

Prayer Walk Among Idol Worshipers, Taiwan

I. Background Information

For more than two centuries, *Ma-Tsu*, the idol known as the Chinese goddess of the sea, has annually traveled a 328km (208 miles) pilgrimage across Taiwan to proclaim its superiority over other gods. This ancient rite covers 5 counties and 17 townships with 1 million people participating in religious rituals and traditional dance. Carried in a sedan chair, the idol visits each temple stretching from the city of Da-Jia to Hsing-Kong to receive honorable recognition and reverential worship from religious and even political leaders.

Aside from the presence of temples, churches dating back to over 80-120 years of existence can be found in each town throughout the processional strip. However, local citizens have disregarded and undermined the importance and authority these churches hold. Not only do the locals view each institution as inferior or even insignificant, the churches themselves have held a poor image of their worth and value as a whole.

This negative perspective from the church has stemmed from the demonic powers binding God's children to believe in an outright lie. For centuries now, the power of darkness has left little room for the church to resist and come against this evil force with authority and power found in Jesus Christ. A tactic that has proven fatal to the advancement of the church has been interwoven in the culture that it is unclean and dangerous to touch anything found in temples. This deceptive scheme has hindered the power of the church to rise up and impact its given region.

Four years ago in a prayer meeting, God gave a divine revelation to a group of Christians that it was time for His Church to stand up in the midst of opposition found in idol worshippers. Their purpose for the next five years was to strategically begin to change the overall spiritual atmosphere through prayer walking during Taiwan's annual idol pilgrimage.

Mark Geppert and I were present in the prayer meeting and immediately felt that it was God's calling for the both of us to participate in this five year prayer walk strategy during each annual procession. And so our exciting journey begins...

II. Our Journey The First Year

The first year Mark and I were present at the idol processional, we were the only Christians deliberately contending for spiritual freedom and abundant blessing to rest on every person there. As we walked by the sedan chair carrying *Ma-Tsu*, we bound evil spirits and any other demonic influence that had wreaked havoc in days past. As we were going from temple to temple, the Lord wanted Mark and I to establish His Authority in each place we entered recognizing that we embodied the Ark of God and God's Presence was with us wherever we went. It is in who we are that enabled us to confidently walk with the Word, Manna, and Aaron's rod that had budded (Heb. 9:4). God also assured us

that these idol worshippers would soon bow down to the living God through us. Therefore, we stationed ourselves at the entrance of each temple for the troops to come two by two for what seemed to them as bowing down to the idols, but in actuality, they were bowing down to us. Aside from that, the Lord also led me to anoint the streets with oil and claim that every street/pathway we had walked belonged to Him.

Before Mark and I had entered each city, I felt the Lord urge me to proclaim that the gates of each city be opened up in the spiritual realm by blowing on my Shofar (*Ram's horn*). The prophetic blast symbolized that the King of Glory was coming into that city. A piece of scripture that the Lord had given me from that first prayer meeting directly correlated with this symbolic declaration; it came from Psalm 24:7-10.

7 Lift up your heads, O you gates! And be lifted up, you everlasting doors! And the King of glory shall come in.

8 Who is this King of glory? The LORD strong and mighty, The LORD mighty in battle.

9 Lift up your heads, O you gates! Lift up, you everlasting doors! And the King of glory shall come in.

10 Who is this King of glory? The LORD of hosts, He is the King of glory. Selah

While we were involved in that, a group of 8-10 Christians called Lion's Team physically knocked on almost every church door along the pilgrimage strip to inform them that God greatly cared for them. Their intention was to charge these churches to take action against idol worshipping by standing together as a church and in unison reach out to lost souls.

The outcome of the first year of prayer walking bore much fruit. After the week long processional march, Mark and I witnessed significant shifts in attitudes and in receptiveness. There were different churches that had started to develop networks and implement various prayer groups in their respective regions.

At a service held several days later, churches even collaborated in worship where it became evident that hearts were opening to receive what God was doing and going to do next. When the opportunity came, I prophesied the scripture from Psalms and declared that in the midst of idol worshippers, churches outside of their region were going to send missionaries to train and support these local churches in worship and in evangelism. What took place the first year continued to thrive and God built upon that during the second year.

III. The Second Year

Several days before the idol pilgrimage/prayer walk began, 120 saints from different churches gathered to receive training from Mark and I. I was greatly encouraged because compared to the first year our prayer walker base of 2 had significantly grown. In order to equip and be prepared for the days ahead, Mark conducted training sessions that involved teaching from God's Word and praying in faith for God to intercede on our behalf.

The Lord gave me Isaiah 45:1-7 to share during the training period before prayer walking.

1 Thus saith the LORD to his anointed, to Cyrus, whose right hand I have holden, to subdue nations before him; and I will loose the loins of kings, to open before him the two leaved gates; and the gates shall not be shut;

2 I will go before thee, and make the crooked places straight: I will break in pieces the gates of brass, and cut in sunder the bars of iron:

3 And I will give thee the treasures of darkness, and hidden riches of secret places, that thou mayest know that I, the LORD, which call thee by thy name, am the God of Israel.

4 For Jacob my servant's sake, and Israel mine elect, I have even called thee by thy name: I have surnamed thee, though thou hast not known me.

5 I am the LORD, and there is none else, there is no God beside me: I girded thee, though thou hast not known me:

6 That they may know from the rising of the sun, and from the west, that there is none beside me. I am the LORD, and there is none else.

7 I form the light, and create darkness: I make peace, and create evil: I the LORD do all these things.

In this verse, the Lord is calling our names, backing us up and shattering the gates for us. We are then to lift up a banner with his name to claim his victories.

Also in Isaiah 45:14, 15

14 The labor of Egypt and merchandise of Cush And of the Sabeans, men of stature, Shall come over to you, and they shall be yours; They shall walk behind you, They shall come over in chains; And they shall bow down to you. They will make supplication to you, saying, 'Surely God is in you, And there is no other; There is no other God.'"

15 Truly You are God, who hide Yourself, O God of Israel, the Savior!

This verse depicts a people that were once in bondage bringing their spoils unto the Lord as an act of surrender and acknowledgement that God is the only one worthy to worship. It also prophesies the secret treasures hidden in the kingdom of God. These two passages were shared to encourage and strengthen everyone that there is no one like our God and that He has gone before us.

When we had arrived to begin our prayer walk, we observed a significant decrease in the number of idol worshippers. The processional participants even noticed our presence and directly asked us what our purpose in being involved in this event was. This opened up many opportunities to share our faith and bless people in the power of God.

To sum up the second year, it was a time we established many relationships. Various connections were established that led to many conversions during the following year. What had been prophesied during the second year began unfolding during the third year.

IV. The Third Year

The third year's training period took place every night of the procession. Mark and I mainly taught them how to fish and to first identify the bait or lure (need) of the people. It was important to figure out what the bait was because most idol worshippers only walked in the procession because they sought after blessings and to satisfy unmet needs such as physical sickness, financial struggles, family or spiritual fulfillment. Upon identifying the need, we then taught them how to approach that particular fish; we gave illustrations of long and short lines. The long line represented that after the bait is cast, connections should be kept and to wait for the right time to draw in the catch. To simply put it, reaping time wouldn't be immediate. The short lines represented that the fish is ready and can be hooked on to soon reel in. A real life long line example that we had shared involved our friend, the monk. (*See Article – The Monk*)

As we began prayer walking, a good number of idol worshippers recognized us from the past two years. Along several junctions of the rural highway, I stood and played drums for half an hour and people sporadically asked if I was changing the atmosphere. It became evident that people were noticing the difference of our presence. Again, we discovered that the number of idol worshippers decreased and I was able to specifically pray over a 1,000 children passing by.

This year was indeed harvest time. Among the relationships that were established during the second year, 45 people got saved. The main focus of the third year was based around Luke 10, which was to pronounce peace, actively pray for people and tell them that the Kingdom of God is near.

V. The Fourth Year

Presently, this is our fourth year of prayer walking. We have observed significant changes among the idol worshippers and within the surrounding churches. Among the people in the processional, the number of participants dramatically reduced to less than a quarter of a million people. Mark and I surveyed people in various towns to discover that many former participants had gradually lost the desire and interest to be involved. In certain sections of the rural highway junctions, we witnessed on average more prayer walkers than idol worshippers.

Even in the political realm, their views on the pilgrimage shifted from a hugely celebrated religious festival to a lesser significant cultural event. Also a new law was implemented to prohibit mediums from performing bloody rituals on the streets. This event has now become part of Taiwan's historical background rather than a present practice.

Another shift we observed involved the chairman of the whole procession. As a well-known gangster, a head legislator and a temple trustee many have been adversely affected by his absence in important events and meetings. His lack of attendance stirred chaotic

revolts amongst his supporters because without a leader at the head, there is no order. Different gangsters representing different territories broke out in fights and various disputes. I was able to share with people the spiritual significance and insight into what was taking place in the natural. God was beginning to shake the cracked foundation of the top leaders of the organizers of the procession. The fact that this pilgrimage is run by gangsters demonstrated the darkness involved. However, many responded to this insight by pointing out that churches were no different.

On a different thought, this past December a monumental occurrence unfolded in one of the largest temples in Taiwan; a temple trustee pulled out five major idols and obliterated them. The temple administrator made an announcement on the streets to simply state that *Ma-Tsu* no longer lived there. However, two months later, the same temple that had renounced *Ma-Tsu*'s reign replaced her with a newly made idol.

On a brighter note, in several cities of the region, prayer and worship centers have emerged and church leaders unite there to regularly pray and worship together. In addition, various training sessions have taken place in other regions throughout the year.

The Lord gave me the following verses that can be found in Isaiah 62:10-12.
It's for churches to pick up their responsibilities...

10 Go through, go through the gates; prepare ye the way of the people; cast up, cast up the highway; gather out the stones; lift up a standard for the people.

11 Behold, the LORD hath proclaimed unto the end of the world, Say ye to the daughter of Zion, Behold, thy salvation cometh; behold, his reward is with him, and his work before him.

12 And they shall call them, The holy people, The redeemed of the LORD: and thou shalt be called, Sought out, A city not forsaken.

Walls between the cities will be destroyed.

Mark and I have one more year to witness what God is going to do in Taiwan. I will post an update on the upcoming events when the time comes.

IV. The Fifth and Final Year

To be continued...