

Prayers That Shook the World

Five examples of people God used to move mountains

'Praying Hyde' and the Punjab

John Hyde didn't just have a fondness for the Punjab region that today straddles the borders of Pakistan and north India. No, the American missionary's heart burned to see the territory of 1 million non-Christians turned to Christ—so much that he developed a lifestyle of ministering during the day, then interceding before God throughout the night. “I used to keep such hours for myself, or pleasure,” he said, “[but] can I not do as much for God and souls?” Though he was only one of five missionaries when he first arrived in the Punjab, by 1904 “Praying Hyde,” as he became known, began gathering Indian Christians and western missionaries for an annual series of conventions. Before the first meeting began, however, he rallied believers for an intense season of prayer and fasting for revival, all for the sake of winning the lost for Christ. “Give me souls, oh God, or I die!” he cried at the 1910 Sialkot Convention, while issuing a public challenge to double his previous year's goal (which was met) of leading one person to Christ every day. Prior to his death two years later, not only had that vision enlarged exponentially, but Hyde also witnessed revival sweeping through the Punjab and the rest of India.

Peggy and Christine 
Smith with Duncan
Campbell (©
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What Sparked the Hebrides Revival

Though evangelist Duncan Campbell became the face of the Hebrides Revival that began in 1949 on the Scottish islands, historians credit two elderly prayer warriors for laying the

foundation through intercession. Peggy Smith, 84, was blind, while Christine Smith, 82, suffered from severe arthritis; neither could attend services at their local parish, yet both burned to see revival come to their tiny village. For months the sisters prayed faithfully from 10 p.m. to 4 a.m., rending the heavens for a move of God, until one night in prayer Peggy saw a vision of Campbell preaching on their island to crowds of young people (most of whom were absent from church). She shared the vision with a local pastor, who then gathered others to press in for such revival, and within months the entire island was consumed with a move of the Spirit that emptied the bars, filled the churches and transformed the remote region.

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When Prayer Tears Down Walls

Ronald Reagan is often credited for sparking the demise of the Iron Curtain with his famous words in 1987: “Mr. Gorbachev, tear down this wall!” Yet when the Berlin Wall actually crumbled two years later, few realize how God used the prayers of His people to do just that. What began with a six-person prayer group that met each Monday night at St. Nicholas Church in Leipzig, Germany, evolved into thousands of people across East and West Germany gathered in homes to pray for peace. By October, almost 300,000 believers were interceding in houses, churches and even prayer walking through the streets. After the wall fell on Nov. 9, 1989, one East German Communist Party leader remarked, “We had planned everything, we were prepared for everything—but not for candles and prayers.”

Wild Kentucky Prayers



While the Second Great Awakening swept through Great Britain and parts of the United States in the 1790s, Kentucky was far-removed from such an encounter with God. Lawlessness ruled this frontier state, where a mere 5 percent of the population attended a church and bank robberies occurred daily. Enter

James McGready, a Scotch-Irish Presbyterian minister who arrived in 1798 to pastor three small churches—filled with escaped murderers, highway robbers and counterfeiters—in the southwest region of Logan County. McGready's vision for revival began from a place of prayer, and he rallied his church members to a day of prayer and fasting for revival on the first Monday of each month, as well as at sunset every Saturday evening and sunrise the next morning. By June 1800, hundreds joined McGready at Red River for a camp meeting that lasted several days, and by the end God moved so powerfully that "the floor was soon covered with the slain; their screams for mercy pierced the heavens." The Cane Ridge Revival soon followed, which not only transformed the state, but also birthed the entire modern missionary movement.

Jeremiah's Business

As often happens, prosperity caused the revival fires of the Second Awakening to dim as the American economy soared in the early 1850s while people's hunger for God waned. When the Panic of 1857 shook the financial world, however, few places were hit harder than New York City—which is exactly where Jeremiah Lanphier believed hearts would be most open to God. The quiet businessman had set aside his business to minister to the 30,000-plus jobless men wandering the city streets, but his efforts left him even more desperate for a move of God. On Sept. 23, 1857, after passing out more than 20,000 flyers announcing a noonday prayer meeting, he sat in an upstairs room praying—alone. Eventually, five men joined him. The following week, another 14; then an additional 20. Within weeks, thousands of businessmen were gathering to seek God's face in prayer each day. As Lanphier's prayer gatherings expanded, similar groups sprang up around the nation. What began with one man's prayer grew into a nationwide revival in which 10,000 New Yorkers were saved each week—and an estimated 1 million people across the nation.