



GROWING IN MOBILIZATION PRAYER

By **RYAN SHAW**

Ryan Shaw is the International Lead Facilitator of Global Mission Mobilization Initiative (GMMI)—www.globalmmi.net—a resourcing ministry equipping the Church for mission mobilization through tools, teaching, training, and strategies. A fourth-generation message bearer, Ryan graduated from Fuller Theological Seminary (Pasadena, CA) with a Master's in Intercultural Studies. He has traveled in a mobilization capacity to over 70 nations and lives with his family in Chiang Mai, Thailand, where GMMI has its International Base and Global Mobilization Institute. rshaw@globalmmi.net.

Many years ago, God called me to prayer for the nations in my early 20s. My local church had a prayer room devoted to praying for spiritual revival and the Gospel to be spread among unreached, frontier peoples. I spent countless hours in that prayer room. Through wrestling with God for breakthrough for the Gospel globally, my own heart was being touched and transformed. I was becoming aligned with the passion of Jesus for all peoples. A significant part of my journey of being mobilized was through such prayer for unreached peoples.

Over the last 20 years of involvement in mobilization ministry in over 70 nations globally, I have consistently observed the power of prayer as a dynamic mobilizer in the lives of individuals, local ministries, and even entire church networks and denominations. Faithful, dedicated intercession is a core purpose in God's big-picture mobilization strategy of His global Church.

About 12 years ago, GMMI started its own prayer room, "The Global Harvest Prayer Room," on our campus in Chiang Mai, Thailand, with daily corporate prayer. Prayer for the nations has always been an emphasis of GMMI as well as a core tool we encourage local ministries globally to implement within the life of their fellowships. Yet about eight or so years ago, the Holy Spirit began speaking about an aspect of prayer for the nations that we seemed to have overlooked.

He started speaking to me about praying less for the unreached, frontier peoples themselves and more for the necessity of the Church growing in spiritual maturity and depth, while being mobilized, aligning with Jesus' redemptive purpose for the nations. He was nudging me to not just praying for individual disciples along this line, but for the whole corporate Church in a city, nation, and across the world. At first, the concept of praying primarily for the Church didn't

sit right with me. It felt awkward and seemed to run against everything I had believed about prayer and its primary emphasis—the unreached coming to Christ.

Around this same time, I started becoming aware of a startling biblical truth surrounding most of the recorded prayers in the New Testament. Jesus', Paul's, Peter's, and John's apostolic, recorded prayers generally focused not primarily on the lost but on aspects of spiritual development in believers' lives and their churches corporately.¹ Again, this realization shocked me. Whereas the recorded prayers in the New Testament definitely have an element of praying for the lost, the lion's share of their content is focused on deepening discipleship within the Body of Christ, enabling Her to become the spiritually empowered vessel God has always intended, to reach the unreached, frontier peoples. We had tended to put the focus on the result (Church Planting Movements producing people movements to Christ among unreached peoples) while Scripture itself highlighted an emphasis on intercession for the vessel (corporate Church) to be prepared, deepened, enabled to rightly engage, and produce fruit among all nations.

At first the concept of praying primarily for the Church didn't sit right with me. It felt awkward and seemed to run against everything I had believed about prayer and its primary emphasis—the unreached coming to Christ.

I began to see a crucial, logical progression in God's redemptive plan. It was His corporate people arising in wholehearted devotion to Himself, growing in obedience, faithfulness, perseverance, aligning their wills with His own big-picture, overarching will of redeeming all peoples. This process taking place in a growing dimension across the Body of Christ (among individuals, church networks, denominations, and organizations) would empower the Church to be mobilized and, in an increasing measure, influence unreached peoples with the power of the Gospel. The cause and effect were evident.

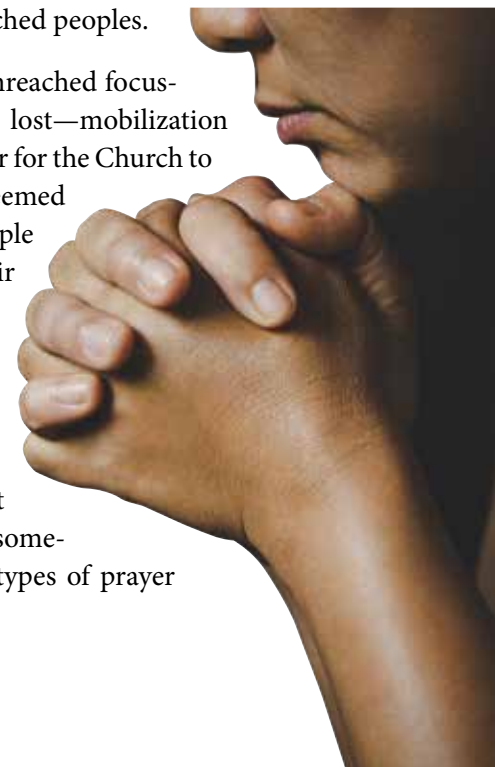
¹ https://makhop.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/03/Apostolic_Prayers_9.pdf

Prayer for the Church then directly impacts unreached, frontier peoples. This appears to be one reason the Holy Spirit deliberately included the recorded prayers of the apostolic leaders in Scripture: To inspire God's people through the ages to spiritually contend for growth and breakthrough among the people of God themselves, which in time always overflows to unreached peoples. In addition, praying God's Word assures us we are praying in line with the will of God while also encouraging faith that, in time, God will answer these prayers.

Yet I was simultaneously grasping that prayer and intercession for the spiritual development and maturity of the Church alone wasn't enough. We also needed to pray specifically for the Church to rightly embrace Her core identity and calling as God's multiplying, reproducing, scattering, missionary people among culturally near and distant unreached peoples. The combination of this truth being integrated into the hearts and lives of disciples becoming wholehearted and spiritually mature had explosive potential across the global Body of Christ.

We call this *mobilization prayer*. It is prayer focused on standing in the gap for the global Body of Christ to become all God intends spiritually, overcoming all the shallow, complacent, compromise-filled outlooks, while simultaneously being mobilized, equipped, empowered, and scattered to impact both culturally near and distant unreached peoples.

While prayer for the unreached focuses on the result—the lost—mobilization prayer focuses on prayer for the Church to become who She is redeemed to be—a corporate people loving God with all their heart, mind, soul, and strength, while emphasizing the Great Commission at the center of the life of their local ministry, not reduced to the side somewhere. We need both types of prayer to progress effectively.



Based on these insights the Spirit was providing, we developed a model for our onsite prayer room that focused on three specific categories of prayer points. Each day we highlight a different country focus. This could be any country in the world.

We tend to focus on nations transitioning from being “mission receiving” nations to those becoming a mission force themselves in mission. Yet every national church (no matter how big or small) has a role in mission globally and can and should be the recipient of mobilization prayer.

1. We start by praying for the Body of Christ in that nation to grow in abandoned, wholehearted devotion. We apply the apostolic, recorded prayers of Scripture to the Body of Christ in that nation, contending for an increased depth of spiritual discipleship across the whole, not merely the leaders.
2. The second category of prayers for the Body of Christ in that particular nation is focused on growing mission mobilization and vision within the life of that national Body of Christ. We focus on the Great Commission being restored as a central message and point of emphasis across every local ministry, instead of a peripheral concept, if present at all. We pray for every believer to become activated in one or more of the six identified roles in the Great Commission² and trained to be effective in the three levels of scattering.³
3. Third, we transition from praying for issues related to the Church to praying for the Unreached People Groups within that same nation. We seek God for His kingdom to come among them and God’s will through the planting of spiritually vibrant, simple, reproducing churches to be realized.

This shift impacted everything GMMI was doing related to prayer. We began to spend much more time contending for biblical discipleship and wholehearted devotion among Jesus’ body in

every nation. Recognizing such an emphasis is foundational for developing mature, deep, mission clarity and understanding among those same people.




SCAN ME

We changed the emphasis of our annual 21-day prayer campaign for the nations to emphasize the call to mobilization prayer, starting instead a monthly day of prayer for global mobilization taking place on the third Tuesday of each month. Learn more and find out how to participate in the **CONTEND!** Monthly Day of Prayer for Global Mobilization by scanning the QR code.

Part of this is due to mobilization being generally misunderstood and even reduced and sidelined in importance from God’s intent.

Through this growth process, we’ve observed how little prayer emphasis there is globally on issues related to mobilization itself. There are a growing number of prayer initiatives focused on the unreached (though we always need more prayer focused on this important category). But there is very little prayer emphasis, that I am aware of, that centers on intercessory prayer for the global Church itself to become all God intends while becoming a people rooted in and living from a Great Commission paradigm and identity.

Part of this is due to mobilization being generally misunderstood and even reduced and sidelined in importance from God’s intent. Yet, we believe the Spirit is restoring an emphasis on mission mobilization across the global Church, widening the Body of Christ’s experience and understanding of it. This will only increase in the coming years and decades as the Spirit brings us into a new era where mobilization is being prioritized as it ought. Where God is orchestrating the final processes necessary for the Church to become the vessel, She is redeemed to be for the literal fulfillment of the Great Commission.

Let us arise in faith, emphasizing mobilization prayer, looking to God to grab ahold of individuals, local ministries, church networks, denominations, and organizations for His global glory among all the unreached, frontier peoples. 

² The six roles in the Great Commission are highlighted in detail in the *Handbook for Great Commission Ministries*, by Ryan Shaw, IGNITE Media, 2019.

³ Three levels of scattering are defined in the author’s book, *Rethinking Global Mobilization*, by Ryan Shaw, IGNITE Media, 2022.