

Voice of Thanksgiving

Calling a Company of Believers Together for Prayer

For the Week of April 18, 2010

Doing the seemingly impossible is the everyday work of prayer.

David Williamson

The Life of Prayer

The Keystone

David Williamson

Have you ever seen a Roman era artifact? For some people things left from the time of the Romans is not important, but some history buffs and others, find seeing and touching things from the time of the Romans exciting. My Mom is one of these people.

While I was in the US Air Force and stationed in Germany, my Mom and Dad came to visit me. This was their first trip to Europe and they enjoyed seeing the sights and exploring places that had previously been only pictures in books or scenes from newsreels and movies. One day we were walking around the city of Wiesbaden, Germany, where I was stationed, and exploring a pretty town. In the center of Wiesbaden is a lovely park, with grass, trees, and flowerbeds. As we walked Dad and I became aware that we were walking without Mom. Turning around we saw that she had stopped some distance behind us. She was staring at a Roman era column.

In this park there are several artifacts of the time when the Romans lived in the area. Wiesbaden was founded for its mineral baths, thus the name, drawing people to the area including the Romans. This was the first time my Mom had ever seen and touched a Roman artifact. She had studied the Romans and Latin in school, she was and is a student of history, and interested in Rome as a Republic and Empire. She was also interested because Rome flourished at the time of Christ. Now she was face to face with a column that was Roman.

Travelers across Europe and the Middle East have many opportunities to see Roman artifacts. It is exciting to see things that have remained in place for 2000 or more years. Some of these things are small, just simple reminders of the people. Others things stand as monuments to the grand accomplishment of the Republic and Empire, such as the Coliseum or the great aqueducts.

While on a trip to Israel, I saw a section of one of the great Roman aqueducts. These great structures brought water for miles to cities and towns. One of the notable points in the building of an aqueduct is the relatively new, at that time, use of the arch. The arch allows for the spanning of a distance. Coupled with the arch is the vault; which is multiple arches working together. The most famous use of the vault is in buildings where you want to have a large open area and because the roof is supported by the arches tied together at a central point making this is possible. These

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architectural tools provide the means of building great buildings, walls, bridges, and aqueducts, as well as many other applications.

At the center of the arch or vault is the keystone. This stone locks in place all the other stones, holding everything together, using the force of the structure to keep the arch in place. Stones or bricks just stacked together will fall, but if stacked and then connected by a keystone, these same bricks can support great weights or span great distances.

The concept of the keystone has been used in many applications. The term, keystone, has been used in many applications to mean the central supporting element of a larger structure. We all know of keystones in the Christian faith. We may use other terms, but no one would deny that Christ is the keystone of Christianity. Jesus said, ***“I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me”***. That is a keystone!

Christianity has other keystones, chief among these is faith. Faith is essential for all Christians, it is the beginning of our life in Christ and required for all we do. Love is another keystone, without love we have nothing. Hope is also a keystone of Christianity; hope gives us our focus to life. It is a keystone of why we live, love, work, and die as we do, because we know that there is a life waiting for us beyond the grave.

But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him. Hebrews 11:6 (NKJV)

And now abide faith, hope, love, these three; but the greatest of these is love.

1 Corinthians 13:13 (NKJV)

In prayer there are important keystones as well. There are keystones of prayer; these are the requirements for effective prayer. There are also the keystones of praying; what we need to be praying so we can affect our life, our family, our church, our nation, and people of the world, for the fullness of life in Christ and the direction God has planned.

We have mentioned the great keystones of faith and love; these are also keystones of effective prayer. Without faith and love our prayers avail nothing. James writes to us about trying to pray without the keystones of faith and love; without these, we ask amiss. Asking without faith and love is asking for our pleasure, but effective prayer requires asking in accordance with the Father's pleasure.

This lesson is lost on so many people. We claim to know what to pray, because we claim to know what we need or what others need. However, the greatest Man of prayer of all times knew He needed to pray for what the Father wanted, not what He wanted. I speak of course of Jesus and a good example of this is Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane. Anyone would know that they did not

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want to face crucifixion, so they could claim to know what to pray and they would be wrong. A keystone to effective prayer is praying the will of the Father, any other prayer is praying amiss.

You ask and do not receive, because you ask amiss, that you may spend it on your pleasures. James 4:3 (NKJV)

saying, "Father, if it is Your will, take this cup away from Me; nevertheless not My will, but Yours, be done." Luke 22:42 (NKJV)

Often the direction of our prayers is reacting to the situation. There are many factors surrounding the things that happen to people and nations. To be praying for a side issue is okay, but not very effective. If we focus our prayer on the keystone, we can pray effective prayer. The keystone of a life or situation may not be the most obvious thing we see. Often the issues will speak louder than the cause. However, as loud as the issues shout, effective prayer deals with the keystone.

Jesus was confronted with a father and his son. The son regularly tore his clothes off and threw himself in the fire or in water. These were issues that all could see. However, if Jesus prayed for a new set of clothes for this boy, His prayer would not be very effective in dealing with the problem. The issue was the visible things that were wrong in this boy's life, but the keystone that needed prayer, was the boy's deliverance from the demon possession. So we see Jesus pray and the boy was set free. After that it was easy for the father or anyone else to get him clothed.

Before us stand issues large and small; they are personal, family, citywide, national, and international in scope. We can pray without the keystones of effective prayer and our prayers will avail nothing. We can pray for the issues and situations as we see them, or we can be lead by the Father and Spirit to pray for the keystones of the issue or problem. The option is ours and effective prayer hangs in the balance. How will we pray and for what will we pray?

Let us pray!

A Call for Prayer

Pray for Poland – Pray for this nation that has been hit by the loss of many of its leaders. In the aftermath of the plane wreck that took the life of the President of Poland and many of the leaders of the government and military, Poland faces many challenges. Paul wrote to Timothy that we are to pray for our government. This is true all the time, but especially so in a time of great change. This is a keystone time for Poland. Like when the Communist government fell and Poland made choices of how they would be governed and who would lead, so at this time choices are being made.

It is to the credit of the Poles that there is a peaceful transition going on. There was no revolution set off by the death of so many leaders. And yet, at this time, direction and policy are being effected by theses changes. The question, the keystone of prayer, is will the near future be for Christianity in

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Poland? Will the churches have the freedom to preach the Gospel? Will the people be free to practice their Christian faith? The answer world seem to be one of, of course things will be open and freedom will reign, but without prayer for this keystone, we are assuming good thing will happen and that is not wise.

I believe that Poland is also a keystone to Europe. As Poland goes so goes Europe. If Poland is bound by a military force or another country, we see death and destruction affecting all of Europe. Conversely, when we see freedom in Poland, we see freedom across the continent. I believe that revival for Europe will come from revival in Poland. Please pray for Poland, now is a special time and Poland is a special place, they and it deserve special prayers. Will you pray?

Pray for Israel – Pray for the peace and protect of this land. True peace, peace for your nation, comes from the peace of Israel. Enlightened self interest guides us to pray for the peace of this land. The Father delights that we would pray for Israel and has great blessing for those who do. Will you pray?

Pray for keystones – Pray for areas in your life, family, church, and nation that are keystones to success and prosperity in Christ Jesus. Pray for clarity of understand as to what the keystones are and how the Father would have you pray. Will you pray?

Continue Faithful in Prayer

Continue to pray for the ministries listed here and use this as a spring board for praying for nations, churches, pastors, ministries, and people close to your heart and according to the Spirit's direction. Your faithful prayers make a difference!

Pray for Pastors of Churches

DK Limbu Daniel – Pastor of a church in Nepal
Jacek Gromadzki – Pastor of a church in Kolobrzeg, Poland
Mark and Patty Spencer – Pastors of a church in Longmont, Colorado
William (Bill) Williamson – Pastor of a church in Cedaredge, Colorado
Charles and Janice Wilson – Pastors in Wyola, Montana

Pray for Nations and the Churches of Nations

Israel and the peace of Jerusalem
Churches in Belarus
Churches in Lithuania

Pray for Leadership over multiple Churches

DK Limbu Daniel – Church planter among Nepalese people
Marek Kaminski – Bishop of Poland and co-founder and leader of the BBB Conference

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Pray for Christian Ministries

Joyce Abrahamson – Head of a Christian school in Brazil

John Coon – Ministry in Europe and the USA

Marianne and David Dean – Missionaries on college campuses in East Asia

Lori Farquhar – Children’s Ministry Director

Bernd and Heike Pastor – Ministry in Germany

Mark Spencer – Worldwide ministry, and co-founder and leader of BBB Conference

Patty Spencer – Worship leader, and musician

William (Bill) Williamson – Leader of a mission outreach to India

David Williamson – Writer and editor of *Voice of Thanksgiving*

Calling Christians to Effective Fervent Prayer

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Books on Prayer:

Prayer: A Force that Causes Change – A Call to Prayer, A Life Of Prayer, Faithful In Prayer and now a new volume, *Effective Prayer*, are available at www.voiceofthanksgiving.com or by email at david@voiceofthanksgiving.com