

Teaching for 11-21-07

Awaken the Sleeping Giant

Japanese Admiral Isoroku Yamamoto is portrayed in the 1970 film *Tora! Tora! Tora!* as saying after his attack on Pearl Harbor, "I fear all we have done is to awaken a sleeping giant and fill him with a terrible resolve." This fear certainly proved to be true, as America was roused from its slumber and rose to become the greatest military might in the world.

Today there are signs that another sleeping giant may be rousing. This giant's power would make the military might of the United States seem small and insignificant. It would have the potential to transform the social, political, economic, and ecological future of our planet. This sleeping giant is not a political action committee or a secret economic forum. It does not represent some vast ecological network dedicated to changing the world.

This sleeping giant has just one agenda and one Head to whom it reports. **This sleeping giant is the prayers of God's people.**

A Great Stirring

In cities and communities all across our country, ordinary people are being stirred to greater interest and participation in prayer. Even in recent years, it is encouraging to see the rising number of prayer groups, books on prayer, prayer ministries, and churches that are increasingly making prayer a central focus of their church lives. Perhaps because of the increasing desperation of our times, more and more of God's people are expressing their conviction that only prayer will make a difference in the ills of our society.

Another encouraging sign of the rise of prayer is a movement through America's National Prayer Committee to help establish a curriculum for teaching prayer in our theological schools across the country. Through this committee, a book will soon be published that is intended to be used as a primer textbook in a prayer curriculum. A compilation from more than 70 education and ministry leaders, this book will be titled: *Giving Ourselves to Prayer: An Acts 6:4 Primer for Ministry*.

An Untapped Potential for Power

It might be fair to say that no one truly knows the power that could be unleashed for the Kingdom and the Glory of God if the Church genuinely understood the power of prayer that God has given to us. Jesus taught a simple truth in John 14:12: *that those who believe on Him would do greater works that Jesus had done in His time on earth*. If we have the potential to do greater works that Jesus, then obviously we have not yet fully tapped into that prayer power!

And still Jesus' question to His disciples in His time of greatest need remains the same for the Church today (Mt. 26:40): "Could you not watch with me one hour?" Just one hour was all that Jesus asked of His disciples. Imagine the power that was available to the disciples in that moment had they stayed awake.

In his book *Mighty Prevailing Prayer*, Wesley Duewel writes: *God's cause creeps forward timidly and slowly when there are more organizers than agonizers, more workers than prevailing prayer warriors. We need prayer warriors who have seen the heart of God, who have experienced the power and the glory of the cross, who know the Bible meaning and significance of the day of judgment, heaven and hell* (pg. 23).

Still Hope for the Awakening

The call is going forth. The cry for us to pray is resonating louder and with greater fervency. There is no greater calling than to hold audience with the Most High God on behalf of His Kingdom on the earth. Will this sleeping giant rouse from the slumber of this present age of ease and self-absorption? That is the question of our day.

If she does, and if she begins to take seriously the call to the power of true, biblical, Holy Spirit-empowered prayer, there is still hope for a great and mighty transforming revival in our land. But the Church must be awakened to the passionate and desperate calling that Paul experienced when he said: *To this end I pray, struggling with all His energy, which so powerfully works in me* (Col. 1:29).

If the sleeping giant awakens, she will be filled with the resolve to see the manifest presence and glory of Jesus Christ fill the earth!

