

Spiritual Warfare II

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Spiritual Warfare and the Frontiers

“Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of His might, put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.” (Eph. 6:10, 11) Paul was well aware of the fact that Christians are involved in a spiritual battle that requires a full set of armor in order to stand and overcome. Paul reminded his readers (then and now) that we fight not against flesh and blood but “against the principalities, against the powers, against the world rulers of this present darkness, against the spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places.”

Paul taught his readers (then and now) that the fight is against “the prince of the powers of the air, of the spirit that is now working in the sons of disobedience.” (Eph. 2:2) He exhorts Christian “not to give place to the devil” (Eph. 4:27), but leads them to understand their task that “the manifold wisdom of God might now be made known through the church to the rulers and the authorities in the heavenly places.” (Eph 3:10, 11) Best of all, to the Christians in Colossae Paul writes that “the principalities and powers” are disarmed in Jesus Christ who “triumphed” over them. This wonderful news does not mean the end of the battle but rather shows us in whose name to wage it and that our victory is assured.

Spiritual Warfare II

This Special Edition is entirely devoted to the important subject of the spiritual battle and the frontiers. And it is Spiritual Warfare II since it is the second edition devoted to this very important topic in frontier missions. In that first edition (see Vol. 10:4, 1993) we focused on the need to correct our Western (warped) perspective

of reality. We commented in *Spiritual Warfare I*,

Few can doubt that Satan has made great advances in our modern world, including infiltrating our churches, and playing havoc with our worldview. This has been accomplished largely by means of a slow but persistent shift of thinking regarding our view of reality, accomplished through so-called “scientific thought” that would see our world as a closed, self-contained natural system, which would postulate Satan’s non-existence, along with other supernatural beings, and somehow reduce our problems and the battles we face to a natural plane of reality.

We stated then, and want to underscore it today, that we need a change in worldview since our view was not Paul’s view of reality. Neither has the modern (Western) secular naturalistic view of life any bases anywhere in Scriptures. Scripture makes it abundantly clear that our conflict, including the battle we wage in world missions, especially on the frontiers, is not principally fought on the natural plane. For that reason we wrote then, and repeat it now, that Christians and missionaries in the Western world “need a major shift of perspective regarding ultimate world and life issues. . . and that unless we do experience a radical paradigm (worldview) shift, we are in for serious trouble.”

This includes world mission, especially frontier missions. Why? In the 10/40 Window we are face to face with peoples and cultures who have been under the rule of “the prince of the power of the air” uncontested for centuries. They have well developed anti-biblical views of reality that persevere mainly because they are fueled by the spiritual reality of the enemy of men’s souls. Only the kind of soldiers adequately equipped and skilled to wage war on the spiritual plane ought to be sent. No one else should be sent nor venture our and go into this mission

battle field. We said it then, and cannot not overstate it now, that “this systemic evil needs to be disarmed (in Jesus’ name and authority) accomplished by the full armored soldiers of the cross who know how to wield the Sword of the Spirit.”

Why Still Unreached?

In *Spiritual Warfare I* we asked the very pointed question: “Why are so many people still unreached in this late hour? Could it that we today, and those who have gone before, have misunderstood the spiritual nature of our mission and the supernatural conflict of the task?” For greater and better reasons, my answer today is affirmative. In fact, there is no doubt that the principle task (not simply a prior task) of reaching the unreached has to do with the battle in the spiritual or invisible plane of reality which we in missions from the West have largely ignored and have not adequately waged. My conviction, now some 5 years later, is that this is one main reason (if not the main cause) for why so many of the world’s peoples and nations still are unreached especially in the 10/40 Window. We are still ill equipped to do this task, and unless we get adequately equipped, finish it any time soon. Is it not true that we have lost a true biblical worldview that takes into full account the unseen supernatural world of God, of the Kingdom of God, of angels and fallen angels, of Lucifer the most anointed cherub—fallen and converted to Satan—and “the spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places” who interact with and influence for evil human life and should be seen as the enemy of men’s souls?

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Spiritual Power to Change our World

The world as we see it today is a battlefield at every level—political, moral, mental and spiritual. The arch enemy of our souls is no “push-over.” In recent years the nature and intensity of the war has become more apparent than ever. Yet, there can be no doubt that for the impregnable strongholds to fall, we must follow God’s strategy and wield the ultimate weapon of intercession given to us by our Lord and God.

by Patrick Johnstone

What a privilege to be brought into the Kingdom for such a time as this! Never before has the Church of the Lord Jesus Christ grown so fast or extended its witness so far. The tide of the Gospel now laps at the final bastions of the enemy of souls. World evangelization is a foregone conclusion because of God’s promises.¹ The world, as we see it, is a battlefield at every level—political, moral, mental and spiritual—with many strongholds to be stormed. His infernal majesty is not a “push-over” and in recent years the nature and intensity of the spiritual warfare in which we are engaged has become more apparent. Yet, for these seemingly impregnable strongholds to fall, we must wield those weapons given to us by God.

Extreme Approaches

There are two extreme approaches which can impair our effectiveness in the spiritual warfare associated with world evangelization;

1. *Under-emphasis of the spiritual nature of the conflict.* For too long Western Christianity has done just this and many missionaries have gone into situations ill-prepared for spiritual opposition (Neil 1990:13). This was certainly my experience in Africa. I was working among a people steeped in witchcraft and the fear of spirits. I

owe much to my godly African co-workers who educated me about the spiritual powers at work and their cultural setting. They also demonstrated how the Lord Jesus gives total freedom through a deep repentance with renunciation of the works of darkness and faith in Him.

2. *Too great a preoccupation with the enemy.* There has been a rapid growth of awareness of, and fascination with, the occult. This, together with the infiltration of New Age Hinduism, has radically changed the world-view of many in the Western world. As a result people have become far more conscious of these spiritual forces. We easily become too devil-conscious and lose sight of the reigning Lord Jesus. The more we know of God, His Word and His power, the better we are able to deal with the enemy. Dealing with the occult can become a morbid fascination for Christians. It can be a dangerous side-track to delve into every form of satanic stratagem and technique to overcome them, for we can become ensnared in time-consuming deliverance ministry or live in danger of unconsciously making ourselves open to the dark powers. Jessie Penn-Lewis’s book, *War on the Saints*, which came out of the 1904 Welsh Revival, warns of an over-preoccupation with the things of

Satan. Frank Feretti’s popular novels on spiritual warfare were written to alert Christians to this unseen conflict. These helped to fill the gap in Western theology with a convincing interpretation of the real world. But despite the author’s pleas (Feretti 1989, Wakeley 1995:158) not to build a theology based on these vivid portrayals of demonic forces, we find many readers have. Our Christian bookstores carry a plethora of titles on spiritual warfare, some propounding exotic techniques and speculative solutions. Such extremes can become a divisive element in the Body of Christ.

We need balance and a biblical centrality in our understanding and involvement in spiritual warfare. We need to return to biblical supernaturalism. I aim to keep within this parameter, for it is on this parameter that we all should be in basic agreement. In writing this article I go beyond present controversies and want to focus on world evangelization by active intercession for the countries, peoples and cities still in the thrall of the prince of this world. My premise is that we are largely agreed on Scriptural objectives in spiritual warfare, and further, that the means for attaining those objectives may be just as well expressed in the terms used in the Bible. The main means by

which this will be achieved is intercession.

Our prayers can change and are changing the world. We do not have to understand everything about the forces arrayed against us, but we do need to understand the nature of the power and authority that is ours in Christ. Sometimes our technical knowledge hinders us. I have been impressed by the increasing concern among Christians for the evangelization of Muslims. Yet, often the best missionaries are the ones who have studied little more than the basics of Islamics but have a passion for sharing Christ. In their boldness for Jesus, they plunge in to witnessing to Muslims where an Islamicist would fear to go. By saying this I am not advocating that a knowledge of Islam is wrong, but we must not let that knowledge cripple our faith that the Holy Spirit can bring about the conversion of Muslims through our witness. The same is true as we confront the devil and his kingdom of darkness and forces of evil. We must not be ignorant of his devices (2 Cor 2:11); nor do we have to know everything about demonism, the occult, the hierarchies of the spirit world before we dare bind the strong man and spoil his goods (Matt 12:29). Donald Jacobs, a Mennonite missionary in East Africa, testifies powerfully to the godly balance of African Christians associated with the East African Revival and how their longing was to know more of Jesus and even to turn their backs on the detailed information their traditional religionist compatriots sought about demons (Jacobs 1990:306).

We need the simplicity and faith of children in our waging war against the strongholds of Satan. My late wife, Jill, was long burdened to write a book to help children pray for the world (J. Johnstone, 1993). Its title, *You Can Change the World*, came

about in a beautiful way and illustrates this principle. When Jill began to write the book in 1990, she described the land of Albania. The land was then a Communist hermit state which proudly claimed to be the first truly atheist country in the world and where all religious expression was illegal. At our mission headquarters in England there was a group of praying children who interceded for each country or people as Jill completed each chapter. These children took on their hearts the need of the children of Albania where the Gospel was banned with no known believers. They prayed for religious freedom to come to that land. A few months later the Communist government fell, and freedom for worship and witness came. Jill had to rewrite the chapter. When these children heard of the answer to their prayers, they were delighted. One of them shouted out, "We have changed Albania!" That was true, but, of course, they were not the only ones praying earnestly for the Gospel to have free entry to that needy land! Just 4 years later we now know there is scarcely a town left in that land which does not have a group of witnessing believers. May God give us their faith and simplicity. May these words encourage the reader to engage, not in controversy, but defeat the enemy in the combat of intercession!

The Historical Evidence

One day from the vantage point of Eternity, I believe one of the major praise points before the Throne of the Lamb will be His working in history through prayer. In fact I see Revelation 5:1-8:5 as a demonstration of this. This is about the seven seals that the Lamb alone could open. The whole section is bracketed by references to the prayers of the saints (Rev 5:9; 8:1-5) and interspersed with paeans of praise for redemption and

the Lamb's right to open the seals. The first six seals (Rev 6) show the manner and principles of God's judgments on mankind; Rev 7 shows parenthetically the simultaneous gathering of the disciples from the peoples of the world. Both the judgments and the gathering are the outworking of those prayers. The seventh and final seal reveals the secret of the impact of the prayers of the saints on the world.

I here want to briefly mention just three major turning points of history to illustrate the impact of prayer:

1. *The Moravian 100-year Prayer Chain*. In 1727 revival broke out in the Herrnhut community. A prayer vigil was begun then which continued day and night without a break for over one hundred years. Out of this movement of the Holy Spirit a passion for missions emerged. The Moravians became the first Protestant body to specifically commit themselves as a body for world evangelization (Tucker 1983:70-71). Is it surprising, that through the Moravians, John Wesley came into his "heart warming experience of Christ"? This was followed by the great 18th century revival that swept Britain and North America and then led to the modern mission movement. The mighty flow of the Gospel over the past 200 years was birthed and nurtured in a century-long prayer meeting.

2. *The Evangelization of China*. Hudson Taylor, the founder of the China Inland Mission, left an indelible mark on Christians in the last century as he emphasized the need for prayer and pled for reinforcements to reach the millions in China's unevangelized provinces (Taylor 1918). China and missions became inseparable in the minds of most believers. Yet, by the time Communism gained control of China's mainland in 1949 and ended all foreign mission work, the response had been relatively small with a total Christian community of

about 1.5 million Protestants and about 3 million Catholics. It seemed to the human eye that the Gospel had failed again to penetrate China's heart. It appears that the work God wanted to do was too great to have man taking the glory which may have been the reason all missionaries were forced to withdraw. Over a century of prayer for China was not forgotten and the seed sown in tears and blood was watered by fierce persecution.

During the 1980s we began to be aware that something dramatic was happening as reports began to circulate of millions coming to Christ. Before the 1989 Tiananmen Square incident when the pro-democracy protest was crushed, this movement to Christ had been predominantly rural. Subsequently, the urban and intellectual sections of society were impacted. Reasonable estimates in 1992 for the total community of Protestants was reckoned to be 63 million (baptized believers would be half of this), and of Catholics to be 12 million (Johnstone, 1993:163). The world has never before seen a turning to God on such a scale—a harvest against all the odds through definite intercession for China's millions.

3. *The Collapse of Communism.* In January' 1984 Brother Andrew, the Director of Open Doors, put out a fervent challenge to the Christian world to pray for seven years for the tearing down of the Iron Curtain and for freedom for the Gospel. The Holy Spirit must have given Brother Andrew a prophetic burden and vision, for within those seven years Communism in Europe and the USSR had collapsed as a viable ideology. The USSR itself had ceased to exist. Now we see the Church growing rapidly in many countries once dominated by Communism. Ideologies and anti-Christian

systems cannot withstand the concerted, militant, believing prayers of God's people. Why have we so neglected this ultimate weapon? How long could Islam, Buddhism, Hinduism, New Age, Western materialistic apathy or any demonic empire remain in place with further global prayer thrusts of this kind? All of these religious and belief systems are in opposition to God and seek to deny full freedom to know the remedy in the

All of the world's belief systems are in opposition to God and seek to deny full freedom to know the remedy in the Gospel. It is the weapon of prayer that will expose their internal contradictions and contribute to God's shaping of events in judgment on them.

Gospel. It is the weapon of prayer that will expose their internal contradictions and contribute to God's shaping of events in judgment on them. Paul's words are true in today's world just as they were in biblical times:

For the weapons of our warfare are not worldly but have divine power to destroy strongholds. We destroy arguments and every proud obstacle to the knowledge of God, and take every thought captive to obey Christ (2 Cor 10:4-5).

Intercessors Who Changed History.

In the histories of revivals that have deeply affected the lives of nations and areas, I have been struck so often by the evidence that the Holy Spirit raised up special intercessors who prayed for the fire to fall. To mention a few:

* David Brainerd agonized for the indigenous Americans (Indians) and saw life-changing revival come (Tucker 1983:90).

* George Muller demonstrated that God could be trusted to support thousands of orphans by the prayer of faith without appeals to man. He laid the faith basis for finances for much of the most innovative and effective missions advances that followed (Pier-son 1899).

* Rees Howells interceded in the heavenlies for divine deliverances in the darkest days of World War II and saw dramatic answers (Grubb 1952), showing how we believers can change the course of human history.

* William Duma, a humble Zulu pastor in South Africa, so walked with God that his prayers led to remarkable miracles, even the raising of the dead, and who gained the respect and love of all races in the darkest days of *apartheid*.

At one time he had the only fully multiracial church in the country. (Garnett 1979). We need many others of like caliber to impact our world.

Great Harvests Won Through Prayer

In preparing the latest edition of my book, *Operation World*, I have been awed by the number of prayer requests listed in the 1986 edition which are no longer points for prayer, but rather for praise, because answers have come. The growth of evangelical believers around the world is staggering especially in the parts of the world where the Gospel was still unknown 200 years ago. Part of our research was to make what is probably the most comprehensive attempt ever made to analyze the growth (and decline) of the 25,000 identified

denominations, as well as the Church as a whole, over the past 30 years (Johnstone 1993:23-26). Just to quote one statistic; in 1960 the 29 million Evangelicals in the non-western world constituted about 30% of the world's Evangelicals; by the year 2000 this could have risen to 400 million and nearly 80% of all Evangelicals.

Consider the massive turnings to God in Africa in the 1960s, Latin America in the 1970s, East Asia in the 1980s (especially Indonesia, China and South Korea), and in the former Communist countries of Europe in the 1990s. Even in the belt of territory between the Atlantic and Pacific, between the Latitudes 10^o north and 40^o north often called the 10/40 Window, we are seeing the beginnings of an unprecedented harvest. This is true among Muslims with more coming to Christ individually and as communities than ever before in history. There are also significant initiatives launched for Hindu and Buddhist regions of the world. There is a worshipping and witnessing group of Protestant evangelical believers in every one of the 237 countries and territories of the world, and also a church planting movement launched and rooted in over 10,000 of the 12,000 ethno linguistic peoples in the world.

For the first time in history we can meaningfully speak of seeing a church planting movement within every ethnolinguistic people and making the Gospel available for every person in our lifetime. This has become the driving vision of the AD2000 and Beyond Movement. I can only attribute these advances as a direct answer to strategic prayer by millions around the world.

Characteristics of Prayer Initiatives

I have become aware over the past 20 years of a growing number of prayer initiatives and networks unprecedented in the history of the world. There is, in fact, a *prayer awakening* under way, the scope of which would astonish us if we knew the whole story. The availability of information and the globalization of the world missionary force have increased the emphasis on strategic praying for Gospel advances in unevangelized parts of the world. What are some of the characteristics of this prayer awakening?

1. *The intensity* of an early morning Korean prayer meeting in almost any Protestant church in the country, or of the extensively attended Friday all-night prayer meetings in many congregations in Brazil.

2. *The militancy* of the praying Christians expecting Satan's forces to yield in power encounters, leading to significant movements to Christ in hitherto resistant peoples. I well remember a Dorothea Mission Week of Prayer we held in the then Portuguese-ruled Mozambique in 1965. To that point little Protestant mission work had been permitted in much of the country. We definitely claimed that land for Christ and an opening for the Gospel. Within weeks, missionaries had gained entry into that land.

3. *The variety of expression* in simultaneous prayer at full volume, prayer walking, marches for Jesus, hands raised to heaven, lying prostrate before the Lord.

4. *The global networks of prayer that has been birthed.* Peter and Doris Wagner, coordinators for the AD 2000 and Beyond Movement Prayer Track, have links with dozens of prayer networks around the world—with millions of Christians involved—The Day to Change the World (now becoming

an annual event on a day in October involving millions to pray for the nations, Gateway cities, Key Unreached Peoples.) The Marches for Jesus (involving 16 million in 1995 with a major component of praying for world evangelization), Intercessors International (launched by Dennis Clark in 1969), Concerts of Prayer International (in which God has used David Bryant to revive the vision of the great Jonathan Edwards two centuries ago), The Lydia Fellowship (mobilizing women for intercession), The Esther Network (mobilizing children as intercessors), and the YWAM initiative to mobilize Christians to fast and pray for the Muslim World during Ramadan, etc.

5. *The specific nature of the praying.* A decade ago we were wondering whether most of the unevangelized world would be closing to any form of Christian presence. Yet in answer to prayer, country after country has opened up for witness whether overtly or covertly. Such countries as Nepal, Cambodia, China, Russia, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, Bulgaria, Ethiopia, and many others are evidence of this. Many of the closing or closed doors have proved to be revolving doors in answer to prayer.

We are, therefore, in the early stages of a prayer-fueled advance of the Kingdom of Christ—a fact that gives me great hope for the future despite the evident negatives in the world and failures of the Church. What could happen for the Kingdom if that prayer mobilization further increased? The majority of evangelical churches have yet to catch this vision. The wider world is so big, complex and remote and their own outreach often discouraging. Their energies and resources are spent on local concerns and programs that benefit the gathered saints, more than the millions of Satan's captives heading for a lost eternity.

The Biblical Basis

So many and powerful are the references to the power and importance of prayer that we sin if we fail to pray to our heavenly Father interceding for a lost world, a needy Church, a limping army of the Lord's servants (1 Sam 12:23, 1 Thess 5:17). Yet how weak, short, limited, selfish our prayers so often are. We have a Father who delights to receive us in His Throne room, not only to hear our hesitant requests, but to answer us above all that we could ask or expect (Jer 33:3).

Hans von Staden, the Founder and Director of the Dorothea Mission in South Africa, was a mighty man of prayer. He was an inspiration to those of us whom he led. In fact, it was his vision for taking up the challenge given by Andrew Murray for weeks of prayer for the world (Murray 1900: 167ff) that led to von Staden's request to write the first *Operation World*. It was he who also suggested the title. He had some powerful comments, several being:

The miracle would be that God NOT answer prayer. He has so committed Himself to answer that it is no miracle that we receive an answer!

When man works, man works; when man prays, God works.

We should not pray for our ministry; prayer is our ministry.

I see so many clear promises about prayer and the assurance of answers in Scripture. How can I even select several and do justice to them? However, Psalm 2 always impresses me. Here the spiritual warfare is vividly portrayed as the Son meditates on the futility of the opposition and assurance of total victory. The Son repeats the promise given to Him:

Ask of Me and I will make the nations your heritage, and the ends of the earth your possession. You

shall break them with a rod of iron (Ps 2:8-9RSV).

Here is the plea of the Father that the Son pray and specifically ask the Father for the world. This Jesus did in His earthly life. Prayer was fundamental to His ministry of redemption for the world. It should be in our ministry too! Amazingly, in Rev 2:26 we see Ps 2:9 applied to believers as well. We too are charged by our Father to ask

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for and rule over the nations as a kingdom of priests.

Do we really grasp the significance of the atonement—how the Triune God identified with us sinful men in the incarnation so that through the Cross we, who are redeemed by faith through grace, are joined to Christ? We are a kingdom of priests identified with His death, resurrection, ascension and present reign (1 Pet 2:9; Rev 1:4-7; 5:10; Rom 5:17). We are now identified with God Himself, seated with Christ in heavenly places sharing in all that He is and has (Col 3:1-4). The greatest of all these is sharing with Him in the ministry of intercession.

It is an awesome thing that we are all called into such a ministry of intercession. We become co-workers with God (1 Cor 3:9, Is 64:4, Mk 16:20). Prayer is the only human activity that moves heaven (Rev 5:9, 8:4-5). In fact in his booklet, *With Christ in the School of Prayer*, Andrew Murray shows how our prayers enter into eternity and work together with God

in the extension of His Kingdom and even in the formulation of His eternal decrees. I do not pretend to understand this, but I do know that prayer is not a manipulative tool for us to force a reluctant God to do what we want. Nor is it a means for God to gain entrance into our being to manipulate us. I pray not just because I need to obey God, but because He has so ordained that this is the means by which He will work in this world. Note Murray's words:

This perfect, harmonious union of Divine sovereignty and human liberty is an unfathomable mystery because God as the Eternal One transcends all our thoughts. But let it be our comfort and strength to know that in the eternal fellowship of the Father and the Son, the power of

prayer has its origin and certainty. Through our union with the Son, our prayer is taken up and can have its influence in the inner life of the Blessed trinity. God's decrees are no iron framework against which man's liberty struggles, vainly. God Himself is living love, Who in His Son as man has entered into the tenderest relationship with all that is human. Through the Holy Spirit, He takes up everything human into the Divine life of love, leaving Himself free to give every human prayer its place in the government of the world (Murray 1900:128ff).

The Teachings of the Lord Jesus

The numerous promises, extensive teaching and prayerful life of the Lord Jesus all show the importance of intercession. Here is not the place to expand on this, but just to share one extraordinary passage where Jesus taught His disciples about prayer. I refer to John 14:12-14 (RSV):

Truly, truly, I say to you, he who believes in me will also do the works that I do; and greater works

than these will he do, because I go to the Father. Whatever you ask in My name I will do it, that the Father may be glorified in the Son; if you ask anything in My name, I will do it.

What are these greater works? Many times I have asked Christians to explain the meaning, but rarely have I heard what I believe to be the answer. Some have suggested working miracles, raising the dead, winning multitudes, casting out demons, more conversions, but these are all works that Jesus did in abundance and promised that we will also do. That still leaves, the question, what are the greater works? I believe that this is intercession in the name of the conquering, risen, reigning Lord Jesus Christ. This challenge is followed by a promise that is deliberately repeated for emphasis about asking in prayer and the assurance that Jesus will do it. That is an awesome promise for spiritual warfare and for world evangelization.

The world is going to be evangelized only through prayer. This is the ultimate weapon, the master strategy for overthrowing every plan, argument, power structure, bondage and even the gates of Hades that are in opposition to the King of kings and Lord of lords. Through the Cross He conquered, and by applying the victory of the Cross we become more than conquerors. We do not have to understand its efficacy, we just believe the promises of God in the Bible. I have been moved by the ready acceptance of simple African believers that if they pray for someone to be delivered they expect it to happen. May we return to the profound simplicity of trust in a Father who, if we ask, will give (Luke 11:9-13).

Intercessory prayer is the means by which we exercise the authority of Christ in the world. There is a power in prayer that takes it outside of time and place. It is perhaps important to

emphasize that prayer's power is not diminished by passage of time. God knows how to store up prayer for answers to be revealed much later. Nor is prayer limited by distance. Prayers in one continent immediately have an impact on the situation in another. Prayer walks are now becoming a big emphasis as a mission strategy.² It is important to realize that the physical presence of the intercessor does not increase the power of the prayers—though the insights gained, the time set aside for the walk, the commitment involved and the combined and earnest agreement of the participants are all ingredients in the strengthening of faith and the effectiveness of the intercession. Prayer moves the hand that moves the universe. So it is being in God's presence, rather than in a physical location, that pulls down strongholds.

Back to the Basics

Our effectiveness in spiritual warfare is not dependent on technique or intimate knowledge of the situation, but rather on our relationship to God. As a believer, only as I know who I am and know the revealed will of God for me will I be able to confidently exercise the authority delegated to me. Ignorance of these truths opens me up to all the wiles and deceptions of the enemy. Tragically, we no longer emphasize these basics. Here are, briefly, what I regard as some of the most important.

1. Knowing Our Position in Christ

How little is preached on the precious blood of Jesus, the meaning of repentance from dead works and faith in the finished work of Christ on the Cross! What a privilege, what security to be *in Christ*—the message of Ephesians. I am redeemed; I now belong to Jesus. I am in the hand of both Jesus and the Father (John 10:27-30). No one can pluck me from that double

clasp. Greater is He that is in me than he who is in the world (1 John 4:4). The only danger is my sin which gives Satan his opportunity. Lack of understanding of these basics, results in too many Christians being "poorly born."

Jill, my late wife, often used to say, "It seems that to be a Christian today you need to give your heart to Jesus and have 50 years of counseling!" There is a counselling craze that has swept through modern Christianity which has become almost a substitute for the objective truths of redemption in Christ. I am not against biblical counselling, but so much that is termed such is a masquerade using biblical verses which overlay humanistic premises and modern psychology. It leads to a dependence on counsellors and not on God alone and is far from the truth recovered in the Reformation—the priesthood of all believers.

As a believer I cannot be affected by witchcraft when walking with God. Stephen Lungu,³ a long-time colleague and close friend in Zimbabwe, often used to stand in our big evangelistic tent and boldly say, "I am staying at the house over there; you can try to practice your witchcraft on me but it won't work because I belong to Jesus." That in an African context was a tremendous testimony. Many Christians live in fear that they or their loved ones may have inadvertently been exposed to some form of witchcraft or the occult.

Missionary friends of ours once traveled back by ship to their homeland for furlough. For years afterwards they were troubled because they blamed subsequent problems with one of their sons on the fact that there was an occultist in the adjoining cabin during the voyage. We can rest assured that no attack of the devil can touch us (1 John 5:18-19) so long

as we obey the conditions for abiding in Christ.

I cannot be harmed by curses when walking in obedience to God. In 1990 Jill and I had to go to the house of a friend who had been tricked out of much of her capital and was even being deprived of her house by a con man who had been given hospitality. He had once been a Baptist pastor and manipulated our friend through purported prophecies and speaking in tongues. We had to take strong action to have him evicted from the house, and as we left the house he cursed us. Our friend was convinced that the cancer diagnosed in Jill a few months later was the result of that curse. It was with some difficulty we persuaded her that we were immune to such in Jesus (Gen 27:29; Prov 26:2), and that He had all under His control⁴ and had encouraged us with specific words from Scripture on this. In fact, in retrospect, we realized that the early symptoms of the cancer had been there before the cursing incident. We were sure of our security in Christ, so these words did not rock our equilibrium, but how easily it could have done so (Rom 8:38-39).

In the 1970s we had a strange incident at our Dorothea Mission Bible School in Harare, Zimbabwe. A gardener employed on the grounds was sacked (fired), but on the side he was a practicing witch doctor. He placed a curse on our people and the property in retaliation. At that time two of the ladies were involved in a bitter war of words and this gave the occasion the enemy needed. There were many unpleasant incidents that were only explicable by the demonic. One of the students (now a respected leader of a significant ministry in Zimbabwe) had the experience in a dormitory with other students in the room of being roused screaming in pain

because he had been burnt by a hot hand under his blanket at night, the burn marks of the hand were evident in the morning. It was only after the fellowship breakdown was dealt with in repentance, and prayer made to drive out these demonic forces, that these incidents ceased.

2. *Knowing our Deliverance*

I am free (John 8:36); in Christ I am a new creation (2 Cor 5:17). The

As I look back to my years in Africa working among a people among whom the practice and fear of witchcraft was normal, I am surprised how few of those who were soundly converted needed deliverance ministry.

fall in the Garden caused my spiritual death. It affected my spirit and thereby tainted and warped my God-given personality. New birth and life in the Spirit gave me a new Start, but sanctification changes my attitudes and actions so that all may be under the lordship of Christ and dependent on Him. My personality created by God is now free to be what God had originally intended when He created it. It is sad that the word "flesh" in the older translations of the Bible has been so misunderstood. The best, though not necessarily all-inclusive, definition I know is in the long and brilliant coverage of the subject by Watchman Nee in *The Spiritual Man* (Nee 1968:69ff). The flesh is any attitude or action done without total dependence on the Lord Jesus Christ (Rom 7:25; 14:23). The NIV has further muddied the theological waters by frequently translating the Greek *sarx* as "sinful nature." Fallen human

nature is not a biblical term but frequently used and gives the impression that I have a fallen personality. Knowing my new creaturehood in Jesus is the great liberation from all my genealogical, social, sinful past. Repentance, renunciation of the works of darkness in my own life and in my heredity, and faith in the efficacy of the blood of Christ sets me free. His indwelling life is my life and I am free to be the person God originally made me to be.

As I look back to my years in Africa working among a people among whom the practice and fear of witchcraft was normal, I am surprised how few of those who were soundly converted needed deliverance ministry—though some did, and demons had to be expelled in the name of Jesus. We made a point of ensuring that any seeker faced up to the total commitment needed, which also involved the destruction of all occult charms and medicines and open testimony to family and peers.⁵ A solid conversion cleared up many of the problems of association with the powers of darkness.

There was a time at our mission headquarters in Britain when deliverance ministry became a major issue and many sought help. One missionary of another agency staying with us for a course had deep spiritual problems. She approached Jill saying that she believed Jill could help her. Jill told her that if she wanted deliverance ministry she ought to go to others, but if she was willing, Jill would spend half an hour with her and show her who she was in Christ and that she could be different for the rest of her life. This lady was a prime candidate for deliverance—depressed, an alcoholic father and an identical twin sister who was seeking to use the occult on her. However she saw by

faith the secret of her new creaturehood and was free from then on. Months later she wrote thankfully to tell us that she was indeed changed! Too often people run around looking for dramatic spiritual deliverances when a good dose of humility in repentance and renunciation is what is truly needed.

3. *Being Seated with Him*

I have often heard people say, "When you have troubles you should look up (to the Lord)." I respond that we ought to do the opposite. When we have troubles we need to look down! Do we realize what Jesus has done for us? Not only are we dead, buried and raised with Him to new life (Rom 6:1-11), but we are also ascended with Him in heavenly places to share now in His reign and throne (Eph 2:6), and this is where our real life is hidden (Col 3:1-4). We are with Christ in the control room of the universe. Do we realize this and do we live in this reality? It will revolutionize our prayer life if we embrace this truth. My intercession makes a difference. We are a holy priesthood standing between God and man with one foot on earth and the other in the heavenlies. With one ear we hear what is going on down below and with the other we hear what God is saying. What privileges we have in Christ.

Knowing the Will of God

Guidance is the birthright of a child of God (Rom 8:14). Jesus promised us as His friends that we would know, as He did, what the Father says and does (John 15:14-15). He promised that the coming of the Holy Spirit would both teach and remind us what Jesus spoke, but would also guide us into all the truth (John 14, 16)—both the written Word and in our day to day walk with Jesus. All Bible believing Christians agree with the former. It is the latter which is open to discus-

sion and abuse, yet is essential for effectiveness in prayer and in spiritual warfare. If I know that I am where God placed me and doing what He has shown me, no suffering, no attacks of the enemy will deflect me until I gain the assurance that it is my Father's will for a change. Many a missionary in a hard field has been kept true to God's calling because of that conviction that God personally revealed His will. All over the world I have challenged Christian workers with these words, "Never leave for negative reasons where God has placed you." The enemy of souls will do all he can to provide all possible negatives and convince us, that this is God's guidance. Over the years I have been moved at how many have come-back. often years later, and said that that particular word I had spoken kept them in God's will.

In day-to-day ministry the Holy Spirit uses many ways to prompt God's servants—the Word or a particular verse that comes to us in deep power as His Word to me, other people, circumstances, or most frequently the deep inner conviction or burden to pray, speak or take some action. We have the mind of Christ (1 Cor 2:16), so there is often that deep inner knowing that comes from the Spirit which is hard to explain. All of these promptings are subservient to the absolute of Scripture and have to be held loosely and in humility. We can sometimes get it wrong. Yet how often that gift of the Spirit of a word of knowledge, wisdom or prophecy has been spoken into situations in a redemptive way! This has to be self-authenticating, including the witness of the Spirit in others too. It is very hard to give any corrective advice to one who says "The Lord has guided me," or "Thus says the Lord."

I have not the time nor space to share wonderful accounts of God's guidance in this way, but how we

need that leading in intercession. I share but one from my own life. For many years I have kept a special prayer list specifically for prayer burdens I believe the Lord assigned to me for intercession. It is astonishing to look back on what must now be over 500 definite prayer requests—only about 40 of which are still active. Nearly all the rest have been answered, and with some I had the deep conviction that God had already answered before I saw the answer, but most were crossed off when I saw the answer. We cannot intercede for everything. We need that leading of the Spirit to those that are our corporate or individual responsibility. We have a God who speaks today, who communicates with us so that we exercise a ministry through revelation. What liberation to know that my Father will always show me what to pray for, which sick person should receive healing, what to preach, where to go, how to write a letter, as well as discern the wiles of the enemy.

There are terms rarely heard today: "effectual praying" and "praying through." Elijah was one who prayed this way (Jas 5:16-17). As Elijah prayed on Mt. Carmel for rain he knew that God would answer, even though he had to send his servant seven times before the cloud became visible. The New Testament is even more explicit on this way of praying:

And this is the confidence which we have in him, that if we ask anything according to His will He hears us. And if we know that He hears us in whatever we ask, we know that we HAVE obtained the requests made of Him. 1 John 5:14-15.

Jesus said;

I say to you, if you have faith as a grain of mustard seed, you will say to this mountain, Move from here to there and it will move: and nothing will be impossible to you. Matt

17:20.

We need to know far more about this kind of prayer depth in today's battle as we come into the final supreme effort to evangelize the world. We need to know the mind of God (1 John 5:14), and be agreed together (Matt 18:19-20), as well as know that what we ask in the name of Jesus will be granted. We can then say the word of faith to the situation knowing that we have the answer. We can then praise expecting to see the deliverance. The battle is usually more severe than these words may sound, but the principles are there. So it was in the prayer lives of great men of God such as Andrew Murray of South Africa, George Muller of Bristol, Rees Howells of Wales, Praying Hyde of Pakistan. In our own mission agency, WEC International, Norman Grubb (the biographer of Rees Howells) brought us into these basic principles for the growth and advance of our work (Grubb 1940).

I use one illustration from recent years. In 1990 we held our sixth annual International Leaders Conference in Scotland. During one of our many prayer sessions, our leaders from Senegal in West Africa shared their concern. Senegal is over 90% Muslim and was to host the World Islamic Conference in their capital the following year. The leaders of the Muslim nations were to gather to discuss united action on a number of fronts, one being the ending of all Christian mission work and the elimination of indigenous Christian minorities in their lands. After prayer, we shared together how we believed God was leading us as to what to ask. We all agreed that we must pray for the nullification of the impact of that conference. We had a mighty time of prayer which reached a climax when a

deep conviction came that God had heard and we ended with glorious praise. The Gulf War came some four months later. This event so polarized the Muslim world that the conference was postponed. When at last the conference was convened the following year the divisions were still so marked that most of the leaders left the con-

The devil is highly delighted with eight hour deliverance meetings, which last until three in the morning, while demons play hide and seek, wear out Christians, confound them with their knowledge, and frighten them by their strength.

ference before the scheduled time with little decided. God stepped in to thwart the plottings of the rulers of this world (Ps 2:1-3) in answer to those definite prayers in which we were sure of God's answer long before the event.

Using our Weapons

We have no need to fear anything the devil can do. We respect his, power and understand that detached from the Lord Jesus we are fair game for him. God has given all we need to both defend ourselves and also to take the offensive in the warfare against Satan's wiles, principalities, powers and world rulers of this present darkness. Here I can only refer to two important passages as illustration of this truth.

Ephesians 6 is beloved by all Christians because of the superb

description Paul gives of our spiritual armor. He shows each part of the soldier's armor has deep spiritual application to our total defense for life in a non-Christian world permeated by sin and also every stratagem and attack of Satan. He also shows us the mighty weapons for attack—the sword of the Spirit, the Word of God, and prayer in the Spirit. The strong message is that we need to be constantly in close fellowship with our God, or we are in danger of ineffectiveness in ministry, or worse become a victim of Satan's wiles and fiery darts. There have been too many examples of servants of God who have become deeply immersed in the area of spiritual warfare, but have failed to put on and maintain that armor daily and have become casualties themselves.

Revelation 12 is an amazing chapter. I believe it is a key chapter in a book written as a manual for spiritual warfare.

There are many interpretations of the symbolisms in this chapter into which I will not go here in this article, but I believe this chapter gives a picture of the warfare of Satan against the Seed of the woman (the Lord Jesus Christ) and the woman (the people of God throughout history from the Garden to the Consummation). In this amazing chapter, the Holy Spirit exposes Satan and his weapons. Nowhere else in Scripture are we told so many of Satan's names, functions and titles. He is revealed in his true colors as in no other Scripture passage. He is the accuser of the brethren, the deceiver of the whole world and, by implication, the one who engineers compromise among believers. Yet here we are also shown the three invincible weapons God has given us:

1. For Satan's weapon of accusation we have *the Blood of the Lamb*. My safety is not in knowledge of the

enemy's stratagems and the precautions I take, but in the efficacy of the blood of the Lamb once slain to deal with the sin issue Satan has no more claim on me once I have repented and continue to walk in the light. I have total freedom and life more abundant what ever my suffering, difficulties or stress in the battle. I am totally safe in Jesus, as are all other true believers.

2. For Satan's weapon of deceit we have *the word of testimony*. This testimony is first about who Christ is and what He has done. Then I can boldly say what God has made me in Christ, what God promises me in His Word, what I know my prayers can achieve and what the ultimate conclusion of the war will be. I have the witness of the Holy Spirit who assures me of these things. He gives me the words to utter whatever my circumstances. He gives assurance that God can use even me to testify so that the devil's captives have their blindness removed and can be set free. The Holy Spirit also gives discernment in every situation. We can have that gift of inner knowing what is of God and what is of Satan; His peace being our referee whistle blower. This testimony becomes the means by which those enslaved to the prince of this world through their belief systems, practices, moral actions and spiritual bondages are liberated.

3. For Satan's weapon of compromise we have to *be totally committed*. We love not our lives even unto death. That is the extent to which we are willing to go for Jesus sake. Over such the enemy has no hold. How we need to walk in that total abandonment to God. Any compromise lays us open to the enemy. The more dangerous we are to his kingdom the greater our humility, dependence and commitment to our Lord must be!

The Great Commission as expressed by Jesus in Matthew 28:18-

20 shows that through the victory of the Cross all authority in heaven and on earth has been given to Him. In Christ we have been delegated His authority (Luke 9:1; 10:19). Jesus has given us, the keys of the Kingdom (Matt 16:19). By faith we can move mountains, We have the power to bind and loose (Matt 18:18-19, Jn 20:23). This gives us the boldness to take kingdoms (Dan 7:14, 22, 27), expect miracles, command demons to submit to our word of command in the name of Jesus, break down strongholds (2 Cor 10:4), resist and bind Satan (1 Pet 5:9), spoil the strong man's goods and bring release to his captives in the name of Jesus. All we can say is to repeat Paul's triumphant words, "If God is, for us, who can be against us." They don't have a chance!

The victory of the Lord Jesus in His cross and resurrection over sin, death and Satan was so decisive that we only have to apply that victory to any opposition of the enemy. I cannot agree with the title of Hal Lindsay's book, *Satan is alive and well on Planet Earth*. The truth is that Satan has been mortally wounded, his defeat is irreversible. He is *not well* (Rev 12:10-12). Simple believers in Africa, Asia and Latin America expect God to work in these ways. We Western Christians make things so theological and complicated. If God says it, of course He will do it! All His enemies are now being put under His feet (Heb 10:14) and we by faith ensure the continuation of the process (Luke 10:17-19). What confidence this gives, what assurance that as we walk with the Lord in the center of His will every assault on us will ultimately fail, and every advance we make will ultimately bear fruit for eternity.

Too often believers have the impression that they have to go out and do the fighting, not seeing that the battle is the Lord's. I have seen

deliverance sessions where those praying seem to think spiritual authority is measurable by vocal volume or physical activity. It also troubles me that many in their praying can be presumptuous and demand or claim things beyond our sphere of authority. Note how Jude writes in warning that we be humble in this regard.

But when the archangel Michael, contending with the devil, disputed about the body of Moses, he did not presume to pronounce a reviling judgment upon him, but said, "The Lord rebuke you." But these men revile whatever they do not understand (Jude 9-10).

An over-emphasis on deliverance ministry can be unhealthy and even dangerous. There is a place for it, but this course should be pursued when it is plain that demonization is indeed the issue. Arthur Neil, a Baptist pastor used of God in the life of a witch, Doreen Irvine, has written two masterly and biblical volumes dealing with this whole area (Neil 1990, 1991; Irvine, 1973). He shared with me that in all his long experience in ministering in the area of deliverance from demonic activity, he only has had to deal with two clear cases of demon possession but many more with oppressions and attacks of various kinds—the latter being the more difficult to deal with. Jill and I had to make an urgent pastoral visit to one of our Latin American fields. One of the problems we faced concerned an over-involvement with deliverance ministry. One of our most effective church planting missionaries had become so involved with delivering Christians from demons. She claimed that thousands of demons had to be cast out of pastors in her many months of ministry around the country. This ministry was causing dismay to many, and appeared to be even possibly a side-tracking of the enemy

into endless conversations with demons and time-consuming deliverances. She was even cross-examining lesser demons to find out more concerning the upper echelons of the demonic hierarchy. We sought to warn her of the real dangers associated with the latter and the need for a well rounded balance in ministry in the former. I cannot help but feel that she was laying herself open to believing the lies and distortions of the enemy and having all her energies consumed in this deliverance ministry. She took some of our advice and moderated some of the excesses in her ministry.

How we need a holy caution in this area. We do not seek the demonic in everything, but we deal with any evident manifestation of demonic powers. Doreen Irvine with her background of Satanism and witchcraft followed by years of ministry and counselling wrote these words:

There was no long dialogue with the demon. There is no need for that. Jesus cast out demons with one word, 'Go,' and the demons left at once. We can cast out demons with six words today: 'Go in the name of Jesus'. If demon-possessed people are willing to be free and are repentant of their sins, demons have to go at once. The devil is highly delighted with eight hour deliverance meetings, which last until three in the morning, while demons play hide and seek, wear out Christians, confound them with their knowledge, and frighten them by their strength (Irvine1986:129).

Being Willing to Pay the Price

I cannot conclude without a word of caution. There is always a price to pay. Grace was freely given to us in Christ, and is freely available to us day by day. But if we are to become ministers of that grace it will cost. We

therefore rejoice in our sufferings for the sake of others and in our flesh we complete what is lacking in Christ's afflictions for the sake of His body (Col 1:24). There are the death points in every ministry—the dealing with our self-reliance (2 Cor 1:8-11). We need to identify totally with the objects of our intercession as did Moses (Ex. 32:32), Paul (Rom. 9:3),

World evangelization is achievable, but at a cost. Our major commitment must be to intercession so that every barrier—whether moral, political or spiritual—be broken down and the Kingdom of the Lord Jesus Christ come.

and also the Lord Jesus Christ Himself (Is 53:12). This was true of Elisha's intercession for the son of the Shunammite woman. Gehazi's use of Elisha's staff did nothing for the boy; it needed costly and committed intercession for the boy to be raised up (2 Ki 18-37). There is the danger in spiritual warfare that we rely on "the staffs" of techniques and experience and not on the total costly commitment for true and eternal deliverances.

Conclusion

Never before has the completion of world evangelization been such a possibility as in our present generation! The basic minimum requirements given by the Lord Jesus Christ in the Great Commission, in its various renderings, could be attainable in our generation. In Mark 16 we are commanded to preach the Gospel to

every person. And in Matthew 28:18-20 to disciple every ethnic people (the Greek meaning for the word "nation" most frequently used in English translations). My estimation is that 15% to 20% of the world's population is still beyond the present preaching of the Gospel. Of the some 10,000 peoples in the various countries of the world, an estimated 2,000 to 2,500

have yet to see a missiological breakthrough to produce a viable Christian church-planting movement within their cultures. Possibly and only 1,000 or so have very little being done on a long-term basis to ensure their evangelization.

The task is achievable, but at a cost. Our major commitment must be to intercession so that every barrier—whether moral, political or spiritual—be broken down and the Kingdom of the Lord Jesus Christ come.

Let us not allow anything to deflect us from the real goal which is world evangelization and a new heaven and a new earth where righteousness dwells and all evil is forever banished!

End Notes

1. Numerous Scriptures assure us of the final victory achieved through Jesus in His death and resurrection and applied by us: Matt 24:14; Matt 28:18-20; Psalm 2; Dan 2:44; Dan 7; Rev 1, 5, 20-22, etc.
2. The theology of prayer walking needs to be spelled out. There is a danger that if the premise of territorial spirits is accepted, this can easily extend to the premise that physical presence of intercessors in the area controlled by the territorial spirit is essential for its binding. The practice of prayer walking needs to be examined—I see many negatives; the huge expense to the detriment of funding for workers on the front line, the motivations for

going can be mixed, the drain on the time and energies of workers serving in glamorous places. It can even endanger ministries in sensitive areas.

3. Stephen Lungu was for many years an evangelist with the Dorothea Mission. He is now one of the leaders in African Enterprise based in Malawi, but with a global ministry. His life story has been published under the title *Freedom Fighter* by Anne Coombes, 1994, Kingsway, England.
4. Jill lived to complete her book *You Can Change The World* just before she went to be with Jesus in June 1992.
5. The Scriptural pattern is to destroy all occultic articles (Acts 19:18-19). For that reason I would advise all Christians to avoid keeping such articles even for deputation programs. Whatever one's view of the attachment of demons to inanimate objects, there are dangers, whether moral (causing others or ourselves to stumble) or spiritual (demonic influence). It certainly can miscommunicate!

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urban areas of South Africa, Zimbabwe, Botswana and Mozambique. During this time he learned something of the spiritual warfare needed to see people steeped in witchcraft and the occult come into the liberty the Gospel. Also during this time he commenced the task of compiling data and information for the writing of successive versions of his world famous Operation World. He is now serving with WEC International as part of the leadership team of the Mission-Director of Research, and Deputy International Direction. He is also Chairman of the Unreached Peoples Network of the AD2000 and Beyond

Recognizing and Defeating the Powers of Darkness

Why does spiritual darkness linger where it does? The author helps missionaries and Christians in general arrive at a biblical understanding of the modern spiritual battlefield and provides insights for fighting this war in global evangelization in response to demonic resistance and counterfeits.

by George Otis, Jr.

As human beings most of us want to know where we are at any given time. If we have not yet reached our destination at least we need to be assured that we are on the right path. Our ancestors gained this confidence by consulting natural reference points like mountains and stars. We are more likely, however, to rely on the ubiquitous “You-are-here” displays that adorn large airports, shopping malls and theme parks.

There is also a temporal aspect to our innate need to fix our bearings. As creatures of destiny, we long to know our position in time as well as in space. The difficulty in charting the fourth dimension is that hard reference points are visible in only one direction: the past. These historical markers, useful in measuring how far we have yet to come, are inadequate for determining how far we have yet to go. The sole solution is to identify the finish line, and the only way to do that is to journey into the future.

Despite our obvious limitations in this respect, most of us cannot help but wonder where we fit on the continuum of human and Church history. The fact that world affairs have suddenly become kaleidoscopic, fracturing and changing at every turn of the earth’s axis, only adds to our curiosity. Are the days in which we live a passing phase, or have we finally

reached the threshold of the “end times?”

It can be argued that every generation of believers has expected to witness the climax of history, but until now there has been a lack of objective evidence to support such expectations. In defining what has changed, contemporary Christians point to three developments:

1. A quantum leap in human knowledge that is unbridled by wisdom.
2. A rising tide of spiritual interest and supernatural activity.
3. The onset of “critical mass” in global evangelization.

While much can be said about each of these important developments, the prospect of completing the Great Commission is undoubtedly the most compelling. Powerful new technologies have not only allowed Christian evangelists to track our progress against Matthew 24:14, something no other generation of believers has been able to do, they have opened the door for long-reach mass evangelism.¹

Employing these tools, and backed by a growing army of committed prayer warriors, contemporary missions has begun to realize an unprecedented level of success. In the mid-1990s, Justin Long of the Global Evangelization Movement estimated that 114 people were coming to Christ

every minute—an evangelistic torrent that translates into a net gain of 44,000 new churches each year! During this same time period, the Lausanne Statistics Task Force reported that, for the first time in history, the ratio of nonbelievers to biblical Christians had fallen to less than seven to one (compared to 220 to one in A.D. 100).²

The Latter Rounds

In the midst of all this good news, however, comes what radio commentator Paul Harvey would call “the rest of the story.” In most escalating ventures (business negotiations, political campaigns, athletic tournaments), the stakes tend to rise in proportion to our position. The closer we are to the end of the process, the higher the stakes. And since no stakes are higher than those associated with completing the Great Commission—an accomplishment Jesus prophesied would usher in the end of the age—today’s Christian warriors can expect to face challenges on the spiritual battlefield that are unique in both type and magnitude. This is the challenge of the latter rounds, and as they say in desperate times, this calls for desperate measures.

Accordingly, while the remaining task of world evangelization is getting

smaller, insofar as the number of unreached people groups is concerned, it is also becoming more difficult. In strategic areas like the 10/40 Window, intercessors and evangelists are finding themselves locked into the fight of their lives. Standing eyeball to eyeball with some of the most formidable spiritual forces on earth, these heroic ministers are reporting two substantial challenges to the continued expansion of God's Kingdom: *demonic entrenchment*, an obstacle resulting from an excess of time, and *demonic desperation*, an obstacle linked to a lack of time.

Demonic entrenchment is hardly unique; the Hebrews encountered it in Egypt and Babylon, and the apostle Paul found it in Ephesus. But now we are centuries deeper into history. There are places on earth, notably in Asia, where demonic pacts have been serviced continually since the great Dispersion.

Consider, too, the proposition that darkness now has a wider human base. As *Time* essayist Lance Morrow noted in June 1991, "If evil is a constant presence in the human soul, it is also true that there are more souls now than ever." Using this logic, Morrow reasoned that evil is rising on a Malthusian curve—or at least the same rate as the population, 1.7 percent per annum.

Demonic desperation, as we noted, is a problem associated with the lateness of the hour. In the book of Revelation, God warns the inhabitants of the earth that "the devil has come down to you, having great wrath, because he knows that he has a short time" (Revelation 12:12, NKJV). As much as these days distress us, they are even more disturbing for the powers of darkness. Confronted with growing incursions into their prayer-eroded strongholds, Satan's hordes are beginning to taste the same salty panic they have long

induced in human beings.

Facing the prospect of eternal ruin, the prince of this world has infected his domain with what Michael Green calls "an increasing tempo of chaos."⁴ Under the shadow of Satan's presence, earthly kingdoms have begun to shake like a terminal patient casting off the final vestiges of life, thereby validating Jesus' two-thousand-year-old prophecy that "the love of most will grow cold" (Matthew 24:12). The enemy, determined to fill every seat in his hell-bound bus, has ordered a dramatic escalation of counterfeit signs and wonders. To protect against those who would probe or escape his snares,⁵ he has initiated a series of violent counterattacks.

These counterattacks are generally aimed at two kinds of targets: territories that have recently experienced a unique move of God, and individuals instrumental in conveying the Gospel to unreached peoples. Territorial counterattacks are usually accompanied by political persecution,⁶ while assaults on individuals include everything from relational breakdowns to physical illness and injury.

Battlefield Protection

While some Christians are content to explain such incidents of attack as the natural, if unfortunate, consequences of mundane forces, I find this attitude a form of denial. By minimizing the influence that spiritual powers have over human lives and habitats, these individuals hope to limit their vulnerability. If their view does not make them any safer, it at least makes them feel more modern.

The Scriptures, however, offer no such harbor. From Genesis to Revelation, we are reminded that activist Christian living is inextricably bound up with the spiritual world—a world that consists not of abstract forces or

laws, but of powerful and interested personalities. And because we are the focus of their interest, few happenings in ministry can truly be called coincidence.

Demonic powers have never been shy about getting in the way of God's servants. Satan, who stood as accuser at the right hand of Joshua (see Zechariah 3:1), is also on record as having afflicted Job with painful sores (see Job 2:7), tampered with Daniel's intercessory mail (see Daniel 10:12-13) and tried repeatedly to distract Jesus from His mission (see Matthew 16:21-23; Luke 4:1-3). The apostle Paul lamented to the Thessalonians, "We wanted to come to you, certainly I, Paul, did, again and again, but Satan stopped [hindered] us" (1 Thessalonians 2:18).

Despite these examples, many Christians today hold the view that the enemy is best ignored. I can still remember the indignity of one Pentecostal man who approached me after I had concluded a teaching on spiritual warfare. Calling my accounts of demonic assaults on Christian workers "lurid," he asserted that Satan can only be empowered by such attention. The best approach to dealing with the enemy, he insisted, is to dismiss him.

But the apostle Peter seems to commend a different approach. "Be self-controlled and alert," he urges. "Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour. *Resist him* (1 Peter 5:8-9, emphasis added). James offers similar advice. After instructing believers in his brief epistle to submit themselves to God, he adds the proactive charge, "*Resist the devil*, and he will flee from you" (James 4:7, emphasis added). Passive neglect, as these biblical writers well understood, is a poor tactic against an adversary who blatantly and frequently refuses to be ignored.

Surviving the enemy's gauntlet of snares, however, is not a task to be

taken lightly. As many well-meaning believers have learned (often too late), Satan is a cunning and relentless adversary, a devious wizard whose mastery of the dark arts enables him to fashion salacious temptations or fling fiery darts with equal ease. Nor are these devices directed solely at the weak and wayward. If the experiences of Job, Daniel and Paul tell us anything, it is that men and women are not invulnerable to trouble simply because their intentions and ministries please heaven. If Satan is audacious enough to tempt the Son of God and impede an angelic messenger dispatched by the Almighty, we can hardly expect him to steer clear of us!

Where, then, does this leave us? If spiritual invulnerability is an unattainable goal, can we not at least make ourselves more elusive targets? The answer is yes. While we cannot put on a magic suit or claim an exemption from battle, God's Word does present us with six tried-and-true steps that, if followed, promise added protection. Latter-day warriors should review them carefully.

Cultivate Humility

Scripture presents humility as a divine requirement (see Micah 6:8) and an endearing characteristic (see 2 Chronicles 33:12-13; Isaiah 57:15; 1 Peter 5:5-6). It is also a potent moral weapon in the battle against pride—a deceptive power that Francis Frangi-pane calls “the armor of darkness itself.”⁷

If God is drawn to humility, He abhors pride. From the moment this lethal and unholy poison bubbled out of the secret recesses of Lucifer's heart, it has brought nothing but pain to the heart of God. Of all the forces at work in the universe, none is more destructive or antithetical to heavenly principles. For this reason we are told

that “God opposes [or resists] the proud but gives grace to the humble.” This proverb, quoted twice in the New Testament,⁸ is linked contextually in both instances to spiritual warfare. And for good reason! If we want to resist the devil, we had better make sure God is not resisting us.⁹

Humility comes, as successful spiritual warriors have learned, from seeing God—and the devil too—for who they really are. One such warrior,

To some believers the devil is little more than an abstract punching bag, an ethereal bogey man, at whom they can hurl epithets and chant cliches.

the great reformer Martin Luther, preserved his insights on the subject in the words of the classic hymn “A Mighty Fortress Is Our God.” Speaking first of our adversary, Luther penned (in the original):

The old, evil Enemy is determined to get us; He makes his vicious plans With great might and cruel cunning; Nothing on earth is like him.

In the last line (later translated as “On earth is not his equal”), Luther rightly acknowledged Satan as a higher-dimensional being whose power and cunning on terms are unmatched.

However, after giving the devil his due Luther moved quickly to the other side of the equation:

But if the right man [Christ] is on our side, One little word shall fell him.

In this magnificently balanced theology, Luther acknowledged two important truths. First, Satan's power is such that we cannot defeat him in

our own strength-ever. Second, Christ's power is such that Satan cannot defeat Him in his own strength-ever. While there is an obvious strategy in these profound mismatches, it is visible only to the humble. Underestimating either of these supernatural combatants will lead to certain defeat.

Although some critics have accused the contemporary spiritual warfare movement of ignoring divine sovereignty, I have not observed this to be a serious problem. What I have found, at least among Western Christians, is a tendency toward unqualified triumphalism, a kind of swaggering religious play-acting that belittles the capabilities of the enemy and incites believers into battle without first ensuring that “the right man” is indeed on their side. To these believers,

the devil is little more than an abstract punching bag, an ethereal bogey man at whom they can hurl epithets and chant cliches.

Such bravado before the enemy, far from being a badge of experience, is a sure sign that these believers have never seen their reflection in his malignant, bloodshot eyes. Like a naive child toying with a cobra, they have no idea what (or whom) they are dealing with.

As the sons of Sceva discovered, cockiness has no place in spiritual warfare (see Acts 19:13-16). The devil's power is real and he is not afraid to use it. Fuller Seminary student Wilson Awasu relates that, in the West African country of Ghana, a pastor ignored the warnings of local villagers and ordered them to cut down a tree that had been enshrined by animist priests. When the last branch was lopped off, the minister collapsed and died. In a similar case, another well-meaning pastor commanded that a fetish shrine be demolished. When parishioners proceeded to carry out

his wishes, he was struck down by a debilitating stroke.¹⁰

One evening in Papua New Guinea, missionaries Jim and Jaki Parlier listened as a group of Managala boys fearfully described the consequences of violating the taboo against speaking the names of the deceased. “Sometimes,” the boys explained, “the [ancestral] spirit will just climb on your body. It feels heavy, like a huge log on our chest, and it’s hard to breathe.”

Hearing this, Jaki determined to teach the boys a lesson about superstition. Facing a grove of banana trees that concerned them, she yelled out the name of a powerful warrior spirit: “Ekileta, can you hear me? If you can, come and bite me. I’m waiting for you!”

The lads huddled together and covered their ears with their hands. Jaki, however, was just getting started. Feeling smug, she began calling out the name of every dead person she could think of, including an old sorceress named Avami. At this, the terrified boys started to cry. Jaki recalls:

“A few hours later, an eerie presence entered [our] room and woke me. Suddenly I felt a heaviness on my chest, like the weight of a huge log, pinning my body to the bed, I tried to wake Jim, but the weight was squeezing every ounce of breath from my body. I couldn’t move or speak. Finally, in one desperate attempt, I forced the words *the blood of Jesus*. The weight lifted immediately.”

Recoiling from her trauma, Jaki sat straight up in bed. Two red lights, like butterflies, were dancing in the middle of the room. After she rebuked them in the name of Jesus, the orbs flitted toward the window, slipped through gaps in the bamboo and danced into the night.¹¹ When it was over, two of God’s people had learned a hard lesson on the risks of spiritual

Walking in Obedience

The second ingredient for spiritual protection is obedience. Some may consider this requirement too general or simplistic to include in a list of practical advice. But the hard fact is, human presumption is among the most common attractors to the demonic.¹² In the arena of spiritual warfare, the devil is concerned less about the words cast in his direction than about who is doing the talking (see Acts 19:15). When it comes time to size up an adversary, he has one primary question: Does this person have an active relational link with God?

In Scripture, this link involves not only hearing but hearkening to the voice of the Lord. Whereas the former affords us knowledge of God’s will, the latter indicates that we intend to do it. The prophet Samuel declared that “to obey is better than sacrifice” (1 Samuel 15:22), for one simple reason: With sacrifice, we decide what God will get; with obedience, we give God what He asks for.

Walking in obedience not only makes us safer by limiting enemy inroads into our lives; it also allows God to defend His own purposes. While this support does not prevent the devil from taking his best shot (witness Elijah, Mordecai and Paul), it does make us more difficult targets. God can also intervene on our behalf without our even knowing about it.¹³ When the Moabite king Balak endeavored to curse the Israelites through the sorcerer Balaam, God’s Spirit caused the well-known oracle to pronounce a blessing instead (see Numbers 23-24). In a contemporary episode, a young Nepali girl died in her sleep after eating food offered to idols (or demons; see I Corinthians 10:20-21) at a Hindu temple in Kathmandu. At that moment the Lord awakened her mother, a godly woman, with a

warning that the girl’s life was in imminent danger. Walking over to her daughter’s bed, she found the little body ice-cold and lifeless. Embracing the child like Elijah (see 1 Kings 17:21-22), she resisted the powers of darkness until the soul of her beloved was returned.¹⁴

Another remarkable case of God defending His own was related to me almost casually by Bhutanese pastor Dawa Sandrup.¹⁵ I had been visiting this high-perched Buddhist nation, officially known as Druk Yul (Land of the Thunder Dragon), for less than a week when we met at his modest apartment in Thimphu.

Having spent the previous four days in the company of a Buddhist astrologer, a “reincarnated” lama, and a *chod* master (whose daily practice was to visualize his dismembered body being fed to hungry demons),¹⁶ I was under a weight of oppression. Now, ushered into what Dawa called his prayer room, I took a seat on one of two facing cots. Despite the cold concrete floor, it was the first place I had visited in the country where the spiritual atmosphere felt clean. Looking into Dawa’s kind face, I asked him how he managed to cope with this intense spiritual pressure year in and year out.

“Actually,” he replied, “the devil has come to take my life many times. The pattern is almost always the same. I awake in the middle of the night with an overwhelming demonic presence in the room. It remains even when I turn on the light. The first stage is physical; I feel a strong binding or weight on my chest. Sometimes I can’t breathe. This is often followed by a psychological attack. The walls of my mind start closing in and thoughts become difficult to form. It’s like mental claustrophobia. The final phase of the attack—and I am usually on my knees at this point—is spiritual. Even though I pray through until dawn, it

seems no one is there to listen. The heavens are like brass.

"The Lord is so kind, however," Dawa continued. "He always sends a breakthrough. Sometimes as I pray in the Spirit, the room is suddenly flooded with divine peace and power. At other times He sends believers to minister to me. They knock on my door in the morning, saying, 'The Lord has sent us to help you.'"

Then Dawa pointed at something over my shoulder. "Do you see that?" Craning my neck around, I spied a walking cane hanging on a solitary nail in the wall. "The elderly man who came to my door with that stick traveled all the way from Himachal Pradesh in northern India. He walked over a thousand kilometers! His name is Sadhu Subhas. Prior to that moment, we had never met or corresponded. But he told me that two years earlier, in 1988, God had shown him a vision of Thimphu and instructed him to come here. Shortly afterward, as he prepared to leave, the Lord supernaturally revealed all the roads and mountain passes he was to take. He arrived at my house on the morning after one of the enemy's attacks. As I opened the front door, he said, 'The Lord sent me to pray for you.' 'The day before he came here, there was a heavy snowfall. The day he arrived it was calm. The evening before his departure, it snowed heavily again. On Monday morning, however, it once again cleared up. When I asked the Sadhu about this, he replied quietly, 'The Lord honors his people.'"

At this point in our conversation, Dawa reached under the mattress on his cot and pulled out a well-worn black leather prayer journal. For the next several minutes, with tears coursing down his cheeks, he read aloud from entries recorded during

the visits of other "ministering angels." The messages, which included words of prayer, encouragement and prophecy, were powerful. As they permeated the air around us, I realized that this tiny, nondescript room was no ordinary place. What had looked like a cold concrete floor now appeared as hallowed ground. I found the urge to kneel overwhelming.

Dawa's prayer room was a heavenly outpost on the edge of a vast supernatural battleground. That this Bhutanese pastor had held firm in the

Putting on the armor of God is synonymous with daily surrender to the Lordship of Jesus Christ... We simply dedicate our first conscious thoughts each morning to the will of our Master. Spiritual armor becomes lifestyle when, for the balance of the day, we choose to walk in the consciousness of His presence and purpose.

face of withering demonic attack was testimony to this steadfast obedience.

When finally I stood to leave, a faded wall-hanging caught my eye. Entitled "The Beacon Light of Faith," it bore words that could not have been more appropriate:

Faith is like a beacon light across a troubled sea,
A glow of hope that casts its rays wherever we may be;
And sometimes through the darkest night our hearts will find the way,
Following that light of faith into a brighter day.

Spiritual Armor

Given the amount of enemy flak in the air these days, it is astonishing

to find so many Christians going about without spiritual armor. When it comes to risky behavior, one can offer better odds to three-pack-a-day smokers, promiscuous fornicators or drivers who shun seatbelts.

The most common reason seems to be simple carelessness. People just do not think about putting on their spiritual armor. While the subject may have been fun in Sunday school, where it was presented in coloring papers and on flannel graph boards, the task of relating helmets, shields

and breastplates to the modern world has caused many adults, at least in practical terms, to abandon Paul's ancient metaphor.

Other Christians decline to don spiritual armor out of a misguided assumption that divine protection is a guaranteed byproduct of godly service. The problem here is not a lack of information but a display of machismo. Like the football player who shuns pads or the police officer who refuses a bulletproof vest, these individuals see themselves as indestructible warriors. The otherworldly nature of this battle is of little concern. As "King's Kids" they believe they automatically command all the power and protection heaven has to offer. In any ease, the devil smirks at their macho spirit.

In one graphic example in the early 1990s, a young, well-traveled missionary decided to engage the powers over the city of Kathmandu. Clambering up to a high point above the sacred Pashupatinath Temple complex, he proceeded to do battle with these potent spirits. Upon returning to his accommodations, however, he suddenly fell to the ground and lost control of his senses—an acute condition that lasted for three days. A week later,

after being examined by a local psychologist, he limped out of town like the sons of Sceva. Friends who fetched him at the airport in Singapore report that he was a basket case—broken physically, psychologically and spiritually. It took months to nurse him back to health.¹⁷

Sometimes it is not carelessness or machismo but a narrow theological worldview that relegates our spiritual armor to the closet. When Dr. Linda Williams signed on for short-term missionary work with World Medical Missions in 1984, she was assigned to The Evangelical Alliance Mission hospital in Taitung, Taiwan. Several days before a scheduled return flight to the United States, Williams and a colleague attended an idol parade associated with the local Lantern Festival. The idol-bearers wore exotic face paint and carried feathered fans. Celebrants, drunk and empowered by evil, swarmed the streets exploding firecrackers.

“Suddenly,” Williams recalls, “one of the temple leaders stepped from the parade line, waved his feathered fan in front of me and chanted angrily.” Confused, she turned to her colleague for an explanation. His eyes were popping. “He pronounced a curse on you,” he stammered. “He asked the devils to demonstrate their power to you within 48 hours.”

Two days later having dismissed this bizarre event from her mind, Dr. Williams headed off on a farewell beach trip with several friends, including a dear missionary couple, Art and Leona Dickinson. As their vehicle approached a curve, a dog darted onto the road, causing their Chinese-American driver to swerve instinctively. The vehicle careened into two large trees and flipped.

Coming to her senses, Dr. Williams found herself covered in broken glass. A warm oily substance was dripping onto the back of her neck.

“Suddenly,” she recalls, “I could hear Art calling, ‘Linda, Leona’s dying!’ It was then I realized the warm substance on the back of my neck was actually Leona’s blood.”

For the next several days, Leona’s life hung in the balance. She was comatose and fighting for every breath as surgeons worked to repair her lacerated organs and broken bones. When one of her pupils dilated suddenly, it became apparent that her brain stem was herniating. The head surgeon, unable to transport Leona to neurosurgical care in Taipei, assembled missionaries to announce that she was probably going to die that night.

Even in the face of this pessimistic report, Dr. Williams recalls,

The non-medical missionaries, teachers and pastors remained appallingly hopeful... They seemed to have identified, before I did, that the accident was the result of the curse placed on me. But they also believed 1 John 4:4 and claimed it for Leona: “Greater is He who is in you than he who is in the world” (NASB).

Despite sustaining a C4 vertebral fracture, a condition that should have resulted in quadriplegia, Leona recovered fully. Says Dr. Williams:

Today I no longer dismiss the reality of spiritual warfare. I have quit trying to fit [demonic power] into a philosophically neat compartment that will not disturb my Christian comfort zone or scientific rationale.¹⁸

As these testimonies remind us, spiritual armor is no optional accessory. Those who dismiss it do so at their peril. As to the question of what this armor is and how it is put on, Paul summed up the matter in four simple words: “I die every day” (1 Corinthians 15:31). It is Christ, he told the Galatians, who “lives in me” (Galatians 2:20).

In practice, then, putting on the armor of God is synonymous with

daily surrender to the Lordship of Jesus Christ. Rather than visualize ancient and imaginary clothing, we simply dedicate our first conscious thoughts each morning to the will of our Master. Spiritual armor becomes lifestyle when, for the balance of the day, we choose to walk in the consciousness of His presence and purposes.¹⁹

Maintain Spiritual Accountability

Author Carol Shields once said, “There are chapters in every life which are seldom read and certainly not aloud.”²⁰ Although these secret chapters are sometimes journalized memories of past failures, they are more likely to concern ongoing difficulties we would prefer to handle on our own. This tendency, as Charles Kraft noted in *Christianity with Power*, is most common among Westerners who cherish individualism and independence. It is not a healthy habit. Kraft points out that, besides engendering and legitimizing self-centeredness, a go-it-alone mentality makes us “vulnerable to Satan in the deepest recesses of our being.”²¹

It is worth remembering that a viewpoint—our viewpoint—is only a view from a point. While we are entitled to our perspective on things, we must also be willing to admit that our view is limited. By habitually rejecting the counsel and insight of others, we become easy marks for the master deceiver.

Christian intercessors are also vulnerable to brief lapses of awareness known as *micro sleeps*. These episodes, triggered by extreme fatigue, can occur in prayer meetings, in the middle of conversations, even while we are driving. Although micro sleeps are brief, usually lasting no more than a few seconds, they are rich in hypnotic imagery—fleeting, undefined forms that serve as the building

blocks for hallucinations. The danger in these episodes, as UCLA Professor Ronald Siegel points out, is that “the fatigued brain can embroider these ambiguous forms with specific features.”²² Without adequate rest or a grounding support system (wise leaders and loving friends), long-haul intercessors can fall prey to false, even demonically inspired impressions.

As the pace of life and ministry continues to quicken around us, accountable relationships become increasingly important to our spiritual well-being. In a reference to this hour, the biblical writer said,²³

Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage [or exhort] one another, and all the more as you see the Day approaching. (Heb. 10:25)

In the end, the purpose of spiritual accountability is to establish guardrails to keep us out of trouble, and a safety tether in case we stumble into it. It is like hiking in a wilderness area at a national park. Maps and trail markers are provided, but recreationalists are also asked to sign in at a ranger station or trail head. Hikers are asked to indicate the number and names of people in their parties, a proposed itinerary and projected entry and exit dates.

Some outdoorsmen see this as an example of overbearing authority, just as certain believers chafe at the disciplines of spiritual accountability. But there are good reasons for requiring such information. Every year adventurers are incapacitated in the wilderness by broken bones, animal attacks and capricious weather. When these things happen—and who ever plans for them?—it is nice to know you are tethered for “deep rescues.” After all, wasn’t this why a priest entering the

Holy of Holies wore bells on his garment and a cord around his ankle?

Faithful Prayer Support

One thing that has amazed me in counseling spiritual assault victims over the years is how few believers bother to establish any form of personal prayer support. With the exception of a few pastors and front line missionaries, most of these individuals never even consider themselves eligible for such an arrangement. While understanding on this subject has improved in recent years, thanks in large part to books like C. Peter Wagner’s *Prayer Shield*, there are still far too many Christians flying solo.

Missionaries too concerned about persecution or deportation take conscious steps to muzzle their witness on the field, leading to the very result the enemy had in mind all along: the effective silencing of Jesus Christ’s primary voice on earth.

A practice I have found of immense benefit is giving my intercessors advance details about each sensitive mission or project I plan to pursue. If my agenda calls for research work, be it in the highlands of Tibet or the streets of New Orleans, I try to provide each member of my support team with a daily schedule of events, including travel, interviews and observational activities. Once the mission gets under way, the intercessors agree to keep a daily prayer journal, detailing how God led them to pray, while I maintain a daily trip report, detailing what actually happened. When I return from the field, we swap documents.

Invariably this post-trip review proves mutually rewarding. The intercessors discover why they were prompted to pray in a certain fashion or at a certain time, while I am grateful for their sensitivity and God’s watch care over my every move.

Taking Godly Risks

The final step in our spiritual protection program involves an activity many Christians overlook: taking godly risks. Although we generally assume risk is something we need to protect ourselves against, the real danger is often fond lurking in the status quo. In Jesus’ Parable of the Talents, for example, the servant who buried his master’s capital in a napkin for safekeeping was sternly rebuked for his actions. Why? He neglected to advance the master’s interests. To his self-centered mind, the potential for loss was of far greater concern than the failure to gain.²⁴ In the end, the steps this servant took to alleviate loss actually promoted it.

Things today are not much different. Parents who worry about their children’s safety or “proper” education respond by holding them back from front line Christian ministry. (All too often this decision backfires when the youngster is lost to some addiction or compromised by the cares of this life.) Missionaries too concerned about persecution or deportation take conscious steps to muzzle their witness on the field, leading to the very result the enemy had in mind all along: the effective silencing of Jesus Christ’s primary voice on earth.²⁵

Prayer warriors can also be impaired by excess caution. A good example surfaced during an extended prayer journey I led in the early 1990s. As our team neared the end of a three-week mission to the Hima-

layas, which included on-site intercession at multiple Hindu and Buddhist strongholds, several participants reported feeling oppressed and asked to remain in their hotel rooms. Of those who proceeded into the temples and monasteries, many spent considerable time looking over their shoulders. In the midst of this spiritual malaise, God reminded us of the time His presence had been conveyed into the Philistine temple at Ashdod. As the Ark of the Covenant was set next to the image of Dagon, the idol promptly collapsed and shattered (see 1 Samuel 5:1-5).

Although the presence of God no longer resides in a gilded ark, it *is* contained in our earthen vessels. Wherever it is conveyed, we may be sure that it will have a greater impact on its environment than its surroundings have on it.

As I pointed out in *The Last of the Giants*, God seldom calls His people to a fair fight. The recurring theme of Scripture is one of giants and multitudes. Time and again Christian warriors are asked to face foes whose natural resources exceed their own.²⁶ If we are to succeed on such battlefields, we must learn to walk in faith; and faith, it has been said, is spelled R-I-S-K. If something is not risky, it does not require faith.²⁷ And “without faith it is impossible to please God” (Hebrews 11:6).

“The risk-free life,” as the late Jamie Buckingham once said, “is a victory-free life. It means lifelong surrender to the mediocre. And that is the worst of all possible defeats.”²⁸

Going out on a limb not only takes us to where the fruit is, but it prevents us from being picked off by the enemy. As any marksman knows, there is nothing easier to hit than a stationary target.

Spiritual Power

There is more to Christianity than

becoming an elusive spiritual target. Our mission to extend the borders of Christ’s Kingdom on earth also requires us to be practiced in the art of offensive warfare. And while the truth of God’s Word is our ultimate weapon, it is often more effective when accompanied by demonstrations of divine power.

In Acts 8 we read that “when the [Samaritan] crowds heard Philip and saw the miraculous signs he did, *they all paid close attention to what he said*” (verse 6, emphasis added). Elaborating on this point, Bible scholar Jack Deere draws attention to Paul’s statement that “the kingdom of God is not in word but in power” (1 Corinthians 4:20, NKJV). This miraculous power, according to Deere, “is more than temporary evidence of God’s kingdom—it is actually a characteristic of His kingdom.”²⁹

People are nearly always attracted more to indigenous power than to foreign dogma. Indeed, until Philip arrived in Samaria with great signs and miracles, “all the people, both high and low” (Acts 8:10) gave their attention to a powerful sorcerer named Simon. Christian success in the Roman world was also largely attributable to the ability of the believers to offer convincing evidence of the power of the faith over demons.

The modern appetite for spiritual power, whatever its source, is no less ravenous. We have only to look at the unprecedented popularity of paranormal television programming, the proliferation of New Age teaching and the revitalization of various indigenous religions. People want power, and the enemy is only too willing to oblige.

Since demonic signs and wonders will increase as we edge closer to the Second Coming of Christ, we face some critical questions: Are we prepared? Do we have the necessary battlefield experience to stand up to this expanding competition? For many

believers, including some in positions of ministry leadership, the answer is a resounding NO.

Examples of this dearth of experience are not hard to find. A recent episode of the popular television program *Unsolved Mysteries* featured a Midwestern family traumatized by a demonic infestation of their home. Unable to cope with a daily routine that included flickering lights, levitating dishes and appliances that switched on without warning, the distraught couple turned to a local pastor for comfort and advice. After observing the unsettling phenomena firsthand, the dismayed clergyman could only conclude, “There are just some things we are unable to understand.”

The problem, as one Native American believer told me in 1992, is that “many Christians are afraid to venture into situations more powerful than they are.” Having little firsthand experience with the supernatural, they are inclined to shy away from its mysteries.

Improving our Performance

Those who admit their lack, however, can improve their performance on the spiritual battlefield by following six basic steps:

1. *We must expose ourselves to real battlefields.* Many of us are committed to notions about spiritual warfare that we have never proven personally. Having confined ourselves to artificial worlds like academia (where spiritual “war games” are waged on paper) or charismania (where battles are fought in rallies), we are often left unprepared for the real thing. The only sure corrective is to venture out beyond our established comfort zones.

2. *We must find a qualified mentor.* The best way to learn how to wield spiritual power effectively is to grab onto the coattails of someone who has

gone to battle before.

3. *We must remain clean and humble vessels.* Only the righteous can lay claim to the promise of divine power. According to Psalm 66:18, Isaiah 1:15 and John 9:31, God will not even listen to the entreaties of sinners.

4. *We must remember the purpose of divine signs and wonders.* Although spiritual gifts are often associated with the personal welfare of Christians, the Bible teaches that divine power is manifest primarily to glorify God and to facilitate evangelism (see Mark 16:20; Acts 2:43; 1 Corinthians 14:22; Hebrews 2:3-4).

5. *We must release ourselves to God's sovereignty.* If we are truly yielded to the Lordship of Christ, we must allow Him to regain His voice in each circumstance that confronts us. This will require more patient listening on our part and fewer demanding formulas.

6. *We must develop a sense of expectation.* This is especially relevant for those of us who live in (or with) the rationalist ghettos of Western society. Although we may find it difficult to picture ourselves in the role of exorcist, seer or healer, this is how God has chosen to minister to our bound and broken world. If we do not expect the Holy Spirit to manifest His power through us, He probably won't.

Whatever posture we decide to adopt on the issue of spiritual power, it is important to note that our competition has already cast their lot. Almost anywhere you care to look, men and women are paying desperate prices to acquire and employ spiritual power.

At least one mission executive, Howard Brant of SIM USA (Society for International Ministries), has expressed open concern about these "spiritual forces of wickedness which stand opposed to the advance of the gospel and the spreading of God's

kingdom on earth." In a recent position paper on the subject, Brant declared:

We want our missionaries, our related churches, and all Christians everywhere to recognize that there are dark spiritual forces which have enormous power over entire clans, villages, towns, ethnic groups, and even over nations (Daniel 10:11-13). It is as we learn to take up the weapons of our warfare and attack these strongholds of wickedness that God's Spirit will be released to turn men and women to himself, bring salvation to the lost, and revive His church.³⁰

The lesson in this corner of the labyrinth is that spiritual power and protection are not only available to obedient Christians; they are core components in God's strategy to liberate enchanted communities. So long as we remain focused on this purpose (as opposed to self-aggrandizement), we may call on divine gifts and power without hesitation. This will become even more important as global evangelization prompts our desperate adversary to flood the world with demonic counterfeits.

End Notes

1. At the forefront of these technologies are video (the *Jesus Film*), shortwave radio and satellite television. Other new technologies (such as the Internet, personal computers and jet aircraft) have affected every evangelistic means from Bible translation to missionary mobilization and global networking.
2. The Justin Long statistic (which is adjusted for defections), derives from a June 1996 telephone conversation with Brian Kooiman of Global Harvest Ministries; see also "World-scene," *Christianity Today*, November 9, 1992, p. 64.
3. Lance Morrow, "Evil," *Time*, June 10, 1991, pp. 52-53.
4. Michael Green, *Exposing the Prince of Darkness* (Ann Arbor: Vine, 1991), p. 97. A similar situation manifested itself in the last few decades before the Spanish conquest of Mesoamerica. Mayan and Aztec priests, sensing the approaching end of their culture, called for an increase in human sac-

rifices, while symbols of death began to predominate in art. See *The Seasons of Humankind*, P. Van Dongen, ed. (*Den Haag: Rijks Museum Voor Volkenkunde*, 1987), p. 101.

5. The Catholic Church, for example, has recorded a dramatic increase recently in the number of requests for exorcisms.
6. Notable exceptions to this rule include South Korea, where God's work has been hindered primarily through disunity between various churches and their leaders; Argentina, where revival fires have been cooled by the moral failure of a leading pastor; and Germany, where great gains were set back by a highly publicized sex abuse case involving a pastoral team in Nurnberg (the trial of this godly couple was based on trumped-up charges).
7. Francis Frangipane, *The Three Battlegrounds* (Marion, Iowa: Advancing Church Publications, 1989), p. 7.
8. Both apostles (see James 4:6 and 1 Peter 5:5) quote from Proverbs 3:34.
9. Jesus declared to the Pharisees, "You belong to your father, the devil" (John 8:44). For individuals who prided themselves on their devotion to prevailing religious orthodoxy, it is hard to imagine a more stinging indictment. Like Lucifer, the Pharisees had become infatuated with themselves—their knowledge, their pomp, their position. By valuing such things, they (like many religious intellectuals) had become "ignorant of God's righteousness" (Romans 10:3, NKJV). Their "zeal [was] not according to knowledge" (verse 2, NKJV). They had missed the point that *godly beliefs should translate into godly character*.
10. C. Peter Wagner, "Territorial Spirits and World Missions," *Evangelical Missions Quarterly*, Vol. 25, No. 3, July 1989, p. 286.
11. Jaki Parlier, "Dabbling with the Enemy," *In Other Words*, Vol. 18, No. 6, September-October 1992, pp. 1-2.
12. And procrastination! See James 4:17.
13. Although God often limits or deflects the devil's barbs, as He did with Job and Daniel, there is evidence that, in special cases of martyrdom, He grants His servants supernatural grace (see Acts 7:55-60).
14. In the autumn of 1993, I had the privilege of confirming this account through first-hand interviews with both mother and daughter, now a beautiful young lady.
15. Although my original conversation

with Pastor Sandruip took place in Thimphu, Bhutan, there are reports he has since been deported from the country on account of his Nepalese ethnicity. Please pray for him and the church he has shepherded.

16. *Chod*, or the "Mystic Banquet," is viewed by its practitioners as a shortcut to enlightenment (a state that typically requires thousands of lifetimes to attain). After mastering advanced visualization techniques (a process that can itself take several years), the disciple sets out to empty himself of ego by "feeding" his dismembered body parts to demons. The ritual, nearly always conducted in private, is carried out at places like caves and cremation grounds where demons are believed to congregate. Upon arriving at the site, the practitioner goes into deep trance. A Daikini spirit conjured through visualization takes a scimitar and slices off the top of the head. The skullcap is then enlarged supernaturally for use as a serving container. For the next several hours, the practitioner's other organs and body parts are dismembered in the same manner and placed in the skullcap. Finally, when nothing remains of the corporeal entity, the practitioner invokes the roaming demons to feast on the severed parts by blowing on a (real) hollowed-out human thighbone. This is the most dangerous moment in the entire ritual. Those who have not prepared themselves sufficiently for this gruesome manifestation can (and do) die of fright. Many others succumb to a condition known as "religious madness." (I had occasion to meet one of these victims on the day after my visit to the *chod* master's private monastery in 1992).
17. From a January 1997 interview with Pete Beyer (now recovered and wiser), and two conversations with Phil and Bev Westbay, his Singapore hosts.
18. Linda Williams, "The Curse of the Devil Worshipper," *Physician*, May-June 1994, pp. 18-20.
19. But also, as Francis Frangipane has said, "We must take off sin before armor can be put on and protect us."
20. Carol Shields, quoted in *Reader's Digest*, "Quotable Quotes," March 1996.
21. Charles H. Kraft, *Christianity in Power* (Ann Arbor: Vine, 1989), pp. 32-33.
22. Ronald Siegel, *Fire in the Brain* (New

York: Plume, 1992), pp. 126-127, 122.

23. See also Hebrews 13:17.
24. See George Otis, Jr., *Last of the Giants* (Grand Rapids: Chosen, 1991), pp. 260-265.
25. Other Christians attend church not because they want to enhance their relationship with Christ, but because they are afraid of losing their salvation. In the end, however, they are rejected by the very One they thought they were serving (see Matthew 7:21-23).
26. Otis, *Giants*, p. 263.
27. Kraft, *Christianity*, p. 135.
28. Jamie Buckingham, "The Risk Factor," *Charisma & Christian Life*, January 1989, p. 106
29. Jack Deere, "Why Does God Do Miracles?," *Charisma*, September 1992, pp. 26.
30. Howard Brant, "Toward an SIM Position on Power Encounter," SIM Position Paper, p. 7.

[Editor's note: This article was adapted with permission from chapter nine of Otis' new book *The Twilight Labyrinth*, Grand Rapids, Michigan: 1997.]



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The Parsee: Liberating an Unreached People by Prayer and Fasting

There are some 3.5 million Parsees in the world with only about 30 that are born again. Also apart from the grace that God has given me, there is no other ministry reaching the Parsee people with the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.

by Kaezad Dadachanjee

In February-March and July-August every year the Parsee people observe their Holy Days called, "Mukhtad." The rituals begin early morning with congregational worship of spirits of deceased relatives, and proceed through the day until sunset. Devotees bring offerings of sandal wood and incense to their fire god, along with flowers, fruits, and other gifts. There are some 3.5 million Parsees in the world, with only about 30 who are born again. Please join us in a forty day fast from February 14 through March 25, during their holy season.

Zoroaster's Birthday

March 25 the birthday of their leader, Zoroaster, Parsees worship fire as their principal god, and spirits of deceased relatives. Many consider Yeshua to be a major messiah or prophet. Their "holy" book is very similar to the Bible, which makes it attractive to them. Also, much of the Old Testament has mention of Parsee kings. This is a good incentive to offer Parsees the reading of the Bible.

Perhaps the strongest obstacle to their conversion is their sentimental attachment to their culture, and memories of joint family religious activities. Parsee converts find the Body of Messiah lacking in commu-

nity support, which has motivated many to revert to their pagan Zoroastrian ways. In this request for prayer and fasting we are including some information on the Parsees. Please join in this fast and mobilize others to pray and fast for the Parsee people.

Specific Prayer Points

Would you specifically focus on the following prayer points? We need your help. Thank you. Please pray that God would

1. Mobilize Intercession. Pray that God would mobilize two million intercessors worldwide with synchronized intercession for the Parsee people. Also pray that God would grant that more would Love the Parsee People and be more committed to become prayer-partners. Also pray that God would burden Evangelical leaders and media to aggressively promote this 40-Day Fast for the Parsee people, and promote awareness in the Body of Messiah. Pray that God would burden Evangelical journalists, media, internet, and advertisers to aggressively mobilize intercession and outreaches to our Parsee people, and advertise the "Love Parsee Ministries," through their publications and resources. Publish our Parsee profile in their journals, web sites, and email confer-

ences. Pray that God would burden pastors, mission leaders and youth leaders to mobilize intercession, outreach, youth outreach, and planting of congregations among our Parsee people.

2. Parsee Awareness. Ask God to promote an awareness in the Body of Messiah about the Parsee people. Especially pray that there would be birthed an intensity and urgency in ministry leaders about our Parsee people's need to find Yeshua, and recruit Seminary Students and Missionaries for Parsee Outreach and Planting Congregations among them Pray that God would motivate seminaries to include Parsee studies as part of their curriculum on world religions and draw seminary students for planting congregations among our Parsee people.

3. Laborers and Co-workers. Pray that God would grant partners and coworkers to accompany us on the mission field, on outreach to Udwada Shrine and other Parsee Temples: Pray that God would mobilize committed intercessors to go to Parsee shrine (especially in Udwada) for prayer walks and servant-ministry to the Parsees there. Pray that God would sovereignly promote and manage the Parsee ministry outreach, meeting

every need, detail, and arrangement, as well as defend, guide, encourage, strengthen, empower, and support every believer whom has been recruited for outreach and prayer. Pray that God would multiply this effort so that Yeshua may receive the Parsee people's worship.

4. *Forbid the Powers.* In prayer forbid the powers of darkness from interfering, and that love and harmony may be maintained between the organizers and between the participants. May God cause a divine order of righteousness to prevail.

5. *Logistics and General Needs.* Also pray that God would provide reliable and comfortable transportation for teams to minister to the Parsees. Air travel, trains and local transportation are extremely expensive and unaffordable. This hinders many native believers from participating. Please pray that the Lord would grant us air tickets and vans, as well as provide living expenses and provision for Parsee outreach teams. Pray that Christians would be encouraged and take time off from work to join our outreaches. Pray that all ministry needs may be provided. "Love Parsee" outreaches to Parsee people directly or indirectly take place in various cities of the 10/40 Window. Please pray for efficient computers, laptops, fax machines, telephone lines, internet, phones, faxes and other office equipment. Please also pray for skillful and submissive workers to help with these.

Praying for the Parsees

Pray for the Parsees: Pray that God would turn the confidence and allegiances of all Parsees (especially the leaders, professionals, and trustees) away from all false gods, and turn them only towards Messiah

Yeshua, with godly repentance, water baptism, and true discipleship. Pray for the recruitment of loving believers tailor-made for individual Parsees, to minister to the Parsees' needs in gentle and practical ways. Pray that the Parsees may be deliver from the grip of the Deceiver, from familiar spirits, and the Anti-Messiah spirit. Pray that the healing power of Yeshua might be demonstrated towards sick Parsees, especially to those not open to the Gospel, to attest to the Deity of Yeshua.

Pray that Parsee children might be drawn to Yeshua, revealing the simplicity of the Gospel. Pray that the

In prayer forbid the powers of darkness from interfering, and that love and harmony may be maintained between the organizers and between the participants. May God cause a divine order of righteousness to prevail.

Parsees might be deliver from intellectualism that would keep them from accepting the simplicity of the Gospel. Also pray that converted Parsees would fund and support "Love Parsee Ministries," and use Parsee resources to fund outreaches to the Parsee people. Pray that Parsees would turn away from their own "holy book", and develop a desire in them for the Bible..

Planting Indigenous Parsee Churches

Pray that indigenous Parsee congregations would be planted in every Parsee locality, especially in Iran; Afghanistan; Udwarda, Bombay, Pune, and Gujrat (India); Karachi (Pakistan); the United Kingdom; North America; Germany, and Australia. Pray for pro-

tection of unsaved Parsees: Bind death and affliction from taking any Parsee person before he /she is saved. Pray for protection for those who minister to, including their families, who minister to the Parsee people.

Pray for the "Jesus Video" Outreach: Pray that every Parsee may possess a "Jesus Video," and a good study Bible in his spoken language. Pray that every Parsee might be drawn to Gods Word.

Barukh Ha Shem. Pray that the Name of Yeshua would be proclaimed over the Parsee people, at the Parsee pagan temples, and at their localities. Yeshua is the Name above every Name. Every knee shall bow and every tongue confess that Yeshua Adonai (Yeshua is Lord).

History of the Parsee People

God's faithfulness to a thousand generations is revealed. "He has remembered His covenant forever, The word which He commanded to a thousand generations" (Ps. 105:8). The God of Israel has been true to His covenant with Abraham and his descendants. All of Israel's enemies from Bible times have perished, but Israel remains and is prosperous.

Another people from Bible times has endured the test of time and geography. These are the prosperous Parsee people. In the Old Testament, Parsee kings are prominent for their benevolence to Israel. In the book of Daniel, the Parsee kings Cyrus and Darius promote Daniel to the highest position in the land. In the book of Esther, Parsee king Xerxes (Ahasuerus) overrules Haman's plans, favoring Esther and Mordecai, and saves the Jewish nation from annihilation. In 2 Chronicles 36, Parsee king Cyrus liberates the Jewish people and

sends them to rebuild the temple of our God. In Ezra and Nehemiah, Parsee kings Cyrus, Darius, and Artaxerxes not only send the Jewish people to rebuild our Lord's temple, but also give money. Additionally, they provide Ezra, Nehemiah and the other Jews resources—building material, authority, safe passage and soldiers to ensure it.

The Parsee kings also instructed authorities over the region to give the Jews whatever they wanted for the ceremonies of worship of our God, and exempted them from taxation. The only gentile in the Old Testament that the Lord ever called His anointed was a Parsee. In Isaiah 44:28, and Isa 45:1, The Lord calls Parsee king Cyrus His shepherd and anointed.

In India and Pakistan, the Parsee people have excelled in every area of life. In politics, Dadabhoy Navroji was the right-hand man of Mahatma Gandhi and Jawaharlal Nehru, founders of modern India. The late Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi was the son of a Parsee, Feroze Gandhi. Soli Sohrabji, a Parsee, is India's attorney general. In the military, the only field marshal that India has had was a Parsee, Field Marshal Manekshaw.

In science, the country's nuclear technology work was founded and pioneered by Bhabha, a Parsee. In sports and the arts, Farokh Engineer was a world-class cricketer, and Zubin Mehta is a renowned music conductor. Freddie Mercury of the rock band Queen was a Parsee as well. It was the Parsee family Wadia that brought India its first ships, and the Parsee family Tata, its first airlines. The Tata family were also pioneers in automobiles, watches, steel and iron, fields where they still lead. The Godrej family is well known for manufacturing household items and health care

products. Parsee lawyers are among the best and most influential. Parsee doctors give quality health care and rarely charge the poor. Parsee schools offer superior education at low cost to people of all backgrounds without distinction. Numerous charities in India are funded and operated by Parsees. These support the poor among the Parsees as well as the non-Parsees.

In Pakistan too the Parsees have taken the lead. The Cowasjees and Dinshaws were pioneers in ship building, and the Kandawallas were the leaders in the automobile industry until the government nationalized them both. Avaris and Minwallas pio-

The average Parsee believes in a righteousness of works. However, a Parsee's zeal for doing good is not motivated by fear of God or earning His favor. A Parsee is by nature a good person, because their religion teaches the principles of "good thoughts, good words, and good deeds."

neered the hospitality industry. Brig. J. Golwalla, Col. Lushkary, and Maj. Irani earned many military distinctions. Avari, Minwalla, Marker, Cowasjee, and Bhandara family members have all held high government positions. Some of these have been appointed honorary ambassadors by foreign nations. Jamshed Marker has been Pakistan's ambassador to both the USA and the United Nations under different governments. Parsee Byram Avari has more than once been the world's yachting champion.

Other notable Parsees were the late Jamshed Mehta, mayor of Karachi; Justice Dorab Patel, Senior Justice of the Supreme Court of Pakistan; and Justice Sidhwa of the Punjab

High Court. The Eduljee Dinshaw family owned so much land that it is understood that the local government banned their acquisition of any more. Parsee land owned by the Bhandara family was the site of the official residence of the president of Pakistan. Parsee schools Bai Virbaiji and Mama are among the best in the nation. NED, long one of the best engineering colleges in south Asia, was founded and owned by Parsees until its takeover by the Pakistani government. In the USA, the UK and other western countries, Parsees occupy prominent positions in business, enterprise, technology and education.

Parsee Values and Beliefs

In the Parsee scriptures, Gathas, their Prophet Zoroaster is quoted as saying, "Reflect with a clear mind, man by man for himself," encouraging devotees to decipher what is good and bad. The foundation of the Parsee lifestyle is to show mercy and to do good to all. Parsees rarely concern themselves with such issues as "salvation" or "life after death."

The average Parsee believes in a righteousness of works. However, a Parsee's zeal for doing good is not motivated by fear of God or earning His favor. A Parsee is by nature a good person, because their religion teaches the principles of "Good thoughts, good words, and good deeds." These words can be frequently found on Parsee tee-shirts or refrigerators, but again this religious teaching rarely drives a Parsee.

Salvation in the Parsee belief system is by grace and cannot be earned. Traditionally, Parsees believed in a heaven and a hell. Parsees believe that entrance into heaven is by the mercy of the Creator God. They hope that their departed loved ones made it to heaven.

Modern schools of thought among the Parsees are changing the traditional belief in heaven and hell. Many contemporary Parsee scholars teach that heaven and hell are on this earth. Many also teach against the existence of a devil. Instead they speak of "good mentality," and "evil mentality."

Concept of God and of Angels

In Exodus, YHWH declares His name as "I AM THAT I AM." In John, Yeshua calls Himself by the same name, "I AM." Hebrews says, "Messiah Yeshua the same yesterday, to day, and forever." In Revelation, Yeshua is

spoken of as the One who is, and who was, and who is to come. Thus we see that Yeshua is the Eternal One, the One who has always been. The Hebrew for "I AM" in Exodus is more like the term "to be."

The Parsees have a concept of a Creator God whom they call Ahura Mazda. Mazda means "wisdom," while Ahura means "being" or "to be;" i.e., "one who is." The name that the Parsees give to the Creator God is the same that the Bible calls Yeshua, "I AM," or "being." The Parsee people do not realize that this God whom they call by this name is actually Messiah Yeshua. They are in fact worshipping a God whom they do not know, an

"unknown god," if you will.

Parsees hold the fire in high esteem. Some perhaps even give fire as much importance as the "Creator God" himself. The Parsee places of worship have traditionally been called "fire temples." In these temples, there is a central room housing a large vessel with a lit fire, fueled by wood and fragrances. Parsees traditionally pray to this fire, often bowing low or even bowing on their faces before it. Parsee scriptures call fire the "son of god," and consider it the visible representation of the invisible god. These are the same titles that the Bible gives Yeshua of Nazareth.

(Continued on page 218)

Overcoming Spiritual Resistance that Brings Transformation

Increasingly, World Vision personnel in various countries are asking for prayer support because they are finding themselves wrestling with spiritual darkness in the communities they serve. Community transformation is integrally linked to spiritual resistance that must be overcome.

by John D. Robb

The global prayer effort called "Prayer Through the Window" is focused entirely on the nations of the "10/40 Window." In 1993, more than 270 teams went out to pray on-site in these countries. It was my privilege to lead one of these teams to the country of Bhutan. Since that time, with the help of World Vision, I have worked with national Christian leaders to set up similar prayer initiatives in several other countries. These interdenominational prayer efforts have focused prayer on mission breakthrough in unreached peoples and/or sociopolitical transformation. Thus, I come at this subject from two angles: a concern for the removal of spiritual hindrances which keep unreached people groups from responding to the gospel, (my AD2000 and Beyond Movement hat if you will), as well as a concern for the overthrow of the evil which brings injustice, suffering and exploitation of the poor (my World Vision hat). Increasingly, World Vision personnel in various countries are asking for prayer support because they are finding themselves wrestling with spiritual darkness in the communities they serve. For example, just a few weeks ago in meetings with our staff in Indonesia, the major topic was how to deal effectively with the demonic forces we are encountering.

Since the late 1960s as a student involved in university evangelism and during my field missionary experience which followed, I became convinced that prayer was our major resource in dealing with spiritual resistance. I continue to believe this but also realize acutely that I am still in the process of learning and hope you will take my comments in that light.

Perhaps the most solid conclusion I have reached is that we need to be humbly dependent upon God, admitting we do not understand, so that as trusting, curious children He can lead us by the hand. King Jehoshaphat, when faced by overpowering resistance in the form of an invasion against his people by combined forces of three hostile nations, prayed, "We do not know what to do, but our eyes are upon you" (2 Chr. 20:12). This, it seems to me, is the safest posture for us to take as well.

Resistance to the Church and its missionary endeavor, of course, springs from both human and demonic origins. Theologian Walter Wink's writings demonstrate that the Bible tends to use the same language for human and spiritual authorities or powers as in Ephesians 6.¹ But since the Apostle Paul says very explicitly that we wrestle not against flesh and blood (Eph.6:12), I want to focus on

the spiritual resistance which animates human beings and their institutions to oppose the kingdom of God.

The Source of Resistance

Above all, we must discern the real source of resistance and use spiritual weapons to combat it Jesus said "The kingdom of heaven suffers violence and the violent take it by force" (Matt. 11:12). A number of Biblical scholars think the meaning of this text is that the kingdom has been under attack from violent foes.² Human beings and their institutions like King Herod and his soldiers captured and killed John the Baptist. Religious leaders in league with the Roman authorities opposed Jesus and had him executed. But behind these human forces, Jesus saw the one whom he often called "the prince of this world." And in Mark 3:27, speaking of Satan, he said that this "strongman" needs to be "bound" if his goods—presumably those human beings and their institutions held captive—are to be liberated from his control.

How did this strongman become strong enough in our world to put up such great and violent resistance to the kingdom of God? The Genesis story teaches that the first people were given dominion of the earth to

rule as God's vice-regents over all creation (Genesis 1:28). But through deception and disobedience, the serpent usurped our dominion, becoming the veritable ruler of this world. In my opinion, prayer is the way we who have been redeemed from satanic slavery apply the victory of Calvary to take back that dominion in the specific situations and places for which we intercede. This, I believe, is the theological reason why prayer can be used of God to overcome resistance from the evil one. It is not that we are powerful in and of ourselves, but that our prayer invites the almighty Lord into the equation, and thus invited, he as Lord of hosts will put the enemy to flight.

The Mightiest Weapon

Scripture attests over and over again that prayer is the mightiest weapon we have been given for overcoming spiritual resistance. When Moses faced Pharaoh and the gods of Egypt, it was a power encounter he won through a relationship of prayerful dependence on the Lord. Forty-six times in chapters 3 to 14 of Exodus it says that the Lord spoke to Moses. Only eleven times did Moses speak back to the Lord. In other words, he listened to God's instructions and acted upon them. Later on he revealed his understanding of what we might now call "spiritual warfare." At the crossing of the Red Sea he urged the Israelites to "stand firm and you will see the deliverance the Lord will bring you today... the Lord will fight for you; you need only to be still" (Ex.14:13-14). Likewise, in the struggle against the Amalekites, Moses took the high ground of intercession, standing on the mountaintop with his arms raised before the Lord. As he kept his arms outstretched, the Israelites prevailed over the Amalekites in the valley below (Ex.17:8-13). At the end of his life he summarized his learning con-

cerning spiritual warfare. He assured Israel that God would be their "shield," "helper" and "glorious sword," and said "it is he who will drive out your enemy before you" (Deut. 33:26-29).

Moses passed down what he had learned to Joshua who time and again prayed for and received guidance from God as to the exact strategy for overcoming Israel's enemies during his conquest of Canaan. It is also important to note that the armies with which Israel fought went forth to war in dependence upon and under the control of false gods. For example, Moloch of the Ammonites and Chemosh of the Moabites were worshiped through human sacrifice, and should definitely be called demons.³ Thus, there was an element of spiritual warfare even though these battles were fought on the physical plane.

Daniel the prophet mourned and prayed for three weeks before the angel of the Lord broke through the cosmic resistance of the princes of Persia and Greece (Dan.10:2,12-13). This story demonstrates both spiritual resistance and the power of prayer to prevail over it. The angel told Daniel "Since the first day that you set your mind to gain understanding and to humble yourself before your God, your words were heard, and I have come in response to them" (10:12). Walter Wink, commenting on this passage, writes: "Recognizing the role of the Powers in blocking prayer can revolutionize the way we pray. We will be more energized and aggressive".⁴

Jesus' own ministry, characterized by intense conflict with the demonic, was always undergirded by much prayer. This was his *modus operandi* whether he was enduring the temptation in the wilderness, confronting evil spirits in possessed people, or sweating blood at Gethsemane before his triumph over Satan on the cross. The apostles James and Peter

both urge us to "resist" the devil so that he will flee from us. We are to do this in a context of submitting ourselves to God and humbling ourselves before him which is the needed posture and attitude of prayer (Ja. 4:9; 1 Pet. 5:9).

Missions is Warfare

The apostle Paul repeatedly uses warfare terminology to describe his mission and that of God's people. There was no more violent image in Paul's day than an armor-clad Roman soldier. This is the image he uses in Ephesians 6 to describe our battle with the powers. He tells us that we do not wage war as the world does in a fleshly or purely human manner. Rather, the weapons we fight with have "divine power to demolish strongholds." Strongholds are points at which the "strongman" has a grip over a people group or human institution. They may be false political ideologies, such as communism, which mislead people, or false religious beliefs like the Hindu concept of caste which lock people into an oppressive lifestyle. Ethnic stereotyping is an awful stronghold. For example, before the Rwandan genocide Hutu extremists constantly referred to the Tutsi as "cockroaches," dehumanizing them to the point where it was all right to eliminate them.

Paul says, "The god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelievers to keep them from seeing the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ who is the likeness of God" (2 Cor. 4:4). People everywhere are perishing, being destroyed through the deception of this false god. They are also being turned against each other in senseless, national and ethnic conflicts in which thousands, even millions, die and no one wins except Satan the destroyer. But Paul reminds us that the weapons God has given us are mighty because Jesus has given us

his power for the pulling down of demonic strongholds. After the seventy-two returned with joy and said, "Lord, even the demons submit to us in your name," he said, "I saw Satan fall like lightning from Heaven." Then he said "I have given you authority (that means the legal right or power) to trample on snakes and scorpions and to overcome all the power of the enemy; nothing will harm you" (Lk. 10:19).

When you tread on snakes and scorpions, you do not do it lightly or with bare feet. You crush them so they will not keep biting or harming other people with their deadly venom. I remember the fury with which I killed a rattlesnake which appeared under the feed trough upon which I had just been sitting in our friend's stable. I cut him up into a dozen pieces to make sure he was really dead! In that situation, I became angrily violent because of the danger to myself and others. Speaking of spiritual warfare, Pastor Jack Hayford affirms, "Prayer is an act of violence."⁵ When will we in the mission community as well as in the Church at large get angrily violent enough to take up the spiritual weapons we have been given to really deal with the enemy? We often just treat the symptoms and let the evil one stay around to keep causing havoc.

Presence of Evil Spirits

The degree of resistance to the gospel corresponds to the presence of evil spirits. George Otis' research demonstrates that people groups renew covenants made by their forefathers with the powers of darkness through recurring religious festivals and rituals.⁶ Even though Satan has gotten significant control over the world as we have seen, he seems to

need the ongoing compliance of human beings to maintain or intensify his grip. Deborah Glick, a missionary working in Taiwan, describes "occasions when the presence, influence or empowering of evil spirits... is particularly obvious." She writes: "During the time of a festival in honor of a god's birthday, the atmosphere may seem to be particularly heavy or oppressive, especially in the vicinity of the participating temple(s) as incense is burned,

**"Prayer is an act of violence."
When will we in the mission community, as well as in the Church at large, get angrily violent enough to take up the spiritual weapons we have been given to really deal with the enemy?**

music played, and spirits are called down to be present or to make their presence known. In other instances *tang-ki* [mediums] may become spirit possessed or under the influence of spirits performing superhuman feats". Her conclusion is: "in all of these cases missionaries and Christian workers... may expect God to demonstrate his power by nullifying satanic power. Thus spirits may fail to manifest themselves at festivals, *tang-ki* may be unable to perform their feats, spells may no longer produce the desired effects and so forth. Missionaries and other Christian workers must be prepared to pray unabashedly either privately or publicly toward this end."⁷

Joy Boese, a missionary friend from Thailand, described the increasing spiritual oppression she felt which was accompanied by inexplicable apathy on the part of the people with

regard to the gospel. "Spirit pillars" had just been erected in her town. She writes, "From our local people I've learned that many cities have a protective and ruling/controlling spirits residing in a recognized pillar. The provincial governor decides to erect a pillar and invites a spirit to come and inhabit that pillar to protect his city or province." She mentions the rising interest in city pillars all over Thailand and, along with this, the occurrence of widespread drought and tremendously increased vices gambling, prostitution and drugs.⁸

Vernon Sterk writes about his missionary experience in a particular Mexican village:

"Since the gospel was first communicated in this village, there has been a great increase in the number of spirits and deities. This has been reflected in both the increased number of saint' images in the local church-shrine and in the amazing multiplication of house talking saints. The resistance to the gospel has corresponded with the increase in these spirits."⁹

This past year a Japanese pastor told me that the majority of new converts to Christ would fall away from the faith unless he and his staff prayed with them personally, severing any pre-conversion connections with specific shrines and temples.¹⁰ Anthropologist David Lewis adds:

"In Japan, which has been regarded as a 'difficult' country for Christian missionary work, there is a need to pay attention to the country's 'spiritual geography,' the foci of demonic power at certain locations and the manner in which there may be interlinkages between them. The 'resistance' to the gospel is not merely cultural but also spiritual. This is also a contributing reason why the Japanese appear to be more receptive to the gospel outside Japan than when they are in their own country."¹¹

His conclusion is: "Christians in Japan and those elsewhere who pray for Japan need to avoid wasting valuable spiritual ammunition on inconsequential or phantom targets. There is a need for increased prayer against the spiritual forces of darkness in each area." He, therefore, calls for extending praise marches and prayer walks throughout the country.¹²

Spiritual Breakthrough

The prayers of God's people can overcome demonic resistance, bringing spiritual breakthrough among the unreached as well as social transformation. I have talked with Christian workers all over the world who maintain that the prayer of God's people weakens the occult powers. An Assembly of God pastor in northern Ghana, attending one of my Unreached Peoples Seminars, relayed how a witch doctor had been stubbornly opposing the work of his church, inciting the people against the Christians. However, when the believers united in prayer for that village, the witch doctor lost all his powers and the villagers began to turn to the Lord.¹³

A doctor and his wife, who have devoted themselves to evangelism and church planting in the vast Indian state of Madhya Pradesh, describe what a difference prayer has made in overcoming resistance in Hindu villages. Before beginning the work of evangelism they and their team members first pause at the outskirts of the target village to exert the authority of Jesus in prayer, binding any forces of the enemy that would seek to hinder the proclamation of the gospel. They often find a new receptivity and willingness to embrace the gospel, and have seen increasing numbers of Hindus turn to Christ.¹⁴

In view of the fact that the prayers of believers make such a difference, how then should we pray?

Praying Unitedly

First of all it is important that we pray unitedly if resistance is to be overcome. Jesus promised us in Matthew 18 that if two of us agreed as touching *anything* it would be done by our Father in heaven. The difficulty is in getting Christians to agree. It has been said, where there are two Christians there are three opinions! In the book of Acts major expansions of the church and spiritual breakthroughs followed the believers praying in "one accord." According to the writings of J. Edwin Orr and David Bryant, united prayer has preceded every great revival in the history of the church.¹⁵ During our international prayer initiatives, we have found that reconciliation is a critical first step if believers are to pray in unity. In Bosnia, one month before the war ended, local Christians from Serb, Croat and Muslim backgrounds first repented to one another, identifying with the sins of their peoples. It was then that they were able to pray effectively for peace and the healing of their land.

Unity in prayer is also essential for spiritual breakthrough in a resistant unreached people. Missionary efforts for fifty years failed to make any dent upon the Bateke people of the Congo. It was only when Christian workers prayed unitedly and authoritatively against the spirit of the river which had enslaved this people with fear that sudden breakthrough came. Within weeks they saw dramatic response to the gospel with 3,000 coming to the Lord, followed rapidly by another 5,000!¹⁶

In the summer of 1992, a group of occultists aggressively opposed the mass evangelism efforts some Russian friends and I were carrying out in the city of Saratov. They tore down the advertising posters and sought to create a diversion by holding a competing meeting on extrasensory perception. During our morning worship

service 200 believers united their prayers against the spirits of darkness who were controlling these human enemies. That evening, in spite of all the earlier opposition, between 6,000 and 7,000 people made public commitments to Jesus Christ, an impact that was far beyond all we could have asked or thought!

Praying Specifically

Secondly, we need to gather information and insights from documentary study, conferring with local Christian leaders, even interviewing members of the people group we are concerned to reach. All of this helps us know how to pray accurately. What is the nature of the grip the forces of darkness have on this people group or city? This will involve a look at culture, history, religion, economics and politics.

When we pray unitedly and with specific information in our hands, we wreak spiritual violence on the enemy, a violence that will bring liberation to his captives because it brings the almighty God into the equation, enabling true holistic transformation to occur. We are just at the beginning of exploring the potential power of united prayer. Theologian Walter Wink states, "History belongs to the intercessors, who believe the future into being". German pastor Ingolf Schmidt affirms, "All over the world the Church is called to cast out demons. Not only out of individuals but also of whole nations and peoples. God wants the Church to rule, to bind principalities and powers with authority, and to determine the politics of nations."

Praying Holistically

Third, every dimension of a people's existence is important and all these dimensions political, economic, social, cultural, and spiritual are

interconnected. In 1995, in the city of Cali, Colombia, the believers focused their prayers on the entrenched structural evil of their society. The infamous Cali drug cartel had used obscene amounts of money to buy over both government officials and police and had killed everyone who stood in their way, making Cali the most violent city in the world. A series of all night prayer vigils attended by tens of thousands of local believers did what nothing else could do. Shortly thereafter all the cartel leaders were either dead or behind bars and an anti-corruption investigation began resulting in the dismissal of hundreds of corrupt police officers and the imprisonment of cartel-linked politicians.¹⁷

In India, when Pastor Arthur Paul and his wife moved into a Hindu slum area of Bangalore, they were first greeted with a hail of stones. They persisted in much prayer for the community, then began to reach out to the people, caring for little girls who would have been sold into prostitution and praying for the terminally ill. Deeds of love and mercy plus miracles of healing and deliverance demonstrated the reality of Jesus. There and elsewhere in the state of Karnataka they have so far baptized over 5,000, the great majority from a Hindu background. According to Pastor Paul, more than anything else it was prayer that brought the breakthrough.¹⁹ In the same way we need to pray holistically for the needs of individuals and their communities

Praising God and Proclaiming His Word

It was at the decisive moment when Judah's singers of praise began to sing "give thanks to the Lord for his love endures forever" that the Lord set ambushes against their enemies (2

Chr. 20:21-23). The invading armies were thrown into confusion and put to flight. The apostle Paul indicates that it is through the Church that the manifold wisdom of God is proclaimed to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly realms (Eph. 3:10). Praise and the proclamation of the Word of God are powerful tools to do this. In our prayer initiatives we have found that worship and praise to God, as well as proclaiming passages of his

Our prayers are the necessary opening that allows God to act without violating our freedom. Prayer is the ultimate act of partnership with God.

word, are an essential part of changing the spiritual atmosphere where there is difficulty or resistance. During a prayer seminar in Bangkok in April 1995, a member of our team led in proclaiming Moses' words to Pharaoh, "Let my people go." We proclaimed this word in the face of the division which was keeping God's people in that city from coming together to pray in unity. Several months later, more than 500 Christians from across the denominational spectrum, including those who had been at odds, gathered to pray together for the first time. One of the prayer leaders attributed it to the April seminar in which the participants had made this proclamation.

Keeping the Central Focus

We must hold to the central focus of the kingdom of God—bringing people to Christ. As Tom White puts it, "Power encounter like any other aspect of ministry is not to become a preoccupation. There is a danger of a

holy crusade to rid the world of evil strongholds. If the vision of the heart of God aching for the lost is blurred by a commando operation to storm the gates of hell, we miss the point of the Great Commission".¹⁹ The whole point of this kind of praying is to bring liberation to those groups of people whose minds are still blinded by the god of this world, who are hindered from understanding and responding to the gospel (2 Cor. 4:4).

Therefore, like Jesus, we need to keep focused on individual and social redemption and transformation.

Mixed Results

We also need to face the fact that sometimes resistance will not be overcome or that we will have mixed results. Pharaoh still hardened his heart against the prayers and words

of Moses. The Sanhedrin, for the most part, rejected Jesus and crucified him. The apostle Paul was stoned, whipped and ultimately beheaded. We can sometimes be guilty of bringing a success mentality to prayer along with a materialistic, technological way of thinking which assumes we can just pull a lever and get a particular result. In Colombia, even while marvelous breakthroughs have been occurring in answer to united prayer, over 200 pastors have lost their lives during the same two year period due to attacks by guerrillas and paramilitary forces.²⁰ Backlash from an utterly fierce and ruthless foe is to be expected. In Matthew 24, Jesus warned us about persecutions that his people will experience, and from which we sometimes may not be delivered.

Although we may have more understanding now, there is still a profound air of mystery surrounding prayer and how God uses our praying and spiritual warfare to transform our

world. Walter Wink wisely affirms: "Prayer is not magic; it does not always work; it is not something we do, but a response to what God is already doing within us and the world. Our prayers are the necessary opening that allows God to act without violating our freedom. Prayer is the ultimate act of partnership with God."²¹

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Community Transformation Through United and Persevering Prayer

Community transformation is not an arbitrary event but the product of a cause and effect process. The certainty about this derives first and foremost from the teachings of Scripture as well as various case studies. The author knows this to be true because he has spent the last several years analyzing more than a dozen newly transformed communities.

by George Otis, Jr.

Transformed communities do not materialize spontaneously. If they did we might legitimately wonder why an omnipotent and ostensibly loving God did not turn the trick more often. We would also be left to ponder our own value as intercessors.

Fortunately, such thoughts can be banished immediately. This is because community transformation is not an arbitrary event but rather the product of a cause and effect process. My certainty in this matter derives, first and foremost, from the teachings of Scripture. God's Word makes clear that divine revelation and power are called forth by sanctified hearts, by right relationships, and by united, fervent and self-less intercession (see 2 Chronicles 7:14; Jeremiah 29:13; John 15:7; James 5:16; 1 John 3:21-ff and 5:14). Colorado Springs pastor Dutch Sheets adds that in the Old Testament era the fire of God was summoned by the presence of an appropriate altar and an acceptable sacrifice (See Exodus 24; Joshua 8:30-31; Judges 6:17-21; 1 Chronicles 21:25-26; Ezekiel 43:18-27). To meet this standard it was sometimes necessary to rebuild broken altars and/or tear down false ones (See Judges 6:25-26; 1 Kings 18:30-38; 2 Kings 23:3-15; Ezra 3:16).

In other words, there are definitive steps that we can and should take to position our communities for a visitation of the Holy Spirit. And if the above passages are not reason enough to believe this, you might want to consider recent evidence that shows God's people are acting on this proposition with great success. I know this because I have spent the last several years analyzing more than a dozen newly transformed communities.

Common Threads

Transformation case studies are best considered collectively. A solitary story, no matter how remarkable or inspiring it may be, inevitably comes with a nagging question: Is it reproducible? You are never quite sure.

Bump into this same story ten or twelve times however and your confidence will rise. You now have an established pattern, and patterns are compelling. Laden with reproducible principles, they transform inspirational stories into potent models.

My own investigation into the factors responsible for transformed communities has yielded several major "hits". These include, but are not limited to, the following five stimuli:

- Persevering leadership (See Nehemiah 6:1-16);
- Fervent, united prayer (See Jonah 3:5-10);
- Social reconciliation (See Matthew 5:23-24; 18:15-20);
- Public power encounters (See Acts 9:32-35);
- Diagnostic research/spiritual mapping (See Joshua 18:8-10);

Although each of these factors recurs often enough to be considered common, two of them—persevering leadership and united prayer—are present in all of our transformation case studies. This observation suggests a possible distinction between core factors and contextual factors. Core factors, given their ubiquity, appear to initiate (or at least signal) divine involvement. Community transformation simply does not occur unless they are present. Contextual factors, on the other hand, are measures commended by God on the basis of local history, habits, and ideology.¹ They are the unique and added touch that turns potential into victory.

With this distinction in mind, I want to take a closer look at the two core factors. If they indeed play a central role in community transformation, it seems prudent to become better acquainted with them.

Persevering Leadership

Determined leaders figure prominently in the Scriptural record. Noah spent decades constructing a massive ark while his neighbors mocked him as an eccentric fool. Nehemiah rebuilt the walls of Jerusalem in the face of persistent threats from Sanballat. Jesus ignored protestations from well-meaning friends in order to lay down His life at Calvary.

It should, therefore, come as no surprise that catalytic leaders associated with recent community transformations have also battled through strong opposition. Exhibiting a characteristic I call determined activism, these spiritual change agents have refused to accept anything less than God's maximum—even when the pressure has come from family members and ministry colleagues.

When things got rough for Robert Kayanja during his transformative ministry in a dangerous neighborhood in Kampala Uganda, his own parents were among those urging him to leave. "God wants to save these people," they said, "but he doesn't want you to die in the process." Christian activists ministering in the violent city of Cali Columbia have heard much the same thing. When pastor Julio Caesar Ruibal was gunned down in December 1995, well-meaning friends urged his widow to leave town before the same fate befell her. Ignoring this counsel (and persistent death threats), she became a rallying point for hundreds of city pastors.

Other warnings have been linked to perceptions about unresponsive attitudes and appropriate ministry venues. When Thomas Muthee announced that he was planting a church in Kiambu, Kenya his ministerial colleagues could only ask, "How will you manage?" One area pastor flatly declared, "The people here don't get saved. We preach, but they don't respond." Not persuaded by this

claim, Thomas went on to found the largest church in Kiambu's history.

Whether we view these determined activists as instruments of divine sovereignty or as magnets for divine intervention, their role is obviously critical to the process of community transformation. In every case their single-minded faith, demonstrated by importunate prayer and a steadfast commitment to the community, led to dramatic results. And while this may strike us as extraordinary, it has long been the promise and pattern of Scripture.²

United Prayer

The second core factor in community transformation is fervent, united prayer. In each of our featured case studies, breakthroughs occurred when intercessors addressed specific concerns in a common cause. Many of these group efforts took on their own unique identities. In Cali, Colombia, 60,000 intercessors held all-night *vigilias* in the Pascual Guerrero soccer stadium while others circled the city in mobile prayer caravans. In a daily practice they called the "Wailing Wall," prayer warriors in the "Beirut of Kampala, Uganda" cried out to God while holding hands around their church property. In Kiambu, Kenya believers petitioned God from a store basement they dubbed the Prayer Cave. Their stunning success led to subsequent intercessory campaigns like "Morning Glory" and "Operation Prayer Storm."³

In December 1995 Pakistani evangelist Javed Albert established a routine he calls "tarry nights" to counter powerful demonic influences associated with shrine pilgrimages and witchcraft activity.⁴ These prayer and praise vigils begin at 9:00 PM on Thursday and Saturday evenings and continue until dawn. Because participants stand through the entire affair,

they are also called *standers meetings*. The program, which began at Albert's modest church compound in Faisalabad, has since spread to twenty-five cities and 4,000 people.

United prayer is a declaration to the heavenlies that a community of believers is prepared for divine partnership. When this welcoming intercession is joined by knowledge it becomes focused—leading to and sustaining the kind of fervent prayer that produces results.

Stages of Progress

Recent case studies suggest that the road to community transformation passes through at least three distinct and measurable stages. These include:

1. *Spiritual beachhead*, an initial phase when revived believers enter into united prayer;
2. *Spiritual breakthrough*, a subsequent interval characterized by rapid and substantial church growth;
3. *Spiritual transformation*, a climatic season attended by dramatic socio-political renewal.

A fourth stage called spiritual maintenance could easily be added to this list. It is entered whenever liberated communities turn their attention to the business of preserving hard-won victories. For Christian leaders this means continuing to champion the things that attract God's presence, namely, unity, prayer, humility and holiness. For born-again politicians, journalists, businessmen and educators it means perpetuating Kingdom values through the institutions they serve.

The ideal is that spiritual transformation remains a permanent condition. Unfortunately, history shows that the blossom of revival (to use a loose definition of the term) lasts an average of 36 months.⁵ Exceptions exist—the Argentine revival has lingered more than fifteen years—but

these are few and far between.

My immediate goal, however, is not to discuss at this time the maintenance of transformed communities (this discourse will come in due time), but rather to examine the process of achieving them. As all true champions have learned, you can only maintain what you have first attained.

We will begin our journey by investigating the role of spiritual beachheads. And do pay attention! More high hopes have been dashed here than any other place on the road to community transformation. It is during this early stage that you must build the spiritual momentum necessary to carry you over the mountains of apathy, pride and unbelief.

Establishing Spiritual Beachheads

Beachheads are small plots of ground (often a beach) that serve as staging areas for invading military forces. Because of their strategic potential, defending armies will fight vigorously to prevent them from becoming established. As a consequence, most beachheads are secured at high cost.

Beachheads can also be established in the spiritual dimension. Like their counterparts in the material world, these staging areas are the work of warriors—in this case intercessors and evangelists—whose ultimate aim is to launch breakthrough assaults on enemy strongholds.

While beachheads can quickly swell with men and materiel, their initial occupants are typically few. In some cases spiritual beachheads have been established by a mere handful of intercessors. The transformation of Hemet, California began with twelve men praying through the night in a mountain cabin. Robert Kayanja's

church planting effort in the "Beirut of Kampala" started with five prayer warriors. Thomas Muthee established the spiritual beachhead in Kiambu, Kenya with but a single partner—his wife Margaret.

Although this modest level of participation appears to be incompatible with the primary characteristic of spiritual beachheads, namely united prayer, three things must be kept in mind. First, the population of beach-

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heads tends to escalate with time. Breakthrough drives are rarely launched before sufficient troops have accumulated. Second, in some cases even a modest group of intercessors can represent a high percentage of the church. This is especially true in frontier or under-churched areas. Third, united prayer has more to do with heart attitudes than mass movements. As Jesus reminded his disciples in Matthew 18:19-20, God's presence and power is manifest when just two or three believers agree in prayer. (See also Ecclesiastes 9:14-15 NIV.) Although numbers are not essential to successful intercessory beachheads, spiritual passion is. Believers who wish to position their community for spiritual breakthroughs must pour their heart and soul into the effort. Unless the church is consumed with a burning desire for divine visitation, united prayer will become merely another project.

As I have taught seminars on this

subject throughout the world, people often ask me to provide examples of genuine spiritual beachheads. Although they are inspired by stories of evangelistic breakthroughs and transformed communities, the results-oriented emphasis of these accounts sometimes obscures important formative details.

The good news is that contemporary spiritual beachheads abound, but do not expect uniformity. Depending on their developmental status, they can appear quite different. Newly formed initiatives are typically small, unpublished affairs in which a handful of dedicated intercessors seek to stimulate a renewed hunger for unity, holiness, and prayer, especially among community pastors. The stakes here are enormous. Without an increased appetite for the things that attract the presence of the Holy Spirit, evangelistic breakthroughs, let alone community transformation, will simply not occur.

Successful beachhead builders are content in their role as supporting actors. They have no craving for the limelight. This characteristic, however, should not be misinterpreted as indifference. Foundational intercessors are also passionate about doing whatever it takes to prepare their communities for divine visitation. Their unceasing petition is that God will replace the Church's bird-like appetite for prayer and unity with a ravenous hunger.

Latter-stage beachheads by contrast are nearly always characterized by intense groundswells of corporate repentance, social reconciliation, and united prayer. In many instances these developments are sustained by intelligence acquired through cooperative spiritual mapping campaigns.

Given the enormous pent-up energy displayed during latter-stage

beachheads, observers have likened this season to a shuddering rocket just prior to launch. Others refer to these exciting days as the “hard labor” that necessarily precedes the birth of a new era.

The bad news is that very few spiritual beachheads ever last long enough to realize their potential as breeding grounds for revival. Most start with good intentions and then fizzle out.

Among the more common reasons for this attrition are weak leadership and the tendency to make unity an end in itself. Pastors gather for prayer but their rendezvous are often lacking in passion. This is because the emphasis is placed on corporate assembly rather than corporate vision. Trying to attract the widest possible cross-section of participants, they create an environment in which personal agendas proliferate like mushrooms. In the end, unity is trumped by cordiality. Unable to achieve a common vision, they settle for a common place.

Happily, there are exceptions to this trend. In Oklahoma City, for example, over half of the community’s spiritual leaders gather monthly to petition God for a spiritual breakthrough. A principal catalyst for this focused prayer and fasting was the April 1995 bombing of the Murrah Federal Building which claimed 168 lives. In the aftermath of this tragic event the intercessory prayer force in the city jumped from 9 to more than 140 pastors and ministry leaders.

Another important development occurred in September 1996. As the leaders gathered one day for prayer, God revealed to them that their newfound “unity” was still superficial. There was almost no Native American participation—despite the fact that Oklahoma hosts more than 60 tribes and the second largest Indian population in the US. Deeply convicted, one

Anglo believer with deep roots in this state of “soil, oil, and toil” repented publicly for the way his ancestors, both in and out of government, had swallowed up land set aside for displaced Native Americans.

The consequences of this Spirit-led action were quick in coming. Welcomed and empowered by this public gesture, Native American attendance at the monthly prayer meetings tripled. Today their voices are heard alongside 1,200 other intercessors that have covenanted to pray for a spiritual breakthrough in Oklahoma City.

While reconciliation between believers and between the church and the community is an important catalyst for evangelistic breakthroughs, the history of revival—a term which has been defined so loosely to at various times apply both to spiritual beachheads and spiritual breakthrough—reveals that general unity is not as critical. Since believers of differing backgrounds and persuasions can and do come together in intercessory common cause over the issues of revival and evangelistic breakthroughs (see Acts 1:14 KJV), unity and united prayer are not necessarily synonymous. In a recent article entitled “Prayer: God’s Catalyst for Revival,” Robert Bakke wrote:

[In the 18th century] Count Nicholas Von Zinzendorf gathered an incredibly diverse group of Christians (Catholics, Lutherans, Calvinists, etc.) from across Europe. He was able to forge and sustain their union as a single movement (the Moravians) only when he called his community to a life-style of united praying.⁶

It should be pointed out, however, that united prayer is not always unanimous prayer. A spiritual critical mass can be achieved even if some members of the community choose not to participate. This was certainly the case in Charles Finney’s day.

When the great evangelist launched his ministry in New England over a century ago, many conservative clergy opposed his efforts. Despite this hesitancy, enough intercession was mobilized to usher in the most dramatic season of community transformation in American history.

Achieving Spiritual Breakthroughs

While united prayer is a potent catalyst for revival, community-wide evangelistic breakthroughs require that intercession be fervent and sustained as well. Like many things that start well, petitions that lose their focus or fervor soon become pipe dreams.

This is not to say that fervent prayer is always articulate. God is a heart reader, not a lip reader (see 2 Chronicles 30:18-20; Matthew 6:5-8). When I petitioned God for the life of my two-year-old daughter, who, in 1996, nearly drowned in a swimming pool accident, I did not pause to consider my words. In fact, there was nothing eloquent about my cries and groaning.

At the same time, my prayer was fervent. And it was fervent because I was consumed with the details of the case. As I looked down on my daughter’s lifeless face, I recognized every tiny crease. I had mapped them over the past two years as I paused to kiss her good night. I was also familiar with her budding gifts and idiosyncrasies, and I could recall each word spoken over her when she was still in the womb. In short, I prayed hard for this little girl because I knew her (and the situation at hand) intimately.

Community intercession is not much different. To pray fervently for a neighborhood we must first familiarize ourselves with its history and features. And since reality is often painted in shades of gray, this requires us to linger in spaces both

dark and light. It is not enough to merely acknowledge the community; we must become acquainted with it—even intimate. True lovers do not refuse to look at their partner's blemishes. Indeed, fervor is bred of familiarity.

And perseverance is no less important than fervor. History shows that spiritual breakthroughs are often delayed reactions, their spectacular fireworks the result of an intercessory match struck months, or even years, earlier. The challenge is to keep the fuse burning to the point of ignition.

Two factors that have proven particularly effective in sustaining fervent corporate intercession are *progressive revelation* and *positive results*.

In the first instance, people are motivated by new details about the case at hand. The psychology is the same as that which pulls readers through a good mystery novel, or a hobbyists through a challenging puzzle. In both situations, participants are rewarded with a sense of momentum toward an ultimate solution. Incremental disclosure is not only tolerated, it is enjoyable.

This was certainly the experience of a spiritual mapping team operating out of the El Shaddai church in Guatemala City during the early 1990s. Their mission was to identify obstacles to revival in their community. To accomplish this, team members were divided into three working groups that investigated respective historical, physical, and spiritual factors.

The process began when God led the historical team to a Mayan archaeological site. As they reviewed the weathered remains, it suddenly became clear that their spiritual challenges were part of an ancient continuum of idolatry and witchcraft. At this precise moment, the physical factors team (which had been operating inde-

pendently) located a vacant house adjacent to the ruins where occult rituals were being practiced. A third team comprised of intercessors received a revelation that the territorial spirit over that place was linked to a human co-conspirator whose lifestyle included idolatrous and occult practices.

The next series of developments, which pastor Harold Caballeros describes as "truly exciting," began when the Lord indicated His intention to disclose the man's identity in the city newspaper even going so far as to

As an ever-increasing percentage of the population comes under the Lordship of Christ, the sin-wrought citadels of corruption, poverty, violence, prejudice, and oppression are transformed into ghost towns.

reveal the date and page on which the information would appear. When the team finally turned to the appropriate page they were stunned to find not only the name of the suspect, but a photo matching a precise physical description the Holy Spirit had provided earlier. "To cap it off," writes Caballeros, "we discovered that this man was also the owner of the vacant house where the occult rituals were taking place, right across the street from the archaeological site!"⁷

Where believers are united in their desire to see a community transformed by the power of God, spiritual mapping can provide the kind of revelatory focus that sustains fervent and effectual prayer. When this intelligence is carried into spiritual warfare, God is released to provide an "open

door" for ministry (see Colossians 4:24).⁸ Evangelistic breakthroughs and church growth often follow.

Answers to prayer offer equally potent motivation for corporate intercessors. Like progressive revelation, timely results encourage prayers to stick with the reassignments. Besides the pleasure associated with seeing desired changes take root in broken communities, there is an exhilaration that comes from knowing our words have moved the Almighty.

To find an example of results sustaining fervent intercession we need look no further than Cali, Colombia. Forty-eight hours after that city's first all-night prayer vigil the local daily, *El Pais*, reported a notable decrease in homicides. Corruption also took a major hit when, over the next four months, nine hundred cartel-linked officers were fired from the metropolitan police force. "When we saw these things happening," one participant told me, "we had a strong sense that the powers of darkness were headed for a significant defeat."⁹

In June 1995, this sense of anticipation was heightened when several intercessors reported dreams in which angelic forces apprehended leaders of the Cali drug cartel. Six weeks later the Colombian government declared an all-out war against the drug lords. By August, federal authorities had captured all seven targeted cartel leaders: Juan Carlos Arminez, Phanor Arizabalata, Julian Murcillo, Henry Loaiza, Jose Santa Cruz Londono, and Gilberto and Miguel Rodriguez.

Emboldened by this success, Cali's Christian community decided to fuel their all-night prayer rallies, now 60,000 strong, by launching spiritual mapping campaigns in each of the city's 22 administrative sections. The

compiled results soon gave the church an unprecedented picture of the powers working in the city. "With this knowledge," one veteran missionary explained, "our unified intercession became truly focused. Praying in specific terms, we began to see a dramatic loosening of the enemy's stranglehold on our community and nation."¹⁰

While these abbreviated examples do not detail the community-wide church growth that resulted in Cali and Guatemala City, it is this level of expansion that defines them as authentic spiritual breakthroughs. Growth that is confined to individual churches, while generally desirable, is not the same thing. This is because there are any number of reasons short of divine visitation that might explain proliferating numbers (including charismatic leadership, quality management, and appealing programs). Genuine evangelistic breakthroughs, on the other hand, tend to spread spontaneously across geographic, ethnic, and denominational boundaries.

From Breakthrough to Transformation

Given the heady atmosphere that accompanies spiritual breakthroughs, some Christians misinterpret these seasons as the climax of divine activity and intention. This is an understandable, if unfortunate, error. For while spiritual breakthroughs are by their very definition advanced achievements, they are by no means the end of God's ambitions for a community.

If intercessors continue to press in during the spiritual breakthrough phase, a point of critical mass will eventually be reached where community transformation occurs. At this level the social, political, and economic fabric of the entire community begins to metamorphose. As an ever-increasing percentage of the popula-

tion comes under the Lordship of Christ, the sin-wrought citadels of corruption, poverty, violence, prejudice, and oppression are transformed into ghost towns. Confirmation of this new heavenly order comes not from Christian triumphalists but from the evening newscasts and banner headlines of the secular media.

This is not to suggest that transformed communities are perfect communities—at least not in a millennial sense. Even sympathetic observers will have little trouble locating blemishes. Violence, immorality, and apathy are ubiquitous in our world, and this includes cities that have been visited by Divine Grace. Spiritual transformation is not a total absence of sin but rather a fresh trajectory with acknowledged fruit. Communities that have been so touched should be measured not by what they still lack, but by what they once were.

Asia has arguably experienced more divine visitations than any other region in recent history. This has led to phenomenal church growth in various parts of China, South Korea, India, Bangladesh, Nepal, Indonesia, and the Philippines. Less encouraging is the fact that the continent has only one documentable case of community transformation—the state of Mizoram in eastern India (three other cases are currently under investigation). Noting the sharp drop off between breakthrough and transformation one cannot help but wonder about the factors responsible for this attrition.

Two reasons stand out. First, as we mentioned earlier, there is a tendency for Christians to misinterpret breakthroughs as the climax of divine activity. If people are getting saved and our churches are growing, what more could we ask for? How could these blessed and exciting developments be anything other than God's maximum intent?

The second reason is closely

related to the first. Community transformation fails to occur because local inhabitants do not perceive a need for change. Affluent societies in particular tend to be self-sufficient and self-satisfied—qualities that make them poor candidates for divine intervention. They are the collective embodiment of Jesus' teaching about it being easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God (Matthew 19:23-24). While the obstacle of affluence (or security) can be overcome, history has shown this to be a rare occurrence.

Of the case studies consulted for this study it is noteworthy that only one—Hemet, California—is located within the Western world, and even it is faced with significant maintenance challenges. While Asia has long been viewed as distinct from the West, the region's economic growth (recent downturns notwithstanding) has blurred this distinction. Places like Singapore, Japan, and Taiwan are now a wash in the same abundance and political stability that one finds in Europe and North America. Unfortunately, they have also begun to adopt the self-satisfaction that so often accompanies these blessings.

This problem is compounded in churches with large memberships. When the pastors of these congregations survey their ministry they see little that would suggest a need for change. Competent staff are busy running well-conceived programs and the sanctuary is filled every Sunday with a sea of eager faces. While the status quo is not perfect, neither is it a rationale for extreme measures. Change, if and when it is needed, is best sought in manageable increments.

The danger in this perspective lies in its introversion. Because their sphere of influence is large, the leaders of well-heeled mega-churches tend

to view their community from inside that circle. They see other churches in the community not as partners in a collective vision but as competitors for market share. There are exceptions, of course, but not many. The mirror of history reveals that the grander a church becomes the more likely it is to fall victim to the Laodicean Syndrome. One of the primary symptoms of this complex is a subconscious shift from kingdom mentality to empire mentality.

While many churches today are preoccupied with growing their circle, God's focus is on the area between the circles. He worries not about the one sheep that is found, but the ninety nine that are lost. He wants to break out of our churches and into area boardrooms, classrooms, and courtrooms. In short, He wants to introduce His kingdom into every area of society and transform it.

Some time ago I took a wrong turn on my way to Sunday church services and found myself on unfamiliar streets. This caused me to pay attention to my surroundings in a way I would not have otherwise. The sights disturbed me. A pair of homeless drunks staggering down the sidewalk; a video arcade filled with troubled teens; and hordes of preoccupied antique shoppers.

When I finally pulled in the church parking lot I noticed something that had escaped me on previous Sundays. A simple sign announcing "Celebration Services" at 9:00 and 11:00 AM. On this morning, however, I did not feel like celebrating. Whatever blessings I might count clearly did not extend to the streets of my community.

Most of us want to see things change in our communities. Unfortunately, few of us ever have. We do not seem to know how to get where we want to go. (Theories on community transformation have always been

more abundant than successful case studies.) In an effort to remedy this confusion we need to take careful note of the role of Godly persevering leadership and fervent united prayer as indispensable tools to change lives and whole communities.

End Notes

1. God's practice of dealing distinctly with different cities is seen in the unique messages He spoke to the seven churches featured in Revelation chapters 2-3.
2. See Genesis 32:26, 1 Chronicles 16:11, Daniel 6:10, Luke 11:5-10, Hebrews 11:6, James 5:16.
3. In the early 1990s, a group of Japanese intercessors rented six railroad coaches, which they dubbed the "Glory Train", and rode the mobile prayer platform through all of Japan's prefectures.
4. Witchcraft is widespread in Pakistan. Initiates learn to control their emotions, particularly fear, during the course of intense encounters with demonic powers. During the final initiatory stage the demons appear in a variety of terrifying forms. If fear gets the best of the initiate, the demon(s) will kill him. If the initiate controls his fear, the demon(s) will be his to "command". The only requirement is that the initiate "entertain" the demon(s) every Thursday night. This entertainment takes the form of a ritual, known as *chowky*, that involves dancing and/or violent head and neck shaking (almost like seizures). Many witches die when they get older and are no longer able to fulfill their Thursday evening vows.
5. Documentation for this is available from Peter Wagner's research.
6. Robert Bakke, "Prayer: God's Catalyst for Revival," *Pray!* Premier Issue, 1997; p. 16. Mr. Bakke directs the National Prayer Advance for the Evangelical Free Church in America.
7. Harold Caballeros, "Defeating the Enemy with the Help of Spiritual Mapping," in C. Peter Wagner, *Breaking Strongholds In Your City* (Ventura, CA: Regal, 1993), p. 144.
8. As I noted in my recent book *The Twilight Labyrinth* (Grand Rapids: chosen, 1997), pp. 281- 282:

In asking intercessors to petition God for an "open door," Paul is acknowledging three important truths: 1) Unsaved people are bound in a prison of deception; 2) God must breach this stronghold if the Gospel is to enter; and 3) Prayer is an important means of persuading God to do this.

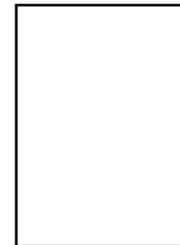
If we want to practice effective spell bending-liberating enchanted minds so they can understand and respond to the Gospel—we must first neutralize the blinding influence of demonic strong men. Jesus talks about this process in Mark 3:27 when he says, "No one can enter a strong man's house (the human mind) and carry off his possessions unless he first ties up the strong man. *Then* he can rob his house" (emphasis added).

We are not asking God to "make" people Christians, or to expel demonic powers that have become objects of worship. Such requests violate man's free will and God will not honor them. What we are appealing for is a level playing field, a temporary lifting of the spiritual blindness that prevents men from processing truth (the Gospel) at a heart level.

9. *Ibid.*, p. 300.

10. *Ibid.*, p. 301.

[Editor's note: This article is an adaptation of chapter 2 of Otis' forthcoming book *Informed Intercession*, (Regal, Gospel Light). Used with permission.]



George Otis, Jr., is the author of The Last of the Giants and his new book The Twilight Labyrinth. He has served as senior associate with the

Lausanne Committee for World Evangelization and is coordinator of the United Prayer Track for the A.D. 2000 & Beyond Movement. He also is the president of The Sentinel Group—a Christian research and information agency located in Seattle, WA. For more info., (books, videos, etc.) call 800-668-5657, or use email <Sentinelgp@aol.com>

Praying for the Lost in the 10/40 Window

It is God's will that all people in the 10/40 Window be saved and come to a knowledge of Him, for Scripture says that God "desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth" (1 Tim. 2:4). "All men" means all of the human race—men from "every nation, tribe, tongue, and people" (Rev. 14:6).

by Billy Joe Daugherty

John 3:16 reveals God's love for the people in the 10/40 Window: "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life." 2 Peter 3:9 says it clearly, "The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance."

Not everyone is going to be saved, but that does not change the will of God. The purpose of Jesus' death, burial, and resurrection was to provide the way of salvation for every person—for every boy, girl, man, and woman—to become a new creation in Him. According to the Greek sense, salvation encompasses not only being born again, but healing, preservation, soundness and safety.

As believers in Jesus Christ, we are co-laborers together with Him. Romans 8:17 (KJV) says we are "joint-heirs with Christ." We have an inheritance in Him that is abundant and powerful. It is time to take hold of it by faith. Part of our inheritance is to use the authority that has been invested in us to pray for people all over the world to get saved.

Our Responsibility

Sinners everywhere—in the 10/40 Window as well as in other nations of the world—have not believed because either they have been blinded to the truth, or they have never heard a bold effective witness of the truth of the Gospel.

Proverbs 28:1 says, "The righteous are bold as a lion." Every believer has a responsibility to pull the lost from the rubble of sin by sharing with them the truth of the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

People all over the world were shocked at the news of the April 19, 1995 Oklahoma City bombing. One positive aspect of this senseless devastation and loss of innocent lives was the tremendous outpouring of the love of God. Many acts of compassion, heroism and sacrifice occurred.

Imagine a rescue worker coming on the scene of the Murrah Federal Building a few minutes after the bombing. He hears the cries of the people, but he keeps on walking down the street, ignoring the cries. Such a scene is unimaginable!

Yet, in real way this is an accurate picture of many Christians. While people in the 10/40 Window, and in other places of the world, are buried under the explosion of sin, many Christians are just walking down the

streets, oblivious to the people who are lost and in desperate need of deliverance from the world of darkness.

Can you imagine what the world would be like if the compassion that was turned loose in Oklahoma City was turned loose in the 10/40 Window? People in Oklahoma City stood in line for seven hours or more to give blood. They waited for hours in a traffic jam on the interstate to take a coat or a sweatshirts to a rescue worker who needed one. Many gave all the food they had so the rescue workers would be fed. Whatever was needed, people gave.

We must be awakened to the fact that there is something we can do to become "rescue workers" of the lost around the world. Every believer can pray for the salvation and deliverance of the lost. Also, many Christians can give financially to support the missions outreaches into the 10/40 Window. Others as the Lord calls them can personally go to this area of the world and share the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

Jesus said, "Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit" (Matthew 28:19).

I pray that we will begin to see the people in the 10/40 Window with X-ray like eyes of revelation knowledge by the Spirit of God. I pray that we will move quickly to pull people everywhere from the rubble of sin and bring them into the Kingdom of God's safety and light. In Jesus' name may it be.

Jesus said, "We must work the works of Him Who sent Me and be busy with His business while it is daylight; night is coming when no man can work" (John 9:4 AMP).

Standing in the Gap

God is seeking for those who will stand in the gap and make up the hedge for the lost through prayer and intercession. Ezekiel said, "And I sought for a man among them, that should make up the hedge, and stand in the gap before me for the land, that I should not destroy it: but I found none" (Ezekiel 22:30).

In Bible times, a hedge was built around an area where the sheep were kept to protect them. If there was a breach in the hedge, a shepherd would guard the opening to protect the sheep and keep the enemy out. This is a picture of the protection offered by intercessors who stand in the gap and pray for the salvation of the lost. In this hour, God is seeking those who will be "gap standers" in prayer for the lost in the 10/40 Window. Will you be one of them?

Guidelines for Effective Prayer

To insure effective fervent prayer for the lost in the 10/40 Window we need to follow some basic guidelines :

1. *Pray that spiritual blindness would be removed* from each person so he/she can see the truth of God's Word. 2 Corinthians 4:3,4 says that the Gospel "...is veiled to those who are perishing, whose minds the god of

this age [Satan] has blinded, who do not believe, lest the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine on them."

In praying for the church at Ephesus, Paul said, "I pray for the eyes of your understanding to be enlightened" (Ephesians 1:18). As believers in Jesus Christ, we have authority to pray and command the wicked spirits that have held people captive to be removed. Jesus said, "...how can one enter a strong man's house and plunder his goods, unless he first binds the strong man? And then he will plunder his house" (Matthew 12:29).

On one of our flights into Albania

We call the leaders and the citizens of every country, province and village in the 10/40 Window saved, filled with the Holy Spirit and submitted to Your will, Father, in Jesus' name.

a young man sitting beside me began to talk to me in another language. He couldn't speak English, so it was rather amusing as we tried to communicate with each other. He wanted to give me his address, and I was trying to talk to him about Jesus. I went through all of the Russian and Spanish I knew, and he finally got it. He said, "No, Moslem, Moslem."

On our second day in Albania, we went to a little Moslem village of 600 families thirty minutes from the capital city of Tirana. The mayor gave us permission to preach the Gospel to the people because of the free food that we would distribute.

As I stood there, up walked the young man who sat by me on the plane. This was his village. I had something to tell him now, because I had an interpreter! I said, "God's got your number!" He said, "I am Mos-

lem." I said, "That's all right. You can still receive Jesus." Moslems and Hindus can receive Jesus Christ, because when you get the real thing, you won't want the counterfeit. After our drama presentation, this young man gave his life to Christ.

You can pray for and over the lost in the 10/40 Window: "I bind the strong man who has tried to hold the people in the 10/40 Window captive, and I bind the devil's power off of these precious people. Holy Spirit, I loose Your power upon each person in the 10/40 Window, in Jesus' name. Open their eyes to know You, Jesus."

2. *Loose a spirit of repentance for the people, tribes and nations.* 2 Timothy 2:24-26 says: "And a servant of the Lord must not quarrel but be gentle to all, able to teach, and be patient. In humility correcting those who are in opposition, if God perhaps will grant them repentance, so that they may know the truth, And that they may come to their senses and

escape the snare of the devil, having been taken captive by him to do his will." You can pray, "Father, I loose a spirit of repentance and a hunger and thirst for righteousness over each unsaved person in the 10/40 Window, in Jesus' name."

3. *Pray that Jesus would be lifted up.* Jesus said, "And I, if I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all peoples to Myself" (John 12:32). Although initially Jesus was speaking of His death on the cross, many people have never had Jesus Christ lifted up in their minds. They have seen religion, denominationalism, cult activities, ideas and hypocrisy. There is good reason to believe that when they see the real Jesus lifted up above the fog of what man has said about Him, they will accept Him.

(Continued on page 222)

Spiritual Breakthrough in Turkey

The prayers of hundreds of thousands of Christians in North America and Europe are paying off. The main reason for the openness in Turkey is because people have been praying for years. What has happened in Turkey can happen everywhere else.

by Editors of *Religion Today*

Turkey is "close to a spiritual breakthrough." Christians are boldly proclaiming the gospel in this mostly Muslim country, and as they do they are gaining more freedom and becoming more accepted. So reports a U.S.-based ministry to the country. "Believers are becoming self-confident," said Luis Bush of the AD 2000 Movement, who met with church leaders last year. "The Turkish world is close to a spiritual breakthrough," Bush said. More churches are being granted legal status and are more accepted by society. Istanbul had two churches 10 years ago; there are now 12 with their own buildings and four that meet in houses. Sales of New Testaments are increasing, and a 24-hour Christian radio station reaches 20 million listeners.

Christians distributed 1,200 New Testaments and hundreds of audio tapes telling about the life of Christ in Istanbul's main shopping district on Christmas Eve. Most people warmly received the handouts and police officers did not interfere. "That kind of thing would have been impossible a few years ago," an official of a U.S.-based ministry to Turkey told *Religion Today*. Police arrested and deported foreign Christian workers for the same activities less than five years ago, he said.

Fruit of Concerted Fervent Prayer

There is little doubt that the prayers of hundreds of thousands of Christians in North America and Europe are paying off. "I think the main reason for the openness in Turkey is because people have been praying for years," the official said. For more than 10 years his ministry has given supporters a bimonthly prayer letter about the church in Turkey. "Then there was not much to report, but now hundreds of Christian workers are actively sharing the love of Christ."

Christians have become bolder about living and sharing their faith. "Turk believers are coming to maturity and they are standing up for their rights guaranteed by the constitution," the official said. In the past they worshiped in private and did little evangelism, but their fear and secretive attitude made authorities suspicious. Now that they are standing up for their rights, police are less willing to harass them, he said. "They have gained their rights by being bold."

Openness to the Gospel

Churches are telling others about Jesus Christ. Christians in Ankara

hosted a Christmas drama in a hotel that attracted more than 1,000 people. They distributed gift packets including New Testaments and other Christian literature. More than 250 people indicated on a survey that they wanted to hear more about Jesus, and several prayed to become Christians when workers visited them. Christian books are sold in the marketplaces of major cities and an evangelical newspaper is published in Istanbul.

"There is a whole new atmosphere, especially in the Aegean area," the official said. "I used to feel a pall when I stepped off the plane, but now it's a different feeling." He recently addressed a group of students at a school in Izmir on the subject of Christianity. They listened attentively, asked many questions, and asked him to stay and talk some more. "I was astounded at their openness. I have never seen that before."

A series of Christian events will be held to celebrate the millennium. "Toward 3,000" is a yearlong celebration of the 2,000-year anniversary of Christ's birth. Tourism officials have agreed to allow Christian concerts and sporting events for tourists. Church leaders invited American evangelist Luis Palau to hold a series

Breakthrough in Turkey

(Continuation from last page)

of meetings in February. The ministry has agreed to participate, and is awaiting permission from the Turkish government.

Once a Bastion of the Faith

Turkey was once a bastion of Christianity. The early church spread the message of Christ through the region that now includes Turkey, and the sites of the seven churches mentioned in the Book of Revelation are there. The country converted to Islam in the 15th century, but about 25% of the population remained Christian in 1900. Political upheaval after World War I resulted in the murder and deportation of more than 3 million ethnic Armenians, a Christian minority. Today there are an estimated 1,000 evangelical Christians, about 17,000 Eastern rite and Latin rite Catholics, and 72,000 Orthodox believers.

Evangelizing the Nation

Most of the 55 million citizens have never heard the message of Christ and many oppose Christianity because of the legacy of the Crusades. European Crusaders conquered the country and massacred many people. "They carried the cross with them, no wonder [Turks] hate the cross," the official said.

A Christian effort to apologize for the Crusades has had an effect. Christians are participating in Youth With a Mission's "Reconciliation Walk." Walkers travel through areas the Crusaders conquered in order to apologize for wrongs committed by their forefathers against Turks, Jews, and Arabs. They moved through Turkey in 1997 and 1998, reading a public apology at mosques and public squares. The effort is helping break the legacy of the Crusades, the official said. END

Praying for the Lost in the 10/40 Window

(Continuation from page 220)

In John 6:44 Jesus said, "No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him..." You can pray, "Father, draw each unsaved person in the 10/40 Window with the cords of Your love. Help them to understand that Jesus paid the ultimate price for them by giving His life at Calvary so they will not end up and go to eternal punishment in hell."

4. *Pray for Holy Spirit anointed laborers to cross the path of each unsaved person in the 10/40 Window.* Scripture says, "Then Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their in their synagogues, preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every sickness and every disease among the people. But when He saw the multitudes, He was moved with compassion for them, because they were weary and scattered, like sheep having no shepherd. Then He said to His disciples, 'The harvest truly is plentiful, but the laborers are few. Therefore pray the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into His harvest'" (Matthew 9:35-38).

Some people have majored on the fact that people have a "will" of their own, as if it could never be changed. I have good news for them! God is in the will-changing business! Every person who has ever been born again had a will of their own. It is the work of the Holy Spirit, in response to someone's prayers, that causes people to yield their will to the will of the Father.

You can pray, "Lord, thank You for providing the funds so tracts, books, tapes, videos, people, billboards, bumper stickers and radio and television programs can go into the 10/40 Window to expose these lost people You love to the truth of Your Word. Open their hearts to receive You, Lord Jesus."

Once you have prayed for the salvation and deliverance of the people in the 10/40 Window, begin to rejoice

with thanksgiving that God is performing His Word in their lives. Pray:

"Father, thank You for giving us the nations in the 10/40 Window for Your inheritance and the ends of the earth for Your possession."

"Because of the severity of the persecution some of these people have experienced for taking a stand for Christianity, we bind the spirits of fear, terror and oppression from them and we loose the Spirit of power, love and soundness of mind unto them, in Jesus' name."

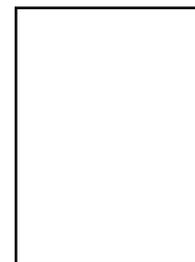
"We call the leaders and the citizens of every country, province and village in the 10/40 Window saved, filled with the Holy Spirit and submitted to Your will, Father, in Jesus' name."

"Happy are the people in the 10/40 Window whose God is the Lord!"

"And Father, in the name of Jesus, we loose wisdom and a blood covering of protection over those who orchestrate prayer efforts as well as hands-on missions outreaches into the 10/40 Window."

"Thank You, Father, that You always give us victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore, we are steadfast, immovable, always abounding in Your work, knowing that our labor is not in vain."

(Read Psalm 2:8; 2 Timothy 1:7; Isaiah 54:14; 1 Timothy 2:1-4; Psalm 144:15; Proverbs 21:1; Psalm 91; 1 Corinthians 15:57,58 for additional biblical support).



Billy Joe Daugherty is the founder and pastor of Victory Christian Center in Tulsa, OK. Victory Center has a world-wide outreach through radio, television, books and videos

as well as through its training institutes located in at least 20 countries. Daugherty has written 7 books focused on victorious Christian living.

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All Important Theme

It is for this reason we have produced and publish *Spiritual Warfare II*. Every article is focused on this all important theme for frontier missions. Patrick Johnstone leads us off with his excellent article on prayer and intercession which he sees to be the ultimate weapon God has given His Church for spiritual warfare as well as the fountain of spiritual power that can change our world.

Johnstone's article is followed with an article by George Otis, Jr. His article concerns our ability first of all to recognize the powers of darkness and then defeat them. Therefore, Otis help us understand the nature of the spiritual battle, for instance, why it is stronger and more oppressive in certain areas and societies of the world, and why does it linger and prevail where it does. Knowing this gives us important insights as to how to fight this spiritual war and subsequently be able more effectively to defeat the powers of wickedness that blind and enslave whole peoples and societies.

Next in line is an urgent plea for prayer and fasting on behalf of one of the oldest and most unreached peoples in the world, as well as one of the most resistant to Gospel light—the Parsee People. The plea for prayer and fasting comes from Rev. Kaezad Dadachanjee, a Parsee himself, whom God has called to evangelize his own people in order to plant the Church of Christ among them. Dadachanjee is the only known missionary to the Parsees. May we all support him with prayer and fasting especially during the Parsee Holy Day seasons—one of them going on now at this time of the year.

John Robb writes his article from a practical need that arose on the field. World Vision personnel repeatedly asked for prayer support "because they are finding themselves wrestling with spiritual darkness in the communities they serve." Moti-

vated with this need Robb addresses the biblical givens that mission needs to be seen as spiritual warfare. After explaining what it is, he then asks the disturbing question: "When will we in the mission community, as well as in the Church at large, get angrily violent enough to take up the spiritual weapons we have been given to really deal with the enemy?" The rest of Robb's article gives us clear biblical support, as well as convincing case studies, that point us in the right direction.

Neal Michell's article reminds us that conventional methods may not work on the frontiers, like the so called "Four Spiritual Laws." More importantly, we need to deal first with the powers of darkness in a given area over a particular people. Before we use any method to declare the Gospel we need to do spiritual warfare first. Michell wants us to understand that spiritual warfare is not evangelism, *but pre-evangelism* and that this needs to occur before any Gospel is given by whatever means.

Two additional articles follow, one (the second) by George Otis and the last by Billy Joe Daugherty. Otis hones in on prayer and spiritual warfare as it relates to community transformation. Community transformation is not an arbitrary event but a bi-product of a cause and effect process. Certain core factors make it happen. Again and again Otis shows that these are united prayer and godly persevering leadership. When these factors are fully operational—and not stopped half way in the process—transformed communities are the result.

Pastor Daugherty in his article gives us a set of four guidelines as to how we could (and should) actually pray for the lost in the 10/40 Window. These guidelines are based on God's Word and must be understood (and applied) from a biblical or supernatural worldview (perspective of reality) without which the guidelines will not make much sense nor will they work.

Spiritual Breakthrough in Turkey

The last item (not an article) is a news release received just prior to publication. It is from the Religious News Service on the spiritual breakthrough in Turkey that is happening now. What is the reason for the breakthrough? It is due to the concerted prayer by hundreds of thousands of Christians throughout the world. This is the pay-off and it is remarkable. Even more remarkable: What is happening in Turkey can happen everywhere else regardless of the intensity of spiritual oppression and persistent resistance to Gospel light. Concerted prayer and fasting, the main weapons of spiritual warfare, do in fact disarm and remove the spiritual darkness with which all the unreached are plagued, which blinds them from seeing the glory of God, and makes them unable to call on the Lord and be saved.

Full-Orbed Missions

This is our task. As the apostle Paul, we too have been called "to preach to the Gentiles (the ethnic peoples) the unsearchable riches of Christ" But preaching is linked with spiritual warfare. Like Paul we too need to do what he said. It was none other than "to make all men see what is the plan of the mystery hidden for ages in God who created all things, *that through the church* the manifold wisdom of God might now be made known *to the principalities and powers in the heavenly places*. This was according to the eternal purpose which he has realized in Christ Jesus." (Eph. 3:8-11 *emphasis mine*) May God open our eyes, guide and anoint us to faithfully and fully execute this task. (P.S. For more info. and training in this area contact the IJFM.)

*Hans M Weerstra,
IJFM Editor
Oct.-Dec. 1998
El Paso, Texas*