

Transformation **NOW!**

How to
Change the Spiritual Climate
in
Your Home
and in
Your Nation

Transformation NOW!

Introduction to this E-book

We live in challenging times where evil seems to have the upper hand. To counter that, the Lord commanded us in the opening verses of Isaiah chapter 60 to arise and shine for Him and not be intimidated by the darkness that is covering the earth, nor by the deeper darkness covering its people. How is that possible? Because His glory is about to come upon us so that leaders and nations will come to the brightness of His light reflected through us.

In essence, this means that the prevailing darkness is being used by God to “dim the lights in the world theater” so that the only light left will be that of His children on the world stage. For this to happen now, it is necessary to more fully understand who we are as members of the Church—the Ekklesia. Jesus stated that the Gates of Hades will not prevail against us, something that is also confirmed in Revelation 12:11.

When Jesus declared, “I will build my church and the Gates of Hades shall not prevail against it” (Matthew 16:18), he was not referring to an institution, much less to a building, but to people. The Greek word used here for Church is *Ekklesia* which is always used to describe an assembly of people.

The Genesis of the Ekklesia

In Matthew 16, we find Jesus in Caesarea Philippi, in Northern Israel. Unlike Jerusalem, the deeply religious city with the Temple as its epicenter, this city was known as a vortex of evil in Israel. It seems that He deliberately chose this dark place as the setting to unfold two

most powerful truths about Himself and the plans He had for His followers: 1) that He is “the Christ, the Son of the Living God,” and 2) that as such, He will build His church—His Ekklesia—as an assembly of men and women gathered in His name who know Him as their personal Lord and Savior to defeat the forces of evil (see Matthew 16:15-19).

The setting where Jesus made these declarations had four temples: one to Caesar, another to Zeus, a third one to the Greek god Pan, and a fourth one called the Gates of Hades. It’s not hard to imagine Jesus looking at these imposing but powerless physical shrines and stating, “I will not build temples but people, and when I do, the evil powers will not prevail against them.” The clear personal implication is that He is going to build *you* and assured *you* that evil—symbolized by the Gates of Hades—will not prevail against *you*.

Two chapters later, in Matthew 18:18-20, He explained how powerful those gatherings are designed to be. He stated that when two or three believers gather in His Name, anything they ask in prayer on earth will be done by His Father in heaven.

His manifest presence, our submission to Him (whose name is above all names), and His teaching us how to pray according to the will of God so that all of our prayers will be answered, constitute the most powerful outlet of divine power on earth. When we understand and apply these principles, the Gates of Hades collapse and His Kingdom becomes manifest.

The fact that Jesus specified that as few as two or three believers is all that is necessary for the Ekklesia (His assembly) to have the quorum necessary to defeat the Gates of Hades is very encouraging. All of us

know at least one or two other believers in our personal spheres of influence—our neighborhood, our school, our workplace—with whom we can come together around His presence on a regular basis. This will ensure that God’s people are able to punch holes in the spiritual darkness for God’s light to shine through.

Key to this is to learn how to change the spiritual climate over our cities, beginning with our own spheres of influence. To that end, it is our pleasure and privilege to make this E-book available to you so that, along with the myriad of believers around the world who participated in this Social Media Broadcast, you will arise and shine for Transformation to begin NOW. Read, be encouraged and empowered, and connect with others to be activated to reach the fullness of His Ekklesia¹.

¹ For a fuller teaching on the Ekklesia, see Ed Silvano’s book *Ekklesia—Rediscovering God’s Instrument for Global Transformation* (Chosen, 2017).

INTRODUCTION TO *MY CITY GOD'S CITY*

More and more Christian leaders have been convinced by God that their cities must be reached for Christ *now*. They also understand that prayer is “the” vital component for cities (not just people) to be transformed. This booklet provides a practical way to initiate, sustain and monitor a transformational city-reaching thrust. It presents the biblical basis for prayer evangelism and its application to the fulfillment of the Great Commission. The material is taken from the second and third chapters of Ed Silvano’s book *Prayer Evangelism*.

Please read this material prayerfully. It will inspire and equip you. If you apply it, your city will never be the same. We remain in prayer, asking God to inspire and enable you to see your city transformed and the kingdom of God coming near to every person in town.

— Ed and Ruth Silvano and the
Transform Our World Team

How to Change the Spiritual Climate Over Your City

THE PROBLEM

“The god of this age has blinded the minds of unbelievers, so that they cannot see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ.” (2 Corinthians 4:4)

THE SOLUTION

“I am sending you to them to open their eyes and turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of satan to God.” (Acts 26:17,18 NIV)

Prayer Changes the Spiritual Climate

Consider the profound effect that a spiritual climate has on our cities. We have no difficulty believing that it is possible to change the spiritual climate inside a home, in a church building, or even in a stadium during a crusade. Every Sunday we see the climate gradually improve as our service proceeds. The concept of changing the spiritual climate is definitely not foreign to us. However, we do have a problem believing that the same climate we enjoy in a church meeting can and should be experienced all over the city. Yet Paul tells us that if we pray for everybody, *especially for those who are in authority*, we will see a dramatic improvement in the atmosphere around us that allows people to lead *“a tranquil and quiet life in all godliness and dignity”* (1 Timothy 2:2). For godliness to increase in a city, ungodliness must decrease, and it cannot happen without radically improving the spiritual climate.

For far too long we have left control of the spiritual climate in our cities in the hands of the devil. This is evident when we contemplate the mire of sin, the prevailing hostility and anger, the increasing criminal activity, and the crushing weight of hopelessness buffeting our fellow

citizens. Every week, thousands marry, hoping for a bright future, and every week a similar number watch their marriages disintegrate. Satan is keeping a subzero climate in place while the Church (to use a metaphor) is rubbing sticks together trying to spark a few fires to keep its own people from freezing.

But what if the Church in the city — Jesus' Ekklesia — was able to take control of the spiritual thermostat and set it to a comfortable 70° F? Suddenly, Satan would have to go on the defensive, assigning his armies to frantically distribute melting ice cubes around the city in a futile attempt to bring the temperature down a few degrees, to use another metaphor. Prayer evangelism is the key to do this.

Prayer Evangelism in Four Easy Steps

The principles of prayer evangelism are taught in several places in the Bible, but the most complete model is found in the Gospel of Luke:

*Whatever house you enter, first say, "Peace be to this house."
And whatever city you enter, and they receive you, eat what is
set before you; and heal those in it who are sick, and say to them,
"The kingdom of God has come near to you." (Luke 10:5,8,9)*

Jesus calls for us to do four things for the lost. It is very important to understand that the steps are interconnected and that for them to be effective, they must be implemented in the order given:

1. Speak peace to the lost: Blessing opens the door to fellowship.
2. Fellowship with them: Fellowship establishes a level of trust and comfort, allowing unbelievers to share their felt needs with us.
3. Take care of their needs: Prayer addresses those felt needs by offering them a divine solution.

4. Proclaim good news: When we intercede for our neighbors, God comes near them in a tangible way: *“Say to them, ‘The kingdom of God has come near to you’* (Luke 10:9).

The typical evangelistic strategy, as good as it is, reverses the steps because it begins with the last one (witnessing) and skips the blessing, fellowship and caring that are to precede the proclamation of the good news. Sadly, in many cases this approach does not work for reasons we will explain later. However, soon after Jesus taught His method to the disciples, multitudes believed in Him and demons surrendered en masse to a bunch of rookie evangelists (see Luke 10:17 and 16:16). Let us take a deeper look at Jesus’ approach!

A Method for Reaching Cities

The apostle Paul teaches about the effectiveness of prayer evangelism in 1 Timothy 2:1-8, where he admonishes us to pray for everyone, everywhere. To fully comprehend this, we need to look at the context established in verse 15 of the previous chapter.

Paul writes, *“It is a trustworthy statement, deserving full acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners”* (v. 15), or in other words, *“Timothy, this statement is so reliable that you can bank on it—that once exposed to it, everybody in your city is going to accept it.”* Paul is not saying that everybody will receive Jesus, but rather, that everybody will accept the fact that He came to save sinners, which is the portal for them to find salvation. Paul is talking about the lost in Timothy’s city, and he uses this statement to introduce a method for reaching all of them.

We often miss the evangelistic nature and focus of Paul’s teaching because in the previous verses, moved by the realization that he is the

greatest of sinners (see v. 16), Paul takes a praise detour. But in verse 18, Paul directs Timothy to keep a specific commandment so that he may fight the good fight. What is the good fight? The good fight, in this context, is not so much a matter of personal growth, but the struggle to open the eyes of sinners to the fact that Jesus came into the world to save them. Paul is talking here about a strategy for reaching the lost; he is explaining to Timothy how to reach a city or a region for Christ.

Why is Paul commanding us to pray for everybody, everywhere? Because God wants everybody to be saved:

First of all, then, I urge that entreaties and prayers, petitions and thanksgivings, be made on behalf of all men ... This is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior, who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth. (1 Tim. 2:1,3-4)

Paul instructs Timothy to mobilize the Church to pray for everybody to ensure that all sinners will have an opportunity to know that Jesus came to save them. He is talking about organizing systematic prayer for the lost in a city or region — what we now call *prayer evangelism*.

The Witch That Switched

I personally witnessed the change in the spiritual climate over a city in San Nicolas, Argentina. This change became dramatically evident when a witch's coven became a lighthouse of prayer in less than 60 minutes. This is how it happened: During the radio broadcast designed to launch lighthouses of prayer all over the region, international delegates were assigned to go to local homes to participate with their hosts in a bilingual radio prayer exercise.

However, two of the international delegates went to the wrong house! They knocked on the door and a very strange looking lady opened it. When they asked, in broken Spanish, if hers was a house of prayer, the woman replied affirmatively in a very spooky voice. Unsure of themselves, they went in, turned on their radios and became connected to the Church that was praying all over the city (the broadcast was done both in Spanish and English for the benefit of the internationals). They soon found out that they were indeed in a house of prayer—a house of prayer to Satan. Their hostess was a witch and her house a witch’s coven.

Nevertheless, within the hour, the witch had received the Lord and was filled with the Holy Spirit. Her two daughters also accepted Christ, and for the balance of the broadcast, the host and her unexpected visitors rid the house of all satanic paraphernalia. What used to be a satanic stronghold became God’s outpost. Under ordinary circumstances, Satan would have had the upper hand, the home field advantage, so to speak, but not this time because the spiritual climate had changed. That night, the Church—the Ekklesia—was in control of the city.

Can I Be Your Son Again?

This is not an isolated case. Let me share two stories of what happened when a similar three-day launch of lighthouses of prayer was held in Modesto, California. On the first night of the radio broadcast, a couple invited their backslidden son to join them to dedicate their home as a lighthouse of prayer. The son refused and left in anger to spend the night elsewhere. During the next day’s broadcast, the parents—along with scores of other Christians all over town—sanctified their home. They were directed to lift up holy hands, without anger or dissension, and to pray for someone who

needed a touch from God. They prayed for God to touch their son, wherever he was.

At that moment, their son was in the middle of an immoral act. Nevertheless, he felt God's touch, stopped what he was doing, and called home, begging permission to go back. As soon as he got there, he rededicated his life to the Lord, and the next day he joined his parents in prayer walking the neighborhood! When the spiritual climate improves, righteousness prevails.

The following is another inspiring testimony from that week.

Doug, a believer, was in his apartment waiting for the radio broadcast to begin. This was the second night of a three-day broadcast. The first night was for Christians to dedicate themselves and their sphere of influence to the Lord. The second, this one, was to sanctify what was dedicated the night before. Five minutes into the broadcast, Doug's ex-son came to the door, burst into the apartment and poured out a litany of pain caused by failure after failure. This was totally out of the ordinary and unexpected because they had not seen each other in 11 years.

The background for what happened is that several years earlier, Doug had married a woman who had a son from a previous marriage. Doug adopted the boy as his own. Unfortunately, the marriage ended in divorce and Doug renounced the adoption. This devastated the young man, the one who had just burst into his apartment uninvited and unannounced.

Fully aware that this was a divine intervention, Doug proceeded to lead him to the Lord, but then realized that he would not have been in

such condition had Doug not rejected him in the first place. Immediately, Doug begged his forgiveness. The ex-son forgave him, and then, in a trembling voice, asked for forgiveness for the sins he had committed in retaliation. Moved, Doug forgave him, and both fell into a warm embrace, tears running down their cheeks. In this tender setting, the young man asked, “Doug, can I become your son again?” Doug assented and right there, in prayer, he readopted him.

Doug also had a son with his estranged wife. After reconciling with the “ex-son,” they prayed together for Doug’s natural son to receive the Lord. The next week, Doug’s son asked to go with him to an evangelistic meeting where he publicly received the Lord!

Each of these cases represents an extraordinary outpouring of the power of God, something we seldom see in our neo-pagan, post-modern world. The reason for these breakthroughs is that the spiritual climate over the city had changed. When the climate changes for the better, so does everybody and everything in the city.

I’ll Meet You at the Prayer Fair

In San Nicolas, where this weeklong process was pioneered, we met on a Wednesday morning with the pastors to strategize how to prayer walk the entire city—block by block—using the aforementioned radio broadcast to mobilize the church. This was the third day of the three-day radio mobilization. The Lord specifically instructed us to concentrate exclusively on speaking peace to every home Christians walked by and not to engage in spiritual warfare. By the end of the evening, the entire city had been silently prayer walked, every home quietly blessed, and an invitation surreptitiously placed under every door, announcing a prayer fair the following Saturday.

On the morning of the prayer fair, we knocked on every door and asked, “Do you know that today is the favorable year of the Lord?” We explained that “favorable” in the Gospels meant that God wanted to do people a favor. When asked if they needed a favor, most of the unbelievers said yes. They were then shown a half-page ad in the local newspaper featuring the prayer fair, with a coupon good for free admission and unlimited prayers!

At 3:00 pm, people began to converge on the prayer fair grounds. Quite a few carried the coupons and stopped at the information counter for directions. Depending on the need they shared, intercessors and pastors prayed for them. God touched many of these curious inquirers all over the park, and as soon as they felt His power, they wanted to know more about Jesus. Many received the Lord right then and there.

When that historic week was over, I asked the Lord to show me the biblical basis for the dramatic change in the spiritual climate we had experienced. He led me to the Gospel of Luke, where I noticed two different kinds of climate during the time of Jesus’ ministry. The first nine chapters of Luke portray a hostile climate everywhere Jesus went; the last 15 chapters show a favorable spiritual climate. This change in climate and the reasons behind it are very important for the subject at hand.

Hostile Climate

Early in Jesus’ ministry, the climate in Galilee and Judea was so unfavorable that at one point, Jesus sounded markedly like someone who felt like quitting. He said to His disciples, “*O unbelieving and perverted generation, how long shall I be with you, and put up with you?*” (Luke 9:41). Obviously, Jesus was quite frustrated and unhappy with them and with their lack of results.

By the next chapter, however, He felt entirely different. In fact, the exact opposite: *“He rejoiced greatly in the Holy Spirit”* (Luke 10:21), and He began to praise God for what His disciples had done. If we examine carefully these two contrasting phases in Jesus’ earthly ministry, we will find the key to changing the spiritual climate over our cities. First, we will see how the spiritual climate became progressively worse to the point of being almost unbearable for our Lord.

A Challenge Issued by God

When Jesus emerged from the baptismal waters, the Father declared, *“You are My beloved Son; in You I am well pleased”* (Luke 3:22, NKJV). For whom was this statement intended? Not Jesus, nor John the Baptist. They knew very well who Jesus was. Since there is no evidence that the crowd heard the voice from heaven, it is possible that this declaration was intended for the devil himself. By saying, *“In You I am well pleased,”* God was making known to the devil that a sinless human being had invaded his kingdom of sin.

This posed a serious threat to Satan, whose rule was empowered by sin. Apparently, that statement by God reminded the devil that he had no leverage against Jesus because of His holy nature. Satan’s kingdom had been invaded, and God’s words constituted the opening bell for the match of the ages.

In response to God’s challenge, the devil came to the fore and for 40 days tried to draw Jesus into his control through temptations to sin. Once defeated, the devil *“departed from Him until an opportune time”* (Luke 4:13). Traditionally, we have identified the next opportune time to be when Jesus was in brutal anguish at the Garden of Gethsemane or when He was hanging on the cross. However, I believe that the devil

did not wait that long to counter attack; in fact, he was waiting in ambush right around the corner in Jesus' hometown.

As we read the Gospel of Luke, we see that friends and neighbors in Nazareth turned against Him in an odd and sudden move (4:22-30); shortly afterwards, demons are unleashed to publicly challenge Him (4:31-44), and the religious leaders attempt to drive a wedge between Jesus and His disciples with their slanderous grumbling (5:21-32).

After Jesus embarrassed the religious leaders in a Sabbath confrontation, they became "filled with rage," and began plotting against Him (6:11). Theirs was a murderous rage, similar to that experienced by his neighbors, the rioters in Nazareth. On the surface, their anger may appear to be simply a negative human reaction. However, its satanic origins were exposed by Jesus when, shortly afterwards, He indicted the Pharisees and scribes as murderous on account of their *direct* connection to the devil: "*You are of your father the devil, and you want to do the desires of your father. He was a murderer from the beginning*" (John 8:44). This indictment did not make Him any more popular with the religious establishment. Things would soon get worse.

John the Baptist is Neutralized

Jesus described His cousin John the Baptist as the greatest man to be born of a woman (see Matthew 11:11). John grew up to become Jesus' forerunner, the one who prepared Israel for His coming.

However, in Luke 7 the spiritual climate had become increasingly hostile, and John had been imprisoned by Herod for speaking out against the ruler's public sinfulness. Confined and awaiting his execution, John was assailed by doubts, so he sent his disciples to

inquire of his cousin Jesus, “*Are you the Expected One, or do we look for someone else?*” (Luke 7:19). This fracture in his faith was most likely the result of the negative climate. That is what such climate can do to someone described by no other than Jesus Himself as the greatest in the natural realm.

Nature is Manipulated Against Jesus

In Luke 8:22-24, the boat in which Jesus and His disciples were sailing was buffeted and nearly sunk by a sudden severe storm. The disciples literally cried out in fear. These brave men, most of whom were experienced sailors and fishermen, suddenly found themselves fresh out of courage. I submit to you that the reason was a storm unleashed, or at least manipulated, by the devil himself.

When the disciples woke Jesus, begging Him to deliver them, “*He rebuked the wind and the surging waves, and they stopped, and it became calm*” (v. 24). Under normal circumstances, all the Creator would need to do to calm a storm would be to *tell* the wind to subside and the waves to calm down. The fact that He had to *rebuke* them gives us room to speculate that supernatural evil was behind such a fierce storm.

Foreigners Turn Against Jesus

In the region of the Gerasenes, Jesus confronted not one or a few demons, but a legion that had terrorized the area while in possession of a local man. Jesus cast them out, set the man free and delivered the region from a serious public menace (Luke 8:26-33). Logically, we might expect that in view of their deliverance from this terror, the locals should have asked Jesus to stay around, if for no other reason than to keep them safe in case the demons returned. They should have at least expressed their gratitude to Jesus. Instead, “*they were*

gripped with great fear” and “asked Him to depart” (v. 37). Once again, what happened does not make much sense in the natural realm; most likely this abnormal response was also the result of the supernatural evil in control of the spiritual climate.

I trust that you now see that Jesus operated in a very hostile climate run by the devil himself. But the worst was yet to come: His disciples were infiltrated by the opposition.

The Disciples Sabotage Jesus’ Mission

Finally, Jesus’ own disciples turned against Him, though perhaps unwittingly. First, the Twelve expressed mild contempt for the crowds whom Jesus loved so much, saying, *“Send the multitude away”* (Luke 9:12). Then Jesus forbade the Twelve to preach, apparently because they were not willing to deny themselves and humbly follow Him (see Luke 9:21-26), and Peter was rebuked as a mouthpiece for the devil himself (see Matthew 16:23).

Soon after, at the scene of the Transfiguration, Peter, James and John were rebuked by no other than God the Father because of their spiritual myopia and self-centeredness (see Luke 9:32-36), while the other nine Apostles were being defeated by a single demon in the village below (see v. 40). Amazingly, after this series of discouraging events, the disciples got into an argument as to who among them might be the greatest (see v. 46)!

Finally, after Jesus chastised His disciples for hindering someone who was doing what they seemed to be incapable of doing—that is, casting out demons (see Luke 9:50)—James and John offered to command that fire from heaven be sent to consume a village of Samaritans who had turned them away (see v. 54). So Jesus passed a most severe

judgment: *“You do not know what kind of spirit you are of”* (v. 55). In other words, the disciples were under the control of Satan rather than of God.

The closing verses of this sad chapter show Jesus unable to recruit new, committed disciples (see Luke 9:57-62). There is no question that the spiritual climate was absolutely hostile. Jesus (like the Church today) had won every battle, but He was in danger of losing the war. Or at least feeling that He couldn't continue at that pace. It is no wonder that Jesus voiced His frustration with His disciples, calling them *“unbelieving and perverted”* (v. 42). Obviously, the climate could not have been worse if this was the best He could say about His closest associates.

Then something happened that radically turned the tide in Jesus' favor in Luke 10. However, let us first look at the ensuing events that took place in this improved climate, and we will come back to Luke 10 later.

Favorable Climate

“Lord, teach us to pray” (Luke 11:1). In the previous chapters, Jesus had repeatedly exhorted His disciples to listen and to learn. That these same *“hearing-impaired”* men now came asking to be taught is indicative of a change for the better, but the virtual absence of demonic activity in the last 14 chapters of Luke is definite proof that the spiritual winds had shifted and that the new climate was not hospitable for demonic activity.

In the first nine chapters of Luke, we see very aggressive demons rearing their ugly heads all over and in large numbers. However, in the last 14 chapters, only two demons are mentioned, and neither of

them is the aggressive Rambo type. One was a dumb demon who went away without a peep (see Luke 11:14). The other is a demon who had tormented a woman for 18 years, but Jesus healed her without even addressing the demon (see Luke 13:12).

The Multitudes Begin to Increase Until Everybody Is on Board

“The multitudes marveled. The crowds were increasing” (Luke 11:14,29).

Unlike the time when friends, neighbors and foreigners turned against Him, multitudes were instead flocking to Jesus—so much so that He declared, *“Everybody is forcing their way into the kingdom of God”* (see Luke 16:16). That is 100% responsiveness!

Rather than waiting for the religious leaders to attempt to trap Him with their devious questions, Jesus took the initiative and exposed the leaders of the establishment as frauds (see Luke 11:35-52; 12:1; 13:17). His enemies, once so sure of themselves, suddenly realized they were powerless to harm Him as they had planned to when the climate was in their favor. Now they wished that Herod would do something to take care of their problem. But Jesus challenged them and Herod publicly: *“Go and tell that fox, ‘Behold, I cast out demons and perform cures today and tomorrow, and the third day I reach My goal’”* (Luke 13:32). Jesus was telling the Pharisees, *“There is nothing that either you or Herod can do to Me. I will fulfill My mission.”*

Later, at Jericho, a poor blind man was healed, and an entire town was won over:

And Jesus said to him, “Receive your sight; your faith has made you well.” And immediately he regained his sight, and began following Him, glorifying God; and when all the people saw it, they gave praise to God.” (Luke 18:42,43)

A Most Decisive Chapter

In Luke 19, the enemy suffered a major setback when Jesus won over one of his best players, Zaccheus, a chief tax collector and a man so despised that he was considered beyond redemption by his fellow citizens (see Luke 19:2-9). With the devil's game plan now in tatters, Jesus began running up the score.

Multitudes flocked to Him from all over, and having become His disciples, they took an active role in His mission:

The whole multitude of the disciples began to praise God joyfully with a loud voice for all the miracles which they had seen, saying, "Blessed is the King who comes in the name of the Lord; Peace in heaven and glory in the highest!" (vv. 37,38)

Jesus then scored a dramatic touchdown when he expelled the merchants and moneychangers from the Temple (see vv. 45,46). He converted the extra point when, subsequently, He was able to teach daily in the Temple, the citadel of the religious leaders, in spite of their hatred (see v. 47). Jesus took it over and transformed the place into His pulpit.

The multitudes, so despised by the religious establishment, became His shield and made it impossible for the chief priests and scribes to even attempt to do harm to Jesus: *"And they could not find anything that they might do, for all the people were hanging upon His words" (v. 48).*

A Clear Path to Victory

In the ensuing days, Jesus' opposition vanished as His enemies were discredited and turned tail. By then the spiritual climate had become the exact opposite of the discouraging days of chapter 9.

Jesus took total control of the situation, confidently stating, *“Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will not pass away”* (Luke 21:33). As there was no significant opposition at hand, with the full backing of the multitudes Jesus took over His opponents’ turf: *“During the day He was teaching in the temple... And all the people would get up early in the morning to come to Him in the temple to listen to Him”* (vv. 37,38).

Satan finally came into the open because his minions were powerless before the common folk who so enthusiastically and in such large numbers rallied around Jesus. You know a football team is in trouble when its overweight coach benches the quarterback, borrows his jersey and enters the field to try to execute a crucial fourth down play. This is exactly what happened when Satan made his move to enter Judas (see Luke 22:3).

Motivated by the first taste of success in some time, Satan demanded permission to draft another player, Peter: *“Simon, Simon, behold, Satan has demanded permission to sift you like wheat”* (Luke 22:31).

What Satan didn’t notice was that Jesus first faked to His right, then swung to His left, and was set to throw a Hail Mary pass that would devastate the devil and his demonic empire. Only a few weeks later, on the Day of Pentecost, Simon Peter would kneel down, grab the handles of the gates of hell, pull them open and announce into the very pit of hell, *“The first 3,000 captives in line, come on out!”* When this happened, Satan could only watch in total disbelief as Peter led the first of many liberating raids against his mortally wounded kingdom.

In the meantime, Jesus would become the ultimate Lamb by surrendering Himself, choosing not to retaliate but to bless instead, all of which led to total victory in Luke 23.

I trust that you see in this quick survey of the Gospel of Luke, two very different spiritual climates: an increasingly hostile climate in the first nine chapters, and an absolutely favorable one in the next fifteen chapters.

How and When the Climate Changed

At what point in time did the spiritual climate change? It happened in Luke 10, when the same demonic powers who had buffeted Jesus and defeated several of His disciples suddenly lost the upper hand and eventually surrendered. Jesus had sent 70 of His disciples out, two by two, to proclaim the coming of the Kingdom in every city where He planned to visit:

And the seventy returned with joy, saying, "Lord, even the demons are subject to us in Your name." (Luke 10:17)

Jesus explained the reason behind this turn of events for the better: *"I was watching Satan fall from heaven like lightning"* (v. 18). In other words, Satan himself had suffered a major defeat.

Now that we know when the climate changed, let us see how it was changed. What was it that produced this dramatic transformation?

The key moment was when the Seventy, unlike the Twelve, agreed to mix in a friendly and conciliatory manner with the same people the devil was using against Jesus—"the wolves," as Jesus called them (Luke 10:3). The change happened precisely when the disciples spoke peace over those who were poised to harm them. Remember, blessing opens the door to unbiased fellowship (see vv. 5,7). At that precise moment, Satan's human army was neutralized, and they eventually defected when the kingdom of God came near to them.

How Satan Falls

The fall of Satan was precipitated by Jesus' sending of the Seventy "to every city and place where He Himself was going to come" (Luke 10:1). By speaking peace over every city, the Seventy voided the jurisdiction the devil had in a vast region. Jesus' move was an enveloping strategy designed to cover a whole area with its myriad of towns and villages, and not just one or two houses.

This strategy was replicated in San Nicolas on Wednesday evening of our weeklong thrust when peace was spoken over every home in town, every sidewalk was prayer walked, and every neighborhood had a canopy of prayer raised over it. By reversing the process through which the devil had obtained jurisdiction, we caused him to fall and his army to flee or capitulate. When the commanding general surrenders or flees, the privates follow suit immediately: "Lord, even the demons are subject to us" (Luke 10:17).

When we did this (blessing an entire city in one night), I sensed that something powerful had happened, but I did not understand exactly what it was, much less the extent to which it happened. It was like the first subtle change in temperature or a slight shift in the wind, small but noticeable, that precedes greater changes in the weather. That week we saw the Church in San Nicolas gain the upper hand in its struggle against the forces of evil. The change in climate was confirmed by the natural way in which the power of God flowed at the prayer fair prayer stations and by how readily people received the Lord.

Satan Crushed by the God of Peace Under *Our* Feet

I asked the Lord why this victory over darkness looked and felt so easy, and He directed me to Romans 16:20 (emphasis added): "And the

God of peace will soon crush Satan under your feet." This verse opened my eyes to a monumental mistake we had been making in spiritual warfare: We had rated war higher than peace. It is not the God of war, but the God of peace who crushes Satan, and He does it under our feet, hence the need for us to walk in peace.

Jesus has defeated the devil already. He did that at Calvary. Now we are to march on the ground where Satan lies defeated by the blood shed at the Cross; and as we walk in peace, we step on the fallen foe and God crushes his head under our feet. This is exactly what happened on Wednesday evening as we prayer walked the city of San Nicolas in peace. To put this in a wider biblical context, let us take a look at two other books in the New Testament: Ephesians and James.

Don't Just Put on the Armor—Put on the Full Armor

In his letter to the Church in Ephesus, Paul does not introduce the principles of spiritual warfare against the devil and the forces of darkness until he has first taught the Church how to make peace in six categories that represent major divisions, or gaps, affecting groups of people in society: ethnicity (ch.2), denominationalism (ch.3), ministerial divisions (ch.4), gender (ch.5), family and wealth (ch.6). It is important that we understand Paul's prescription for city reaching: Make peace in the city *before* making war in the heavenlies.

This is reinforced by his preface to spiritual warfare, in which he instructs us to "*be strong in the Lord **and** in the power of His might*" (Ephesians 6:10, NKJV, emphasis added). These are two different sets of instructions as indicated by the conjunction, each phrase identifying the key component of a powerful two-part formula. The first is defensive; the second is offensive. More importantly, the latter should not be initiated until the former has been fully executed.

To be strong in the Lord, in the context of the whole epistle, means the bridging of six gaps—the ethnic gap, the denominational gap, the ministerial gap, the gender gap, the age gap and the wealth gap—before any warfare against the devil is to be initiated. Having taken care of this most important defensive maneuver, Paul next points to the enemy and highlights the need to be strong in the power of the Lord’s might to carry out the offensive dimension:

Put on the full armor of God, that you may be able to stand firm against the schemes of the devil. For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places. Therefore, take up the full armor of God. (Ephesians 6:11-13)

Notice that twice in this passage Paul indicates the need to put on the *full* armor of God. This is a very important point and we will soon see why.

First comes the belt of truth. We put this on when the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of truth, convicted us of our spiritual poverty, convinced us of our sin and revealed to us the wonderful salvation available in Christ. This is followed by the breastplate of righteousness, which is Christ’s righteousness and refers to us appropriating it by faith in His atoning death. We put this on the day we were saved.

The third piece of armor is key to the subject at hand: “*having shod [our] feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace*” (Ephesians 6:15). For the sake of easier visualization, I will describe this as “putting on the sandals of the gospel of peace.” When we put on our shoes or sandals,

it's because we are about to walk. That is why we never wear shoes to bed. Therefore, the instruction to put this piece of armor on implies that we are to walk—and not just to walk, but to walk in peace. I submit that this is designed to see Satan crushed under our feet (see Romans 16:20).

So how do we walk in peace? We do it by speaking peace over those who have cursed us. This is a countermove against the devil who used to have us under his feet. Now we are able to bring him under our feet to watch him be crushed, and we do this by removing every jurisdiction given to him through anger (see Ephesians 4:26,27). If unresolved anger gives jurisdiction to the devil, then blessing those he uses to make us angry should void such jurisdiction. This is what happened in Luke 10 when the Seventy went out to every town and village. This is also what we saw first in San Nicolas, and later in scores of cities all over the world.

The fall of Satan and his removal from our immediate sphere is confirmed by the use of the next weapon, the shield of faith, with which *“you will be able to extinguish all the flaming missiles of the evil one”* (Ephesians 6:16). We can categorically conclude that the devil is no longer nearby because of the weapon he is using at this point: missiles. Missiles are never fired at close range but always from a distance. The devil has left the area and is reduced to firing at us from afar. He fled when we walked in peace, voiding jurisdictions granted to him through anger inside our sphere of influence.

When We Submit to God and Oppose the Devil, He Must Flee Even from Our City

The apostle James identifies this same anger component necessary for the devil to obtain jurisdiction over us when he makes reference to

fight and quarrels among Christians (see James 4:2). Having identified the cause-and-effect relationship between fights or quarrels and satanic proximity, James assures us that it is possible to remove the devil from inside our own circles (v.7).

James is not discussing how one person can make the devil flee from him or her, but instead how a body of believers—and, consequently, the area where they live—can be rid of him. Obviously, since the devil is not omnipresent, he makes himself present through the rulers of darkness under his domain. He addresses the epistle not to an individual but *“to the twelve tribes who are dispersed abroad”* (James 1:1). Nearly all of chapter 4 is written in the plural form. Therefore, when James says, *“Resist the devil and he will flee from **you**”* (James 4:7, emphasis added), he means from all of you (plural). The implication is unavoidable: It is possible to remove the devil from our homes, our neighborhoods, our cities and our states. By removing, I mean to take away from Satan the upper hand he has enjoyed for so long in the spirit world, so that the Church has the advantage instead.

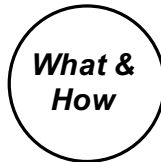
Now that the concept of prayer evangelism is fast becoming mainstream and lighthouses of prayer are springing up everywhere, nothing would please the devil more than the Church failing to discover that the secret to victory resides in changing the spiritual climate over entire regions to force him to flee. It is possible for the Church to take control of the spiritual climate, but to do it requires a concerted, enveloping movement aimed at lifting up Jesus all over the city, house by house, neighborhood by neighborhood.

My City – God’s City

We have seen this happen in cities, and now we are beginning to see it take place in regions. Nations can’t be very far behind.

The Ekklesia's Mission at a Glance: What & How

My City - God's City!



• Biblical Perspective

Vision: **My City - God's City**

For God so loved the **world**.... (John 3:16)

Objective: To lift up Jesus in the entire city (John 12:32)
for satan to fall down like lightning (Luke 10:18)
and all his demons to become subject to the Church (Luke 10 :17,19)

• Biblical Methodology

• Metrics for Progress

Prayer Evangelism from Luke 10 **When can it be said that the city is being reached?**

- | | | |
|---------------------|---|---|
| 1. Bless (v.5) | → | Level 1: When every lost "sheep" has a shepherd. |
| 2. Fellowship (v.7) | → | Level 2: When every "sheep" knows who his shepherd is. |
| 3. Minister (v.9a) | → | Level 3: When the spiritual climate of the city is changed. |
| 4. Proclaim (v.9b) | → | Level 4: When the kingdom of God comes and transforms the city. |

A Guide for Establishing and Increasing the Presence and Power of God in the City

When & Where

3. Implementation

<i>Catalytic Groups in the city</i>	<i>Transformational Activity</i>			
	Daily	Weekly	Monthly	Quarterly
PASTORS & MINISTRY LEADERS	Set an example in the Home	Equip the Saints for the work of the ministry	C A R A V A N O F B L E S S I N G	United Catalytic Events
YOUTH	Pray in his/her School & Workplace	Pray with other Youth at Bible Clubs & Youth Meetings		<i>Spring Jesus is Risen (Intercessors)</i>
MARKETPLACE CHRISTIANS	Pray in his/her Marketplace	Pray in the Marketplace with other Christians		<i>Summer Jesus in the Marketplace (Marketplace Ministers)</i>
WORSHIPERS	Worship where he/she is	Worship in Churches. Take worship to Parks & Public Places		<i>Fall Jesus on Campus (Youth)</i>
INTERCESSORS Systematic Intercessors "Special Forces"	Provide a Continuous Prayer Covering Take on Strategic Prayer Exercises as needed	Come together with others to intercede		<i>Winter Christmas in the City (Worshippers)</i>
	<i>From house to house...</i>	<i>...In the temple...</i>	<i>...Into the city...</i>	<i>...For the City and Beyond</i>

NOTE: The material in this E-book has been adapted from the booklet *My City God's City*, which also offers a detailed strategy for pastors to equip and deploy those under their care to change the spiritual climate over their cities. The book *Prayer Evangelism* presents a fuller theological underpinning for this strategy.

Transformation NOW! is a call to the Church—the Ekklesia of the Lord Jesus—to rise up to dispel the darkness filling the earth. Ed and Ruth Silvano, Bill and Beni Johnson, Che and Sue Ahn, Kris Vallotton, Vaughn McLaughlin, Danny Silk and Loren Cunningham have been led by God to join hands and hearts to inspire and activate Christians to take the power and the presence of Jesus to their sphere of influence 24/7 for the Gates of Hades not to prevail.

You are receiving this complimentary E-book as a result of having responded to the call to be part of this movement.

For additional print and online resources, visit www.transformourworld.org. Download the Transform Our World App from the App Store or Google Play for daily devotionals, weekly podcasts and videos, and transformation news. Visit the websites of the leaders who facilitated Transformation NOW! for more encouragement and inspiration.



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