

The World Prayer Movement

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(Trans. by S. A. Neblett)

A Christian is a person dedicated to the service of God. His earnest desire is the development of his spiritual life. Constant prayer is the indispensable factor, both in the spiritual development of the individual and the evangelization of the world. Every Christian should read the Gospels, riveting attention on the teachings of Jesus about prayer.

We are in an age in which the evangelical churches are giving more attention than ever to individual and united prayer. We recognize our commission to evangelize the world, and that if we are to obey the last command of Jesus, prayer is our major weapon.

In 1955, more than 1,300 churches in the United States formed prayer chains. Many pastors and churches succeeded in relating prayer vigils with the life of the local church, while others formed prayer cells or held devotional retreats.

El Aposento Alto (The Upper Room), reporting the action of the Methodist General Conference of 1956, said the following:

The year 1957 has been designated by many groups as a favorable era in which to develop a World Prayer Movement. The first week of the year is the universal Week of Prayer. However, in 1957 millions of persons who have formerly not cooperated in a movement of this kind will join. It is the result of the spirit of fellowship which animates all Christians the world over who have faith in prayer to such an extent that they practice it.

They pray for one another, for the Church, for world peace, for Christian brotherhood; they pray that they may become instruments in the extension of the kingdom of God.

The kingdom of God is extended by means of the 'still small voice.' The Holy Spirit impels this progress. We must pray for the extension of the kingdom of God. Those who believe in prayer pray together. Our prayer is that all who pray to God be disposed to unite in this world

movement. . . . Let us together consecrate ourselves to this task. Would that there might arise a predominant host of witnesses dedicated to prayer ascending to the throne of grace! God help us as we unite in prayer in 1957!

A department of the Methodist General Board of Evangelism has charge of the promotion of the fellowship of world prayer. Our churches in Cuba are on the eve of their months of evangelistic services. The pastors will have received a communication concerning the "Prayer Cell," a movement already in-

itiated in 46 countries in churches on all the continents.

The prayer cell is indispensable, not only in the weeks before the revival services, but it should also be a permanent feature in each local church for the development of the spiritual life. A minister has given the following testimony:

The presence of the Holy Spirit was manifested in the hours of waiting on God, in such great power that I have no adequate words with which to describe it. Lives were transformed, and we received blessings such as I have never experienced in my ministry.

May the ministers and members of the church in Cuba soon be able to give a similar testimony!

From these early fast prayer meetings and the continuation of camp meetings as a part of our evangelistic program for our conference, what rewards are we reaping at the present moment? Allow me to present the statement of Rev. Louis Johnson, District Superintendent of the Lodja and Lomela Districts, who with his African Superintendent, Rev. Moses Ngondjolo, projected this Peoples' Movement to Christ. A few days ago I received this letter from him:

As the Mbulo la wedia Volambi (the term known and used throughout our tribe to describe the revival and what happened in the early years--comparative to the Cane Ridge meeting in Kentucky) and your continuing emphasis on camp meetings and revivals has produced fruit and helped bring a basis for the Katake Kombe blessings of the Holy Spirit in July, 1955, and the outpouring of His Spirit upon us at Lodja in August, 1955, and the continuing spreading revival until the church is living in a modern Pentecost.

As I write, word comes of expectation of at least three thousand people together in their weeks district conference

which is literally a continuation of Pentecost. Rev. Machlin reported... of the thousands coming and the great revival continuing to spread.

The following is an excerpt from a letter written by Louis Johnson to the Board of Missions of The Methodist Church which met January 15, 1957, at Buck Hill Falls:

Since the beginning of the Peoples' Movement Christward in Lodja District beginning in August, 1955, and continuing to the present with vitality, 73 lay preachers have been added to our rolls. These men are totally self-supporting; the congregation builds their church and parsonage and pays all their salaries.

Several thousands have been converted. The Movement is just beginning and going strong, spilling over one Chefferie boundary on to the next with many more calls coming in for revivals and preachers in new villages. It is evangelistic, calm, determined and powerful. Powerful moral and ethical changes are taking place in the lives of these people as they turn away from idols and fetishes and charms; from adultery, stealing, lying--sins of the flesh and sins of the disposition--to Christ.

Last month, in a quarterly meeting of Preachers' Revival Visitation Evangelism campaign, the most wicked village in the territory was turned upside down in repentance and conversion. The state officials said that Weshi Ndjadi is the most rotten place in the territory. They said, 'Go win all of the people to Christ, we're for you, we've tried everything, nothing else will work.' It was truly a Peoples' Christward movement, with the chief and village elders and several hundred of the people looking to Jesus for forgiveness and the Christian life.

Also, last month in a new village recently opened up by one of our lay preachers, a still larger movement took place. In one evening I saw over four hundred people at an altar of prayer in a grass brush arbor. They really were praying individual prayers as I listened to many, many of them as they prayed. We left before the meetings were closed, but the preachers report at this second place one of the largest movements yet.

So the Movement continues in part of our tribe. A personal

prayer request from Rev. Thomas Carruth, Secretary of the World Wide Movement for Prayer, asks us to join with them in this world-wide movement. Recognizing that still a large part of our country is not in this Peoples' Movement, and that the desperate needs of our times across the world calls for prayer, I asked our church this morning if they would join in this World Wide Prayer Movement. Nearly fifty people out of a before-daylight congregation of nearly two hundred came forward to the altar to indicate the fact that they would make 1957 a year of prayer.

*District Superintendent, The Methodist Church. Taken from "The World Wide Prayer Life Movement" and used by permission.