

## The Goal



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“When men work,  
Men work;  
When men pray,  
God works.”

Hans Von Staden



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Prayer is the source of power behind any ministry. How much more when the task is as difficult as completing the Great Commission? Therefore the goals of this teaching are:

- To motivate the churches to pray for cross-cultural missions,
- to encourage some members of the missions committee to search for current information for the church to pray about,
- to present the many missions needs and petitions,
- to provide resources to pray for missions, and
- to analyze the church’s activities in order to saturate them with missions prayer.

Prayer is the motor of cross-cultural missions. [Slide #1 of the PowerPoint] God is doing mighty works among the unreached ethnic groups in response to the pleas of his people. So many have been praying for the Muslims in the recent years that Jesus himself has been pleased to visit them in visions and dreams! One in four Muslims who convert to Christ testifies to these supernatural visits.

There are three ways in which any one can participate in the Great Commission: going to the field, giving so others can go, and **praying!** All our missionary plans and projects are nothing more than human activity if they are not saturated in constant, fervent prayer.

## I. The Call to Pray for Missions [2]

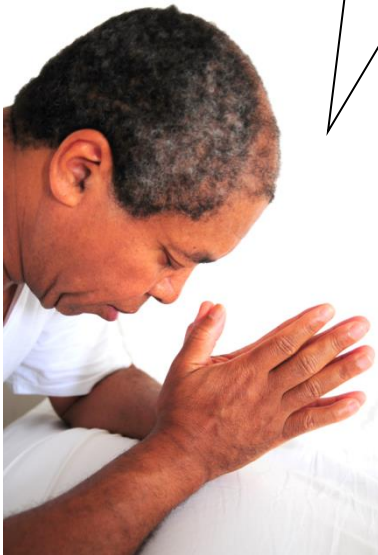
The apostle John tell us: “This is the confidence we have in approaching God: that if we ask anything **according to his will**, he hears us” (1 John 5:14). We know that the will of God is that no one be lost (2 Peter 3:9). We have discovered that the basis of the whole Bible is the missionary plan of God. How much more should we pray for the fulfillment of the Great Commission, since it is the will of God revealed in the whole Bible?

We have seen that God had established all of Israel as a kingdom of priests in reference to the nations of the earth (page 23, Exodus 19:5,6). Peter also refers to the church as a royal priesthood in 1 Peter 2:9: “that you may declare the praises of him.” What is our priestly role in relation to the nations? To pray for world missions!

The Bible calls us to missionary prayer. Jesus teaches us to pray in the Lord’s Prayer: “Thy kingdom come.” When Jesus saw the multitudes he said, “Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field” (Matthew 9:38). Missions originated through prayer and fasting (Acts 13:1-4). Paul pleads with the church in Rome to pray for him, a missionary: “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” (Romans 15:30). God continues to look for those who would stand in the gap (Ezekiel 22:30) between the present reality (7,000 unreached ethnic groups) and the future promise: “After this I looked and there before me was a great multitude that no one could count, **from every nation, tribe, people and language**” (Revelation 7:9).

The success of missionary work greatly depends on both personal prayer and the church's prayer. For this reason, everyone - children, youth, adults, and the elderly - should be involved in this great privilege. "The prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective" (James 5:16). Are you ready to go to the unreached with a true commitment of love, mercy, and perseverance, kneeling down and pouring out your heart for them in prayer?

*Oh God,  
Bless the whole world;  
Bless all the missionaries.  
Bless the whole world;  
Bless all the missionaries.  
Bless the whole world;  
Bless all the missionaries...*



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## II. The Search for Information for Prayer [3]

Sometimes the lack of current information causes us to falter in our discipline of intercession for missions since our prayers become repetitive. Our brother on the left will get bored very quickly with these monotonous prayers, and he might be tempted to give up praying for missions. This shows the importance of asking someone on the church's missions committee to be in charge of finding current information.

The missions committee can look for information pertinent to their church's missionary projects from many different sources. These could include:

- Prayer letters from the missionaries they are supporting,
- maps and information from the country or area where their missionaries are working,
- profiles of the ethnic groups they are reaching,
- pictures of the missionaries and their families, and
- information from the mission agencies they are working with.

Later in this chapter we will present other excellent sources of information for missionary prayer.

## III. Petitions for Missionary Prayer [4]

We have already learned that the missionary process is long and difficult: The missionary receives their calling, gets prepared, is sent out, adapts to the field, starts to see fruit, and finally sees a church started in the unreached ethnic group. This whole process has to be saturated in prayer.

We are going to group the many possible prayer petitions into three categories: the mission fields, the missionaries, and the newly planted church within the ethnic group. Let us remember that in the Bible we can find many promises on which to base our prayer for the unreached and for the missionaries. A Bible verse is listed with each suggested prayer petition. In this way we will be sure we are praying for missions as the Lord desires.

**A. Prayer for the mission fields** - God told Jesus, the great intercessor, in Psalms 2:8, "Ask of me, and I will make the nations your inheritance, the ends of the earth your possession." If Jesus had to ask, how much more must we? Upon seeing the needs in the mission fields, Jesus "had compassion on them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. Then he said to his disciples, 'The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field'" Matthew 9:36-38). Abram interceded for Sodom in Genesis 18.



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Prayer for the mission fields is like the hard work of plowing the earth to receive the seed of the gospel. Christians are not even allowed in the country where the picture on the left was taken, but we can go to that enormous concentration of Muslims through spiritual warfare! Imagine what the Holy Spirit could do in the minds and hearts of all those misguided pilgrims if an army of prayer warriors was interceding from all around the world! The following are some suggestions for prayer for the mission field: [5,6]

### Prayer Requests for the Mission Field

- The great need for workers for the harvest (Mt. 9:35-38).
- The different ethnic groups within and outside of **Mexico**, particularly those where the gospel has not yet penetrated (Mt. 24:14, Mr. 11:15-17, Rev. 5:9).
- The preparation of the hearts of the people so that when the seed of the gospel is sown it will not be snatched away (Lk. 1:17).
- The opening of closed and semi-closed countries, and for their governments (1 Tm. 2:1-4).
- Open doors to present the gospel (Acts 16:9, Col. 4:2-4).
- Against the principalities of darkness over the country, region, or city (Dn. 10:11-14, Mr. 3:26, 27).
- For the gospel to spread through the ethnic group (2 Ths. 3:1; 1 Ths. 1:4-10).
- To halt the advance of false religions such as Islam and Hinduism (Lk. 21:8).
- The healing of the land (2 Chr. 7:14).
- The specific needs of each place.

**B. Prayer for the missionaries** - Even Paul asked the Ephesians to pray for him. He states in 6:18,19, “And pray in the Spirit on all occasions... Pray also for me, that whenever I open my mouth, words may be given me so that I will fearlessly make known the mystery of the gospel.” Perhaps Paul’s great courage was due to the fact that the Ephesians were praying for him! If the apostle Paul asked for prayer for his ministry, how much more should we pray for our missionaries today? The following are some suggestions to enrich your missionary prayer and to bless your missionaries. [7,8]

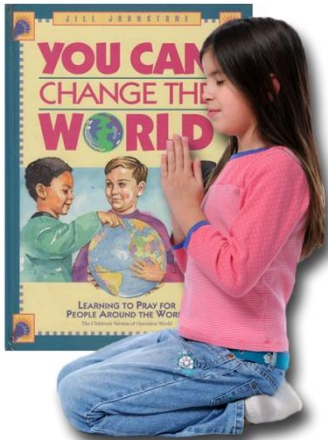
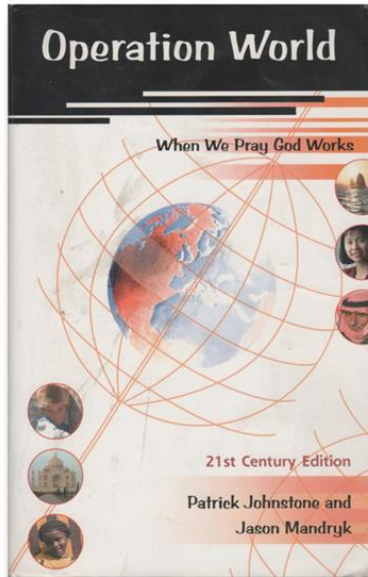
### Prayer Requests for Missionaries

- The missionary's relationship with God (Mt. 22:37, Gal. 5:16; 2 Pet. 3:18).
- The missionary's good testimony (Heb. 13:18).
- The missionary's health, energy, and recreation (James 5:15,16; 1 Cor. 15:58, Rom. 15:32b).
- The missionary's family (1 Cor. 9:5, Eph. 4:32; 5:21-6:4).
- The missionary's ability to learn a new language and culture (Acts 2:4; 14:8-20).
- Wisdom for the missionary and success in his/her ministry (2 Tm. 2:2; 2 Ths. 3:1; 2 Tm. 4:2).
- That the fruit would endure in the new believers (Jn. 15:4-8).
- Against the opposition or persecution he/she encounters (2 Ths. 3:2).
- Against the spiritual oppression to which he/she is subjected (Eph. 6:10-12).
- Wisdom to speak and make decisions (Acts 6:10).
- Grace to relate to other team members (Jn. 17:20,21; 1 Cor. 1:10).
- A clear vision for the ministry (Acts 16:7-10).
- That there be no lack of economic, moral, or prayer support (Phil. 4:10-20).
- Against the natural tendency to impose the missionary's own culture together with the gospel (1 Cor. 9:20-23).
- The missionary's travels (Rom. 15:32a).
- Liberation from dangers (2 Cor. 1:9-11).
- The specific needs of each missionary.

**C. Prayer for the new church** - Paul always prayed for the churches he had planted, as he tells the Ephesians: "I have not stopped giving thanks for you, remembering you in my prayers" (1:16). A new church is like a tender new plant, needing to be showered in prayer. Satan does not like when the gospel penetrates an unreached ethnic group and will attack the new church with all his fury. You could pray like this: [9,10]

### Prayer Requests for the New Church

- Maturity and good testimony among the believers (1 Ths. 3:12,13, Acts 2:47).
- Good understanding between the missionary and the church (Jn. 13:35).
- For lasting fruit (Jn. 15:16).
- That all the believers take part in the ministry (Eph. 4:11-16).
- Against misunderstanding the gospel and the danger of syncretism (Mk. 12:24).
- Against legalism and traditionalism into which it is easy to fall (Gal. 3:1-5, Mk. 7:6-8).
- Fellowship, as in the early church in Jerusalem (Acts 2:41-47).
- Protection from the enemy (1 Pet. 5:8).



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#### IV. Resources for Missions Prayer [11]

Aside from the search for information we mentioned in section II, there are many other resources to motivate and enrich missionary prayer. The most important is the *Global Prayer Digest* which will be presented separately. Here we will touch briefly on the resources which you can obtain from **COMIMEX**, a Christian bookstore, the internet, or with a phone call.

- **MILAMEX News** - a high quality, Spanish, Christian, on-line newspaper reporting on issues of spiritual interest, the persecution of the church, and other church-related news in **Mexico, Latin America**, and the world. You can find it at [www.noticieromilamex.com](http://www.noticieromilamex.com), opening the tabs *persecución* or *internacionales*.
- **Let Us Reach the Ethnic Groups of Mexico** - This was presented in detail on page 65 and contains information and prayer requests for each language family of Mexico. Contact the Missions Education Department of COMIMEX at (52) 55-5938-1780 or find it at COMIMEX events (Spanish).
- **Operation World** - The most complete prayer guide on the spiritual state of every country in the world, with current prayer needs. Available in Christian bookstores.
- **Etnopedia** - Contains profiles of more than 2,700 of the least evangelized ethnic groups at [www.etnopedia.org](http://www.etnopedia.org). Look for the *prayer* button to join your prayers with brothers and sisters from around the world. You can also download and print some profiles to pray in your church.
- **Impact 316 Phase II Prayer Cards** - A packet of 50 cards featuring first ethnic groups targeted by the COMIMEX Impact 316 project (see page 120). Available in COMIMEX.
- **Be Part of a Million** - A movement of **Latin missions** intercession. See [www.seapartedelmillon.org](http://www.seapartedelmillon.org)
- **You Can Change the World** [12] - Written by the wife of the author of *Operation World*, this is a missions prayer guide for children, great for enriching family prayer times. Available in Christian bookstores.

#### V. Global Prayer Digest [13]

In cooperation with missions agencies around the world, the *Global Prayer Digest (GPD)* informs Christians of the victories and needs related to what God is doing among the unreached ethnic groups. The GPD compiles information from its own in-depth research, from prayer letters of missionaries on the field, interviews with missionaries, and reports from missions periodicals. The GPD provides clarity about the world situation for your devotional times and for group prayer.

Each month the GPD focuses on a different part of the unreached world. A great variety of formats make every day's devotions especially exciting:

- First there is an interesting article that gives an in-depth introduction to the theme of that particular month.

- There are short biographies of missionaries that have worked in the featured region.
- Each unreached ethnic group within the month's theme has a profile that helps you pray with clarity.
- There are powerful testimonies of new Christians from the featured ethnic groups.
- Maps and photos enrich every day's reading.
- Bible studies deepen the understanding of missions.
- Every day lists some prayer requests that allow you to join your prayers with others for urgent and relevant needs.



Why is the GPD so important for the success of your church's missions program? Aside from praying for your church's missionaries and their fields, the GPD is the best tool for promoting sustained, up-to-date, effective missions prayer among lots of people. Moreover, you will be uniting with thousands of intercessors from all over the world who are praying at the same time for the same mission fields. There have been testimonies from the field attesting to an anointing on the work while the world is praying for that place through the GPD.

The GPD is available at [www.globalprayerdigest.org](http://www.globalprayerdigest.org). For those who really want to promote prayer for missions, you can download the GPD in PDF format, copy each page to Paint in order to format it as an image, paste the images to sheets of paper to form a booklet, and hand out the booklet so many can pray. Easy as pie!

## VI. Prayer in the Church [14]

Prayer is an integral part of the life of the church. Before starting a new meeting, make a list of all the ways the church is already praying to see how you could include prayer for missions in these existing activities, using relevant materials. Here are just a few ideas:

- Personal and family devotions,
- pastoral prayer from the pulpit,
- cell groups, Bible study groups, and Sunday school,
- prayer vigils,
- a “missions minute” during the worship service,
- youth groups, women's groups, men's groups, and of course
- new activities in the local church or in conjunction with other churches exclusively for prayer for missions.

[15] What would it be like if every Christian in **Mexico** prayed for 5 minutes a day for world missions? If 7% of the **Mexican** population of 100,000,000 is Christian, that would be 5 minutes x 7,000,000, in other words over half a million hours of prayer for missions every day! What would God do in response to so many prayers?

Jesus taught us about prayer in the parable of the widow and the unjust judge. She finally got her request because of her persistence (Luke 18:1-8). Jesus asks us, “When the Son of Man comes, will he find faith on the earth?” Today we have to show the same persistence as the widow by obeying the command of Jesus: “The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few. Ask...!”