

The Incredible Power of Prayer

Christians can still turn their world upside down with prayer



By Michael Bronson

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The International Outreach of BibleHelp.org

This book is a partial printout of my website BibleHelp.org. BibleHelp.org has 18,000 new visitors a month from 120 countries. Over 100,000 chapters are accessed every month. Although this website was started as a small personal ministry, it has taken on a life of its own. It has become a ministry in-and-of itself. I still work full-time as a Corrections Officer, but this website has given me opportunities I never thought would be possible.

Now that the website has grown, I feel it is important to raise prayer support for it. Therefore, I am asking you to consider praying for this website on a daily basis. Not only would it be greatly appreciated, it would give your prayers an international impact. You can download a prayer card at:

BibleHelp.org/prayweb.htm

BibleHelp.org



Using the Internet to bring Christ to a lost world

Prayer Reminder Card

- God will lead people to the website who could be helped by the material
- God will meet the needs of the visitors' hearts
- I will have God-given wisdom as I answer people's questions

*Over 18,000 new visitors a month
Visits from over 120 countries*

The Incredible Power of Prayer

Prayer: The Unsung Hero	6
Burden to Pray	10
Prayer Evangelism	12
An International Prayer List	15
Do You Know a Christian Prisoner?	16
Rainbow Prayers	18
The Incredible Power of Prayer (a skit)	20
Changing Lives with Change	22
Calculator v slide-rule	24
Not Forgotten	28

Prayer: The Unsung Hero



Chapter: 7:01

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On my desk there is a little card that reads, “No Christian is greater than his prayer life.” I have come to a gripping realization that prayer is probably one of the greatest contributions we can make to advance the Kingdom of Christ. Yet, we as Christians, seldom capitalize on this resource. Surveys show the average Christian prays 15 to 30 minutes a week. If the statement, “No Christian is greater than his prayer life,” is true, then it would explain, in part, why so much of the world is still not evangelized.

Why do we spend so little time in prayer? Why is prayer one of the first things we neglect as we drift away from God? Many pastors have preached sermons condemning us for spending up to 3 hours

a day in front of a television set while we pray less than 30 minutes a week. Although there is a need for such sermons, I have no intention of pointing out something for which you are probably already painfully aware. It is my desire to encourage you, to share with you what I have learned from my struggles in this area.

We, as Christians, often condemn ourselves because we do not pray as much as we think we should. Often, the simple task of praying only 15 minutes a day seems almost impossible! Of course, we can understand why it is easier to sit in front of the TV than devote time to prayer. TV is relaxing and prayer is work. I do believe energy is drained from us when we pray.

I am convinced, though, the main reason we do not pray as much as we should is not because it is too much work. There are many sincere and dedicated lay-Christians who spend as many as 15 hours a week working on Christian projects, yet find it difficult to spend a significant amount of time in prayer. With all this time spent on Christian projects, their lack of prayer cannot be considered laziness.

Satan understands the power of prayer, and I believe he is fighting fiercely to reduce its impact. An obvious military strategy is to concentrate attacks on the targets, which are the greatest threats. For example, in war, primary targets are radar installations, ammunition depots and weapons factories. Limited military resources are not used on non-strategic targets such as the officers’ dining hall (although many soldiers would probably welcome the relief from military food). It is my conviction that Satan knows the biggest spiritual battles are won or lost because of our prayers. Therefore, why would Satan not try to blind our eyes to the need and urgency of prayer?

The story of the disciples at the time of the resurrection is a good example of how capable Satan is of blinding our eyes to important truths. Jesus told his disciples on several occasions that He was going to be killed and would rise again on the third day.

Yet, on the third day, where were His disciples? Why were they not waiting at His tomb? They were not even looking for His resurrection.

The Pharisees, on the other hand, remembered Jesus talking about His resurrection. This is why they requested a guard be placed at the tomb (Matthew 27:62-64). It appears Satan, the author of deception and distraction, had blinded, or at least distracted the disciples to this very important truth. If the disciples, the very men who walked with Jesus, could miss something as important as the resurrection, isn't it reasonable to believe Satan could blind us to the power of prayer?

The attitude with which we as non-Christians first approached God is what released the dynamic power of salvation through Jesus Christ. It was essential when we came to God, we recognized Jesus Christ as our total redemption. Our human abilities played no part in the salvation process. We had to trust God fully.

Likewise, when we as Christians approach God, He still wants us to trust Him fully and understand that the solutions to our problems lie beyond our abilities. It is this recognition that releases the power of God. Prayer is an expression of the commitment and trust we have in God.

When we come before God in prayer and give Him *full* control of a situation, we are acknowledging His sovereignty in that area. As a result, God begins to work on the problem with His mighty power. God desires to be involved in *every* area of our life. He wants us to specifically commit each of our concerns to Him. I have found the more specific we are in our prayers, the more direct and effective will be the answers. For example, the prayer, "God, please bless the missionaries," will not be nearly as effective as naming specific missionaries and their particular needs.

Although we are in a Space Age of high-tech transportation and communication, we still go further on our knees. We will never have a true appreciation of how powerful and effective our

prayers are until we enter God's presence and He unfolds the completed story. At that time we will see how people were saved and lives changed as a direct result of our prayers.



Although we are in a space age of high-tech transportation and communication, we still can go farther on our knees.

God is continually working in ways that we are unaware. An example of God's hidden involvement in our lives is seen in 2 Kings 6:13-17. In this passage Elisha and his servant ran across a huge Syrian army and the servant becomes afraid. Elisha prays and asks God to open the servant's eyes, and the servant sees that the mountain is full of God's angelic army.

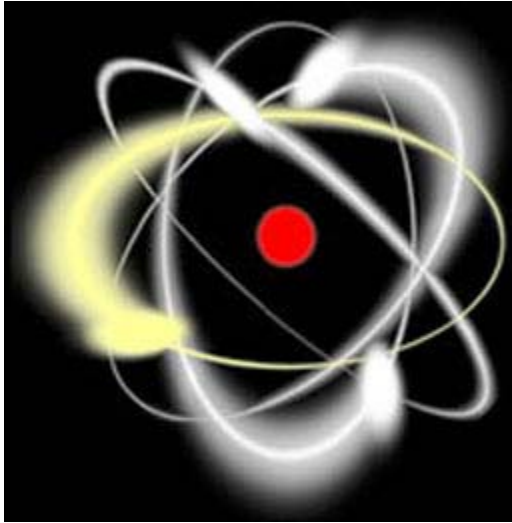
Looking at the great needs of this under-evangelized world, it is easy to be overwhelmed with feelings of futility or the thought, "What is the point? I can't make much of a difference." This discouragement can often keep us from even trying.

There are two things we must keep in mind. First, God does not expect us to change the whole world. He only wants us to do our part, to grow where he has planted us. Second, we must realize that, although we cannot change the whole world, there is much we can realistically accomplish.

Being consistent in our prayer life can help us accomplish more than we may have ever thought possible. A consistent savings plan at a bank can help save money without the feeling of having a "big

bite” taken out of your paycheck. Likewise, a consistent prayer system can help us pray for a large group of people without feeling burdened.

Many short prayers throughout the day are easier than praying an hour at a time. An example of this is the old tale of the Tortoise and the Hare. The rabbit, which is obviously the faster of the two, was overconfident, and did not pay attention to the race. Although the turtle was slow, he was consistent, and as a result, his seemingly “insignificant” effort paid off in a big way.



When God created the atom, He bound it together with a powerful force called the nuclear attraction force. This force is $3 \times 10E39$ times more powerful than the force of gravity. ($3 \times 10E39$ is written as 3 with 39 zeros after it.)

The next time you are discouraged because of a complex and overwhelming problem, remember the atom. Think about the tremendous power God applied to this small object. This same power is available to us when we commit a problem to God.

Source: Worlds Without End by Creation-Science Research Center

There are two types of prayers I use: Systematic prayers and Onetime prayers. My systematic prayer list is a list of people, Christians and non-

Christians, whom I have met throughout the years. I systematically work through this list from top to bottom over a period of time. Praying for 5 to 30 names at a sitting is non-burdensome and yet gives me the opportunity to intercede for a large group of people.

Onetime prayers are requests that are usually prayed for only once. These prayers are often for people I have run into throughout the course of my day, or someone who has caught my attention. The aspect that makes onetime prayers so practical is they consume very little of my time. They are ideal for situations where I am already doing something but not using much mental energy, such as driving in a car or standing in a line.

When I pray for these people, I pray not only for their salvation, but I ask God to make them strong, dynamic Christians who will become prayer warriors in their own right. I also ask God to raise up thousands of people to pray for this person. So, although I may pray only once for this person, I am confident God will raise up others to continue where I have left off.

Obviously, praying many times for one person is much more effective than just a single prayer, but never underestimate the power of these onetime prayers. It is important to realize for some people, you may be the only Christian who has ever prayed for them. This is the reason I ask God to raise up hundreds of people to pray for each person. As you expand your prayer time, be careful not to become overburdened. You should approach it as an adventure, not an obligation.

Years ago, I started what I call the quick prayer list. This short list contained 10 of the most important issues going on in my life at the time. (You have to keep this list short or you get overwhelmed and stop using the list altogether.) Every hour, such as on the hour, I pull out the list and pray for my concerns. I found this to be an excellent way to ensure I prayed on a consistent basis.

Since I was a Correction Officer with lousy days

off, two of the items on my prayer list were: I would get a job working with computers and would have good days off. After two years of praying for this, I was called into the Warden's office. He told me the Deputy Director for the State's Department of Correction wanted me to work for him personally to do computer programming. For 4 ½ years, I worked for the Deputy Director's office overseeing a large number of computer projects. Every time someone asked me how my "rags to riches" story came about, I always tell them about the prayer list and give God the credit.

In the 19th Century, rescuing a drowning person from a pier presented certain logistical problems for lifeguards. They did not have the luxury of our modern rescue techniques and equipment. Instead, they used a "lifeline" system. When a lifeguard dove into the water after someone, he would tie a rope around himself and hand the other end to someone to hold. One stormy day, a lifeguard spotted a swimmer being swept under by the mighty ocean waves. In his haste, he forgot to tell someone, "hold the rope." Thus, as he went into the water, so did his lifeline. This lifeguard needlessly lost his life in the stormy ocean rage because of carelessness.

This story illustrates the importance of being consistent and faithful in upholding Christian workers through prayer. However, there is another lesson to be learned too. We should never rush off to do God's work before we have adequate prayer support. As we serve the Lord, let us not forget to ask people to "hold our ropes."

Burden to Pray



Chapter: 7.02

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“You better call home because you wife and kids are dead!” a large prisoner said with a glazed look in his eyes. My Sergeant, who was stunned by the announcement, rose slowly to protect himself from this strange acting prisoner.

Suddenly, the prisoner attacked him with a desk lamp. My natural response was to jump on the prisoner’s back to help subdue him. In the violent struggle, my back was gouged by a piece of metal, which caused a 2” x 10” cut. After the prisoner was subdued, I was taken to the hospital for treatment.

This incident happened during my fourth week of working in the prison. Being a Correction Officer is difficult enough as it is, but it is even more difficult for new officers. Since new officers were rare before the massive prison buildup in the mid-1980s, the prisoners had more time to test the new officers to see if they could be intimidated. Unfortunately, this testing often lasted for months.

Since I was getting tired of this testing, I was hoping something unusual would happen that would cause the prisoners to respect me. In fact, the morning of

the attack, I made such a prayer request. Of course, I was thinking of something a little less violent, such as making a major drug bust. As it turned out, I got the prisoner’s attention by coming to the aid of the Sergeant. Word spread quickly in the prison, “... don’t mess with the new cop. He’s not afraid to fight.” As a result, all of the prisoners left me alone.



Injuries I sustained while breaking up a fight in the prison (my fourth week at work).

In reality, my help in the fight had nothing to do with my being brave. It was simply a natural reaction. It happened so quickly I didn’t have time to be scared. If I’d had a couple of minutes to think about it beforehand, I would have been scared to be in a fight inside a prison surrounded by several hundred prisoners. Nevertheless, I didn’t bother explaining this to the prisoners. If they wanted to

believe I was a fearless cop, who was I to correct them?

I have found it a little bit unnerving that the *only* day I prayed for this was the day the fight took place. Personally, I feel God put this prayer request in my heart because He wanted to do a special work in my life. I have found God often prompts people to pray when He is doing a unique task.

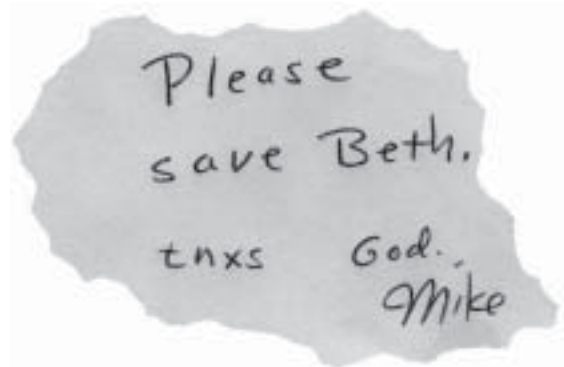
One day as I was driving down the highway, I decided to pray for a while. One of the things I prayed for was protection from getting a speeding ticket. This really surprised me because I had never prayed for that before, or since. There are two reasons I wouldn't normally pray for something like this. First, if I am driving the speed limit there isn't much risk of getting a ticket. Second, if I am deliberately speeding and I have the audacity to ask God to protect me while I break the law, my prayers may prompt Him to cause me to get a ticket. Since I try to adhere to the speed limit, I really couldn't understand why I would even consider such a prayer. It just came out.

However, a couple minutes later I reached over in the car to pick up something from the floor and my foot pushed the gas pedal down. As I straightened up, I saw I was going 80 mph in a 55-mph zone. Also, at the same moment, I saw a State Police car in the median. He, of course, pulled out onto the highway and began to follow me. After three grueling miles, he stopped following me. I believe God foresaw what was going to happen and put that prayer request in my heart.

The salvation of the great missionary to China, Hudson Taylor, is another example of God's prompting. Hudson became a Christian while his mom was away on a trip. Wanting to surprise his mom, he instructed everyone in his family to keep quiet about his experience. However, when he approached her about the good news, she said she already knew what he was going to say. She said, "You became a Christian about two weeks ago, didn't you?" She even knew the exact day and time.

On the day he became a Christian, his mom had a tremendous burden for him, so she got out of her bed and started to pray for him. Although it seemed like a short period of time, her prayer session lasted several hours. When she was finished, she had such joy. She knew God had answered her prayers.

Another example of God prompting someone to pray is the salvation of a girl named Beth. I discussed this incident elsewhere in this book, but I feel it is important to include this example here. During a church service, I suddenly had a strong burden to pray for the salvation of a lifeguard (Beth) who happened to be attending the service. After praying for her, I wrote the phrase, "God, please save Beth" on a piece of paper. After the service she came up to me and told me she had become a Christian. Of course, she was very surprised to see the note I had written to God.



This prompting of God is quite common and a person could fill several large books with examples. Yet, I think it is natural to ask, "Why does God do this. Does He *need* our prayers? If God were all-powerful and all knowing, why would He need to prompt someone to pray in order to carry out His desired task?" Quite frankly, I don't know. There are many things I don't understand about prayer and our all-powerful God. I do know, however, God desires our prayers and is pleased when we put our full reliance on Him. Maybe the reason He occasionally reveals these unique promptings to us, is to reveal His power and bring us closer to His presence.

Prayer Evangelism



Chapter: 7.03

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The commandos crawl through the tunnel and position themselves for the assault. At 3:17 PM the signal is given. Multiple explosions are discharged and 140 commandos rush into the Japanese Ambassador's residence in Peru. Troops pour through the tunnels, through the front entrance, and in through the roof.

It all started 126 days earlier on December 17, 1996 at a dinner party. Fourteen members of the Tupac Amara Revolutionary Movement, dressed as waiters took control of the ambassador's residence. After freeing the majority of the 500 dinner guests, they kept 72 of the most important people as hostages. They were hoping to force the release of 400 imprisoned comrades.

As negotiations broke down, it became apparent a military solution was necessary. However, it was almost an impossible situation. The hostages were kept in several locations and the building was booby-trapped. Daily, the terrorist would rehearse killing the hostages in case a rescue attempt was made. The military planners realized that if the terrorists were not immediately neutralized, most, if not all, of the hostages would die.

A *double* approach was necessary. Besides the traditional military rush on the building, some *inside* help was needed. It was essential to know the exact location of the terrorists and hostages at the time the rescue was attempted.

The military planners wouldn't reveal all of their secrets, but they did provide some hints. For example, electronic eavesdropping devices, the size of match heads, were hidden in supplies brought in during the course of the siege. The Red Cross brought in bright colored clothing for the hostages. This was done so the commandos would not mistake the hostages for terrorists (who were dressed in olive drab). While loud music was being played from the streets, five tunnels were dug up to and under the building.

Being able to place explosives in the tunnel directly under where the terrorists were standing eliminated the threat from most of them. The fact that troops were able to climb immediately into the building (via the tunnels) helped them deal with the remainder of the terrorists. Even with this advantage, a couple of the terrorists came very close to executing the hostages. Two soldiers and one hostage died. All 14 terrorists were killed.



The reason I share this episode is to demonstrate the relationship prayer has with witnessing. Just as the brute force of the military was incapable of successfully rescuing the hostages, witnessing, by

itself, is not sufficient to lead a person to Christ. Both need *inside* help. Both needed things accomplished on the inside that are impossible to do from the outside. With witnessing, the Holy Spirit works within a person to soften and prepare his heart. God brings about circumstances and events to get the person's attention and cause him to reevaluate his beliefs. Our prayers move God to work in the lives of others. The more we pray, the more God works. If we neglect to pray, this inside work will go unfinished.

Most of us have heard of the *rowboat* illustration, where one oar is prayer and the other is witnessing. If we use only one oar (witnessing without praying or praying without witnessing) the boat goes around in circles. We need to accompany witnessing with fervent prayer.

Apart from the traditional prayers for the lost, there is a type of prayer called *prayer evangelism*. Although it does not take the place of witnessing, it is a very aggressive form of evangelism. With traditional evangelism, you usually pray for a person *while* you share Christ with him and *afterwards*. With prayer evangelism, you aggressively pray for a person *before* he has been witnessed to. You are asking God to prepare his heart, to prepare circumstances, and to provide someone to share the gospel message with him.

Depending on which survey you look at, Christians pray an average of 5 to 30 minutes a week. Since most of these prayers are either for themselves or their immediate loved ones, there is very little prayer for those outside their families. If most of the prayers are for the Christian and his loved ones, who are the ones praying for the large population of unbelievers? There are probably many people in the United States (where there is a large number of Christians) that have never had anyone pray for them. If this is true, what about all those people living in countries where the percentage of Christians is much smaller? I have to believe there are hundreds of millions, perhaps billions, of people who have never had anyone pray for them (at least to the true living God).

What influences a person to come to a saving knowledge of Christ? Although this will be covered later on in the book, I will give you a quick summary. It appears that a person's exposure to any of the following three things greatly increases his chance of becoming a Christian: The *written Word* (Bible), the *living Word* (the Bible living through the lives of the believers) and *prayer*. This would explain why areas that already have a large number of Christians usually produce a large number of new Christians, and areas with few or no Christians usually produce few or no new Christians.

If it is true that prayer stirs God to work within a person's life, think of the impact that prayer evangelism can produce. Think of the difference *your life* can have on this lost and needy world. Maybe part of the reason most of the world has never been evangelized (apart from the obvious lack of laborers) is because there hasn't been enough prayers to stir God to do the *inside* job. I would like to emphasize again, we should never consider prayer to be a substitute for witnessing. We should still be actively involved in other tangible efforts of world evangelism, such as giving to worthy outreaches or even going ourselves.

Prayer evangelism allows you to overcome geographic, political, and religious barriers. It allows you to be able to pray for the salvation of specific people all over the world. You can have a tremendous impact on parts of the world you'll probably never have the chance to visit. You'll be able to reach people who are completely cut off from the gospel.

The simplest way to get involved in prayer evangelism is to get a magazine that has a large number of photographs of people and start praying for *each* person. Keep in mind that you are not making a blanket prayer, such as, "God save everyone in this magazine." You focus on each individual and bring them to God.

National Geographic magazine is an excellent source for photographs of people from various countries. Just think what would happen if 10,000

Christians prayed for every person shown in a particular issue? Since most Christians have access to several dozen back issues of *National Geographic*, they have a rich source of prayer material.

I have found that travel guides, such as the *Insights Guide* series, are another good source of pictures of people from different countries. I like to keep these books and magazines by my couch so I can pray for these people during TV commercials. Another way to pray for people from around the world is to rent travel videos and pray for the people you see. The *Video Visits* series by *International Video Network* are excellent tapes for this purpose.



Prayer evangelism allows you to reach the far corners of the world for Christ.

Another way to pray for the far ends of the world is to pray for different cities around the world. As I pray for a city, I ask God to raise up a strong gospel witness to reach this city. Besides asking God to supply the various needs necessary to make this witness effective, I ask God to start a small revival that will spread to the surrounding communities. The maps in most world atlases have at least 20,000 cities for which you can pray. You can even use the index as a prayer list. If you cut the index out of a pocket size atlas, you'll have a convenient prayer list that you'll be able to systematically work through.

The evening news broadcasts usually show film clips of people from all over the world. Since you are not usually doing anything while you are watching the news, this is an excellent time to pray for these people. There are millions of Christians who regularly watch the news. Just think of what would happen if a large number of these Christians started praying for the people shown on the news? Since many of the people shown on the news are in strategically important positions, having millions of people praying for them could bring about dramatic changes in the world.

The next time you are surfing the net, try praying for the different people you run across. The Internet attracts people from all over the world and from all walks of life. Try selecting a particular group of people and surf for the purpose of prayer evangelism.

There are many hurting, angry, and rebellious people on the Internet, people who desperately need Christ. These people use the Internet to voice their opinion and sometimes vent their anger. They like the Internet because it provides them anonymity. Since nobody knows their true identity they feel safe. Using aliases, such as *Armageddon*, *Babylon*, *Viper*, etc., they leave their opinions and trademarks all over the Internet. Ironically, this false sense of anonymity may be their downfall (or should I say salvation). The more you see their trademark, the more likely you are to pray for them. They can hide their name from you, but they can't hide it from God.

Obviously, there's no way to know, at least in this lifetime, what impact your prayers will have on our world. Who knows, your prayers might be the catalyst that starts a revival in a remote part of the world. Maybe, one day when you are walking on the streets of glory, a person will come up to you and say, "Thank you. It's because of your prayers that I'm here in Heaven."

An International Prayer List



Chapter: 7.04

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Would you like your prayers to have an International impact? In the previous chapter I talked about using currency as a prayer list. You can expand your outreach by using foreign currency. Foreign money can be purchased from a variety of places. For example, wscoin.com sells foreign paper currency for about \$1 to \$3 and foreign coins for much less.

If you prefer, you can use the “prayer list” I have created. Recently, I obtained currency from over 200 countries specifically for the purpose of prayer evangelism. Please join me in reaching the world with prayer evangelism.

A Special Note of Thanks

I would like to thank the various missionaries who have contributed to this collection. I would also like to personally thank Debbie Petterson for her efforts in this task.

Do You Know a Christian Prisoner?



Chapter: 7.05

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Do you know a prisoner who is a Christian? If you do, you know he faces some unique challenges. All prisoners have to deal with the loss of freedom, dignity, and privacy. All prisoners have to live with hundreds of murderers, thieves, etc. All prisoners are exposed to the same corrosive environment that so easily destroy a person's vocabulary and attitude.

While the prison environment can make life difficult for the Christian there is another source of frustration (especially if the Christian is trying to grow spiritually). The Christian prisoner who wants to serve the Lord will find his limited outreach confining and frustrating.

A prison, of course, is a mission field in-and-of itself. You are definitely surrounded by unsaved people who are in desperate need of God's love and forgiveness. As they say, "A light shines the brightest in the darkest place." There are not too many places darker than a prison. Yet, it is natural for a growing Christian to develop a burden for the "regions beyond."

As Christians read the Bible and grow closer to God, they develop a natural burden to expand their realm of Christian influence. This burden comes from God. Acts 1:8 says, "... and you will be my witness in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth." Basically, this verse is saying, "Start you Christian witness in your city, expand it to your state, expand it further to cover your whole country, and finally expand it to reach the ends of the world."

Being stuck in prison for many years can frustrate these desires. Yet, there is a way for prisoners to help reach the rest of the world without leaving the prison. Prisoners can use Prayer Evangelism described in a previous chapter.



For those who have not read the previous chapter, Prayer Evangelism is basically a unique way to pray for people all over the world. You take a magazine,

like the *National Geographic*, and pray specifically for each person in the photographs. It's like having a prayer list of people from all over the world. Even though you don't know their names, God does.

Prisoners may not have a lot of money, freedom, or any of the other resources we take for granted. They do have, however, a great deal of free time. In fact, this valuable resource is something that most Christians outside the walls are lacking. This free time can be their passport to help reach the rest of the world for Christ. This free time can make their lives much more productive than many Christians outside the walls.



I have been a Correction Officer for over 18 years. Since I don't swear, smoke, or have a sour attitude, most Christian prisoners know I am a Christian. When they initiate a conversation with me about God, I share my burden with them about Prayer Evangelism. It is fascinating watching their faces light up with excitement. In a sense, their prison doors have opened up. They see new hope and purpose. They now see that their time in prison doesn't have to be a waste.

Prayer Evangelism has become contagious amongst these prisoners. As they are transferred from one prison to another, they share their burden for Prayer Evangelism with their new brothers. There are now dozens of prisoners across the state praying for

people all over the world.

If you know a Christian who is in prison, send him a copy of this chapter and the previous chapter (*Prayer Evangelism*). Encourage him to take advantage of this rare opportunity. Challenge him to spend a few hours a day in Prayer Evangelism. Once he is out of prison, he'll probably never have this surplus of free time again.

If you know of someone who works in a prison fellowship, share these chapters with them. Maybe this will light the fire in some prisoners in your area. I have tried to share this burden with different prison fellowships, but my influence is limited. This type of message needs to be shared one-on-one.

Rainbow Prayers



Chapter: 7.06

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Another form of prayer that I use is called “rainbow prayer.” A rainbow in the sky consists of a large spectrum of colors and spans across a large area. Likewise, rainbow prayers usually cover a large spectrum of economic and social classes. It usually spans across hundreds and even thousands of miles. Rainbow prayers extend your spiritual influence to geographic, social and economic realms not normally accessible to you.

Instead of praying for people you see, rainbow praying is praying for people associated with an event or object. If I am in the doctor’s office, I may pray for everyone who has looked at a particular magazine at that office, or I may pray for everyone who has used a certain pay phone during

the past week. I may even pray for the next ten people who will come in contact with the twenty-dollar bill I am spending (or the last ten people).

Many people may discount rainbow praying because it seems silly or impersonal. Yet, the reason this type of prayer is so practical is because it only takes a few seconds and can be done at times you normally may not be praying.

A more complex version of a rainbow prayer would be praying for people associated with a billboard, such as a beer advertisement. I may pray for the people in the photograph, those involved in the photo session, the person processing the film, the advertising staff involved in creating the ad, the President of the beer company and the person who physically put up the billboard.

As you can see, this gives the Christian the ability to pray for specific individuals (although usually nameless) all over the country and even around the world. It allows you to pray for people with whom you normally would never come in contact.

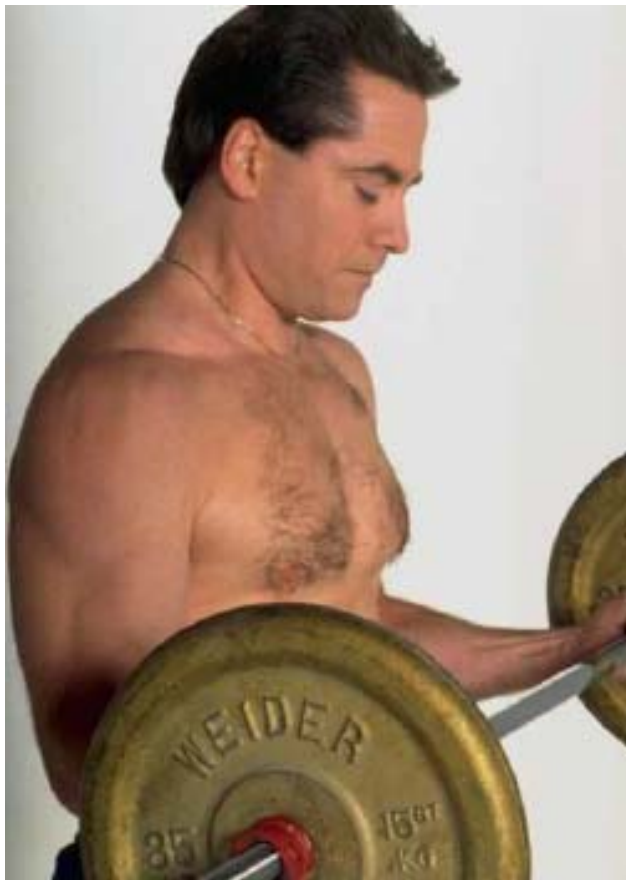
When I pray for someone, I don’t just pray for their immediate needs. I also pray that God will raise up hundreds of people to pray for this person. I even ask that years from now people will still be praying for this individual as a result of my prayer. I figure a hundred people praying for a person can produce more than my single prayer. Basically, I am multiplying my prayers.

Rainbow Prayers

Provides you the ability to reach every corner of the world.



The Incredible Power of Prayer (a skit)



Chapter: 7.07

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Many people are unaware of the tremendous power that is available to us through prayer. As a result, I created a skit, which illustrated the *hidden* power of prayer. I used people's misunderstanding of electricity to make my point. I had two people with me (my wife, Janet and another friend, Ron) to demonstrate my props.

Ron was all dressed up in weight-lifting clothing and was doing some curls with a 10-pound weight. I pointed to Ron and said, "How many times would Ron have to lift this 10 pound weight to equal the energy in 10 cents worth of electricity? Would it be 10 times? A hundred? A thousand? It would be almost 400,000 times!" (The exact number is 379,696.)

I then turned to Janet who was displaying a fan. I said, "How long can this fan operate on 10 cents of electricity? Ten minutes? 30 minutes? An hour? It would be over 28 hours!" (The exact number is 28.57 hours.)

I again turned to Ron who was attempting to lift a mock 200-lb. weight. I pointed to a one-gallon gas can and asked, "How many times would Ron have to lift this 200 lb. weight to equal the energy in one gallon of gas?" As Ron was still struggling to lift the weight I said, "It'll be over 1/2 million times." (The exact number is 505,341.) Ron turned to me in frustration and walked off. Jan then walked over to the weight and picked it up with one hand (as if it only weighed a few pounds) and walked off the stage.

I turned to the audience and said, "How many times would you have to lift that 200 lb. weight to equal the energy in one prayer? Obviously there is no way of knowing, but there is much more energy in prayer than what most people realize. Just as most of you were surprised to find out how much power is actually in electricity and gasoline, most Christians have no comprehension as to how much power is in prayer. As a result, most of us do not utilize this vast resource."

Here's an interesting side note. When I was writing this book, I couldn't find my notes for this skit, so I tried looking up the raw data in my physics book. Since I couldn't find that either, I emailed about 20 petroleum companies asking them for the number of BTUs in a gallon of gasoline. All but one were helpful. Here is the *unedited* response from one company:

"On the absolute atomic scale - enough to power the earth for one year!!! How in 'H' would I know. I'm no rocket scientist-just an engine maker. Regards."

Don't you just love the internet?

Raw Data of the calculations:

Depending on where you live, ten cents can buy about 1,430 watts of electricity. 1,000 watts (3.6E6 joules) = 2,655,219.7 ft. lbs., which means it can lift 2,655,219.7 pounds one foot. Therefore, 1,430 watts can lift 3,796,964 lbs one foot. This means a 10 lb weight can be lifted 379,696 times.

The fan Jan was holding was a 50 watt 12 inch fan. Therefore, it would take 28.6 hours for it to use up 1,430 watts ($1,430 / 50 = 28.6$).

Depending on the grade of gasoline, one US gallon contains approximately 130,000 BTUs of energy. One BTU = 777.45 ft-lbs. Therefore, 130,000 BTUs will lift 101,075,000 lbs one foot ($777.45 \times 130,000 = 101,075,000$). This means one gallon of gasoline can lift a 200 lb weight 505,341 times ($101,075,000 / 777.45 = 505,341$).

Changing Lives with Change



Chapter: 7.08

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Mary put her hand on the carving fork and began to give George Soper an angry stare. With fierce determination, she lunges at him. Eluding her deadly stabs, Soper works his way toward the door. Having escaped Mary's attack, Soper decides to bring reinforcements. Accompanied by Dr. Josephine Baker and five police officers, Soper knocks on the door. Again, he is met with a fork. Stepping back to avoid the attack, Soper stumbles into the policemen. Surprisingly, during the distraction, Mary "disappears."

After five hours of searching a couple houses, the police find her hiding in a little cubbyhole. Apparently, the servants in the neighbor's house helped her hide. Upon her discovery, Mary came out swearing and fighting. Soper said, "It was like being in a cage with an angry lion."

New York and America owes a great deal to George Soper. It was some brilliant detective work that led Soper to his discovery. He had found a common link to many illnesses and deaths throughout New York. This common link was a healthy cook named Mary Mallon.

From 1900 to 1907, Mallon drifted from job to job, working as a cook. She would only work for a couple of weeks before she would move on. Soper discovered there were 28 different outbreaks at houses in which Mallon had worked. He also found she would suspiciously leave shortly after each outbreak.

Mary Mallon, an Irish immigrant, became known as "Typhoid Mary." What made Mallon so unique and dangerous was the fact she was a "healthy carrier." This meant she didn't have any of the symptoms of typhoid, but was able to pass on the deadly disease. As a result, no one suspected she was carrying typhoid from city to city.

Initially, of course, Mallon was unaware she was transmitting the disease. However, at some point she started to suspect some type of connection. When Mallon was told of her carrier status, she refused to believe a healthy person could be a carrier. After two years of isolation she was set free and told never to prepare food again. Although she was instructed to report regularly to the Health Department, Mallon disappeared, changed her name, and started preparing food again. Tragically, this disobedience led to more deaths. The outbreak that led to her apprehension infected 25 people, killing two.



“Typhoid Mary’s” (Mary Mallon) tomb

Officially, there are 51 cases of typhoid (including three deaths) that officials felt they could substantially prove were *directly* attributed to Mary Mallon. She is, however, suspected of being responsible for many more cases. For example, Mallon is unofficially blamed for a 1903 outbreak in Ithaca N.Y., where more than 1,400 people were infected with typhoid. Apart from the people who *directly* contracted typhoid from Mallon, there are several thousand people who contracted this dreaded disease *indirectly* from her. (Source: *Typhoid Mary: Captive to the Public Health*, pages 43 – 46)

Just as Typhoid Mary’s exposure caused great suffering and death, there is another type of exposure that can bring joy and life. It is called “exposure prayer.” This prayer targets people who are exposed to a particular item. Money is well suited for this type of prayer.

For example, let’s say you go to McDonalds and order a meal that costs around six dollars. When you get your meal, you pay for it with a \$10 bill. That bill will eventually be passed on to someone else, who in turn, will pass it on to someone else. This bill could change hands several thousand times before it is eventually taken out of circulation.



“Typhoid Mary” (Mary Mallon) in isolation before it is eventually taken out of circulation.

If you think about it, a list could be made of everyone who has ever touched (or will touch) that bill. This list could then be used as a prayer list. Obviously, a list like this will never be created, but you can still pray for everyone who would be on this list. God knows who these people are; He knows their names. All we have to do is simply pray for every-

one who will ever come in contact with that bill.

A convenient time to make this prayer is when you take the money out of your wallet. You can also make the same type of prayer as you receive the change. This is an efficient use of your time since your mind usually isn’t busy during this time. Can you imagine what would happen if *all* Christians made these prayers every time they purchased something?

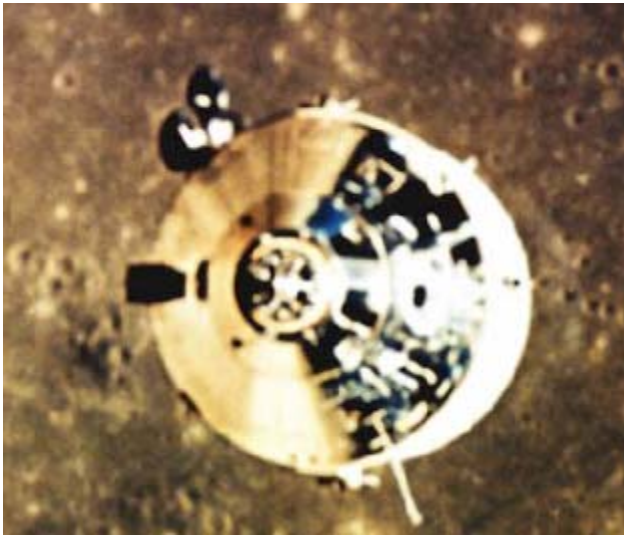
Just like with *Rainbow Prayer* and *Prayer Evangelism*, you can reach a large variety of people in a variety of locations. Of course, the more often you pray for each situation, the more impact you will have on it. As I mentioned before in other chapters, prayer is a supplement, not a substitute for witnessing.

When I make these prayers, I pray that every one of these people will become strong, dynamic Christians. I ask God to raise fervent prayer warriors for each of them. I ask God to bring strong Christians into their lives and give them a clear presentation of the gospel.

A few months ago an Islamic friend of mine gave me some currency from Bangladesh (Taka) and India (Rupee). I have them sitting on my dresser. I pray for these bills (i.e. everyone who has touched these bills) several times a day. I would appreciate it if everyone who reads this chapter would make a *one-time* prayer for the people who have been in contact with these bills.

You might want to consider starting your own foreign mission outreach using exposure prayer. Most people have some foreign currency that they can use for this. Even if you don’t, you can usually find some fairly easily. I want to emphasize again, this should never be considered a substitute for other foreign missionary outreaches. This should be just one of several activities you are involved in to bring Christ to a lost world.

Calculator v slide-rule



Chapter: 7.09

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“Houston, we have a problem.” Commander Lovell said as his Apollo 13 spacecraft tumbled out of control over 200,000 miles from Earth. Those infamous words were the start of an odyssey that caught the world’s attention. What almost became the worst tragedy in NASA’s history became NASA’s greatest achievement. In many ways, returning the astronauts back to earth alive was more of a technological challenge than landing a man on the moon.

As most of you know, a ruptured oxygen tank severely crippled the spacecraft. There was not enough oxygen, power, electricity, and heat to get them back alive. It seemed totally hopeless. What made matters worse was that several times while ground control was struggling to resolve one problem, another problem would raise its ugly head. Sometimes a life-threatening problem would have to be resolved in minutes. I found it interesting when dozens of engineers pulled out their slide rules and made frantic calculations to plot new solutions. The computers and calculators we take for granted today were not available then. Calculations we can now do in seconds, took hours and even days back then. I’m intrigued at the idea of what Einstein

could have developed if he had a simple pocket calculator, let alone a Cray supercomputer.

Technological advancements have helped many aspect of missionary work. Airplanes and helicopters have greatly reduced the time it takes to travel to remote areas. Radios and satellites play a vital, new role in communications. Yet, there are still two areas in mission work that remind me of the old, slow slide rule. The first is a Bible translation and the second is language learning. Of course, computers have helped these areas by replacing the cumbersome index cards with a quick retrieval system. What I am talking about, however, is computer systems that can do some of the *actually* translation and language learning work.

They are a Phonetic Recognition System (PRS) and a Computerized Bible Translator (CBT). I started working on and praying for these projects around 1980. I have written this chapter to ask you to pray for two special projects that would greatly enhance missionary work, especially in areas which are language intensive. Without going into the technical details, I will try to give you a brief overview of each project.



The PRS is a tool that would help the language learner *see* what is being spoken. Although it could be created as a stand-alone unit, the most practical and inexpensive approach would be to develop it as

software that would work in a Windows® based environment. Basically, the user would speak into the microphone and the computer screen would display the phonetic sounds using the International Phonetic Symbol set. It would also be able to show tone, intonation, stress and time duration. The user would be able to adjust the amount of details displayed on the screen as the situation warranted.

This would help a new missionary learn a foreign national language, such as Spanish. The missionary would practice individual words (or phrases) and then compare what he said with what should have been said. He could then modify his speech until his sounds match the information on the screen. Being able to see what is actually spoken, the missionary could work on those troublesome “American” consonants and vowels that make the missionary sound like a foreigner.

The PRS could also be used in learning unknown tribal languages. A native would speak into the microphone, thus allowing the missionary to *see* what is being said. This would be extremely helpful in identifying those sounds which foreigners do not normally hear or speak. The PRS would also be able to store what was displayed on the screen (along with the actual sounds) for future review.

The PRS would utilize some of the technology currently used in speech recognition. Speech recognition is where you speak into a device and it will carry out your command, such as turning a light on or off. The main difference is the PRS would not try to figure out the *intent* of the sound, such as the command, “lights on.” Rather, the PRS would only display the building block sounds used in speech.

As I mentioned earlier, I’ve been working on this since 1980. I’ve contacted dozens of corporations trying to raise some interest. I’ve even talked to the Vice President of Intel (the maker of the Pentium® computer chip). Recently, I talked to the former head of the Language Research Department at IBM. He said if I had told him about my dream of

a PRS a couple years ago, he would have said it was a pipe dream. However, he said that recent advancements in technology now make the concept a possibility. He cautioned that creating such a system would still be a difficult challenge, but it is now possible.

This is the reason I am soliciting your prayers. I don’t have the technology to produce such a product. Please ask God to put a burden on someone’s heart to carry it on to the next step.

Another application of this technology is to help deaf people learn to speak. Basically, the deaf person would start out by trying to make the basic vowel sounds. Although he cannot hear the sound, he could see it. After he compares his sound to the desired sound, a manual, or help screen, would show him how to alter his mouth to go from his current sound to the desired sound. After the vowels are mastered, he could work on consonants. Next, he would work on simple words, and eventually long complicated phrases.

The Computerized Bible Translator (CBT) is software that would do the original raw translation of the Bible. Currently, translating the whole Bible is a difficult, time-consuming process that takes many years to complete. The task is so time-consuming and missionaries are so scarce, most languages have very little, if any, of the Bible. Currently, out of 6,528 languages only 276 languages have the whole Bible and only 676 have the New Testament.

In recent years, computers have been utilized for Bible translation work. They serve as a database of words, concepts and grammatical structures. They also have been used as word processors, greatly reducing the time needed for editing.

There is, however, much more that the computer can do to assist in the translation process. The computer could do the first draft translation, which is incredibly time-consuming. This would free the missionary to spend more time on the final stages of the translation work.

Just like the PRS, the CBT is an extremely complex project. I know enough about translation work to appreciate the complexities and profound challenges the Bible translators are facing. Attending New Tribes Missions' Language school is what first made me interested in finding some solutions to the translation process. Although the explanation of how the CBT works appears simplistic, please realize I have taken into consideration many factors that will not be discussed.

There are five major components to the CBT: 1) Source text (Bible), 2) Vocabulary list, 3) Grammatical structure of the language, 4) Modified coding, 5) Translator engine. The definitions of these are listed at the end of this chapter.

Anyone who has learned a foreign language or has done translation works knows there is no such thing as a word for word translation process. Sometimes one English word needs to be translated into 5 Spanish words, or vice versa. Sometimes the tribal language does not have an equivalent word, such as the word "snow." Other times the tribal language would phrase things differently, such as saying, "belly of the mountain" instead of "foot of the mountain." There are many other problems besides these that must be addressed.

To address these issues, the missionary would do the translation work in four phases. They are the structure phase, the fine-tune phase, the printing phase, and polishing phase. The *structure phase* is where the missionary fills out a survey and from this a vocabulary list and grammatical structure is created. This information is then fed into the computer.

The *fine-tune* phase is where the program is modified to accommodate all of the exceptions to the rules and awkward wording. For example, the CBT translates a chapter, such as the first chapter of John. The missionary reviews this chapter with his native interpreter. They identify the spots where the translation process created awkward or inaccurate text. The modifications are entered into the computer and the chapter is printed again along

with a new chapter. The missionary and native again review these chapters. This process is repeated over and over until the missionary feels most of the rough spots have been worked out.

The *printing phase* is where the CBT prints out multiple books at a time. Besides creating a paper copy, the CBT also creates a text file that can be used in a word processor. The *polishing phase* is where the missionary and native review the manuscript and polish it. This will be a manual process.

After the manuscript is complete, the text files can be sent to a publisher for printing. I don't think technology will ever be advanced enough to create a polished manuscript of the Bible from scratch. It may eventually be advanced enough to translate a normal book, but to ensure the *integrity* of the Bible, manual fine-tuning will always be necessary.

The rapid growth of international communication on the Internet has produced some advancements in this field. There are now some companies that have already created software, such as *Web Translator* by Globalink, to translate German text to English and vice versa. Although this is a step in the right direction, we are still a long way from being able to create a translation of the Bible into a remote tribal language.

As with the PRS, the CBT project is too complex for me to complete on my own. Please pray God will raise up others to carry on with this project.

Definitions of terms:

Source text

The text Bible would need to be converted into raw grammatical code (verbs, nouns, modifiers, etc.). Once this *source text* is created, it can be used for all languages. Creating the source text would only need to be done once. Many computerized grammar checkers can identify the grammatical components of the text. They could be used in creating this source text. Preferably, however, the people creating this source text should try to refer to the

original Greek and Hebrew as often as possible.

Vocabulary list

The next component is the *vocabulary list*. This is a list of words for each tribal language. This list is made only once for each language or dialect. This vocabulary list would parallel one originated from the source text.

Grammatical structure

The third component would be the *grammatical structure* of the language. This coding tells the computer how to structure the text (where to place nouns, verbs, modifiers, etc.). This coding is created only once for each language.

Modifier coding The fourth component is the *modifier coding*. This coding is used for fine-tuning the translation process.

Translator engine

The final component is the *translator engine*. This is the heart of the program that takes all of the components and creates a master document. Once the translator engine has been built (programmed), it can be used for any language.

Not Forgotten



Chapter 7.10

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On January 31, 1993, guerrillas kidnapped three New Tribes Missionaries serving in Panama. It's been over eight years since they have been taken away from their families and there appears to be no end in sight. Although it is believed that they are still alive, there has been virtually no contact with them or their kidnappers. Please pray for their safe release.

--- UPDATE --- (September 10, 2001)

Recent statements by guerrilla defectors and corroborating testimony have validated past accounts that the men were killed in 1996. Several guerrilla defectors and other collaborating witnesses have related essentially the same story:

Early in 1996, one defector told a Colombian army officer he knew where the men were being held. He later led troops to the camp. Fleeing the military in fear, the guerrillas decided that Dave, Mark and Rick were a liability. On a jungle trail in the hills of northern Colombia, an order was given that sent

Mark, Dave and Rick into the arms of their loving Lord.

Details will probably remain secret until eternity and their remains may never be found.

Death is a terrifying subject for many people. Although many people try not to think about it, death is a relevant fact of life. In fact, 1 out of every 111 people will die this year (look at the chapter *World's Mortality Rate* for more information). Even though death is shrouded in mystery, it does not have to be dreaded. There can be victory over the "sting of death." The chapter *Victory over the Sting of Death* covers this in more detail.

Some people wonder why these people would sacrifice so much and even risk death to be missionaries. The death of these missionaries has brought these questions to the surface. To learn more about why they felt compelled to make these sacrifices, look at my section *What will Happen to Those 'Without the Gospel?'*