

Knocking on Heaven's door

Shaping the '80s through all-night prayer

“ The love, yearning, hope and prayers that were prayed were powerful and touching— full of faith and infused with God's presence. ”

The Christians on campus were a fairly unified bunch in the late 1970s and early '80s, and were organized under the banner of “Carleton Christian Fellowship,” or CCF as it was affectionately known.

Stories of revival and God's move on campus and in Northfield in the early '70s, partly as a result of the Jesus People Movement that had swept the nation during the Vietnam era, fueled our imaginations that God could and would continue to touch our campus in a big way.

As a group, we were faithful to meet in Bible studies and prayer meetings and hold outreach events. We also took on professors who were “hostile” to Christ. We were standing up for Jesus, even if it meant getting lower grades!

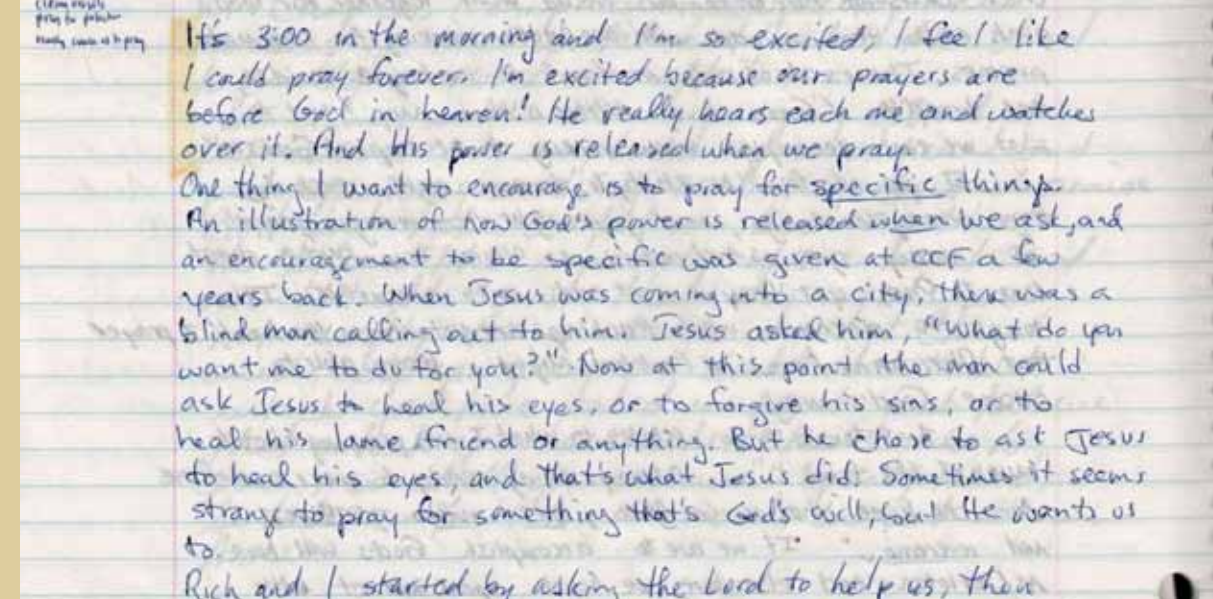
Then in the spring of 1982 several of us seniors, seeing that our time at Carleton was coming to a close, decided to float the idea of having

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all-night prayer meetings seven days a week for the entire term. We would start at 11 p.m. and end at 7 o'clock each morning. We would try to recruit seven teams of two to pray all night one night a week. To our surprise, the idea caught on quickly despite the sacrifice required and busy study schedules. Soon we had our seven teams ready to “knock on Heaven” for God's blessing.

The execution was simple and heartfelt. Each team met in the dorm room of one of the partners, and began seeking the Lord and praying for the campus. There was no set agenda except to be led by God. There was Bible reading and singing. “Mini-naps” were taken by one person while the other was awake to pray.

It was a true prayer vigil, a true prayer watch. The grace upon each team to stay up all night was truly amazing. Nearly every team gave witness to how they had received the su-



Above: Students who prayed all night during spring term 1982 kept a journal that they handed off each night.

pernatural ability to stay alert, vigilant and engaged in prayer.

One wonderful aspect of these “all-nighters” was that all seven teams kept a single unified journal. Each team would write down what they prayed, what God was speaking to them and how they met the Lord, and then would pass the journal on to the next team for the next night. This way each team could draw on what God was speaking to the prayer team from the previous evening, and carry on any themes that seemed to be overarching. I still have this journal in my possession. It actually should be part of some record or archive, as the thoughts and prayers recorded are so precious.

The love, yearning, hope and prayers that were prayed were powerful and touching—full of faith and infused with God's presence.

Did we see a revival as a result of our “knocking on Heaven”? For those of us who were seniors, graduation

took us away from Carleton, so we weren't there to witness or nurture any awakenings that might have followed.

Connections with the underclassmen the following year seemed to indicate things were healthy but still “quiet.” Nevertheless, the result was in God's hands. The important thing was that we were inspired by the Lord to seek Him and water the ground for a future work.

It was our joy and privilege to give ourselves to Him in prayer. We trust Carleton will answer when God decides to knock. ♦

Rich Kao '83 founded Five Stones Church in Vancouver, BC, in 2003 after pastoring in Minneapolis, MN, for 12 years. With a passion for missions, leadership and church planting, Rich is focused on raising up the next generation of Great Commission workers. He and wife Memie have four children.

