

From the Coordinator

It has been some time since there has been a newsletter from Pray Bendigo and for that I apologise. I can only plead the pressure of other activities. During this time Pray Bendigo has been far from inactive. Our weekly prayer meetings continue from 7am to 8am on Thursday mornings at View Hill Fellowship. The Pastors still meet every week from 8am every Thursday, and the work of the Kingdom continues as always.

This seems to be a time of change within the various parts of the organisational church in Bendigo. Pray Bendigo has reaffirmed its role as one of praying for the city and its future in God. We are a close group of pastors who value the fellowship and support that our Covenant provides. Others are always welcome to join us in this. A new group "City Wide Connections" has been formed to coordinate large combined events in the city. There is a proposed "Inter Church Council" that some churches are proposing. The Ministers' Fellowship continues as the peak body representing the Church to the community in an organisational sense and providing the tangible business benefits for advertising, etc. Several other networks exist for fellowship among various pastors and people. All this is a sign of a vital Church networking across denominational boundaries. For this we give thanks. This is the age of networks rather than formal organisations and that all adds to the opportunities that we have for fellowship and service for our Lord.

In all this Pray Bendigo

remains a group committed to prayer for the city and seeing that prayer worked out in practical service. We continue to network with the authorities in various spheres in the city to see how we can best serve them.

The National Day of Thanksgiving gave us all a chance to say "Thank you" to the emergency services of Bendigo. This will be an annual event just preceding Pentecost each year, enabling the Church to say "thank you" to the various elements which make up this great city.

Regular prayer nights will continue to be held to give us a focus for prayer for the city. The next of these will be on Friday 27th August (next Friday). We will meet at the Bendigo Christian Fellowship in Eaglehawk Rd at 7.30pm. During this time we will have two important things to do apart from our crucial time of Praising God and Prayer. The first will be to affirm the Bendigo Covenant between the Pastors for a further year. The second will be to introduce a Declaration of

Commitment to the City which will be presented to the city Council at a later date.

This issue of the newsletter includes an article from Ruth Webb which may be controversial for some people. It has been included as a strong reminder to us that we do not fight against flesh and blood but against the principalities and powers of the air (Eph 6:12). The dragon is not the item of cloth and wood that is in the Chinese

Museum, but a spiritual power well known in the Bible as a representation of the Evil One. We are not attacking Chinese culture, but the powers which assail all people who seek to do the will of God.

I hope to see you next Friday at the prayer night and may the God bless you as you seek to proclaim His Lordship over Bendigo.

John Steele



WHO RULES IN BENDIGO –THE KING OF GLORY OR THE DRAGON?

In a recent prophetic act, the pastors and intercessors welcomed the King of glory into the city. How we long for His Presence to be so manifest in our city that even the newspapers and TV news would report the wonderful works of the Lord and give glory to Jesus. How we long to see the transformation of our city that we have been seeking in prayer for so long. Yes we long for the government of this city to fully rest upon the shoulders of the King of Kings.

As we open the gates to the King of glory, one question remains in my mind: have we **closed** the gate to the dragon? .

There are three very practical things that we can all do to close the door to the dragons influence upon this city.

THREE VITAL KEYS TO OVERCOMING THE DRAGON

1. STOP AGREEING WITH THE ACCUSER

Revelation 12:9 calls the dragon the Devil or Satan. This arch enemy of God approaches the court of heaven day and night to accuse every blood washed saint. (Rev 12:10) Jesus our advocate has a strong defence for us. The problem occurs when we, God's precious people, AGREE with those accusations. The nature of the dragon is to accuse and so every time the dragon is released in our city, even more accusation is released. God doesn't agree with the accuser and neither should we. In a court of law an innocent person would never agree with the prosecutor. So why should we? The dragon gains much influence and power when we enter into agreement with his accusations. One of the most powerful ways to remove the dragons power is for the church to STOP agreeing with him – after all he is a liar and murderer from the beginning. Yet we seem to easily enter into agreement when Satan accuses us. Personally he challenges our integrity, our walk with God, our reason for being here in this city, our position in the Body and relentlessly it goes on. How easily do we agree with and receive these accusations? Victory comes when we refuse to accept these accusations and instead believe what the Word of God says about us. Or what about when the accuser comes and speaks about a brother or sister in Christ? Do we agree or even enter into dialogue with the accuser? Do we even add some fuel by putting some of our own accusations into the discussion? The "discussion" may be played out in our minds, or it may go further and develop into gossip. Every time we verbally or even mentally agree with the accuser we are giving power and authority to the dragon and reinforcing his reign over us and over the city. How can we verbalize that Jesus is Lord, yet dishonour Him by agreeing with

His greatest enemy? How can we honestly welcome the King of Glory to this city if we enter into agreement with the dragon? We will start to see the dragon's power diminish over the church and over the city when we, God's people, repent and renounce ALL agreement with the accuser. We need to choose to agree with what the Word of God says about ourselves and about our brethren. We must enter into agreement with the King of Glory and what He says about us.

2. THE BLOOD OF THE LAMB

Revelation 12:7-12 tells of the dragon, the accuser, being cast out of heaven. The next verse gives very practical and vital keys as to HOW the brethren OVERCAME the dragon when he is lose and angry. *"And they overcame him (the dragon) by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, and they did not love their lives to the death."*

Our defence in the face of every accusation is the blood of Jesus. We need to remind the accuser that we have been redeemed from his kingdom by the blood of the Lamb. We have been made clean and new by the blood of Jesus. Every claim against us was nailed to the cross. The second part of this scripture says it is our testimony that also overcomes the dragon. We need to testify to the power of the blood of Jesus in our lives. We need to proclaim aloud by verbalizing what the blood of Jesus has done for us. Every time the accuser asks "who we think we are" – we can confidently declare we are sons and daughters of the living God who have been redeemed by the blood of the Lamb. While every accusation may be "true", Jesus paid that debt for us in full and there is nothing owing!

Thirdly this verse speaks of not loving our life to will probably cost more than we can even contemplate. But are we death. If the Lord required it of us, are we prepared to lay down our lives to see God's kingdom come to this city? We may not suffer persecution as our brethren do in some countries, but if we are really committed it will cost us. It prepared to pay the cost for revival? Are we prepared to lay aside our reputation even within the church? Are we prepared to do whatever He asks us to do – regardless of the consequences? For it is this type of commitment that overcomes the dragon! Satan has nothing to fear from lukewarm Christians. But those who are even prepared to lose their lives (physically, emotionally, financially) WILL be prepared to pay ANY cost to do WHATEVER the captain of the hosts requires. If we are serious about seeing the door closed to the

dragon in this city we must take these verses seriously.

3. ELIJAH PRAYER ANOINTING

"The effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much."
James 5:16

James then goes on to talk of the prayer of Elijah. *"Elijah was a man with a nature like ours..."* In other words Elijah was an ordinary guy like us, BUT extraordinary things happened because of his praying. James calls it, fervent prayer and that this kind of prayer produces miraculous results. What sort of prayer is this? It is not weak, feeble or passive. Nor is it intermittent, erratic and haphazard. To be fervent means to be intense, hot, zealous, burning, fiery. Elijah's fervent & prophetic prayer to stop it raining was not haphazard. Israel had sunk into Baal worship and they believed that Baal controlled the rain. So Elijah prayed and kept praying with fervency so that Israel would know that rain does not come from Baal but from the Lord God Almighty! God's answer to this prayer challenged the heart of the idolatry in the land. After the prophets of Baal were confronted and dealt with, Elijah began to pray for rain. He didn't just pray once, he kept praying and praying and praying... until it rained.

Every time we see an article in the paper that glorifies the dragon in this city we must pray and keep praying, believing that God answers prayer. Pray with an intensity and zeal that is burning with the fire of God. Are we indignant like David when he confronted Goliath – who is this Philistine to defy the living God?

May we take hold of these keys and turn them in the gate of our city that ONLY the King of Glory will be welcomed here.

Ruth Webb

Prayer Night

Next Friday night (27th August) from 7.30-9.30pm at Bendigo Christian Fellowship (Eaglehawk Rd, Long Gully) we will have our next prayer focus night. This is an especially important night as the ministers and people reaffirm the Bendigo Covenant for the following year.

Both the Bendigo Covenant and the new Declaration of Commitment to the city are included with this newsletter for your information. The churches and Ministers who will be party to this Covenant/Declaration will be announced on the night. We will be thanking God for the benefits we have received as a city, especially the lowering crime rate and the way we are cared for by so many people in the service of us all.

We will also thank God for the answered prayer from two years ago when, at the request of the then Mayor, we helped facilitate the building of a new park in Bright St Eaglehawk, and the safety of residents in the Virginia Hill estate. In the former case there has been an announcement of a grant of \$108,000 for the construction of the park, and in the latter case, a residents committee has been formed to regulate unruly elements in the estate. Both of these outcomes came as a result of the prayers of many people in Pray Bendigo, and the activity of several pastors in the implementation of the outcomes, along with the hard work of the residents of the areas

Another emphasis of the night will be praying for the various elections, local and federal which will be coming up this year. This is a crucial time for us as a city and a nation as we elect those who will govern us for the next 3 years or so.

Please come and be part of this exciting time of worship and prayer

THANKING GOD FOR ANSWERED PRAYER

Let us thank God for the incredible response from the Christian Community to protect marriage. The Christians of the nation were telling our Federal Politicians that they wanted marriage to be retained as "the union of a man and a woman to the exclusion of all others, voluntarily entered into for life." The Senate Committee has never had such a response as the number of emails received on this issue. Christians also voted with their feet and filled the Great Hall of Parliament House, Canberra, to overflowing at the marriage forum.

CONNECTIONS



MISSION

Pray Bendigo is an expression of the Christian Church of Bendigo. Our purpose is to be a catalyst for the transformation and blessing of Bendigo by the power of God, to reflect His purposes for the benefit of all citizens.

VISION

Our vision is to play our part in the transformation and blessing of the city through:

Prayer, which will include worship and intercession, in order to bring the fullness of heaven down to the community.

The fulfillment of a city eldership role, which will be expressed in pastoring the leadership of the city and speaking the word of God into the community.

The honoring of each other in mutual encouragement and support.

THE CALL AUSTRALIA 40 DAYS OF PRAYER COMMENCES 24TH AUGUST



The Prayer and Fasting facilitator Matt Madigan explains, "There's a deep longing for a day in which we see breakthrough for the kingdom of God in this nation. The vision is that through Prayer and Fasting for 40 days leading up to the Call Australia, we would see a harvest of souls like never before and the heart of this nation would be turned back to Christ. The call is to all Christians of Australia that they would partner in these 40 days to see historic change happen."

Please pray:

* That many Christians will see the deep longing in God's heart for this Nation and participate in the 40 Days of Prayer of The Call Australia.

* That through this 40 Days of prayer there will be a great harvest in this Nation.

*That the major woundings of the Australian mindset that have occurred through history will be healed, the redemptive gifts of Australia will be released and a new Jesus revolution will be birthed in this land which will lead to the transformation of this Nation.

Contact the office if you would like prayer points for this season of prayer.



Prayer Points

Uphold all those in Ministry in Bendigo especially the Heads of Churches/ Denominations that their task would be made easy by the support of those they serve.

Pray for the people in each Church that they would all learn to love one another and respect those in authority.

Pray for those who have not yet responded to the call of Jesus upon their life. Pray that they would be open to the words of love that the Holy Spirit brings across their path.

- Continue to uphold the emergency services and the police for the work they do to serve all in this community.

*Bendigo -
Be in God*

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