

Two Decades of School Prayer

School prayer may have officially been banned in 1962, but that hasn't stopped students from interceding on their campuses. Since 1990, millions of students—from preschool to college—have gathered around their campus flagpoles to pray each September during the annual See You at the Pole (SYATP), with 1 million to 2 million youth worldwide expected to participate in this year's event Sept. 22. "It took off in a way that really nobody anticipated and ... couldn't have been explained other than the Holy Spirit working in the hearts of kids and igniting a movement," says SYATP spokesman Doug Clark.

The student-led gatherings have given way to dozens of other campus-based prayer ministries, including the Luke 18 Project, founded by the International House of Prayer (IHOP) based in Kansas City, Missouri. The outreach is challenging thousands of college students to plant "prayer furnaces" on every full-time, four-year accredited college campus by the 2012-2013 school year. From there, the plan is to "mobilize students into a new student volunteer movement of missions and prayer, sending them to ... the hardest and darkest places," says Luke 18 Project executive director Brian Kim. This month, the Luke 18 Project will partner with IHOP, TheCall and Every Home for Christ (EHC) to send a team on a two-week journey through California to call young adults to prayer and missions. The Purple Pig Tour, named after a book by EHC President Dick Eastman, will begin Sept. 26.

"My response to her was, I am a Christian, and as a Christian I too can be offended, and I am offended if I cannot pray in the name of Jesus."

Ron Baity, the pastor of Berean Baptist Church in Forsyth County, North Carolina, responding to a clerk who told him he couldn't use the name of Jesus in his opening prayer for the

North Carolina House of Representatives because it may offend some in attendance. For many years the House has requested, but not required, pastors to deliver nonsectarian prayers. Because of Baity's complaint, it is considering banning all prayers before sessions.