



THE
BLUEPRINT SERIES
Volume 4

Building **MISSIONS EFFECTIVENESS** **Through Intercessory Prayer**



Created by Paul Brannan
for the
World Assemblies of God Fellowship



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MISSIONS EFFECTIVENESS

Through Intercessory Prayer



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This manual has been produced by the Missions Awareness Team to assist church Leaders in establishing a comprehensive missions outreach in the local congregation.

Created by Paul Brannan



MISSIONS COMMISSION
WORLD ASSEMBLIES OF GOD FELLOWSHIP
THE ACTS ONE-EIGHT PROJECT

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Without the assistance of others, we accomplish very little in this life that is worthwhile. This was certainly true in preparing this manual about intercessory prayer for missionaries. Most books or manuals contain the author's own thoughts and opinions, but in this case I felt it necessary to seek input from others.

Little is mentioned in these pages regarding the techniques of prayer. Instead, the emphasis is on inspiration, ideas and resources, involving scores of committed individuals who believe in and practice intercessory prayer.

Testimonies by missionaries regarding answered prayer were critical to the manual's effectiveness. I searched for accounts of missionaries who had a great need that was unknown to others, yet the Holy Spirit led obedient saints to intercede. Many times these intercessors did not know the missionary personally and had no detailed knowledge of the need. They only knew that the Holy Spirit led them to pray. These testimonies were later confirmed when the missionaries met the intercessors and confirmed the dates and circumstances of the Holy Spirit's involvement. That is the Holy Spirit in action!

Hundreds of pastors encourage intercessory prayer for missionaries and create opportunities for believers to participate collectively and individually in prayer. I am grateful for the scores of pastors who took the time to share their experiences and ideas for keeping believers active in intercessory prayer. Many of the suggestions in this manual may be new; others quite familiar. In either case, pastors and church leaders can benefit from the experiences shared.

My deepest gratitude is directed to the Holy Spirit for His guidance, not only in compiling and writing this material, but also for His daily presence, direction and empowerment. May we all become increasingly conscience of His strength and enablement to live more victoriously. His power makes it possible for each of us to go to the ends of the earth, either on our feet or on our knees, with the eternal message of God's love.

INTRODUCTION

Almost everyone will pray – at least in times of difficulty. When a son or daughter is on drugs, we pray. When the doctor says, “You have three months to live,” we pray. The question is: What kind of prayer are we involved in and is it really effective?

Contrary to some peoples understanding, there are many kinds of prayer. Some prayers are true worship to God; other prayers are a way of communing with Him by talking and then listening. There is soul-searching prayer concerning our spiritual walk with God, or prayer for our physical, financial or emotional needs. There is also prayer for others who are close to our heart. Finally, we pray for people and circumstances that do not directly affect us. This kind of selfless prayer is called *intercessory prayer*.

We don't hear much about intercessory prayer in most Christian circles, but it is biblical, very effective and desperately needed by missionaries. So why don't we dedicate ourselves more to intercession since we know that God responds to our pleas in behalf of others?

Perhaps the reason is that we don't understand the importance of intercessory prayer. But we have only to look at the demonic forces at work against missionaries and national church fellowships around the world to recognize the extreme need for intercessory prayer. We may not know how to pray effectively for the missionaries initially, but with the guidance of the Holy Spirit and help from available resources, we should soon learn to listen to the still, small voice of the Spirit.

If the truth were known, the likely reason that we fail to pray for others is not because we are selfish and uncaring, but because we are too busy. It seems that the more labor-saving devices that we accumulate, the busier we become. But are we too busy to intercede for others, including our missionaries? Without prayer support, the battle is lost before missionaries ever leave for the field.

Intercessory prayer takes time and can be hard work! While this manual does little to address issues of time management and work ethics, it does include information and resources about praying more frequently and more effectively for missionaries. The testimonies of answered prayers and the experiences shared by the pastors regarding how to promote prayer for missionaries offer fresh ideas that missions leaders may adapt to local congregations.

My desire is that in some small way the following pages will make missionaries labors more effective through increased intercession of local congregations on their behalf.

Your partner in the harvest,

Paul Brannan

SECTION 1

Intercessory Prayer: What Does the Bible Say?

I urge, then, first of all, that requests, prayers, intercession and thanksgiving be made for everyone – for kings and all those in authority, that we may live peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness.

1 Tim 2:1-2 NIV

INTERCESSION IN THE OLD TESTAMENT

There are scores of examples of intercessory prayer to be found in the Old Testament. Few, however, will match the two recorded below for their audacity or intensity.

Abraham's intercession for Sodom

The men turned away and went toward Sodom, but Abraham remained standing before the LORD. Then Abraham approached him and said: "Will you sweep away the righteous with the wicked? What if there are fifty righteous people in the city? Will you really sweep it away and not spare the place for the sake of the fifty righteous people in it? Far be it from you to do such a thing--to kill the righteous with the wicked, treating the righteous and the wicked alike. Far be it from you! Will not the Judge of all the earth do right?" The LORD said, "If I find fifty righteous people in the city of Sodom, I will spare the whole place for their sake." Then Abraham spoke up again: "Now that I have been so bold as to speak to the Lord, though I am nothing but dust and ashes, what if the number of the righteous is five less than fifty? Will you destroy the whole city because of five people?" "If I find forty-five there," he said, "I will not destroy it." Once again he spoke to him, "What if only forty are found there?" He said, "For the sake of forty, I will not do it." Then he said, "May the Lord not be angry, but let me speak. What if only thirty can be found there?" He answered, "I will not do it if I find thirty there." Abraham said, "Now that I have been so bold as to speak to the Lord, what if only twenty can be found there?" He said, "For the sake of twenty, I will not destroy it." Then he said, "May the Lord not be angry, but let me speak just once more. What if only ten can be found there?" He answered, "For the sake of ten, I will not destroy it." When the LORD had finished speaking with Abraham, he left, and Abraham returned home. (Gen 18:23-33 NIV)

There is no doubt about it, Abraham meant business! He actually went to the Lord six times, each time reducing the acceptable number of righteous that might be found in the city in order to spare it from destruction. What audacity! That's what you call goal oriented.

It takes more than stubbornness, however, to accomplish such a feat as this. Abraham didn't realize this answer to prayer just because he was focused. Abraham had this kind of influence with God because he was a "Friend of God" (James 2:23 KJV). How do you think Abraham knew that the Lord was preparing to destroy Sodom? Because the Lord told him! That is the kind of relationship they had.

Moses' prayer for the people after the golden calf

A book on the intercessory prayers of Moses would be interesting reading. Imagine having not only the spiritual responsibilities, but the logistical load as well, for over three million displaced people wandering through the wilderness. The problems they encountered would force any leader to their knees pleading to God for help. We have a record of many of those prayers of intercession.

Without a doubt, the most deliberate and potentially costly to Moses personally was his prayer for the Israelites when he came down from the mountain with the Ten Commandments that God had given him on the two tablets of stone.

You remember the story. The people decided that Moses had been gone too long. They didn't know if he was coming back or not. Maybe he was dead. They decided to make a god that they could worship, so they took their jewelry, melted it down and made a golden calf.

While this was going on, God told Moses to return quickly to the people, that they had returned to pagan worship. Upon his return, Moses saw how depraved they had become. He became angry and threw down the tablets containing the Ten Commandments, destroying them.

God said he was going to destroy the people for their idol worship. An interesting point is that God said that He was still going to make from Moses a great nation. Moses had nothing to lose. God was going to bless Him, but God was going to destroy these idolatrous people. This is where Moses laid his life on the line when he said, *"Oh, what a great sin these people have committed! They have made themselves gods of gold. But now, please forgive their sin--but if not, then blot me out of the book you have written."* *The LORD replied to Moses, "Whoever has sinned against me I will blot out of my book. Now go, lead the people to the place I spoke of, and my angel will go before you. However, when the time comes for me to punish, I will punish them for their sin."* (Ex 32:31-34 NIV)

Moses could become angry with the people, but no one could doubt his commitment to the people. He risked his own eternity in that prayer to God! God in His graciousness, however, reminded Moses that sin has a price. Moses, you lead the people to the place that I have shown to you and at the proper time those who have sinned will have to pay for their sins.

Read the full account for yourself (Ex 32:11-14, 21-34; 33:12)

INTERCESSION IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

Intercession in the Gospels

We know that intercessory prayer is prayer for others. It is prayer motivated by a deep concern and love for the need of another. It is prayer that does not benefit us directly. Let's look at the Gospels for examples of this kind of prayer.

We would expect to find examples of intercessory prayer evidenced within the New Testament Church, but the Gospels have a number of examples of intercessory prayer within their pages.

Near the beginning, when Jesus is teaching on prayer he says, *"pray for those who persecute you."* (Matt 5:44 NIV) This introduces a new kind of prayer. In the following chapter (Matt 6:9-13) in the Lord's Prayer, Christ again presents the concept of concern for others and the forgiveness of others.

Many who came to Jesus evidenced an attitude or spirit of intercession by looking for help for their friends. We see this recorded in the account of the

centurion who came seeking help for his servant (Matt 8:13); also those who brought the paralytic (Matt 9:2-6). Later we see the account of the woman who cried out for her child and how Christ responded (Matt 15:28), or His response to the man who brought his lunatic son (Matt 17:14-21).

Two perfect examples of intercessory prayer are shown when Christ interceded for Peter (Luke 22:31-32), and again for those who crucified Him (Luke 23:34). There are others, but this should show the pattern of intercessory prayer within the Gospels.

Intercessory Prayers of the Church:

With the coming of the Holy Spirit in Acts, Chapter 2, the Church was born. The Holy Spirit filled believer made the Church a power-filled dynamo! Supernatural power was now resident within the believer.

The prayers of the saints were connected to the throne of God. Stephen's prayer for his murderers is an example of a prayer of intercession anointed by the Holy Spirit. Or consider Peter in Joppa where his anointed prayer of intercession brought Dorcas back to life (Acts 9:40). Following that miracle the church was interceding for Peter who was in Prison awaiting his execution, but was delivered by an angel (Acts 12:5, 12).

We can see intercessory prayer exemplified in the commissioning prayer when Antioch sent Paul and Barnabas out as missionaries (Acts 13:3); and again as Paul and Barnabas interceded for the churches (Acts 14:23).

Intercession Found in the Epistles:

We find intercession mentioned often in the Epistles, with most references found in Paul's writings. He draws vivid word pictures of earnest prayer for others:

- a. Prayer for the Christians in Rome
"For God is my witness, whom I serve with my spirit in the gospel of his Son, that without ceasing I make mention of you always in my prayers." (Rom 1:9 KJV)
- b. The Spirit's intercession *"for the saints according to the will of God."* (Rom 8:27 KJV)
- c. Paul praying for the Jewish people to be saved
"Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is that they might be saved". (Rom 10:1 KJV)
- d. Paul's request that they pray for him
"I urge you, brothers, by our Lord Jesus Christ and by the love of the Spirit, to join me in my struggle by praying to God for me." (Rom 15:30 NIV)
- e. Paul had been strengthened through the prayers of his friends
"He has delivered us from such a deadly peril, and he will deliver us. On him we have set our hope that he will continue to deliver us, as you help us by your prayers. Then many will give thanks on our behalf for the gracious favor granted us in answer to the prayers of many." (2 Cor 1:10-11 NIV)

- f. Paul prays for the Corinthian church
“Now we pray to God that you will not do anything wrong. Not that people will see that we have stood the test but that you will do what is right even though we may seem to have failed.” (2 Cor 13:7 NIV)
- g. Paul prays for the Ephesians
“For this reason, ever since I heard about your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love for all the saints, I have not stopped giving thanks for you, remembering you in my prayers.” (Eph 1:15-16 NIV) (See also Eph. 1:17-23; 3:14-21)
- h. Paul exhorted that intercession be made for everyone, including kings and those in authority.
“I urge, then, first of all, that requests, prayers, intercession and thanksgiving be made for everyone- 2 for kings and all those in authority, that we may live peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness.” (1 Tim 2:1-2 NIV)
- i. Paul prayed for Timothy
“I thank God, whom I serve, as my forefathers did, with a clear conscience, as night and day I constantly remember you in my prayers.” (2 Tim 1:3 NIV)
- j. He also prayed for Philemon
“I always thank my God as I remember you in my prayers, 5 because I hear about your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love for all the saints. 6 I pray that you may be active in sharing your faith, so that you will have a full understanding of every good thing we have in Christ.” (Phile 4-6 NIV)
- k. James instructs us that the elders of the church are to pray for the sick
“Is any one of you sick? He should call the elders of the church to pray over him and anoint him with oil in the name of the Lord. 15 And the prayer offered in faith will make the sick person well; the Lord will raise him up. If he has sinned, he will be forgiven. Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective.” (James 5:14-16 NIV)
- l. The writer of the letter to the Hebrews appeals for prayer
“Pray for us. We are sure that we have a clear conscience and desire to live honorably in every way. I particularly urge you to pray so that I may be restored to you soon.” (Heb 13:18-19 NIV)

Over and over again we are admonished to pray for others. “But”, you say, “How can we be sure that our prayers will really be heard?” We can know without a doubt. John perhaps says it best. *“This is the confidence we have in approaching God: that if we ask anything according to his will, he hears us. And if we know that he hears us-whatever we ask-we know that we have what we asked of him.”* 1 John 5:14-15 NIV

Now that is assurance! So what are we waiting for? Let’s start asking in faith!

JESUS CHRIST AND THE HOLY SPIRIT AS INTERCESSORS

Jesus Christ Intercedes for Us

During His years of ministry here on earth, Jesus frequently demonstrated His compassion by praying for those whose lives He had come to touch with His message of love and life. He wept over the city of Jerusalem (Lu 19:41). He demonstrated His concern for His disciples by praying for them both individually (Lu 22:32) and as a group (Jn 17: 6-26). As noted earlier, He even prayed for His enemies while He was hanging on the cross. (Lu 23:34)

Right now, even as you read these words, Christ is occupied, fulfilling one aspect of His ministry: to intercede for each of us before the throne. *“Who is he that condemns? Christ Jesus, who died-more than that, who was raised to life-is at the right hand of God and is also interceding for us.”* (Rom 8:34 NIV) It is not God’s will that we sin and John admonishes us not to sin, but he also says that if we sin, *“...we have one who speaks to the Father in our defense-Jesus Christ, the Righteous One.”* (1 John 2:1 NIV)

That is why Jesus is able to completely and totally save all who come to God through Him. *“He is able to save completely all who come to God through him. Since he will live forever, he will always be there to remind God that he has paid for their sins with his blood.”* (Heb 7:25 TLB)

The Holy Spirit’s Ministry of Intercession

Who wouldn’t want to be full of the Holy Spirit? Who wouldn’t want to walk in the Spirit day by day? This is not privation. This is privilege! To have the Holy Spirit living within us, bringing strength for our weaknesses and helping us with our daily problems – who could ask for more? That’s what Paul said the Holy Spirit will do in the life of the Spirit led believer. Just read these two versions of his words to the Romans about the work of the Spirit in the life of the believer.

“In the same way, the Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groans that words cannot express. And he who searches our hearts knows the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints in accordance with God’s will.” (Rom 8:26-27 NIV)

“And in the same way-by our faith --the Holy Spirit helps us with our daily problems and in our praying. For we don’t even know what we should pray for nor how to pray as we should, but the Holy Spirit prays for us with such feeling that it cannot be expressed in words. And the Father who knows all hearts knows, of course, what the Spirit is saying as he pleads for us in harmony with God’s own will.” (Rom 8:26-27 TLB)

It should not seem strange that the Holy Spirit would be actively involved in the intercession of the saints. In 1 Peter 1:11 the Holy Spirit is called the Spirit of Christ. We know that Jesus asked the Father to send the Holy Spirit to dwell in

the believers' lives so that we would not be left spiritual orphans. *“But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all truth. He will not speak on his own; he will speak only what he hears, and he will tell you what is yet to come... All that belongs to the Father is mine. That is why I said the Spirit will take from what is mine and make it known to you.”* John 16:13, 15 (NIV)

It appears that the ministry of intercession conducted by the Holy Spirit in the lives of the Spirit led believers here on earth is somehow related to the ministry of intercession conducted by Jesus Christ at the throne of God. That is awesome!

SECTION 2

Learning to Pray More Effectively

One day Jesus was praying in a certain place. When he finished, one of his disciples said to him, "Lord, teach us to pray, just as John taught his disciples." Luke 11:1 NIV

INTERCESSORY PRAYER

THE UPSIDE-DOWN PRAYER

By David Irwin

Intercessory prayer is a subject not usually addressed and not often practiced.

Most of us have been brought up on other kinds of prayers. Some pray according to Wall Street. That type of prayer is based on the premise that says, "Whatever you put into the Kingdom, God always gives back more; it's a good deal, so it pays to pray."

Another kind of prayer is prayed when families are in trouble, or children have run away, or a marriage is falling apart. In our distress we appeal to God for help.

Some of us who are over-budgeted pray very earnestly at times of the month when our payments are due. We pray, "O God, forgive my foolishness, but send the money I need."

Intercessory prayer is a different kind of prayer. I think of it as an upside-down prayer. It does not originate with the person praying. It does not begin with his need for a car payment or healing for his children. It isn't a prayer begging God to raise his salary. Intercessory prayer is *unselfish* prayer. The intercessor asks nothing except to be a channel through which the Spirit of God can flow as oil flows through golden pipes.

Intercessory prayer requires no objective experience or knowledge. You do not have to know the facts of a case to be used as an intercessor. All you have to do is say, "I will be a channel through which God's Spirit can move. If He wakes me at night, I will pray. When He burdens me with the things that break His heart, my heart too shall be broken. I will identify with my suffering Lord."

In intercessory prayer, we progress through three stages. Each stage builds upon the other and finally consummates in the kind of prayer that brings deliverance.

The first stage is *identification*. We, like our Lord, care about people who are lost. The New Testament speaks of Christ being filled with compassion. The word translated *compassion* in English is a more powerful word in Greek. It means His very bowels, His intestines, were wrenched with pain and agony because of what was happening to the people. When He saw them deceived by the wiles of the devil, such compassion gripped Him that He was physically sick.

He is looking today for people who will identify with the ugly, the lost, and the radical. He wants us to identify with people who hurt; with those who, when we help them, can offer nothing in return.

The second stage we must go through to become intercessors is to *learn to agonize*. Some Christians don't believe their relationship with the Lord should cost them even a moment's pain. I want to assure you that Jesus is not sitting on the right hand of the Father laughing; He is sitting there weeping. Jesus is deeply grieved. He wants us to take up the burden, to share the load, to make prayers of commitment about the kind of people we want to be.

Agony is the farthest thing from some Christian's minds. They feel they should not be bothered by people in Africa, or the South Seas, or the Middle East, or anywhere else.

This philosophy is diametrically opposed to what our Lord said. The Good Shepherd left the ninety and nine and went out to seek the one who was lost. Finding a lost sheep isn't hard because a lost sheep will bleat until his shepherd comes. But the hard part, the agony, is being willing to pick up that bleating, bruised, battered sheep, place it on your shoulder, and by an act of your own will and commitment, carry that sheep back to the fold. That's the hard work of evangelism – bringing the sheep into the home of the Father.

Third, after we have identified with the lost and needy, after we have agonized, we can reach a place of *authority*. Intercessory prayer is not nebulous or wispy or spooky. It is relevant, powerful prayer because God is laying upon us the burdens we need to help His kingdom the most. Spiritual needs can be met through the authority of intercessory prayer.

Dr. Johan Loew, headmaster of a girl's schools in Malawi, told about a miraculous of intercessory prayer. During a revival of nationalistic religions such as sorcery and witchcraft, when some Malawians were returning to the practices of their forefathers, the Christian girls in the school backslid. In their villages they had been persuaded to go back to heathen religions as a sign of independence. They took part in sexual orgies and beer-drinking feasts.

Dr. Loew related how the girls' rebellion crushed him. But one day, one of the girls came into his office and said she wanted to make things right with God again. She knelt by the headmaster's desk and renewed her fellowship with God. The next day and the next, more girls came, until finally they had all returned to the Lord.

While visiting the churches that supported him, Dr. Loew told this story. After one service a little arthritic grandmother from a farm asked to speak to him. He went to her, and she asked if the girls had started coming back to the Lord on a certain date. He said, "Yes. How did you know?"

She said, "I can only tell you the strangest experience of my life. I cannot go out and do things, so I pray day and night for the work of God. One day I was sitting in my bedroom looking out across our farm where my sons were working. The presence of God came upon me with a spirit of prayer. The Holy Spirit put the number 238 in my mind. I asked, 'Lord, what does 238 mean?' He answered, 'Simply pray.'

"I began to pray and a spirit of agony came upon me. The next day the number was 237, the 230, and right on down through all the numbers."

Dr. Loew said, "Every day the number she was given matched the number of girls who had not yet returned to God!" That grandmother had identified, and agonized, and claimed the souls of those girls.

If we will identify with the lost, the sick, and the hopeless; if we will agonize over their condition; if we will die to ourselves; we will gain an authority in prayer that we have never known. The Spirit of God will arrest sinners on the street. He will walk with us in our communities, down hospital corridors, into rest homes, and into schools. Our prayers can reach around the world and touch a lost soul, a depressed national pastor, or a struggling missionary by the Spirit of God. We can become the golden pipes through which the oil of the Spirit will flow.

David Irwin and his wife, Debbie, served as missionaries in Egypt and Malawi before he was appointed Foreign Missions Editor in July 1970. In July, 1975 he transferred to the Assemblies of God Theological Seminary where he taught missions courses. He was killed in an automobile accident July 7, 1984.

HOW TO MAKE EFFECTUAL AND FERVENT PRAYER FOR MISSIONARIES

“God bless the missionaries and meet their every need” is the prayer repeated daily by thousands of believers across the nation. There is no doubt that their desire to pray for missionaries is real, but this kind of prayer is not the effective, fervent prayer that James wrote about. ... *The effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much. (James 5:16 KJV)* Powerful intercessory prayer is knowledgeable, specific, faithful, and spirit-inspired.

PRAY KNOWLEDGEABLY

1. Know the Missionary

Find out as much as you can about the missionaries for whom you are praying. Read their prayer letters. (Your church receives several letters yearly from the missionaries that it supports.) If possible, correspond with the missionary. When missionaries visit your church, spend some time with them, maybe even inviting them out for a meal. Knowing the missionaries by name and by face will help you pray for them individually. Getting to know a little bit about their lives and personalities will help you better understand their needs and desires.

2. Know the Nature of the Missionary's Work

Missionaries' responsibilities and ministries vary greatly. They may serve as evangelists, church planters, Bible teachers, administrators, doctors, nurses, or writers. Whatever their responsibilities, they all share the same goal: to help bring souls into the kingdom of God. Understanding each missionary's ministry will help you pray for them more specifically.

3. Know the Missionary's Field of Labor

Read general knowledge about the missionary's country of ministry in publications at your local library. Also take advantage of the publications available from Assemblies of God World Missions. Understanding the culture and conditions in which the missionary works can help you better understand their prayer needs.

Mark the missionary's country and city on a map. If you hear of an earthquake, flood, or political problems in that nation, studying the map will help you determine whether the missionary is in immediate danger that would require your intercession in their behalf.

PRAY SPECIFICALLY

1. Pray for the Needs Mentioned in the Missionary's Letters

Since every missionary's ministry and circumstances are unique, every missionary's prayer requests are different. These requests may be mentioned in prayer letters or announced from the pulpit. Be sure to take note of the special needs that are mentioned.

2. Pray for the Missionary's Health

Missionaries work long hours, with very difficult schedules, and many live in inhospitable climates. Different food and unsafe water can cause illness. Sanitation may be inadequate. Medical help may not be readily available. Missionaries are subjected to many illnesses and diseases that are seldom seen here in the United States. Sickness can rob missionaries of time and strength. Pray that the missionary will have adequate rest, nutrition and strength.

3. Pray for the Missionary's Safety

Many missionaries travel extensively in their work, traveling on anything from an airplane to horseback. Some missionaries cross crowded cities in hazardous traffic; others travel primitive roads or mountain paths. An accident can cause injury, delay of ministry, legal complications, or even death.

Many missionaries live in countries that are politically unstable or are unsympathetic to the western world. Terrorist activities and rampant crime are a way of life that many of our missionaries must face every day. Pray that God will protect the missionaries in their daily ministry activities and their children as well.

4. Pray for the Success of the Missionary's Ministry

Missionaries need visas to enter a foreign country. When they want to start a new work or build a church or Bible school, they usually need special permits. Pray that God's work will not be hindered by red tape or hostile officials.

In many countries, everyday tasks can be time-consuming and frustrating. Even buying groceries or mailing a package may take several hours. Pray that missionaries may have the knowledge and resources necessary to accomplish their God-given goals quickly and efficiently. Pray that food and other necessities will be readily available.

Pray that missionaries' prayer and study times are productive. Pray for wisdom, clarity and the direction of Holy Spirit in their ministry activities.

5. Pray for the Missionary's Spiritual Needs

Missionaries are not super Saints just because they responded to the missionary call. They need God's presence to uplift them, the wisdom of God to direct them, and the anointing of God to help them have effective ministry.

Missionaries carry heavy responsibilities. They must feed the spiritually hungry. Often they are called upon to give counsel and direction in difficult

situations. Such demands drain their spiritual resources. Pray that they will depend on the Holy Spirit for renewal and that they will establish supportive relationships with fellow missionaries.

6. Pray for the Missionary's Emotional Needs

Loneliness and homesickness attack all missionaries at one time or another. While their families in their home country celebrate births and weddings, missionaries can only read about these events in letters. Missionaries in isolated areas often must spend holidays alone. The enemy uses discouragement, loneliness, temptation and feelings of inadequacy to bring confusion and a sense of ineffectiveness. Pray for power to resist Satan's attacks and the will to rejoice in spite of difficulties.

7. Pray for the Missionary's Cultural Adaptation

Every nation has its own customs, laws, expressions, styles, and manners. What is considered polite in one country may be thought rude in another. Learning a new language and adapting to unfamiliar sights, sounds and thinking are difficult. Pray that God gives missionaries flexibility, the gift of language learning and the ability to appreciate their adopted culture.

8. Pray for the Missionary's Family Relationships

Any family problem that exists is only exacerbated when moved to a foreign culture. A missionary family, like any other, is subject to problems, misunderstandings and challenges. A loving Christian family relationship presents a great testimony of Christ and the gospel. Pray that the missionaries will be able to walk in love and forgiveness. Pray that candidate missionaries will not leave for the field until serious family issues have been resolved.

An unfamiliar environment and a different life-style, along with the absence of tension-releasing outlets, can cause stress even in strong marriages. A strained marriage hinders ministry. Pray that each missionary couple will maintain communication and joy in their marriage.

9. Pray for the Missionary's Children

MKs (missionary kids) have unique privileges but face extraordinary circumstances and, in some cases, feel isolated and detached from family and friends in the United States.

Providing children with a stable home life and an education in a different culture can tax the missionary financially and emotionally. MKs sometimes must attend boarding school, often in another country. Such separations are difficult for the whole family. Pray that God will give the parents special wisdom in raising their children. Pray that the MKs will develop strong relationships with Christian young people and with the Lord. Pray also for the adult children of missionaries. Those who come home for college or work face long separations from their parents and a difficult cultural adjustment.

Pray that they feel a part of their parents' ministry and are given opportunities to reflect Christ's love in their schools. Pray that they feel protected and loved by the Lord, their families and the body of Christ.

10. Pray for Single Missionaries

Single missionaries encountered the same challenges as their married colleagues, but they face these things alone, and often suffer even greater loneliness. Pray that God's presence will rest especially on them.

11. Pray for the Missionary's Relationships with Other Missionaries

Ministers who live in your country are able to select those with whom they wish to share fellowship, while missionaries on the field do not have that privilege. Missionaries find themselves working with coworkers in circumstances that are less than ideal. When missionaries work together daily, differences of opinion can become major issues. Pray that missionaries will work together in unity and understanding.

12. Pray for the Missionary's Relationship with the Nationals

Many missionaries work in areas where their Christian message is unwelcome and misunderstood. Unbelievers may respond to them with suspicion and hostility.

The differences in culture and language can cause misunderstandings and offense. Pray that God's favor is evident in work-related relationships.

Even among national Christians, missionaries may have difficulty establishing rapport. In some countries where the national church is strong and well-organized, the missionary may work as a teacher, evangelist or church planter under the direction of national leadership. For missionaries who have spent years in leadership roles, this change of status requires some adjustment. Pray that the missionaries will maintain a spirit of love and servanthood.

13. Pray for the Missionary While Itinerating

Coming home on their itineration cycle can be very difficult for missionaries. "Home" has changed during the three or four years that they have been away on the mission field. Family members may have been born or died. The "home" church may have a new pastor and many new members. Clothing styles, music, and even the language have changed during their absence. Worship styles and the length of services are very different. Missionaries may feel overwhelmed, and they need time to adapt.

The itineration cycle is not a vacation. Churches must be visited and the new budget raised. For most missionary families, this means that Dad travels while Mom stays home and gets the children off to school. For the children, fitting in at school and making new friends can be intimidating. Pray that God will give missionaries strength, understanding, and adaptability during their time at home.

In countries that have now have an established Assembly of God World Missions outreach, usually about one-quarter of the missionaries are ministering in churches throughout the sending country at any given moment. Pray that God gives them favor with believers and church leaders, the ability to present their ministry effectively, protection as they travel and adequate financial support to return to their places of ministry.

PRAY FAITHFULLY

Many churches will focus on prayer for missions during their convention or when a missionary visits the church. Some will pray when they receive a missionary prayer letter. But if they don't hear anything, they assume that the missionaries don't need prayer.

No news is not necessarily good news. Missionary letters have been delayed or lost for many reasons including the following: a missionary's illness and hospitalization, a prolonged postal strike, a dishonest postal worker stealing the stamps and throwing away the letters and a civil war that halts the mail service. So keep writing, whether you received the letters or not.

Pray for missionaries, both when they're experiencing revival and when they have little progress to report. In some countries, many people are coming to Christ. Missionaries in these places need prayer as they work to disciple the many new believers. In other parts of the world conversions are few or none at all. Yet they are sowing the seeds of the gospel, and they need special prayer to persevere.

FOLLOW THE HOLY SPIRIT'S PROMPTINGS

A missionary was spending the night at an Assemblies of God Bible school in another country. The nation was in civil war, and the school was caught between the two armies. Stray bullets penetrated the buildings. And a bullet was shot from the missionary's hand. If the Army found him, he knew he could be executed.

However, during the night the Holy Spirit told a minister in his home country to pray. Several times the Spirit awakened him, impressing him that this missionary was in danger. Each time he rose and sought God for the missionary's protection.

Back in the war zone, the armies stopped at the property line of the Bible school. The buildings were not excessively damaged, and the missionary was safe. He credits his protection to prayer.

When the Holy Spirit prompts you to pray for a missionary, do so immediately. Your prayers could save lives.

See Section 3 for further testimonies of answered prayer.

**How to Pray for
Missionary Kids
(MKs)**

PRAY

for physical health and protection

PRAY

for emotional stability during political unrest and danger

PRAY

for those struggling with knowing God's will for their lives

PRAY

for 100% commitment of their lives to the Lord

PRAY

for unsaved MKs

PRAY

for MKs in boarding school

PRAY

for MK college students – separated by thousands
of miles from their parents and making
the transition to their home country

PRAY

HOW TO PRAY FOR NATIONS WHERE PERSECUTION IS PREVALENT

- Thank God for the privilege of cooperating with Him through prayer in changing these nations.
- Pray that God will release unbelievers from the powers and principalities of darkness.
- Ask the Lord to call people who are willing to sacrifice and share the love of Christ where persecution is widespread.
- Ask the Holy Spirit to open the hearts of unbelievers toward true Christianity and make them receptive to the gospel.
- Pray that God will continue to reveal himself to people through dreams and visions.
- Ask the Lord to raise up strong local churches among unreached people groups.
- Pray against spiritual forces that hinder the establishment and growth of the church in persecuted areas.
- Pray that God will sustain and give courage to new believers and protect them from those who threaten persecution and death if they do not return to the major religion.
- Ask God to give missionaries and believers creative ways to share the gospel.

SOMEBODY PRAYED

**Somebody prayed and my burden was lighter,
Somebody prayed and my path became clear,
Clouds rolled away and the sunshine was brighter,
Jesus, my wonderful Savior, was near.**

**Faith flickered low in my pain-tortured body,
Jesus, the mighty physician was there
Healing me, bringing me joy in His presence,
Answering somebody's unfailing prayer.**

**Gems for the Master afar I may gather,
Trophies at last at His feet to be laid;
"Well done," He'll say, but I think I shall answer;
"Naught but Thy grace, Lord, somebody prayed."**

Missionary Louise Jeter Walker (1913-1998)

LET'S BE SPECIFIC WHEN WE PRAY FOR OUR MISSIONARIES

Paul Brannan

How often we have been encouraged to pray for the missionaries. I wonder how often we really do it. And when we do pray for the missionaries, do we ever get specific, or is it just that general prayer that is so often repeated as a post script when we are asking God's blessing on our meal, "Oh, yes. And please, God, bless the missionaries."

It sounds a bit humorous, but not when focused through the prism of spiritual reality. It has recently been estimated that 4.4 billion people have yet to hear an adequate gospel witness. That means they may have heard of the historical Jesus Christ, but they have never heard of the Savior, Jesus Christ, or the plan of salvation and how it can affect their lives.

Over 10,000 missionaries, laboring around the world, have been sent out by countries represented by the World Assemblies of God Fellowship. These missionaries are facing thousands of challenges each day that are beyond their own abilities. They need more than a half-hearted "Lord, bless the missionaries" in their behalf.

Thank God for the thousands of committed intercessors who take seriously their responsibility to pray, really pray, for our missionaries, on a daily basis. Many times during an itineration, someone would come to me at the close of a service and say, "I just wanted you to know that not a day goes by without me praying for you." Do you have any idea how that makes a missionary feel? Certainly the missionary needs financial support, but that faithful daily intercession in our behalf is the heart of missions!

"But", you say, "how can we be more specific in our praying for missionaries? Some time ago a missionary from a sensitive area wrote in about the need for prayer for their lives and work. Obviously, the list is too long for you to cover at any one time, but it does give you an idea about how to pray more specifically and it would make a great outline for directing a prayer meeting or group.

1. Pray with understanding, claiming the Scripture's promises for us, especially for supernatural manifestations and miracles to penetrate the darkness of bound minds.
2. Pray in the Spirit, speaking in tongues, for He intercedes on our behalf.
3. Pray that we will meet the kinds of people we find in the Scriptures; i.e., people with personalities and character qualities similar to Cornelius, Peter, Andrew, the Centurion, Saul of Tarsus, Martha, Mary, Lydia, Priscilla and Aquilla, Apollos, and others.
4. Pray with authority in the Spirit against demonic forces that cause violence, spread lies and deceit about us, and blind spiritual eyes to the truth.
5. Pray that we may live Spirit-filled, Christlike lives.

6. Pray that our family will experience each day the peace and love of the Lord.
7. Pray for us to overcome what seems slow progress in language study. The enemy uses this against us.
8. Pray for our children's relationships with each other and for their growth in the Lord, progress in school, and witness.
9. Pray for our relationships with coworkers.
10. Pray that we will be sensitive to the Holy Spirit in dealing with our unsaved friends and contacts.
11. Pray that the love, power, and gifts of the Holy Spirit will flow through us and that Christ will be seen.
12. Pray for the unreached people group to whom we are giving our lives.
13. Pray that Christ will build His church among this group.
14. Pray that we will be led to those people who are searching with open hearts.
15. Pray against men of violence and those who would hinder our work, that their actions will be used for good for the gospel's sake.
16. Pray for the Holy Spirit to anoint, protect, and use new believers to reach their people with the gospel.
17. Pray for the peace of our city and country and that we may have divine favor with government officials.
18. Pray that we may be granted visas for long-term service in the country of our calling.
19. Pray for more laborers to work among the unreached and neglected people of our area.

You're right. To pray specifically for our missionaries will take time. But the time we spend in intercession will be much more rewarding and fruitful than most of the activities that clamor for our attention each day. And just think, at the end of the day we will have traveled to the far corners of the globe on our knees and become true partners with our missionaries! Can you think of a better way to spend your time?

Pray for me, too, and ask God to give me the right words as I boldly tell others about the Lord and as I explain to them that his salvation is for the Gentiles too. I am in chains now for preaching this message from God. But pray that I will keep on speaking out boldly for him even here in prison, as I should.

(Eph 6:19-20 TLB)

SECTION 3

Living Proof of the Power of Prayer

So Peter was kept in prison, but the church was earnestly praying to God for him...Then Peter came to himself and said, "Now I know without a doubt that the Lord sent his angel and rescued me from Herod's clutches... When this had dawned on him, he went to the house of Mary the mother of John, also called Mark, where many people had gathered and were praying.

Acts 12: 5, 11 NIV

THREE REASONS TO PRAY FOR MISSIONARIES

You may have heard missionaries make a statement such as this: “We need your monthly financial support, but we need your prayer support even more.” You may have been tempted to think, “Yeah, right. They say it, but they really just want my money.” But believe it or not, they really do mean what they say!

Missionaries know that they will find financial support somewhere, but they may not be so sure about finding the prayer support they need. They know their success on the field depends on the prayers of faithful partners at home.

Here are three good reasons to consider becoming a prayer partner and supporting missionaries with your faithful intercession:

1. Many missionaries face the full force of Satan’s opposition as they carry the life-changing message to those in bondage. These missionaries must have a prayer covering.
2. Interceding for specific missionaries is a spiritual investment in the results of their ministry. The victories belong to both the missionary and his or her prayer partners.
3. Jesus commanded every believer to become involved in taking the gospel to the whole world. There are only two options of obedience. One is to send others with our offerings and our prayers. The other option is to go personally. What is your choice?

The selection of missionary testimonies in the following pages shows just how critical prayer is. It can mean the difference between life and death! These testimonies also teach how important it is to be sensitive to the voice of the Holy Spirit as He urges us to intercede for someone. We may or may not know the details, but the Spirit knows the person and the need at that exact moment. Read these testimonies and let them bless your spirit. Then tell God that you are ready for Him to use you in this miraculous ministry of intercession.

A CALL TO PRAY FOR MISSIONARIES

By Dara Brannan

From the beginning of the Bible to its conclusion, prayer had an important role in the lives of God's people. Both the Old and New Testaments give examples of prayer. In the Old Testament, men of God such as Moses, Abraham, Jacob, Job and Jeremiah had a prayer relationship with God.

In the New Testament, Jesus not only taught about prayer, but he also lived a life of prayer. Luke reported Jesus praying when the heavens opened at His baptism (3:21). From this point forward, the major events of Jesus' life are characterized or preceded by prayer, culminating in His final prayer on the cross (Luke 23:34, 46).

Jesus had a relationship with the Father, and He maintained that relationship through prayer.

Some people believe prayer has lost its significance to the church today, but in the missions ministries of the Assemblies of God we know that prayer unlocks the power of God for building the church.

Without the power prayer brings and the anointing of the Holy Spirit, the goals of the harvest will not be met. Thus prayer is the awesome responsibility of the church.

In the Book of Acts, the church's ministry of prayer is reported both in the beginning: "They all joined together constantly in prayer" (Acts 1:14, NIV); and as it grew: "And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved" (Acts 2:47, NIV). This chain of prayer continued as the mighty power of God performed "wonders and miraculous signs" (Acts 2:43).

This same power of God was evidenced in our family while we were serving as missionaries in Argentina. My brother, Darin, who was about 9, was diagnosed with Hodgkin's disease. At that time the medical profession had no cure for the disease; it was fatal.

In response to much prayer, God began working in several churches as well as in individual lives. Two churches in Argentina began nightly prayer meetings to intercede for Darin's healing. They set a date when their prayers would be more concentrated through fasting. Scores of faithful intercessors participated.

Although Darin was quite ill, my father felt obligated to fulfill a commitment in Chile, where he was to minister at an international event. During the early morning hours following the day of fasting in Argentina, he was awakened by someone singing in Spanish the well-known chorus "Have Faith in God." The next morning at breakfast, he asked who had been singing. No one had heard anything.

Dad returned to his room to meditate on what had happened and what it might mean. He concluded that the singing was a message just for him. God had not punished him for any moment of doubt or fear he might have experienced over Darin's welfare. Instead, God sent a special messenger to sing a solo specifically for him! It was just the encouragement he needed.

Later that day, Dad contacted my mother by shortwave radio and discovered that Darin was much improved.

Upon Dad's return home, he and Mother took Darin to the doctor for further tests. When the examination was finished, the doctor came out, sat Darin on his knee and said, "Son, you are now ready to do your military service." Darin was completely healed and has never had another symptom of the disease.

The prayer chain that started during Darin's illness continued, and other healings were reported. These miracles came at the beginning of the mighty move of God that has brought miraculous growth to the Assemblies of God in Argentina.

The success and safety of the missionary family serving on the front lines is affected by the faithful prayers of sending churches. The apostle Paul was sustained by "*the prayers of many*" (2 Corinthians 1:11, NIV). Missionaries today depend on the prayers of churches at home.

We have the opportunity to reach the masses of people who still need an adequate witness of our Lord Jesus Christ. No culture is too difficult, no darkness too deep for prayer to penetrate, Share the excitement of the power of prayer with your congregation, and help believers implement it in their lives. Your church will be blessed, and the prayers prayed will undergird missions ministries around the world.

Join with us in a formidable army of prayer partners, dedicated to making Christ known throughout the world. We can do it on our knees!

Dara Brannan, a second-generation missionary, works with Latin America ChildCare. She writes curriculum, evaluates schools and conducts training seminars for LACC teachers.

Traveling on My Knees

Last night I took a journey to a land across the seas.
I didn't go by ship or plane; I traveled on my knees.
I saw so many people there in bondage to their sin,
And Jesus told me I should go, that there were souls to win.
But I said, "Jesus, I can't go to lands across the seas."
He answered quickly, "Yes, you can, by traveling on your knees."
He said, "You pray, I'll meet the need; you call and I will hear.
It's up to you to be concerned for lost souls far and near."
And so I did; I knelt in prayer, gave up some hours of ease.
And with the Savior by my side I traveled on my knees.
As I prayed on, I saw souls saved and twisted bodies healed.
I saw God's workers' strength renewed while laboring in the field.
I said, "Yes, Lord, I'll take the job. Your heart I want to please.
I'll heed Your call and swiftly go by traveling on my knees."

Sandra Clopine Drake

IT HAPPENS EACH JANUARY

By Dee McNeil

In August 1975, my husband, Larry, and I went to San José, Costa Rica, to study the Spanish language before beginning our missionary assignment in Spain. Although we enjoyed the culture and wonderful people of the country, the adjustments during that first semester of language school were almost overwhelming.

Larry was well-adjusted and loved his language studies, but I was struggling. We lived in a rented house that had few conveniences. I was frustrated both emotionally and spiritually. My familiar role as wife, mother and homemaker had changed drastically. Was I a missionary, a wife and mother, or a Spanish-language student?

I was bothered by inconveniences. Since our stove had no oven, cooking was a challenge. I was unable to prepare some of the dishes I normally made for my family and, of course, baking goodies was impossible. I especially missed making Christmas treats.

Our two young sons, Larry Paul and Scott, slept on flea-infested straw mattresses. We had no hot water except in the shower. To add to the stress, Scott was in his first year of school. Since he was learning to read in both English and Spanish, he struggled to distinguish between vowel sounds.

The boys missed their grandparents, cousins and puppy. Then, illness struck our home. A stray cat bit Scott, who then developed cat scratch fever with a 105-degree temperature.

Although I had been a straight-A student in the United States, I could not seem to grasp the Spanish language. Since church services were in Spanish, I could not understand the message. How I longed to feed my soul in a familiar English worship setting!

At Christmastime we had several weeks of vacation. When January came I suddenly felt spiritually renewed. I was lifted out of my depression, and the joy of the Lord filled me with new strength. I awakened each day feeling happy and with fresh desire.

The second trimester of language study began the middle of January. Everything was different this time. I loved Spanish and found it a joy to go to class. I decided our Christmastime break had made the difference in my outlook.

Because of Larry's advanced placement in Spanish and the great need at the Bible school in Madrid, we went to Spain without finishing our year of study in Costa Rica. This meant that I had to finish language study in Madrid.

Our first year in Spain was another challenge for me. I was trying to furnish a home; our boys had to be settled in a new school; and a miscarriage depleted my physical energy. I again battled with language study as I adapted to the Castilian Spanish spoken in Spain.

Early in January and for no apparent reason, I again received a new measure of strength and joy. I felt like a different person. I was soaring with fresh purpose!

I did not realize what was happening until our second year in Spain. Once again, I felt a new strength in the early days of January. Then, suddenly, I knew why. January 5 is my birthday. People all over the world pray for me on this special day because my name is listed in *Call to Prayer*. (A prayer resource containing the name, photo, birthday and country of ministry) In response, God answered the pleas of His people.

Throughout our missionary ministry, the Lord has proven himself faithful, but Januarys are especially filled with blessing, victory and joy. Because I know people are praying for me, I look forward to this special time every year.

Larry and Dee McNeil ministered in Spain. Larry currently serves as President of Latin American Theological Seminary.

DON'T PUT YOUR HANDS IN THE WATER

By Cherie Herrera

I was still living at home with my parents in Fiji. During a terrible thunderstorm we noticed the lightning and thunder were getting close and very loud. I was supposed to be washing dishes, and Mom was in the other room getting music ready for choir practice.

My brother, sister and I kept running around the house screaming as the lightning flashed. Mom told us to stop and reminded me to get back to the dishes. But for some reason I just couldn't stand still. The three of us kept running around and counting the seconds between the lightning flashes and the thunder. Our counting got shorter and shorter so we knew the lightning was getting closer.

Long story short—lightning struck our home. It hit the copper water tank on top of our roof and a million volts of electricity shot through the house. The light fixtures exploded, the switches on the wall were charred, the stereo blew up and the microwave was destroyed. Basically everything that was plugged in was fried. Later when we realized that lightning had struck the water tank, we couldn't help but be thankful to God that I wasn't washing the dishes!

Mom called my grandmother to tell her what had happened. My grandmother said a woman in our home church had just called and asked if she had heard anything about us. She said she had been constantly praying for us, and she had felt prompted to pray the strangest prayer: "Carlsons, don't put your hands in the water! Carlsons, don't put your hands in the water!" When the burden lifted she was able to stop praying.

God had used her intercessory prayer at that exact moment to save our lives. Yes indeed, the Holy Spirit still moves today!

Cherie Herrera is the daughter of missionaries Randy and Renee Carlson. She and her husband, Ricky, are missionaries to Tonga.

THE HOLY SPIRIT DOES NOT SLEEP

By Connie McDonald

Bill and I had traveled by plane from Cuenca, Ecuador, to Quito, the capital, to pick up missionary-evangelist Elmer Bueno for a series of meetings. Upon Elmer's arrival in Quito, we learned that all flights to Cuenca had been suspended indefinitely.

We had rented the government auditorium in the center of Cuenca for the meetings, but now we were stranded in Quito, about 250 miles away. The 35-minute flight was no longer an option, so our only choice appeared to be a 12-hour bus trip.

Bill decided that we should travel at night, leaving around 8 p.m. This would give us an opportunity to sleep all night on the bus and arrive around 8 a.m. the next day. We bought four tickets—two for Elmer and one each for Bill and me. We wanted our guest to be able to stretch out comfortably with plenty of room. Bill and I would just snuggle up together and sleep all the way home.

After we got on the bus we prayed together for God's protection. Elmer showed a true missionary spirit and was willing to do whatever it took to get the job done. We talked for a while after the bus left, but eventually we grew tired and drifted off to sleep.

In the middle of the night I opened my eyes to see Bill trying to awaken me and pushing me to the floor. I asked what was going on and he told me that the bus driver had fallen asleep and we were about to crash. Awakened by the screams of the passengers, Elmer looked at his watch. It was 3:10 a.m.

We were sliding sideways down the highway at full speed, with a cliff on one side and a rock wall on the other. By this time the driver had awakened and was trying to regain control, but he overcompensated, causing the bus to fishtail in the other direction.

Suddenly, for no apparent reason, the bus came under control and on course. No one was injured. You can be sure that for the rest of the night everyone stayed awake with their eyes fixed on the road ahead.

We arrived in Cuenca, and many people received Christ as their Savior at the crusade. We didn't have time to reflect on the bus trip until a week later when I received a letter from my friend Billie in Louisville, Kentucky. She wrote to ask if anything had happened on the date we were traveling. She said the Lord had placed us on her mind, and she had prayed for us all that night!

Two weeks later I received another letter from my friend Linda in Springfield, Missouri. She started her letter by asking what happened on that same night at about 3 a.m. The Lord had awakened her from a sound sleep, so she got out of bed and interceded for us.

This experience confirmed to us the work of the Holy Spirit and the value of intercessory prayer in behalf of God's servants, wherever they may be.

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| Bill and Connie McDonald currently serve as missionaries to Ecuador. Bill is founder and director of the worldwide Unsi3n Television Network. |
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A MIRACLE IN BRUSSELS

By David Lee

In 1995, while living in Brussels, Belgium, my wife, Jimmie Ruth, had surgery. After returning home, she began having pain in her legs and difficulty breathing. The doctor wanted her to come back to the hospital at 11 a.m. the next day.

I sent this information to my daughter, Cindy, who is a nurse practitioner with experience in emergency medicine. Having served as a life flight nurse for 10 years, she was familiar with the symptoms I described. Cindy lives in Pensacola, Florida, 4,700 miles away and seven hours difference in time. She read my e-mail at 8 p.m., Central time, and immediately dropped to her knees to pray.

At 7 a.m., Brussels time, she called. When I answered the phone, she said, "Dad, don't wait until 11 to take Mom to the hospital. Get her there right now because she is in big trouble."

Jimmie Ruth asked who was on the phone. When I told her it was Cindy, she said, "Let me go to the bathroom and I will talk to her." Her voice was clear and she was very lucid.

In the few moments it took for her to walk to the bathroom and back, a blood clot went through her brain. When she came back she was sweating profusely and slurring her words so badly that they were totally unintelligible. With a blank stare, she was unaware of anything around her. We had no idea what was happening.

This is where the promise of God and His power come together. Jesus said He would be with us even to the end of the world. At the exact moment I desperately needed help, my expert daughter was on the telephone telling me what to do. My son, David, who was with us in Brussels, called missionaries Richard and Sherry Dunn. They came immediately and called an ambulance.

A couple of hours later, the head of the ICU told me that he had bad news. Jimmie Ruth had clots in her legs, lungs and, worst of all, one in the brain. "I know you want me to do something, but whatever I do will kill her. If I break up the clots, she will bleed to death. If I do nothing, the clots will kill her. In all my 38 years as a physician, I have seen only three patients with clots in both the veins and arteries. None of them survived."

As people around the world prayed, God spared Jimmie Ruth's life and began the healing process in her body. Her first speech was a word at a time. Later she was speaking sentences. The only problem was that she mixed English, Spanish and French, but it made sense if you understood all three languages.

Six months later she received a standing ovation at Christian Center in Brussels after she played the piano for worship for the first time since the stroke.

Today, Jimmie Ruth is well and strong. Each birthday and every Christmas, we celebrate the life that comes from Him.

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| David and Jimmie Ruth Lee reside in Springfield, Missouri, USA. David is director of U.S. Relations for the U.S. Assemblies of God World Missions and a member of the Executive Committee. |
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GOD WATCHES OVER HIS OWN BOTH DAY AND NIGHT

By Renee Carlson

We were traveling on a ferry from our home in Labasa to Suva, the largest city on Viti Levu, Fiji's main island. It was a 12-hour trip. We always left early in the morning and drove for several hours on dirt roads to the ferry landing, followed by a four-and a-half-hour ferry ride to Viti Levu. From there we traveled another two hours to Suva.

After speaking at a conference, Randy and I left Suva about 4 a.m. in order to catch the ferry back to the island of Vanua Levu where Labasa is located. In the darkness we drove over the curvy mountain roads.

As we came around a mountain edge, we saw a large van coming straight toward us on our side of the road. Randy tried to cross to the other side, but the road was too narrow. The van hit us, spinning our little car all over the road. There were no guard rails, and from the road's edge the mountain dropped 200 feet straight down. The ordeal ended with our car at the edge of the mountain. It was a miracle that we didn't go over the side!

After the car was repaired sufficiently to get us home, my mother called and asked if everything was OK. She said a friend had called and told her she had been interceding for us. She had seen me standing on the edge of a steep cliff and I was about to fall off a mountain. She prayed and interceded for us until the burden lifted.

I told my mom that at that exact time we were driving through the mountains. A van had hit us on a mountain curve after the driver fell asleep at the wheel. It is a miracle we are alive.

GOD CARES ABOUT REFRIGERATORS TOO

Labasa, the place where we lived in Fiji, had nowhere to buy refrigerators. Our refrigerator was quite old, and one day it stopped working completely. We weren't returning to the States for a long time, and I had no idea what to do. I prayed. "Lord," we need your help. Please make this refrigerator work." Later that day the refrigerator started working again.

Soon afterward, a woman from one of our supporting churches contacted me and asked how our refrigerator was working. She said she felt impressed to intercede for it because she felt that it had stopped working. When her burden lifted, she knew it had started working again.

Although it was daytime for us when the refrigerator stopped working, it was nighttime in our home country. God had burdened her at the very moment of our need. He cares about our appliances too.

Most of the miracles that have taken place in our lives are the result of women from the prayer group at our home church who intercede for us.

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| Randy and Renee Carlson formerly served as missionaries to Fiji. They currently serve in Tonga. |
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GOD USES REGULAR PEOPLE (LIKE YOU) TO PRAY

By Vender Murphy

My wife, Jenny, and I were involved in building a new facility for the growing church we pastored in Colombia, South America. One day we received a call from one of our sons in the States. He had been arrested and was terrified.

"Mom, Dad, I didn't do it," he said. "They have the wrong guy." Jenny and I felt helpless. Should we go home and deal with the situation? If so, what about the growing church? Who would pastor it? In desperation we entered into a time of fasting and intense prayer for God's direction.

On Monday morning during the second week of our fast, I could not face going to the church office. I was tired, hungry, disappointed, frustrated and maybe even mad at God! I didn't feel like a pastor and didn't want to face anybody. I decided to stay at home while Jenny went on to the church. There I sat, feeling badly, when a barrage of tempting thoughts began: *"Now would be the perfect time to die. It would all be over and you would be free of the worry. In fact, you would die as a martyr. People would say, 'That poor missionary died in the midst of a fast.'"* I leaned back and relaxed as the thoughts kept coming. *"I wonder if someone can just stop breathing and die at will. That would be so convenient."*

Then, all of a sudden, I felt the presence of the Holy Spirit come over me in such a powerful way that I jumped up and shouted, "Devil, you are a liar. You are the father of lies, and I rebuke you in the name of Jesus! I will not listen to your suggestions. You are a defeated foe, and I stand on the Word of God! He said, *'I will never leave you nor forsake you.'*" I believe that and know that it's true."

The presence of the Holy Spirit was so strong on me that I began dancing. I cried and repented. I worshipped and literally basked in the refreshing presence of God Almighty.

About 10 minutes later my son called from the States. He was shouting with excitement, "Dad, guess what. It's over! I'm free. All the charges have been dismissed. The policeman who identified me was covering his own failure of allowing the real criminal to escape."

I called Jenny and said, "Honey, it's over! God has answered our prayers!" She rushed home and we rejoiced together at God's faithfulness.

Several months later I was in a missions service at Wanchese Assembly of God in North Carolina. Immediately following the service, a young mother approached me and introduced herself as Mona.

"Brother Murphy," she said, "I must talk to you. I've waited for this moment for months. During May of last year I had a scary, but wonderful, new experience with the Lord. I had gone into my bedroom to have my devotions, and as I knelt I heard an audible, male voice right in the room with me. It said very clearly and emphatically: 'Pray for Vender Murphy!' It scared me and I looked around to see who was in the room with me. Since I saw no one, I tried to ignore it and proceed with my devotions. But I heard it again, just as clearly as the first time: 'Pray for Vender Murphy!' I remember thinking; 'I don't know anyone by that name.'

“I decided to call my sister, my spiritual mentor, who lived just a few houses away. Before I could finish telling her what happened, she said, ‘I’ll be right down to pray with you. Vender Murphy is a missionary that our church has supported for years. He must be in trouble.’

“When she rushed in, we started to pray. I had a vision and could see you standing between a wall and a building under construction. An angry group armed with machetes, clubs and stones surrounded you. It appeared that they were going to kill you. But as we prayed, I saw them look at each other as though they could hear us praying. They scurried about and then ran off, leaving you standing alone. Brother Murphy, did you have an experience like that?”

My memory reached back to that morning in May when I sat feeling defeated and desperately alone in our apartment. I remembered those haunting suggestions and thoughts of dying that the enemy had put in my mind.

As best as we could calculate, it was that morning, at that moment, that God spoke to a regular person named Mona to pray for my family’s deliverance and victory.

“Yes, Mona,” I said, “there is a specific place between a wall and building like you saw. Yes, I was surrounded that day by death. No men were around me; I was in my living room alone. I do not know how many of the devil’s crowd were present or what they had in their hands, but God showed you my need. Yes, there was a moment when they all fled, and peace and joy filled that place. God used you and answered your prayers by bringing deliverance to someone you didn’t know who lived 1,500 miles away.” I went on to tell her about how God blessed us with the answer to our need; then we cried and rejoiced together.

Isn’t it wonderful how God uses regular people to fulfill his will?

Vender and Jenny Murphy are retired missionaries who served in Colombia and in their later years as members of the Missions Awareness Team.

DAY OR NIGHT – GOD ANSWERS PRAYER

By a missionary in a sensitive country

While my wife and I were serving as missionary associates, I contracted dengue fever. My temperature rose to 104 degrees. For three days I could not eat, talk or get out of bed. All my wife could do was pray and make sure I had enough fluids in my body. About noon on the third day my fever broke and I began to recover.

Little did we know then how God had brought about my healing. Through phone calls and e-mails, we discovered that God had awakened a 12-year-old Baptist girl in the middle of the night, which was the middle of the third day of my illness where we were living. God led her to pray for us by our first names. She awakened her mom and began to pray, and half a world away my fever broke! I had never met this girl, but she knew my family and where we were ministering. It was an incredible and extremely humbling experience.

The name of the missionary is not given due to the sensitive area where his family works.

LIFE SPARED THROUGH INTERCESSORY PRAYER

Anonymous

Due to personal matters I had returned to the United States for a few weeks in the middle of my family's term of service. During this time the pastor of my home church took me aside and showed me a piece of paper he had placed in his Bible. On it was written the name of my child, along with a date and time. The pastor said the date and time signified when the Holy Spirit spoke the name of my child to him prompting him to pray. The pastor sensed that my child's life was in imminent danger and interceded until he felt the sense of urgency lift.

The pastor asked me if I was aware of any danger my child faced on that date. I replied that so far as I knew, my child had not experienced anything life-threatening at that time.

Nearly three years later, my child related a horrendous experience that happened several years before that could have resulted in death. Until that moment I was unaware of what my child had faced, since the incident had been kept hidden.

Although I was in the dark about the experience, the Holy Spirit was well aware of what was happening and had prompted a faithful pastor in America to intercede. The pastor was obedient, and God shielded my child from danger. The date (and presumably the time) that my child faced danger was the same date written on the piece of paper in the pastor's Bible. I am convinced that my child's life was spared in answer to intercessory prayer.

The missionary's name and country of service are not listed out of respect for privacy.

GOD SEES OUR TOMORROWS

By Richard Dunn

My father came to Africa to visit us in the bush. He brought a Frisbee and asked if he could take our 5-year-old son, Richard, to a nearby field to toss it back and forth. We said it would be fine.

One throw of the Frisbee overshot Richard's head and landed in bushes a short distance from him. As he ran to retrieve it, three African men on bicycles appeared from a road behind the bushes and began screaming at him. Afraid, Richard ran back to the security of my father's arms.

The men immediately dismounted, pulled out machetes and surrounded the cluster of bushes. They lit a fire, and as it burned inward toward the center of the bush a large, poisonous serpent appeared. The men hacked the snake to death and offered the carcass to my dad, who kindly declined the offer.

At that time, my brother was a student at Southeastern University in Lakeland, Florida, USA. During a chapel service a student stood and said he had a burden for a missionary's child in Africa who was in danger. At the request of the worship leader, the students stood and interceded. My brother thought about

us. He immediately called home and asked my mother if she had heard anything from us. She said, “No, nothing!” It wasn’t until my dad returned that she learned how Richard’s life was spared. My brother, now an Assemblies of God pastor, remembers that the student body’s prayer was the day before the incident. We believe that even then God was preparing three unknown African men to save a missionary child’s life.

Richard and Sherry Dunn were living in Burkina Faso at the time of this incident. They currently serve in Europe.

LED BY A CHILD

By Melinda Henderson

The area where we live is secure, and burglary is uncommon. Nonetheless, while we were out to dinner one evening, burglars broke into our house.

The following day, a friend contacted me through Facebook and told me that the previous day her 7-year-old daughter, Ana Paola, had felt prompted to pray for us. My friend said she did not know why Ana felt the need to pray, but the family joined in intercession for us. I told her that they prayed the very day that thieves broke into our home.

What makes this experience special is that we had decided not to leave our children home alone as we had done one day a week earlier. We know that God guided us in our decision and protected our children that evening. And it was all because a 7 year-old child was obedient to the leading of the Holy Spirit!

Larry and Melinda Henderson and their three children minister in the Canary Islands.

And pray for me, too. Ask God to give me the right words so I can boldly explain God’s mysterious plan that the Good News is for Jews and Gentiles alike. I am in chains now, still preaching this message as God’s ambassador. So pray that I will keep on speaking boldly for him, as I should.

(Ephesians 6:19-20, NLT)

SECTION 4

How Churches Increase Missionary Effectiveness through Prayer

Don't forget to pray for us, too, that God will give us many opportunities to preach about his secret plan--that Christ is also for you Gentiles. That is why I am here in chains. Pray that I will proclaim this message as clearly as I should.

Col 4:3-4 NLT

HOW OTHER CHURCHES PRAY FOR MISSIONARIES

Missions is about evangelizing the world with the Good News and reaching that world is a commandment from our Lord. It is a big assignment that cannot be carried out effectively without partnership. Paul made that clear when he wrote, *"... And how can they hear without someone preaching to them? And how can they preach unless they are sent?..."* (Rom 10:14-15 NIV) John called it partnership when he wrote to Gaius, *"Dear friend, you are doing a good work for God in taking care of the traveling teachers and missionaries who are passing through. So we ourselves should take care of them in order that we may become partners with them in the Lord's work."* (3 John 5, 8 TLB)

Partnership in missions includes two kinds of people: those who go and those who send. Sending the missionaries involves both giving and praying. The problem is that few in your congregation will give or pray unless the need is made a priority in the church.

Out of sight and out of mind is an old adage that is certainly true for missionaries. Since most missionaries will visit your church on an average of one time each five years. It is difficult for your congregation to carry a burden for them during this period without some type of exposure on the part of church leadership. There are a number of ways that you can help keep the congregation focused on missionaries and their needs. Week after week, even though the missionary is not present. It is important to keep the names and faces of your missionary family before your congregation on a regular basis.

DAILY

- Many churches have lined the walls of their sanctuary with monthly commitment certificates for the missionaries that they support. Others have chosen to put these names and photographs in their prayer room. In either case, when people come to pray at any time during the week, they have a ready-made prayer list before them.
- Make the missionary prayer card, a key tool for the intercession of the missionaries. When a missionary visits your church, secure an extra supply of the missionary's prayer cards to distribute to every family in your congregation. Encourage each member to use these cards as reminders to pray for your missionaries on a daily basis.
- Some churches punch a hole in each card, placing a set of the cards on a large ring or chain and distribute a set to each family. They can then pray for their missionaries on a rotating basis during their personal prayer time. Others will place all of the prayer cards in a basket on their table and will take out one card and pray for that missionary before eating their meal.

- Create a profile for the missionaries and their ministries. This would include a color photo of the individual, couple or family and their birthdays. Reproduce sufficient copies to distribute to each church family as a prayer resource.
- Each church family can adopt a missionary for daily prayer. Ask members of the congregation to commit to faithfully intercede for specific missionaries for the next 12 months. At the end of the year, they may choose another missionary or renew their commitment to the same missionary for another year.

WEEKLY

- Some churches devote a portion of each Sunday evening service to a prayer time for missionaries. Others may do so on Sunday morning, placing the photos of the missionaries on a loop and projecting them on a screen. Even churches that do not have projection equipment will list their missionaries on a rotating basis in their weekly bulletin or prayer list. This not only makes it possible for them to pray for the missionary of the week during their service, but the members now have a hard copy of that information to take home with them and use for the next several days.
- Some churches prepare a special prayer folder of all of the missionaries that they support as well as their missionary projects. These are then distributed as people are coming into the sanctuary. There are also made available at their welcome table.
- It is great when the pastor leads the congregation and praying for the missionary requests and praise reports that are presented each week. This communicates to the membership that the pastor believes this is important. And he or she serves as an inspiration and example for the congregation that they lead.
- Churches that have projection equipment can present a video of a featured missionary each week, prior to the morning worship service. This requires no extra time in a tight schedule on Sunday mornings.
- Churches that have a weekly prayer meeting, other than the Wednesday night service, often make a place for a special focus on missionaries and their needs.
- Some churches distributed a list of their missionaries to each Sunday school teacher. The teacher will then focus on one missionary each week at the beginning of their class.
- Speaking of Sunday school, some churches have a special prayer class on Sunday morning. The leader also has a list of the missionaries and they take time to pray for each of them each week.

MONTHLY

- The first Sunday of each month is designated in many churches as missions Sunday. There is usually a special focus, which may include a brief missions' video or a compilation of news items from the missionary newsletters. This is the time when the missionary offering and the faith promises are received. It is also an ideal time to present prayer needs from one or more on the missionary families that your church supports.
- A few churches dedicate 30 to 45 minutes to a "World Missions Meeting" on the first Sunday evening of each month. Some churches will line the sanctuary with flags of the world, saying missions oriented music, and then pray for their missionaries. Many times the requests are projected on the screen with PowerPoint. At other times, the requests are printed and distributed everyone. It is a moving experience to see the service conclude by inviting the people to gather around the flag and intercede for the missionaries ministering in the country represented by the flag. This makes a statement about the priority of missions for this congregation.
- Hundreds of churches will have a guest missionary each month. When they are preparing to receive the offering for the missionary, they will call the missionary forward, have the board members and staff go forward, and pray for the missionary's personal and ministerial needs. Other churches will ask the congregation to move forward at the close of the service, to lay hands on, and pray for the missionary.
- Many churches have a missions committee (team), which meets on a monthly basis. Their monthly agenda should include a presentation of missionary needs in a time of prayer. In some churches the missions team will take the letters received from the missionaries during the previous month and divide them among the team members, who will then pray for those needs during that month.
- One church reported that on the second Saturday of each month, they have a guest missionary attend their Monthly Missions Prayer Meeting and give a 15 minute presentation about their ministry. They then break into small groups and pray over the requests listed in their monthly prayer letter. At the end of the meeting, they pray for the guest missionary.
- It is extremely helpful when the church is able to compile current prayer requests into a monthly prayer letter. And then send that to all of the missions minded members of the congregation to pray over each month. If your church does not have adequate staff to do this, you can, more than likely, find a volunteer within your congregation, who would love to volunteer for this ministry.
- It is exciting to see a church which has formed a prayer group for each region of the world. These groups usually meet on a monthly basis to pray for the needs of the missionaries and their ministries in their specific region of interest.

- The boys and girls make a great contribution to world missions. One great idea is for the boys and girls missions' leader to meet with Sunday school classes, once each month, and pray with the children using missions' material.
- The young people in your church are great friends to the missionaries. In several countries the youth groups are committed to helping provide a vehicle for each missionary sent out. The opportunity for providing times of intercessory prayer for missions should not be overlooked. The prayers of the youth can be extremely powerful.
- Secure the book Operation World. (Authors: Patrick Johnstone and Jason Mandryk – Publisher: Bethany House) Pick a nation one Sunday each month (at least), to pray over as a church. As Pastor, stand and share a few details about the nation that you are focusing on for prayer that Sunday. Then lead them in intercession for that nation. As you do, confront the darkness that hold that nation in slavery to the forces of the enemy. Take a stand against the devil and his works in that nation. You will be helping to advance the kingdom of God in the world and you will be teaching your people how to intercede.

QUARTERLY

- Some churches have reported that they conduct quarterly World Prayer Meetings, dividing the world into regions as identified by AGWM. They then pray for the missionaries that they support in each region.
- In addition to the quarterly prayer meetings, some churches will devote one or two services annually to the missions ministries sponsored by the youth and the boys and girls. Each of these services presents the opportunity to pray for our missionaries.

ANNUALLY

- Thousands of churches conduct an annual missions convention during either the spring or the fall. Many churches will devote only a weekend to this activity while many others may devote a full month to a focus on missions. This may be called Missions Mandate Month, World Harvest Month, or some other similar name. Whatever the format might be, there should always be a service, or at least, a time allotted for congregation to intercede in behalf of our missionaries on the field.
- Many churches will also have a semi-annual missions event. If their main convention is in the fall than this event will usually be celebrated in the spring. One church calls this activity Taste of Missions in the Spring.
- Observance of the International Day of Prayer for the Persecuted Church is extremely important. Its observance not only gives assistance to persecuted Christians around the world, but it also alerts your congregation to world need and helps each one realize how fortunate we are here.

- Some churches produce an annual missions prayer guide that pictures each of their sponsored missionaries and gives a brief description of their field and their involvements. It is important that this guide be updated annually.

ONGOING

- A few churches have a 24-hour prayer room located on their campus, where they have a special section devoted to all the missionaries that they sponsor. Available to anyone who visits the prayer room are the pictures of the missionaries, the location of their ministry, and copies of the newsletters received from the missionaries.
- Some missionaries are especially blessed upon their return to their home country by having housing provided to them during their itineration cycle. While at home, the missionary family attends the host church. By becoming better acquainted with the missionaries, the congregation can and will pray more knowledgeably for the missionaries once they have returned to their field of service.
- A wall in a well-lighted and well-trafficked area should be devoted to a World Harvest Display. This area can include a monthly commitment certificate with a photograph for each missionary support by the church. An attractive bulletin board that includes current missionary newsletters should be at the center of the display and should be frequently updated.

“Jesus never taught His disciples how to preach,
but He did Teach them how to pray.”

D. L. Moody