



MONTHLY PRAYER UPDATE



A Village Transformed!

The following account was recently shared by an Operation Christmas Child Volunteer living in a sensitive country.

I want to tell you a story. We have been receiving shoeboxes for over fifteen years. Many of the children who received shoeboxes in the past are now leaders in many of the local farms. They are now the ones who are multiplying and reaching many people, including children.

There was a pastor in a city who received shoeboxes from the OCC team and he distributed them in one of the villages. The whole village received the shoeboxes and happily accepted the gospel message. Five years later, there was a major conversion taking place in the village and children were sharing the gospel with their parents, peers and with their families. The village now has 23 families that have accepted Christ! They are meeting every week so the pastor is ready to build a small church there so they can have place to meet. Initially, they met underground but slowly, steadily they started meeting in the family houses. Now they have a piece of land and they are building a church! A small shoebox impacted a few kids and that has impacted 23 families. This village has become a Christian village now!

Prayers that Avails Much

There are over a thousand references and verses in God's Word concerning the beautiful gift of prayer the Lord has given to us. One verse that is often quoted and memorized concerning prayer is James 5:16b, *"The effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much."* One of the reasons this verse on prayer is so cherished by so many is because it refers to prayers that cause things to happen. This promise about prayer from God's Word gives us some description and instruction on the kinds of prayers that avail much.

One of the first things we notice about this promise about prayer is that the person praying is said to be "righteous." This verse is referring to those individuals who have received Christ's imputed righteousness thus having a perfect and righteousness standing before the Father. According to God's Word, this describes any person who has repented and received Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior, *"and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which comes through faith in Christ, the righteousness from God that depends on faith"* Philippians 3:9. This promise from the book of James is emphasizing to us that as we seek daily to walk in obedience to God's Word by the power of the Holy Spirit in us and chose to put on the righteousness of Christ in our actions rather than putting on sin (Romans 13:14), our prayers will be effective and avail much.

In this verse, James also describes effective prayer as "fervent" prayer. In the original Greek language, this word first communicates the idea of having been heavily burdened in our soul. This happens when the Holy Spirit places on our heart an unusual burden for a specific situation or person that He is calling us to intercede on behalf of. This heavy burden that the Spirit has shared with us causes us to pray in with a very sincere and heart-felt fervency. In addition, the word fervent also carries the idea of persevering in prayer for this burden until the Lord provides his answer for the situation or until the time that the Spirit releases us from carrying this burden in prayer.

Bible scholar and commentator Matthew Henry describes the working out of this promise on prayer from James 5:15b with this exhortation for us;

"And when a righteous person, a true believer, justified in Christ, and by his grace walking before God in holy obedience, presents an effectual fervent prayer, wrought in his heart by the power of the Holy Spirit, raising holy affections and believing expectations and so leading earnestly to plead the promises of God at his mercy-seat, it avails much."

Be greatly encouraged, make yourself available to the Spirit as an intercessor and He will begin deeply burdening you with specific situations and people that will require fervent prayer and be assured, that kind of prayer will avail much!

Operation Christmas Child

International Prayer Requests: July 2018

Week 1: Cameroon

- We are praising the Lord God for the wonderful training materials He has provided for all of our teams and for how our teams have embraced the new material as good stewards and faithful servants!
- Please pray for peace throughout the country. The various OCC Regional Teams desire to remain active in every region. Pray there will be agreement between English and French speaking areas so the gospel continues to spread.
- Please pray for the Holy Spirit's unity among all of our teams, volunteers and ministry partners as they continue the ministry of The Greatest Journey Classes throughout the country.
- Please pray for God's anointing and protection on the locations of The Greatest Journey classes and on the The Greatest Journey teachers and students.

Week 2: Central African Republic

- Praise God that OCC trainers were able to visit Bangui to equip the local OCC teams of the Central African Republic. Ask that all who participated will transfer the knowledge to others for God's glory and we will see true Kingdom multiplication.
- Praise the Lord that containers cleared customs. Pray that the shoebox gifts that have been distributed and the Gospel presentations that have been shared will bear great spiritual fruit among thousands of children!
- Pray that all of those who enrolled in The Greatest Journey discipleship class will engage fully with the material and believe and receive Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord.
- Please pray for peace throughout the country. Recent conflict in the capitol has slowed the project of OCC and we know that Satan will try anything to hinder the advancement of the gospel. Please pray against his schemes.

Week 3: Chad

- Praise God for the recent visit by OCC staff. Our team has been well equipped to move the project forward. May God receive all glory!
- Praise the Lord that the country remains relatively calm despite the ongoing economic crisis in Chad. Such a crisis could lead to delays difficulty with clearance of gift boxes. God's grace has prevented such a delay.
- Please pray for the upcoming season of The Greatest Journey discipleship course in Chad. Many children have come to know the Lord through this program. Ask that they will impact their neighborhoods with the light.
- Please pray for the marriages and families of the OCC teams members throughout the country. The enemy tries to go after marriages and families to stop the work of the Great Commission. Please pray for the Holy Spirit's protection on all and for a fresh anointing and Christ's richest blessings on them.

Week 4: Democratic Republic of Congo

- Praise God for the faithful teachers of The Greatest Journey. These teachers have been trained by local OCC teams to disciple children in the faith. God is glorified through their service to expand His Kingdom.
- Please pray for the ongoing conflict in various regions of the DRC. The fighting and political unrest. Pray that none of the ministry of OCC will be delayed by the conflicts of man.
- Please pray that each OCC team member will be drawn to the feet of Jesus each day and abide in him and he in them so that they will be able to bear much spiritual fruit in this ministry and in their families.
- Please pray for physical and spiritual protection for all of the locations hosting The Greatest Journey classes and that the Lord's presence and love will be experienced by each student who attends.

Forward this e-mail to a friend who you think would be interested praying for or learning more about the ministry of Operation Christmas Child.

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