

INTERCESSORY MISSIONS

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A missionary colleague of mine, who served for many years in South Asia, once told a story of when a top-government official came into his office asking for prayer. The official, who was from a Muslim background, specifically requested my friend's co-worker to pray for him—someone who was known by everyone as a man of prayer. However, at the time, he was not in the office.

"I'm sorry," my friend said, "He's not here. Would you like me to pray for you?"

The leader replied, "No, I want the other guy."

Curious, my friend asked, "Why can't I pray for you?"

"Well..." the leader mused aloud, "You are like a diplomat. Your friend is a man of God."

That was the last thing my friend wanted to hear!

Is this what Muslims are looking for? Genuine men and women of God? Many workers among Muslims are coming to this conclusion, and it's not just in the Muslim world. It's in every culture where spirituality is highly valued. Is this something we have missed in our approach, both in terms of preparation and field-practice? We train our missionaries to be good teachers, church-planters, and cross-cultural evangelists. But do we mentor them to be mystics, faith healers and prophets? These very concepts make some of us cringe! And yet, these are the kind of people God has used all throughout history to ignite gospel movements. Why might that be?

Almost all innovation and breakthrough in the Kingdom is pioneered by the apostolic and prophetic gifting. But once the ministry is established, the work is turned over to pastors, teachers, and administrators. These are a much more conservative crowd. They are far more likely to toss out an apostle or prophet than to nurture one! So while

these giftings might have difficulty finding a place in their home church, they are a perfect fit for the frontiers. They are also the kinds of people whom God uses to birth revival and renewal in the "home front" as well.

This is why we are excited about the growing convergence of the prayer and healing movements and the frontier mission movement. Historically, there has always been a strong synergistic connection between renewal movements and missions. So it should not be a surprise that we are beginning to see a passion for mission in the midst of the prayer "furnaces" which are being ignited in this country and all over the world.

Daniel Lim, a Malaysian leader who serves with the International House of Prayer, recently described what is happening at a meeting which drew together 30,000 intercessors, many of whom are full time intercessory missionaries:

Despite the pressures and inherent dangers, we see 24/7 prayer centers coming forth in the Muslim world, in nations like Egypt, Turkey, Syria, Indonesia, and Lebanon.... Many are asking the Lord to establish 24/7 prayer with worship in every tribe and tongue before the Lord returns, by bringing multiple ministries together in unity to accomplish the work in every region of the earth. Imagine a missions movement that reaches every tribe and tongue, with the gospel being preached in every language, deeply connected to 24/7 prayer with worship.

This exciting potential has many mission strategists wondering and thinking aloud: Could it be that God has reserved the most powerful forms of mission for penetrating the last frontiers of the Great Commission—the places we call the "hardest and darkest" on earth? What might happen if thousands of houses of prayer and healing rooms were to spring up throughout the 10/40 Window, in every major city and town throughout the non-Christian world? From what we know of history and Scripture, the world will never be the same.

The significance of this strategy is that it combines two important components required for breakthrough. First, these houses of prayer will be interceding 24/7 for spiritual strongholds to be broken—you might think of this as the "air war." But secondly, these ministries will also engage in

healing and deliverance ministry on the ground in their communities. What is so strategic about this is that in most of the world's least-reached places, the gospel has only gained a foothold when supernatural ministry was present. This begs the question, "Why not lead with this approach?" Isn't this how the Roman Empire was won to Christ? Paul said to the Corinthians, "My message and

the modern-day prayer movement? John Robb, a veteran intercessory missionary, gives us some important insights about this in his interview beginning on page 23. He observes that when spiritual breakthroughs happen in a nation they involve a common pattern, which is characterized by a three-step process. The first step begins when leaders come together and humble

concerted asking, united contending. But in the midst of these incredible promises, we have also been given a warning: "You do not have because you do not ask God." (Jam 4:2, NIV) Why has it been almost two thousand years since the Great Commission was given and still over 2 billion haven't heard the good news? Why do 3,600 unreached people groups still have no missionaries among them? The answer is almost scandalous: We are not asking!

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my preaching were not with wise and persuasive words, but with a demonstration of the Spirit's power..." (1 Cor 2:4 NIV)

For this reason, we have decided to dedicate this issue of *Mission Frontiers* to the topic of intercessory missions—or what you might call prayer as mission. The paradigm is so obvious and so biblical it is incredible that we have just begun to explore it in modern-day evangelical missions. Frankly, we are merely re-discovering some ancient paradigms for mission going all the way back to temple worship in the Old Testament; to missional monasticism in early Christianity; to the Moravians in the 18th century, who kindled a 24/7 prayer furnace for missions that went on for a hundred years.

ALL AUTHORITY

What are some of the lessons we can glean from the last three decades of

themselves before God and each other. From here they enter into unity and concerted agreement with one another. Finally, once they are in this place of alignment with each other and the Holy Spirit, they are enabled to exercise the authority given to the saints to prophetically declare the will of God over their nation. To put it succinctly, "humility + unity = authority."

The governing rights given to God's people are incredible. Jesus said, "Whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven..." (Mat 18:18, NKJV) He promised, "You may ask me for anything in my name, and I will do it." (Joh 14:14, NIV) He declared, "I have given you authority... to overcome all the power of the enemy, nothing will harm you." (Luk 10:19, NIV) The common denominator in all of these promises is that they were given to the disciples as a group—meaning corporate prayer,

LIGHT THE WINDOW

Of course, it is not as though the church has been completely idle in prayer over the last few decades. Some have been quite dedicated, even though they are a minority. Through this committed few, in the last thirty years we have seen more breakthroughs among unreached peoples than ever before in history. Many of these breakthroughs can be directly connected to intentional, united prayer efforts. For more on this read John Lambert's article on page 21 which describes the various prayer initiatives for the 10/40 Window that have happened over the last twenty years, and what has happened as a result.

One new initiative called Light the Window aims to raise up 10 million intercessors to pray for the peoples of the 10/40 Window through the year 2020. The goal is to raise up 1 billion hours of prayer for spiritual breakthrough among the 365 largest unreached people groups, which collectively make up 2.5 billion people. To learn more about this initiative read the article on page 40 and visit www.ltw2020.org. 