



World Christian Fellowship Newsletter

February 2008

Prayer as a Force for Mobilization

by Mark W.

The World Christian Fellowship was birthed in prayer and guided by Scripture. As we gather for our 24th year of the World Christian Conference, we are heartened to see how God has *sustained* our vision as a grass-roots movement of Christians on a journey to becoming strategically involved in God's plan to disciple all nations.

Power of prayer. All of us experience the power of prayer in our lives. The legendary passage in Exodus 17 vividly demonstrates to us that Israel fought (and won) its first military battle through corporate prayer to the Almighty! Verse 11 reveals, "As long as Moses held up his hands, the Israelites were winning, but whenever he lowered his hands, the Amalekites were winning."

Aligning our hearts. Many other Scriptures exhort us to prayer and intercession because it is the lifeline of our Christian well-being, and a fundamentally indispensable imperative for our success in our World Christian endeavors. Prayer is the means of aligning our heart with the heart of God, and thus fulfilling his purposes in us!

As the WCC advances into our silver jubilee next year, we hope that our vision will transform from one of "sustenance" to "expansion." The only way to realize that transformation is through the active and intentional engagement of every World Christian alumnus, not just at the conference, but also for the rest of the year through the World Christian Fellowship regional prayer groups or other similarly focused prayer vehicles.

Prayer as warfare. At the same time, prayer is a vital and strategic mobilizing force used by God to fulfill his purposes in the kingdom. Prayer is warfare. Ephesians 6:12 emphasizes that "our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world, and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms." R. Arthur Matthews, in his eminent book on spiritual warfare, *Born*

for Battle, reinforces the idea that Christians are soldiers of the cross!

Military context. It is interesting to note that the word "*mobilization*" was first used in a military context to describe the act of organizing and assembling of troops and supplies in preparation for war. Hence, as we pray, we mobilize for the kingdom, in our individual World Christian journey, and as a corporate body girded to be part of the World Christian movement globally.

WCF prayer groups. The strategic focus of the World Christian Fellowship prayer groups, and our very *raison d'être*, is threefold:

- 1) Prayer for accountability and discipline in our World Christian journey. Constant clarification, refocusing, and expansion of our vision.
- 2) Prayer for mobilization into action regarding our specific calling at any point in our journey – as a *goer, sender, or mobilizer*.
- 3) Prayer as intercession for the nations.

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Come, as we continue to *arise and revive the nations* and *explore visions of expansion in our World Christian journey* as a corporate body!

Tips: Revitalize your Prayer Group

Focus. Narrow the focus of the prayer time. For example, prayers might be limited to praying for the persecuted church and then only for specific needs of say three to five selected countries.

Short and Sweet. Long winding prayers may be appropriate in the prayer closet, but they are rarely conducive to community prayer, often resulting in people tuning out. The person praying the long prayer inadvertently discourages others from participating because of the proportion of time taken up. Remind your group to keep their prayers targeted and brief.

Centered on God. Remember that God is the real audience, so direct the attention on him. Make God the subject of the prayers rather than overusing the word "we." Instead of saying, "Lord, may we reach out to the nations" say, "Lord, would You give us a greater heart for the nations." The difference in wording is subtle, but the difference in focus is clear.

Kingdom Requests. From Matthew 6:9-10, Jesus intended "your kingdom come, your will be done" to be the context in which all prayers are brought to God. Read "Enter the Battlefield article" in this newsletter for more on logistical vs. strategic prayers. Reference: Wheeler, A. (2007, November/December). Help for praying small groups. *Discipleship Journal* (issue 162).

Enter the Battlefield: Increase your Strategic Prayers

By Esther W.

In his article “Engaging The Unseen Foe”, Jerry Bridges (1984) addressed the issue of prayer as warfare with a defeated but still powerful enemy. Bridges pointed out that if believers allow their prayers to remain only on the level of immediate or “felt needs”, they risk the danger of missing the larger struggle that God is ultimately interested in.

2 Kings 3. Bridges used the illustration of 2 Kings 3 that recorded the account of Joram (king of Israel), Jehoshaphat (king of Judah), and the king of Edom charging into battle against the king of Moab without seeking God’s help or guidance. Only when they ran out of water in the middle of the desert did they suddenly want God’s help. The focus of their prayer was their “felt need.” Although having enough water was a critical detail, it wasn’t the main purpose. The kings were supposed to fight a battle! God spoke through the prophet Elisha: “You will see neither wind nor rain, yet this valley will be filled with water, and you, your cattle, and your other animals will drink. This is an easy thing in the eyes of the Lord; he will also hand Moab over to you (vv.17-18).” Unlike the kings who were preoccupied with their immediate need, God had not forgotten the objective of winning the battle over the Moabites.

Strategic, tactical, and logistical prayers. Bridges made the distinction between three military terms that illustrate various types of prayer: strategic, tactical, and logistical. *Strategic* referred to the ultimate objective or overall plan, to defeat the enemy. *Tactical* referred to the specific battles necessary to achieve the ultimate objective. *Logistical* referred to the supplying of the physical needs of the army fighting the battle.

Mostly logistical. Bridges believed that the majority of prayers are often logistically focused, for water in the desert. These prayers could be for someone’s illness or for a friend who lost a job. Although praying for someone’s immediate needs should definitely be done, it is important that it is not all that is being prayed about. Believers should increase their focus on the ultimate objective, the battle that God is keenly interested in. When praying, believers are entering into spiritual warfare and engaging a defeated but still powerful enemy: Satan the unseen foe.

Greatest “felt pain.” Personally, I often am most fervent in prayer when my “felt pain” or that of those around me is the greatest or the most urgent. O Lord, take this stomach

flu away. O Lord, please let my sister’s baby and toddler sleep through the night. O Lord, let the visas come through in time for the short-term trip. These types of prayers are natural and good because they acknowledge our dependence on God, our Father in heaven. The illustration from 2 Kings 3 is such a good reminder that it is easy for the Lord to take care of those things. However, I may miss the bigger picture of what God is concerned with if I remain only on a logistical level.

Increase the strategic prayers. Understanding the distinction of the prayer types encourages me to be more aware of who the enemy is and the spiritual nature of the battle. Praying for each spirit-filled believer to overcome Satan in order that

Are our prayers mostly logistical, tactical or strategic? What’s the difference anyway?

all the nations would know Jesus Christ as King is the kind of prayer that aligns with God’s ultimate objectives. Instead of condemning fallen church leaders, I can increasingly view them as casualties of the war and pray for their restoration to the church body in love. I can pray for God to unleash the Asian American capacity for world missions in order to further his Kingdom purposes. I can ask God for healing and victory in many arenas of my life in order that I might be a faithful witness to the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Get into the battle. Bridges concluded, “Keep praying for your friend in the hospital, and keep praying for your friend who needs work. But remember that these are light things in the eyes of the Lord. Ask God to get you into the heat of the real battle. Ask him to equip you to engage the unseen foe, and then take your prayer life into the war for God’s ultimate objective. And expect him to hand Moab over to you.”

Reference: Bridges, J. (1984, January/February). Engaging the unseen foe.

WCF REGIONAL PRAYER GROUPS!

The following prayer groups meet monthly. For more information on meeting times and locations, visit wcfellowship.org.

East Bay (Moraga, CA)

LA (Arcadia, CA)

SF Monthly Missions Meeting (MMM) (San Francisco, CA)

Seattle (Tukwila, WA)

SF South Bay (Sunnyvale, CA)