



February 2009

The Word of God **NEWSLETTER**

an
ecumenical
charismatic
missionary
Christian
Community

Do you find intercession to be a challenge?

The Intercessor's Lot

By Martha Balmer

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Intercessor's Lot

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At the U of M

And More ...

Intercessors have a hard time of it. They are the vanguard, pushing the edge, hanging out in unsubmitted territory. They live in the realm of faith and hope—among things unseen, things not yet in their hands. By definition, intercessors are always sojourning in enemy territory — like Joshua sent ahead to scout, to declare the truth, and to lead the people in to possess the kingdom.

"Don't be surprised, as though something strange were happening to you." (1Pt 4:12)
The warriors go into conflict, the plow cuts into the rough.

The intercessor's enemy has a very simple and logical strategy—discourage him by stating the obvious, pointing out what is as plain as the nose on his face. Things like how long he has prayed without seeing an answer, the high fatality rate of thus-and-such a disease, the enormity of the task ahead, or the size of the enemy's army. The things the enemy shows us are easy to see, because they are natural, physical things.

But we are given the task of seeing the unseen, knowing the unrealized, just as Elisha saw and knew and prayed for his servant to see the Heavenly Army. We have been given authority to declare things that *are*, but they are not things that can yet be seen with the natural eye, because at best they have only been partially manifested in the natural realm.

Prophetic intercessors receive the authority to pull down from heaven things that God has opened heaven to pour out. On His behalf, they claim what is His and take it back from the one who stole it—because God has shown them that it's time! They manifest what existed long before in the heavenly realm and is now legitimately breaking into the natural realm. They bring forth in this age the first fruits of the age to come, just as Peter did when he told the lame man at the Temple to get up and walk. They make rough places plain, and then they move on to the next rough, unclaimed place.

"Don't be surprised, as though something strange were happening to you."

Doing things first

Because they are the vanguard, intercessors have to do things first. If they are moved to pray for conviction of sin, they should not be surprised when their



A self-confessed prayer-complainer before the Lord started to call and instruct her in intercession, Martha Balmer shares insights she has gained in the challenges faced as we pray for

things yet unseen to become seen.

Seems to me ...

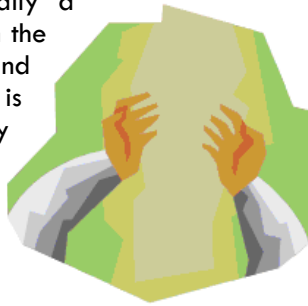
Lifting up holy hands

By Phil Tiews

I urge, then, first of all, that requests, prayers, intercession and thanksgiving be made for everyone—for kings and all those in authority, that we may live peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness. 1 Tim 2:1-2

I want men everywhere to lift up holy hands in prayer, without anger or disputing. 1 Tim 2:8

The New Testament portrays the church doing a lot of praying. All sorts of prayer, on every occasion, in every place — in unity. Prayer not only for themselves, but for their world. As we know, the church here in the US is not really a praying church, though in other places in the world she prays with fervor and persistence, and fruit. But I think this is beginning to change here in our County and across the country. As too often happens, it seems the Lord needs to use difficulties to stir up a sense of desperation and bring us to the end of ourselves—and more of Him!



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In this issue you can read a lot about prayer. Martha Balmer shares great insights the Lord has given her into the role of intercessors as she has responded to the call to prayer. Joan O'Connell writes about the real-life difference it makes to have people praying for you.

There are stories of Christians gathering to 'lift holy hands without anger or disputing' from across denominational boundaries at the Concert of Prayer and the 40 Days of Prayer on the University of Michigan campus. And there is more going on in our County than we can cover here. The annual Pastors Prayer Summit. Churches who are instituting weekly or daily prayer times. The IM-PACT 24 hour prayer room. The upcoming County-wide 40 Days of Prayer that we will be participating in as a community [see notice on page 8].

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In John 17:22 Jesus declares that the glory given to Him He has given to us. Paul speaks of the surpassing power of God in us, though we are earthen vessels (2 Cor 4:7). I think you can agree with me that the measure of glory and power we now experience is probably less than they had in mind! But is it our destiny in Christ, and our world desperately needs God's glory and power to be revealed through His people. The pathway to that is prayer. Entering the Throne Room, being ever more fully clothed in Christ, our hope of Glory, receiving His power to bring the message of reconciliation to His world.

Let's pray.



Martha Balmer

The Intercessors Lot [continued]

own sins are the first to bear the light. When they pray for repentance to fall upon the church, they will find themselves stricken with sorrow for sin. As they pray for God's heart to be manifest in the church, they can expect the very challenges in their own relationships that will call for supernatural love. As they pray for healing gifts they can expect to start tripping over the sick. As they pray for outpourings of faith, they should not be surprised by an onslaught from the discourager that challenges them to exercise that faith before they see it around them. As they pray for change, they will feel the pressure of the resistance. As they pray for prophetic words, they may find that they are the ones who hear them and must speak them. Intercessors are the vanguard; they go in first.

An experienced complainer

When I first heard the call to intercede I only had experience in complaining to God about my own desires and needs. I didn't have anybody but myself on my heart, and I knew it.



No matter what we see with the natural eye or recall throughout a lifetime of unrealized hopes, we know that any enemy stronghold is so much tissue paper against the sword of the Word of God.

The territory we take is not illumined by natural light. It is taken—against natural instinct and inclination—by spiritual sight and supernatural means.

When I tried to pray for others, it was like walking through mud up to my knees; the suction was almost more than I could break, and I was always in a sweat. But I knew that God is a God who supplies what he requires, so I said yes. I didn't even *want* to pray for others, but I said yes.

That was the first lesson. The territory we take is not illumined by natural light or seen by the natural eye or taken by natural strength. It is *taken*—against natural instinct and inclination—by spiritual sight and supernatural means. We are not guessing. We are not wishing. We are not idealists in a state of optimistic denial. We are standing on the Word of God Almighty, maker of Heaven and Earth. We are acting in obedience to the Master of the Universe, going with a flow that is inexorable. We know the One we believe; we trust the word of the Absolute; we stand on the sure Foundation.

When we move within the authority of His name, we are inexorable as well. Cancer. Depression. Addiction. Perversion. Nothing stands against God's Word; no stronghold survives against Him. No matter what we see with the natural eye or recall throughout a lifetime of unrealized hopes, we know that any enemy stronghold is so much tissue paper against the sword of the Word of God.

Seeing with spiritual eyes

An intercessor has to give up using his natural eyes in order to see the answer. He has to close his mind to the liar. He does this more and more easily as his prayer life increasingly manifests Paul's exhortation to "pray constantly."

"Do not be surprised, as though something strange were happening to you." The enemy will lie to us,

but the more time we spend in God's presence, the less time and space his lies can take up in our heads and the less credence we can give his nonsense. This freedom is the logical outcome, because the more time we spend in God's presence, the better we know who He is. And the better we know who He is — in all His glory and majesty and power — the less afraid we are of His enemy. When the enemy says, "This depression is too hard, too entrenched, too habitual, too deep," we'll laugh. Because in God's presence we have seen sorrow and sighing flee away. We know the enemy is just hustling for time. He's powerless. He just hopes we'll believe him long enough to leave him alone during our lifetimes.

Intercessors become healers,

teachers and encouragers. They manifest every spiritual gift—because they bring about what they pray for through their faith, and their faith is manifest in their works.

Rolling out the carpet of welcome

Intercessors become prophets because they seek God's heart and He reveals it to them. They become exhorters and leaders because they know what God is up to. And they know what He is up to, because they spend so much time in His presence that they SEE it. They see it unfolding like a red carpet before Him, and they put their hands behind it and PUSH! They push it on their hands and knees until it gets lighter, then they get up on their feet and push until it gets lighter still. Finally they give it a kick and watch it unroll away before them faster than they can keep up.



This freedom is the logical outcome, because the more time we spend in God's presence, the better we know who He is. And the better we know who He is — in all His glory and majesty and power — the less afraid we are of His enemy.

Have you ever been in a situation where you realized you were “over your head” with challenge, but didn’t know who to ask to help? Or what to ask for?

Several years ago, a friend with whom I was talking about challenges surrounding me as Director of the *Christian Dance Network*, encouraged me to get some prayer covering: for me, personally, in addition to the ministry’s activities. New idea to me, but it sounded right. Gradually, I introduced the concept to various friends, as the Lord seemed to lead. One by one, they agreed to pray for me. Now, there is a small army of intercessors to whom I email periodic updates. I try not to “blog” to them. I send them prayer requests and occasionally, celebrations of answered prayer.

Hearing and acting

I feel I can call on them any time; I know they will be there, hear my cry for help, and back me up with prayer. Since it’s an email relationship at this point, I can send a message day or night; they’ll receive and respond to my request when they get it. [I trust that God can handle the potential time and space discrepancies.]

I had pre-requested prayers from my intercessors concerning a scheduled “procedure” my husband Patrick had done over Christmas vacation. As Patrick purposefully hadn’t told many people about the surgery, I was cryptic. The morning after the surgery, I wrote the following report, using the computer in the hospital ward “family room”:

Sent: Tuesday, December 23, 2008 4:02 PM

Subject: Pat’s doing well. Yea...

Hey, all ~

THANK YOU for your prayers!

I left Patrick around 9pm at St Joe's - sitting up, chomping on a popsicle, pain level about a 1, and ready to snooze. His nurse/techs were taking good care of him. He'll probably spend two nights in the hospital, so he'll be home for Christmas!

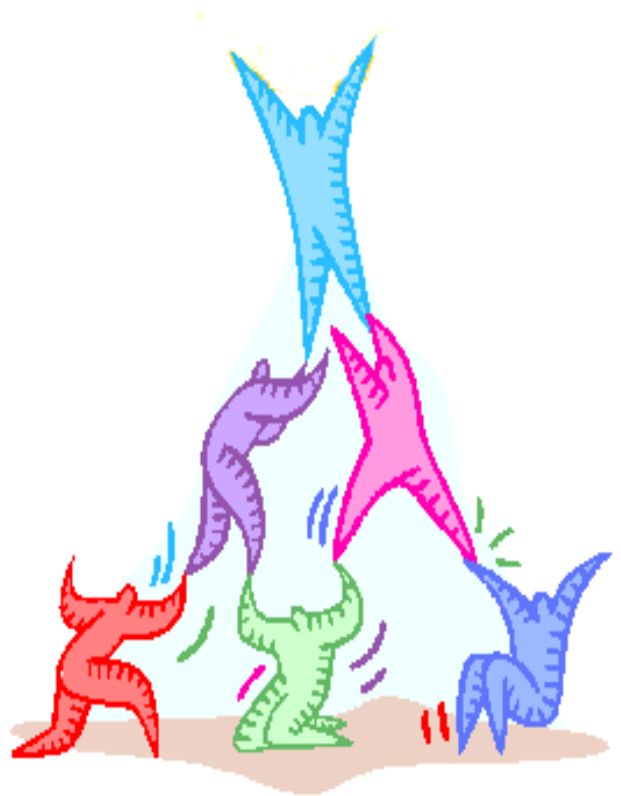
It was a long day! Mostly because of simple issues like housekeeping, falling behind in room prep. Pat was in the recovery room for about 4.5 hours -- prolonged time, mainly because of the rooms upstairs not being ready for the number of people coming out of the OR.

Eventually, they let me go hang out with him in the recovery room (not normal, apparently). We passed the time by my reading *The Last Battle*, C S Lewis. Thanks for your prayers. All is well. Doc said there were “no surprises.” That sounds like good news to me.

That was written in the morning of the “recovery day.” We were told he could leave that afternoon. But, four hours later, the recovery process began to get complicated. I felt the stress of wanting support, but not knowing where to turn. After all, Pat wasn’t sharing widely about this situation. So, to whom could I make my needs/Pat’s needs known? Like others, our parents are no longer in the picture. Our sibling relationships, if under reconstruction, are still loosely defined. One “doesn’t want to worry the children...”

Asking for help

Ironic, isn’t it? We live in a virtual community of perhaps as many as 1000 committed, caring, praying Christians, but when the heat is on, I flounder. Who can I call? Where can I go? Who will help? I encouraged Patrick to phone his sharing partner/our friend Phil Tiews to give him an update. *Feeling* the need for support for myself, I went down the hall, fired up the ‘family room’ computer and wrote this note to my prayer buddies. I was no longer cryptic. We needed back-up.



Help Me?

By Joan O'Connell

Sent: Tue, Dec 23, 2008 at 8:32 PM

Subject: Hi Folks.

Actually, things turned this afternoon. We're still in hospital.

Now we need

- wisdom for the doctor: shall we return to the Operating Room or wait it out?
- stop the bleeding (is it bleeding or is it clots remainders?)
- dissolve the clots from the operation, so that the "pee" can flow freely!

AMEN.

THANKS, all,

Bless you, Joan

I'm staying in hospital tonight. Too much excitement to go home and the weather is lousy as well.

Bless you, Joan

Describing the effect for me of knowing that some praying people out there knew of our situation would include words like: relief, comfort, feeling "you are not alone," strength, endurance, grace. We did wind up in the OR again late that evening, both of us returning to Patrick's room, where I spent the night, following the second surgery.

Practical assurance: The next day, our daughter, freshly in from Chicago for the holidays, and I were sitting with Patrick in room 314. Phil Tiews came by and visited. After initial howdy-do's, he walked the seeming mile to the hospital coffee shop procuring for us some 'real' coffee and a cinnamon roll for which everybody had declined interest, but which was subsequently consumed with enthusiasm. The visit was reassuring. Strengthening. A few days later, helping bridge the gap between hospital time and home time, Barb Tiews prepared and delivered to us a simple meal from her Christmas fare. Our neighbor also brought us some homemade soup. So practical; so helpful. Did we "need" a meal? Perhaps we could have managed. Was it loving, kind, appreciated? You betcha

Prompts

I remember when I was in junior high school, I developed a serious case of pneumonia. I was out of school, in bed, for at least 3 weeks. One of my fondest memories of that dreary, uncomfortable time was brief glimpse of normal life that I had when a friend came by to bring me my homework. Although I was essentially quarantined, by parents' orders, my friend was allowed to peek into my room and say hi. Standing in the doorway, she looked so incredibly healthy!! Her health gave me hope and vision for what a return to normal could mean. Strength, vigor, good color. Quite a contrast to my status, but so refreshing.

We live in the midst of a people of faith, prayer and real life adventures. How can we "be there" for one another? As the Holy Spirit prompts us? "Joan, why not give ___ a call?" Or, "Might ___'s mom would appreciate a leave-the-house break during his nap tomorrow?"

Does the Holy Spirit prompt you to action sometimes, according to your uniqueness? What if we responded to those prompts more frequently? Simple acts of kindness, extended in love, by the grace and at the urging of our Lord. How glorious! Amen.

As we age, wrestle with child-raising issues, encounter illness and set-backs, challenges of work or lack thereof, I pray that we'll be attentive to the still small voice of God whispering and equipping us to reach out to one another in the simplest ways, strengthening the fabric of our life together, one cup of soup, visit, phone call, shared meal, greeting card at a time.

[PS- Patrick is doing great now, thank you. ☺]



How can we express God's blessing to young Couples?

Have a night out on us! ...

Marriage Builder Nite II

Saturday, February 7—a week to Valentine's Day and The Word of God gave young couples an early gift, a great night out with free meal and childcare. The couples had a relaxing time, the kids have a blast and the team of a couple dozen folks who helped in one way or another experienced the joy of being part of the flow of the Spirit!. See some comments from the couples below:

Dinner & experience was great!!! Thank you to all of the volunteers who contributed to this evening, you are truly appreciated!



This is such a blessing for us. Also, thank you for having the childcare. As you know, though we love our children, it is nice to have a couple of hours to focus on each other. Again, thank you.



We always greatly appreciate the blessing of a night out to focus on our marriage. It's awesome to see the value that is placed on marriage by the WOG! In this society it's wonderful to be in a place where marriage is focused on a blessing and a grace from God. We thank all of the people who have served together to make it possible.



Thanks to you and everyone involved in putting on the marriage builder night. It was so nice to sit down together for a coherent adult conversation and uninterrupted dinner. It was great to know the kids were having fun and being well cared for. They enjoyed themselves as much as we did!



We had a really nice time. The free baby-sitting was so special. It's not often we get a quiet meal together without having to worry about the cost. We found a lot to talk about and even learned a little about each other's "love languages." Thanks to everyone who helped make it possible!

Unity, Reconciliation, Life & Transformation

So, are the people of God going to give in to discouragement and defeat or will the challenges of the times stir us to prayer—becoming even more urgent in asking the Father to bring His Kingdom on earth?

For one cold, dark night in January the answer was, "We're going to pray!". Each year folks from churches across the county have been gathering the third week of January to pray in response to the Week of Christian Unity, Martin Luther King Day, the anniversary of Roe v Wade, and for transformation of our County. There was a bit of a breakthrough this year in that St. Francis of Assisi Catholic Church invited us to use their church. They have not been much involved in the various inter-church efforts, but this was such a good experience they are considering being a co-sponsor next year!

Praying together, we experienced the Holy Spirit lifting us up and giving us strength to believe for God's purposes in our County. ■



It was cold and dark, and the times can be discouraging, but Christians from many churches gathered January 19 to for the annual Concert of Prayer for Unity, Racial Reconciliation, Life & Transformation. This year for the first time St. Francis of Assisi Catholic Church invited us to meet at their church and now are interested in being a co-sponsor next year!

Non-Stop prayer at the University of Michigan?

How Crazy is That?!



A prayer movement among students at U of M? Sound familiar? Well, it is taking a different form than some of us

experienced, but the Spirit is stirring students from a couple dozen campus ministries to pray night and day as 2009 gets underway.

Since early January hundreds of students at the University of Michigan have been praying night and day at a prayer room in University Lutheran Chapel. This effort was organized mainly by the students themselves who drew the leaders of 2 dozen Christian churches and ministries to cooperate in the effort. Their Goal: 40 Days of Prayer to transform UM. Here is an email report from one participant.

The 40 Days is amazing. And I do not say that lightly. The 40 Days is pretty much unprecedented in terms of what it represents and what it is accomplishing on campus. 24 Christian organizations on campus and in the extended community are joining efforts to come together in unity and to pray. This represents just under half of the official student organizations recognized by the Michigan Student Assembly. Our direct network (primarily via Facebook) is 500 strong and our sponsors indirectly and easily represent more than 3000, 4000 or probably 5000 Christians (including church congregations).

How crazy is that?!

How great is God for using us to put this together for his glory?!

The 40 Days is so far reaching beyond anything that we can ever

dream or imagine, and I'm not talking about numbers. God is using this for His Glory! We are His Instruments! Offered up in sacrifice - with humility and righteousness!

I entered the ULC tonight with my Oxford Bible study and was amazed. First, 25 or so people were in the Common Cup, 5 or 6 close friends that I said hello to. On the first floor a ULC Bible study taking place where I saw two of my closest friends. Second floor, a group of people praying in the "couch lounge," 6 or 7 people in the "coat/shoe area" praying and reading and talking, 6 people in the prayer room, all in prayer or reading. After our Bible study on prayer, I exited to a different group of people in the couch lounge praying, more people in the coat/shoe area, even people in Pastor Scott's office, and at one point 18 people by my count praying in the prayer room. Is God being glorified?!?

I am so encouraged by the relationships I saw developing tonight, the tangible unity of the Body of Christ and the prayers being lifted up by the righteous and faithful. How great is our God???

People are being saved. Lives are changing. God is alive and working!

Please - be encouraged. Dream big. What is next? What is now?! ■



Billy Kangas along with current and former Mission Christ folks have been

fully involved in helping to start and sustain the 40 Days of Prayer at U of M which has its prayer room at University Lutheran Chapel.

*The Church of Washtenaw County crying
out for transformation day and night*



**Plan to take a shift during
The Word of God's portion**

Friday, March 20 to Monday March 23

**Held at the Community Office
230 Collingwood, Suite 160B, Ann Arbor**

**Call the Office (994-3243) to sign up
or after the next Prayer Meetings**

Join us in March

**3/1 Prayer Meeting, 4:30–6:00 pm
Covenant Presbyterian Church
5171 Jackson Road**

**3/7 Band of Brothers 9–11 am
Covenant Presbyterian Church
5171 Jackson Road**

**3/14 Women's Breakfast 9–10:30 am
Covenant Presbyterian Church
5171 Jackson Road**

**3/15 Prayer Meeting, 4:30–6:00 pm
Covenant Presbyterian Church
5171 Jackson Road**

**3/20-23 "40 Days of Prayer"
Community Office, 230 Collingwood**

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