

## **FACING THE WORLD WITH PRAYER GROUPS**

Glenn Clark, May 1941

Before us looms a year of crisis. Poise and balance are at a premium as never before. There is a crying need for men and women who can carry within their hearts that "peace that passeth all understanding." In a time of turmoil all are seeking for people who carry quiet spaces in their being. Such persons meet the description of the prophet Isaiah: "And a man shall be as a hiding place from the wind, and a covert from the tempest, as streams of water in a dry place, as the shade of a great rock in a weary land." Isaiah 32:2.

How can we find such men? Let me shift this question to another: How can we produce such men?

The Christian Unit or Prayer Cell is the answer. There is no greater blessing that we could bring to our nation right now than the spreading of prayer groups everywhere. What we need are more consecrated persons with poise and understanding who possess a passion for starting little Prayer Cells all over the land.

We have not begun to measure the tremendous spiritual resources available through two or three coming together and praying together. When two or three come together in perfect love, perfect harmony, perfect selflessness, so that it does not matter whether they remain silent or speak aloud their inmost thoughts, so that they can live, move, and have their being as unselfconsciously—as though no one else were present—then indeed there is power. Such groups trace the outline of something greater than themselves; such a group creates a Master Mind and that Mind is Christ. "Where two or three come together," says Christ, "I am in the midst of them, and whatever they ask will be granted, even to the moving of mountains."

The only way that I can conceive of making this Power real to you is to compare it with the power of the Cosmic Ray. The highest discovery of science today is the Cosmic Ray. The most powerful substance, force, energy, whatever we want to call it, is the Cosmic Ray. Ordinary light rays are visible only in daylight, they function only when the sun is in sight, their power vanishes the moment the sun is obscured. Even the ultraviolet ray, the greatest invisible ray that is derived directly from the sun, loses its power the moment the sun vanishes from sight.

THE COSMIC RAYS COME NOT FROM ANY ONE STAR OR SOURCE OF LIGHT BUT FROM THE GREAT INTERSTELLAR SPACES OUT BETWEEN THE STARS. In other words, out there in the Vast Somewhere—Between—the various light rays of all the suns meet and embrace in some sort of vast "cosmic orchestration," and that which is born of the meeting of the various threads of light becomes greater than the sum of all the various threads of light that unite to create it. Thus, the suns, through the mere act of losing themselves and merging themselves and uniting themselves in that which is not themselves, find themselves. Out there in Space somewhere the various individual suns lose themselves and find themselves in the Universal, and, in so doing, all the power is created that is necessary for producing all the life on all the planets in the universe.

Everything in the physical realm is but an outer reflection or counterfeisance of that which is in the inner realm. If all physical life on all the planets comes from the radiation of the unseen but eternally shining Cosmic Rays radiating outward from the vast Cosmic Orchestration of the suns, all spiritual and

mental and emotional life is coming from the radiation of the unseen but eternally shining Spiritual Rays radiating outward from the Vast Spiritual Orchestration of the Love of God.

Is it possible to organize "Prayer Cells" that can generate as much power as the Cosmic Rays? It is possible if we can follow the laws of God as completely as the electrons thrown off by the celestial suns obey the laws of physics and mathematics.

In the first place, the group must possess a genuine inner harmony. This is so tremendously important that no effort should be made to carry on such a group until this is assured. Far better to limit the group to two or three rather than include one single person whose antagonism, egotism or indifference might block the voice of the Spirit. Jesus Himself considered this so important that He frequently reduced His own twelve to three—the first little "prayer cell" of Christendom. But this little group generated so much power that it started forces in motion that have changed the world.

In the second place there must be complete honesty and sincerity. No pretense or false belief, no play-acting or showing off can be tolerated if it is to be God's Voice that we are seeking.

In the third place there must be a real humility, a selflessness. Not only self-conceit must be abolished, but even such a minor affair as self-consciousness. When a new group is formed containing many strangers it may take a number of meetings before all self-consciousness is eliminated.

In the fourth place, there must be some understanding of the powerful, basic laws of the Spirit; in short, a genuine sound faith built upon sound basic understanding of the spiritual laws upon which such prayer groups are established. For that reason an effective prayer group, especially if most are new to

this thing, should be for half or two-thirds of each meeting period a *study* group.

In the fifth place, all effective prayer groups establish their routine of meeting not upon conscience and duty but upon Love and Joy. The soul of a prayer group is grace, not law. There should be sincere enthusiasm and the lilt of expectancy in every coming together. Then there is power, when members come together who would rather pray than eat, who would rather talk and think of spiritual things than go to a dance or movie.

Wherever there is humility there is power; wherever there is sincerity and honesty there is power; wherever there is enthusiasm and expectancy there is power. When all these elements are combined in one group there is unmeasurable power!

The most effective prayer groups are those founded upon a basis of real harmony and affinity of interest, often very small. The group that Jesus used most effectively was four, Himself, and three chosen disciples. When a group grows larger than twelve it may be better subdivided.

The more the group is completely released into the hands of the Father the more completely the group can depend upon inspiration and intuition as to the form and shape the hour shall take.

Silent Prayer should have a big place. Petitionary prayer is a powerful thing where the group is high enough. Quietly repeating some psalm or hymn in concert is a beautiful way to close.

*Where there is a consecrated leader with deep experiences of the spiritual life*, a short talk by him is a good way to start. Where there is not such a leader, and with people new to the discipline of deepening the spiritual life, it is often well to use the first half of the time in the study or reading aloud of some book like *The Practice of the Presence of God*, by Brother Lawrence or *Well-Springs of Immortality*, by Starr Daily.

## **THE CAMPS FARTHEST OUT**

Edwin Markham said that all the values of life center around Bread, Beauty, and Brotherhood. The Camps Farthest Out were established as places where men and women could break *bread* together in places of *beauty* in the spirit of *brotherhood*. Here the body is disciplined to fall into alignment, balance and harmony to serve, radio-like, to catch for us better the message of the spirit. The mind is disciplined to see the harmonies, symmetries and beauties in art, nature and life where it formerly saw only incongruities, discords, and inharmonies. And the soul is disciplined to find a deeper awareness of our sonship to God and our brotherhood with man.

The program assumes that religion involves the whole man, and that spiritual laws can be learned only through actual experience. The entire fellowship is conceived as a training camp for "athletes of the spirit." Lectures, forums and discussion groups clarify principles that are further explored through active participation in the rhythmic arts and creative motion.

Here we climb a mountain and get still together and secure a true perspective of things. We adventure on a voyage of discovery to find the wholeness of the spiritual life.

Glenn Clark, "Facing the World with Prayer Groups" 1941