

Christians Begin 40-Day Prayer Efforts for Election

Believers across denominational lines are starting 40-day prayer and fasting campaigns for the 2008 general election on Nov. 4.



[] On Wednesday Christians representing a wide variety of denominations and church organizations are beginning 40-day prayer and fasting initiatives.

“Together, we will make this the most prayed-for election in the nation’s history,” said John Lind, president of the Presidential Prayer Team, a nonpartisan, nonprofit organization whose mission is to pray for national leaders year-round.

In an effort called 40 Days to Pray the Vote, Presidential Prayer Team participants are joining in online prayer forums. Each morning, team members also are e-mailed a specific prayer topic that targets a vital aspect of the election. It includes a related Bible verse, inspirational photo and written prayer.

Leaders of the initiative hope to join believers nationwide in prayer for both the next president and for specific political issues facing the United States. The prayer team has sponsored three other 40-day prayer campaigns leading up to this year’s election. The initial one was launched back in May.

Leaders say prayer and fasting campaigns are “crucial” to shape the course of America’s future. “We must not only participate with active participation in the vote but also prayer participation,” said LIFE Outreach International founder James Robison, in an endorsement for the Pray the Vote initiative. “In this critical point in human history we must have godly leaders. I’m asking you to join us in prayer. That people will vote, vote their convictions based upon principles, and vote for those who will uphold principles and not sell out to political parties or partisan positions.”

In addition to Pray the Vote, San Diego pastor Jim Garlow of Skyline Church is calling Christians to fast and pray for the next 40 days as part of his Protect Marriage campaign. The initiative, launched after the California Supreme Court legalized gay marriage in that state, is designed to generate support for ballot initiatives in California, Florida and Arizona that, if passed, would define marriage as the union of one man and one woman.

“This is a spiritual battle; it must be won in prayer,” said TheCall founder Lou Engle, who is calling on church leaders to participate in the 40-day fast in the run-up to TheCall San Diego on Nov. 1. “We believe the pastors across California and the nation need to lead the nation in these 40 days of fasting and prayer. We need to take away the rights of the powers of darkness to bring this kind of resolution forward because it’s a spiritual battle.”

Some organizations are not only praying and fasting until Nov. 2 but are also conducting prayerful protests outside the nation's abortion clinics.

Leaders of the prayer campaign 40 Days for Life are calling their initiative the "largest and longest coordinated pro-life mobilization in history." Approximately 170 cities in the U.S. and Canada will participate.

David Bereit, national campaign director of 40 Days for Life, says the current economic situation has weakened the abortion industry and caused many clinic doors to close. He added that his group hopes the 40 days of prayer will help eliminate abortion completely.

"Abortion numbers have dropped so significantly that several states are now down to only one or two remaining abortion centers," Bereit said. "This fall's 40 Days for Life campaign presents a great opportunity to finish the life-saving work in these states, creating abortion-free zones and encouraging other states to follow suit."

The group also plans to host community abortion-education outreaches as the election nears.

Wednesday also marked the beginning of the Southern Baptist Convention's (SBC) 40/40 Prayer Vigil. The denomination says participants can pray for spiritual revival and national renewal for the duration of the 40-day campaign

and/or choose to pray for 40 hours during the initiative's culminating event, which begins Oct. 31.

The SBC is also providing prayer guides to aid those joining in the prayer vigils, but church leaders said all Christians should commit to prayer for this upcoming election.

"As Election Day approaches we as Christians know we need to be committed to praying for the outcome and for those who lead us," said Geoff Hammond, president of the SBC's North American Mission Board. "We must be united in our prayer and acknowledge that God is the one who must do the work in and through us.

"When we pray we become more dependent on God," he added, "more aligned with His will, more fruitful in our works. And He says He chooses to demonstrate His power through the prayers of His people." —**Felicia Mann**