) with 4,860 people groups and 2,322 languages. You will see a breakdown of the percentage of people following various religions throughout Asia. Following this information is a variety of continental prayer initiatives.

**Prayer Resources:** When you click on this tab, you will find a comprehensive list of prayer resources, with more added daily. The categories include: personal prayer; prayer evangelism; praying for the persecuted church; children, teens and prayer; pray for ethics, values, and clean living; and pray for the poor and suffering. As you begin to click through, you will find a wealth of resources to guide you to pray in these arenas.

For example, when you click on Praying for the Unreached, you come to a page with three main headings:

What Is the Problem?

What Can You Do to Change This?


How Can We Pray Effectively?

The *What is the Problem?* heading addresses this problem: One in four people still have no reasonable access to the gospel. Then the site lists the Joshua Project in

response to that problem and provides a link to that ministry.

Under *What Can You Do to Change This?* Luke 10:1–3 is quoted to show that Jesus' solution for us is prayer, and the site delineates ten ways prayer changes things.

The *How Can We Pray Effectively?* segment offers some scriptural ways to pray for the unreached, some creative practical ideas, a 40-day prayer calendar showing how to pray for one unreached people group every day (follow the link: [Praying for the 40 Largest Unreached Peoples](#)), and links to several ministries focused on praying for the unreached.

By the time you read this, GPRN will have expanded its offerings greatly and updated its content. This could well be your go-to site for informed, targeted intercession for the nations of the world and the mission of Jesus Christ around the world. Spend some time exploring what God has for you, your family, and your church at [globalprn.com](http://globalprn.com). 

### What's Not to Like?



Here are some prayer pages on Facebook we encourage you to "Like." (Add [www.facebook.com](http://www.facebook.com) before the / on each address.)

**Prayer Connect**

[/prayerconnect](#)

**Harvest Prayer Ministries**

[/harvestprayer](#)

**OneCry**

[/theOneCry](#)

## “But Lord, I’ve Never Taught Children Before!” | By Cynthia Hyle Bezek

Probably the most common frustration I hear from church prayer leaders goes like this: “Someone [fill in the blank: my pastor, home group leader, Sunday school teacher, the elders, the deacons, the women’s ministry director] ought to be mobilizing prayer, but they aren’t! How can I encourage them to get on board?”

There is no simple answer to this common complaint. If someone in leadership doesn’t have a vision, passion, or confidence for prayer, all the hints, invitations, requests, nagging, or even bribing in the world won’t change them. Your best resort is to pray for them and humbly set a good example.

I knew all that. Still, I found myself thinking along those lines last fall. The church prayer ministry I help lead invited our children to pray for our pastors one Sunday during Clergy Appreciation Month. The kids went forward, circled around the pastors—and were utterly silent. Were they just shy? Or did they actually not know how to pray? We were concerned. And, I confess, my first thought was to wonder how we could get our children’s ministry on board in prayer.

That’s when the Holy Spirit reminded some of us in our prayer ministry that He had called *us* to lead the way in prayer for our church.

*But Lord! I have never taught children before! I am not gifted with children! In fact, I’m sort of afraid of them—at least groups of them! Send someone else.*

### It’s Up to Us

You probably can guess how that went. God wasn’t planning to send someone else. He wanted us to do it. As it so happened, I had already written a children’s prayer curriculum (oddly enough, I can write for children—I’m just inexperienced

teaching them!) and our prayer ministry had several people who are gifted teachers. So we volunteered to teach eight weeks on prayer during the children’s church hour. The children’s ministry director was delighted to have prayer taught—and to give her volunteers a break. We had her full and enthusiastic support.

Our curriculum included lessons on basics (prayer equals relationship with God, the Lord’s Prayer, and intercession), as well as more advanced concepts like listening prayer, perseverance, and inner-healing prayer. One of our prayer ministry members (an experienced teacher) took the lead in planning the lesson each week. Men and women on our team took turns telling the story. And the remainder of the prayer ministry members supported them by interceding for the children and leading small groups of two or three children each week.

I was nervous my first week as a small-group leader. To my relief, however, I found the children to be engaged and responsive. They opened their hearts to the Lord and to us—and they seemed to catch on faster than adults often do. So after my first-week jitters, I actually looked forward to being with the kids.

I was amazed at some of their responses. Some tough-looking little boys shared some pretty big hurts. A child with learning difficulties volunteered to write his prayer on the poster board up

front. After a lesson on listening prayer from John 10, every single child heard something encouraging from the Good Shepherd.

In the unit on persevering prayer, a little girl, we’ll call her Tanya, told me she had been praying for a long time about a friend who is mean to her. Tanya said that at first all she asked God to do was to “make her nicer.” But as Tanya persisted in prayer, she started to realize some things. She realized the other little girl might be nicer if she knew Jesus! So Tanya started praying that her friend would come to know Jesus. But then Tanya realized that her friend might not even have heard very much about Jesus, so Tanya started praying that the other girl would read the Bible so she could get to know Jesus.

Over time, as she persevered in prayer and let God reshape her prayers, her prayers became more mature and others-focused. She told me her prayers are not so “greedy” any more. I realized that this little girl understood more about listening to God, persevering in prayer, and Kingdom-praying than many adults I know!

I’m so glad our prayer ministry didn’t wait for somebody else to come along and teach our kids to pray. God gave *us* the ministry of prayer for our church. Why shouldn’t we be the ones He uses to help the kids learn to talk to Him? **PC**



#### CYNTHIA HYLE BEZEK

served as managing editor and editor of *Pray!* magazine from 2002 until it ceased publication in 2009. She is the author of *Prayer Begins with Relationship* and *Come Away with Me: Pray! Magazine’s Guide to Prayer Retreats*, both published by NavPress. Her prayer blog, *Let’s Talk*, is available at [prayerconnect.net/blogs/lets-talk](http://prayerconnect.net/blogs/lets-talk).



## The Loudest and Loftiest Praises | By Watchman Nee

**P**raise is the highest work carried out by God's children. David said that he *prayed* to God three times a day (Ps. 55:17). Yet in another psalm, he said that he *praised* God seven times a day (Ps. 119:164). David was inspired by the Holy Spirit when he acknowledged the importance of praising. David touched God's heart and offered up sacrifices of praise that were pleasing to God.

God uses many hardships, difficulties, and slanders to create praises in His people. He causes them to learn through difficult circumstances. The loudest praise comes very often from the ones who are passing through hardships.

God does not want men to praise Him only when they are on the mountaintop, surveying Canaan, the Promised Land. God desires much more to see His people writing psalms and praising Him when they "walk through the valley of the shadow of death" (Ps. 23:4).

Although you are in the midst of difficulties, He is still worthy to be praised.

### Praise Brings Victory

But there is more. Praising is the way to overcome spiritual attacks. Satan is afraid of the prayers of God's children; he flees whenever God's children kneel down to pray. This is why he often attacks God's children and frustrates them from praying.

But Satan's greatest attacks are aimed at praise. The ultimate goal of Satan is to stop all praises to God. Prayer signifies spiritual warfare, but praise signifies spiritual victory.

Paul and Silas were praising God in the jail cell, and all the doors opened and the chains broke (Acts 16:19–34). The wounds on their bodies were not yet healed; their pain was not soothed. Their

feet were in the stocks, and they were shut in an inner jail of the Roman Empire. But they saw that God was still sitting in the heavens; He had not changed at all. He was still worthy of their blessings.

When you pray, you are still in the midst of your situation. But when you praise, you soar above your situation. When you encounter unusual circumstances and problems and are bewildered and feel like collapsing, just remember one thing, "Why not praise?" God's Spirit will operate in you, open all the doors, and break all the chains.

Let your loftiest praises burst forth to God, and you will surely withstand and overcome. When you praise, you find the way of victory opening wide before your eyes!

### Praise in Persecution

Please remember that when you suffer great personal hardship and severe injustice, it is the time for you to praise. You should bow your head and say to the Lord, "I thank You. You are never wrong in what You do. I accept all these things from Your hands. I praise You."

Victory has nothing to do with struggling with the flesh or striving to pardon others with one's own strength. Victory comes when one bows his head and praises the Lord. When you praise the Lord this way, your spirit will soar above your problems; it will soar above your inner wounds. This was the pathway our Lord Jesus took when He was on earth. We should take the same way.

The more others try to put us down, the more we should rise up before the Lord and say, "I thank You and praise You!"

### Praise before Understanding

The Lord is waiting for our praises.

Nothing can glorify our God as praises can. One day, all the prayers, works, prophesying, and labor will be over. But on that day our praises will be more than today's. Praise will last for eternity; it will never cease. When we reach heaven and arrive at our final home, our praises will swell even higher.

Today is still the time when we see in a mirror obscurely (1 Cor. 13:12). Although we can see a little of many things, we cannot understand the meaning behind them. We can only feel the pain of all the inward wounds and outward trials. This is why we do not praise.

Everything will be clear when we go before the Lord on that day. On that day we will see the Lord's excellent will in every step of the Spirit's discipline. On that day we will see why the Lord allowed all these things to happen to us. On that day we will bow our heads and say, "Lord, I was a fool because I did not praise you that day."

For many things, the more knowledge we have, the greater our praises will be. We have a desire to praise the Lord because He is good (Ps. 25:8, 100:5). Today we have to believe that the Lord is good. He is never wrong, even though we cannot always understand what He is doing. If we believe, we will praise.

To praise is to glorify God. God is worthy of all glory. May God gain abundant praises from His children. **PC**

**WATCHMAN NEE** (Nee Shu-tsu, 1902-1972) was a second-generation Christian born in China. His rich ministry of teaching and writing was often defined by his life of suffering and sorrow. He was arrested in 1952 because of his faith in Christ and leadership in the Church. He died in prison in 1972. Before he was arrested, some 400 churches had been raised up in China because of his ministry. This article is excerpted from a writing entitled "Praise."



Start with a Complete Set

# GET EVERY BACK ISSUE OF PRAYER CONNECT



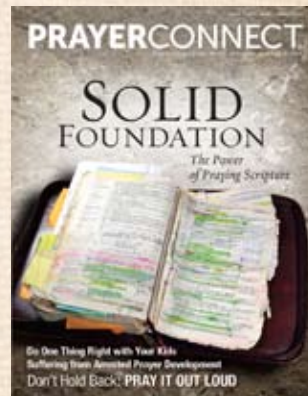
**Premiere Issue**

**CAN PRAYER SAVE AMERICA?**



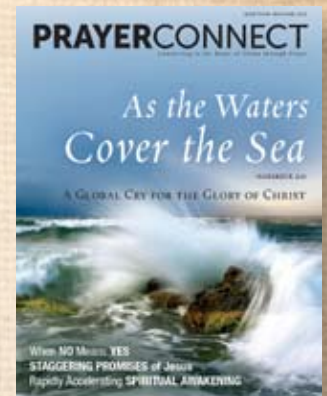
**Issue 2**

**FRESH FIRE:**  
Hope for a Christ-Centered Revival



**Issue 3**

**SOLID FOUNDATION:**  
The Power of Praying Scripture



**Issue 4**

**AS THE WATERS COVER THE SEA:**  
A Global Cry for the Glory of Christ



**Issue 5**

**THE PLACE WAS SHAKEN:**  
Igniting the Power of Corporate Prayer



**Issue 6**

**STAND FIRM & STRONG:**  
Wrestling Against the Powers of This Dark World

**COVER PRICE: \$6.00**  
**PRAYERSHOP PRICE: \$5.00**

**Multiple Copy Discounts:**

- 5 - 24 copies: \$4.00 each
  - 25 - 99 copies: \$3.50 each
  - 100 - 499 copies: \$3.00 each
  - 500 - 999 copies: \$2.50 each
  - 1000 or more copies: \$2.00 each
- (Free shipping in U.S. on orders over \$30)

[www.prayershop.org](http://www.prayershop.org) • Click on  
"Prayer Connect Magazine" "Back Issues"  
812-238-5504

---

Prayer Connect and PrayerShop Publishing are ministries of Harvest Prayer Ministries

---