



A PUBLICATION FROM THE OFFICE OF THE GENERAL DIRECTOR OF FOREIGN MISSIONS, UNITED PENTECOSTAL CHURCH INTERNATIONAL

## WHAT IF?

Attending the Because of the Times Conference, I noticed a billboard advertisement for the host church. It simply stated, "What if?" I was bewildered as to what it meant. The theme of the conference was taken from II Chronicles 7:14. How familiar but, too seldom practiced. It contains the key to the global revival we all long for. It reads, "If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land."

It leaves me wondering, "What if?" What if the people of the name—found everywhere around the globe—humbled themselves, and seriously got a grip on praying? What if we turned from our sins of self-righteousness, self-absorption, and self-pity? The verse also answers, the "what if." Going to our knees in repentant prayer, asking God for a breakthrough, and storming heaven yields these dividends:

1. We will hear from heaven.
2. God will forgive our sins.
3. God will heal our land. He will turn things around.

But it is all predicated on one little word: if...we will, God will! "Only ask, and I will give you the

nations as your inheritance, the whole earth as your possession" (Psalms 2:8, *NLT*).

Sister Thetus Tenney said, "It is absolutely beyond the natural mind to believe that a little band of believers on their knees have the power to determine destiny, to rule kingdoms, to chart the course of events, to loose, to bind, to destroy, to give life, to bring revival; but it is verified in the Word of God.

- More than once, Moses' prayers saved his nation from destruction (Deuteronomy 9, 11, 16, 21).
- Elijah strangled the economy of a nation and then, with one prayer, broke the drought as a witness to the power of God.
- Hosea prayed a hedge of thorns around his wayward wife until she would be redeemed (Hosea 2:6).
- A prophet's prayer blinded and subdued a destroying army who then took orders from him (II Kings 6).
- Praying women initiated revival on the continent of Europe (Acts 16:13-15).
- Cornelius prayed down an angel and a revival in an unlikely place with unlikely people (Acts 10).
- A home prayer meeting dispatched an angel to unlock prison doors (Acts 12:5-7).
- The prayer and praise of Paul and Silas provoked an earthquake that broke open a revival (Acts 16:25-34).

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- Peter prayed, Dorcas was raised from the dead, the whole city heard about it, and many believed (Acts 9:40-42).
- Paul prayed, the governor's father was healed and became a witness to the power of God (Acts 28:7.8).

Consider that small group praying had major effect on nations, heathens, enemies, continents, the economy, strange people, family, prisoners, angels, the sick, and the dead. "

Such biblical examples beckon this question, "What if...we placed emphasis on prayer?" What if...prayer became the priority?"

Andrew Bonar said in 1853 (but it is still true) that prayer is the church's power against the world. My predecessor, Brother Harry Scism once remarked that the real of the church is not in the board room but in the prayer room. I'm not downplaying the need for organization or boards. I'm merely saying that, with so many of the situations in our churches, it would be best to take it to prayer...first.

A limited prayer and fasting base in the local church will limit power in the church. The same goes for the national church. "As prayer goes so the church goes." The Book of Acts began with leaders gathered together in the Upper Room in an extended prayer meeting. The Holy Spirit was poured out. Souls were won through the anointed preaching of the Word of God. The Church was established. Prayer remained a priority in the Early Church among leaders and members alike. Leadership always led the way in prayer. Hear me clearly, my dear leader friend. It is YOUR responsibility to call your church to prayer. Set the example! Now!

Leaders reemphasized their priorities in Acts 6. Prayer was placed first among ministerial priorities. Men of God stated their main concerns in the ministry as:

## First Quarter 2009

- Give ourselves continually to prayer.
- Give ourselves to the ministry of the Word.

Dan Southerland in *Transitioning (Leading Your Church Through Change)* talks about the Elijah Sickness that some leaders have. Elijah saw God do some tremendous miracles. "But Elijah got so busy working for God that he did not make time to seek God. Soon the same leader who had been used in such big ways..." was running from a wicked woman. "The problem with not spending time in prayer is simply this: those who talk with God ...hear God best. And those who do not talk with God...do not hear Him at all. The number one hindrance to answered prayer for...leaders today is prayerlessness.

Vesta Mangun, in her lesson, "Leadership in Prayer--Indispensable Example" tells us that you can:

- Measure your love for your people by your prayer life.
- Measure your concern for your people by your prayer life.
- Measure your vision for your people by your prayer life.
- Measure your leadership of your people by your prayer life.

"The devil is in constant conspiracy against a preacher who really prays, for it has been said that what a minister is in his prayer closet is what he is, no more, no less." (Vance Havner)

What if the entire United Pentecostal Church globally went to prayer? What if a nation went to prayer? What if a local church went to prayer? What if you went to prayer? What if? It goes back to the beginning. We would hear from heaven. God would forgive our sins. He would heal our land. His kingdom would be extended. Revival would happen. What if?

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