

How This Missionary Supernaturally Dethroned Principalities, Reclaimed His City for the Lord

Editor's note: This is a guest blog by my friend Greg Winslow, a former missionary to Mexico.

It was February, too cold to be outside, but we were determined.

We had been challenged to take up prayer walking for one of the most tormented cities of drug overdoses in America: Manchester, New Hampshire. With over 51 overdoses in the city last September alone, that number was staying steady. It seemed the epidemic was touching every family. We were ready to take to the streets in prayer to see change come.

Although we started out with only four of us, others caught the vision and joined us in the task, thus growing to over 30 early-morning walkers representing at least four churches and more to follow. As we walked the streets, we would come against the strongholds over this city of drugs, crime, alcohol and the like.

We know the weapons of our warfare are mighty for that very reason. As we walked Elm Street in downtown Manchester, we would pass the SNHU arena, a stadium that holds some 12,000 people. We would pray for God's favor to one day use the stadium for God's glory: for salvations, intercessions, deliverances and God's praises to be in such a place.

Up to this point, the arena had only been used by one church for occasional holiday events. Such an event would be enormous and require many hands on deck, but we were presently just a

handful. However, we couldn't shake the feeling that God wanted it for an event that would massively tear down strongholds on the state level, with many statewide churches involved.

My wife, Suzanne, and I had been missionaries in Mexico for 27 years (17 in Zihuatanejo), and having gone through a violence epidemic, we had some experience in how to pray for a city.

While we lived in Zihuatanejo, the violence escalated. It became common to see in the newspaper and hear throughout the town of homicides, raids and especially kidnappings. We had been personally on the front of, the middle of and the back part of shootouts.

One time, three of my kids and I were carjacked and taken to a sugar cane field, where we were tied up and left, robbed of everything.

We have also been stopped by people with AK47s, and it was all too common to hear of stories of people who would try to stand up to the violence, disappear and never be heard of again. The regular sound of gunshots and grenades made the area where we lived a living hell for raising a family all because of drugs and the greed they breed.

As a united church, we came together to pray and fast for the city. Pastors united together to organize church-wide prayer events to tackle the problem. We understood the problem existed because as a church we had become passive and permissive in watching over our city.

So we banded together as churches and began to, as Ephesians 3:10 says, notify principalities and powers that they were finished. We did not ask God for anything. Rather, we used the authority He has given us for such a time as this. God gave us authority to make things happen.

Many pray and ask God to do this and to do that, but God gave

us the authority to exercise it here on earth. So we did. Needless to say, we saw tremendous results.

We prayed a number of times for people who were kidnapped to be set free, and they were. On one occasion, we had the president of the city come and give the keys of the city to the church. We prayed for him, and he was so grateful for the church to come alongside him during his term in office. We saw dramatic change in the atmosphere of the city, and a noticeable change was evident there. We had made a dent in the strongholds over our city and were determined to see more.

It was with this experience in mind that we began praying for the SNHU arena to have not only a similar event, but similar results. Manchester needs Jesus, and it's up to the church to bring about the change through God's power. That's why God gave the church authority in the first place.

The Great Commission commands that we disciple the nation, not make disciples of people in every nation but bring the whole nation under the lordship of Jesus Christ. As in the parable of the leaven, the yeast permeated the whole lump. Likewise, we are to permeate every area of the nation. Situations exist in the city because the church permits them.

So we stepped out in faith and booked the SNHU arena for Oct 28 to rally the statewide churches in New Hampshire, to bring all under the lordship of Christ. Jesus is the answer, but He works through the church, so the church must come alive, step into its God-given authority and notify the principalities that their days are over.

Since the start of our prayer walking in February, crime has reportedly gone down 25 percent since January. We give the glory to God. However, we are not settling for only 25 percent: We want Jesus glorified in this city, and by the grace of God, we will see it. Join us. Backing off because we see an improved statistic isn't what is needed. Rather, we

need a complete healing that God can bring if His people, who are called by His name, will humble themselves, turn from their sin and pray. We need to see the healing through till completion. {eo}

*Having planted churches in Acapulco and Zihuatanejo, Mexico over a period of 27 years, **Greg and Suzanne Winslow** are in a season of transition. They are currently helping to build a local church in New Hampshire while making short-term mission trips. The Winslows carry a missionary spirit, evangelizing and discipling wherever they are serving. They are currently reaching out to drug addicts in one of the worst drug-affected cities in the U.S.*