

Theological Musings from Dave's Laptop

January 30, 2018

It's hard to believe January is gone already. Tonight is the State of the Union, and Lent begins straightaway. Wow. Life surely moves fast on the back side of the Bell Curve!

One phrase that I expect we'll hear more than once tonight is "Make America Great Again." As with most retrospective and nostalgic remembrances, the phrase presumes states of affairs that probably never existed in the first place.



In that spirit, I propose to redefine "MAGA" to represent "Make America Godly Again." That, too, presumes states of affairs that probably never existed in the first place, but the idea does call me to more fervent prayer.

And, as January gives way to February, my own thoughts are turning with more focus to Africa and to our upcoming trip to Ghana. Thinking about my experience in Africa twelve years ago reminds me of the person at whose invitation I went to Malawi—Steven Loots, a South African pastor with a passion for church planting.

Steven wrote a book about "strategic missional partnerships" and about the prayer that undergirds them, and he offered some specific suggestions that I continue to find helpful. Someone told me long ago that "nothing becomes actual until it becomes specific," and I think that applies to prayer as much as to anything else.

America is not going to become "godly" until and unless God's people pray with focus for that outcome (and live so, ourselves). And as we travel to Ghana in search of "strategic missional partnerships" (among other things), that prayer needs to be specific, too.

I've given you Steven's strategic prayer guide for every day of the week before, several years ago, and I'm going to give it to you again on this "State of the Union" afternoon. But before I do, here's a list of ten specific missional partners with whom CBF already has some relationship. I invite you to undertake daily prayer for these ten partners using Steven's suggested areas for concern and prayer.

We can do more than pray after we have prayed, but we cannot do more than pray until we have prayed. Things happen when God's people pray that would not have happened without that prayer

Dave



Strategic Missional Praying for Strategic Missional Partners ¹



1. **CBF** and our ministries to the families of Oakland Mills
2. Mark Swan and the **Fire & Light Church** in Reisterstown
3. Ernest Adu-Gyamfi and the **Ghanaian Baptist Convention**
4. David and Laurel Cheromei and the **Grace of God Children's Home** in Eldoret, Kenya
5. **Help End Homelessness** Howard County (HEHHC)
6. Ron Larson and the **iFresh Evangelism Initiative** in our region
7. **International Justice Ministries** (IJM) and global human trafficking
8. Gennady & Mina Podgaisky and the **Village of Hope** in Kiev, Ukraine
9. Mark Wakefield and the **Youth Ranch** in Huehuetenango, Guatemala
10. World Vision and the **Village Wells in Ghana**

MONDAY: Praying *down* God's Power— Godly Intervention

“Your ministry partner needs to *live* in the power and presence of God, so first of all we need to pray *down* the power of God into and onto your partner. Missionary activity is serious spiritual work . . . so, responding to both the prompting of the Holy Spirit and whatever knowledge or information you may have through your contact and communication with your partner, pray God's power down on his life, her family, and their ministry” (pp. 112-113).

“Your missionary partner also needs to *function* in the power of God. His or her work needs to carry the seal of godly authority. Strongholds need tearing down, darkness needs to be pushed back, and unbelief must be challenged. . . . Ask God to powerfully confirm His Word, supernaturally bless your partner's evangelistic efforts, and divinely save the lost. . . . Pray that the power of God may be the hallmark of your partner's ministry and that it would become evident to all around him” (pp. 113-114).

TUESDAY: Praying *away* Spiritual Darkness (Ephesians 6:12-13)

“The devil hates all missionary endeavors. He hates any action that will draw people out of darkness and into the light. He will use whatever means he can to frustrate

missionary efforts. He will fight dirty; he will lie and deceive and kill. . . . He will break down trust, confuse communications, cause equipment malfunction or failure, bring illness, attempt to kill, sow enmity, emphasize tradition, criticize unfairly, and waste resources. He will do anything to slow down the progress of the gospel and speed up the destruction of God's servants. . . . Pray back forces of evil. Pray through attacks, pray in deliverance, and pray down strongholds” (pp. 114-115).

WEDNESDAY: Praying *open* Closed Doors (Colossians 4:2)

“Your missionary partner needs to make the most of every opportunity. Pray that God will show him open doors and that God would open closed doors. Pray that her sphere of influence will expand, that he would meet the right people, and that God would provide her with divine appointments. Pray for invitations, access to the right institutions, and entry into formerly closed areas. . . . Pray that every hindrance will turn into an opportunity” (pp. 116-117).

“Be aware of what is happening in the country where your partner works. Use the Internet, read books, stay up-to-date with the news. In many places civil wars still rage, blocking off huge areas from the gospel. Pray for peace, free entry and safe passage. In some places organized religion is the main opposition. Whether it is a state church, Islam, voodoo or

¹ Excerpted from Steven Loots, *Personal Missionary Partnerships* (Greenwood, VA: World Christian Press, 2008), pp. 109-126.

animism, all enslave the people and make it difficult to share salvation. Pray for cultural keys—those well-known stories, histories, practices or myths that could be used to explain the gospel in a way that locals will understand” (p. 117).

“On a personal level, your partners also need you to pray for opportunities to educate their children, for visas, for support, for permits and other documentation, for housing and amenities, for the opportunity to shop, travel, and spend time together as a family” (p. 117).

THURSDAY: Praying *in* Resources

“Pray for your partner’s continued fundraising efforts. Many missionary partners gifted for work on the field are not necessarily gifted for soliciting funds. . . . Pray for more partners (and help find them). Pray for open doors to trusts, foundations, and grants. Pray for introductions to those who can give. Pray for churches to get involved. Ask the Lord what you can do to help bring in the resources. Allow the Holy Spirit to prompt *you*” (p. 119).

“Not only do we need to pray resources in, but we need to pray for God to protect, preserve, and help us use well what we have. Pray for the protection of current ministry assets, equipment, finances and resources. . . . Ministry involves an intricate web of people, actions and relationships. Many things can and do go wrong. Family troubles and responsibilities, illness, lack of infrastructure, staff resources, projects, poverty, nature and the environment, a dynamic global economy, and a multitude of other things all present daily challenges to your partner.

“Each of these things needs our prayers. Whether it’s a lack of clean water or a pregnant wife, a dreaded disease or a toothache, a new staff member or a hurricane, aging parents back home or adventuresome teens on the field—all of these require God’s help, guidance, provision or intervention. Losing a cell phone in New York is easily remedied; losing one in Angola is a major setback. Breaking a tooth in London may be painful and even expensive, but doing so in Honduras or Zimbabwe could be a nightmare” (pp. 120-121).

FRIDAY: Praying a Spiritual Covering *over* your Partner (Colossian 4:2)

“One area of prayer that is often neglected is that of watchful praying—being alert to possible dangers and standing in the gap as a watchman for others. Being watchful requires an awareness of what’s happening in the world and sensitivity to spiritual forces—especially to the whispering of the Holy Spirit.

“You may become aware of a worsening political situation in the area where your partner works, or, watching a weather forecast, you realize that a hurricane is headed directly toward them, or you read of new legislation that will directly impact your partner. All of these could be merely interesting, but for someone sensitive to the Holy Spirit, they can be powerful warning signs that urgent prayer is needed.

“Praying watchfully requires a sentry’s vigilance—always on the lookout for possible threat or opportunity. Become a watchman for your partner. Read, listen, and look. Get your spiritual antennae out and get on your knees” (p. 122).

SATURDAY: Offering *up* Glorious Praise

“Breathe in the Holy Spirit. Reflect on the glory of God. Tell Jesus that you love Him. Adore your Heavenly Father, who answers prayer. Rejoice alongside your mission partner for every success, every breakthrough, every victory, and every advance of the kingdom.

“Whether you read of three people coming to Jesus in Albania or 10,000 in Zambia, our response should be equally enthusiastic: Praise God! Every soul saved is a miracle, a work of God, a victory over death and Satan. Every soul won is a step closer to winning the world for our Lord. And thank Him each time He provides for you so that you can bless the ministry more” (p. 124).

SUNDAY: Praying *out* Workers into the Harvest (Matthew 9:37-38).

“In all likelihood your partner needs help. There is a chronic shortage of workers to help bring in the harvest. Pray that God would supply human resources, that people with a calling would become aware of the work your partner is doing, and that they would pray about joining him or her. Perhaps you should be spreading the news, telling others and seeking help—with your partner’s concurrence, of course” (p. 125).