

But God

Dear Intercessor

The end of the year is around the corner. On the one hand the country has not changed much. Some feel we have made progress politically and economically and others are very negative about the situation in the country. The World Soccer Cup is almost upon us, there is a lot of interest in the event from abroad and a lot of preparations are being made. It is important that the Church will be part of this process and also earnestly pray for it. We have a new President and a new government. New leaders now need to find their feet in their new positions and learn to do the work and make meaningful decisions. It is our responsibility to pray with great dedication for the government; we are, after all, instructed to do so in **1 Timothy 2:1-3**.

Many who pray grow weary along the way. Many wonder if it really helps to pray, because some of the marriages they pray for are still falling apart, loved ones die and their children turn their backs on God and want nothing to do with Him. Yet it is necessary to encourage each other. Do not give in to the sin of unbelief. Come, stand close to God and trust Him. There are many things we will never understand and what we cannot understand, we can leave to God. He knows what He is doing. But then there are more than enough things we do understand and that we know quite well we need to do. We also understand well enough the many reasons why we should keep on following God. So come, let us live from what we know we should do and what we do understand.

Support in 2009

Thank you so much to all who supported us in 2009. Some gave financial support, others prayed with us or for us. Yet others wrote an e-mail or letter of encouragement or supported us with a telephone call. Thank you for this. Up until now the Lord has provided and has helped us. He has provided month after month for 28 years. I must admit though: I am still somewhat uneasy every time the end of the month approaches and there is just not enough money. And then, when the first week of the month has passed and the bills have been paid, there is always this wonderment that God has, once again, provided. The problem is usually that if it is "my" ministry, it is my responsibility to generate the finances. However, if it is God's ministry or work, God always takes the responsibility to provide.

The person who cares will pray *and* do

There is great misunderstanding about 'praying' on the one hand and 'doing something practical about the needs of others' on the other hand. There are people who do without praying and there are people who pray without doing. Both are equally wrong.

Prayer has become a very cheap word. In fact it has been a cheap word for a very long time. We often try avoiding our responsibility to become involved in people's needs with an "I'll pray for you". This is not the kind of praying I'm talking about. There is a type of praying where you really pray for someone or a situation. First of all it takes your time. And time is something we are not prepared to give. We regard our time as our own and for this reason we will many times at most mention the person's name that we promised to pray for in our prayer and then continue with our own prayer requests. But genuine prayer for others also expects me to go and stand before the throne of God as a priest and intercede for this person, to pray for grace, guidance and deliverance, depending on the problem and need of the person.

It also means that I will go on praying until there is an answer or a breakthrough. When I promise to pray for someone, it more or less means the following: "I will go and talk to God about the matter and I will wait for His answer and stay put before Him in prayer until the matter has been concluded." Thus it is not a cheap 'commitment' that I make when I tell someone I will pray for him or her.

When I pray and speak to God, I have to listen too, because God also speaks to me. It is during these times when God speaks to us that He can tell us what things we should do, where we should become involved, whom we should serve and what we shouldn't do any more. This is the 'dangerous' part of prayer. Prayer that does not lead to action, is prayer where you 'prayed', but did not really listen to God and didn't hear what His answer to your prayer was; and neither heard what He is going to do or expects you to do.

If you care, you will pray. Caring for your fellow human being is to pray. It is to pray for the need of the world, which means especially praying for people. Praying in general for children who have no food is one thing, but praying for a specific child who is hungry, a child with a name and a face is something else. The same goes for a raped woman, a single-parent mother, an unemployed father, a criminal in prison.

When you are praying for someone, pray until you can feel in your heart the need of the person, *and* until you can feel God's heart for the person. Then do what God shows you to do. Then you are being a true Christian.

Focuses for the following three months

In December our focus is on revival. There are 25 short stories on revivals in history. Our generation doesn't know about God's great deeds over the past 300 years anymore. This doesn't mean that nothing happened; we are simply not passing it on anymore. Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and into all eternity – therefore we can expect that what He did in the past, He can do again in our day and age, and we believe that He will. In January 2010 we focus on the Word of God. That the authority of the Word will be re-established in our lives, for a new hunger for the Word and that the Spirit of God will break open the Word for us. During February the focus is on the working of the Holy Spirit in our own lives and also in the Church. We trust that you will find the information meaningful and that you will pray with great faith and devotion, because God answers prayer. Sometimes 'he does not answer' because of sin in our lives and sometimes He waits until we are ready to receive the answer. It is always our responsibility to pray, and always God's responsibility to answer. When we pray and live according to His Word and pray the promises from His Word, we can rest assured, He will answer us.

I wish you a blessed Christmas. May Jesus reveal Himself to us during this time as the Son of Man, as Lord and as God.

Eph.3:20

Bennie Mostert

Managing Director: Jericho Walls International Prayer Network

What's online:

www.FaithComesByHearing.com

Faith Comes By Hearing produced the short program, which runs less than 12 minutes, to help people engage in the Bible and hear the Easter story in a dramatic, audio format.

<http://www.findabible.net>

Find A Bible, is an innovative and interactive website that gives easy access to Scriptures in more than 3,000 languages, providing the most comprehensive and current database of Bibles and portions in majority and minority languages available.

<http://www.world-bibles.org/>

The *World Bibles* site indexes over 16,000 Bibles. The new *World Bibles* website, just released by *Wycliffe Associates UK*, will help immigrant populations to find Bibles in their own languages. Since the site is an index, it

provides links to existing sites on the Internet, but it does not offer any specific Bibles. In order to help non-English users, the user interface is available in ten languages, and more are being added.

Did you know?

JESUS Film

Every four seconds, somewhere in the world, another person indicates a decision to follow Christ after viewing the *JESUS Film*. That amounts to 21,600 people per day, 648,000 per month and more than 7.8 million per year! Called by some "one of the best-kept secrets in Christian missions", a number of mission experts have acclaimed the film as one of the greatest evangelistic tools of all time. Since 1979 the screening of the *JESUS Film* (based on the gospel of Luke) has resulted in more than 225 million people indicating decisions to follow Jesus. It has now been translated into more than 1,050 languages, with a new language being added nearly every week. (Website: <http://www.jesusfilm.org/>).

Burundi: President commits to God

The President of Burundi, Pierre Nkurunziza, says he became born-again in 1997 after receiving a Bible from a rural minister. "I started reading the Bible from beginning to end," he said. "When I finished, I got saved. That's it." He began leading other rebel combatants to Christ and said God spared his life after a near-fatal shooting. He went into hiding for four months without anyone to care for his wounds. When he returned to his troops - miraculously alive - he told them they would have to put God first in their movement if he were to remain their leader. (Website: <http://www.joelnews.org/>).

Atheist father's prayers answered!

Natalie went into labour three months before her due date and found there was "no room at the Inn" for hospital care for the premature baby in her hometown. Efforts by Canadian officials to get the family help had a great impact on the baby's father. "I was an atheist," he said in a phone interview. "Now I'm considering going to church and being a Believer. There's got to be Someone up there who's saving our little daughter." He got up to pray for his daughter and on that very day, he and his wife learned their baby had been taken off the ventilator the day before. "That's enough for me to be a Believer," he said. (*Breaking Christian News*. Email: editor@breakingchristiannews.com).

Non-Christian Iraqis Watch Christian Television

A new survey found that about 5.3 million Iraqis watch Christian satellite programmes on SAT-7, a Christian television ministry created by and for the people of the Middle East and North Africa. As Iraq's Christian community numbers less than 600,000, it's safe to say that most of SAT-7's viewers are Muslims. Approximately 97% of Iraqis have access to satellite TV, and 18.8% watch SAT-7; 2.6 million are watching on a daily or weekly basis. (Source: Church around the world, July 2009).

Quotes

Prayer is self-discipline. The effort to realize the presence and power of God stretches the sinews of the soul and hardens its muscles. To pray is to grow in grace. To tarry in the presence of the King leads to new loyalty and devotion on the part of the faithful subjects. Christian character grows in the secret place of prayer. - Samuel M. Zwemer

Beware in your prayers, above everything else, of limiting God, not only by unbelief, but by fancying that you know what He can do. Expect unexpected things, 'above all that we ask or think'. Each time, before you intercede, be quiet first, and worship God in His glory. Think of what He can do, and how He delights to hear the prayers of His redeemed people. Think of your place and privilege in Christ, and expect great things! - Andrew Murray

The power of prayer has never been tried to its full capacity in any church. If we want to see mighty wonders of divine grace and power wrought in the place of weakness, failure and disappointment, let the whole Church answer God's standing challenged: "Call unto me, and I will answer thee, and show thee great and mighty things, which thou knows not." - James Hudson Taylor

All great soul-winners have been men of much and mighty prayer, and all great revivals have been preceded and carried out by persevering, prevailing knee-work in the closet. - Samuel Logan Brengle

How do I know that I am praying by the will of God? Every true attempt to pray is in response to the will of God. Bungling it may be and untutored by human teachers, but it is acceptable to God, because it is in obedience to His will. If I will give myself up to the inspiration of the Spirit of God, who commands me to pray, the details and the petitions of that praying will all fall into harmony with the will of Him who wills that I should pray. - E. M. Bounds

Wherever the Church is aroused and the world's wickedness arrested, somebody has been praying. - A. T. Pierson

24-7 Prayer watch focus: December 2009-March 2010

These prayer focuses are to encourage those involved in a 24-7 house of prayer to focus in prayer on the same things at the same time. These are only guidelines and watch coordinators may add their own focuses as the Holy Spirit leads them. Will you not consider **putting up these prayer pointers in your prayer room** in creative ways, or use them in your quiet time? Also inform others and encourage them to pray for these issues during each of the monthly focuses. More information on these issues is available free of charge from our website: www.jwipn.com. Also remember to subscribe to our weekly *Prayer Alert* at cape@jwipn.com, which covers current issues in prayer.

December: Spiritual revival in the Church

We belong to a generation that doesn't know much about the great deeds of God over the past 2,000 years. Let us pray that God will reveal Himself to us in the same way that He revealed Himself to the past generations. He is the same yesterday, today and forever (**Heb.13:8**). As you read the stories of how God intervened many times during the past centuries, be encouraged to pray that God will also do it in our time. Let us use December as a time to pray for spiritual revival in the Church.

January: Restoring the authority of God's Word & praying for the government

During January we will focus on the restoration of the authority of God's Word in the Church as the foundation of every Believer's life. We will spend time on studying, praying and proclaiming passages from Scripture, and also encourage you to consider praying through these prayer pointers in your cell or Bible study groups during this month. Apart from this we have felt God prompting us to pray for members of parliament by name before Parliament opens in February. In his letter to Timothy (**1 Tim.2:1-3**), Paul instructs Timothy, urging him to pray for all people, that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving thanks be made for all men, for kings and all who are in authority, that we may lead a quiet and peaceful life in all godliness and reverence. This is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour, who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth. Our focus is to pray that every heart will be directed by the Holy Spirit in the process of decision making and legislation as Parliament opens next month; also that all will have a personal relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ and experience growth in this relationship.

February: Understanding the person and work of the Holy Spirit

There are many misconceptions when it comes to the person and the work of the Holy Spirit in the Body of Christ. During February we ask God to once again reveal the truth about the Holy Spirit to His Church, so that fears,

doubts and criticism may fade in the light of His glory and might. You may consider putting up some of these prayer pointers in your prayer room so others may also benefit from it in prayer.

March: Forgiveness

One of the most difficult and sensitive issues to address is that of forgiveness. All of us are wronged so often. At the same time we wrong other people, whether knowingly or unknowingly. During March we focus on the different issues of forgiveness; forgiving others, forgiving yourself, and also how to reconcile after forgiving someone.

The Church of the future: lessons from history

Article by Jurgens Hendriks (shortened)

The preacher wrote in **Ecclesiastes 3:15**: *Whatever is has already been, and what will be has been before; and God will call the past to account.* There are basic patterns in history that help one gain perspective. From the Old Testament you will recall the 40-year cycles: prosperity and blessing, then a process of degeneration, of a fake religion and external ritual, disobedience; then warnings and eventually ruin (**Deut.8, Judges to Chronicles**). If what the preacher says in **Ecclesiastes** is true, then the secret of the Church of the future can be found in the past. This is ultimately what I want to do.

In his book *The rise of Christianity*, the sociology of religion scholar Rodney Stark (1997: 6-7) discusses the reasons for the Church's remarkable growth between the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ and in the year 350 A.D. From its approximate 7,000 persecuted Believers in the time of **Acts 2**, the Church grew 40% per decade over 300 years, until they numbered approximately 33 million of the total population of 56 million in the Roman Empire ... 33 million out of 56 million!

Stark says the secret for the growth of the Christian church lay in the social networks and intimate interpersonal relationships and loyalties that they had formed, without becoming exclusive and closing their ranks. Their loyalties to Jesus Christ surpassed all other loyalties (Stark 1997: 3-27).

- 1. The Christians lived differently to the world.** The evangelical method of the early Church, their mission work, was not done by special preachers, mission organisations or evangelical expeditions. It was simply the testimony that the many small home congregations transmitted (Meeks 1983:77). Their love for each other and for others, their disposition and relationships were based on an entirely different ethos than that of the world around them.
- 2. Christians cared for each other and for others out of love.** In the period of 300 years, there were two unbelievably great epidemics in the Roman Empire. From 165 to 180 A.D., approximately a quarter to a third of the population of the Roman Empire, sometimes up to 5,000 people, died per day. During this period, the Christian survival rate was much better than any other group because they cared for each other and for the sick. After each epidemic, the percentage of Christians, as part of the total population, was much higher and large numbers of people joined the congregations. For the Church in Africa, there is no greater opportunity for testimony than the HIV/AIDS epidemic.
- 3. Christians arranged their marital and family lives according to Biblical principles.** The sexual morality of the Roman Empire, particularly in and around Rome, the large cities and among the elite, was rife with perversity. Homosexuality, abortion, prostitution and the concomitant marital and family degeneration was shocking. Abortion was so common that infant corpses were one of the causes for the blockages of the sewage systems. In the Roman Empire, despite all the wars, there were 100 women to 131 to 140 men, because so many baby girls had been killed after birth. In the Christian faith communities, people helped to establish a stable marital and family life. This had two consequences: the Christians had a much higher birth rate than the rest of the population and, in Christian congregations there were always more women available for marriage.

- 4. *The Christians strongly condemned racism and classism.*** The Roman Empire globalised because of political, economic and social reasons. The marital and family degeneration, as well as the epidemics, caused the implosion of the populations in parts of Italy. Consequently, people from over the known world of that time had to be lured with incentives to key areas. This resulted in people of all races, nations and languages living in all the large cities. Thus, the potential for cultural and racial conflict was high. Differences in status are common in all communities, and the Roman Empire was no exception. The early Christian congregations addressed these issues with passion.
- 5. *Christians were trustworthy and hardworking – one could rely on them.*** I was truly surprised to discover how often the New Testament letters mention this. Christians were reliable, honest and hardworking. They were sought after in society at large. Ultimately, in 313, the Roman Emperor, Constantine, exempted the Christian religion from all forms of persecution (Stark 1997:11) and he also accepted this faith. His motive: it is impossible to rule an empire without reliable people, and Christians were reliable people. He wanted to benefit their case, because they would benefit his case.

The statistics indicate how today's established churches are losing their market share, how they are declining and dying. The statistics also indicate two other tendencies: One, the birth process of a whole series of churches that contextualise in the new time. Secondly: the Independent African Churches that joyfully contextualise in the rich African culture and form. The Church will always have a future. This I believe, because I believe in the resurrected Lord Jesus who received all power in heaven and on earth. The Church of the future follows Him on his crucifixion road, which, paradoxically, is both a way of suffering and a way of victory.

International issue: How to pray when natural disaster strikes

If you have not experienced it yourself, it is pretty impossible to imagine what goes through the hearts and minds of people facing a sudden natural disaster. The number of natural disasters worldwide is more frequent than ever before. How do we pray about disasters and for those in need? The following are a few guidelines on how to pray for victims of a natural disaster whether it be a flood, fire, earthquake, mudslide, tsunami, etc. Disasters can be critical spiritual turning points for people. Some may turn to God while others might turn away from Him completely, and this is why we must pray in great earnest into such situations.

Pray for the Church:

- ✎ For Believers everywhere to consciously and practically prepare themselves to be ready, should any disaster have a direct influence on them, their loved ones or their community.
- ✎ That they will have such an intimate and established relationship with the Lord that they will not feel overwhelmed, but have a clear understanding of exactly what to do to help and support others in need.
- ✎ For churches to consider strategies to manage in times of disaster as part of normal ministry, as well as to prepare their congregation on how to minister to and help people both practically and spiritually in such a situation.

Ongoing prayer strategy:

Pray for Believers to acquire a greater awareness of where in the world disaster has struck and to pray focused and effective prayers into such situations, keeping themselves updated on the progress made and new needs of people as they arise.

Practical prayer for issues on ground level:

- ✎ Pray especially for victims who lost a loved one to be able to find rest and comfort in God. Ask that non-Christians will be able to meet someone who can share the gospel with them, and that they will be really open and receptive.
- ✎ Pray for those who have lost a home, possessions and because of destruction, their job.

- ✚ Ask for God's grace upon communities, that strong Believers will arise and play a significant role in portraying God's hope for the future and encourage people to stand together in rebuilding their communities.
- ✚ Pray for sufficient medical supplies and personnel to be deployed to disaster areas within a very short while and for as long as it is necessary.
- ✚ Pray for search companies, for God's guidance to find people trapped under rubble, mud, etc. and to be able to safely and quickly remove them from difficult situations.
- ✚ Ask for the quick arrival and effective distribution of food and clean water to disaster victims. Pray that food and water will be provided for as long as necessary.
- ✚ Pray for God's grace and protection against any outbreak of viruses or sickness among people, animals or crops just after a disaster. Ask that suitable cures for such tendencies will be developed and be ready for application in every situation.
- ✚ Pray for the necessary financial aid towards a disaster-struck area for the rebuilding of infrastructure and livelihood.

Pray for Spiritual work done in a disaster area:

- ✚ Ask for opportunities for aid workers and Believers who might be victims themselves, to encourage, befriend and share the hope of Jesus Christ with disaster victims.
- ✚ Ask for the corporate local church in a specific disaster area to take up responsibility in helping, feeding and teaching people amidst the situation.
- ✚ If there are no active prayer groups going, pray for prayer groups to be established right after disaster strikes. Also that these groups will grow as people gather before the Lord to cry out to Him for help and the salvation of the people in their community.
- ✚ Pray for the Church worldwide to become more visibly involved in the long-term assistance of people who suffered natural disasters.

Men-2-Pray: Men can say no

(This article is equally applicable to women, but we focus here on men)

Men who live pure and holy lives are urgently needed in our society today. The problem is not really just with non-Christians. Sad to say, it is unfortunately true that so many Christian men live impure lives. The appeal to people to live pure and holy lives is quickly brushed aside, accompanied by reproaches that you are quick to judge, that you are hypocritical, that you should not think you are better than others and also, who are you to judge?

This is however not about one person who judges another. The Scriptures make it very clear that we must live pure and holy lives. When men live pure and holy lives, according to God's standards, it is reflected in their marriages. It makes their families holy, it spills over into the congregation and influences their workplace and ultimately also society. In **1 Thessalonians 4:7** we read: *For God did not call us to be impure, but to live a holy life.* Holiness destroys immorality and impurity. The opposite is also true. Jesus explains in **Mark 7:21-22** what things make us impure: evil thoughts, sexual immorality, theft, murder, adultery, greed, malice, deceit, lewdness, envy, slander, arrogance and folly.

Pure lives lead to the restoration and preservation of marriages, prevent divorce which then drastically reduce the violent influence of divorce on families, and especially children (**Mal.2:16**). A pure life sets a spiritual standard in the community – it makes a choice against the impure things mentioned in **Mark 7:21-22**. And it is when we live like this that peace settles in our hearts, our homes, workplaces and the country. It sets us free and blesses other people. And it starts with men who choose to live pure lives. Men *can* say no to impure relationships. Men are not 'victims' of their urges and of women who tempt them to become involved in impure relationships. Men make their own choices and become impure by getting involved in extramarital and sexually impure relationships,

pornographic reading matter, visiting pornographic web pages and watching films showing nudity and sexually provocative scenes. Men can choose not to do impure things like the ones Jesus mentions in **Mark 7:22**.

In our society today we are seeing more and more households devastated by violence, and here we are not referring to violence from outside. The violence is from the inside, and a result of divorce. Malachi 2:16 says that God hates divorce and that it is nothing but violence. If we as Christian men feel strongly about God's Word and want to put an end to the violence resulting from divorce that is destroying our children's lives, we will have to start by obeying God's command to live as holy men.

How do I, a man, achieve a holy life? The following are a few guidelines and thoughts to consider:

- **Confess your sins.** Read **Mark 7:22**, **Galatians 5:19-21** and **1 Corinthians 6:9-10**. Ask the Holy Spirit to point out specific sins to you and write them down. Divide the different time periods in your life into sections: preschool, primary school, high school, after school, university, married life, etc. When you have confessed these sins and put them into writing, destroy the page(s). Plan to spend time to stand before the Lord daily and ask Him to show you the things that have to be confessed. Don't go digging for sins – allow the Holy Spirit to show you. Carry on with this until there is nothing more to confess. Afterwards, before you go to bed you can ask the Lord to point instances out to you where you behaved in an impure way.
- **Choose a lifestyle that keeps you from temptation and sin.** Find one or two people that you can be accountable to. People with whom you can share things in your life, whose help you can ask and who can speak to you when they see things in your life that are impure and not according to the will of God. Make an agreement with at least one person you can trust to ask you on a regular basis if you are still living a pure life in your contact with other women (as far as your conversations go and also what is going on in your thoughts).
- **Be wise.** Don't travel somewhere by car alone with your secretary or another woman (and if it can't be helped, find someone else to go along.) Don't counsel or help other women behind closed doors. Try to put a glass panel in the door in your office so that anyone can at any time see what is going on inside. However, as far as possible try to maintain an open door policy. When the 'guys' start telling dirty jokes that belittle women, leave, or make it clear that it is not acceptable to you (normally it then stops immediately). Don't make remarks to women that can be misunderstood and/or discuss your domestic and emotional problems with another woman. Some of the things mentioned here may seem impractical to you, unheard of and even ridiculous or absurd, and yet they will protect you against a myriad of temptations. It is exactly in these situations that many men have been tempted and have sinned (**Eph.5:15**). Our lives should be examples to those watching us (children and non-Christians) and be of good reputation to the Christian faith.
- **Be pure with things and money.** Reflect before the Lord on your attitude towards money, things in your business that are not 100% in line with the laws of our country or that God could see as fraud or theft, any slander or pride in your heart. Ask the Lord to help you make practical arrangements that will help you avoid every one of these snares.
- **Choose to follow God radically.** Take your Bible and start underlining all the *commands* God gives us and make sure your life is in line with these instructions or commands. Start with the New Testament – it is sure to give you a good foundation.
- **Stand up for who you are in God.** Don't compare yourself with others and reason that this or that person does or does not do a specific thing. Only the Word sets your standards. Nothing else.

(Also see article for teens focusing on social media).

ARTICLE: Becoming a praying congregation

It was very dear to Jesus' heart and also a command from Him that the church should be a house of prayer (**Matt.21:13**). He quotes **Isaiah 56:7** and so confirms that God's plan with His "church" (Old Testament) is also His plan with the church in the New Testament. It is still one of the greatest challenges for churches to be houses of

prayer. The following are a number of guidelines that churches can use to give more momentum to prayer in the congregation:

1. A praying congregation starts with *individuals who pray*. The most important focus of spiritual leaders in the congregation remains helping individuals to pray with greater boldness and more faith. Individuals need guidance on how to enter into a deeper and more intimate and personal relationship with God.
2. Continuous, uncomplicated and practical *instruction in prayer* is necessary. Numerous sermons and books on prayer give wonderful spiritual content, but are mostly lacking in practical guidelines on how to plan your daily quiet time. Teach Believers how to use a prayer journal. Give them a simple layout of what to pray for, how to listen to God and how to pray the Word.
3. *Establishing prayer groups* in the congregation is of the utmost importance. Boost existing prayer groups and encourage the establishment of new prayer groups. It helps to get together businessmen, for example, in one or more prayer group, and also to encourage young people, children, women and specific interest groups to start their own groups. The different ministries of the congregation must be encouraged to establish a prayer movement or prayer group for their ministry, on the understanding that they also pray in those groups themselves and not expect others to do the 'prayer work' while they just do the other work.
4. The concept 'intercessor' can create many problems in a congregation. In many congregations the unhealthy situation sometimes develops where a few people in the congregation become known as the 'intercessors' or 'those who pray'. Intercession is a *type of prayer*, it is not a *type of person*. Should we limit the prayer ministry of a congregation to a number of *intercessors*, we exclude 98% of the congregation who could also be praying. The 98% could eventually feel their prayers are not good enough, they are not 'experts', God will not hear them so readily, and then a group of people start saying, "We'll do the work and you (the intercessors) can pray for it." This is not Biblical and the quickest way to immobilise an entire congregation. It deprives the so-called 'non-intercessors' from the *privilege and responsibility* to be involved in the prayer ministry of the congregation, as well as praying for their families, the community, the town/city and the world. The Word of God is clear; every member of the church should be an intercessor, one who prays – every child, young person and adult, irrespective of profession or position.
5. If you want to raise the level of prayer in the congregation, you must be involved as spiritual leader. Leaders cannot encourage the congregation to pray, but not be involved themselves. The apostles say very clearly in **Acts 6:4** that they (as spiritual leaders) have the responsibility to concentrate on *prayer* and the ministry of the Word. You cannot expect others to pray, to carry the prayer responsibility of the congregations, if you as leader are not involved.
6. Preachers can encourage people to pray by doing, among other things, some of the following:
 - Regular preaching on prayer or making prayer an important part of the message.
 - On a regular basis, tell real-life stories of answer to prayer from the pulpit as well as at other gatherings of the congregation
 - Present seminars on prayer – a Friday night and Saturday morning, for example, could work well.
 - Encourage church members to read books on prayer – give the titles of one or two at a time.
 - Choose a book on prayer and get members to work through it in Bible Study groups or cell groups.

Prayer story: Walls of prayer

The following is an 'interview' with Phil Bennett, the person through whom *Prayer Walls* started and an excerpt from his book *Watchmen of the Lord*. (It was written by Phil Bennett and Dick Eastman, and published by *Every Home for Christ* in 2008.)

How did it all start?

In 1997 while praying in my prayer room, God prompted me to pray for a specific nation, England. I complained that I did not know how to pray for an entire nation. The Lord began to show me, in a gentle way, the specific things I was to pray for regarding England. After several months, the Lord spelled an unfamiliar word (to me) in my

mind: Leicester. He explained that it was a city in England for which I was to pray. I began to pray for that city, claimed it for Christ and prayed for lost souls. He revealed to me that there was a small group praying in Leicester. He called me to join them in prayer, even from a place so distant, across the Atlantic. God soon pressed me to contact these people. I simply wrote a letter and asked someone for a list of all the churches in the area and got into contact with a group with the name 'Christ for Leicester'. Soon after I had contacted them, I received a unique vision that was to begin my personal journey in establishing *Walls of Prayer*. I was shown by the Holy Spirit that the city of Leicester had a dark cloud over it and the only way to break through this cloud was through prayer. I had no idea how to do it. I inquired around and discovered a ministry called the *Watchman's Prayer Ministry* designed by Larry Thompson. It was a simple system whereby people prayed in one-hour segments and when all 168 hours in a week were covered specifically, unceasing prayer would be established. I discovered a church doing it and knew this was possible in Leicester as well. I went to Leicester to cast the 'watchmen' vision and invited dedicated intercessors to pray on a wall of prayer for the city. There were several meetings and within a week we had built almost an entire wall. The watchmen prayer ministry was launched and more watchmen were added.

Is this concept of *Walls of Prayer* limited to Leicester?

I thought my work was finished in England. But soon a second vision came, this one concerning four cities around Leicester. That together with the Leicester wall would make up a network of prayer for advancing Christ's Kingdom throughout the Midlands. The cities were Northampton, Peterborough, Birmingham and Nottingham. A prayer wall was soon established in each of those areas. I started to realise that God builds on strategies one layer at a time. He does not build one thing, then abandon it and go on to something unrelated. He starts and then builds upon a vision or strategy continually. He adds new things that ultimately tie or link up in His kingdom plans.

Isn't this a good concept to promote globally?

After building walls in England, the Lord called me by invitation to an eastern gate: Hong Kong. That city is a clear gate into China, the largest harvest field in the world. Several *Watchmen Walls* were established there and again a team engaged in spiritual warfare praying over, as always, very specific sites. It was in these days that God gave me a picture of the Great Wall of China becoming a *Great Wall of Prayer*. Today plans are underway to see walls of continuous prayer mobilised in every province of China, and ultimately in every major city and town in China – some 2,700 areas. (Since the writing of this booklet, many *Prayer Walls* have been established in China through the involvement of especially *Every Home for Christ*). God led me to other countries, including Mexico. God somehow revealed to me that Mexico is a gateway into North and South America. It was here, I sensed, that He wanted to build a national Wall, not just one with local intercessors praying on the walls in individual cities. That wall was soon established with 800 watchmen from throughout the country, from the north to the south. After this, it started to spread to other nations.

How does a wall of prayer function?

A call to the wall involves asking people if they are willing to pray one hour a week for their city or nation. They are asked to pray at least one specific hour each week (although people are free to take more than one hour a week). When all 168 hour-long periods in a week are filled, there will be continuous prayer, 24-7. A simple roster could be used where people fill in their names. In city-wide walls some form of a monthly prayer guide is necessary. This prayer guide should be changed monthly with non-controversial needs with which all Christians can be comfortable praying for.

Women-2-pray: Is your child a bully victim?

Many children are bullied at school and it causes parents and children much pain. This article is not an in-depth discussion of the full extent of the subject, but it does give directives for you as parents on how to pray.

- Firstly, it is important to work on your child's self-image. Children who are bullied often have a very poor and/or warped self-image. The child must be taught that he or she also has a place in the community, that they are worthy and have their own talents and gifts that are just as special as those of others.
- Pray for the child to understand his or her position in Jesus. Pray that the child will understand that he is so important that Jesus was prepared to die for him and lives in him after re-birth. The child needs to understand that God loves him unconditionally and that the Spirit of God lives in him. We are talking about children here who have a personal relationship with Jesus. If the child does not have a relationship with Jesus, explain the way to salvation clearly and how to become a child of God.
- Parents must teach these children how to pray themselves. The child must go and stand before God himself and ask Him for wisdom, and guidance and protection for his situation. This is of the utmost importance.
- Teach the child to bless the person who is bullying him or her. It is very important.
- Pray that your child will not react in the wrong way: with anger, bitterness or hatred. Pray that God will set him or her free from fear of the bully. It is fear that makes the child lose heart and makes him feel helpless. God did not give us a spirit of timidity, but a spirit of power, of love and of self-discipline (**2 Tim.1:7**). Pray for physical protection. It is only in the minority of cases that physical protection is important, but it is the fear of getting hurt physically that paralyses many children.
- The parents can and should prepare the child spiritually. It is useless to make the child's battle easier for him by visiting the school continuously and complaining to the teachers. In the end, the child must overcome the situation himself/herself otherwise the same problem will repeat itself over and over again in his or her life. There are many bullies in life and the sooner the child learns to handle it, to deal with the situation and find his own way of not only surviving, but living in freedom within each situation, the sooner the child will also be equipped to tackle the rest of his or her life.
- If it becomes necessary to go and talk to the school authorities, pray for wisdom on how and when to do it.
- Try not to take your child out of the school. It does not really solve the problem.
- Ask God if there is not a deeper problem in your family that needs to be faced: In many cases when children are bullied, there is a problem with the way the family functions. For example, there could be a domineering dad or mom, a child who for some reason or another experiences rejection at home, or is overprotected. Pray that the Holy Spirit will provide insight on how to solve the problem.

Also teach your child to actually pray for the bully!

- Guard against negative prayer, accusing the bully and pointing out to God all the 'sins' of the bully.
- The bully normally also has a self-image problem himself and suffers much pain in his life. Pray for this child to also understand who he or she is and what God's purpose is with him/her.
- Bullies often come from homes or situations where there is a lack of love, where they experience rejection and are belittled, where they are treated with violence for making mistakes and are sometimes punished too heavily and sometimes unfairly. Bullies are children who rebel against such circumstances and then take out their anger, inferiority and frustration on other children, in this way trying to be in a situation where they can take control of their circumstances. Because they know only violence, they react violently towards everyone around them. Bullies are children who go about with great pain in their hearts, seeking love and acceptance, but it is hidden behind a façade of bluster.
- Bullies usually need acceptance and they want to be part of the 'in-crowd'. They are desperately in need of friends, but easily become jealous of other children. Bullying other children gives them a feeling of power and they believe this will make them acceptable to the group and gain esteem. This is why bullies normally have a few children who form a bully-group with them.
- Pray for the fear of the Lord to keep the bully in check.

- Pray for the bully's domestic situation, that he or she will get to know the love and unconditional acceptance of God.
- Pray for the salvation of the bully. Maybe he will one day be able to help other bullies to come to accept that it's foolish to continue being a bully.

(Also see article for teens focusing on social media).

Teens-2-pray – Internet 'red-bots'

Dr. Archibald D. Hart said: 'Many teenagers and even young children today cannot tolerate doing nothing for more than thirty seconds, maximum. Then they demand more stimulation.' Think about that. Over 60% of children and teenagers partake in 'chat rooms' on a daily basis. Three out of four children are willing to share personal information about themselves and their family online in exchange for goods and services. It is also true that at least one out of five children will be targeted by a predator or paedophile each year. Thus the Internet is an extremely popular 'fun and games' venue for young people to visit. Why talk about this? Because the Internet, together with its wonderful advantages, unfortunately also holds hidden spiritual, emotional and even physical dangers for 'innocent' teenagers.

How do you know at your age when you are treading dangerous ground? Chatting with your friends on-line or via cellular phone is commonly known as social media. Social media can take many different forms, including Internet forums, weblogs, social blogs, wikis, pod casts, pictures, video, rating and bookmarking. Technologies include: blogs, picture-sharing, wall-postings, e-mail, instant messaging, music-sharing and voice over IP, to name a few. Many of these social media services can be integrated via social network aggregation platforms like Mybloglog and Plaxo.

1. What is a blog? A blog is a type of website, usually maintained by an individual with regular entries of what is happening in his/her life. Many blogs provide commentary or news on a particular subject; others function as more personal online diaries (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Online_diary). There are different ones: art (artlog <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Artlog>), photographs (photoblog <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Photoblog>), sketches (sketchblog <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sketchblog>), videos (vlog <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vlog>), music (MP3 blog http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/MP3_blog), and audio (podcasting <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Podcast>). As of December 2007, there are more than 112 million blogs worldwide. Some examples: Twitter, Plurk, LiveJournal, Vox etc.

Be on the alert: Pray for God's wisdom when you partake in blogs. Be careful of the kind of personal detail you share, and how you share it. Do not speak negatively of other people. Often friends have misused such information when they feel jealous of or angry with each other.

2. What is photo & video sharing? People put photos and videos of themselves online, because it is then easy accessible to friends and others. Of these sites, YouTube (videos), Flickr and Photobucket (photos) and ccMixter (music) are more or less the most well known.

Be on the alert: Always tune your heart into the voice of the Holy Spirit when you watch these videos or photos. If anything is not uplifting or blasphemous, promoting un-Biblical values, make a decision not to watch that any longer. Also encourage your friends to do the same.

3. What is a virtual world? A virtual world is a computer-based simulated environment intended for its users to interact via *avatars* (computing). These *avatars* (or alter-egos) are usually presented as textual, two-dimensional, or three-dimensional graphical representations. The computer-simulated world works by presenting a model based on the real world or some hybrid fantasy world. Communication between users range from text, graphical icons, visual gesture, sound, and balance senses.

Be on the alert: Ask the Lord how much time you should spend partaking in these different options. Normally all teenagers spend too much time on the Internet and virtual relationships and contact with 'other' Internet friends. The dangers are that the 'virtual world' becomes a person's 'real world' and they struggle to actually discern between the 'virtual world' and reality after some time. It is very important to keep in touch with real life and not live in a fantasy world or try to escape into a world that seems to have no consequences.

4. What is the thing with online-games? Multiplayer online games create a computer world very similar to the real world, with real-world rules, real-time actions and communication. Communication is usually textual, with real-time voice communication. Virtual worlds are not limited to games. Sometimes, emoticons or 'smileys' are available, to show feeling or facial expression.

Be on the alert: Make sure you as a Christian pray about it all the time and think well and carefully how you spend your time in this computer world. Ask the Lord to show you if the games you play are bringing you closer to what He is like, and to help you limit the time that you spend on these games. Do not compromise; just give up things that will jeopardize your relationship with the Lord Jesus. Also encourage your friends to do the same. Remember that you need to spend quality time with your loved ones close to you – do not be selfish with your time, otherwise it may develop in unhealthy life-patterns on the long term.

5. What is a chat room? Chat rooms are designated areas where people with similar interests can 'get together' to talk. The conversations happen in real-time. By simply typing on your keyboard, you can immediately talk to someone on the other side of the world. There may be a moderator in a chat room that monitors the content of the conversation in order to prevent abuse. Moderators have been known to shut down a conversation if the content is deemed unacceptable or inflammatory. A chat room is a way to learn, talk and socialise, but the fact that it is so easy to be anonymous has led to abuse of the system. Children and teens love chat rooms, and reports of the dangers of chat rooms are widespread. There are many irresponsible adults who use chat rooms anonymously for their own entertainment. Parents need to be aware of who their children are talking to in chat rooms.

Be on the alert: How do you know when you are 'at risk' when chatting in a chat room? The easiest way to determine this is to ask yourself if you would be comfortable for your parents or an adult to walk into your room at any time and read the conversations in your chat room at any time. The same goes for the Lord. Ask Him to help you not to chat to people you don't know, who might be posing as someone other than they really are. When the Holy Spirit prompts you on these issues, take special care to listen to His voice. Also never use foul language, get involved in online arguments or gossip.

6. What is free online speech? The Internet has made long overseas chats easier and much more affordable than traditional telephones. Programs like *Skype*, *Google Talk (GTalk)*, *Nimbuzz* and *Fring* are some examples of programs that help you to chat (text, audio or video) with another person anywhere in the world. There are often people from other countries who want to connect with someone in South Africa with the intention of escaping from their own countries. They do this in deceptive ways, like enquiring about tourist attractions in South Africa, only to obtain personal information from you, like where you stay, what you do etc.

Be on the alert: Make sure to change your settings so only those people in your address book can contact you. NEVER give out any personal information about yourself that may assist another person in finding out where you stay, where you work, etc. Ask the Lord for discernment and wisdom on what to do when someone you do not know contacts you.

7. What is MXit? *MXit* is an *IM (Instant Messaging)* application that runs on your cell phone (PC versions are also available), which allows for real-time chatting in one-on-one conversation or inside chat rooms, at a fraction of SMS costs. Maybe the most significant example of the abuse of young children through a technological medium so far in South Africa, is the case of a 16-year old girl who was abducted by a 33-year old man she met through *MXit* chat room. *MXit* is free to download, and free to register, meaning no monthly fees. You can send messages back and forth in real-time (instant messages). The maximum length of these messages is 2048 characters

compared to a normal SMS at 160 characters. MXit has about 2 million users, the majority being between 12-17 years old and smaller groups aged between 18 and 25.

Be on the alert: Never give your cellphone number, full name or physical address to strangers and never meet a stranger from a chat room in real life. On the other hand, ask the Lord to show you how you can share things about your personal relationship with the Lord Jesus with some of your friends on e.g. MXit.

8. Stay connected with real people: Social media is an unhealthy substitute for real friendship. It can literally destroy family relationships in the end because it allows people to live in a virtual world where they can say what they want with seemingly no consequences. It isolates you from your friends and family, and prevents you from building real and lasting friendships because you are always in contact with 'other people'. There is no real commitment involved in Internet and virtual relationships. Astonishingly enough, people are getting lonelier in the process. You cannot share the depths of your heart, your real pain, deepest emotions and tears with a human being that seems faceless to you and whom you do not know personally – the electronic media cannot replace that vacuum.

Be on the alert: How do you know if your social skills are deteriorating? When you and your friends spend more time chatting online than face to face, it is a red light. If you start and end relationships by e-mail, chat rooms or via SMS, you are in a danger zone of becoming socially isolated. Ask the Lord Jesus to tell you how to conduct your personal relationships with people in a healthy way.

(Teenagers have developed their own 'lingua franca'. There is a detailed list of SMS and Chat abbreviations being used by teenagers on their cell phones, MXit and the Internet: <http://www.phelios.com/sd/archives/sept04.html>).

Children-2-pray: How to pray for the government

You can change the world – by simply praying for those who are kings and rulers in the nations. God specifically tells us to pray for our government leaders so that our country will be blessed (1 Timothy 2:1-2). The following are some prayers from God's Word to help you as you pray for our president and other government officials, for all of them need a closer and growing relationship with the Lord Jesus!

1. **For their homes:** Father, reveal the truth of Jesus Christ to the family and heart of every government leader. Make them willing to do what is right. Give them wisdom and understanding. Let each home be filled with peace and quiet (**Psalms 127:1, 101:7; Proverbs 14:11, 24:3, 17:1**).
2. **For their spiritual lives:** Father, please open the eyes of all our government leaders who do not yet follow Jesus as their Saviour, so that they may see that You are the best plan for their lives. I pray that they would turn away from bad things and that they would live good lives and serve You. Give them much faith, love, patience, and gentleness. (**John 6:44; Ephesians 2:8; 1 Timothy 6:11,12**).
3. **For their work:** Father, please pour out Your Spirit of wisdom and revelation upon the heart and mind of every government leader. Cause them to seek wise counsel, take only good advice, and accept correction if they need it. Help them make the right decisions (**Proverbs 15:22, 19:20**).
4. **For strength:** Lord, help our leaders to be strong and brave and to do what is right even if they stand alone. Give them confidence that You are their helper so that they will not be afraid of what anyone says or thinks (**Joshua 1:7; Hebrews 13:6**).
5. **For humble hearts:** Guide our leaders to be humble, to do what is right for other people, and to show kindness. Will You please protect, guide, and teach them when they show true humility. Cause them to speak no evil about anyone, to live in peace and to be polite to all people (**Micah 6:8; Ps. 18:27, 25:9; Titus 3:2**).
6. **To be honest:** Father, give our leaders an undivided heart to speak and walk in the truth. Help them not to listen to lies and to be trustworthy themselves (**Psalms 101:2-4, 86:11, Proverbs 16:13, 29:12**).
7. **To have compassion:** O Lord, help our government to do what is right for the poor and needy in our country. Help them come to the rescue of the weak and the orphans. Help them not to seek revenge or hold a grudge (**Proverbs 29:14; Psalms 82:3-4; Leviticus 19:18**).