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#206 How do I share my faith with my New Age, Muslim and Atheist Friends? (Replay)

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Ask NT Wright Anything - Premier

What happens to those who don't believe in Jesus? What can I say to my New Age sister? My Muslim friend gets so much comfort from her faith... do I need to evangelise her? These and more listener questions get addressed by Tom Wright in this episode. Subscribe and Rate the Ask NT Wright Anything podcast on your podcast provider! • Subscribe to the Ask NT Wright Anything podcast: <https://pod.link/1441656192> • More shows, free eBook, newsletter, and sign up to ask Tom your questions: <https://premierunbelievable.com> • For live events: <http://www.unbelievable.live> • For online learning: <https://www.premierunbelievable.com/training> • Support us in the USA: <http://www.premierinsight.org/unbelievableshow> • Support us in the rest of the world: <https://www.premierunbelievable.com/donate>

Transcript

Truly understanding your identity is a deeply personal journey, and discovering who you are starts with knowing where you came from. This applies to us as individuals as well as collectively. Though it's popular to question the existence of a historic Adam and Eve, do they truly exist? Or where they merely archetypes? The truth is, much of our uniqueness as humans only makes sense in the light of the Genesis account of creation.

These questions and more are explored at length. Welcome to this replay of Ask NT Wright Anything where we go back into the archives to bring you the best of the thought and theology of Tom Wright. Answering questions submitted by you, the listener.

You can find more episodes as well as many more resources for exploring faith at premierunbelievable.com. And registering there will unlock access through the newsletter to updates, free bonus videos and e-books. That's premierunbelievable.com. And now for today's replay of Ask NT Wright Anything. Welcome back to the show.

Today on the programme we're going to be looking at other faiths. We've got a number of questions about interfaith issues, how we should relate, especially when it comes to

evangelism and mission and that sort of thing, Tom. I'm sure in some of the roles you've held, that's often involved meeting with religious leaders of other kinds.

Yes, when I was Bishop of Durham, I was involved both with inter-churchwork, particularly with some of the freer churches and some of my Roman Catholic neighbours, but then also at a national and international level with some Christian Jewish work and also some Christian Muslim work. In Durham, there wasn't a large presence of, say, Buddhists or Hindus or other people from the subcontinent of India, but we did have, interestingly, a well-known Orthodox Jewish community in Gateshead in the northern part of the Durham Darsis. And that was frustrating.

I used to meet people from there sometimes, but they're very much enclosed, keeping themselves themselves, and indeed, apparently not having much contact with other less Orthodox Jewish groups. So that was always something I would pray about and wish we could do more to involve them. And there were little bits of involvement.

But, yes, in my own work as a biblical scholar, I've often had to work alongside and with Jewish colleagues coming at similar questions from very different angles. And then when Ron Williams' Archbishop, he got me involved with some of the Christian Muslim dialogues that he was doing. So I've done a bit of that.

Never as much I have to say as I might have liked, but I've always learnt an enormous amount and it's been exciting. Well, as I say, a number of people wanting to ask questions about this. Eric Innore, who we'll begin with, who says, there seems to be very little, apart from the specific doctrines that we hold and our specific ritual practices, that separate us from other belief systems, faith healings, prophecies, speaking in tongues, mystical experiences of something great, a loving one's neighbour, forgiveness in a peaceful nation of character, prayer and a relationship to a God.

All of these can be found to some degree or other in other philosophies or religions. Which features of our faith, as lived out in the present, are truly unique and special for Christians? If there are none, then are we condemned to a purely intellectual, i.e. the historical basis is stronger basis for our faith? Eric apparently seems to think that there's a great deal of commonality and we just really differ in some of the specific things. Yes, Eric has a point.

If you go back to the first century and read one of my favourite non-Christian authors from the first century, Epictetus. There are places where Epictetus, who is a kind of a cheerful street level stoic. There are places where you almost want to put your arm around him and embrace him.

When he talks about God, even though he's a stoic, who believes that God is everywhere and everything is God. Nevertheless, there is a personalness to his God and he has a wonderful prayer, invoking this God and thanking him for his goodness, etc. And you

have a sense, are you a crypto-Christian or what? Because this is not like the atheism that we know in the modern secular world.

And I think if you've been soaked in the secular world, as so many of us have been, where just the assumptions of secularity are all around us, then when you meet people who seem to have a prayer life, a sense of the love of God, etc. etc. etc.

You think, oh, well, that's what I got from my Christian faith. Of course, the difference, and Eric kind of swats it away at the end of his question. The difference is Jesus, that for the Christian, everything that is true about the God who made the world, and the idea of a God who made the world is not common to all the faiths, of course, everything about that God comes into focus, personal, human focus in Jesus and Azeroth.

And more specifically for the Christian, Jesus' death has accomplished the defeat of the powers of evil so that Jesus' resurrection has launched new creation, and that all that we know arising out of that comes from that. And it isn't just, oh, well, we've got some historical background. No, Christianity is about something that has happened in history as a result of which everything is different.

Now, people say, oh, it doesn't look that different to me, but actually, and again, I say as an ancient historian primarily, I know what the Roman world in the first two or three centuries looked like reasonably well, and I know the impact that is made when you get people living radically differently. And of course, Christianity was born into a world of many faiths. It's not just chapped like Epictetus, but there were all sorts of different religions, some of them very intense, some of them, yes, involving speaking in tongues or prophesying, which is why Paul in 1 Corinthians has to say, here's the litmus test.

If somebody thinks that this is the spirit, then if they end up saying Jesus be cursed, then that wasn't the Holy Spirit, which shows that there's all kinds of stuff going on. And so we have lived in this world which says, here is the secular world, and there are these religious people, mostly Christians, we think. And then we discover there's all these other people, and that it's secularism that's actually out of step with the rest of the world.

So we live in a complicated and confusing world, but Jesus is at the center of what Christians believe. I suppose the question that strikes me, Eric, is then asking, is in a sense well okay, granted Jesus is unique in terms of the way we believe God has been revealed to us, and it's through him that we approach God and so on. But if it looks like these other faiths are having broadly similar experiences, aren't they just sort of simply doing God their way, and we're doing God our way? Again, there's a glass half full, glass half empty thing, and there are passages in scripture which help us with that, like the story of Nehem and the Syrian, who suddenly meets the prophet Elijah and gets cured of his leprosy, and then has to go back home where he's required to bow down in the Temple of Riemann.

And Elijah says, actually, I understand your situation, that's fine. Or like Cornelius in the Book of Acts, who doesn't know about Jesus, but has been praying to God as best he can, and when Peter comes to him he says, I see that God shows no partiality because in every race anyone who tries to love him and follow him is acceptable. At the same time, you're then on that knife edge where Jesus says on the one hand, those who are not against us are for us, and then on the other hand there are other occasions where those who are not with us are against us.

And discerning that difference has always been a tricky part of Christian discipleship, and the danger is that people will use the fact of other faiths, and they seem to have this good experience, whatever, as a way of downplaying the distinctiveness of Jesus, and saying, well, Jesus is one great teacher, but then there's Buddha, and there was Moses, and there's Muhammad, and so on. And actually, when you look at it, that's not how it works, it really isn't. And so I think particularly the invention of the idea of faiths, which is a modern thing, that's itself part of the secular agenda.

And the way that the questions come at us is the reflex of that secularity, which says secularism is the real thing, and there are these funny people who do these funny things. And I want to say, Christian experience, it comes in all shapes and sorts and sizes because we're all so different. And trying to judge the truth or validity of Christianity by the sort of experience that it gives me or you or some people is like going for a walk in the hills and taking a compass bearing on a sheep.

That sheep is going to be moving around, you better watch out. Similar sorts of questions here, and we'll see what your response is. Miriam in York says, my sister is a new age adherent, and I find that whenever we talk about spirituality, we use much of the same language.

The universe loves her, God loves me, etc. And we even seem to be in agreement about a lot, mercy and self-giving love of principles, she also follows, for example. I can't really see much of a difference in how we implement those in our lives either.

Both of us seem to have arrived at the same way of living life through different means. What I wonder is, how does the work of the Holy Spirit fit into this? Should I at least not be somehow better at this way of life than her, given that we're roughly equal otherwise, but that I have the Holy Spirit guiding me? Not that being better matters, I just want to understand the Holy Spirit's part in all of this. Also made me wonder, if our way of life can be copied without having our faith, then why is membership in God's family a necessary prerequisite for becoming part of his new creation project? So to speak.

Yeah, good question. Again, using a railway illustration, having just spent a certain amount of time on trains recently, if I get a train from Aberdeen to Bristol, quite a bit of the track will be the same track as you'd be using if you went from Inverness to London. It's coming down the middle of the country a certain way, but your origin is different and

your destination is different.

The fact that that middle bit, you're on the same track, doesn't actually tell you about where this came from or where it's going to. That's partly helpful, doesn't get you all the way. But I think I would say, yes, there are many people, quote out there, unquote, who will say, like the Jewish teacher who muses about what Jesus says in Mark 12, and Jesus says you're not far from the Kingdom of God, and he's sort of thinking it through.

It looks as though, and there are many, many people in the New Testament times who would see what these early Christians were doing, and perhaps like Gamaliel in the Book of Acts, say, this is the kind of movement that might just be from God, so watch out, don't start opposing it. Now, again, navigating these things is a matter of discernment, but again and again historically, where Christians have, as it were, said, oh well, all people of good will act this way, so we'll just go with the flow. That may work for a year or for even a generation, but then, as we've seen in our country and our culture, an assumed Christian Britain, which I grew up with, the assumption just gradually turns away, and then people assume, well, aren't you coming with us because we're still doing what we think we should, and the Christians have to say, well, sorry, no, we don't cross that bridge.

But if you've got out of the habit of discerning things Christianly, which means on the basis of Jesus, the gospels, et cetera, and prayer for the Spirit, then the facility to say, no, when it's required may have atrophied, and that's a real problem. But as I say, in the early church, the reason people became Christians was because these Christian communities were actually living radically differently. That's not to say there weren't other communities that were trying to live differently and that there were some parallels between them, but my goodness, the Christians had the inner motivation because they believed that Jesus had defeated evil on the cross, so that if people said, well, you can't really sit down, and you need with slaves.

Oh, yes, we can. They're humans too, and they are part of the family. Or you can't really treat women as equal.

Oh, yes, we can. This is a sister. She's part of the team.

And so there's all sorts of things where, again and again, Christianity does make a difference when you really follow it through. What you were saying earlier and just then made me think as well that sometimes we don't give credit to the fact that the reason someone who says they're a new age adherent, living in 21st century Britain, does probably have rather similar values in goals. And what I've asked you is probably because we're soaked in still a Judeo-Christian heritage, which has informed so many of the values that people now think, well, of course we all think that.

Quite, quite. And the answer is we do and we don't. And Christians differ among

themselves, obviously as well, but part of my trouble in answering that question is that the phrase new age can mean all sorts of things.

And this was big in the 80s and it seems still to linger on and re-emerge in new ways. Some new age stuff is basically pantheistic, that God is, as this person says, God is the cosmos or the cosmos is God. Well, go back to ancient Stoicism, it's all there.

And as I say, you'll find Epictetus is a good friend. But at a certain point, what the new age can't really have is a serious critique of evil because pantheism, the idea that God is the cosmos and the cosmos is God, then everything that happens is just everything that happens. And if there is radical evil and you have to be very naive not to think that there is, then what's going to happen about it? How does that, how do you deal with that? I think the thing I've noticed really emerging, you know, you have obviously on one hand the die-hard sort of secularist atheists who are really naturalistic in their thinking.

But I think there's a large middle ground of people who like to call themselves spiritual but not religious and who don't want to name a particular religious tradition. But say, I don't disavow the idea of a sort of transcendence and that sort of thing. And I think that's quite a difficult conversation to have with someone who's neither fully against it or on one side.

But it's so hard to pin down really as to what they actually think of. It's funny because, yes, I know plenty of people who would come into that category. And when my publishers recently reissued a book that I'd written 25 years ago, the title they gave to the new edition was Spiritual and Religious in order to say, actually guess what, there is a convergence here.

And I think the but not religious bit is picking up steam from the kind of rejection of an old-fashioned boring out-of-date tedious churchianity of a previous generation. It's a way of saying, yes, I'm a deeply spiritual person. Of course, I don't go to church or any of that.

Often somebody who's never darkened the doors of a church or not for a long time or maybe only for a wedding or a funeral. And actually, they would find if they turned up that the religion is now quite different from what they might have thought. And that critique of religion as well has a great deal of the sort of 19th century liberal Protestantism about it.

We don't do religion. We do the real thing. And so culturally that sounds appealing, but actually when you cash it out, it's not going to be very satisfying.

Let alone to do justice to what Christianity is actually all about. It isn't just about spirituality. It's about new creation and transformation and us stumblingly finding ourselves caught up in that.

Before we rejoin today's episode, I need to tell you about an urgent challenge Premier Insight is facing today. As we begin this new year, \$20,000 is needed by February the 29th in order to keep Premier Insight strong and financially on target. At the outset of this new year, that couldn't be more important.

As you know, all said to Christianity is in rapid decline across the United States. So many Christians feel ill-equipped to defend their faith against the angry and antagonistic rhetoric of our day. But at the very same time, there's also a growing spiritual openness, with 84% of Americans saying they're open to a conversation about Jesus.

Both these trends mean that America is crying out for a clear and courageous Christian voice in 2024, a voice that not only equips believers to stand firm, but one that also winsomely engages skeptics and seekers with the claims of the gospel. That voice is Premier Insight. Your gift today will help keep Premier Insight strong at this pivotal moment, so please give generously to help meet the \$20,000 need.

You can give online at premierinsight.org forward slash NT right. That's premierinsight.org forward slash NT right. Thank you so much.

Mark in Washington State asks, I'm curious how you reconcile Jesus' assertion that we can ask for anything in his name or ask the father in his name from John 14 and 15. In expectation that it will come to pass with the reality of the many times Godly, Christ-following people have prayed for the healing of loved ones, only to have them pass away with no apparent answer to their prayers. Thank you.

I know this is never an easy question. No, it isn't an easy question and in my close circle of acquaintances, there's been one such instance within the last year. A dear God-son of mine who died of cancer in his mid-30s, a lovely Christian young man with a super family and lots of people praying, I'm sure.

Lots of people praying, actually a lot because he was quite well known in his circles. And that remains a mystery and none of us want to pretend that it's anything other than that. However, he himself wrote some blog posts and diary posts in his last year when it became increasingly clear that he was going to die very young, which made it clear that this didn't alter his belief in the fact that God does answer prayer, but that it always remains a mystery.

I mean, in a more easy-going example, I've often known that when you pray specifically about one particular thing and you think you know this is the answer to this question, Lord, please, will you do this thing now? This is what we reckon we need. And while you're praying about that, God quietly is doing something else over here and suddenly you realize, oh, I see, God seems to be taking these prayers and this is a much better answer than the one I had in mind. Now, I'm not saying that for my God-son to die when he did was a much better answer in all sorts of ways, but I think that's the point at which

we say we are here staring into a void which sometimes seems dark and sometimes seems bright, where we just have to say, into your hands, we are not in charge, God is in charge, and though that is really tough sometimes.

But I do believe that what Jesus said in John 14 and 15, he really meant. Well, I was going to say, what did he mean then? If saying, asking for things in Jesus' name is not some sort of magic cue to then get that thing you're asking for, what does Jesus mean by saying? I think it's something to do with the phrase in Jesus' name. And this isn't a cop-out, it's a way of saying, who is this Jesus in whose name we're asking? And this is the Jesus who in the scene in Gethsemane and Matthew and Mark anyway asked very specifically a question to which the answer was no, namely, please can there be another way and then nevertheless not my will but yours.

So the Jesus in whose name we pray is the one who himself went through that and ended up saying, my God, why did you abandon me? And we know in retrospect, in the Gospel writers trying to tell us in retrospect, that actually those prayers were amazingly gloriously answered in a different way, not that he was able to escape the cross, but that through the cross, he did the most extraordinary world-changing victory. Another question here from Carol in Scotland says, can we as resurrection people tackle sin and evil in all its forms where we see it? Can we pray for freedom from disease, for instance? And I suppose that goes direct to the heart of that question. Can we be so bold as to simply pray for people to be healed of disease and sickness? To be sure.

And I have known people who the doctors have basically said, sorry, there's no chance, and people have got round and prayed and around the world. And have an example in my enclosed family, a girl who was age six diagnosed with double kidney failure and told it was a matter of days. And that was 35 years ago and she's now a healthy, happy 40-something Christian girl.

And there is no explanation the doctors had no answer to, we don't understand why she's not dying. And that is repeated again and again, if you talk to people who've been involved in that kind of ministry, that is clearly the case. So I want to put that there and say, this really does happen, partly because God can do whatever God wants.

The idea that he's sort of imprisoned in a system of his own making, which means that he isn't allowed to do different things, I think is quite dangerous. Sorry, there was a second half of that. Well, it was really just, can we pray for freedom from disease, for instance? Well, yes, we can.

At the moment, that prayer, I think, is subsumed within the larger prayer, going back to Romans 8, which is, and also places in the book of Revelation, where God's people have always prayed, how long, oh Lord, how long. You know, this is where we are at the moment. We know this is not the end of your story.

Please will you bring the end of the story, and please will you also bring such anticipations of that end as are appropriate at the moment. And I would put that in a maximalist way, not just a minimal, oh well, there may be some slight improvement, but actually we've got to wait until the last act. This is my admission.

I try to be faithful in prayer, but very often if I'm presented with someone who is obviously physically sick or whatever it might be, I don't always go for the full-blooded, heal this person, God, kind of prayer. I very often pray to sort of, may they know your peace, your strength in difficult times, and I fear that's because it's a slightly easier prayer for God to answer somehow. In some ways, yes.

I'm inclined to say, people are fundraising, I'm not a fundraiser, but when people who are fundraising will say, well, you're going to zone so, why not ask for 10,000 pounds? And if they say, here's a fiver, then that's fine. But if you only ask for a fiver, that's all you're going to get. So I'm inclined to say, we should err on the side of going for the big one.

I mean, I had a message just yesterday from a friend in another country who just three quite separate things are afflicting her at the moment. And I just sent an email message back, just including a prayer for healing and for peace while that's going on. And that's all one can do at the moment.

I will continue to pray for healing there. And God can do with that prayer, whatever God wants to do. I mean, I think part of what is difficult for us to understand has to do with the working of the Holy Spirit, that over the last generation, because of the charismatic movement, depending on the costalism and so on, we've tended to think of the Holy Spirit as working only in a dramatic, sudden outbursts of whatever it may be.

But for all Christians who are in drought by the Spirit, their prayers and the Spirit's prayers are melded together and God knows what's going on. And God is at work through our personalities, some of which may be more bouncy and effervescent and some of which may be quieter and more introverted. And that's fine so that our task is to be present with God in the Spirit, shaped according to the pattern of Christ, and to hold these, and the wisdom from, oh, ancient Christians, the desert fathers, people like that, as well as I have to say, the wisdom from many great Jewish rabbis who've said the same thing, is that when we are in the presence of God, sometimes you just get an awareness.

This is what you should be praying for now. And sometimes, I've only had it once or twice in my whole life. I've suddenly had the sense you've been praying for this person for the last weeks, months, whatever it is.

It's going to be okay. And so you can scale that down in a strong sense. And the last time this happened, I waited a week and then emailed the friend whose daughter it was that I was praying for and said, I'm just wondering if actually there was a turn for the better last weekend, got the message, how did you know? So that does happen.

For the person listening who thinks, gosh, I wish I could have your prayer life, Tom, because prayer for me is I don't feel like I'm getting much back. Or it's just difficult. It feels dry and I struggle at it.

Where would you say to begin in that case? I'm a good Anglican. Begin with the Psalms. Actually, I hope I'm not a very good Christian, but I'm a Christian.

Begin with the Psalms. The Psalms were Jesus' prayer book. They should be our prayer book.

One of the things I really grieve over in the contemporary church is that so many lively churches have given up using the Psalms. And they say, well, it's so difficult. Our people are new to all this and say, well, yeah, but there are ways to get them used to it.

There are ways. It's like the Psalms are like when you learn to play the piano and these are the basic scales and arpeggios. And to begin with, yeah, your fingers may not be covered.

But once you're into it, then the world of Haydn, Mozart and Beethoven starts to open up in front of you. So the Psalms, Billy Graham once said that he prayed five Psalms a day. He said, because they helped me get along with God and he read one chapter of Proverbs a day, because it helps me get along with man.

He said, I heard him say that. I thought, wow, good idea. My tradition gives you, on average, five Psalms a day, get through the Psalter in a month.

And I get through Proverbs in a month. Because I now read them in Hebrew, all the septons in Greek, I go a bit slower than that. But they are always there.

It's a river of prayer into which we can step. And very honest prayer very often. Oh, the Psalms are brutally honest.

Hey, God, wake up. What's going on? It's like the disciples on the boat with Jesus. Hey, come on.

You're supposed to be in charge here. There's a storm going, we're going to drown. And the Psalms are exactly like that.

Wake up, God. Why don't you do something? And that's robust. It's very Jewish.

And if we find that almost striking and offensive, well so we should. And coming back to the point you made at the very beginning, which is that sometimes it's difficult to simply start prayer from a standing start. Sometimes it very often is response to scripture, which fires up our prayer.

Oh, yes. And that's again and again again been so. And for me again, the framework of

an easy set liturgy.

There are certain prayers in the old prayer book, which I still use, which say better than I possibly could, exactly what I want to pray. And I think many young Christians find that liturgy feels constricting and dry. And this is somebody else's framework.

And I want to say it's like a suit of clothes, which has been handed down from an older brother or whatever, that actually you'll find as you grow into this. It'll be comfortable and you'll be at home there. Final question from Elizabeth in Northern Ireland.

She says, I heard a sermon that we need to give God permission to act through prayer. They said he can't do anything on earth unless we ask him to. I totally disagree.

We would like to know what you have to say about this. God doesn't need our permission to do it each other or once. However, as I said, it seems that the way God has made the world is such as to give humans the dignity of sharing agency.

And of course, God can override, overrule and just as well. Because if everything that had to happen today in this city, whatever, was the result of someone's prayers, there's a lot of things which would just stop dead in their tracks because nobody happened to be praying about it. It's very odd.

I understand that the preacher in question was overstating a point in order to say, don't just hang back and assume that if God is God, he's going to do it anyway. You'd really well pray about it. Yeah.

And just as we close out, something that I have more and more been drawn towards is the theology of the idea of us being involved at some level in a sort of a cosmic warfare. And our prayers are being joined if you like in that movement of God's kingdom. But there is another kingdom pressing against that.

So when we don't perhaps always see the answers we would like to our prayers. We've got to remember it's a battleground and we don't see victory in every battle in the war. I would put together that scene from Gethsemane where Jesus is absolutely up against it and sweating drops of blood and so on.

Deeply, this is not the sort of calm mystical, easy access. This is absolutely up against the wall. Put that together with Ephesians chapter 6 where Paul talks about our struggle being with Prince Balthus and powers and where the weapon of all prayer is one of the weapons in the spiritual warfare.

And one of the things that I think I've learned is that often that's going on when we don't really think it is, that we just were doing something that seems to be ordinary and it may be only later we look back and say, oh my goodness, that was what was at stake there. Some real major issue going on. One can get, I don't know how to put this.

As you can see, one can get so overexcited about this. So, oh, you know, on the Christian soldiers marching as to war, let's go. And I won't say this is a messy war.

It's dark. The enemy does not play fair. There's no Geneva Convention in spiritual warfare.

And so often, the things we have to do are to hang in there when it's tough. In *Scruté Balthus*, Louis has scrutéed the senior devil saying to Wormwood the junior devil, make no mistake, our cause, that is the devil's cause, is never more in danger than when a human being, here's the phrase, no longer desiring but still intending to do God's will, looks out on the universe from which every trace of him seems to have been removed, asks why he has been forsaken and still obeys. And that's obviously a picture of Jesus on the cross.

But Louis is turning it into an image of what it's like when we're praying. When no longer desiring but still intending. That's a wonderful phrase.

Absolutely. A great place to conclude but perhaps as it's, this particular episode is about prayer. It seems to make sense perhaps to conclude with prayer.

So John I wonder if you would just lead a brief prayer. Perhaps for anyone listening who themselves is struggling with prayer or who would like to, in some way, there are issues in their life which they've struggled to pray through and to see God's hand at work and perhaps you could pray for that. Sure, let's pray.

Gracious Father you make us in your image so that we can reflect your love into the world and so that as we do that we can know that love in ourselves. I pray for my brothers and sisters around the world as we all learn to pray, as we all learn to be kingdom people, to be image bearers, to be intentional about standing before you with the needs of your world on our hearts. Pray that you will take us as we are, very different from one another, different personalities, different backgrounds, different temperaments, but use us by your spirit to be part of the great movement of prayer, part of the great breath of the spirit, blowing in the world, catching us up within it.

Teach us to pray. Take us each one of us from where we are to where you would have us be. Grow us spiritually.

Make us people of faith, people of prayer, people of hope so that through our prayers in ways perhaps that we'll never even see except just glimpse occasionally. Your will may be done and your kingdom come. We pray in Jesus' name.

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