

**INVITING GOD'S MANIFEST  
PRESENCE  
TO YOUR CITY**

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*Are you interested in seeing...*

- Every church in your city filled to capacity every day with people crying out to God in praying...and God answering those prayers?
- Hundreds, perhaps thousands of people saved in a season of overwhelming spiritual harvest?
- As many as 15% of your population coming to Christ in the next few years?
- Denominational differences not destroyed, but placed in proper perspective so that there is no hindrance to true unity among God's children? And *increased* unity about the foundational doctrines of the faith?
- Prejudice and pride gone among the believers in your city?
- The pastors and Christian leaders of your city becoming lifelong friends?
- All of the churches cheering for each other? No competition, just completion!
- Churches supporting each other with such generosity that there is "no more need" in the entire body of Christ?
- The governmental and educational leaders calling on the church *first* to help with spiritual and social needs because the power of God in the churches is so obvious to everyone?
- God's presence so overwhelmingly visible in your community that He cannot be ignored by a watching world?

If you think this is impossible in your community, then you don't know your revival history! All of these things—and much, much more—have happened in our nation in the not-too-distant past. *And they can happen again!*

This is possible in your city because God has not changed. Mighty movements of revival in the church and spiritual awakening among the lost have been God's continual plan to bring glory to Himself, salvation to the lost, and critical course corrections to nations. In fact, the United States has seen four *nationwide* movements of revival and spiritual awakening in its past.

So what would it take to see an extraordinary movement of the Spirit of God that would produce extraordinary results in your city? And, how can you cooperate with God in the process?

We must understand that revival is a sovereign work of God. We cannot manipulate God to do anything. But we can set our sails to catch the wind of the Spirit as He is moving. And, we can do that which invites the presence of God. We can build a highway for our God! (Isaiah 40:3-5)

The following pages are filled with some of the ways that God has in the past and is now preparing whole cities for the supernatural movement of God in genuine revival in the church and spiritual awakening among the lost. To be honest, these are things we should be involved in all the time! But the urgent need of our day and growing desperation among us all, calls for a heightened sensitivity to this type of preparation for the manifest presence of God. Although not in a particular order, these ideas could form the basis for the united cry in your city for the extraordinary movement of the Spirit of God.

## Table of Contents

<b>#1: Authentic Friendships</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>#2: Accurate Assessment</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>#3: Spiritual Agreement</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>#4: Continual Repentance</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>#5: United Prayer</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>#6: Catalytic Initiatives</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>#7: Prioritized Differences</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>#8: Effective Communication</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>#9: Persevering Leadership</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>#10: Unceasing Prayer</b>	<b>19</b>

## #1: AUTHENTIC FRIENDSHIPS

Bob Bakke, one of the foremost authorities on the Second Great Awakening says, “History is changed among friends.” If you study carefully the greatest spiritual movement in human history, you will see that its Leader called men to “be with Him.” (Mark 3:14) Jesus was a friend of sinners and the movement of His Spirit began with relationships. I doubt we can improve on that plan! The disciples’ commitment to each other and to the cause of the Kingdom grew in the rich soil of authentic friendships.

This relational connection made the work of kingdom move at light speed. One of the reasons the church is so disconnected in most cities is that the spiritual leaders of the city don’t know each other. And, if they do, they often view each other with reserved skepticism.

If we long to see greater spiritual activity in our community, it will take a willingness by pastors and spiritual leaders to spend time developing friendships. If the relational connection is not there, any attempt at cooperation, united prayer, or strategic ministry will be met with cautious skepticism and little engagement.

### **A SIMPLE NEXT STEP**

There is no massive program to building friendships. It’s initiating time with someone, being genuinely interested in their life, praying for them, and growing to know and trust each other in love.

Paul told the church in Ephesus that the movement would grow by that which “every joint supplies.” (Ephesians 4:16) Joints are the connection points. In God’s movement in the church in a city, joints are relational connections. If the elbow or knee has a disconnection, the parts on either side suffer. But if the connection is healthy, life flows in both directions.

Also, it is important to understand that Christ values this unity immensely. Look at John 17 and realize that of all the things He could have prayed for, He asked that His children would be connected in visible union; first with Him and the Father and then with each other. This makes the whole body strong and is an undeniable testimony to a watching world.

Do you want to see God’s increased activity in your city? Then it begins with you. Give intentionality to making friends!

## HIGHWAY BUILDING SUGGESTIONS

1. As a pastor or church leader, begin to meet with 1-2 different pastors weekly for coffee or a meal. Spend time getting to know them. Share your thoughts on why knowing each other and developing relationships is so critical. As the opportunity develops, take time to share your vision for revival and awakening in the city and how you can cooperate together to see this moved forward.
2. Host a small group of 3-4 key pastors that you may already have relationship with and see if they will join you. Share this booklet with them. Ask them if they would be willing to intentionally build relationships with 4-5 additional pastors in the next few months.
3. Start a monthly prayer group for revival with 8-10 pastors.
4. Host gatherings to invite the spiritual leaders of the city together to connect and pray for the city. Share the contents of this booklet with them.
5. Invite the OneCry ministry to help you host a meeting of city pastors and leaders and cast vision for revival in the city and the critical role that united pastors and spiritual leaders play in that movement.
6. Have a one day OneCry rally in your city such as we had in [Reno, NV](#). Please contact [info@onecry.com](mailto:info@onecry.com) for more information.

## #2: ACCURATE ASSESSMENT

When Nehemiah faced the massive task of rebuilding the walls of Jerusalem he started with a very important step.

*And I arose in the night, I and a few men with me. I did not tell anyone what my God was putting into my mind to do for Jerusalem and there was no animal with me except the animal on which I was riding.*

*So I went out at night by the Valley Gate in the direction of the Dragon's Well and on to the Refuse Gate, inspecting the walls of Jerusalem which were broken down and its gates which were consumed by fire. (Nehemiah 2:12-13)*

John Dickerson in "The Great Evangelical Recession" compares our current spiritual climate to that which preceded the most recent financial recession. While some economists warned of coming danger, many financial leaders continued to ignore the reports. When the recession came, it brought disastrous results.

His belief is that their overconfidence about the financial market contributed greatly to the recession. He further states that the church's inflated reporting of numbers and overconfidence about the strength of the American church is leading to the same scenario.

It's time to take a hard look at the walls. To see them as they really are. Recent studies have shown that the number of true believers in the United States may be only 7% of the population. With all the good things that are happening with many churches, the moral and spiritual free fall continues in our nation at an exponentially increasing rate.

If we assess our walls carefully we will find tough things that indicate the deterioration morally and spiritually in our city. But we may also be surprised to discover great spiritual activity! (You will hear an amazing story about this in Reno, Nevada as you continue to read.) Nehemiah found a whole nation that quickly saw the need and were instantly mobilized to rise and build. So great was God's activity that the walls were rebuilt in 52 days! God had been preparing the nation for His work and it took one humble, prayerful, courageous leader to stand up and mobilize the people.

Many years ago the pastors in Little Rock, Arkansas were drawn together in friendship and united in prayer. A leadership team for the churches of the city that had been developed spent a day in a room overlooking the city. "What can we do for the city?" they began to ask. But then, a wise leader among them said, "But do we even know what the needs of the city are?"

Very quickly they realized the need to assess the walls and they were actually given money by a concerned businessman to do a massive survey of the spiritual and social condition of the city. They were surprised by what they discovered. This fueled their understanding for the cooperative work that continues to this day.

As pastors and leaders, it is our job to be spiritual physicians to our flock. How can we give what is needed if we don't know the needs? As spiritual leaders in your city, do you know where to begin? What the needs are? Where the great problems are? Where God is moving and how you can cooperate with Him?

### **HIGHWAY BUILDING SUGGESTIONS**

1. Develop a city leadership team to help the development of the movement in your area. Make sure it has as much ethnic diversity as possible. Appeal to those of influence in your city to be a part of this team, but do not under any circumstances compromise with leaders who are not devoted to prayer, who have godly character, and who have a common burden. The greatest requirement is that they must be leaders who hear God and are committed to a united movement in His body.
2. Take time to assess your city. Be creative in how this is done. Find God's plan. Don't merely concentrate your assessment among Christians. Find out what the deep needs are of your city. Study demographics. Talk to the city leaders in government, education, business, etc. But, in the end, assess all of this through the eyes of Christ to discover the greatest *spiritual* needs. Be a Nehemiah and develop a Nehemiah team.
3. Invite a group of pastors to spend a day praying through the needs of your city.
4. Do a comprehensive study of the churches, social services, number of people in church weekly, number of people coming to Christ annually, etc.
5. Ask God to begin to supernaturally give you an understanding of your city. He is interested in you seeing this more than you are.
6. If you discover prayer groups that are ongoing in the city, go to them, merely as a participant with no agenda. Let God use this to help you assess the spiritual temperature of the city.
7. Connect prayer leaders who do not know each other across your city so they can be encouraged by what God is already doing.

### #3: SPIRITUAL AGREEMENT

It is important as leaders to come to what Jonathan Edwards described as “explicit agreement” which would lead to “visible union among God’s people in extraordinary prayer.” Part of this agreement comes through the study of Biblical and church history to understand the ways of God in His movements of revival and awakening.

There is a very clear cycle in the Scripture that is observable among nations. Spiritual vitality is often followed by spiritual decline, then God’s judgment, then desperation that causes God’s people to cry out together. If this repentance occurs, it is usually followed by a gracious intervention of revival in the church and spiritual awakening among the lost. (See this diagram explained in “OneCry: A Nationwide Call for Spiritual Awakening”, page 51)

As you study the ways of God together, it will become obvious where the church in your city is in relation to God’s activity.

#### **BECOME AN EXPERT ON THE WAYS OF GOD**

There is no reason why you could not become the greatest authority on revival and awakening in your area. Study the Scriptures. Study revival history. Read great books on revival. (Find one good [Revival bibliography](#)). As you do, and invite others to join you, there will be a growing agreement surrounding the need and path to a greater movement of God in your area.

Also, come to agreement around the 2-3 primary things in which the whole church in your city is to cooperate. Individual churches are led to do particular things and so the cooperative efforts must be few, simply doing the things TOGETHER that cannot be done separately.

Be open to God’s fresh winds that blow in your city. Revival history is filled with spontaneous movements that illustrate the sovereign, mighty power of God. Don’t be afraid of these! Be willing to flow with God’s activity.

But you do need to be discerning and resist the urge and pull by others to promote *every new agenda* that comes through the city. In Little Rock, the focus of the city movement over the years has become united prayer, leader connection, and community restoration, which include both a physical and spiritual agenda. Everything we do together falls under those categories. Stay before God as a team to make sure you are finding His ways in your city for your cooperative, unified agreement.

One of the hallmarks of the First and Second Awakening was the prayer covenants that churches in an area signed to promote regular prayer. Since the greatest need among us is for UNITED prayer, consider the possibility of joining together in your

city in the [National Prayer Accord](#) which is being embraced by thousands around the nation.

## **CAST VISION**

Use every opportunity available to help the spiritual leaders and followers of Christ across the city see the need for and the possibility of revival and spiritual awakening. Sound a clarion call for God's ways in these days and the urge need to unite with Him in His purposes.

### **HIGHWAY BUILDING SUGGESTIONS**

1. Unite a group of pastors, perhaps your city leadership team if it is organized, to read "OneCry: A Nationwide Call for Spiritual Awakening" together for the purpose of a basic, united understanding.
2. Unite your churches to take an 8-week period to do the OneCry Church Experience together for the purpose of giving the whole church in the city a united understanding of what God longs to do in revive His church. Follow this by a citywide prayer gathering or a one day, OneCry gathering.
3. Do a study of the major revivals in the Bible and the major revivals in church history.
4. Consistently read one revival book a month for the next year. (A bibliography is provided [HERE](#))
5. Decide together as leaders in prayer upon the 2-3 primary areas of emphasis in your city.
6. Plan strategic initiatives around these areas, making sure that you do not do too much.
7. Make a commitment that you are NOT going to promote every new agenda if it does not enhance the cooperative movement. You will quickly lose pastors if your movement becomes about everything, not a few of the most important things.

## #4: CONTINUAL REPENTANCE

“If my people,” the Lord promised, “Will humble themselves and pray and TURN from their wicked ways...” (2 Chronicles 7:14). Repentance is a necessary step in revival. And since we sin continually it is necessary that every child of God become a lifelong repenter.

The great Romania revival in the 1970's (which led to the overthrow of the Communist government eventually) was spurred when the “Repenters” which is what the believers were called, were led to “repent!” Let the “Repenters repent” became the theme of that mighty movement.

### **INDIVIDUAL REPENTANCE**

Obviously it is critical in revival for every believer to see his/her need for individual repentance. Anything and everything that can be done to foster such repentance should be promoted.

### **LEADERSHIP REPENTANCE**

What would God do if He saw the spiritual leaders of your city standing together in spiritual repentance? Of their lack of unity? Of their competition? Of their pride? Of their sectarianism? Of their prejudice? And on and on. Of particular need in most cities is repentance from racial prejudice.

Great spiritual breakthroughs could occur if environments were provided where such humility was promoted and experienced.

### **CORPORATE REPENTANCE**

And what would occur in a city if the whole church in the city cried out to God for mercy, in humble repentance? If you want a picture of such repentance, study Nehemiah and see the marvelous reviving results when the people came to agreement and repented together.

When God began to move in Little Rock, Arkansas among the pastors, there came a weekend where they united for a great strategic initiative. At the close of that weekend, they rented the arena in the city and thousands of believers gathered to pray and celebrate what God was doing. But the first order of business was to stand and read a statement of repentance. We repented of our pride and prejudice and particularly of our failure to be the church that the world needed. It was a very, very powerful moment. One pastor read the document while 60+ pastors stood in agreement and visible union on the stage. (See Robert Lewis' book, *The Church of Irresistible Influence*, for a fuller account)

What is the Spirit saying to the churches? When Christ came to the churches in Revelation, the first order of the day for most was the need to repent of specific sins. How could it be less for us?

#### **HIGHWAY BUILDING SUGGESTIONS**

1. Enlist a group of pastors to go away on a 2-day spiritual retreat for the purpose of prayer, repentance, and spiritual uniting. (There are several great resources to find those who lead such retreats such as Strategic Renewal Ministries with Daniel Henderson at <http://www.strategicrenewal.com/>; the Prayer Summit movements at <http://prayersummits.net/>; or you can contact OneCry at [info@onecry.com](mailto:info@onecry.com) for help.
2. Spend time as a pastor overviewing your life. Don't ask others to repent of things you are unwilling to deal with in your own life. Use guided tools to help you in this process (Many links to [spiritual revival](#) )
3. Spend time with a group of pastors in prayer asking God to identify the primary areas of needed repentance. Think of cooperate opportunities and ways to express this repentance.
4. Take the time to take a pastor of a different race for lunch that you have a relationship with and ask him deep questions about what he senses are areas of needed repentance.

## #5: UNITED PRAYER

Of all the things that are needed to seek God in revival and awakening, united prayer is at the top of the list. Why? Because God has so decreed! Over and over again we hear His call to seek Him in prayer, to cry out, and we also see the consistent illustration of this activity among His children. In fact, each time His people cry out in humble repentance, He always answers! It is important as city leaders to embrace united prayer as the primary pathway to unity and power!

### **PERSONAL PRAYER**

God begins here. If I am unwilling as a pastor or city leader to pray, then I cannot ask others to do so. It is very easy to promote prayer, but not pray. To preach about prayer, but not pray yourself. Begin to pray daily for revival and spiritual awakening in your city. Use any and every tool you need, but do not neglect to pray.

Pray specifically for every pastor and church in your city that God would bring revival to their church. Send them a note or text letting them know you're praying for them. Pray for them in the services of your church.

### **CHURCH PRAYER**

Leading a church to pray together is hard work. Everything fights against it including the Enemy who knows the power of united prayer. Prayer must be continually encouraged in a church or it will languish to a faithful few.

Determine that you will not be deterred by small numbers. Preach and teach on prayer and be ready to follow this with specific action. Start a men's prayer group weekly or monthly. Unite your church in a weekly or monthly night of prayer. Become a great prayer leader who knows how to move a prayer meeting along so that it does not become boring. ([How to Lead Corporate Prayer](#), [The Need for Prayer 1](#) and [2](#))

### **PASTORS AND BUSINESS PRAYER GROUPS**

One of the most powerful things you can do is to gather 6-8 of your pastor or Christian leader friends together to pray at least monthly. Encourage business leaders to pray together weekly or monthly.

A significant boost to your prayer movement would be to encourage pastors to go away for a prayer retreat as mentioned above. Nothing will unite the pastors quicker than spending 2-3 days in prayer together!

### **UNITING AND CELEBRATING EXISTING PRAYER GROUPS**

There are intercessors in every church. As a city team, spend time seeking to discover the intercessors in each church so that you can unite them together at strategic moments or citywide prayer events. Build a database of these intercessors so that you can alert them to prayer needs and moments in the city. Don't abuse this, but utilize it strategically.

Keep your ear open for existing prayer groups around the city. Help them know about each other. You don't want to disturb their rhythm of prayer, but it will help tremendously if they become aware how many are really praying across the city. Visit these groups purely for the purpose of praying with them.

### **CITYWIDE PRAYER AND WORSHIP**

When it becomes possible and God seems to be initiating it, seek to develop a citywide worship and prayer gathering. It might be important for the sake of momentum to have an initial, recognizable speaker to kick-off the first gathering. But make sure that it is not all preaching and worship and little prayer.

In your city there are a few leaders who are gifted to lead corporate prayer. Not everyone is good or experienced at leading prayer. Don't be caught in the trap of rotating the prayer leadership around to try to get others involved when they are not interested in prayer nor effective at leading a prayer event.

One pattern that we have used in our monthly Worship and prayer nights is to have a worship team comprised of multiple worship leaders around the city. Let them lead in 2-3 segments of worship, but between each have a gifted pastor lead a section of prayer. Think beforehand of what needs to be prayed for and focus your prayer gathering around these prayer needs. And pray BEFORE the meeting that God would descend in power!

### **NATIONWIDE PRAYER**

The first Thursday in May has been designated for years as the National Day of Prayer. In some cities this is a meager effort, in others very vibrant. Each year there are over 40-50,000 prayer events happening across the nation! Join with them in your city. Perhaps this is a night you could do a citywide evening of worship and prayer.

You could also join together annually on the National Day of Prayer around the Moody Radio OneCry Prayer broadcast if it is available in your area.

### **NATIONAL PRAYER ACCORD**

Many churches and cities are adopting the National Prayer Accord as a pattern for prayer and visible union in prayer. Churches can adopt this individually or they can covenant together with others to unite in...

- Weekly prayer for revival and awakening
- Monthly prayer as a church
- Quarterly prayer among like-minded churches
- National prayer on the first Thursday in May

### [NATIONAL PRAYER ACCORD](#)

#### **HIGHWAY BUILDING SUGGESTIONS**

1. Read through “Reality 5-Waiting for One Cry” in “OneCry: A Nationwide Call for Spiritual Awakening” to help shape a discussion with multiple leaders or your leadership team about the value and purpose of united prayer.
2. Start small if needed. Simply join the churches in your leadership team together in a night of prayer.
3. Unite pastors and spiritual leaders in prayer by developing small prayer groups. 4 prayer groups with 8-10 leaders would be significant. Quarterly, bring them all together for a larger leader prayer gathering.
4. Investigate uniting around the [National Prayer Accord](#)

## #6: CATALYTIC INITIATIVES

When God begins to move among your churches, the great temptation is to immediately jump on tactical, strategic initiatives for service and evangelism. Be sure to let any such initiatives be initiated by God. Don't try to push or manufacture something. It will come in time.

But, if the Lord is initiating, join with His activity! There is something very catalytic about strategic gatherings, service or evangelism seasons, or events that can catapult the movement of God forward.

Perhaps a first step would be to take a Saturday to worship and pray, inviting some outside speakers to join you who can cast vision for city movement and prayer. There is something powerfully unleashed when the believers in a city realize they are a part of a larger movement. Just make sure that you don't measure all God is doing by one event. And, don't make the whole movement in your city about one event. If so, you will be disappointed and the movement stops when the event has ended. See it, rather, as a part of God's continued movement in your area.

### **HIGHWAY BUILDING SUGGESTIONS**

1. As you have assessed the needs of the city, what is the most pressing issue? Ask God to show you if there is some way, through addressing that issue as the church in the city, you could open doors for evangelism and spiritual movement.
2. There may be ministries in the city (adoption, foster care, homeless, etc.) that don't need to be "reinvented" but could be dramatically advanced by a citywide involvement.
3. Be careful not to let one person or church push you as a group into something that doesn't seem to have God's initiation. But also, God may lead through one individual! Be fervent in prayer.
4. If you try a strategic, cooperative effort and it does not go well, don't let that deter you from future involvement.

## #7: PRIORITIZED DIFFERENCES

What divides the church in our cities are our differences. Some of these (such as vast theological differences) are so divergent that they may never be crossed (and perhaps should not be). There are major doctrinal truths that we must *never* compromise.

But some of the differences that divide us are preferential, not essential. Styles of worship, and lesser, peripheral doctrines should not keep us from the union that could be greatly used by God.

One pastor in Michigan said about the unity among their churches: “We don’t do away with our differences, we just prioritize them.” This takes a big kingdom vision, but is essential if we are to unite to cry out for revival and spiritual awakening.

Every church and church leader should be mindful of this. Are you promoting in your city movement things that should best be left to your own individual church initiatives? Are you demanding of others that they perfectly align with you or you will not unite with them?

If there is a concern that important doctrinal issues might be compromised, it would be possible to do as some city movements have done to develop a brief doctrinal statement around the broad issues that are non-negotiable. (What would you do, for instance, if a Mormon wanted to join your movement?)

Also, it is important to thank God for and celebrate the various streams of the true, Biblical church that are contributing to the life of Christ in your city. These should be appreciated and applauded.

### **HIGHWAY BUILDING SUGGESTIONS**

1. Talk through these issues with your city team. If you feel it necessary, write out a core doctrinal statement for use.
2. Encourage, in any gathering, the people to be mindful of not doing anything that would needlessly offend a brother of a different stream of the body. Agree to prioritize your differences!

## #8 EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION

When revival comes, many organizational components will not be necessary for it will spread like wildfire! But as you are uniting people to seek God for revival, today's culture demands that you communicate well. Do not underestimate this important component of fostering God's movement in your city.

It is important to discover key, gifted people in the city who have enough time and resources to give help in communication. Here is where a larger church can be tremendously beneficial, lending aid to the movement by access to their communications resources. Someone needs to be responsible for and faithful to this communication. It is helpful to develop a database of those interested in city movement so they can be communicated with quickly.

Also, when God comes in revival, it makes sense that He will utilize existing means of communication for the rapid propagation of the news. The telegraph and advances in the printing press were mightily used by God to communicate the news of revival during the 1857-1858 Prayer Revival. Think creatively of the myriad of ways now available to us to spread the story of revival and awakening. It is often said that "the flame of revival is spread by the fame of revival."

### **HIGHWAY BUILDING SUGGESTIONS**

1. Find someone who is willing to give 10% of their time to the communications component of the movement.
2. Appeal to a larger church for their help in this area.
3. Be careful not to abuse this! In many places, it has become necessary to make a commitment to only use these communication resources to publicize and communicate things directly related to the movement and NOT communicate about every initiative that any individual or church wants to advertise. This is very important!
4. Develop a good website if possible. This does not have to be fancy, but usable.
5. Investigate the development of a citywide Facebook site, Twitter, Instagram etc.

## #9: PERSEVERING LEADERSHIP

Everything rises and falls on leadership. Those who have studied the movements of God in a city will testify that there is always one or more persevering leader. The uniting of churches in prayer for revival and awakening and the presence of God is not easy. It takes a leader or a group of leaders who are willing to persevere.

It helps greatly to develop a team. A team will provide diversity and connections to multiple streams in the city. A pastor I know who is being greatly used in his city decided to give a “tithes” (10%) of his time to the united work of God in the city. If each pastor would do this it would make a huge impact. A team of leaders can divide and conquer the necessary tasks.

Do not put individuals on the team just to try to get them involved. This almost never works. Get those who are committed and have illustrated a level of commitment to the work of God in the city and then join them together in a citywide team.

Also, utilize the pattern of Ezra and Nehemiah—a spiritual leader and a business leader—to join hands in the task. It may be of benefit to develop multiple sub-teams to oversee various areas of need.

### **HIGHWAY BUILDING SUGGESTIONS**

1. Develop a team of interested leaders. Don't be timid but rise up and unite this team, knowing that there may be others to join in the future or that your role may change. But remember that many things die for lack of leadership!
2. Organize the team, potentially, around key areas of movement or need.
3. Designate one key individual as the chairman or leader of the team. Again, this needs to be someone with not only the passion, but the time to give leadership. Usually, this is self-evident in the city regarding this leader.
4. Commit to meet as often as needed—particularly in the beginning days—to gain momentum.
5. Make sure your team is grounded in and constantly utilizing prayer. Model to others what Spirit-directed, prayer-driven, Word-based leadership is about!

## **#10: UNCEASING PRAYER!**

It seems self-evident, but God will not bless what He does not initiate. As you seek to cooperate with Him in His movement in the city, make sure it is driven by and bathed in authentic prayer. Make no step without praying. Develop no new initiative apart from Him.

Pray about your gatherings. Pray for God to raise up intercessors across your city. Pray for key leaders. Pray for every church in the city, by name, every week.

If we are going to see revival and awakening in our day, it will begin on our knees. And that must begin with YOU!

We finish with the illustration of one man who saw the need in his city and began cooperating with God. We've asked Brent Brooks of Reno Christian Fellowship in Reno, Nevada to give a brief testimony of God's activity in his city.

### **ONE CITY...ONE CRY...ONE MAN**

*(By Brent Brooks)*

The winds of the Spirit have periodically brought revival to the most unlikely of places – the sparse frontier settlements of New England and Cane Ridge, Kentucky, the poor coal mining villages of Wales, the scattered and remote Hebrides Islands off the coast of Scotland, the slums around Azusa Street in Los Angeles, are but a few of the examples. There is probably no more unlikely place in America today than Reno, Nevada.

#### **OUR HISTORY**

Reno sits at the far western edge of the high desert of Nevada next to the towering Sierra Nevada Mountains. The geographic beauty stands in stark contrast to our sordid history. Reno was literally the end of civilization for much of American history. Our history began in 1868 as the last stop on the transcontinental railroad before the return to civilization in California, connecting the gold and silver mining boom of the Comstock Lode with modern transportation.

As the mining craze wound down the local powerbrokers found their new economic engine in 1931 by creating the most liberal divorce laws in the country and passing open-gambling legislation to draw certain elements of the rest of the country to what would become known as "Sin City". Just take a look at Wikipedia today and you will see that for decades the phrase "going to Reno" was synonymous with

shedding one's past life and heading west to get a divorce. Reno was populated with "divorce ranches", (dude ranches that existed to house and entertain the migrants coming and waiting the required period to get divorces) and casinos.

Reno has never had a rich religious history. By and large the mainline denominations barely made it here with small outposts. Today approximately 5% of the 400,000 people in our valley go to a Bible-believing church. One Southern Baptist survey ranked us among the 5 most unchurched communities in America. We are still the "Divorce Capital" of America with the highest divorce rate among any metropolitan area in America. Other sad national rankings include being in the top 5 in gambling addiction and the top 20 in binge drinking. Yet, amazingly, we also (due to the natural beauty, weather, and low tax rates among other things) frequently make lists of best places to live in America.

### **GOD'S MOVEMENT**

In this unlikely environment God has begun to build the seeds of revival. For 12 long years a group of approximately 30 Pentecostal pastors of churches mainly under 100 in attendance has met every Wednesday and brought their churches together one Monday per month to pray for revival. Finally in early 2012 changes began to happen.

A lay movement for prayer for revival called Acts4 began in January of that year and has continued moving from church to church each month since. Simultaneously, Awaken INC ("in the name of Christ"), a citywide movement to end sex trafficking began to gain traction in Reno. (Yes, we are the only state that has legalized brothels.) And without knowledge of either of these, a group of local worship pastors began holding quarterly all-city worship events with bands from multiple churches. And at the same time, for the first time both African-American and Hispanic pastors associations formed among ethnic pastors who had been previously divided along theological lines.

God had begun something new in Reno! The question was whether these would continue to be separate streams of the Spirit or whether they might be drawn to work together into a united force for unity, prayer, and revival in our city. This was the unique calling God placed on my heart. For thirty years I have studied and prayed for revival. A consistent cry for revival has been a heartbeat in my spirit during this time. My study of revival has convinced me of certain things. It has happened! It can happen! It will happen somewhere! Why not here? Why not Reno?

As I began to see all of these movements and began to know all the key players, God began to place it more and more on my heart that there was something that needed to be done to bring these diverse groups together. As you probably know if you are reading this, there was one other thing that God began in virtually the same time period, the national OneCry movement and God blessed me with contacts with the OneCry leadership.

The steps and principles I used to bring these groups together can be found in the bullet-points that follow. Has revival come to Reno? Certainly not yet fully, but significant steps have begun. In March of 2013 we brought together 360 leaders from 60 plus ministries (Black, White, Hispanic, Asian, Evangelical, Pentecostal, and Charismatic) for our first OneCry Reno event. In 2014 it expanded to 695 from 95 ministries. God has begun to bring us together in unprecedented cooperation to pursue unity, prayer, and revival! If it can happen here, it can happen anywhere, even where you are!

## **HELPFUL SUGGESTIONS**

- Watch for the moves of the Spirit that are always going before. Keep your eyes, ears, heart, spirit open to what God is already doing around you.
- God has always been going before you – look for the signs of convergence and God’s preparation...
  - In your city,
  - In your life.
- Find the intercessors and stay close to them.
- Start with relationships, not events.
- Remember people distrust and build theories about those they don’t know. These dissolve where there is relationship.
- Identify the various pastoral tribes in your community (in our case we have separate tribes for Evangelicals, Pentecostals, African-Americans, Hispanics).
- Understand that each tribe has its own culture and tribal chieftains. Learn the cultures and know the chieftains.
- Appreciate the tribal cultures. Remember Christ loves the whole Church despite their flaws, especially the flaws within your tribe.
- Learn to be multicultural, working in more than one tribe. As long as we stay separate the Devil wins. When we are One the church will rally, the world will take notice, and the Devil will flee.
- Find others who share your passion. Build a coalition team behind the scenes. Don’t make the identity of this team public. If you do, then others will ask who put you in charge? Just work quietly together behind the scenes. You’ll have allies working with you in each of the tribes.
- Theologically move to the highest common denominators (Father, Son, Holy Spirit, the gospel, authority of Scripture, the Cross, prayer, revival).
- Don’t treat cultural differences as theological differences.
- Where there has been past friction between tribes, ask “why?” Learn from the past.
- Where there have been past conflicts practice deliberate “gracism.” In other words, affirmative action in reconciliation will be needed. Remain persistent even when you are initially ignored. They want to know if you are just like everybody else who wanted to symbolically embrace diversity, but were unwilling to accept them and their culture as full partners.

- Don't try to simply be "color blind." It won't work. The goal is not homogeneity (the old melting pot idea where they are supposed to become like us). The goal is a total embrace of all the flavors of Christ's body (a stew pot, not a melting pot).
- Don't ignore the differences. Bring them out in the open. Talk about them. Recognize them and recognize the power of the Spirit to embrace every nation, tribe, and tongue. It will happen in heaven. It can start now.
- Don't accept "we tried it before, it didn't work." Ask, "Does that mean we should stop?"
- Identify outliers, i.e. those who are not connected with any tribe. These will require personal contact.
- Don't move to event without relationship.
- Make sure that you seek no personal credit. Keep the focus on unity, not you. (But know you're unique role and don't be afraid to play it.)
- Do not imply anything bad about prior efforts. Just recognize what has gone before and build on it.
- Remember love covers over a multitude of sins. (1 Peter 4:8)
- Pray at all times.
- Identify the key rallying points upon which all can agree to pray. In Reno, they are...
  - The unity of believers in our region
  - Love for one another to grow
  - The displacing of the powers of darkness (which begins with repentance, both individually and for the region)
  - Revival to come to each local church and the entire local church
- Make sure when you have an event that it embraces all the cultures and does not exclude any. For us, this meant bands that embraced White, Black, Hispanic, Asian, Native American, evangelical, and charismatic. It meant that we imposed no rules on charismatic gifts, etc. I trusted my friends to behave in my house. They did.
- Try to do things that bring pastors together with pastors, church leaders with church leaders, across the tribal lines.
- Keep prayer and revival at the center.
- Expect opposition.
  - Understand that "revival" is a bad word for some people.
  - Narcissistic churches and church leaders won't get it.
  - We have an enemy. He won't like what you're doing.
- When divisive behavior occurs, and it will, don't let it go unchallenged. Speak the truth in love and bring your coalition members (from the tribe of the offender) into play with you.
- Remain persistent! Remain persistent! Remain persistent!