

FOSTERING SPIRITUAL LIFE THROUGH OBJECTIVE PRAYING
ON ALL LEVELS

R. C. Hawkins

Becoming "spiritual" or living a deeply "spiritual life" is no accident. It never comes by chance. It cannot be secured by wistful wishing. It is not inherited, discovered, bestowed, gathered by association, found at the altar, or received from others. This is not something that can be assumed for professional purposes. Neither can it be put on to impress a Sunday school, a board, or a committee. There is nothing quite so "phony" as a cheap imitation of deep spirituality. Any time we can "put on" a burden and a groan one minute and "turn off the tears" the next, we are in dire danger of dreadful, deceitful hypocrisy. Emotions are powerfully affected by spiritual surges, but they must never be pushed to provide cheap imitations. As you speak the language of Canaan with all the proper inflections be sure that hidden among these leaves are the fruits of the Spirit. These fruits always come from the center of spiritual life.

Living a deeply spiritual life is a purely personal matter. It comes with years of walking with God, and God walking with man. Thus, this is something that must be fostered. Unmixed daily devotion to God and disciplined living is the price of spirituality.

Prayer alone will not make us spiritual, but it is absurd to think of being spiritual without it. You might

as well try to develop your muscles without exercise as to try to develop spiritual life without prayer.

As leaders in this church, it is assumed that you are men of prayer. Likewise, I am sure that those of you who invest the most time in prayer would be the first to admit that you do not pray enough. Whereas, for you this is simply an expression of your unconscious humility, for all too many people in our church this is a tragic reality. Do you know how much time the preachers under your care actually pray each day? Do they regularly have family worship? Is Christ really the head of their houses? Is the Spirit honored, respected, and obeyed? If you know the answers to these questions about your men, you know something of how well they are fostering their spiritual life.

Sitting under the ministry of these pastors and evangelists are thousands of laymen. What of their prayer life? In all the pressures of jobs, and homes, and business, do they pray? Is the Word precious to them? Does God talk to them? Do they talk to God? Or, is he relegated to a secondary position? If we really want a deeply spiritual church, gentlemen, these are questions that the leaders of this church must face concerning the people God has given to us. The question for our people is, "How much do we really pray?" Since we are serious about fostering spiritual life, perhaps we should all cry,

"Lord, teach us to pray."

Having learned this lesson, when we pray, we must pray properly. Dropping a tired body on one knee for three minutes before we fall exhausted into bed and mumbling a few incoherencies from a subconscious mind could hardly be classified as prayer. It might be better to go to bed, sleep well, get up a half hour earlier and then actually do some praying.

Proper praying must be selfless. It is true that all of us need prayer. It is likewise true that we must pray for ourselves. Nobody needs God more than we need him. Still and all, even when praying for ourselves, those prayers must be selfless and objective. The purpose must always be not for self but for God's glory and the sake of others. Prayer must center on some thing or some one. Repeating God's name over and over again does little good. Besides that it violates God's Word. If you can't think of anything about which to pray, try this list:

On the local church level--your pastor, your family, your friends (particularly the unsaved ones), your business and your business associates, money for the church, adequate buildings and equipment, the preachments from your pulpit, Vacation Bible School, the youth, purity of doctrine, gains, losses, vision of the church, burden for souls, pray against the encroachments of Laodiceanism, and for a genuine revival in your community.

On the district level--district superintendent, district officials, your camp meeting, conference, ministerial conventions, rallies, money for district interest, district home missions, spiritual life of ministers, cooperation on all levels, and a district-wide revival.

On the general level--the general superintendents, all other general officials, God's blessings on the multiple publications, missions and missionaries at home and abroad, the many fine programs for Sunday school and youth, finances and a world-wide revival.

In addition, don't forget the President, the Congress, the United Nations, the state governments, the great social and moral issues, and even the P. T. A. meeting, and your local mayor. If this isn't enough, you can surely think of something else for which to pray.

This objective praying must be fervent. By this, I mean, it is not enough to get on your knees and read off a list like the above, or hold it up and invite God to look it over. In order to be fervent in prayer, we must become involved, both emotionally and in other ways. You may pray for God to send someone to a task and discover that he is sending you. You may pray for a needy soul until you are sent to witness to him. There is real, fervent praying that leads to personal involvement.

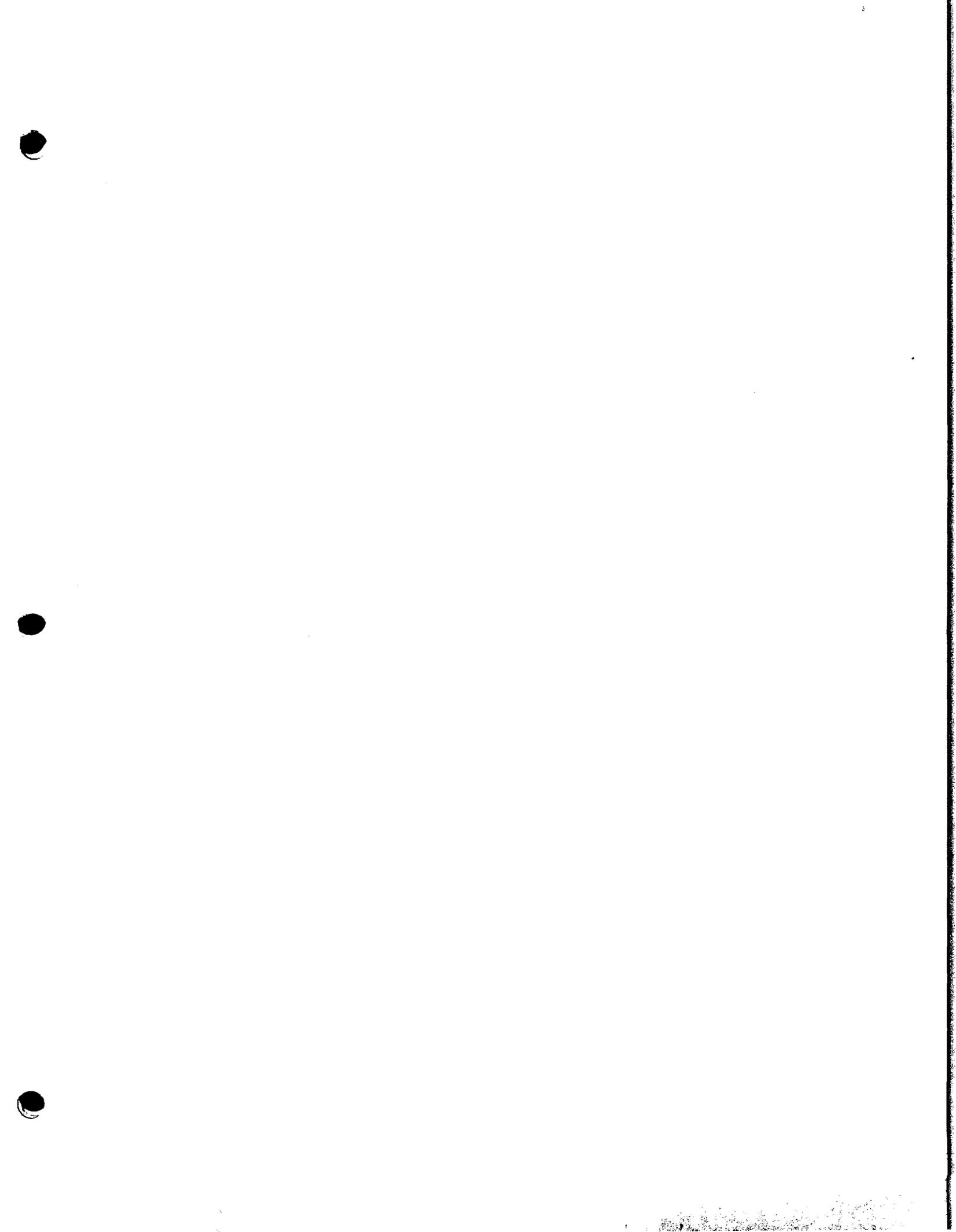
Again genuine, intercessory praying leads us out into areas of petition that actually involves the human spirit

emotionally with the one for whom we are praying. This is not merely "calling a name in prayer." It is the cry of a burdened soul, agonizingly reaching upward to God in behalf of a lost man, or a holy cause.

Here, gentlemen, is the true genius of the holiness movement. There can be no substitutes for this type praying. Madison Avenue techniques and colorful promotion on slick paper will not be an adequate substitute. Neither will larger and more luxurious buildings with finer furnishings be sufficient. We may preach longer and louder, but it will not do. Ecclesiastical decrees and legislative enactments can only fail at this point. Emphasizing traditions and glorifying the past will never take the place of this one needful thing. No matter how much we boast about our greatness or our smallness, our generosity, or our poverty, the things we don't do, as well as the things we do, such words are only idle prattle. For the true saints, such boasting is impossible to harmonize with heart holiness. Instead, our personal lives must know the toil and blessing of true, intercessory prayer. Here, closeted alone with God in fervent and desperate intercession is the key to holy living and spiritual conquest. When the paths to Pilgrims prayer closets are well worn, the individual souls, as well as the soul of the church, will dilate and develop. All the things for which God's people long will follow. You name it--

holy character, New Testament living, revivals, influence, growth, money for God's work, or whatever. It is all ours as we remain in the mainstream of Biblical truth and lay on our faces in intercessory prayer.

Yes, men, true intercessory prayer will indeed foster spiritual life on all levels. It is a hard road that is often bitter, and always lonely. Yet, it is the path that leads to a perfection of devotion and achievement that is both God-honoring and God-glorifying.



GENERAL BOARD MEETING and CHURCH LEADERS CONFERENCE

November 10-13, 1964

Theme: A DEMANDING HOUR - A DECISIVE CHURCH

Theme Song: O For a Faith

Tuesday - 9:30 a.m.

Executive Session of General Board
Presiding General Superintendent - M. H. Snyder

*** 1:30 p.m. ***

Presiding General Superintendent - P. W. Thomas

Singing	Gordon Miller
Scripture	Charles Felsburg
Prayer	C. P. Hendrick
Roll Call	General Secretary
Address: "The Redemptive Purpose of the Church"	William H. Neff
Singing	Gordon Miller
Paper: "Raising the Budget - District and General"	W. E. Hall
Paper: "District Church Extension"	Parker Husselton
Paper: "The Need of Spiritual Renewal"	L. B. Reese
Singing	Gordon Miller
Closing Prayer	James Hertel

*** 5 p.m. ***

Group Dinner - Severn Hotel

*** 7 p.m. ***

Presiding General Superintendent - W. H. Neff

Session Theme: "Functions of General Offices in Relation to Total Purpose and Program of the Church"

Singing Roy Ankrim

Prayer
Papers: (Moderator - M. H. Snyder)
General Secretary-Treasurer
Secretary of World Missions
Secretary of Church Extension
Singing
Papers: Secretary of Sunday Schools & Youth
Editor
Publishing Agent
Singing
Closing Prayer

W. A. Massey
J. D. Abbott
E. L. Wilson
R. C. Hawkins
Roy Ankrim
O. D. Emery
A. D. Peisker
E. V. Halt
Roy Ankrim
W. R. Dudley

*** Wednesday - 9 a.m. ***

Executive Session of General Board
Presiding General Superintendent - P. W. Thomas

*** 1:30 p.m. ***

Executive Session of General Board
Presiding General Superintendent - W. H. Neff

*** 6:45 p.m. ***

Group Picture in General Board Room

*** 7 p.m. ***

Presiding General Superintendent - M. H. Snyder

Singing	C. B. Colaw
Scripture	Arnold Peck
Prayer	L. E. Schendel
Subject: "Our Denominational Structure"	P. W. Thomas
Question and Answer Period	
Singing - "The Church's One Foundation"	C. B. Colaw
Closing Prayer	Harold Crosser

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