

## HOW TO PRAY FOR INTERNATIONAL TROUBLE SPOTS

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**By John Robb, International Prayer Council Chairman**

For more than 20 years, it has been my privilege to facilitate interdenominational prayer initiatives in many of the hard places of the earth where there is war and intense human suffering, hopeless and impossible situations. As our ministry teams joined local brothers and sisters in Christ in humbling ourselves, getting right with the Lord and one another in times of moving reconciliation and repentance, over and over again we witnessed God's gracious hand coming in to bring about deliverance, with marvellous breakthroughs that resulted in peace agreements, governments of national unity and spiritual revival among ministry leaders.

It was not because we were some great prayer gurus at all. Instead, in childlike dependence, along with the local ministry leaders, we sought to align ourselves under His direction as the only one who could really solve such gargantuan difficulties. Here are some simple lessons or principles that may be helpful in praying for the hot spots in your region:

- 1) God can turn things around through united and authoritative prayer to bring healing and reconciliation in the world's trouble spots..
- 2) Prayer initiatives should be interdenominational, if not international, efforts that bring many believers into heart agreement as Jesus encouraged in Matthew 18:18-20.
- 3) Dependence on God and His direction is essential in undertaking such an initiative. Ask for and expect His guidance step by step through the whole processy.
- 4) In order to experience the kind of faith-filled, united praying that brings breakthrough and transformation, the relationships of those praying first need to be reconciled.
- 5) Believers need to identify with and confess the sins of their own ethnic groups or political factions in a conflict, asking God and those from the opposing groups for forgiveness.
- 6) Pray transconfessionally. Include the whole of Christ's Church and try to draw as many denominations and traditions as possible into your prayer effort. Be sensitive to the particular style of others, even if it seems foreign to your own. Strive for unity in diversity.
- 7) Pray holistically. Listen to the Spirit of God and pray about any issues He begins to surface during the sharing and prayer times. Ask for peace, healing and restoration of communities, tribes and nations caught up in the conflict.
- 8) Gather and disseminate information. Learn about the situation you are praying for and share what you learn with prayer networks and intercessors who can pray in support.
- 9) Expect God's illumination as you proceed. As we listen and pray, we can count on the Lord to put His finger on the main issues that are hindering His peace. Be open to prophetic impressions, words or images that the Spirit sometimes gives spontaneously to participants (I Corinthians 14:26 f).
- 10) Engage for the long term. Sometimes there are "suddenlies" that happen, but generally deep transformation does not happen overnight. Persevering prayer is usually needed over weeks and months, sometimes years, for real and substantial impact. Take time to observe and discern during the initiative and to keep track of what happens during it and afterwards. How has God answered? Write down your insights and reflections, then share them with others to encourage their faith and continued prayer.