

ABC of Prayer - Part 5 - E

A few ago hardly anyone had heard of e-mail. Now if you want to participate in what is happening around the world, you can't live without e-mail and the World Wide Web.

Today, prayer news and needs, and connections between prayer leaders, depend on e-mail. Information about the latest challenge to the faith of Christians, even from remote areas of the world, is easily available. Our knowledge of global needs has been transformed by rapid, instant communication. Whenever a news-story breaks, we can get a Christian perspective from the area within hours.

There are some really worthwhile sources from which to obtain up-to-date information. Prayer Alert is a well-researched weekly prayer resource, produced on behalf of the Prayer Forum of the British Isles and Ireland. (www.prayer-alert.net)

The Impact the Nation email service from Prayer in Action focuses on Britain and Ireland and also comes out weekly (www.prayerinaction.net). For a regular resource for daily prayer for the persecuted church, with country by country coverage, I recommend Window International (www.win1040.com), and for a resource that combines stories from the nations, plus needs for prayer, you can't beat Joel News (www.joelnews.org).

Your group may have its own sources that it should continue to access. If, for example you have connections with people in the police and the legal profession, or medicine or education, use them as sources for prayer. Many missionaries are now connected to the Internet and can be a resource. Don't forget to ask them to show you where you can get up-to-date information about the nation in which they serve.

A word of wisdom and warning, thought. Do not pass on any prayer information that you are not sure about (the source, the facts, the time). There are 'spam' communicators out there, who delight in spreading false information to confuse praying Christians. There are some e-mails 'doing the rounds' with information which is being recycled from previous years.

Every group of praying Christians, concerned for the issues of the day, the needs of the nations and the advance of the kingdom of God, should have access to e-mail.

Once you receive the information, why not send it out immediately to those in your circle of friends who also have an e-mail, or print some copies off for everyone to have at your next meeting?

We are better connected with God's children around the world than ever before and we need to be! The enemy is at work, and we must combat him through prayer.

E is for Expeditions

John and Yvonne Pressdee first pioneered prayer expeditions in this country in the late 1980s. In connection with the launch of March for Jesus (large crowds of people marching with music and prayer through cities and towns), John had a vision for a prayer walk lasting several days. The first to take place were two simultaneous prayer walks from John O'Groats to London and from Land's End to London.

Prayer expeditions require a great deal of advanced planning, as well as a vision from God; Yvonne became the planner and John the spiritual leader.

They identified the route, travelled it, and checked out likely stopping places. They then contacted churches or Christian leaders in the towns and cities along the way.

They would walk about 20-22 miles a day, praying all the way, only stopping for food and drink. A spiritual diary was created concerning the history and spiritual needs of the villages, towns and cities they passed through. Not only did the walkers have this as a reference guide, but also prayer supporters back home could follow them in prayer.

At each overnight stopping place an evening prayer concert was usually arranged in conjunction with local churches, who took responsibility for providing an evening meal, bed and breakfast. Sometimes if the resources weren't there in the church, a school hall or community centre was hired for the night.

In addition to the prayer walkers, the prayer expedition could include several vehicles - usually one at the front of the walkers, one behind, and a camper van in which the welcome necessary supplies were kept. Sometimes they had to set up a camp kitchen, in true expedition style!

Over the years, many such expeditions have been planned. A small team of us walked from Holyhead in Wales to Lowestoft in Suffolk, so making the sign of the cross over our land (we intersected with the previous John O'Groats to London walk). There were some utterly extraordinary God-incidences along the way, and some amazing answers to prayer. Those of us walking became closer to God and very aware of the Lord speaking to and through us. It was awesome! We obviously learned as we went. What started as a small team sometimes became more than 100 local walking and praying. Local authorities or church dignitaries occasionally put on receptions; secular and Christian media took an interest. The length of the prayer walks sometimes extended to 80 miles a day, with small team of walkers being bussed to walk and pray part of the route, with the others 'leap-frogging' over them at the completion of their stretch.

Later expeditions included multi-national ones from London to Berlin and Berlin to Moscow, with reconciliation becoming part of the process. These then led to a walk across First World War battlefield, a walk around Ireland, and the Reconciliation Walk from London to Jerusalem. It also inspired David Pott to do a series of expeditions along the Meridian Line on issues to do with slave trade, and Steve Lowton to lead a team from Canterbury to Rome in 2005.

Now these expeditions occur throughout the world. Many nations hold their own Cross Walk (making the sign of the Cross and carrying a wooden cross). One Prayer expedition, lasting several years, covered Cape Town to Cairo. Recently, one man completed a prayer walk around the coasts of Great Britain.

John And Yvonne Pressdee have recently been involved in prayer walks along the ancient routes taken by pilgrims from Winchester to Canterbury, and in walking and praying between the Second World War airfields of East Anglia and Lincolnshire.

If you wish to plan your own expedition, contact them for advice at www.prayerexpeditions.co.uk.

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