

Pray for Englewood

Isaiah 62:4 For the Lord delights in you...

Issue 4

Revive Chicagoland Begins

A sense of excitement filled the sanctuary of Chicago Embassy Church as people began to gather on a Saturday morning. "I can hardly believe it's happening," whispered an African-American pastor in awe. He had worked and waited and prayed so long for this moment. For intercessors who had prayed for two years at prayer altars in Englewood and for local church members who had prayed for revival for many years, it was the beginning of God's answers.

Soon about 150 people had come together in the sanctuary. They received basic training, prayed in small groups, enthusiastically worshiped the Lord, ate breakfast, and then divided into some 30 teams. The teams spread out into the streets of Englewood and offered to pray with people they met. After praying for requests, they shared the gospel of salvation through Christ to those willing to listen. Through those encounters a number of people, including a prostitute and several drug users, met the living Lord, who began to change their lives and destinies for all eternity. It was the launch of "Revive Chicagoland."



Team member tells how she saw God working as her team met local

The name shows a connection with the move of God now spreading throughout Indiana—"Revive Indiana." That movement began in Elkhart County in January 2015. An Amish man named Dennis Miller had been praying for



Participants gather in small groups to pray before going out into the streets.

revival among his people. He invited Kyle Martin, a friend with whom he had grown up, to bring his organization, Time to Revive, to the area. As the week progressed, the Holy Spirit moved in unique and awesome ways, amazing even the Time to Revive team. The planned week of meetings turned into 52 days at God's direction. Churches united across denominational lines, something totally new there. Hundreds of people received

Christ as Savior; many others recommitted their lives to Christ. People received physical and emotional healings. Some public schools gave excused absences to students to join the effort. Some RV manufacturing plants closed down their lines for a short time for a gospel presentation. From several hundred people who took part early on, the crowd grew to 10,000 by the 52nd day. Many of those drove in from all over the Midwest.

During the summer several pastors from the Englewood area of Chicago began talking together about the Indiana revival. A couple of them drove to Indiana to experience it, and they told other local pastors about it. Soon a dozen

pastors made a commitment to pray and join together to seek revival in their community. They invited two Indiana pastors from transformed churches to come and mentor them.

After many weeks of prayer and discussion, they decided, "Enough talk. Let's just do it." They did not have enough



A street team shares the Gospel with an Englewood resident.



Englewood man hears the Word of life.

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committed churches to host a Time to Revive week-long effort, so they settled on a half-day as a start. As the church began filling up that October 10th, the Englewood locals were amazed and blessed. A large number of people from the Indiana revival had driven in for the 8:00 a.m. kick-off meeting. Dozens more people came in from Chicago suburbs to support the Englewood believers.

In November, December, and January 2016 the Englewood churches took a larger step of faith. They extended the outreach for an entire day. This monthly evangelism will continue as local pastors and Time to Revive pray about when to go to a full week—perhaps around Easter.

Many participants in the fall outreach recognized something transcendent taking place, God's hand at work. They also knew that the plans of His heart reach beyond a small, turbulent community on Chicago's south side. He has in mind the whole of Chicagoland; already a Latino neighborhood has taken a place next in line. Englewood is just the ignition point. May it be so.

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What Is a Prayer Altar?

When pastors from different churches and denominations join hands to seek a move of God in their community, that unity doesn't come out of nowhere. In Englewood's case, the decision arose from a foundation of prayer. Only God knows how many area churches have prayed for revival and for how long. But for more than two years groups have been meeting in a high school,

a business, and a police station there to erect altars of prayer. These intercessors prayed specifically for the body of Christ to join together in seeking revival. And they are part of a network of prayer altars throughout Chicagoland.

So what exactly is a prayer altar? The Lord showed the concept to Ugandan pastor John Mulinde who, with fellow pastors, sought God for help when the devastating AIDS epidemic ravaged his country. God told him to build a network of prayer over the nation, and through that prayer net God eventually transformed Uganda into a place where His kingdom is evident. This plan was not something new. The prayer altar's roots go back into the Old Testament where God told Abraham, Jacob, Moses, David, and many others to build Him an altar. There God's servants established a place for God's presence to dwell, and there they reclaimed the land for Him.

Certainly Englewood needs to be reclaimed. But looking beyond to Chicagoland's smug, tidy suburbs, we still find abortion clinics, porn shops, casinos, drug dealers, prostitution, corrupt businesses and government officials, and crime. These are



Indiana pastor helps train and encourage believers for the outreach.

unholy altars that draw spiritual darkness into the area. This darkness hinders the work of the Holy Spirit in people's hearts and in the culture. John Mulinde and co-author Mark Daniel wrote in their book **Prayer Altars*: "There is no such thing as neutral spiritual ground. Either there will be a predominance of holy altars drawing the presence of God or unholy altars drawing the powers of darkness ... the altar that is most active will control the territory and will influence everything in that territory. ... The only way to turn things back around is for someone in the land to rebuild the altar to the Lord" (pp. 73-74).

God intends that prayer altars function as gateways between heaven and earth. We bring our sacrifice of praise for Him to inhabit, actually to dwell in. But more than that we offer ourselves as living sacrifices there,

all we have, all we are. In a total capitulation we surrender our wills, our plans, our time, our resources to Him, the living God. We allow the Holy Spirit to pray through us repentant, unrelenting, and even desperate prayers. Such praise and prayer brings the Holy Presence that disperses spiritual darkness, opening up a pathway for the spiritual realm to touch the physical realm. "This gateway can open into our homes, families, workplaces, churches, cities, and territories ... layers of darkness that blind, harden, suffocate, hinder, and oppress begin to give way and the heavens start to open, allowing a ... greater flow of God's life and resources" (*Prayer Altars*, p. 46-47).

Many people testify to experiencing that greater flow of God's life at a prayer altar. Esther, from Nappanee, Indiana, started a personal prayer altar and found God's presence more real and her ability to hear Him increasing. One morning several weeks before Christmas, she went to the cupboard for a coffee mug to take to her prayer room. As she picked up a Santa Claus mug, the Holy Spirit spoke to her, "If you bring that, I'm not coming." Startled, she saw the mug with new eyes. It represented the multitude of idols our culture accepts, idols because they rob the Lord Jesus Christ of His rightful place.

Of course, the first altars we build must be in our own hearts. Is our time with God truly a time of connecting with Him, of entering His presence daily? Are we learning to abide in His love, provision, and especially His enablement, which is the secret to our spiritual authority? Are we getting to know His heart, His character? To receive His life, truth, righteousness, and wisdom as we go through each day? Is our trust in Him increasing and our surrender to Him deepening? He's calling us to grow in all these areas. Only as we learn to stay in intimate communion with Him will we be able to fulfill the calling of God on our lives and the destiny for which He created us. +++

(**Prayer Altars: A Strategy That Is Changing Nations* by John Mulinde and Mark Daniel, available on Amazon.)

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