

## NEW WINESKINS FOR THE PRAYER MOVEMENT

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**by Marc van der Woude**

These days we are hearing a lot about ‘new wineskins’, new approaches and formats to fit a new work of God’s Spirit. The worldwide prayer movement is also burgeoning and branching out. At this moment, six important shifts are occurring:

1. From private kingdoms to God’s Kingdom.

The time of private agenda’s and programs is over. More and more intercessors and prayer leaders are realizing that united prayer is the key to spiritual breakthrough. This requires commitment to each other, listening to God together, and developing a strategy in unity. In a growing number of places, prayer leaders are uniting to form ‘servant leadership teams’ to stimulate the local and national prayer movements to grow to a new level. Let’s pray for unity and courage for prayer leaders, to seek God’s Kingdom first and to form new effective partnerships under the leadership of the Holy Spirit.

2. From ‘prayer lists’ to Spirit-inspired warfare prayer.

It is not wrong to pray persistently for certain fixed subjects. But it could easily become routine. The Holy Spirit is fresh and creative every day and He helps us to pray to-the-point under his direction. We are authorized to stand up in the spiritual authority that God has given us in Christ. We want to see spiritual breakthrough, and that is no small thing! Let us pray that the prayer movement worldwide may develop this prophetic edge.

3. From individual intercessors to praying churches.

Individual intercessors have done their preparing work in private for years. We are now seeing the day that God is mobilizing whole churches to pray for their city, town or region. And that is good news, for praying churches have more authority (spiritually) at a city level than individual intercessors. Churches that speak and act in unity and with the authority of Jesus, can influence all areas of society. Let us pray that God will pour his Spirit of prayer into every church in the world.

4. From ‘old faithfuls’ to ‘young radicals’ .

In many western countries, the prayer movement has slowly aged, counting many grey heads. But there is hope for the future too! God is answering the prayers of the ‘old faithful’ by calling a new generation of ‘young radicals’ to prayer! Initiatives like The Call and 24-7 are mobilizing young people. Let us pray that God will turn them into an army of young prayer soldiers with the mentality of Joshua, Gideon and David, who will change the spiritual landscape of our world.

5. From programs to ‘living altars’ .

More and more people feel uncomfortable with (prayer) programs that are not, or insufficiently, integrated into their own lives. The Holy Spirit is leading Christians into a lifestyle of prayer, a divine partnership of Jesus with his Church, so that the things that have been prepared in heaven will become reality down here. In Europe, prayer leaders have covenanted themselves to God and each other to form an ‘altar of prayer and worship’ for what God wants to do in that continent. A covenant relationship with the Lord is very powerful. Such a living altar attracts God’s glorious presence, which is incomparably better than any program.

6. From 'miscellaneous hits' to a 'prayer saturation strategy' .

Hit-and-run prayer actions can be useful, but it is better to develop a strategy to gradually saturate an area with prayer. An increasing number of cities and nations are discovering the power of such long-term strategy. The resulting fruit will be a greater openness in the spiritual climate of a country. These opportunities need to be followed up, for instance by combining saturating prayer with saturating church planting.

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