

How Millennial Leaders Are Bringing the Prophetic Heart of Psalm 122 to Their Regions

In these rapidly changing times, it often seems that the interest of the Millennial generation in the Israeli-Arab conflict in the Middle East faces an uphill battle in contrast to other hot-button issues such as Western politics, technology advances and social justice. However, a growing participation by millennials in prayer for Jerusalem has defied these trends.

In 2003, Pastor Jack Hayford and I launched the Day of Prayer for the Peace of Jerusalem, which has steadily grown into an unprecedented global prayer movement for peace in God's holy city, observed the first Sunday of every October. Psalm 122:6-7 proclaims, "Pray for the peace of Jerusalem: 'May they prosper who love you. Peace be within your walls, prosperity within your palaces.'" Over the last 15 years, this initiative has done just that, each October bringing together religious leaders from all walks of life to participate in this concerted effort. Their common goal? To intercede on behalf of God's chosen people and all the inhabitants of Jerusalem, who are constantly in the crosshairs of a violent onslaught of religious hatred.

Reaching more than just Israel-focused ministries and the older generation of church leaders, this prayer event has drawn an increasingly high number of Millennials in the body of Christ with an active interest in what the Word of the Lord has spoken regarding Israel.

Young pastors from across the nation and beyond have been traveling to Israel in increasing numbers in search of a better understanding of the issues facing this small stretch

of land in the Middle East. Last year, I took to the Holy Land a group of 25 Millennial leaders of large churches who were awestruck by the depth of what they experienced, and we followed it up with a second trip like this in 2017, with similar results.

Pastor Ali Ferrell of Resting Place House of Prayer in Woodland Park, New Jersey, is one of the young pastors we have brought to Israel. In his words: "Understanding the importance of the nation of Israel to the Lord should be a priority to all disciples of Christ. The land is our birthplace, the people our kin, and the Word of God compels our action on their behalf."

These Millennial leaders are bringing this heart of Psalm 122 to their congregations, their regions and other places of influence among their peers. The result of these leaders' exposure to Israel and Jerusalem is a radical movement among this generation to seek out the heart of God in Jerusalem, and many are doing so by joining together in prayer on the first Sunday of every October.

Pastor Luke Cobrae of The Rock Church in San Bernardino, California, says, "Psalm 133 makes clear the importance of unity among God's children. The Day of Prayer for the Peace of Jerusalem creates an opportunity for believers from all around the world to seek peace in a time of turmoil."

But the growing heart for Israel in the church goes far beyond our borders here in the United States. Hundreds of thousands of churches on all continents and in almost all nations have committed to praying for the peace of Jerusalem; and not just the elders of the churches, but also the young leaders and members who are coming together with a heart for Israel. Pastor Teofilo Hayashi of Monte Sião Church in São Paulo, Brazil, exclaims, "Teaching the generations in our church the importance of unifying in prayer for the peace of a people that so many people are hostile towards is one of our

priorities. On the Day of Prayer, we join in Spirit with the rest of the body across the globe to ask for God's hand to be over Jerusalem."

The heart for the nation of Israel and the Jewish people is growing within the rising leaders of the body of Christ all across the globe, as people turn their attention toward the center point of our shared faith and values: Jerusalem. Regardless of the city where each believer prays from, or how the Word of God reached their part of the earth, all of them have a link to the Holy Land through their faith in the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.

As anti-Semitism becomes more brazen and pronounced in America and many parts of the world, there is a simultaneous cry for justice and righteousness rising up out of the sons and daughters of the God of Israel as they pray for that land.

Even as man and governments repeatedly fail to find a solution to the conflict, the younger generations of the church look to the ultimate peacemaker, the God of the universe, to bring rest to the weary. As they lift their eyes to Mount Zion and wait for His glorious return, they pray for peace. They pray with the full expectation that He will hear their cries as He did in the days of Moses and Elijah, and that He Himself will defend His people and His land.

Prayer for Jerusalem is gaining momentum, as an increasing number of young leaders are recognizing that the same God who has miraculously returned His people to the Promised Land will be their Rock and their Protector in the days to come. {eoa}

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