

Revival & REFORMATION

The Official *United in Prayer* Weekly Blog and World Church Prayer Requests
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The New Year's Eve Party I will Never Forget!

By Melody Mason

About twenty years ago, I did something that I had said all my life I would never do. I moved to southern California. Since I was raised as a country girl in the Ozarks of Arkansas, living in a highly populated area was never my idea of fun. Far from it. And southern California was one of those places I had said I would never live. Well, as I've learned over the years, it's best *never* to say never.

I moved to southern California for a few months because the pay was good, and I wanted to get more experience as a travel nurse before I got involved in missions. Little did I know that my few months in California would turn into four years and those four years would give clarity to God's mission for my life.

After working six months at a hospital in San Diego, I moved to Loma Linda. In Loma Linda the opportunities for ministry were endless. The opportunities to grow my social life were also endless, and my home, which I shared with several roommates, became a hub for many young-adult activities, parties, and ministry functions.

However, while work and ministry and my active social life kept me very busy, my heart was still hungry. I knew that I needed more—*more of Jesus*. And so, I started praying, really praying, *for more*.

"Show me how to know You, Jesus." I began to pray. "Show me how to follow You. Show me how to love You, and to comprehend Your love for me."

Not long after praying that prayer, God took me on a very spur-of-the-moment mission trip to Bangladesh where He gave me a radical revelation of His love as I'd never experienced before. When I returned from that overseas adventure, I continued to seek Him even more earnestly.

As I spent time with Jesus each day, often with my Bible open on my lap and with tears of longing dripping down my cheeks, my hunger grew. As my hunger for Jesus grew, so did my longing to be used by Him.

I was a nurse, and I was a good nurse. But suddenly I found that I didn't want to just be a "good nurse" anymore. I didn't want to just care for broken bodies. I wanted to touch broken souls, to help my patients discover the Jesus that I was coming to know. I wanted to make a difference for eternity.

As I prayed for divine appointments and opportunities, God began to open more and more doors for me to share. But I still have a great hunger to know that God was really with me.

"Do You really know me by name?" I asked Jesus one day. "Do you have a unique and specific purpose just for me, maybe even beyond working as a nurse?"

It might seem strange that I would ask Jesus such questions, but as a young adult still seeking to find my place in life and ministry, I really wanted to know that He saw me and that He knew me *personally by name*. I also wanted to know that I was living in the center of His will and following His plans for my life.

God has a unique way of answering our prayers, and I had no idea how He was about to answer mine.

As the winter holiday season was approaching, my roommates and I began talking about what kind of New Year's party we would host. I had lived on the West Coast for close to two years by this time, and we knew everyone was expecting a great party. However, the closer we got to the New Year, the more I felt in my heart that instead of the normal New Year's Eve party, we should host an all-night prayer meeting to welcome in the New Year.

It was a unique idea, and I didn't know what everyone would think, but thankfully my roommates eagerly jumped on board, and to our mutual delight when New Year's Eve arrived, many of our friends decided to join us. Some even brought other friends with them. One of those brought a sweet Indian girl of another faith. Her name was Anika.

Anika and I were not officially introduced in the beginning as I was busy bustling about tending to last minute details for our all-night prayer meeting. However, about thirty minutes into the evening, someone spoke my name, and Anika, looked up in surprise. As I got up to go into the kitchen to get something, she also got up and excitedly followed me, pulling me aside.

"Is your name Melody? Is this your home?" she asked incredulously.

"Yes! Why?" I replied.

With tears in her eyes, she shared how she had been praying that very day about what to do for New Year's Eve. She didn't want to attend the usual wild young adult parties, yet she didn't know where to go. However, as she was reading her Bible, God impressed upon her mind that she needed to go to "Melody's home."

"But, God," she had argued. "I don't know a Melody!"

Later the conviction came back stronger. "Tonight, you need to go to Melody's home to pray!"

"If you show me who Melody is, I will gladly go!" she told God. However, she didn't know anyone named Melody, so she again brushed the thoughts aside.

Not long after, her friend (who was friends with one of my roommates) invited her to attend our all-night prayer meeting. The friend did not mention my name, but Anika excitedly accepted the invite. The impression that she had received earlier in the day about "Melody's home" was temporarily forgotten... forgotten that is, until she heard someone refer to me by name.

"God told me to come here!" she told me incredulously. "He told me your name before I met you! He even told me to come to your home to pray!"

It was my turn to be incredulous. "He told you my name?" I asked, as tears came to my own eyes. "Yes!" she nodded excitedly.

I couldn't believe it! Here I'd been praying asking God if He knew my name, and through a sweet Indian girl of another faith, He had answered my prayer.

I don't remember many details about that New Year's Eve night of prayer, except that the whole night was incredible. In fact, it may have been the launching pad for my work in prayer ministries today, for not long after that I took the lead in prayer ministry for our "Advent Hope" young adult group. However, one thing I won't ever forget is how God brought Anika to my house to pray. That was almost twenty years ago, and I still get goosebumps sharing this testimony.

Friend, He not only knows my name. He knows your name too! In fact, He's written your name on His very own hands. "See, I have inscribed you on the palms of My hands; Your walls are continually before Me" (Isa. 49:16).

If He's written your name and my name on the palm of His hands, with nail print scars, can we not trust He cares about what's going on in our life right now, today. He cares about the messy stuff, about the confusing stuff, and about the things that don't make sense. We might be confused sometimes, but He's not confused. He's not overwhelmed. He's still on the throne.

Melody Mason loves Jesus and loves helping others learn how to fall in love with Him too. She works with program coordination and resource development for the General Conference Back to the Altar initiative. She is also the author of "Daring to Ask for More" and "Daring to Live by Every Word," two full length books that help people go deeper in their walk with God. Anika is a pseudonym.

World Church Prayer Requests

December 22 - 28, 2023

- Pray that we will reflect the love of Jesus and be His lights of hope to all those we meet.
- For peace on the territory of Ukraine and Russia as well as between Armenia and Azerbaijan.
- Pray for evangelistic series that are planned in Eastern Europe, as there are challenges from the ongoing conflicts. Pray for pastor's kids that they will not lose their faith.
- Keep praying for the **10 Days of Prayer** that will be running January 10-20, 2024, focused on the "Priorities of Faith." Pray that many churches and groups around the world will take part.
- Keep praying for the **Generation. Youth. Christ.** event that will start this week in Portland Oregon, Dec. 27th-31st. Pray for many decisions to be made for Christ.