

Rise of the Praying Church

God is stirring a massive yet underground movement of prayer among His people. But what does it mean? jerusalem 24/7 prayer leader tom hess offers his take.

Rising above

Jerusalem along the city's eastern side is a rolling ridge of three

peaks called the Mount of Olives. Its simple name, bestowed in ancient

times, doesn't call to mind the breadth of God's history this site has

hosted. Yet on its summit the very "glory of the Lord" once stood when

Ezekiel prophesied the regathering of God's exiled people to Himself

(see Ezek. 11:20-25). Thousands of years later, the glory of the

Lord—God's Son—stood on the mountain again and set into motion God's

plan to gather the nations to Himself.

From this mountain, Jesus prayed the

Lord's Prayer, the beginning of which was fulfilled on Pentecost, and

the end of which will be fulfilled with His coming again to Jerusalem to

reign over all nations. Also from this mountain, before He ascended to

heaven, Jesus commanded His disciples to take His salvation to the world

and to wait in Jerusalem until they had been filled with His

power for
the task:

“You shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth” (Acts 1:8-9).

Heeding His words, 120 of His followers waited on Him in prayer and worship for 10 days in the upper room until the Holy Spirit came and baptized them. The prayer movement begun by those 120 believers has been changing the world for more than 1,900 years! We, the church, have witnessed its historical result—the outward movement of the gospel from Jerusalem to the ends of the earth.

Here on the Mount of Olives, at Jerusalem House of Prayer for All Nations, we have been keeping similar “upper room” prayer-and-worship watches for the last 24 years, praying 24/7 for the peace of Jerusalem and for all countries. Our prayers are united with those of intercessors worldwide to see the gospel of the kingdom come back to Jerusalem.

We now are witnessing in the Back to Jerusalem prayer movement the gospel of the kingdom being fulfilled. Twelve great global prayer movements are circling Jerusalem like a wall

of fire from the ends of the earth (see Zech. 2:5). Each of these prayer initiatives corresponds to the 12 historical gates of Jerusalem through which at least 12 of Jesus' apostles passed to take the gospel from Israel into all the earth (see map on p. 30). Here is more about these efforts—where they are located, who is involved, and the national and international transformations they are creating:

1. Lion's Gate

I believe Asia is leading the world prayer movement today from Korea, China and Indonesia. Many churches have been praying daily through the Lion's Gate, where the apostle Jude took the gospel from Jerusalem to Asia in the first century. As many as 100 million Chinese, Koreans and Japanese are praying in what we have termed the "Chopstick Revival." May the shakings in Japan be ultimately redemptive and may tens of millions of Japanese come to know the King of Glory.

2. Golden Gate

The apostle Thomas took the gospel from Jerusalem to the Golden and Bethany gates in India. About 100 million intercessors in Malaysia, Singapore, Philippines, Vietnam, Thailand, Myanmar, India, Bangladesh and Pakistan are preparing the way back to

Jerusalem for the King of Glory to come through the Golden Gate (or Gate of the East).

3. Bethany Gate

The Bethany Gate movement is being led geographically from New Caledonia, New Zealand, Australia and Indonesia.

The strongest prayer movements in this gate are in Indonesia and

southern India, with Niko Njotorahardjo (Indonesia) and Mathew Kuruvilla

(India) serving as key apostolic leaders. Indonesians hosted the first

World Transformation Convocation in 2005 and will host Asian Empowerment

21st Century in October (a follow-up to the 100th anniversary of Azusa

Street) and the World Prayer Assembly in May 2012.

Including believers in the Arabian

Peninsula, probably 80 million praying Christians are involved in the

Bethany Gate. There is strong 24/7 prayer of the “harp and bowl”

model—which mixes Scripture, worship and intercession—all over Indonesia

and southern India. Observers estimate the Christian community has

grown so significantly it could be more than 20 percent of the population of Indonesia, the largest Muslim nation in the world.

4. Mount Zion Gate

The apostle Matthew took the gospel from

Jerusalem to Ethiopia. The Mount Zion Gate of Africa has

strong growing
prayer movements in Tanzania, Kenya and Ethiopia.
Approximately 75
million intercessors, with many 24/7 prayer watches, join in
united
intercession.

The Ethiopian Orthodox church, led by
Abune Paulos, and the Protestant church came together in
cooperation to
host our fourth All African Convocation in Addis Ababa in
2010. The
church in Ethiopia has grown from 50 percent to 60 percent in
the last
10 years and comprises 40 million Orthodox Christians and 17
million
evangelicals. Paulos has taken a strong pro-life stand. He is
a defender
of the biblical family and stands against the practices of
homosexuality and same-sex marriage. He is also committed to
standing
with Israel and says, "The God of Israel, the people of Israel
and the
whole land of Israel are one, and Jerusalem should remain the
capital of
Israel."

5. Bethlehem Gate

The apostle Mark took the gospel and led
the prayer movement from Jerusalem to Egypt, and to the
Bethlehem and
Ein Kerem gates in the first century. In 2001, Graham Power
convened the
first Global Day of Prayer in South Africa, which is now
convened
annually in almost every nation. South Africa has one of the
stronger

prayer movements, with more than 100 night-and-day watches.

Bennie

Mostert has helped facilitate and encourage 24/7 prayer throughout South

Africa and other nations. Constant prayers have helped overturn the

injustice of apartheid. But prayer is needed for the church and

government to change and take a clear biblical stand on abortion, the

family and God's covenant with Israel.

Prayer movements are also growing in

Zimbabwe, Congo-Kinshasa and Uganda. John Mulinde has been leading and

encouraging 24/7 prayer in Uganda and other African countries and is

helping many nations with the process of national transformation.

6. Ein Kerem Gate

Two nations in this gateway where God is

moving powerfully are Nigeria and Brazil. I attended all-night prayer

meetings in Nigeria led by modern-day apostle E.A. Adeboye, where 4

million intercessors in one place prayed all night. A month later, in

2001, God gave them a Christian president.

Again in 2010 another Christian president

was elected. The Christian population has grown during the last decade

from 50 percent to 60 percent. Each month they host all-night prayer

meetings attended by more than 1 million people.

In Brazil, the Before the Throne ministry, led by Ana Paula Bessa, annually records live worship albums with up to 2 million people in attendance. Pastor Marcio Valadao (Bessa's father) and pastor Rene Terra Nova each have growing praying churches of more than 40,000 believers.

Prayer and 24/7 prayer movements are growing all over Brazil. The Christian population has grown from 15 percent to 30 percent in the last 10 years.

They are a wonderfully worshipping and celebrating nation. Pray that God will give them good government that will rule in righteousness and justice and stand with God's covenant with Israel, as well as the other Latin and South American nations.

7. Mevasseret Gate

God is moving in the Mevasseret Gate, where the apostle Simeon first took the gospel from Jerusalem. Mexico, one of the 10 largest nations in the world, has a growing prayer movement and Christian population. Colombia is also experiencing revival: The gospel is triumphing, and drug lords are decreasing. God is strengthening the prayer movements in many of the smaller nations and Caribbean island nations within the Mevasseret Gate. Pastor Myles Munroe's teachings on prayer, the kingdom and leadership are

helping
many.

8. Jaffa Gate

The apostles Peter and Paul took the gospel from Jerusalem to Rome. From Rome it moved west.

Today God is moving in the Jaffa Gate,
where Canada has a Christian prime minister, Stephen Harper,
probably
the strongest head of state supporting Israel today.
Repentance and
reconciliation in Canada are changing the nation, and Canadian
youth are
helping to bring this transformation.

In the U.S., many organizations are
encouraging prayer for the nation and the world. Prayer
movements are
growing on college campuses. Prayer movements, 24/7 watches
and houses
of prayer are growing and multiplying in many U.S.
denominations.

The Azusa Street Revival in Los Angeles,
which started in 1906, was a spontaneous 24/7-prayer movement
that went
on nonstop for three years and began taking the prayer
movement and
gospel back to Jerusalem through the Jaffa Gate. As a result
of this
movement, more than 700 million people have become Spirit-
filled
Christians.

Since 1999, the International House of
Prayer (IHOP) in Kansas City, Mo., led by Mike Bickle, has
probably done

more than any to mobilize full-time “intercessory missionaries” to promote the harp and bowl model, especially in the U.S. Through its live webstream, IHOP has reached far beyond America, however. Joining with Youth With A Mission they are helping to change the face of global evangelism and working with the Koreans to help join the Eastern and Western churches together.

Here in Israel, we have been keeping 24/7 prayer going in Jerusalem for all nations since 1987. At that time, the number of 24/7 houses of prayer in the world was fewer than 25; today, there are an estimated 10,000.

In 2012, we are planning an All Euro-Americas Convocation in Rome, the city from which the gospel came to the West. We believe it is time for the gospel to return from Rome to Jerusalem!

9. New Gate

This is where the apostle John on the island of Patmos, coming from Jerusalem, received the Revelation of Jesus and the end times. From A.D. 555 until the A.D. 800s, there was a 24/7-prayer watch of as many as 3,000 people in Bangor, Ireland, that transformed the country and took the gospel to other European nations. In the 1700s and 1800s, another 24/7 watch that lasted 120

years began
in Herrnhut, Germany, with Count Zinzendorf and the Moravians.
It
birthed the Protestant missions movement worldwide.

Numerous movements of 24/7 prayer are
taking place in Germany, one of which is led by Peter Wenz,
who has
conducted 24/7 prayer for 17 years and has the largest church
in
Germany. In 1999, his movement began a nationwide prayer
initiative.

Peter Greig of England started a 24/7 movement among young
people, which
has spread across Europe to other nations of the world. Strong
24/7
watches also are being held in Switzerland. Pray that there
will be a
spiritual awakening again in Europe as there has been
throughout
history.

10. Samuel's Mountain Gate

The apostle Andrew originally went to
Kiev, Ukraine. Growing prayer movements can be found today in
Ukraine, a
former Soviet republic, as well as in Russia. As a direct
result of
prayer and biblical prophecy, 1.2 million Jews have come home
to Israel
from the former Soviet Union since 1986. Of the Jewish
believers in
Israel today, 60 percent have come from the former Soviet
Union and are
on the front lines of the revival in Israel.

Ulf Ekman, from Sweden, and Finnish

Christians are making a significant impact in this gateway through their prayer movements and proclamation of the gospel. Hudson Taylor, a great missionary-statesman to China had an open vision that the greatest move of God in the last days would come out of Russia and the Ukraine. The move of God that is happening today, and that will continue in Israel, could be part of the fulfillment of this vision.

11. Damascus Gate

The apostles Luke and Paul went to Antioch in Turkey, where the followers of Jesus were first called Christians. The first megachurch was in Ephesus, also in Turkey. Today the prayer movement and houses of prayer are multiplying among the young generation in the Turkish church, which has doubled in the last 10 years. As prayer increases in this nation of 70 million, we believe that millions will become Christians. In the midst of many trials, we praise God that the prayer movements among youth in Lebanon and Syria are growing. Let's pray together for the gospel to triumph in Lebanon and Syria and that the terrorist organizations will be dissolved.

12. Beth El Gate

The apostle Bartholomew took the gospel to Armenia, which became the first Christian nation in the world and

where today growing prayer movements are developing. One church in Armenia has grown to 8,000 people, a substantial number for that region of the world. Kazakhstan and central Asia, where the church was annihilated by the Muslims after Muhammad established Islam, have seen tens of thousands of indigenous people becoming Christians, many of whom are strong intercessors. The indigenous praying church in Iran, which straddles the Beth El and Lions gates, has grown from 3,000 people at the time of Iranian Revolution in 1979 to more than 3 million today. According to Reza Safa, who operates a 24/7 television network in the Farsi language, now is the time of visitation for the Iranian people.

The Isaiah 19 Highway

In the center of the world that surrounds Jerusalem and Israel—from the Nile to the Euphrates rivers—is the Arab Middle East and Turkey. God says this region, which once was the Garden of Eden—the land God covenanted to Abraham that David and Solomon ruled over (see Gen. 15:18)—will ultimately be the length and width of the New Jerusalem.

Isaiah 19:23-25 says that in the last days this region will be a blessing, when Egypt, Israel and Assyria worship God together. Egypt will be His people, biblical

Assyria His
handiwork and Israel His inheritance. We have been working
extensively
into this vision for more than 20 years and now are seeing the
first
fruits of this vision throughout the Middle East.
Representatives of
this vision from the 24 nations in this region have joined us
to worship
and form an Isaiah 19 prayer council representing almost all
these
nations.

God is now shaking the Middle East, as He
did the former Soviet Union almost 25 years ago. In Isaiah
19:1, God
says He will ride on a swift cloud to Egypt, which would be an
appropriate description of the force of change that began
there in
January.

Growing prayer movements are taking place
in Egypt, where there are approximately 20 million
believers—Coptic,
Orthodox and evangelical—including millions of believers among
the young
generation. There are almost as many believers in Egypt as
there are in
all other Middle Eastern countries combined.

The prayer movement includes a strong
interdenominational 24/7 watch in Cairo. The Christians had a
significant presence during the demonstrations at Tajir
Square, where
Muslims even supported them.

The shaking in Egypt could become worse
before it becomes better but will ultimately be redemptive as

Isaiah

19:23-25 says. The nation of Egypt will be saved and become God's people.

Also, as people have been praying, Israelis continue to return to their land. In 2008, Israel had the highest Jewish population of any country. The nation is slowly awakening spiritually. The prayer movement in Israel continues to grow, with four 24/7 watches in Jerusalem, ours for 24 years and the other three for the last five to seven years. There are also three 24/7 multicongregational watches—one in the north, one in the south and one in the west of Israel, and numerous other houses of prayer are in motion or starting.

Groups are praying and fasting in every nation on the Isaiah 19 highway. Corporate, fully functional 24/7 prayer watches are also being held in Kuwait, Algeria, Sudan, Turkey and Israel, and emerging 24/7 watches are being held in other Middle East nations.

We have convened an annual All Nations Convocation Jerusalem and Watchmen's Tour of Israel since 1994, which includes leaders and delegates from all the 12 gates and many of the nations of the Isaiah 19 highway. Almost 230 nations have been represented. For 14 days we keep 24/7 prayer with thousands of delegates

from all nations, praying around the clock in the “upper room.” In 2012

we will hold our 25th anniversary of 24/7 continual day-and-night

worship and prayer at the All Nations Convocation and Watchmen’s Tour of

Israel, from Sept. 16 to Sept. 30.

As encouraging as it is to see growing movements like these worldwide, we need to see much more depth and

breadth in both individual and corporate worship and prayer to see the

nations transformed. May the term “24/7” not be just another fad but an

individual-corporate lifestyle of deep abiding devotion to Jesus.

May His praying church prepare the way

for Him to return, stand again on the Mount of Olives (see Zech. 14:4)

and reign as King of Glory from Jerusalem over the whole earth.


Tom Hess established the Jerusalem House of Prayer for all Nations in 1987 as a 24-hour, day-and-night prayer watch to pray for peace in Jerusalem and for all nations.

The 12-Gate Global Prayer Movement Back to Jerusalem

These 24/7 prayer initiatives are named for the 12 tribes/gates of Jerusalem, through which the apostles took the gospel worldwide



The World's Largest Praying Church

 *Charisma* Publisher Steve Strang met recently in Seoul, South Korea, with the Rev. Young Hoon Lee (left), pastor of the city's Yoido Full Gospel Church. They discussed the prayer movement at Yoido that's been going since 1973 and how God is moving today in South and North Korea.

Steve Strang: What are some of the prayer distinctives at Yoido Full Gospel Church?

Rev. Young Hoon Lee: Various prayer gatherings are part of our weekly program. We have daily dawn prayer meetings, overnight prayer meetings and special prayer meetings

such as the Daniel [Fast] Prayer for 21 days, the 12 Baskets Prayer for 12 days and the Jericho Prayer for seven days, which caters to the common needs of the members such as economic crises or a university exam.

The church members and many visitors from outside and inside of Korea come to Choi Ja-sil Memorial Fasting Prayer Mountain for fasting prayer, which is an extreme form of one's resolute prayer and brings miraculous healing and resolution of problems.

It is well-known that healing through prayer is one of the theological contributions that our founding pastor, Rev. David Yonggi Cho, has made to the contemporary church.

Strang: How has the Holy Spirit impacted Yoido's work in Korea?

Rev. Lee: In 1958, Rev. Cho pioneered a church with only five members that became the Full Gospel Church—the largest single Christian congregation in the world within 50 years, with a membership of 780,000. He emphasized the Pentecostal belief in baptism in the Spirit distinct from conversion and speaking in tongues, followed by intimate fellowship with the Spirit. These emphases serve also as the significant cause that ignited the Pentecostal Holy Spirit movement in Korea. The dynamic of the

Holy

Spirit has made a great impact on Korean church growth.

Strang: What is on the horizon for you?

Rev. Lee: I envision another

great revival in our near future. In order to witness this, we must

emphasize a powerful prayer movement along with world evangelism, the

baptism in the Holy Spirit, divine healing, the practice of the love of

Christ and personal sanctification.

Currently, we are constructing the Cho

Yonggi Heart Hospital in the very center of Pyongyang, North Korea. With

it, leaders of North Korea will think about Christianity, and the love

of Christ will be manifested in North Korea through medical support.
