

The Most Fascinating People of 2007

Well, I have seen the secular list of the most fascinating people of 2007 and I have to admit, I'm not too impressed. I could make up a list, but I'm sure it would be challenged by the secular world. I think I shall mention in this article those who, to me, are the most fascinating people of 2007. After reading it, I don't think I shall receive too many arguments from you.

I am hesitant to write something so personal in this format, but rather than an attempt to play down the importance of which I write in a feigned portrayal of modesty, I defer to write an honest evaluation no matter how any in the article are characterized. I have headaches - not just ordinary headaches as a rule; they have an almost paralyzing and sickening effect on me. Now, before we go further with your worry for your pastor, I appreciate the rather frank words of my physician, "We could do some intense testing, but if it was something more serious, you would have been dead by now." Doctors have a way of putting it "on the line," don't they? My mom knew I had a headache; she called a couple of hours after finding out to see how I was doing. I didn't want to tell Mom I still had the problem. I don't like to appear to be a whining complainer, but I learned early in my youth, don't lie to Mama! So Mom didn't give her usual advice about what to do next for relief. She simply said, "Okay, I just wanted to know." When I get the "whopper," it can last for twelve hours. I have had some go longer. This was showing signs of the long one. During this time, if I must work, I work, with an occasional lay down just to bear the pain.

This particular headache began to escalate and it was the same day our friends, Mike and Naomi Crain were flying to be with us. These people have been friends for thirty-five years and it had been several years (although they are on our missionary board) since they have been with our church. They have had a fascinating ministry. It is now estimated that Mike has seen over one million people profess Christ in his evangelistic endeavors. Having had a stroke and having to curtail his travel, this was his first time out in a meeting, therefore, I really wanted him and Naomi to relax and enjoy themselves. And I believe they did have a wonderful time with Christchurch.

Returning to the headache - which, in fact, I don't want to do, but for the sake of the story, I must, in memory. I was dreading trying to entertain the Crains with this "whopper." I become sensitive to sounds, light, motion, and the nausea sets in forbidding me to enjoy eating. If this continued, I was going to be a handicapped host. Within 20 to 30 minutes after Mom called saying, "Do you still have that headache?" things changed for the good dramatically. We were getting ready to walk out the door to meet the Crains, and I knew I needed to call and tell Mom how good I felt, so she would not keep worrying. Mom said, "Good, Son. Thanks for telling Mother. I called the Prayer Chain." I embarrassingly thanked her. Then it occurred to me. All the medication I had taken had not phased my pain. Then imagining how long it would take to get full prayer coverage, I realized the timing was perfect. This was not psychosomatic, this was not the power of positive thinking, this was not the result of medication, I was better: actually more than better - I was over it.

Just last week I saw a remarkable improvement in one of our ladies in the hospital who had prayer coverage. I have often seen this happen for others. This was the first time I have noticeably experienced the blessing when the Prayer Chain "kicks in." The Prayer Chain was placed in a rather personal "test tube" of Divine experimentation and what a remarkable discovery! I knew it, I believed it, but last week, I was on the receiving end of this spiritual dynamo. I know many of you have been recipients as well, but for me it was so traceable! So, as we wind down the year I should like to give my salute to the most remarkable people of 2007, the Prayer Chain of Christchurch Baptist Fellowship. As we look at this phenomenon, I bring to you a few observations:

I. There is power in prayer.

We see throughout Holy Scripture, we serve a God of great power. We also see resplendent reminders that God is more than willing to let His power affect our lives and environment! *“God hath spoken once; twice have I heard this; that power belongeth unto God”* (Psalm 62:11). *“...for God hath power to help...”* (2 Chronicles 25:8). *“O God, thou art terrible out of thy holy places: the God of Israel is he that giveth strength and power unto his people. Blessed be God”* (Psalm 68:35). *“God is my strength and power: and he maketh my way perfect”* (2 Samuel 22:33). *“According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue”* (2 Peter 1:3). *“Wherefore also we pray always for you, that our God would count you worthy of this calling, and fulfil all the good pleasure of his goodness, and the work of faith with power”* (2 Thessalonians 1:11).

The Greek word for power is “dunamis” which is the root from our English word, “dynamite.” When we pray effectually we ignite the mighty miracle-working power of God. This brings to mind another appropriate word study. James said, *“...pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much”* (James 5:16). The word from which we translate “effectual” is the Greek word “energeo.” We recognize from whence our English word “energy” comes. What an awesome thought: God’s Divine energy is activated when we pray! Yes, there is power when we pray! After Jacob wrestled with the angel of the Lord all night God declared: *“... Thy name shall be called no more Jacob, but Israel: for as a prince hast thou power with God and with men, and hast prevailed”* (Genesis 32:28). Power with God and power with man comes to those who learn to prevail in prayer!

II. There is power in united prayer.

Jesus said, *“Again I say unto you, That if two of you shall agree on earth as touching any thing that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven”* (Matthew 18:19). When we unite in prayer, God undertakes. I love the word “agree.” In Greek the word is “sumphoneo,” which means “to be harmonious, to accord.” As you probably noticed, this is where our word, “symphony” is rooted. God is a music-loving and generating Creator. *“The LORD thy God in the midst of thee is mighty; he will save, he will rejoice over thee with joy; he will rest in his love, he will joy over thee with singing”* (Zephaniah 3:17). On our Lord’s last night on earth before His death on the cross, He has the Last Supper with His disciples, then when enroute to Gethsemane, the Word of God records: *“And when they had sung an hymn, they went out into the mount of Olives”* (Matthew 26:30). My heart is arrested with the concept of our Lord singing with us on special occasions.

Our Lord is moved when we pray together. It is a symphony to His holy ears! Let us strike of the chorus of united prayer from time to time, with the hope that He shall join in and *“joy over us with singing”* (Zechariah 3:17).

III. Change occurs when we pray.

Things change, people change, everything changes when we pray. We change when we pray! Ancient Abraham was given the news that he and his wife, two people beyond the physiological ability to do what God said they were going to do, saw change. I cannot improve on the way God says it: *“Who against hope believed in hope, that he might become the father of many nations; according to that which was spoken, So shall thy seed be. And being not weak in faith, he considered not his own body now dead, when he was about an hundred years old, neither yet the deadness of Sarah's womb: He staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith, giving glory to God; And being fully persuaded that, what he had promised, he was able also to perform”* (Romans 4:18-21).

Don’t give up on God. Pray, believing Him for what He says He can do!

- Pastor Pope -

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