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CHRISTIAN LEADERSHIP ATTRIBUTES DYNAMIC INCREASE IN EFFECTIVENESS TO THE WORK OF INTERCESSORS

NANCY PFAFF

Nancy Pfaff, currently living in Reno, Nevada, with her husband, serves as a church growth consultant, specializing in spiritual life and prayer. She is the founder of Nevada Church Growth, a non-profit organization which researches church growth in Nevada and reports in the Nevada Church Growth Newsletter. She received a B.S. from the University of Nevada in Reno, Nevada, and has done graduate work in church growth and cross-cultural studies at Fuller Theological Seminary and evangelism, discipleship, and leadership at the International School of Theology.

We all think prayer makes a difference, but *how much* of a difference does it make?

In a recent survey of 130 pastors, evangelists and missionaries, it was revealed that prayer made a dynamic difference--89% indicating a positive change in ministry effectiveness when a trained intercessor prayed for them only fifteen minutes a day for an entire year.

THE SURVEY ITSELF

The greatest majority of those we asked to evaluate change in crucial areas of ministry and personal life indicated positive or significant positive change. For example, 81.5% to 89% of those surveyed indicated positive or significant positive change in the following areas:

1. Eighty-nine percent indicated greater effectiveness in ministry and use of spiritual gifts. For example, if their gift was evangelism, more people came to Christ; if teaching, a better response was reported; if counseling, there were definite improvements.
2. Eighty-nine percent indicated fresh insights, discernment and a greater freedom in seeking and receiving God's wisdom.

3. Eighty-nine percent reported increased wholeness and completeness in Christ as well as greater openness to God for correction.
4. Eighty-six percent related improved attitudes which resulted in more fruit of the Spirit, less competition, less independent superiority and defensiveness.
5. Eighty-two percent reported a deeper relationship to God (sensitivity to the Lord, quality private time in prayer and the Word, receiving personal direction and vision).
6. Eighty-one and one half percent reported improvement in leadership skills (ability to communicate clearly, free flow of the gifts of the Spirit and wisdom in dealing with staff).

This survey was the result of intercessors taking a five hour training course through Iverna Tompkins Ministries, Scottsdale, AZ. They were given 18 areas of prayer on which to focus. (See attached survey form for subject areas). Willing intercessors were assigned a ministry person (man or woman) to pray for during the next year. Little or no correspondence took place between the intercessor and the minister for whom they prayed.

In a smaller follow-up study of twenty of the intercessors, *daily prayer* for leaders was seen to produce greater results than prayer offered less often (weekly or monthly). Where intercessors stopped praying for their assigned leader after a few weeks, the leaders indicated no significant positive change in their lives and ministries during that year.

IMPLICATIONS FOR CHURCH GROWTH

Out of 109 pastors covered by intercessory prayer, 60% indicated numerical growth of their church. Since an incredible nine in ten Americans say they pray, and even three out of four of the unchurched indicate they pray,⁸⁵ there exists a tremendous reservoir of untapped prayer power in every church which can be affirmed, trained and deployed

⁸⁵*The Gallup Report*, "Religion In America", April 1987 Report No. 259, 42.

to see the lost won, the apathetic revived, the "backslider" restored and the committed made more effective, in short, to pray for church growth.

One pastor in Pennsylvania writes, "Thank you to the intercessors. The last 12 months have been times of dynamic change and transition. One year ago we were conducting a midweek Bible study with about 15 in attendance, today we are pastoring a church of more than 600. How amazing our Lord is!"

Applying the biblical principle that prayer, focused on God's purposes, brings forth much fruit--increased results, decreased spiritual warfare, and accelerated accomplishment--intercessors in churches must be mobilized to undergird and strengthen the church's work in these last short days before Christ returns.

Knowledge of the power in prayer for ministry has led to an integration of prayer and church growth both in the United States and Third World countries.

John Wasem, previous pastor of evangelism and new church development at the 91st Street Christian Church in Indianapolis, reports growth to 1600 in only eight years with 40%-50% new believers.⁸⁶ He attributes their astonishing growth to their prayer teams which were paired with home visitation and evangelism callers. The intercessors prayed for those making the calls and later for those who were called on. The visitation/evangelism callers left messages for the intercessors as answers to prayer came in. Those called on were built up in faith as their needs were met in answer to prayer, and they felt loved and appreciated by the church. Intercessors were encouraged to continue in prayer. The church grew.

In Korea the early morning prayer meetings which combine church growth emphasis are believed to produce the tremendous growth we see there. Dr. Paul Yonggi Cho, pastor of the world's largest church of approximately 600,000, attributes their spectacular growth to intercessory prayer.

Dr. Daniel R. Reeves, a church growth consultant and managing partner of the New Church Consultants Group, attributes the 60-70% increase in the development of ministry contracts to the prayer coverage he received from an intercessor. Even more important than this, he indicates his spiritual life was dramatically enriches and stimulated.

⁸⁶John E. Wasem, Minister of Outreach, East 91st Street Christian Church, 6049 East 91st Street, Indianapolis, Indiana 46250, (317) 849-1261.

Leaders surveyed realized the tremendous spiritual warfare which attacks them personally, their families and their ministries. They thank God for the intercessors and attribute increased effectiveness and decreased strain to the "prayer covering."

In Argentina, spiritual warfare against ruling principalities over geographic areas have released spiritual oppression with thousands coming to Christ. Omar Cabrerra, pastor of a church of over 135,000 in Argentina, tells of his intercessory prayer encounters with ruling spirits over towns, resisting them in the power of God, then beginning crusades where thousands accept Christ when few could win converts before the intercession.⁸⁷

IMPLICATIONS FOR LEADERS

Dr. C. Peter Wagner of Fuller Theological Seminary reports trends in prayer that indicate we are now in the beginning of the greatest prayer movement in living memory and that it will blossom in the 1990's.⁸⁸ He goes on to say that prayer is the most underutilized source of power for Christian leaders today.

Answers to prayer are evidences of God's acts today--God making Himself known to us. The acts of God, God's interaction in the events of history, make up the landscape upon which we learn to know Him and respond to Him (scripture governing our interpretation of God's acts in day-to-day events).⁸⁹

Leaders in Biblical times employed intercession. Abigail saved her household through intercession with David (1 Sam. 25). Esther saved the Jews through her intercession and that of her fellows (Esther 4,5). If we follow Jesus' life, we see him being first in prayer at every major turning point.

⁸⁷Omar Cabrerra, *Vision De Futuro*, Casilla 288, 3000 Santa Fe, Argentina, breakfast conversation with author, August, 1988. Rev. Cabrerra's church grew from 30,000 in 1979 to 135,000 in August, 1988.

⁸⁸Dr. C. Peter Wagner, lecture on prayer for leaders, Fuller Theological Seminary, Fall, 1988.

⁸⁹Dr. Ray Anderson, lectures in Theology, Anthropology and the Revelation of God, Fuller Theological Seminary, Fall, 1988.

Billy Graham is reported to have a list of 43 fallen national Christian leaders.⁹⁰ Should not prayer be marshalled as "preventive medicine" to undergird leaders strengthening their resolve to resist temptation? In the survey, 78% of the leaders prayed for indicated their strength to overcome temptation increased in areas of money, sex, and power.

It is crucial that Christian leaders everywhere learn how to receive intercession.⁹¹ Many in leadership have yet to admit that they need this kind of prayer support--intercessors who are confidential, trustworthy, and powerful before God.

IMPLICATIONS FOR INTERCESSORS

Christian intercessors who are willing to give their lives in prayer for others as God directs, need to begin extending the kingdom of God in their areas of influence. The time has come for Christians to understand the need to make themselves available to church leadership as prayer partners, focusing on protection of the leader from "the world, the flesh, and the devil," as well as covering ministry goals and personal needs. If an intercessor senses God's call to pray for a leader, it is important to let that leader know, and equally important to let the leader confirm this call or decline to do so. If the offer is not immediately or openly received, the intercessor can pray, watching for specific needs in the leader's communications.

God appears to open the door and bring the match of leader with intercessor as the leader asks God for an intercessor in prayer. Let this be an encouragement to the many intercessors who have found it next to impossible to get prayer requests and prayer targets from their church leaders, and a goad to church leaders to receive intercession.

Potential intercessors can be recognized by their intense commitment to prayer. They tend to pray two to three hours or more a day or would if they could, seeing an amazing number of answers to prayer. One intercessor in Reno, NV, kept track of 100 requests by the leader she covered regularly in prayer. Only 12 requests appeared to be answered "no", and 36 answers to prayer fell in the range of the miraculous--the answer to prayer could not be attributed to natural means.

⁹⁰Ibid.

⁹¹Ibid.

Intercessors indicate their reward for spending their time in this way is their intimate relationship with God and seeing God bring about His will in otherwise difficult or "closed areas."

IMPLICATIONS FOR THE FUTURE

In I Samuel 25, David and his men surround Nabal and his family and their assets in a similar way an intercessor surrounds a leader in prayer. Nabal's servant described David's ministry and the results in verses 14-16,

"...these men were good to us. They did not mistreat us, and whole time we were out in the fields near them nothing was missing. Night and day they **were a wall** around us all the time we were herding our sheep near them."

Nehemiah, a type of the Holy Spirit, was commissioned to **build a wall** around Jerusalem so they would "no longer be in disgrace"⁹² with the enemy coming in and out among them, threatening them with destruction and producing fear and weariness. Through prayer guided by God's Spirit, intercessors accomplish much the same thing when praying for leaders.

Today the intercessor is being seen, and must be seen, more and more as an essential member of the ministry force, building that wall of protection and increasing the fruit of ministry.

Campus Crusade employs eight people whose only job description is to pray.⁹³ DAWN Ministries International has hired an intercessor full-time. Not only is she praying for the leaders of the ministry team, but she is developing intercessors for other leaders in the DAWN movement world wide.⁹⁴ John Wimber, pastor of the Vineyard in Anaheim, CA, asks his

⁹²Neh. 1:3

⁹³Wagner, op. cit.

⁹⁴DAWN Ministries, *DAWN Report*, 7 June 1989, n.pag.

staff of over 80 persons to take one of their working hours and devote it to prayer for the ministry with no deduction from their pay.⁹⁵

If we are to hasten Christ's return and evangelize the world by AD 2000, as Lausanne II in Manila recently showed to be possible, the prayer power of the church must be significantly released. We need to continue as our Lord taught us to pray the revolutionary prayer, "thy kingdom come." We must combine the best principles of ministry with the best principles of intercessory prayer, *uniting leaders with intercessors*. There are 657 definite requests for prayer in the Bible, not including the Psalms. There are 454 definitely recorded answers.⁹⁶

God's power is directed toward God's purposes. When we pray for the people, tasks and strategies that make implementation of God's purposes possible, we join forces with God; and God's power flows through our prayers of faith to multiply results and diminish opposition.

*This article is based on *case study research* undertaken to explore intercessory prayer for leaders as a researchable problem. *Action research* is now being conducted on this subject with results expected in 1992.

⁹⁵John Wimber, lectures in Church Growth, Fuller Theological Seminary, August, 1987.

⁹⁶George W. Peters, *A Biblical Theology of Mission* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1972) 339ff.

INTERCESSORY PRAYER PARTNER SURVEY RESULTS

Intercessors were trained to pray for pastors, evangelists, and missionaries by Ierna Tompkins Ministries. Their commitment was to pray at least 15 minutes daily for the person assigned them. Questionnaires were sent to 210 of the leaders prayed for over a period of at least one year, and 132 responded. Leaders were asked to indicate significant positive change (10, 9, 8); some positive change (7, 6); no change (5); some negative change (4, 3); and significant negative change (2, 1). There were twenty categories as indicated below.

1. Effectiveness in ministry and use of spiritual gifts (If one of your gifts is evangelism, have more people come to Christ?; if teaching, are you getting a better response?; if counseling, is there more improvement?; etc.)

130 Responses Mode: 8

Ave: 7.7

89 %	positive change (57% = significant; 32% = some)
11 %	no change
.8%	some negative change
0 %	negative change

2. Numerical growth of the church (Are more people finding Christ and growing in Him than the year before? Use average worship attendance as a measure).

109 Responses Mode: 7

Ave: 6.4

59.6%	positive change (27.5% = significant; 32% = some)
32 %	no change
3.7%	some negative change
5.5%	significant negative change

3. Relationship to God (Sensitivity to the Lord, private time in prayer and the Word, receiving personal direction, vision, teaching).

131 Responses Mode: 10

Ave: 7.7

82 %	positive change (56% = significant; 27% = some)
15 %	no change
1.5%	some negative change
.8%	significant negative change

4. Effectiveness in priorities (Knowing your priorities, apportioning time effectively, maintaining flexibility).

131 Responses Mode: 5

Ave: 7

74.8%	positive change (40.5% = significant; 34.4% = some)
22 %	no change
3 %	some negative change
0 %	significant negative change

5. Quality friendships (Friendships at your level of maturity, fun and social fellowship, more than one key friend, wisdom and discernment concerning the opposite sex, balance between letting God meet your needs and letting friends meet your needs).

130 Responses Mode: 5

Ave: 6.8

62 %	positive change (42% = significant; 20% = some)
33 %	no change
1.5%	some negative change
3 %	significant negative change

6. Wisdom (Fresh insights, discernment between your own wisdom and God's, continual seeking of God's wisdom).

131 Responses Mode: 10 & 7

Ave: 7.8

89 %	positive change (58% = significant; 31% = some)
10 %	no change
.8%	some negative change
0 %	significant negative change

7. Health (Emotional, mental, physical health; coping with weariness; care of physical body; rest; self-control in eating; exercise).

129 Responses Mode: 5

Ave: 6.7

61 %	positive change (38% = significant; 23% some)
29 %	no change
6.9%	some negative change
2.3%	significant negative change

8. Temptation (Power--desire to be somebody, healthy ego; Sex--strength to overcome temptation; Money--ability to be content).

130 Responses Mode: 10

Ave: 7.6

78 % positive change (58% = significant; 20% = some)
20 % no change
.8% some negative change
.8% significant negative change

9. Attitudes (Positive--fruit of the Spirit; Negative--against competition, independent superiority, defensiveness).

Mode: 8 Ave: 7.8

86 % positive change (66% = significant; 20.5% = some)
13 % no change
0 % some negative change
.8% significant negative change

10. Motives (Whole and complete in Christ, openness to God for correction).

Mode: 10 Ave: 8.2

89% positive change (68% = significant; 21% = some)
11% no change
0% some negative change
0% significant negative change

11. Appearance (Reveal the Lord in actions, dress or speech).

Mode: 5 Ave: 7

65 % positive change (45% = significant; 19% = some)
34.6% no change
0 % some negative change
.8% significant negative change

12. For the Vision (Clear vision, not blocked).

Mode: 10 Ave: 7.2

73 % positive change (46.5% = significant; 26% = some)
20 % no change
4.7% some negative change
2.3% significant negative change

13. Leadership (Ability to communicate clearly; free flow of the gifts of the Spirit; wisdom in dealing with staff).

Mode: 10 Ave: 7.2

81.5%	positive change (54% = significant, 27% = some)
15 %	no change
2.4%	some negative change
.8%	significant negative change

14. Ministry staff (Understanding and support of vision, enhancement to ministry, team attitude, anointing and ability).

116 Responses Mode: 10

Ave: 7.3

73 %	positive change (52% = significant; 22% = some)
22 %	no change
3.4 %	some negative change
.86%	significant negative change

15. For those who receive and support ministry (Open hearts, generous, faithful).

121 Responses Mode: 7

Ave: 7.3

77.7%	positive change (45% = significant; 32% = some)
19 %	no change
2.5%	some negative change
.8%	significant negative change

16. The Family Leader (Giving of self to family emotionally, physically and spiritually; time with family; good communication; time to listen).

Mode: 10 & 8 Ave: 7.3

78 %	positive change (48% = significant; 30% = some)
20 %	no change
1.6%	some negative change
0 %	significant negative change

17. Family (Supportive of ministry, active involvement).

126 Responses Mode: 5

Ave: 7.3

69 %	positive change (51% = significant; 18% = some)
28 %	no change
2 %	some negative change
.8%	significant negative change

18. Spouse (Desire to complement; unity and love flow; fulfillment of own spiritual relationship; strength to cope with stress; freedom from performance expectations).

116 Responses Mode: 10

Ave: 7.7

78%	positive change (55% = significant; 23% = some)
19%	no change
2%	some negative change
1%	significant negative change

19. Children (True relationship to the Lord, good relationships with brothers and sisters; no resentment of ministry staff; security in parents' love).

111 Responses Mode: 10

Ave: 7.7

76 %	positive change (56.8% = significant; 19.8% = some)
21.6%	no change
.9%	some negative change
1.8%	significant negative change

20. Financial Provision (For all needs and some wants; not have to use family provision for ministry; faith to believe for special needs; revelation of joy of giving).

128 Responses Mode: 10

Ave: 7.3

69.5%	positive change (52% = significant; 18% = some)
20 %	no change
.9%	some negative change
1.8%	significant negative change

APPENDIX A

Nevada Church Growth

*Stimulating and encouraging church growth
in Nevada to the glory of God*

IVERNA TOMPKINS MINISTRIES

March 20, 1989

P.O. Box 50157

Reno, Nevada 89613

Dear Participant:

We are enclosing an important questionnaire for a nation-wide prayer research project. Please take 15 minutes now to complete the survey. Comments are encouraged. You can save us the cost of a phone call reminder by returning the survey on or before April 10, 1989.

You have been selected to participate because you are being prayed for by the Iverna Tompkins Ministries Intercessors Prayer Network. Approximately 227 Pastors, Evangelists and Missionaries are participating in this study.

Twenty subject areas have been selected for your subjective measurement as to changes that have occurred in your personal life, family life and ministry life since you have been receiving intercession. Your intercessor has been trained to pray for you 15 minutes a day in 18 of the 20 subject areas.

The research project will identify "perceived changes in personal, family and ministry life as a result of receiving intercession." Results will be published in a variety of publications. If you would like a copy of the results, please indicate this in a note at the bottom of your questionnaire.

Example of survey response desired:

- 1....5....10 4. Effectiveness in priorities (knowing your priorities, apportioning time effectively, maintaining flexibility)

If, in your opinion, your effectiveness in this area increased significantly, you would circle "10"; if there was some positive increase, you would indicate a number between 5 and 10 and circle it; if there was no significant change, you would circle "5"; if there was a decrease in effectiveness you would indicate a number between 1 and 5 and circle it; if there was a significant decrease in effectiveness, you would circle "1". Suppose you felt there had been an effectiveness increase you would measure as "8", this is the way you would mark the survey:

1....5 8....10

Thank you for your anticipated timely response.

NANCY PFAFF, FOUNDING PRESIDENT, NEVADA CHURCH GROWTH
DIANE MCINTOSH, IVERNA TOMPKINS MINISTRIES, PRAYER NETWORK ADMIN.

If you have questions, call (702) 747-1013, Nancy Pfaff

APPENDIX B

Nevada Church Growth

*Stimulating and encouraging church growth
in Nevada to the glory of God*

VERNA TOMPKINS MINISTRIES

P.O. Box 89137

Reno, Nevada 89513

INTERCESSORY PRAYER PARTNER SURVEY

In order to assess the effectiveness of intercessory prayer for Christian leaders, we would like to know your own experience as one who has had an assigned intercessor for the past year. The intercessors were trained to pray for leaders in several categories which are listed below. On a scale of 1 - 10 with 10 being "significant positive change", 5 representing "no change", and 1 representing "significant negative change", please indicate what you have experienced in each category. You may comment after each if you wish.

1.....5.....10

Comments:

1. Effectiveness in ministry and use of spiritual gifts (if one of your gifts is evangelism, have more people come to Christ?; if teaching, are you getting a better response?; if counseling, is there more improvement?; etc.)

1.....5.....10

Comments:

2. Numerical growth of the church (are more people finding Christ and growing in Him than the year before -- use average worship attendance as a measure.)

1.....5.....10

Comments:

3. Relationship to God (Sensitivity to the Lord, private time in prayer and the Word, receiving personal direction, vision, teaching)

1.....5.....10

Comments:

4. Effectiveness in priorities (Knowing your priorities, apportioning time effectively, maintaining flexibility)

1.....5.....10

Comments:

5. Quality friendships (Friendships at your level of maturity, fun and social fellowship, more than one key friend, wisdom and discernment concerning the opposite sex, balance between letting God meet your needs and letting friends meet your needs)

1.....5.....10

Comments:

6. Wisdom (Fresh insights, discernment between your own wisdom and God's, continual seeking of God's wisdom)

1.....5.....10

Comments:

7. Health (Emotional, mental, physical health; coping with weariness; care of physical body; rest; self-control in eating; exercise)

1.....5.....10

Comments:

8. Temptation (Power--desire to be somebody, healthy ego; Sex--strength to overcome temptation; Money--ability to be content)

1.....5.....10

Comments:

9. Attitudes (Positive--fruit of the Spirit; Negative--against competition, independence, superiority, defensiveness)

1.....5.....10

Comments:

10. Motives (whole and complete in Christ, openness to God for correction)

APPENDIX B (CONTINUED)

1.....5.....10

Comments:

11. Appearance (Reveal the Lord in action, dress or speech)

1.....5.....10

Comments:

12. For the Vision (Clear vision, not blocked)

1.....5.....10

Comments:

13. Leadership (Ability to communicate clearly; free flow of the gifts of the Spirit; wisdom in dealing with staff)

1.....5.....10

Comments:

14. Ministry staff (Understanding and support of vision, enhancement to ministry, team attitude, anointing and ability)

1.....5.....10

Comments:

15. For those who receive and support ministry (open hearts, generous, faithful)

1.....5.....10

Comments:

16. The Family Leader (Giving of self to family emotionally, physically and spiritually; time with family; good communication; time to listen)

1.....5.....10

Comments:

17. Family (Supportive of ministry, active involvement)

1.....5.....10

Comments:

18. Spouse (Desire to complement; unity and love flow; fulfillment of own spiritual relationship; strength to cope with stress; freedom from performance expectations)

1.....5.....10

Comments:

19. Children (True relationship to the Lord, good relationships with brothers and sisters; no resentment of ministry staff; security in parents' love)

1.....5.....10

Comments:

20. Financial Provision (For all needs and some wants; not have to use family provision for ministry; faith to believe for special needs; revelation of joy of giving)