

Secular Media Explores Spiritual Warfare, Politics and ‘Seven Mountains’

“It was just before 3 a.m. when Ruth and Shady Abadir walked through the double doors that lead into the thumping heart of the International House of Prayer” in Kansas City, Mo.

That’s how Mitchell Landsberg, a reporter with the *Los Angeles Times*, starts out a story called “Perpetually Praying to Save Society.” The article explores the world of IHOP-KC and tries to make connections to politics and dominionism.

“In 12 years, the music has never stopped at the International House of Prayer—a leader in a small but growing movement dedicated to perpetual prayer,” Landsberg writes. He notes that young people have flocked to the ministry “from as far away as Britain and South Korea, convinced that their prayers, joined in a never-ceasing stream, can push back evil forces that threaten to overwhelm society.”

Brad Christerson, a professor of sociology at Biola University who studies charismatic Christianity, told the *LA Times*, “It’s probably one of the fastest-growing movements within the broad evangelicalism. They’re really engaging a new generation of young evangelicals.”

Landsberg goes on to explain that the prayer movement seeks influence over “Seven Mountains”—Business, Government, Media, Arts and Entertainment, Education, Family, and Religion—in secular society. He also tied it to spiritual warfare and dominionism, though Mike Bickle, leader of IHOP, has publicly stated that he is not a dominionist nor is he affiliated with the New Apostolic Reformation that has recently come under fire in secular media circles.

Why is IHOP suddenly in the media spotlight? Partly because of its role in Gov. Rick Perry's The Response prayer meeting at Reliant Stadium in Houston. It seems apostolic and prophetic leaders like Bickle are facing increasing scrutiny in this election cycle for supporting the non-denominational, apolitical prayer meeting. Words like "potentially dangerous, cult-like group" were used in the *Times* article.

"Like we're going to take over Bill Gates," the *Times* quoted Bickle saying. "C'mon people, get a grip."

Although Landsberg worked to paint a picture of charismatic believers as dominionists with supporting quotes from liberal advocacy organizations, Bickle maintained in the article that he has no political loyalties or designs.

"I've been criticized many times for being apolitical and abdicating my responsibility in the realm of politics," he said. "I'm not against being involved; it's just not my interest."