

Prayer Transformation Ministries Email Newsletter – Teaching for 6/6/07

Global Day of Prayer – Are We Missing the Fire?

The 2007 celebration of the Global Day of Prayer on May 27 is now history. Very literally! The largest prayer meeting in the history of the world was marked by unprecedented participation of believers in 203 countries.

The dedication of believers around the world is inspirational. In Hong Kong, 20,000 believers in this Chinese city gathered together in pouring rain to spend three hours in worship, crying out to God that He would come and touch China. In Bangalor, India, 150 churches came together to worship, praise and pray together. And they were only one of 3,000 locations across the country of India with an estimated two million believers participating. In London, organizers were overwhelmed when an unexpected 20,000 people joined together in West Ham Stadium.

This hot fire of global prayer has spread quickly around the world. Like a wildfire, this vision has spread from Africa to Asia, Europe, Australia, and the Pacific. **But the hot flame falters and flickers when it hits North America.** In this vastly expansive prayer movement, we are playing “catch up.” Compared with the rest of the world, GDOP gatherings in the United States have been relatively small. Why is that? Can we blame it entirely on Memorial Day weekend, or is there something else holding back the fires of revival in our nation?

A Growing Worldwide Vision

This phenomenal “God-thing” began in 2001 in Cape Town, South Africa, in one stadium. By 2004, the entire continent of Africa joined together to pray for the transformation of Africa. Believers fanned the flame of prayer in every country in Africa. In 2005, Africa invited the world to join them to seek God’s face together.

This year viewers watched satellite broadcasts of the Global Day of Prayer from Kenya, Zimbabwe, Egypt, Israel, Germany, France, Dubai, Togo, Switzerland, Denmark, Sweden, Myanmar, Saudi Arabia, and many more countries around the world. By way of a newly opened cable capability in Pakistan, an estimated three million viewers had the potential of joining in prayer. One could witness in real time the excitement of believers in this amazing opportunity to pray with brothers and sisters in Christ for the transformation of our world.

The vision was kindled by the promise of Habakkuk 2:14: *For the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea.* On a global scale there is hope that Habakkuk 2:14 is nearing fulfillment with God’s manifest presence known throughout the world!

The Reality of the Movement Here

There has definitely been growth in the GDOP vision in North America. As the North

American Director, Bob Bakke has devoted his life to encouraging the movement in our nation. He has traveled throughout the country, speaking and sharing the vision. Many cities have come on board with events in rapidly growing numbers, much to Bob's encouragement. But nevertheless, it doesn't seem the growth has been matched the enthusiasm of the rest of the world.

Even in the Twin Cities, we had much greater participation than the past two years. But the hopes of filling the Northrup Auditorium were not realized. Given the number of churches that indicated their willingness to participate, the crowd was a very small representation of those churches. It was a wonderful evening, but the empty seats were noticeable. With the exception of the "Sacred Assembly" at the Metrodome following September 11 when 24,000 people gathered in brokenness to pray, the prayer movement in the Twin Cities has flickered and faltered on the larger scale. In the early 1990s, citywide concerts of prayer gathered several thousand people to pray. Today we struggled to come any where near that kind of attendance.

Why is the flame faltering and flickering?

A Perspective from Inside the Prayer Movement

We have been involved in the prayer movement here for many years. We are not offering an "expert opinion" on this, but rather a viewpoint from years of being on the frontlines of mobilizing prayer on a citywide level. There are certainly many explanations that could be proposed, but we have noticed some common themes over the years:

- **We are simply not desperate enough.** We experienced a taste of desperation after our nation was attacked in 2001, but within 60 days the church was back to "business as usual." The prayer movement flared for a moment when we didn't know where else to turn but to God.
- **We are terribly distracted.** As a Church, we are caught up in many good things. But rarely do those good things lead us to the place of desperate cries for the manifest presence of God to come to our churches and communities. Our concentration on prayer is replaced by many time-consuming activities.
- **We may be a bit prideful.** The Global Day of Prayer did not originate with us. It came out of a small group of humble people in Africa. Perhaps there is an undercurrent of pride because we did not initiate this global phenomenon. We all need to check our own hearts on this.
- **We have not made prayer a priority in our own lives, much less on a corporate level.** Most of us struggle with making prayer a priority in our personal lives and in our homes. In addition, most churches experience a general apathy toward prayer. Just check out the average attendance at prayer meetings. This apathy on the local church level is inevitably going to be reflected on a citywide level. If we haven't experienced the power of prayer in our own lives, it may cause us to express an apathetic spirit toward this amazing work of God on a global level.

Hope for the Future

The good news is that there is still time and opportunity. The Global Day of Prayer is designed to build year upon year until 2010. It is definitely not too late to embrace this prayer movement with determination to join the rest of the world in its passion and fervency. Each time we come together on a citywide level, we are gaining momentum in practicing corporate prayer, worship, and service as the Body of Christ. We can learn to “do Church differently.”

The Global Day of Prayer is not the “end-all” in the prayer movement. There are other opportunities to gather as the Church of the Twin Cities, including National Day of Prayer. Each gathering represents a wonderful opportunity to pray, love, worship, and serve our communities together with our brothers and sisters around the world. We can be the answer to Jesus’ prayer in John 17:20-23 when He asked the Father to make His Church one in Him:

I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message, that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you. May they also be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent me. I have given them the glory that you gave me, that they may be one as we are one: I in them and you in me. May they be brought to complete unity to let the world know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me.

If we were to learn these lessons of unity in prayer, imagine a time in the future when our children and grandchildren would know nothing different. Imagine them saying, “Tell us what it was like when we didn’t have this unity in our city. What was it like when churches didn’t gather as one to pray? Tell us about how it all changed!”

That’s something to *imagine*...and *believe* for our future!