

PRAYER

CHANGES THINGS

Convergence in the Ethne Ephesus Vision

LIZ ADLĒTA

Rev. Elizabeth A. Adleta and her husband, Rev. Thomas L. Adleta served for 30 years as missionaries in Central America and Asia, and now across Africa, Europe and Latin America as well as in their role as intercessory coordinators. Liz serves on the steering group of the Ethne movement, co-facilitating its prayer workgroup which mobilizes prayer and outreach on behalf of the more than 6,000 remaining least-reached peoples in 12 regions of the world.

Editors Note: In March 2013 we introduced our readers to the Ethne Ephesus Vision, which is a global strategy, network and collaboration platform to catalyze Church-Planting Movements among the least-reached peoples. We are excited to learn how prayer is increasingly becoming central to this strategy. We asked Liz Adleta, coordinator of the Ethne prayer strategy group, to give us an update about this convergence taking place.

The Ethne movement is building relationships of trust and cooperation, empowering field workers with cutting-edge strategies that actually increase fruitfulness, and mobilize focused fervent prayer. Ethne has linked these in a powerful way for the glory of God and the catalytic growth of his family among all peoples. In 2009, several of the working groups began to wonder what might happen if we purposely worked to catalyze movements in the “gaps,” clusters of people groups where little or nothing was happening. Out of this has grown the Ephesus Vision featured as a highlight of Ethne 2012 in Seoul, Korea—an effort to catalyze movements to Christ among clusters of 50 or more people groups with little access to the gospel. The goal was that the resulting movements would ripple throughout the entire cluster of peoples.

One of the earliest Ephesus teams to form focused on what is often called the most unreached island in the world. This particular location is the home of 49 unreached people groups of over 25 million people. It was estimated there were only 5,000 followers of Christ! When the people groups there begin to turn to Christ, they could be instrumental in carrying Jesus throughout the rest of their nation and throughout their entire region.

Workers have labored among these groups for some time and have seen little fruit. However, as the Ethne movement grew, several working group facilitators began to consider what could be done to intentionally apply what we were learning towards catalyzing movements to Christ among these 49 people groups. In January 2010 a small group of about 20 people were continuing this discussion in the Dallas area, just as the deadline was approaching for the *Global Prayer Digest's (GPD)* June 2010 issue. In that room the editor of the *GPD* agreed to shift their theme to the 49 unreached peoples of this island for the June 2010 issue, partnering with the field personnel who had their feet on the ground to work with us and see what God might do in answer to these millions of prayers.

Within a month of the *GPD* release of the June 2010 issue,¹ the evidence was clear: several people groups that had previously had no believers saw new believers come to faith and begin sharing their faith with others. Indications of small movements to Christ were beginning and growing. The practical synergy that developed through the joining of hands of extraordinary global prayer with diligent field efforts brought clear breakthroughs!

Just over a year later, in July 2011, the peoples of Cambodia were highlighted for prayer in the *GPD*² partnership with field teams. Within a month, clear new breakthroughs came (according to our field partner) which were directly attributed to the additional prayer boost. He noted, however, that as the year wore on, they were seeing that window of opportunity closing once again. They encouraged workers in other places to make the

most of the opening, knowing that it might only be open for a brief period. By being ready and working to conserve the harvest gained, further progress can be made even past the closing of that window by those who came to faith during the open times. Linking massive global prayer efforts to concerted and strategic field outreaches bears incredible fruit!

TAKING IT TO THE NEXT LEVEL

In addition to and alongside the Ethne Ephesus Vision, this new strategic approach to igniting movements, leaders connected to the Ethne prayer workgroup realized that prayer is strategy and that part of the overall strategy for seeing these wholesale movements to Christ must include prayer. So from January 31 through February 2, 2014, a group of 45 leaders from 6 nations gathered near Dallas, Texas for the first Fellowship of Prayer Strategists meeting to consider the role of the prayer strategist in igniting these movements to Christ. A dozen seasoned leaders shared case studies that included individual intimacy with God, prayer journeys, spiritual warfare, houses of prayer and 24/7 prayer, prayer partnerships, onsite prayer teams and prayer as ministry, prayer in crisis response, prayer strategists as strategy team members, and more. Momentum is growing as we learn from and connect with one another to harness the synergy of effective, fervent prayer in agreement with God and each other.

For example, the *GPD*'s November 2012 issue featured unreached peoples of Central Asia that were without scriptures in their own language; During that month our prayers focused on the need for the Word of God among all peoples in their heart languages. One of the Central Asian unreached people groups with work ongoing for more than two decades is suddenly demonstrating an unprecedented interest in God's Word! In the 13 weeks following the initiative, more people have accessed and received Scripture portions and interacted with the message of the good news than in the last 10 years of Scripture distribution combined! This amazing "miracle" has opened doors to "first ever" conversations and inquiries and to people hearing about our Savior. You could say that this is the single greatest opportunity in recent history to reach these people with the good news!

Over the years a significant barrier to the spread of the gospel has been getting God's Word into the hands of this populous but widely spread out and remote people. Scripture portions have been hand distributed, which has left the vast majority

of people without any contact with the Good News. For years many have prayed for God to break through barriers so that these millions of people could hear the gospel and read it in their heart language. Then, earlier this year, in a way that caught everyone by surprise, these Central Asians started showing up on the internet on a Scripture site—but one in a different language.

What could be done to help them find his Word in their own tongue? A link was created and a fresh website was designed in their language that drew viewers in with biblical answers to questions about everything including marriage and family life, getting along with neighbors, money and wealth, and God's character. On each page there is an opportunity to read related Scripture passages, and throughout the website users have the option to print portions of the Bible, download the whole Bible (or at least what is currently translated) or listen to audio files. Visitors to this website may post questions or comments that will be passed on to our growing response team. And many visitors to the website are writing in—some with earnest questions and requests, others with hostile comments. In a way only God could have arranged, this single website has made it possible for thousands of people to read and/or download the good news in the last three months!

Is this coincidence or a miracle in response to believing prayer? We believe it's our prayer-hearing/prayer-answering God moving as we have joined in unity to pray for harvest among peoples with the least access to the good news. This fruit

has encouraged us to press on together even further, looking for ways to grow deeper and even more laser-focused in our efforts toward finishing the task Jesus set before us so many years ago.

Join this growing prayer force as we look to open doors for the harvest among the remaining 6,000 unreached peoples around the world in partnership with Ethne's Harvest-Linked Prayer Strategy Initiative! Contact us at prayer@ethne.net to get connected, find specific resources and visit the www.ethne.net site for more resources and information on the entire Ethne movement. 

¹ (www.globalprayerdigest.org/index.php/issue/shifting-ground-and-spiritual-ch...)

² (www.globalprayerdigest.org/index.php/issue/finishing-the-harvest-among-chin...)

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