

# A Map With a Mission

**Like no other time in history, we must cry out to God for world evangelism. Here's a tool that will help you pray more effectively.**

Defining moments: Every believer has them. They represent encounters or experiences of such significance that they help define something of the believer's life from that time forward. Every intercessor I've met can describe several defining moments that have occurred in their own lives.

Beyond my personal salvation experience—clearly life's most important defining moment—few experiences have defined my daily prayer life more than what happened to me on a mild May day in 1975. That's when I first met Jack McAlister, founder of World Literature Crusade (WLC), a ministry with a goal of reaching every home in the world with a printed gospel message through a program he called Every Home Crusades. It was also the day I was introduced to praying daily over a map of the world.

During that initial encounter, I had no idea I would become the director of prayer mobilization for WLC only a year later, or that 13 years later—after the ministry had changed its name to Every Home for Christ—I would be the international president.

## **The Power of a Plan**

As described in my recent book *Heights of Delight* (the first of a trilogy about intercessory worship published by Regal Books in 2002), this moment came about because Jack had invited me to visit him in his Los Angeles-area office. At the

time, my wife and I directed a 24-hour prayer ministry in Sacramento for college-age youth called The Prayer Corps. Jack had heard how the young people in our group had sustained nonstop prayer for 35,000 hours (during a four-year period), and he was looking for ways to mobilize more prayer for his ambitious crusade to take the gospel message to every home in the world.

During our first meeting Jack placed in my hands a map of the world, folded in such a way that it would fit nicely in my Bible. He referred to it simply as the World Prayer Map.

Jack's map listed all the countries of the world under various categories (small nations and islands, communist nations, Arab-Muslim nations, and so on). Each country listed was assigned a number that designated its location on the map.

Jack, who was rather forthright in our first meeting, asked me bluntly how many nations of the world I prayed for daily. I cleared my throat, stammering somewhat, and answered, "About two, America and China."

My answer was only half-honest: I did pray daily for America but probably only once or twice a week for China. My periodic prayers for China were no doubt due to the fact that the country was then in the midst of Mao Zedong's oppressive Cultural Revolution and was frequently in the news.

Jack's response was penetrating: "No wonder so little is happening in the world. So few are praying for what really counts."

I got the message and within days had begun to pray daily for

several of the 210 nations listed on the map. By year's end, 1975, that defining moment in May took on an even greater dimension when I was overwhelmed with a burden to begin praying daily for all the nations of the world by name.

My prayer during Christmas week of 1975 was simple, "Lord, if You'll give me the strength, I will pray for all the nations of the world each day for the rest of my life." During that week I committed the nations to memory as a way to help me pray.

Those moments with Jack in 1975 revealed to me the power of having a practical plan for prayer that reaches beyond one's immediate sphere of influence. As I follow the plan God gave me, He continues to provide the strength for me to keep my vow to Him.

## **Touching Neighbors and Nations**

After praying daily for the nations for several years and becoming a leader in Every Home for Christ, I redesigned the World Prayer Map, giving it a calendar format, to encourage intercessors to pray for several nations a day and thus influence every nation on Earth each month. The map makes it possible for them to do this in only five or 10 minutes each day.

I also added two important features. The first is the name of the head of state beside each nation so intercessors can pray more literally (as Paul admonished Timothy) for all who are in authority (see 1 Tim. 2:1-2). The second is a list of seven or eight different evangelical mission ministries and denominations for each day that allows intercessors to have an

effect on a wide scope of missions activity globally through their ongoing monthly prayers. With these additions, the map became a more helpful tool.

This year the map has evolved even more as a result of our desire to help strengthen Mission America's Lighthouse Movement, which encourages believers to be lighthouses of prayer and evangelism in their own neighborhoods. Every Home for Christ's newest Light Your Street/Light the World edition of the World Prayer Map includes a special place in which intercessors can sketch a map of their neighborhoods so they can touch both their neighbors and the nations through daily prayer.

Using a map of the world as an aid to prayer helped me discover several keys for influencing both those residing in my "Jerusalem" as well as those living at "the ends of the earth" (see Acts 1:8).

**1. The Motivation Key: biblical purpose.** Having a map in my hand motivated me to move beyond mere "bless me" prayers to touch multitudes that have never heard the good news of Jesus. More specifically, it added a biblical purpose to my praying. Purpose is defined as "something set up as an object or end to be attained" or "what one seeks to achieve."

When I first began praying for the nations I was driven by God's promise to His Son, "Only ask, and I will give you the nations as your inheritance, the ends of the earth as your possession" (Ps. 2:8, NLT).

I almost stopped using this promise as a basis for my praying after a Bible professor, who heard me quote it in a seminar as a foundation for praying for the nations, suggested the verse

was given exclusively by God to His Son. It wasn't for us, he said.

Thankfully, I read the rest of my Bible before tossing the promise aside and discovered in Romans 8:16-17 that any promise God gave His Son is ours as well. That's because we are co-heirs with Christ of all the Father has given Him.

Paul wrote: "The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God's children. Now if we are children, then we are heirs—heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ" (Rom. 8:16-17, NIV). The New Living Translation reads, "Everything God gives to His Son, Christ, is ours, too."

That settled it! I could ask God for both my neighbors and the nations. This has provided me with a biblical purpose and a powerful motivation. And holding before me a map of both my nearby neighborhood and the distant nations brings this purpose alive every day.

**2. The Ministry Key: biblical passion.** The second key helped release in me a biblical passion. For many people, prayer provides a specialized ministry when other popular callings may seem out of reach.

Most followers of Jesus won't become apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors or teachers (see Eph. 4:11). The majority won't serve as bishops, deacons, or elders, or even sing in a church choir. But all can embrace a twofold ministry that truly has eternal implications.

First, every follower of Jesus can minister to the Lord. This concerns our personal worship. It focuses on a passion for the

Lord. There is no higher calling than ministry to the Lord.

Second, every follower of Jesus can minister to the lost. This concerns our personal witness. It focuses on a passion for the lost. It involves not only praying for those who don't know Jesus but also developing a plan to share our faith in Christ with them. This includes supporting missionary endeavors in distant nations with our resources.

Notice how the psalmist links these two themes in a single psalm: "Sing a new song to the Lord! Let the whole earth sing to the Lord! Sing to the Lord; bless His name. Each day proclaim the good news that He saves. Publish His glorious deeds among the nations. Tell everyone about the amazing things He does. Tell all the nations that the Lord is king" (Ps. 96:1-3; 10, NLT).

Holding a map of the nations (and our neighbors) before us in prayer and saturating that map with worship and intercession brings Psalm 96 alive in our praying.

**3. The Mandate Key: biblical pattern.** All true followers of Jesus have been given a mandate to help fulfill the Great Commission. Praying over a map of the world (that includes a map of our neighborhoods) brings new life to this mandate. It also provides us with a biblical pattern to help carry it out.

A mandate is defined as "a resounding directive" or "a clear and focused objective given by a person or persons in authority." Another definition reads, "To put into one's hands; to command or entrust."

We discover our mandate from Christ in such commands as,

“Therefore go and make disciples of all nations ... teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you” (Matt. 28:19-20, NIV).

Luke provides a description of the biblical pattern for fulfilling this mandate when he tells in his gospel how the early church responded to Christ’s command: “Day after day, in the temple courts and from house to house, they never stopped teaching and proclaiming the good news that Jesus is the Christ” (Acts 5:42). Our new Light Your Street/Light the World prayer map seeks to embody this pattern with practical ways to pray for and proclaim Christ in our immediate neighborhoods and the most remote nations.

**4. The Mission Key: biblical plan.** The final key introduces to each believer a biblical plan that enables us to truly affect both our neighbors and the nations for eternity. This model for missions is increasingly being described as the “prayer, care, share” plan.

Based largely on such Scriptures as Luke 10:5-9, it has been embraced by Mission America, a coalition of 80 denominations and 400 parachurch ministries, as its primary objective for influencing our communities as well as nations.

Every Home for Christ’s new edition of the World Prayer Map is developed around three action steps for this prayer, care, share plan of Luke 10. They include:

**Prayer focus.** When Jesus commissioned the 70 to go forth with the gospel, He admonished them, “‘When you enter a house, first say, “Peace to this house”’” (Luke 10:5). Prayer for our neighbors (and nations) is the primary blessing we can give

them. Prayer additionally prepares the way for the rest of the plan to be effective.

**Care focus.** Next in the Luke 10 model, we read Jesus' commands to "'Stay in that house, eating and drinking whatever they give you,'" and "'Heal the sick that are there'" (vv. 7,9). His words speak of a willingness to fellowship with those around us as well as to look for ways to meet their needs (such as through healing the sick). These qualities embody the care focus.

**Share focus.** Finally, Jesus said, "'Tell them, 'The kingdom of God is near you''" (v. 9). God's kingdom, of course, is revealed only through Jesus Christ. Thus, to witness to a lost person about Christ is to point that person in the direction of God's kingdom. To lead him to Christ is to bring him into the kingdom. What began with prayer and was nurtured in care now opens the door to share who Christ is and how He can transform that person's life.

Every Home for Christ has a desire to join with other Mission America partners to see tens of thousands of new "lighthouses" birthed in our nation's neighborhoods. We have an urgency to vastly increase an army of those who are focusing prayer on all the nations of the world, especially in light of intensifying global tensions. Therefore, we have set a goal of equipping 1 million believers in the coming 12 months to pray daily for their neighbors and the nations.

A grant from a Christian printer to make Light Your Street/Light the World prayer maps available free of charge to individuals, prayer groups and congregations (while they last) has convinced us that God is blessing this urgent call to prayer. A sample of the map is included with this issue of



Charisma to help you begin praying today.

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