

IMPRESSIONS FROM NZ'S FIRST PRAYER SUMMIT

(Matamata Crystal Springs Christian Camp – 8-11 Feb 1999 – EKB)

Background to Prayer Summits.

In 1989, Dr Joe Aldrich, the President of Multnomah Bible College in Portland, Oregon, in the USA, was talking to a group of pastors in his city. He was speaking to them on unity in the Body of Christ. At one point he casually spoke out the thought running through his mind, and said, "I wonder what would happen if we pastors were to go away for four days with no agenda but to seek the Lord?" The pastors to whom he was speaking grabbed hold of the suggestion and the first "Pastors' Prayer Summit" was held soon after. Actually within four weeks, forty pastors from a wide variety of denominational backgrounds had managed to change their schedules, (miracle!) and went off on a coach together to a conference centre. The result was a life changing experience for them all. It was the beginnings of a city-transforming process as the leaders of the church of Jesus Christ began to pray, live and work together in unity for the sake of the Kingdom of God.

What is a "Prayer Summit"?

Dr Joe Aldrich's definition is:

"A Prayer Summit" is a **prolonged, four day, life changing worship experience**, attended by a **diversity of Christian leaders from specific targeted communities**, whose singular purpose is to seek God, His Kingdom and His righteousness, with the expectation that He will create and guide them through a humbling, healing, uniting process, which will lead them to a **unity of heart, mind and mission**, and will qualify them for the **blessing of God.**"

Further Developments.

After that first "Pastors' Prayer Summit" in Oregon, word spread quickly to surrounding areas about what had happened, and Dr Joe Aldrich and his Associate, Terry Dirks, were asked to come and facilitate "Prayer Summits" in other areas. They have not sought to promote Summits as such, but have been available to the wider Body of Christ. At this time more than 300 "Pastors' Prayer Summits" have been held in many cities and nations, always with exciting consequences in the lives of those attending, and in the cities and regions where they have been held.

Some basic principles of "Pastors' Prayer Summits".

The key to true humility, confession of sin and deliverance is prolonged time in His presence. Time to focus on Him – with no other agenda. No church business is allowed. No strategizing or networking. No one directing except the Holy Spirit. Generally, no prayers for "problems back home" are introduced. What we need is time in His presence, to worship Him hour after hour. In a Prayer Summit, we may sing over a hundred songs a day. Scripture is read and prayers spontaneously given. We stay vertical fixing our eyes and hearts on our Saviour. Often the presence of the Lord is so strong no one dare speak. We stand on Holy ground. Men lie on the carpet, prostrate before the King. Tears flow as God begins the breaking process. The process has five parts as follows:

Holiness → Humility → Unity → Community → Impact

There will be no impact without a healthy community of faith. If you want a city-wide revival, you need a city-wide church.

There will be no community without unity. A house or church divided against itself will not stand.

There will be no unity without humility. Here is where repentance and reconciliation usually take place. Can you imagine pastors asking forgiveness from fellow pastors in the community? We've seen it happen at countless Prayer Summits.

Crystal Springs "Pastors' Prayer Summit" – Feb 1999

Sixteen pastors from the Mahurangi – Warkworth area and one from Wellsford attended the Summit which was run by two facilitators from the Toowoomba City Church. (Pastors Colin Shaw and

David Blair) Also there were four observers from NZ: Leon Downes of World Vision, John Fulford of Vision NZ and Ken and Dorothy Bassett from Greenlane CC.

Commencing early on Monday afternoon we gathered to worship the Lord. At the beginning there was a brief word of why we had come with a little background on the beginnings of “Prayer Summits”. We were encouraged to keep in a vertical attitude of worship toward God, and to allow God to be God. There were no musicians or leaders of praise. There was no agenda. As we worshipped God in song, thanksgiving, prayer and praise, the presence of God came strongly amongst us. After about two hours we stopped for afternoon tea and then continued to the dinner break.

As we continued to worship the Lord from 7.30pm – 9.30pm, the Holy Spirit moved among the Mahurangi pastors in power. The presence of God had come. Issues of unresolved conflict were brought to the surface and resolved. Deep hurts were expressed and addressed. After each period of reconciliation or healing we returned to worship, to keep our attitude vertical towards God. Confidentiality was agreed upon by all at the beginning as most important.

According to our very experienced facilitators, Colin and David, every Summit is different. A Prayer Summit is not an “event”, but is part of a process, of Jesus building His Church. Only so much can be achieved in a Summit and there is absolutely no pressure on anyone for any response at all. We were all in His presence and individually responded in faith to what we believed the Holy Spirit was requiring of us.

This process continued through Tuesday and Wednesday, starting at 8.45am for five sessions each day. There were many clear words from the Lord, and those who came to observe were also strongly impacted by the Holy Spirit, as well as the Mahurangi pastors.

This was a very powerful and awe-inspiring experience. Much progress was made towards unity among the Mahurangi pastors, for which we give all praise and thanks to our heavenly Father, His Son and the Holy Spirit.

Thursday morning, our last two sessions were times of victorious rejoicing in God. We discussed ways of building on the gains made towards unity at the “Pastors’ Prayer Summit” after returning home to normal routine.

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Recommended reading: “Building Bridges to each other Through Prayer Summits”. “Reunitus” (main book title) by Joe Aldrich. Pub: Multnomah Books, 1992 (206 pages)

Preparation for a “Pastors’ Prayer Summit”.

A “Pastors’ Prayer Summit” is not an “event” but part of the process of Jesus building His Church. It is important for the pastors of a particular region, or city, to prepare their hearts, attitudes, and where possible, relationships, so that an ongoing work of unity in the Body of Christ will be achieved.

Because of the strategic spiritual significance of “Pastors’ Prayer Summits”, and the schemes of satan to destroy them, intercessors need to be mobilised locally and internationally to pray powerfully for the coming Summit.