

Spiritual warfare: At the World Prayer Center

by [Riley Edwards-Raudonat](#) in the [October 6, 1999](#) issue

I thought the reference to the queen of heaven might mean Mary, but it turned out I was wrong. A glance at commentaries on Jeremiah 7:18 revealed that she was the Assyro-Babylonian Ishtar, the goddess of war and fertility introduced to Judah by King Manasseh. At the World Prayer Center in Colorado Springs, Colorado, the queen of heaven is viewed as "one of the most powerful spirits in Satan's hierarchy," according to WPC president C. Peter Wagner. For Wagner and the WPC, confronting the queen of heaven with the proclamation that Jesus Christ is Lord is a central and defining task.

The organization's zeal is apparent when one walks into the WPC "observatory." Hanging from the ceiling is a sword, which represents the power of prayer, a weapon that will be used to wage war against the queen of heaven and other evils.

The needed "ammunition" can be obtained just across the hallway from the observatory in the Arsenal Bookstore. There, neatly divided into sections such as "spiritual warfare" and "deliverance," are the books that spell out the task. Titles include *The Mighty Warrior*, *Commitment to Conquer*, *The Three Battlegrounds*, *Evicting Demonic Intruders*, *A Manual for Children's Deliverance*, *Spiritual Protection* and the all-encompassing *Handbook for Spiritual Warfare*.

In some ways, the World Prayer Center is reminiscent of the United Nations. The huge and handsomely appointed building houses the Global Harvest Ministries, the Wagner Institute for Practical Ministry and the Christian Information Network. Like the UN building, it is surrounded by the flags of many nations. Inside, walls are lined with maps of the world and the U.S. A large, up-to-date atlas gives the visitor a closer look at any of the world's countries. A battery of computers set to Web site < <http://www.wpcas.org>> allows the visitor to call up the current political, social and religious situation in any country around the globe. A globe 15 feet in diameter rotates slowly on its axis (one revolution per hour) at the front of the WPC's 500-seat

auditorium. The world is within one's reach, ready to be engulfed in WPC's "prayer power."

The WPC is a central command station from which worldwide prayer battles are waged. Military terminology is pervasive. Consider the task of the "Eagles of God" as outlined in an issue of *Prayer Track News*, a newsletter of the Global Harvest Ministries: "The Eagles of God will be the World Prayer Center rapid deployment forces. They will be a small, highly trained, well-conditioned, risk-taking contingency of experienced intercessors who can embark on strategic prayer journeys at a moment's notice. God has commissioned the World Prayer Center to build a core of 30 seasoned strategic-level intercessors, including six prayer journey leaders, as this first-ever rapid deployment force."

When the "spiritual radar screens" of the WPC detect a pressing prayer need, the Eagles are on an airplane within 48 hours, headed to meet their colleagues wherever they may be and to pray on site. This is spiritual war.

The aim of the WPC is to use modern communication technology to amass prayer power. Prayer concerns are "beamed out" within minutes after reception, so that a wide network of people all over the world can commence praying simultaneously for divine intervention on the matter at hand.

This harnessing of spiritual power is not necessarily aimed "against" anyone. The Web site entry on Rwanda, for example, calls for forgiveness and reconciliation, not further conflict. Prayer activity is linked with the work of World Vision International, the international relief organization.

I could hardly be against prayer for places like Rwanda, where violence continues to occur and is often perpetuated by Christians upon fellow Christians. Yet I found it difficult, if not impossible, to accept the WPC format for prayer. The quasi-military strategies evoke the image of a powerful God whose interdiction can be summoned by his followers at a moment's notice. Am I to assume that if Christians in Germany and the world over had only prayed harder, networked by computers, Hitler could have been stopped before the evil had been done, that the 50 million lives lost in World War II could have been saved? I cannot. Conjuring up the image of an almighty "Mr. Fix-it" God is anachronistic. We cannot expect that God will quickly "right the ship" if only we are willing to pray hard enough.

We must pray. We need to focus our thoughts on God, express our failings to God and ask for forgiveness. We must ask God to empower us for the task at hand. But we must face the evil of this world ourselves, one prayer and one step at a time.