

PRAYER IS THE MIGHTIEST FORCE • II CHRON. 7:14



Challenging Christians to Pray — March 2008

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*“Intercessors are like eagles, they don’t flock,
you find them one at a time.”*

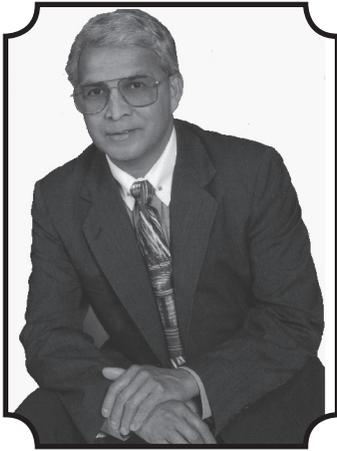
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REVIVAL
with Matthew Skariah

March 16-23, 2008
Friendship Baptist Church
32 Liberty Hill Road
Highland, Arkansas
Mike Stanley Pastor

March 26-30, 2008
Immanuel Baptist Church
1915 E. 3rd Street
Tulsa, Oklahoma
Don Queen, Pastor



Mathew Skariah

Pillow Prophets

It is no exaggeration to say that our beloved nation is in a moral and spiritual quandary, and we desperately need God in an hour such as this or we are sunk. When moral and spiritual decay permeate society, people of faith and prayer put on the armor of God and ready to fight for the souls of men and women that Christ died for. Our world is in a tail spin and it is desperately crying out for the voice of a wounded prophet who can clear the deck and strike at the very heart of our wanton culture. The more prosperous nations become, they tend to sin and rebel and sin brings shame and hopelessness. When God's people are confronted with a litany of social and moral problems, they long for the visitation of the holy One of Israel.

Currently, in America, we've too many "pillow prophets" who couch their messages in order to appease a generation of materialists who undermine the basic tenets of the Christian faith. One popular preacher on television dislikes the word sin. Instead of the word "sin," he prefers the less offensive terms "faults and weaknesses." Beloved, Jesus died on the cross to redeem a fallen race. On the cross sin worked its worst and love worked its best. *"Sin and the sense of sin will always be with us,"* writes Julian Huxley. St. Augustine wrote: *"If man had not sinned, the Son of Man would not have come."* Beloved, Christian history is on our side, and don't let the present day "pillow prophets" bamboozle you with their oily charm.

The New Agers never acknowledge the inherent nature of sin; they claim that they are not sinners and therefore they don't need a Savior. When we reject original sin, we reject God.

"Pillow preaching" is Christianity without the cross. The cross is the ultimate balance. We must go to the cross for forgiveness and cleansing. David said, "Against Thee, Thee only, have I sinned." God does forgive sin, and sin brings conviction and conviction is the work of the Holy Spirit in response to the cry of the penitent sinner. It is "shallow theology" to say that God forgives because He is love. The love of God means the cross; and anything less than Calvary's love is pseudo-love.

The criteria in which God forgives sin is through the atonement of Christ. On the cross love was satisfied and perfected when Jesus, the Son of God became the Son of Man. As preachers, we are commissioned to preach the "Gospel of Redemption" whether it is fashionable or not. The world doesn't need a therapist; it needs a Savior, and only the Savior of the world can save the world. If a preacher thinks his function only is to cajole, amuse and entertain, he should have never accepted the call of God. When we're in a spiritual melee, we wrap ourselves with vapid "socials," or shallow "Bible studies" where the goal is to explain away spiritual truths by focusing on "human relationship therapy, temperaments, psychology, crass materialism, politically correct taboos," etc., to appear ourselves as religious but denying the power of God. What happens when the glory departs from the church? The answer is all too familiar, we go after "handsome Assyrians" and "Egyptian studs" (Ezekiel 23), we have very little affection left for our beloved Savior.

Today's church is facing a formidable challenge from the entertainment and technological world. Technology has become the world's new religion. Gospel entertainment is the golden calf of many evangelical Christians today. Much of what goes on in the name of worship is the craze for entertainment, and no wonder we've created a night-club atmosphere in the house of the Lord. Jim Frankel, columnist for the Cleveland Press, said, *"If and when American civilization collapses, historians of a future date can look back and sneer, they entertained themselves to death."* But if we prefer such indictment in a religious tone, well, here is what Dr. A.W. Tozer, a 20th century prophet said, *"America is laughing her way to hell."* The Europeans need another Luther. England needs

another Wesley. America needs another Finney to strike at the very conscience of this nation with the preaching that is profoundly disturbing and downright convicting.

A baptism of holiness, a distinctive and Christ-filled lifestyle are the crying need of the hour! Can we experience heaven's outpouring without the abdication of the self-life? Today our churches are filled with environmental worshipers who consider their worship merely a performance rather than being in the presence of Jehovah God. Why not a Bible conference on dying to self? Why pursue one shoe-fit-all approach? Where did originality go? Every pastor should develop a prayer life that will caterpillar his church into the very throne of God instead of implementing popular book study as a viable alternative to heaven's outpouring. We profess to be the people of God, but serve our own gods, and promote our own agenda.

Our churches are more prosperous today than at any time within the past several hundred years. But the shocking reality is that our gains are mostly external and our losses wholly spiritual (internal). There is a benign condition that does exist in the church today and that needs to

be addressed. I see the creation of "generic god" and most everything is done in a generic way that fits into the psychological profile of the modern day worshiper. Are we losing our capacity to gaze upon the holiness of God? Why is it so difficult for us to see ourselves as God sees? We have learned to live with sin and it does not bother us anymore. We sing His praise, but shun His holiness.

The spiritual problem is deeper and more revealing—there is not enough heartbreak over the prevailing moral conditions, not enough spiritual passion, not enough soul-travail, not enough anguish and weeping and fasting and crying. The Christians of yester years pitched their tents and built brush arbors and sang sacred hymns and testified and prayed for wisdom and strength. But today, we have become promoters of "temperament theology" and the gospel of prosperity. Let's not "scrupulously confine" ourselves to the preaching of the good life, instead of the godly life! We must have the courage to remain rooted in a moral and spiritual permanence. *To all God's true prophets, I say, let's keep on serving our Lord, until we receive the final summons to come home!*

Biblical preaching must produce a wistful longing for righteousness in the heart of the hearers and a disdain for evil. Sad to say that modern Christianity has become a means to make ourselves feel good without being good.

SPEAKING PRAYERFULLY by Matthew Skariah

Many trust God up to a point, then they go back to the basic panic prayers of those who do not know God as Father, Friend and gracious Benefactor.

Those who walk with God always pray in sheer confidence, knowing that their God is in control and they do not sit around and wring their hand about the ever-changing world conditions. The sign of true love and devotion to God is the desire to remain with Him, and an undeniable trust and confidence in His care which nothing can shake or alter.

When Christians become truly prayerful, they become positive, upbeat and caring. Believing prayers of God's faithful remnant have proven to be a powerful atom

in the battle for a generation that is fed on tantalizing and tawdry entertainment and social puffery. Oswald Chambers, the prolific devotional writer was profound when he wrote: *Climbing in the spirit is accomplished by kneeling, and not by running; by surrender, and not by determination.*

Panic Prayers

When everything goes into total eclipse, remember that Jesus is with us and He alone is our anchorage. Though heaven and earth pass, Jesus lives, and He holds the key to your situation and mine. Our God reigns supreme and He is with us, and all He asks that we take the hand that stretches out. Remember, we're loved by our God, irreplaceable in His sight, unique among our fellow men.

God's plan for our lives is undefeatable. So be still, and revel in His presence. Stand in awe! All is safe when God is around. Wonders are unfolding. Glory is ahead of us.

Man is entrenched in nameless fears and worries. Most worries and fears are just worries and fears, and nothing more. The world has become one wild jungle where people run around in the name of progress and do their thing without regard to the One Who created them. If we do not have any respect for the Creator, then how can we have respect for the creation?

The present generation is afraid to look back with wisdom. We madly rush forward and call it progress.

PUNCHLINE

by Matthew Skariah

Fatal Thinking

Without humility and love for the Creator, society will crumble the bottom up. When man begins to doubt his origin he lost his way.

Our faith in God grows deeper as we recognize the greatness of God. We have lost the primacy of faith in a ridiculous proportion. The foundation of our faith is based on a promise. God has promised He would never *leave us nor forsake us*. Let our faith be less of a theory and more of a living reality. Let faith resonate!

"God is not in need of anything, but all things are in need of Him."

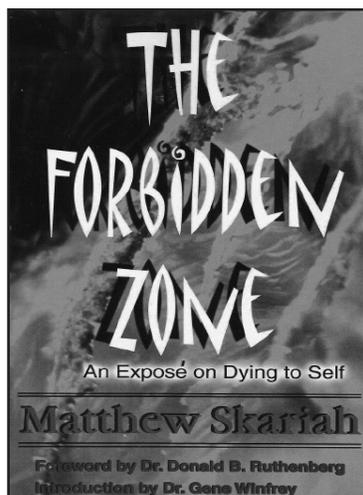
Marcus Aristides



WHY THIS BOOK?

Step into the ZONE and see what God does!

There are tons and tons of religious books out there. Why another one? To answer that question, may I ask: *When was the last time you read a book on 'dying to self'?* Of course you know the answer.



If you're serious about dying to self, *The Forbidden Zone* is the book you need to read. No Christian wants to attend his own funeral, and yet that's what "dying to self" is all about. This book contains no ivory tower spiritual taboos. No fluff. No bluff. No pablum. No pat answers. Just unvarnished biblical truths that are relevant to our spiritual survival.

The Author

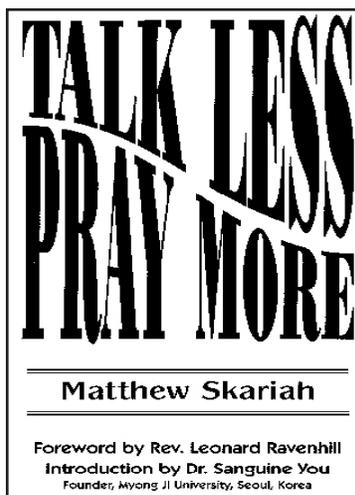
This book is a follow-up on the previous books by this prolific author that while salvation is free, it comes at a price on the part of our Savior and on our part.

Dr. Donald B. Ruthenberg
Former President, Columbia College

If you want to learn how to excavate self and experience God's presence, then *The Forbidden Zone* is for you.

Gene Winfrey, Th.D.

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Sanguine You, Ph. D., LL.D.
Founder, Myong-Ji University
Seoul, South Korea

Talk Less and Pray More is a stunning, thought provoking, revelatory writing on prayer. It moved me to tears and challenged me to take my prayer life to a new level. Those who read it will never be the same. This book has literally changed my life.

Joy Bollinger, Author

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