

# **SPIRIT TRACKING**

This is the first edition of the book *Spirit Tracking* which was published hard copy in 2001. A major revision, in which about half the book will be changed, is due out in late Summer 2011 and will be published online.

**This e-book is available as a download for \$3.00. Like the old vegetable stands where they leave out a box for cash, it's on the honor system.**

The originally planned non profit (Prayer Tracker) mentioned in this book did not materialize however plans are currently being made for a new testing center to carry on the tests mentioned in this book. The original publisher, the Grayhaven Center, no longer exists but is being changed into the new research center. More information will be in the new revised edition.

A short murder mystery called *The Prayer Tracker* is the fiction companion to this non-fiction book and is available online now for \$3.00. The original research, in a book called *The Spindrift Papers*, is also available online. If you would like a link sent to these files or if you would like to be on my mailing list send me an e-mail.

All money collected from downloads of books will go to a testing center to carry on the research. Thank you.

Deborah Klingbeil

Grayhaven's motto  
as found beneath its logo  
on the front cover  
is taken from  
Deuteronomy 32:2 (KJV)

“as the small rain upon the tender herb . . .”

# SPIRIT TRACKING

By Deborah Klingbeil

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Hard copy was printed and bound in the United States of America by Thomson-Shore, Inc., Dexter, Michigan

Formatted by Joseph Rozanski

First Edition

Published by the  
Grayhaven Center

ISBN 0-9714208-0-7



This book is dedicated to my dad,  
Bruce Klingbeil,  
in deep gratitude  
for the trust in good that he gave me,  
and for having encouraged and nurtured  
my capacity to love from an early age.

## Table of Contents

Foreword .....	i
Chapter 1: Tracking the Wind.....	i
Chapter 2: The Beginning of the Trail.....	10
Chapter 3: Building a Blind in the Woods.....	19
Chapter 4: GR Prayer Tracks.....	25
Chapter 5: IR Prayer Tracks.....	32
Chapter 6: The Prayer Tracks of Mice and Men.....	43
Chapter 7: God's Middle Name.....	51
Chapter 8: The Silent Song of the Prayer Tracker....	58
Chapter 9: Adorable Math.....	63
Chapter 10: By the Numbers.....	68
Chapter 11: Concentric Circles.....	82
Chapter 12: Making Prayer Tracking Accessible.....	96
Chapter 13: The Man who Prayed for Trees.....	103
Chapter 14: Prayer Tracking With Adults.....	112
Chapter 15: Prayer Tracker Jr. ....	127
Chapter 16: Hands-on Experiences.....	147
Chapter 17: When the Trail Leaves the Physical.....	166
Chapter 18: Conclusion.....	178

## Foreword

In my religious tradition, silent individual prayer - the struggle for good or evil in a single human heart - is the core of spiritual healing. The solitary nature of such prayer needs to be balanced by constant connections to the larger prayer community, and I am grateful to my friends, of all faith traditions, for this. I would never have written this book without friends. They gave me help, as well as encouragement.

I have five volunteer editors who helped immensely with this book. I want to thank Linda Bestor Ph.D., Betty Brenneman, Joe Rozanski, Annette Wishner and Birrell Walsh Ph.D. for their editing, and for the donation of their time.

Besides her work in helping to edit this book, Linda Bestor is also the artist who created Grayhaven's logo, which is featured in this book at the beginning of each chapter and on the cover.

Betty Brenneman has been helpful in marketing, and in bringing together the network of people needed to create this book. She also funded the entire project.

Joe Rozanski created a database for the mailing list, and formatted the entire book, text and graphics. He also answered my computer questions.

Annette Wishner handled all our printing quotes, communications, and questions, along with her editing.

Birrell Walsh not only made many detailed positive suggestions concerning the book, he is also

the one who inspired the use of the tracking theme as the main metaphor in this book.

I would also like to thank my friend Susan Jaimes for her open-hearted generosity in inviting me to use her woodland home, the Three Jewels, a year ago. Not only did I find healing and renewal in this refuge, and wonderful tracks, but there also the first seed of this book was planted.

There are many people who have encouraged me to write this book and I would like to thank them all. My name on the cover is merely a formality. This book was written for, by, and with, friends.

I would like to thank Jerome, for bringing back memories of my grandpa, and sitting next to me in gentle companionable silence while I worked on this book.

I would also like to thank the people in Racine County, Wisconsin (though they will probably never read this book) who worked so hard and so unselfishly to help Jerome come home. They have created a caring community in which I feel encouraged to work to bring healing to our health care system as a whole.

Finally, I want to give special thanks, from my heart, to Jacqueline Olsen Curty, who has been a sister to me. Only she knows all I have to thank her for.

Thank you everyone.

Deborah Klingbeil

September 2001





## Chapter One

### Tracking the Wind

*"The first track is the end of a string. At the far end, a being is moving, a mystery, dropping a hint about itself every so many feet, telling you more about itself until you can almost see it, even before you come to it. The mystery reveals itself slowly, track by track . . . It will tell you the intimate details until you know the maker of the track like a lifelong friend. The mystery leaves itself like a trail of breadcrumbs, and by the time your mind has eaten its way to the maker of the tracks, the mystery is inside you, part of you forever. The tracks . . . show how much more you have become than what you were."*

From the book, *The Tracker, The Story of Tom Brown Jr.*,  
as told to William Jon Watkins,  
Prentice-Hall, 1978

I was born in the north woods of Wisconsin before the wolves all died. We didn't live there long. We moved to Skokie, Illinois, a suburb of Chicago. My childhood was filled with trips back to northern Wisconsin, to visit relatives. I knew the difference between coyote tracks and wolf tracks before I could read.

My dad loved the woods, and would walk in them for hours, but people didn't think of him as the outdoorsy type. He had a tall but slight build. He was gentler and much quieter than any of the women in my family. My mom loved football and would shout herself hoarse cheering for the Chicago Bears. My dad didn't follow football, and I never heard him raise his voice.

My dad had no interest in sports, didn't fish or hunt, was obviously bookish, and didn't tinker with cars. It was hard to buy a Father's day card for him. They always looked like they were for someone else's dad.

Despite this, the hunters and sportsmen respected my dad because he knew how to track. I don't know where he learned. He taught me to track, (though I was never more than an average tracker), and he used it as a metaphor for prayer.

The year my grandpa died we spent a lot of time at grandpa's home on Little Spider Lake near Rhineland-er, Wisconsin. My dad spent the summer teaching me to track the fragile daddy long-legs which were so abundant. He bought me a magnifying glass that I kept grandly in a fake leather pouch.

I remember the excitement of that rare occurrence of finding a full set of tracks, with all eight legs, clear and distinct. Usually we had to track these extraordinary creatures less through their footprints and more by the traces of minute alterations they made in their tiny environments.

My dad never instilled fear in me, and for this I have been increasingly grateful over the years. As an adult I learned that things could hurt, and I had to deal with fear. I have been able to deal with it more easily than many people, because I never felt childhood's terror.

My dad taught me the beautiful side of spiders and snakes. His concrete knowledge of the goodness of God outweighed nightmares, fear of the dark, scary movies, and the boogie man, all which he hugged away with genuine and irresistible joy.

He certainly never taught me to fear God. I grew up utterly comfortable with the vast power of an Almighty being. I was taught to feel at home with all things that God created.

My dad wouldn't teach me to pray until I could sit quietly for three minutes. He wouldn't teach me to track until I could do the same. The two were connected in my mind. How hard it was at that age. I made it up to two minutes several times before I ruined everything with a wiggle or a sigh.

My dad taught me that praying was like getting birds to eat out of your hand. You had to be quiet and still, then they would come to you. In prayer you had to listen, and observe, instead of talking - instead of

walking through the woods stirring up a dust. Then God's thoughts, like the wild birds, would come to you and teach you everything you needed to know.

One of the first lessons I learned was the difference between chasing and tracking. One winter I saw a weird track in the snow and took off after it, sure I would find some strange animal. I spent an exhausting half-hour before discovering that I was tracking the cardboard wrapper of a six-pack. The holes punched in the cardboard made an interesting track.

Had I spent even five minutes studying the track I would have known that nothing alive could have made it. I had been carried away by the thrill of the chase, and had forgotten my first lessons.

My dad was a healer. He was a Christian Science practitioner and he healed the sick through prayer, for a living. He was a rare beast himself, and he knew how to find elusive things. He taught me never to chase a physical healing. "The healing will come to you, don't run after it" he would say.

When you track in prayer, you take the time to study the marks God leaves in the world, big and little. In doing this you learn so much about the nature of God, divine Love, that you become one with that Love.

The book, *The Tracker*, talks about how we cannot track where a bird flies. Only when a bird touches down for a moment can we see her tracks. By studying those tracks, we will learn more of the path she takes in the air. The book reads:

Birds are always mysteries. They leave their track in the air most of the time and I don't have the nose to follow it. Their tracks on the ground were irresistible. . . .The tracks painted in the living picture of a bird, a picture indistinct at first but clearer with every track.

My dad told me the Holy Ghost moved with grace, like a bird. He always used the old language of the King James Bible, which I grew up with. Today most people would say Holy Spirit. My dad often quoted a poem I have forgotten, about the white wings of the Holy Ghost. The actual word once translated “Ghost” and now translated “Spirit”, is *pneuma*, which means wind or breath.

How can you track the wind? How can you track the breath of God? By watching what happens when it moves.

We cannot see the breath of God, but we can see the incarnate power of Love, which is always moving in the world and which sometimes touches down to leave the track of a physical healing. Such incarnations, those “visible signs of invisible grace”, are, in Biblical language, “signs following” (Mark 16:20). They are tracks, and they teach us about the nature of divine Love. They teach us about God, just like a bird's track on the ground teaches us of its flight.

### *Bones that Dance*

My dad also taught me a lot about bones. We were always finding old elk bones in the woods, some of them more than a thousand years old.

I love the Bible story of the old dry bones that get up and move. (Ezekiel 37) My dad taught me - and it never occurred to either of us that this might be irreverent - that the Bible stories were like a bunch of bones and that God could make the bones dance.

This was not a negative view of the Bible. We both really loved bones. My dad said the Bible wasn't the physical bones of physical people, it was the spiritual bones, the foundation and very structure of holy people who had lived in ancient times.

He said you could read through the Bible, like an archeologist digging through different layers of soil representing thousands of years, and you could piece together the bones, the actual internal structure or law of God, that underlies all spiritual healing. You could see how it all fit together, how the laws of God worked.

Daddy said that when you read the Bible with love, God (Love) would make the bones dance. The Bible would come to life for you, waltzing and spinning and doing a jig in your heart, until the bones of pure Love were fleshed out in a way special just for you.

The book *The Tracker* talks about bones. It also talks about death and the fact that our being is more than organic.

My grandpa was the first person that I loved who died. I remember my dad taking me out in the woods

and telling me that he had died. I was six years old and didn't know what death meant. Daddy said, "It means we have lost Grandpa's trail for now." I understood.

In this passage *The Tracker* speaks of skulls instead of bones, but with the same thought.

A skull is the ultimate track a creature leaves. When everything else has been unshaped by time, when every scratch and print is gone, the skull remains. When I find a skull it's as if I am standing within touch of the second greatest mystery in the universe, the mystery of where creatures go when they leave...the visible design of the invisible that we call Nature.

The place where you lose the trail is not necessarily the place where it ends. A lost trail always extends beyond the evidence, and even the trails we find are only fragments of the trails that lie beyond our comprehension. When the bird left my feeder and flew I could find him only by inference, but his trail went on after I lost it, and I believe it goes beyond the skull as well, although I have no idea what it is like or how to follow it.

The lessons in prayer and in tracking didn't stop when we came home from up north. Some of the most exciting tracking we ever did was on subways, and also in downtown Chicago. Chicago is a city where you can always hear jackhammers, like mammoth birdsong. It's a wonderful place to track life.

## *Tracking a town*

At home in Skokie my dad taught me to read sidewalks. Sidewalks, he said, were the track left by the town itself, a flowing fossilized river of the town's history.

It was the first time I had thought of a town, in other words a group of individuals as opposed to just one animal or person, as something that you could track.

From sidewalks I learned how the size of the lot lines had changed over the years. From their zigging and zagging I learned how the town had grown and where the first houses, the first cowpaths, the first footpaths, and even the old Indian trails, had been. I could picture the changing shape of the town as it emerged and grew.

I learned to read in the cement the traces of when and why sidewalks were patched, when there had been bad weather, or where there had once been a tree whose roots buckled the pavement.

I learned what kinds of materials were used to make sidewalks at different points in time. I learned to recognize the work of different cement layers. I found out why some sidewalks are good for roller-skating and why some aren't, and why some crack and why some don't. It has to do in part with the ground beneath the sidewalk. I learned a lot about the earth that the town thought that it had hidden under the cement.



From reading the actual words written by the sidewalk companies on their sidewalks, like the signature of an artist, I learned that the earliest remaining sidewalks had all been laid by Chicago companies, before Skokie was big enough to have a company of its own.

I learned that some old sidewalks came from a company in a town, which turned out to be Skokie, before Skokie was given the name Skokie. It must have been about that time that the town became big enough to support its own cement company. I used to look at the name of the company and wonder who started it, and if he did well.

Skokie is an old Indian name. My dad and I read about why the name was changed. We talked to elderly people who had voted for the change at a controversial meeting decades earlier.

We talked to a lot of people because people always stopped and wanted to know why we were crawling around on the sidewalk. We talked to people who had laid their own sidewalks. We made maps. We both stuck our bare feet in cement to leave prints whenever anyone would let us, which was more often than you might think. We sat on the ground and ran our hands over different kinds of sidewalks, until we could identify them with our eyes closed. People thought we were crazy.

I came away with an understanding of the town I lived in that no history book could ever have given me. I still love sidewalks and read them wherever I go.

From this early experience of tracking a town through its paths, it was natural for me to realize that cities, and towns, and not just people, leave paths. If you can track it you can pray for it. As an adult I found it very natural to pray for cities and towns, for forests and for rivers, as well as for individuals.

### *Prayer Trackers*

In the 1970's my family began doing prayer research. They began exploring the relationship of prayer to healing using the scientific method. They began praying for research organisms and tracking the results. It wasn't until then that I realized my dad had not just been using tracking as a metaphor. Spirit tracking, learning about the nature of God through the data tracks generated by prayer, was possible not parable.

Throughout this book, when I use the term prayer tracking, I mean the use of the scientific method to study the physical traces made by divine Love in the world. Prayer tracking is my word for what some people call prayer research; praying for a research organism under controlled conditions and then measuring the results.

The idea was not original. By the late 1960's mind/body studies were already being discussed. My dad had been very touched by the work of Sr. Justa Smith, a Catholic nun who was also a biologist and who had prayed for enzymes under controlled settings.

My dad quickly developed his own unique style of prayer tracking, which he called IR, or identity-referenced. IR prayer tracking embodies a lesson I learned as a child.

As a child I used to try to get my pets to leave tracks in play-dough. It isn't as easy as you might think to get a good track. I would press the dog's foot down only to have him jiggle and ruin the track. As for the parakeet, I never did get him to cooperate.

One day I got the idea of leaving the play-dough where my parakeet would walk over it by himself. I got a perfect track.

Many people track prayer by trying to insert God into some problem, by trying to press God to create a physical healing. My dad called this goal-referenced or GR, because it was done with a specific goal.

My dad's IR way of setting up a test of prayer didn't do this. He set up circumstances, like putting out soft earth, and waited to see how and when or if God moved. From studying the resulting data or track, he learned about God, and about prayer, and about healing.

For most people such learning is as remote as the knowledge of how to track animals in the woods. In this book I want to give people a peek into a world they might not know exists.

My dad taught me to track, both in the woods and in prayer. Both my dad and brother were Christian Science practitioners, experts in spiritual healing, not experts in the physical sciences. Though my dad taught himself several computer languages, and did

his own programming, and though my brother learned many scientific skills, their field of expertise remained prayer itself.

Books have been written recently which tell the scientific story of prayer research. This book tells of the religious journey.

Over a period of two decades my dad and brother tracked prayer. When they died in 1993 they left behind a record of their work called *The Spindrift Papers*. *The Spindrift Papers* is a series of pilot studies in their particular kind of prayer tracking.

This book is a personal record of my spiritual journey related to *The Spindrift Papers*.

I no longer live in the north woods of my birth. I live in a modest but beloved little farmhouse in Franksville, Wisconsin. I am blessed in that the house sits near the border of a wood and a field. Interfaces are great places. The best tracks are always found at the interface between one terrain and another.

I am also blessed to be living on the border of science and religion, to glimpse the interdependence of the truths that walk in each terrain.

It makes for great tracking.



## **Chapter Two**

### **The Beginning of the Trail**

I first prayed for soybeans when I was 25 years old. It was 1976. I was religiously cocky and I thought I knew a lot about prayer.

I had been raised in a religious family. My dad, a Christian Science practitioner or healer, was pioneering the field of prayer research within his vocation.

Prayer research is the use of the scientific method – the laboratory test - to study the relationship of prayer to healing. He had difficulty finding people willing to pray for his experiments, so he drafted me.

I had prayed in times of crisis, when I was too upset to speak. I had prayed for pure joy and thanks on golden sunlit mornings. I had prayed for my family, for children, and for world peace when I read the newspaper. I had prayed in church. I had said grace before meals, and prayers before bed, since I was a

toddler. I had prayed for the sick. I had prayed for my old dog when she was dying.

But when my dad asked me to pray for soybeans, as part of a prayer research experiment, where the results would be measured, I was stumped.

Soybeans are small, white, and hard. They bounce. It's like trying to pray for popcorn. I couldn't tell one soybean apart from another. I couldn't even tell if they were alive or dead.

How do you pray for something that you don't feel love for, something whose life, if you can call it that, is so far removed from your own that you can't relate?

OK. I sat down and looked at the beans. I rolled a few around in my palm and felt a little guilty when one rolled off, going under the desk. I tried to put aside the notion that this was quite silly (which was hard to do while lying on the floor to retrieve the soybean and place it back in its research container).

I pumped up my mind trying to fill it with whatever love I could muster for these little pearl-like bits of creation. I rattled off Biblical passages in my head, and finally got going on a pretty good prayer.

After I prayed there was a measurable result. The soybeans I prayed for all absorbed and retained more water (showing up as a weight gain) than the control beans. They reacted as a group.

I felt surprised, pleased, and mildly powerful.

Then I saw my brother's test results while reading through the research diary. The weight loss or gain of the beans had been graphed. I could look at the graph

of his results, and at the graph of my results, seeing my first prayer track.

The graphs were tracks. For the first time I realized that our prayers leave mathematical footprints and that using different kinds of prayer, like wearing sneakers or wearing high heels, leaves different kinds of tracks. The graph, the data, looks different. You can study it and learn from it, just like you can with a track in the woods.

I felt as excited as the first time I saw the track of a whale in the water. If anyone had told me that you could see the track of a whale in the ocean I would have said they were crazy. But that was before I encountered whales. A whale that surfaces and dives leaves a distinct glossy smoothness between the seas, a smooth patch that floats visibly for several moments.

In the same way, if anyone had told me that prayer left measurable tracks I would have said they were crazy. But that was before I encountered soybeans.

Through data and measurement we can see the distinct mathematical pattern, the distinct footprint, of different kinds of prayer. You can call it a graph, or you can call it a data pattern. When it's consistent you can call it a ratio or even an equation. To me, it's a track, pure and simple.

### *Regulation vs. Stimulation: Two Different Effects.*

My brother's graph looked different than mine. There was just enough sibling rivalry between us to make me wonder why.

When John prayed for soybeans they didn't react as a group. All of them reacted individually to prayer. Not all of them had a weight gain. Some did, while others had a weight loss. My brother's prayer had affected them all differently.

On that first test neither my brother nor I knew that the soybeans had been soaked in water for various amounts of time prior to the test.

The optimal time for soaking a soybean is about 10 hours. A soybean's skin is pretty tough and it takes a soybean that long to soak up enough moisture for optimal sprouting. You can see little bubbles appearing at the top of the water the beans are soaking in when they have absorbed enough water. If you cut the soybean open you can also see the difference between an undersoaked and oversoaked soybean.

Some of the beans being prayed for had been soaked for 6 hours and were undersoaked. They needed moisture. Others had been soaked as long as 18 hours, so they were saturated.

My prayer caused all the beans to absorb and retain more moisture, even if they were already saturated, and even if this wasn't in their best interest.

My brother's prayer affected the bean's moisture content (weight gain or loss) in a much more subtle way. The test was set up to measure subtle things. If it had not been, if it had just been set up like most prayer research tests, to measure how much weight the bean gained, it would have looked like my brother's prayer had not had much of an effect.



My brother's prayer had an amazing effect. Each one of more than 5,000 beans reacted as a distinct individual. Those that had too much moisture, lost moisture, those that had too little, gained moisture. Those that had just the right amount did not change.

We are talking really small amounts of moisture here. Soybeans are not very big. What kind of a power could reach into the heart of a soybean and regulate tiny amounts of moisture? Could this power make minute adjustments to cells in the human body? Why would such a powerful force bother with a bunch of beans? How had my little brother accessed this power, this Ordering Force? He had not been trying to increase or decrease moisture content; he had just felt genuine love for the beans.

I suspected that my verbal thanks to God for creating the soybeans had not reached a very deep level. My words were good, but I knew deep down that I didn't care about these soybeans. They were just beans. Yet I had changed them to a small degree, en masse, through prayer, and without any depth of feeling. This was sort of scary. What was I getting into? I don't think I had really expected any response from the soybeans at all. Suddenly I realized that I was in over my head.

My brother's prayer had caused the beans to be affected as individuals. His prayer had the effect of regulating the amount of moisture released or absorbed.

My prayer had caused the beans to react as a group. It had the effect of stimulating the beans to hold on to as much moisture as they could.

The pattern of stimulation vs. regulation could be clearly seen on the graphs. Later I would find that the two basic patterns I first saw in these graphs held true no matter what you were praying for - seeds, yeast, enzymes, cells.

### *More than one species of prayer*

Later I would find out that my brother's prayer had produced results, which created an IR (identity-referenced) prayer "footprint". IR prayer footprints are a pretty rare sighting in today's labs.

My prayer had produced results that created a better-known GR (goal-referenced) prayer footprint.

The test design is primary. I can't see the track of a butterfly that lands momentarily in the mud, even though she actually has been there, but I can easily see where my dog Scooter ran through the mud. IR prayer often involves a very light touch, and IR prayer footprints require a "fine powder" test that is designed to reveal them, or they won't show up.

In a laboratory, types of prayer are not classified theologically. They are classified according to the kind of track they produce.

Identity-referenced and goal-referenced are terms that refer primarily to the track of prayer, not to the

prayer itself. However, when we find a prayer that leaves an IR track, it seems natural to call it an IR prayer.

The word “referenced” refers to what kind of a reference point is used to measure the effect of the prayer. The term “goal-referenced” is easy to understand. You decide what your goal is, and then you measure whether prayer moved the organism toward that goal. The goal is your reference point for measuring.

Perhaps a parakeet is losing its feathers. Your goal is to keep it from losing its feathers. You pray for the bird and measure the results. If the bird stops losing its feathers you have achieved your goal. If you pray for two parakeets who are both losing their feathers, and one keeps losing feathers but the other stops, you have a score of 50 percent effectiveness.

My father was the first to point out that you could measure in a different way, which he called identity-referenced. The word “identity” just means what things are. What makes a parakeet different from a soybean? They each have a different identity.

To make this very simple I will speak here merely of the physical identity of the parakeet, although most religious people believe that created things have an eternal being, an identity beyond the physical, which can be accessed or referenced through prayer.

A parakeet has two feet, feathers and a beak. It has a certain body temperature, and normal cycles of hatching, maturing, eating and flying. Each of these things could be mapped on a grid as one point of its

identity or parakeet-ness. Taken all together the points could be described as a field.

In an identity-referenced test you don't measure in reference to a goal, you measure whether prayer moves the organism back towards its field of identity.

Lets look back at the example of praying for two parakeets, where only one stopped losing its feathers. In identity-referenced measurement you wouldn't just be measuring whether the bird stopped losing its feathers. You would have to determine why it was losing its feathers.

Perhaps one parakeet is molting. All parakeets molt. The molting cycle is part of the identity field of a parakeet. Therefore, prayer that maintained this, prayer that resulted in the parakeet continuing to lose feathers, would be an effective prayer, because it would move the bird back toward, or maintain the cycle of, the identity of the bird, and that is your reference point for measuring.

Perhaps the other bird is sick, and that is why it is losing its feathers. Sickness is not in the identity field. The disease is not something experienced by all parakeets. It is not an automatic part of parakeet-ness. In this case the prayer would be measured, or considered effective, if the prayer resulted in the bird not losing its feathers.

The same prayer would affect the two birds differently, but both would be considered a positive effect, a move back to identity. Measuring this way

would give you a 100 percent effectiveness score, instead of a 50 percent effectiveness score. Same birds, same person praying, same prayer, different ways of measuring.

When we measure this way we sometimes find that certain prayers cause both birds to stop losing feathers, even if it isn't good for the molting bird to keep its feathers. Some prayers, that visualize a certain result, mentally push or stimulate the bird or organism toward the goal of the person praying. We call this a goal-referenced prayer.

Goal-referenced prayer isn't invalid. People see it as a way of breaking limits. Why shouldn't a soybean grow faster than normal they ask, why shouldn't we stimulate things to be bigger and faster and better if we can?

I am not telling people to use one kind of prayer or another. I am simply saying that diversity is important and that there needs to be diversity in test design, as well as in people.

Diversity doesn't just come from the people who pray in the experiment. It wouldn't have mattered whether it were a Catholic, a Jew, a Buddhist, or a Native American praying for those parakeets. If the test was set up to measure goal-referenced prayer, only the selected effect could be measured.

Different people might pray, but their different types of prayers would not show up, be studied, or be considered valid. Anyone who didn't get the goal-referenced effect would be considered incompetent at praying.

To prevent this we need diversity. Diversity is achieved through the way the test is designed, even more than through having people of different faith backgrounds participate in the test (though that is important too.)

### *Directed and non-directed prayer*

Several people have asked me if IR prayer is the same thing as non-directed prayer, as praying “Thy will be done” instead of asking for a particular thing when you pray.

Yes, generally speaking, IR prayer is another name for non-directed prayer while directed prayer, prayer with a goal, is another way of saying GR prayer. But it is not so easy to tell which you are praying. You cannot tell by the words alone.

My father taught me that generally, if you see a track where the front feet are paired instead of staggered, you are looking at a tree-climbing animal. That’s true, but I’ve come across a few individuals among the ground dwellers who hop playfully, pairing their front feet. No matter how accurately you categorize animals, one individual animal is always going to hop out of character, and it’s the same with some prayers.

“No two robins are ever the same...each is as different as you and I.”

Stalking Wolf, Apache Tracker, quoted in  
*Tracks in the Wild* by Betsy Bowen,

Prayers are individual. Sometimes people think they are praying a “Thy will be done” type of prayer but unconsciously they have a strong goal. This affects the prayer more than their conscious mind. A GR prayer track will appear in this case, no matter how non-directed the words to your prayer may sound.

At other times we pray for a specific thing but we are open to having the healing occur in the best way possible, even if it’s not what we had in mind. This underlying openness to the holy may produce an IR prayer track, even when our words are those of petition.

In the same prayer where Jesus prayed “Thy will be done”(non-directed prayer) he also prayed, “Give us this day our daily bread” (directed prayer.)

I never worry about the words, or lack of words, in my prayers. Jesus used both directed and non-directed prayer, both petition and affirmation. It isn't the words that count; it's what you feel.

Prayer tracking can help you be more aware of the different ways to pray. It allows you to try them, and to expand your repertoire of prayer. Through such experiences of encountering the holy, we are able to pray naturally, no matter what style of prayer we use.

Rather than trying to pray one way or the other I would simply track both. Soon you will find yourself praying without fear of doing it the wrong way. Pray your way. It's the best way to pray.

## *Collaboration*

Prayer tracking is meaningful for people of all religions, not just for Christians. But to a Christian, every prayer tracking experiment involves incarnation and sacrament, the visible sign of invisible grace, the manifestation of divine Love (God) in a physical form, however small.

At the birth of Jesus, kings, shepherds, a nursing mother, shepherd boys (children) Joseph, and animals, all came together, something they would not have had a forum for doing in Jerusalem. The kings even brought a gift of gold (funding!) and the shepherds risked their professional reputations by setting aside the project on hand (tending their flocks) to come and preview the appearance of a brand new kind of shepherd, one that would carry shepherding to heights they could not then imagine.

The kings were probably Zoroastrian, the shepherds certainly Jewish. This was an ecumenical gathering.

Christmas carols and stories have placed so many people at the manger scene that the barn in Bethlehem would have had to be as big as a football field to accommodate them all.

Today, prayer tracking can provide a big enough manger to include everyone. I invite everyone: musicians (the little drummer boy) genetic engineers (was there really a red-nosed reindeer?) patients (Amahl) angels (nurses and those in the ministering



vocations), to follow the song of the prayer tracker.

God is still birthing Herself into our world, in ways large and small. When laboratories become mangers, it's worth banding together, in non-traditional collaboration, to locate the baby.



## **Chapter Three**

### **Building a Blind in the Woods**

I had a friend once who was going on assignment for a magazine to photograph elk in Wyoming. To practice building a blind, which he had never done before, he built one on a friend's farm, intending to practice his wildlife photography on the cows.

The blind was not a success. The cows would have had to be blind not to see it. Soon he was surrounded by no fewer than 40 cows, all of whom crowded around to see the man in the box.

One cow put her head in for a better look and drooled all over his new zoom lens.

He didn't have much luck when he got to Wyoming either. He spent a cold day in his blind without seeing a single elk. On arriving at his motel after dark he propped the door to his room open while he went to get his cameras from the car. On returning he found a chilly elk trying to sneak her way into the room.

Prayer tracking often does not go as planned either. Most prayer research still treats spiritual force, conceptually, as though it acted in a way similar to physical force, and could be measured as simply as one measures the voltage of electricity. IR prayer cannot be measured in this way.

In IR prayer research you cannot simply bring prayer into the laboratory, like putting a wild animal in a zoo, and see if you can get it to do things. Because even if it does what you want it to do, you won't learn about the wild animal.

A fish in a laboratory will respond differently when prayed for than a fish in a river. Sometimes you have to move the laboratory to the river. Sometimes you have to build an indoor river (don't laugh, I've done it.) Sometimes you have to learn to monitor large systems.

If you want to really learn the habits and nature of IR prayer you must build a blind - you must learn to blend into the natural surroundings of prayer.

For example, you must set up an ethical experiment. A crow won't be fooled by a blind higher than the surrounding vegetation, because he recognizes it as artificial. In the same way, an IR prayer won't work in an unethical environment. Just as the crow will hide, so will your measurable effect, if you create an experiment, which divine Love would immediately recognize as false.

A blind is a portable or permanent enclosure in which the tracker can camouflage herself in order not to startle wildlife. The lesson of the blind is that we

must adapt to holiness, rather than expecting holiness to adapt to us.

“The secret place of the most high” (Psalm 91) is a poetic description of a prayer blind, a place in which we are “hid with Christ in God” (Col.3:3). Jesus told us that when we pray we should enter into our closet (inner chamber) and close the door. (Matthew 6:6)

Often prayer research is set up to prove that prayer can do this or that, that it can cure cancer, or cause seeds to grow faster. I would like to see more prayer research set up simply to see what does happen when you pray, rather than trying to make something happen when you pray.

IR prayer tracking adapts to holiness, rather than trying to tell holiness what to do. The trained ponies of prayer have their place, but you won't learn much about wild mustangs by feeding a pony a carrot.

Sometimes you need to go out in the desert and watch the wild horses run free. To do this, you must adapt to their environment. Otherwise they won't come near you.

Hunters will tell you that portable blinds, which you put around you like a tent as you walk through the woods, work better if you approach game from rising ground. This is certainly true in prayer. We must hold the high ground in prayer. We must lift our thoughts above ego and a limited personal agenda to gain a higher perspective.

It is disturbing that prayer tracking is occasionally presented as a way of doing public relations for churches, or used to prove that “we are right”, that

“prayer works”, or else it is presented in a “I told you so” kind of way.

It is not the point of prayer research to prove a certain position. Prayer tracking is done to learn. This doesn't mean that proof is wrong. Objective proof is a necessary check and balance, like a street sign that tells you when you are headed the right way.

When I am tracking I don't see a track for every footstep the animal took. I use my knowledge of the animal to make educated guesses about when where and how fast it might be moving. The occasional actual track is necessary as the “proof” that my interpretation of the animal is correct, and that I am not just imagining it.

### *Butterfly Prayers*

As Americans we believe that more is better, and we also tend to believe that healing through prayer is very very hard and so you must work very very hard to bring about a “miracle.”

We tend to hike long and hard in the woods searching for the knowledge of how to heal through prayer, rather than sitting quietly in our prayer-blinds, and learning how to heal by studying the animals that pass.

If you use strength to catch a butterfly you will crush her. In certain cases praying really hard doesn't work. This was a surprise to me. Laboratory results showed that I was sometimes praying too long, too hard. By changing just one element of the research design, like

shortening your prayer, and then comparing results to experiments where you prayed longer, this can be clearly seen.

It is no easy thing to know how and when to end a prayer. It is no easy thing to know when prayer needs to be power and when it needs to be grace. Prayer research sheds light on these and many interesting issues, and it does so in a way that helps you find your own unique prayer style.

Butterfly prayers are momentary connections with God's grace, like letting a butterfly land lightly on your hand - and then, most important, letting her go. We so often forget to let our prayers go. We need to learn to trust them to fly around in the world, spreading beauty, and pollinating loving acts.

Instead we take the sharp pinprick of fear, - that nagging fear that our prayers aren't good enough, - and pin our prayer down, like a butterfly to a soap bar, beating the wings of prayer over and over trying to pump out a result.

Sometimes we have an emotional need to work very hard, and to pray very hard, in order to deserve a healing, or in order to prove that we love the patient.

Prayer is more effective when we make the effort to separate our emotional needs from the needs of the case. Pray, let it go, and move on.

*A soybean as icon; entering a new dimension*

In 1976, when I first prayed for soybeans, I still felt, in my gut, that prayer was just prayer. Back then I couldn't feel any difference between an IR and GR way of praying, though I could understand intellectually that dogs and butterflies travel different paths and must be tracked differently.

Years later when my dad and brother had moved to Oregon, and I was working in San Francisco, they repeated the same soybean test and I had a chance to try it again.

On my first try my prayer produced a GR prayer track. On my second try my prayer produced an IR prayer track. I could feel the difference. I could see the difference. For me it was a defining moment, like when Helen Keller learned to associate the word water with actual water, and realized language existed. It catapulted her into a whole new world.

I finally realized that more than one kind of prayer existed. That realization catapulted me into a whole new world. I had started on a prayer journey. It began with a soybean. Eventually it would change everything in my life.

People still say to me, “Why would you pray for a seed when there are so many people who need help?”

I think prayer, all prayer, is valid for its own sake, because it is an expression of holy adoration, an acknowledgment of a power beyond our own.

Praying for soybeans, enzymes, yeast cells, and even insects, has also taught me how to pray for people more effectively.

There has been another unexpected blessing to my involvement in prayer tracking. Beauty. The beauty of prayer research took me by surprise.

I have never needed to prove that prayer works. My dad was a full time Christian Science practitioner (healer) and I grew up accepting spiritual healing as the norm.

In the same way I have never needed proof that the earth was round. I took this on faith. No one needed to go to outer space and take a picture of the earth to convince me.

But when those first pictures of our earth came back from outer space, and I saw the earth hanging blue in a black sky, it shook me. It was so unexpectedly beautiful.

For me, as for others, that picture brought a new dimension to my feeling for the earth, its fragility, uniqueness and beauty. For me, globalization began with that first picture from outer space, that first realization of earth community.

Seeing the footprints of prayer, seeing the graphs of the effect of prayer on soybeans, brought a new and unexpected dimension to my prayer life. Those soybeans were the seeds of my first realization of prayer community, community that included all creation, not just the human part.

Many people feel uncomfortable praying for anything except human beings. They need to be taught how to do this. When we learn to pray for plants and animals, and even for enzymes and microorganisms, we also learn the interconnectedness of all created



things. We begin to learn the small details of God's Mind.

It's a wonderful and liberating thing to pray for a microorganism and to see its response. My dad used to say that with his microscope and scientific instruments he could see the response of the universe to God's love, and it was like watching an answering smile on the face of a friend. He also said that watching a microorganism respond to prayer was as amazing in its own way as communicating with beings from outer space.

My brother once said that praying for a microscopic organism, that didn't do much but eat and move around, was challenging at first. Then one day when he was praying he could feel divine Love pouring out on this organism. He felt like he was eavesdropping on the love between God and this tiny being. He said it was like witnessing the love of an artist for a pure primary color, the simple uncontaminated building block of everything else that is created.

In the Bible Jesus tells us that each hair on our head is numbered, that God knows each blade of grass in the field, and that divine Love cares about each sparrow. I suddenly realized that this wasn't just poetic language. It was real. From the tiny and minute, to the enormous and the infinite, divine Love was an Ordering Force. Prayer brought order to a system. Different types of prayer did this differently.

A soybean makes an unusual prayer partner, but praying for soybeans brought the Bible alive for me. Soybeans were the icons that carried me through the

door of Biblical poetry into a personal experience of the holy.

A soybean may be small but I was on the trail of something big. I had traveled a long way from the north woods, but once again, I was tracking.



## **Chapter Four**

### **GR Prayer Tracks**

As one example of how GR prayer is measured (how we obtain GR prayer tracks) one can look at an interesting biofeedback program known as Freeze-Framer. The user's manual says that this program is an "emotional management enhancer." Here are some excerpts from the user's manual.

The Freeze-Framer was developed based on research findings conducted by the Institute of HeartMath under the direction of Doc Childre in Boulder Creek California . . . With the Freeze-Framer, you can monitor your heart rhythms in real-time by viewing a real-time heart rhythm monitor (also called heart rate variability or HRV) . . . The Freeze-Framer monitors the beat-by-beat changes in your heart rate with its electronic sensor, which reads the pulse from your finger . . . The Freeze-Framer records the degree of

smoothness or jaggedness of your heart rhythm and, based on a mathematical algorithm, assigns a score.

The goal is to achieve a state of what is called “entrainment”, which, according to Freeze-Framer, “reflects the balance of your nervous system.” It also, according to the user’s manual, reflects the way your heart communicates with your brain.

There are three beautifully programmed games. You sit at the computer and stick your finger in a little tube that measures the pulse. If you jiggle your finger, or do something to invalidate the data, a red line interrupts the data on the screen at the place of interruption.

In one game a hot air balloon rests on the ground. As you calm yourself and try to enter into “a state of appreciation” the change in your heart rhythm causes the balloon to rise. As the balloon travels through the air you have to get it high enough to get over different obstacles. The farther you “travel” the more things appear in the fields below you.

A second game has a pot of gold. As you become “entrained”, affecting your heart rhythm by changing your emotional state, a rainbow appears. If the rainbow grows big enough to reach the pot, a dollar amount begins to show on the screen. The higher the amount, the better you have done.

My favorite game is the meadow in the woods. A black and white picture of a woodland and a stream appears. As your heart rhythm improves, corresponding to your emotional state, the scene slowly turns

green. Eventually a rabbit, and then a deer, appear. Finally the water and waterfall come to life.

These games have been used successfully with heart patients, with disturbed children, and with many others. The health-related research is impressive, as reported in a book that comes with the program called One Minute Stress Management.

For example, the research shows that five minutes of anger can adversely affect your immune system for up to eight hours. A graph shows what your heart rhythm looks like when you get angry. One Minute Stress Management reports:

The Research Division of the Institute of HeartMath is engaged in several areas of investigation showing how and why our mental and emotional attitudes have such profound effects on the heart's electrical system and on the immune and hormonal systems.

Freeze-Framer is a visual way of becoming aware of how your emotions are affecting your heart beat, and also a way of seeing how consciously altering your emotions can affect your heart beat.

Freeze-Framer is a classic example of a goal-referenced measurement program (GR). You have specific goals. Your goal is to change your heart rhythm. Your goal is to relax, to become entrained. Your goal is to make the meadow turn green or the rainbow appear.

If the meadow turns half-green, you've been halfway successful. You have a scale to measure how close you have come to your goal or not.

Many people consider the state of love and appreciation that improves your heart rhythm to be a state of prayer that is healing them by creating a healthier state. People who have prayed while hooked up to the sensor have seen beneficial results. This is a wonderful outcome for Freeze-Framer.

I assume that these prayers are GR prayers. They might even occasionally be what are known as IR prayers. The Freeze-Framer measurement design makes the distinction difficult to see.

### *Separating the two tracks*

How would an IR (identity-referenced) measurement design be different? How would IR prayer be different than the mental input that you learn through the exercises in the Freeze-Framer workbook?

In IR measurement you would not be measuring how close you came to your goal (are you calm, peaceful, relaxed, entrained) but rather you would be measuring how far you and the entire system (community) moved toward the most beneficial pattern (identity) for the entire system (community).

Most of the time, being what Freeze-Framer calls "entrained" will be beneficial to you and those you relate to. This is a case where IR and GR prayer are generally working in the same direction, although with different processes. You might say they go to the same

destination, but they take different routes. The tracks overlap at the destination, and that is the only place this research design looks at the tracks.

The Freeze-Framer is a GR design, a design that metaphorically waits at the destination to see who gets there and so cannot tell by what route they have come.

Without a different research design, a different way of measuring, we cannot clearly see the two different routes or processes. We cannot separate the two overlapping tracks.

Let me use an extreme example to highlight their differences, an example where IR prayer and GR prayer would be working in opposite directions.

If mental effects, like people, are going to two separate destinations, it's very obvious that they have followed a different route. If they both go to the same place one might assume, correctly or incorrectly, that they came the same way. If two kinds of prayer both cure cancer, you might think they both cured it in the same way. This is not necessarily the case.

To spotlight the difference between IR and GR prayer, let's set up two different destinations (results) for these mental effects, however improbable the circumstance.

Let's say that you've just killed someone, or stolen something, or told a serious and harmful lie. It would be normal under those circumstances to feel stress. That's why lie detectors work. Lie detectors also measure heart rhythm, in a way very similar to the way in which Freeze-Framer does.

A pathological liar can pass a lie detector test. She

can be entrained, peaceful, relaxed, and calm when telling a lie. Why? Because she is in a deep psychological state of denial. This denial is a mental illness. It is more dangerous to her than any temporary physical stress on her heart. In this instance, IR prayer would increase her stress (i.e. conscience or self-awareness) until she was so uncomfortable that she could break through her denial, or at least up to the point she was able to bear at the time. This would be healthier both for her and for the community that she was doing harm in, than if she was at peace about her act.

It would not matter if the person praying for her knew that she was a criminal or was completely fooled by her. IR prayer would still cause stress, not cure it, in this instance, because in this context stress would be more constructive than a calm state.

The Freeze-Framer measurement design would not show this constructive effect of IR prayer. It would just show that the “patient” had not achieved the goal - was not entrained or peaceful. If Freeze-Framer was being used for prayer tracking, this research would imply that prayer had no effect, when actually it did.

Freeze-Framer, being a GR program, isn’t designed to take circumstances or context into account. It’s only designed to work in a certain direction, to work toward a certain goal.

IR mental input or prayer would cause a liar to be stressed. GR mental input, such as the exercises in the HeartMath book, would help a liar to be calm and relaxed. They would work in opposite directions in this particular instance.



We have two types of mental input here, even though they sometimes look and feel alike.

*A by-product, not a goal*

There are some very good things about Freeze-Framer. It is an excellent and practical tool for learning the effect of the mind on the so-called automatic body functions.

Over one hundred years ago my religious leader, Mary Baker Eddy, wrote in *Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures* (p. 187) :

There is no involuntary action.

. . . The valves of the heart, opening and closing for the passage of the blood, obey the mandate of mortal mind as directly as does the hand, admittedly moved by the will.

A century and a quarter later, western culture is still tiptoeing around this idea.

Freeze-Framer helps people understand that their mind governs their body. This is good. It is certainly better than taking a drug to govern your body.

Second, Freeze-Framer encourages self-discipline. Most people are not aware of their destructive emotions, or they think a certain feeling is constructive when it isn't. Freeze-Framer is to be commended for its design in this aspect because most people are not aware of their destructive emotions. This program helps people to learn to be aware of, and to control and discipline, their emotions.

However, Freeze-Framer differs in design from what would be included in the design of an IR prayer tracking experiment. Love and “a state of appreciation” are conceptualized within the measurement design of Freeze-Framer as a means to an end - the end being the improvement of your heart rhythm. This may not be the intent, but it is the way the actual measurement of the test is set up.

In prayer, altruistic love and caring are an end in themselves. If they happen to improve the health of your physical heart that is secondary, a by-product not a goal.

In all IR prayer research, measurement and for that matter the physical change (healing) itself, is a by-product of a larger process. This must be conceptually understood before you can effectively design such tests.

To study IR prayer effectively your measurement design must be reversed. Both the effect, and the measurement of the effect, must be treated as a by-product, not a goal, in IR prayer research designs, because that is what they are.

I doubt whether Jesus was peaceful, relaxed, and entrained the night before his crucifixion. His disciples slept. He was alone, surrounded by betrayal. This was a man who prayed three times, asking if there wasn't a way he could get out of this ethically - but there wasn't. This was a man who wept in agony, who paced back and forth, who sweat blood. This was a man who was stressed.

Had he stuck his finger in the measurement tube that night I doubt his heart rhythm would have made the little meadow turn green.

From this we see how dangerous it is to accept at face value the premise that a loving state of mind will produce a certain physical action.

Jesus expressed more love in that one night than most of us will express in a lifetime, but his heart rhythm probably wouldn't have matched the graph in the user's manual that shows what love is supposed to look like in terms of your physical heart beat.

It isn't that Jesus didn't think that the health of your physical heart was important. After all, he healed the sick, which implies that he valued physical health. It's just that he had his priorities straight.

Doing the loving thing, instead of what was physically best for his blood pressure and his heart, did bring him heart health physically. It enabled him to re-start his physical heart long after CPR would have faded into a useless technique. Three days after violence had stopped his heart, it beat again.

That's pretty good doctoring on anybody's terms. You're never going to learn that kind of spiritual healing through entrainment, or by trying to mentally control your heart rhythm.

Trying this program, perhaps because it is such a good program, reminded me that it is very easy to read more into any scientific research, including both IR and GR prayer tracking, than actually exists. It is easy to forget the limitations of all test design, easy to forget that measurable effect is one model of reality and not

reality itself, easy to forget that tests are just one useful tool among many.

## Chapter Five



### IR Prayer Tracks

After we prayed for soybeans (also rye grass seed, mung beans, and other types of seeds), we prayed for yeast. My dad and brother were living in a small apartment in Palatine, Illinois. It had ugly green carpeting and a depressing view of a strip mall.

It was all they could afford as there was no funding for their research, except out of pocket. At that time

such researchers were pretty isolated both in their lives and in their research efforts.

My brother slept on the floor. Every inch of space in his bedroom was taken up by scientific equipment. He had sold his car to buy a random number generator.

At least once a week he took a 50-pound bag of Red Star yeast up in the elevator to use in his newly created yeast test. The neighbors eyed him curiously. They must have wondered what in the heck he was baking in that little apartment sized stove. If they had known he was praying for the stuff, they might have reacted even more warily.

My dad and brother chose yeast as a research organism because it was cheap, it was easily accessible to an amateur researcher, it was less complex than a many-celled organism and responded to prayer readily, and it did something simple and easily measurable. Specifically, it gave off carbon dioxide gas when it ate, which caused a measurable change in weight.

When they tried to raise money for the yeast test, the Chicago press had a field day. The yeast test was one of a series of tests called the Spindrifft Tests, which the press quickly dubbed the "Spendthrift Tests", urging people to give their money to more pressing social matters.

Spindrifft was a non-profit organization that was established, temporarily and unsuccessfully, to support my dad and brother's research. After urging that no one give money to Spindrifft, an editorial in *The Chicago Star* commented, that "On the other hand,

there's nothing more heart rending at Christmas than a yeast on the skids."

My brother laughed out loud, and hung the article above his computer. He had the gentle grace of enjoying his critics.

### *A Computer Christmas*

I remember that Christmas so well. I had come home for the holidays, with some family and friends. There was no money for presents, or for any special Christmas dinner (we had peanut butter sandwiches), and certainly no tree. No one minded. There was data pouring out of the computer like crazy, a frenzy of IR and GR prayer tracks to look at, and a very Christmasy message inherent in the data - that powerful incarnations of divine Love could come from humble beginnings.

For the test to be successful the yeast had to all be from the same batch when it was created, had to be grown according to a particular formula, and had to have been out of refrigerated storage for the same amount of time. Being out of storage is stressful for yeast, and one batch cannot be stressed more than another if you want to compare test runs.

Grayhaven doesn't do this test anymore. The kind of yeast my dad and brother used is no longer commercially available. The yeast chemist they knew at Red Star in Milwaukee has retired. I don't have a yeast chemist or the storage conditions necessary in order to create the kind of yeast needed for this test.

Other tests are similar and simpler to do. The research organism may be different, but the ratios (equations), that flow from the generated data, in other words the prayer tracks, are the same.

But I remember the excitement of that Christmas, and of doing the yeast test together. It was our last real family Christmas, before my divorce, and before my dad and brother's move to Oregon.

My husband, Alan, who was a United Methodist Minister, myself, and two Ethiopian refugees, who were staying with us, visited my dad and brother for three days, after Alan finished preaching his Christmas service.

Alan had supported the research and we had given all our spare holiday money to fund the new test. We were anxious to see it up and running, and more than glad to get away from the parsonage in North Prairie, Wisconsin for a few days.

We had taken our new Ethiopian friends, whom I will call Paul and Haptom, to many Christmas activities, ending with the tree trimming party at Alan's church. During the party Haptom - who was conscientiously learning new English words from the local farmers - politely told a woman with a Christmas brooch that she had a very nice jewel on her udder.

Later, at a dinner where the District Superintendent and the Bishop were both present, I had asked Paul in front of everyone how Christmas was different in his country, as he was a Christian. "Oh," he said seriously, "it is much different. In my country it is a religious

holiday.” As he so often did, Paul was teaching us about the true nature of the holy.

But it was definitely time for a vacation and a complete change of scene from North Prairie.

Visiting my dad and brother was always mind-boggling. My husband used to get so overloaded with new ideas that he would say he just wanted “to go home and watch ten episode of ‘I Love Lucy’.”

On that trip we slept in sleeping bags in front of the computer, passed around some humorous home-made gifts, sang carols, ate peanut butter (which Hapton loved) and laughed a lot. But mostly we sat around the computer, as awed as children, while each new graph generated by the test, each new prayer track, seemed as beckoning as a shiny Christmas ornament. Those bags of Red Star were our star of Bethlehem.

We all had our reasons for being interested in prayer tracking.

Paul loved the Bible. At home his church could not afford the whole Bible. Each book of the Bible was written on scrolls and often a church could not afford all the scrolls. He remembered as a boy carrying the heavy scrolls up to the altar during the church service.

That Christmas he had read the book of Isaiah for the first time. I remember that he stayed up late to do so. I remember that he cried. He had heard so much about the book of Isaiah, and had wanted to read it for so many years, but never had a copy of it before.

Where he came from in Ethiopia the scrolls were written in such fine print that priests often had poor



eyesight from poring over them hours a day, year after year.

Paul could not understand how reading stories about Jesus, for example of how he healed the blind man, could result in poor eyesight. Rather than just automatically reading the words, as so many do, he sensed a deeper meaning. He sensed that the words were being read but somehow the power in them - the power that could heal blindness - was not being accessed. He was interested in finding the lost trail of spiritual healing.

My husband had his own reasons for supporting prayer tracking. He was tired of the increasingly secular emphasis in the church, and the decreasing role of prayer. A liberal Christian, and a social activist, he nevertheless admired and respected the emphasis on prayer that was prevalent in more conservative churches. He felt there should be more emphasis on prayer in the liberal churches too.

He said that at the seminary many of his teachers had been secular rather than religiously based. He had learned fund raising from businessmen, and counseling from a secular psychiatrist. He said he felt like a secular psychologist, but with a faith twist. The prayer element was too often missing.

I noticed this lack on two occasions. Both occurred when we lived in Milwaukee, before he was transferred to a rural parish.

Before moving to the country parish, I had participated in a prayer tracking test my dad was doing, where I needed to pray for soybeans from a

distance. I had asked a friend of Alan's, also a Protestant minister but of a different denomination, where I could go to pray without interruption.

"Why not use the sanctuary?" he suggested.

"No," I explained. "I'm looking for someplace where I can pray silently for several days."

"Oh dear!" was his slightly alarmed response. "I think you'd have to see the Catholics for anything like that."

At another time we had a meeting of local Milwaukee clergy in our home, in response to a social problem. As we discussed solutions my husband suggested a prayer vigil.

"Well," responded one clergyman, "if we can't think of anything else . . ." and another clergyman chipped in, "It would be a nice symbolic gesture."

Alan was interested in anything that put prayer back in religion as a real force. Praying for yeast wasn't quite what he had in mind, but he had to admit it was an interesting approach.

### *How the yeast test worked*

The test itself was simple. Yeast was mixed with a malt solution. Malt instead of sugar was used to feed the yeast because it kept down the acidity of the solution, which kept the yeast alive and eating longer. Yeast has a pretty short life span. Using malt instead of sugar meant you could have a longer test run. Each run lasted 40 minutes.

After the yeast solution was mixed, an equal amount was poured into two containers that sat on two balances (scales) interfaced to a computer. As the yeast ate it would give off carbon dioxide gas and its weight would change. The balances weighed both yeast solutions simultaneously every few seconds and recorded the data for later analysis.

A screen was put between the two balances so that only one pot of yeast could be seen. A prayer provider (one of us) would then come in and pray for the pot of yeast he or she could see, for as long as they wanted, up to the end of the 40-minute run. Most people prayed about 15 minutes, although the prayer tracks continued to show up after the actual prayer stopped. A process had been set in motion.

Afterwards, the weight loss of the two pots of yeast was compared.

When my dad and my brother John began the test, they had no idea what would happen if they prayed for yeast. They didn't know what yeast ought to do when it was mixed with a malt solution, they weren't sure what was best for it, and they certainly didn't have any way of guessing what might be "God's will" concerning the yeast.

They simply concentrated on being grateful for it, experiencing a sense of love for it as a created thing, and asking, in prayer, to see it with the eyes of divine Love. They figured if there was any difference between the two pots of yeast, between the one prayed for (treated) and the control, that would mean the test "worked."

It worked and things quickly became more interesting. We soon discovered that GR prayer made the yeast stronger, i.e. able to eat for a longer period of time. IR prayer had a different process. It caused the yeast to return to its normal cycle. The normal cycle for fresh yeast, mixed with a malt solution, as we discovered from hundreds of control runs, is to eat more than 80 percent of its food in the first 20 minutes (the first half of the run.)

You don't want to watch yeast eat under a microscope. It is not a pretty sight. GR prayer stimulates the yeast, enabling it to eat more than is good for it. It helps the yeast pig-out. IR prayer regulates the yeast, bringing it back to optimal behavior, back to the eat-and-rest cycle.

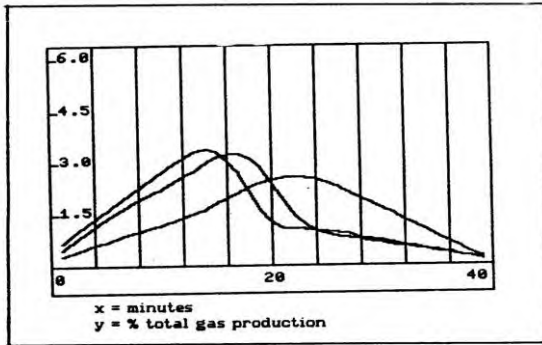
My dad used to amuse my husband by saying solemnly that IR prayer caused the yeast to repent of overeating.

The most active eating period for healthy fresh yeast occurred between minutes 13 and 16. When combined with the malt, fresh healthy yeast ate 80 percent or more of its food in the first 20 minutes, which was the first half of the 20 minute test run.

Yeast that had been out of refrigeration for three days ate between 70 and 80 percent of its food in the first 20 minutes. Yeast that had been out of refrigerated storage for seven days degraded quickly and peaked later in the run.

Below is a graph, a track of the yeast. The first line is the track of the fresh yeast, the second line is the track of the three day yeast, and the third line is the

track of the least fresh yeast. You can see that they peak differently.



My dad and John quickly discovered that the middle line was the easiest to work with. It created the clearest prayer tracks. In layman's terms, fresh healthy yeast doesn't need anything so it doesn't show any IR measurable effect when prayed for. Yeast that has been out of storage three days needs help and will show some effect. Yeast that's been out a week or more is pretty far gone. It's too hard to heal to make it a good research subject, especially if you want to set the bar low, and make this a test anyone can get a result on.

All yeast tests were done with yeast that had been out of storage long enough to stress it but not long enough to make it deteriorate. In other words my dad and brother worked with yeast that produced a track like the middle line on the graph.

Experimenter effect is a goal-referenced result. It is the measurable effect caused by the unconscious goal

or expectation of the experimenter. It quickly showed up on these tests.

Experimenter effect is similar to where you walk over a trail by mistake and muddy the tracks. You have to know how to separate your tracks from the actual track.

If you always prayed for the pot of yeast that sat on the balance on the right, then even when you ran a control run (a run where two pots of yeast were placed on the balances for 40 minutes and neither was prayed for) the one on the right would show a very slight result similar to the result of yeast prayed for with GR prayer. A tiny GR prayer track would form, even though no one was praying. This represented experimenter effect.

For this reason, everyone always did pray for the pot of yeast on that balance only. This way experimenter effect could be tracked and factored into the scoring. The effect was definite, but quite small and easy to keep an eye on.

### *The tracks themselves*

Here are some actual graphs; pictures of the prayer tracks that were created by our prayers that Christmas. These experiments were done in the middle of the night. My husband had to preach a midnight service on Christmas Eve. It was a candlelight service and the house was packed. I was sitting on the end of an old fashioned hand-carved pew, with a candleholder carved right into the wood. The candle kept dropping

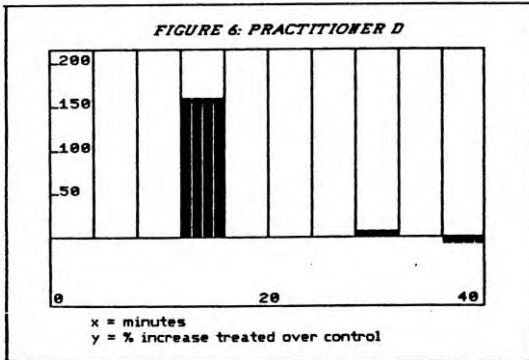
hot wax on me, making me jump. My girlfriend kept making faces, and refused to switch places.

Afterward we jumped in the car and drove to my brother's, which was less than two hours away. No one wanted to sleep. We all wanted to try the tests. It was like being a child, and seeing a fresh expanse of clean snow. You couldn't resist going out and making tracks.

My brother had just completed a run when we drove in. Here is the graph of his prayer tracks. Let me explain how to read this track. The black lines do not represent how much carbon dioxide gas the prayed-for (treated) yeast is actually giving off. It represents how much carbon dioxide gas is being given off (how much the yeast is eating) in relation to control.

Only the minutes 13 to 16 are being measured in the first half of the run. We found that those four minutes were the points of most activity and left the clearest prayer track.

This is literally a picture of the prayer track left by my brother's prayer about 1 A.M. on Christmas morning more than 15 years ago. Besides its scientific value it has a sentimental value to me, like seeing once more where we took our shoes off and stuck our feet in the wet cement of a sidewalk years ago.



You will notice that my brother's prayer caused the yeast to eat more in the minutes from minute 13 through minute 16. In other words it caused the unrefrigerated yeast to act more like fresh yeast.

These four minutes average 183 percent in size above the control measurements for the same four minutes. Most people are used to thinking of a score in a range of one to one hundred. To get such a score we added the ratios of increase of the four minutes together and multiplied by ten. Using this method my brother had an IR prayer score of 73.3.

Complete scoring information, along with the details of these tests, can be found in the book, *The Spindrift Papers*, available from Grayhaven.

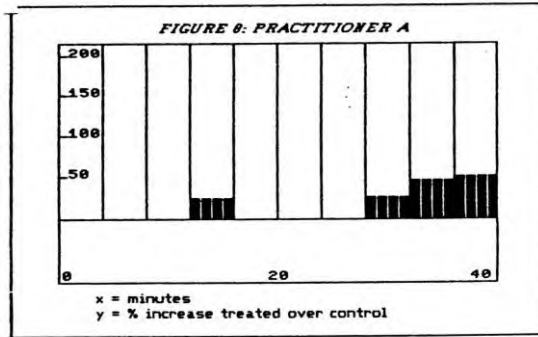
You will also notice that John got a GR prayer track, which shows up at the end of the run, as well as the IR prayer track which is the effect that you see at the beginning of the run.

It is very seldom that you get only a GR prayer track or an IR prayer track, in fact I've never seen it. People get both, but one predominates. This may indicate that



both types of prayer overlap, or that we all have the potential for both.

I was the next to take the test. My prayer did not cause the yeast to act like fresh yeast, however it did make the yeast strong enough to eat longer than it normally would have. Here is a picture of the prayer track my prayer left.



As you can see I got a small IR prayer score, which is the first black column you see, and a slightly larger GR prayer score, which appears as the last three black columns.

We were tracking two different beasts, two different processes, that both walked on the fresh snow of the yeast test. I did not yet know how to read the tracks, but it was exciting to see them. We had found some Christmas miracles right there on our own computer.

My father had stored profiles of IR prayer in the computer. When anyone got a score that fell within the parameters averaged from those profiles, it would send a signal to the computer. The signal would turn on a small red light. That was our only Christmas light, but it

looked pretty impressive shining against the black and white monitor (which monitors were back then).

Without ever touching the yeast, just by thinking about it, and feeling love for it, we could make a light go on, or a prayer track appear on a graph. I never again spent a Christmas where I was so filled with a sense of awe and the holy.

It's probably not how most families spend their Christmas. There were no decorations and not a fruitcake in sight. But before taking naps the next morning, having worked all through the night, we did eat breakfast together. My dad said grace, and thanked God for the gift of the Incarnation.

He thanked God for spiritual gifts including the spiritual friendship of those who sat at breakfast. He then asked that as we gave thanks for these spiritual gifts we not forget the physical gifts too, the birth of IR prayer tracking into the world that Christmas, and the gifts of bread and wheat and flour and yeast.

After the blessing my brother broke the bread and passed it around. We all broke bread together for Christmas morning. It was homemade bread of course. The one thing we had in abundance that Christmas was yeast.



## **Chapter Six**

### **The Prayer Tracks of Mice and Men**

It was tiny, it was about three weeks old, and all the toes had washed away in the rain. Since the first thing you do on discovering a track is to count the number and position of toes, I had to resort to plan B.

I looked for other tracks or partial tracks. I looked for a pattern. I looked for anything in the surrounding area that would give me a hint as to how this creature moved. Did it walk diagonally or straight ahead? Did it rock from side to side? Was it going fast or slow?

There was nothing I was skilled enough to see, no other track markings, no disturbances, no scratchings, and no strands of hair.

Elmwood Park in Skokie, Illinois, was a lousy place to track. There were too many people coming and going, there was too much foot traffic, too much hard-

top. Besides, there weren't any elm trees left in Elmwood Park.

My dad and I had watched the day all these lovely trees, all these important wildlife habitats, were cut down, during the plague time of Dutch elm disease. It left me with a lifelong interest in praying for trees.

At first glance the only wild things left in Elmwood Park were Billy, the neighborhood bully, and a few wild raspberries where the park bordered the railroad track.

Closer examination revealed that the almost treeless park was still brimming with wildlife. I found possum tracks under the swing set. I fell in love with ravens at Elmwood Park, and would lie upside down on the slide to watch them, until Billy the bully would push me off.

The tracks of baby buggies (this was pre-strollers) intertwined with the tracks of squirrels, pigeons, mourning doves, chipmunks, and even skunk.

A rabbit successfully raised two babies in a nest right on the softball field, during the season, just behind home plate. I once found a clear raccoon track in a squirt of spilled mustard, beneath a picnic table.

Raccoons napped brazenly within striking distance of the garbage cans. Stray cats half napped, hidden and self-contained, waiting for the moonlight, and keeping a wary eye on the leashed dogs.

In the spring, when darkness came before my bedtime and my dad and I were in the park at dusk, the air was filled with the unbelievably skilled flights of little brown bats. Billy thought they were sparrows. Billy, I thought with satisfaction, was a dumbbell.

The track that I was looking at that day - with the toes washed away, - had just enough form in the sandy dirt to tell me it was probably the right forepaw of a mouse. There was no tail mark, and the track itself was quickly degrading.

The partial indentation was such an iffy trail that ordinarily I would have discounted it and kept looking, just like my dad would discount the rogue runs on his prayer tracking tests years later.

A rogue run is a test where the results are so high or so low, where the prayer track is so broken, that a mistake in methodology is suspected.

But sometimes a rogue run cannot be ignored. It demands that you turn aside to see what is causing the aberration.

And occasionally when tracking, in prayer or in the woods, a track will call attention to itself. I don't know how to explain this except to say there are certain tracks that refuse to be ignored.

I knew this little remnant of a mouse track was something special. There was no physical evidence to indicate this. I took it on faith.

I went home and mercilessly scooped up a handful of fine top soil from my mom's African violets. Running back to the park I spread this where I imagined the mouse run must be.

A small trail, used habitually by an animal, is called a run. The length of time a lab experiment takes is also called a run. There are other overlaps in vocabulary.

The next morning there were plenty of tracks, including tail marks. The tracks were clear and distinct.

The pairing of the front feet indicated that this was a tree climbing mouse. Several types of mice can climb trees. Despite the clarity of the tracks I wasn't sure what kind of a mouse this was.

That is how I first encountered my favorite type of mouse, the white-footed mouse, and the sweetest faced rodent in creation. They are also called deer mice but I didn't realize this until I was older. I thought my dad was saying that it was a dear mouse, and so it was.

It was two months before I met the mouse in person. It was another two weeks, and after the start of the school year, before I could stroke him safely. Before either of these heart-stopping events I knew him better than I knew my schoolmates.

I knew he was young, male, had just found a mate, and was raising his first family. I knew the pink hairless babies had been born in an old bird's nest which, being a good suburban male mouse, he had remodeled and roofed.

I knew he liked to get away from his kids and take naps inside an empty potato chip bag that had blown under the raspberry bush.

After his tracks showed that he had been trying to sip water from a broken discarded squirt gun, my dad and I began leaving him bottle caps of drinking water every night.

He was active at dawn and dusk, times I wasn't allowed in the park during the long late days of summer, but he must have become gradually aware of me too, from my scent, and from the cheerios and

seeds I would leave him.

When we finally met we were close friends and we both knew each other right away. In retrospect, it was kind of like meeting someone you've already gotten to know quite well through email.

I called him Homer because, like the rabbits, I frequently found his tracks near home plate.

Homer was sadly disinterested in his own offspring, but he himself played games like a baby. He liked to play hide-and-seek. He considered litter a constant bounty of free toys from some unknown heaven.

He liked to flip bottle caps over. He liked to snip grass with his powerful little teeth and then throw the grass in the air for no apparent reason. He could perform backward somersaults better than my best friend Maureen could, and Maureen took gymnastics.

When cold weather drove him to new terrain, and we went up north for Christmas vacation, I lost his trail for good and never saw Homer again.

He was not the first mouse to teach me the difficult lesson of letting go. It is a lesson that you need to learn in order to heal through prayer, or to track.

*“But now ask the beasts, and let them teach you;” Job 12:7*

Meeting Homer had been a healing thing for me. White-footed mice are a special breed. It was as if this species was revealed to me as a sign that I had come full circle, that I had at last learned the lesson of not

hanging on, of not trying to hold a prayer - or a mouse - captive.

Because just before I was to meet Homer I had been visiting my cousins and I caught a field mouse in their yard. I became fond of him, and didn't want to let him go. Unknown to my aunt I put him in a box disguised among my pile of books. If the mouse scurried or chewed too loud (mice do) I would whistle. I had just learned how, and it was a plausible cover.

My cousins lived in Homewood, Illinois, on the other side of Chicago. My aunt took me part way home, leaving me and (unknowingly) the mouse at the office where my grandma worked in downtown Chicago. I was to sit quietly until grandma could take me home on the bus.

My grandma worked for our church. She was a secretary for the Committee on Publication, which was in a big office building downtown. The mouse got loose in the office. He got into a wastebasket where Grandma had thrown some carbon paper and proceeded to leave perfect inky tracks all over the office.

He got into a supply closet with louvered doors and ran up and down the doors making a noise like castanets. Lots of people screamed, even my grandma's boss, who was a well-known Christian Science practitioner at the time.

Eventually the poor frightened mouse worked his way into the walls of the office building and was never seen again. I had visions of the exhausted mouse



trying to run up and down the walls of the high rise, floor after floor, looking for a place that led to grass.

My dad did not yell at me but he did something worse. He said quietly that he thought the mouse would have been happier if I'd left him in the grass.

I cried myself to sleep. The lesson was heartfelt. Homer appeared like the answer to prayer, a physical sign that the lesson had been learned. He eventually let me stroke him, but I never attempted to catch him. Homer taught me not to try to capture a prayer, a test result, or a mouse, but to let it run where it will and learn the lessons it can teach.

I was letting go of childhood's goals, and learning to act in identity-referenced ways.

### *My favorite species of the yeast test*

Research tests can be like a species of animal that you become attached to. Sometimes funding, a change in suppliers, or just the need to move on, means that you have to stop tracking prayer in a particular test, just like cold weather may mean that you have to stop tracking a particular animal.

I loved the yeast test and was sorry when it was time to move on. Just like white-footed mice are my favorite of all the mice species, so one particular type of yeast test that we did was my favorite.

This particular yeast test, like Homer, was amazing, and had the capacity to surprise. As with Homer, I had only a short acquaintance with the test. My dad only ran it for a short period. I was very lucky to have been

home when the test was run.

My dad knew that prayer easily influenced random flow. He had a special random board built for the computer and hooked up a soldering iron in such a way that random flow controlled the number of times the iron was on or off in a fifteen minute period.

He mounted the soldering iron on a stand and lowered it into a quarter cup of yeast solution. The iron was on about half the time; the amount of time it was on was controlled by the random flow of impulses coming from the computer.

When I prayed, my expectation was that random flow, being so thought-sensitive, might be affected and that the iron would be on less of the time, because the heat was harmful to the yeast.

Some people have asked me how we could set up such a cruel test. I can only answer that what we did was no more cruel than baking bread or boiling carrots. So far in IR prayer research, IR prayer has not worked (provided measurable effect) in any experiment that has caused pain to a being conscious of pain, and equipped with a nervous system. This is one of the differences between IR and GR prayer.

This experiment did work, but not in the way I expected. My prayers did not decrease the amount of time the soldering iron was on. The more-is-better expectation must have been very ingrained in me because my prayer increased the time the soldering iron was on, and I stopped doing the test. The sound of the sizzling yeast was getting to me.

When my dad prayed nothing appeared to happen at all. The soldering iron was still on about half the time for the prayed-for yeast, just like it was for the control yeast.

It was the computer guy that built the random board, and who was acting as our technician, that discovered the result by accident. My dad's prayer didn't affect how long the soldering iron was on; it affected the yeast itself. When he prayed, the yeast didn't get hot.

We all checked it, my brother, the computer guy, my dad, and I. It was like something out of science fiction. The yeast simply didn't get hot even though the soldering iron had been on just slightly more than the control.

Test results over many years had shown that my dad was an identity-referenced healer. I had seen his results with his sick patients that came to our house, and in later years I had seen his results on the test scores.

My dad stopped doing this type of yeast test. He said we needed to keep away from those things which would draw curiosity seekers, and we needed to keep away from those tests that required us to work at the outer limits of our ability, especially when a new field was being built up.

Besides, he said the lesson had been learned. You can't always tell where the effect will go. You might pray for a plant, but it may be the soil that will respond.

My Native American Ojibway friends that live near Rhinelander, Wisconsin, where I was born, claim that

the earth is one body. They say that the water is her blood, the trees her lungs, and the soil her immune system. From this point of view, having the soil respond when you are praying for the plant isn't so crazy.

I remember tracking a deer once, in woods near a farm. I was studying its footprint intently when I felt that I was being watched. Turning around I was surprised to find a pig looking at me. The track of a pig and the track of a deer are similar, and I was too inexperienced to know the difference.

I was actually tracking a pig, not a deer, or, more accurately, she was tracking me. She had seen me in the woods and slipped under the fence to follow me. She apparently had been tracking me for some time. Standing behind me, and studying me with great interest, this pig was way ahead of me in the tracking game.

IR prayer is like this sometimes. It sneaks up on you in unexpected ways.

The soldering iron test, like Homer, taught me not to try to capture a test result, or a mouse, but to let it run where it will and learn the lessons it teaches.

Maybe I was praying for the wrong thing. Maybe I was praying for fewer problems, for the soldering iron of life to be on less often. Instead, IR prayer was simply teaching me not to respond.

It was the first of many surprises.



## **Chapter Seven**

### **God's Middle Name**

There is an old saying that God's middle name is "Surprise." Just prior to the soldering iron test, divine Love prepared me to receive the lessons it would teach. I was teaching a Sunday School class of third graders, and I ended up being the student.

The children were learning about the solar system in school. They seemed very impressed by the fact that the sun is "billions of degrees hot."

I wanted to teach them that divine Love, although immensely powerful, can work gently in our daily lives. I took the sun as a metaphor. The sun may be billions of degrees, but we could, I assured them, access its power to burn a very small hole in a common piece of notebook paper.

I had them all write a bad thing on a single piece of paper. They wrote things like "scared" or "hitting".

None of them had ever seen the old Girl Scout trick of burning a hole in paper using a mirror and the sun's rays. Positioning the mirror to reflect the sun I explained to them that the mirror was like prayer, because when we pray we mirror forth, or reflect, God's love.

I focused the reflected light from the mirror onto our piece of paper with the bad things written on it. Soon there were ooh's and ahh's as a small brown smoldering appeared and the sun gently burned a hole in the paper causing all those bad things to disappear.

The children were quite properly impressed and we went back to our regular lesson.

These kids were on the rowdy side and had a tendency to hit each other with hymnals. After the opening hymn I made them lay their hymnals on a back table. I made sure the piled up hymnals were lying open to the closing hymn, to avoid chaos when the closing bell rang.

When we pray we often think we are in control. We think we can direct where the effect is going to go. When I used the little mirror I felt very much in control, very much like someone the children looked up to. I knew the children were impressed by this new demonstration of my power.

I didn't think about the fact that the little make-up mirror I had taken from my purse was double-sided. While I was reflecting the sunlight in one direction, a ray of sunlight was also being reflected off the backside of the mirror unto the pile of hymnals.

When the little brown smoldering spot appeared on my piece of paper, another spot was also appearing on the page of an open hymnal. It continued to smolder after we went back to our lesson. I smelled something, but wrote it off as the aftermath of the mirror demonstration.

Suddenly the hymnals broke into flames. The church service had to be interrupted, the church and Sunday School had to be evacuated, and the fire engines came roaring in. Waves of water from the hose bounced off the podium where the superintendent normally announces the closing hymn.

The main thing is that no one got hurt. The children never forgot the lesson that I learned right along with them, that we don't control the results of our prayers and that the effect might sometimes show up in surprising places.

At the time the church was debating a hymnal revision. Whether this was an editorial comment from on high, a dire warning to use inclusive language, I could not say. I did have a hard time explaining to the Sunday School superintendent how it was possible to accidentally set fire to a stack of hymnals while teaching a class.

I was put on probation and watched carefully for several weeks, but nothing could dim the spectacular lesson I had been taught.

God's middle name is "Surprise."

*Surprise, Surprise, Surprise*

To many people the idea that thought affects matter is surprising, and the idea that prayer can be tracked is even more so.

Since this is such a new area to most people I would like to comment on three simple things that most people find very surprising.

The first surprise is that thoughts leave tracks. This isn't really so amazing. Think of a blush, or a tear, and how they enable you to easily track your feelings by the physical marks left on your body.

If you sit in a lawn chair while wearing shorts on a hot day you sometimes stick to the chair. When you stand up you can see the distinct impression, or track, of the lawn chair on your bare legs. It deteriorates quickly, but it can be clearly seen.

When you go to a movie, the movie also leaves an impression, but it leaves the impression, or track, on your mind instead of on your legs. If the movie was sad, you may feel the sadness for some time before it fades.

People aren't used to the idea that their thoughts leave tracks in the world, on themselves, on others, and in the environment. We have come to accept that car exhaust in Kansas affects the ozone layer over the Ukraine. Some day we will also understand that the road rage you feel on the freeway in Milwaukee is also a sort of pollution that can impact the mental environment in Cleveland or San Francisco.

If we are going to make tracks with our thoughts, it's best to walk with love. Which isn't bad advice for a physical walk in the woods either.



This leads to the second surprise. Most people think of themselves as something that makes tracks, and are not aware that they are also a medium upon which tracks are made. Even physically, a mosquito bite is a track left and the sting of a bee is a language spoken. The lawn chair impression could be called a track made on you, as could the blush and the tear.

My dad taught me a lot about mental terrain, about when to sit quietly and be like a rock, upon which no track can be impressed. He taught me to hide from the world's jarring emotions, well camouflaged by love. He taught me to be like a newborn fawn who can be left alone by her mother safely because the newborn has no scent of fear and therefore attracts no attention.

### *To be Present*

The third surprise to many people, when they first begin IR prayer, is the degree of awareness it takes. The kind of IR prayer that heals the sick takes skilled levels of awareness.

Barbara Dossey RN, MS is a leader in the holistic nursing field. She was interviewed in January of 1999 in the Journal *Alternative Therapies*, for an article called *On Holistic Nursing, Florence Nightingale, and Healing Rituals*. Dossey said:

. . . The holistic caring process is that moral state in which the holistic nurse brings her or his whole self into relationship to the whole of another person and other significant beings, reinforcing this presence, this connectedness in the moment.

When her interviewer, Bonnie Horrigan, commented, “That kind of care takes time,” Dossey responded with the following:

Actually it doesn't. What it takes is an intention in the nurse's consciousness - which is instantaneous and timeless - and being totally present in the moment, not thinking about all the other responsibilities . . . It is also a volitional act of love.

We are a generation taught to listen with half an ear. The media has taught us this. How many of us keep the radio or TV on in the background?

We are also a society of multiple tasks. Most of us think nothing about driving, talking on our cell phone, drinking a cup of coffee, and listening to the radio, all at the same time.

In IR prayer, as in tracking, you need to be present. You can't pray for someone effectively if you are wondering how your daughter did on her math test, how much it is going to cost to get the car fixed, and what you are going to make for dinner, all at the same time.

Paul Rezendes has written a beautiful book called *Tracking and the Art of Seeing* (HarperCollins 1999). In this book he writes:

Our security does not lie in the control we have over nature, but rather in the quality of attention that we bring to our lives. If we care about our relationship with nature, or our relationship with other human beings,

that caring demands our attention. Caring is attention . . . The tracker in the forest is in love with his or her surroundings. In nature, we are open to a larger perspective of self.

Rezendes also points out:

By thinking, we have set up parameters that divide the universe into things that can be categorized, and we call that understanding. This gives us a sense of power and control. We look at the forest and say, ‘That’s a white pine. That’s a white oak. Over there is a sugar maple,’ and we think we know the forest . . . We do not embrace the forest with our whole being; instead, we label it with our minds.

This is why having hands-on experience of prayer tracking is so helpful. To simply read about the labels one can put on the different processes of prayer, to intellectually understand the parameters of IR prayer and GR prayer, is not to embrace divine Love with our whole being.

It is useful to know the difference between IR and GR prayer tracks, just as it is useful to know the difference between a sugar maple and a white pine, but another dimension is needed before we can begin to understand. To enter that dimension we need to be aware, because we need to love, and as Rezendes pointed out, “Caring is attention.”

Practice awareness. Practice listening not with half an ear but with your whole being.

Listening involves spiritual intuition. Awareness goes beyond the physical. It means spiritual awareness. Awareness of the Soul, or the spiritual identity of your patient, brings physical healing.

Elijah is a formerly stray cat that has taught me much. When he was still a stray and I was tracking him, I knew when the moment came that it was all right to gently touch him, as we sat gazing at each other in the moonlight.

This is what I mean by listening; being present with the cat, being aware of him, and being aware of his awareness of me.

If I had touched Elijah before he was ready he would have run away and hidden. I would have had to try again another day.

If you mentally touch (pray for) a being before you are present with them, before you listen and are focused on and aware of them, they will mentally hide and your prayer will not be very effective.

A cat won't take food if he's up a tree, and a person won't accept the nourishing love you offer if you don't engage them, by being present, first.

We need to be totally aware of our patient when praying. Sometimes just quiet admiration of something good about them is needed, rather than an agenda of what we want to accomplish by praying.

Praying for another being is like seeing a dolphin jump out of the water. Some dolphins will come up and look at you. Some will even let you touch their nose, or will take a fish from your hand. Others won't. Seeing a dolphin jump out of the water in the morning sun will

still enrich your life, even if you never get closer than that.

When walking in the wilderness of prayer you don't even have to leave home. You just have to be open – open to learning, to other beings, to God (divine Love) and of course to surprises.



## **Chapter Eight**

### **The Silent Song of the Prayer Tracker**

My mom gave birth to me at home. I weighed 11 pounds, probably because I was a month late. Being a ten month baby allowed me to land in this world on my grandpa's birthday, a fact that endeared me to him more than it did to my mom.

Grandpa was my first true friend. He died when I was six, but my memory of him is very strong. I still remember, when I dream, how good he smelled; like wood fire and coffee, strong soap, and soft crackers.

My parents, being strict Christian Scientists, did not drink coffee, though my mom was liberal enough to drink something brown called Postum.

My grandpa not only drank coffee, he let me drink it, and he made it like no one else - in a cast iron frying pan with a raw egg and lots of sugar, cream and what I

now suspect was brandy. Whatever it was, it tasted great from a saucer, plus he sang while he made it.

Grandpa drank beer and smoked Camel cigarettes. He drove a pick-up truck. He used toothpicks and cuss words. All of this made him highly interesting to a little girl.

He also owned “the book”. He wasn’t much for reading. Except for the family Bible, “the book” was the only book I ever saw in his house.

But what a book it was. It was called *The Lives of Game Animals* by Ernest Thompson Seton and I took it to bed with me on every night that I spent at grandpa’s.

This was before I could read. The words were still black scratch marks on the page, bird tracks I hadn’t yet learned to identify. I would look at them and wonder at how evenly they walked on the page. Mostly though, I would look, and look, and look, at the drawings of animals.

My grandpa wasn’t passionate about tracking, other than for deer hunting, but when he referred to animal tracks he always spoke of “reading” them. He said he would rather read tracks than a book any day.

“The book”, despite being a book, agreed with him. After I learned to read, the bird tracks unscrambled themselves, becoming these words.

Never forget the trail. Look ever for the track in the snow; it is the priceless, unimpeachable record of the creature’s life and thought, in the oldest writing known on earth.

Tracks are a written language. They are the hieroglyphs of animals, and of us. To track is to learn what the animal has to say, to decipher the record he has left for you to read.

Tracking means being willing to walk by the side of someone when they aren't there physically - just like reading and like praying.

Words, numbers, and tracks, are all icons - doorways into deeper meanings. I couldn't articulate that as a little kid, but this wisdom collected in my soul, like a specially mixed potting soil for growing prayers.

Today I pray in words, but I also pray in numbers, and in tracks. "God, help me to walk deliberately, like the fox. Help me to make happy tracks, like the squirrel. Help me to stand on my toes to see you, like the white-footed mouse. Help me to fly to you without a trace, like the crow flies." I am translating this prayer into words, and losing in the translation. This prayer is better prayed in tracks, with no words at all.

Sometimes I pray in numbers, in the language my computer speaks. It is a universal language. It is a mathematical language, and math is one of the most ancient, perfect, and beautiful languages on earth.

The most beautiful poetic psalm that you type into your computer is interpreted by your computer only as a pattern of zeros and ones, a pattern of plus and minus, positive and negative. Which is the prayer, the computer pattern or the words? They are both language, two sets of symbols representing the same prayer. If one set of symbols is meaningful to one



person, and another set to another, it doesn't matter. Prayer transcends the symbol.

The Greek word for disciple is the same word that is our root word for mathematics. Health, or wholeness, comes from the same root as the word integer, that is, a whole number instead of a fraction.

Many prayers in the Bible can be seen almost mathematically in terms of affirmation and denial, purgative or restorative, plus or minus. Jesus spoke with computer like precision when he told us to let our conversation be “yea yea or nay nay”, a simple “yes” or “no”, to the point, and with the full power of simplicity. (Matthew 5:37)

There are things that can only be said in numbers. I cannot describe the individuality of a particular soybean through verbal description. I need data to show you its weight, its moisture content, its minute variation in shape, and whether its skin is a little thicker in one spot than another. Without scientific data I cannot distinguish one soybean from another soybean.

God can. Verbal description does not reveal this dimension of God; this place of Love in which even a soybean is given individuality, and where, in Biblical imagery, the hairs of our head are all numbered. Prayer tracking allows us to look deep into unsuspected dimensions of God, in holy appreciation, and with a sense of awe.

Prayer tracking has convinced me that our God is never bored or boring. Even the smallest created things have identity. They have stories to tell, and their stories are written in the language of numbers.

Tracks, like data points, are a predictive language. They tell us what is to come. They speak of relationships. All numbers are connected.

It's possible to pray in a predictive language. Sometimes the rhythm of ratios and equations, like the rhythm of a running deer, becomes the silent song of the prayer tracker.

My grandpa knew nothing of math but he respected the rhythm of all prayers, prayers with or without words, prayers in or out of the church.

Grandpa went to the Catholic Church, when he went at all, but he was of that breed of men who believed that religion should be a whole family affair.

He didn't go the Christian Science church, but he did stay away from his own church after marrying a Christian Science lady. I heard my mom tell my dad once that she thought that was very romantic. Dad said quietly, "Not if you're God." I could tell by the way he said it that he was angry, though you'd have to have known him very well to detect that.

There were always many religious nuances, conflicting loyalties, passions, and ethical questions dancing like snowflakes around our house. The grown-ups plowed through them, shoveling heavily. Being a little girl I just played in the snow.

Grandpa was my real friend. Even though he was a grown-up he would sometimes put down his shovel and play in the snow with me.

I remember grandpa lying in the hospital, his confiscated pack of Camels on the dresser, a medicine

bottle of brown glass near the bed. A priest had just given him the last rites.

His heretical wife was dead and needed no loyalty, yet when the new doctor asked him his religion he glanced at his little heretical granddaughter and said gently, “Christian Science.”

My mama giggled, my daddy frowned, the doctor raised his eyebrows, and I accepted his words as they were meant, not as a denial of his religion, but simply as a last sharing gesture.

Later I reciprocated by making the sign of the cross, like I’d seen him do. Since my Christian Science family would have been horrified had they seen me do this, I did so when I was out in the woods and no one was looking.

My parents wouldn’t let me go to the funeral. I sat at home alone, downwind from heaven, while the breath of a loving God carried Grandpa’s scent to me, letting me know he was still there, up ahead.

For a long time I could picture my grandpa’s tracks extending far into the woods. Sometimes I missed him so much that I would close my eyes and follow his tracks in my mind. I called with no words, chanting the silent song of the prayer tracker. My efforts to find my grandpa were a prayer, and even then, I knew it.

## Chapter Nine



### Adorable Math

She meant no harm, but Miss Horn's math class left me more terrified of equations than I ever was of snakes.

Years later my brother set me straight. Equations to John were not sharp rocks designed cleverly to trip poor students on difficult math tests. They were beautiful tracks of invisible things, pictures of something that can't be drawn.

John told me that equations were the parables of math. Who can understand what Love is? When we read the parable of the Good Samaritan, a story in which Jesus uses symbols, and shows us the relationship between them, we suddenly understand, in part, what Love is. We approach the invisible.

In the same way my brother held that equations were symbols, placed into certain relationships. He said equations spoke to the heart of a scientist like a parable spoke to the heart of a Christian.

When a scientist looks at an equation he approaches the invisible. He understands, in part, what gravity is.

*Equations are language. Equations are tracks.*

There is a difference between the effect of prayer and its measurable effect. Animals walk in the woods all the time and we don't see them. Doing an experiment is like putting out a track box, which is a six-foot low box of pressed soft earth, mixed with sand, and with a bait plate in the middle. You leave it out overnight, and the next day you study the tracks.

Love is the best bait. You will always get prayer tracks if you bait your experiments with love

Measurable effects are the tracks found in the "six feet" allowed by a laboratory experiment. I assume that there are many more effects from our prayers, out in the woods, that we don't know about. There are also some that we do know about, but don't measure.

The title of this book was borrowed from a math and prayer program that I created for children. I called it Spirit Tracking, and I presented the data visually. For example I always drew the E, which stands for measurable effect in our equations, as a simple line drawing of an eagle, with his wings creating the letter E.

Using animal imagery helped the children to relate to, understand, and remember the math and data. It also took away their fear of it.

By equating data patterns with animals, it has been easier for children to grasp the underlying movement of the data, and to read the tracks, graphs, and equations which prayer leaves in the soft earth we offer.

The animals have the advantage of being lovable and cute, and of bringing these characteristics to the data. Can math be lovable, even cute? I feel sure that Miss Horn, my 7th grade math teacher, would cringe at the thought, but with prayer, all things are possible.

### *Linking animals with mathematical patterns*

There are different patterns of measurable effect. The children learned the parameters of each category, each type of effect, much like one learns to recognize tracks from the cat family (cougars, bobcats, housecat) the dog family (wolves, coyotes, fox, dogs) and so forth.

The four categories I always started with were the eagle, the ant, the bee and the moose. By having the children relate the pattern to an animal, it was easier for a child to remember it. It was kind of like drawing a constellation around stars, or in this case picking some numbers out from all the other numbers and grouping them.

A constellation is a way of picking some stars out from all the other stars, a way of recognizing a set

pattern. Literally drawing the numbers inside of animal outlines was a way of doing the same thing with math.

Some people have asked me if the children remembered the animals better than the patterns. They remembered them together, and that was the point. It's like linking words with music. A child may have trouble memorizing a long poem, but if you put it to music, chances are he'll remember all the verses.

Linking animals with data patterns made math easy, like singing a song.

I used a drawing of the eagle when writing the "E", the symbol for measurable effect, in the equations. The top and bottom of the "E" were shaped like wings and the middle part of the E was drawn as the eagle's head and beak.

The eagle can be either an IR or a GR measurable effect. Both IR and GR prayers are capable of eagle flights of joy, the types of prayer that lift you above the problem.

The Ojibway do a dance and say a prayer before they pick up an eagle feather that they find in the forest. When we see even a little bit of measurable effect, even one sacred feather of the eagle, I teach the children to pray and give thanks before analyzing it (picking it up.)

Eagles nest in very rocky places. Even in the rockiest situation, the healing eagle effect can be born. Anything over a 70 was an eagle effect, in IR or GR. When my brother got a 73 on the yeast test, that was an IR eagle effect.

Eagles can see in dimensions we cannot. They can

see the body heat of a mouse appearing as a streak of light, when the mouse is running across the ground.

Prayer produces an eagle effect, allowing us to see beyond the dimension of the ordinary. Prayer flights lift us into a higher perspective. Then the familiar warmth and affection of friends, be they mice or men, can be experienced as a blaze of light, a streaking prayer path of light and healing.

The ant is a GR measurable effect. Though earth bound she is a master builder, building her ant hills so perfectly that every single grain catches an equal amount of sunlight and accesses the warmth of God.

Many physical healings come from GR ant prayers. We may not always soar like an eagle but persistence and hard work will bring the healing, or measurable effect.

The effect I got on the yeast test that Christmas morning was an ant GR effect. I worked hard at it. It may not have been a huge effect but it was steady, useful, and measurable. I have great respect for ant-like prayer effects.

Ants work in colonies, and GR healers often use prayer chains and group prayers.

The bee is an IR effect. Community is central to her in many aspects, though she goes out to collect nectar individually. This is a good model of IR prayer.

When we repeated the yeast test a decade after that Christmas, I began getting IR scores, though they were only in the 50's and 60's. These were IR bee effects.



The bee is an IR effect because even though, by being receptive, we can build a hive in our heart and hope she takes up residence, the bee cannot be held by a human agenda. She must venture daily into the wilderness and she must adapt to what it offers. The honey (healing) will differ according to the terrain she works in. Buckwheat honey tastes different than red clover honey. Both are delicious.

Bees visit 5 million flowers to create just one pint of honey. Those flowers - the spontaneous blossoming of God's grace - are comparable to the identities referred to in identity-referenced prayer. They are the raw material from which the honey of healing flows.

There is no such thing as synthetic honey.

I would not want to forget the moose. The moose is not a common effect. He is massive, and he can be an IR moose or a GR moose. He is the sudden overwhelming healing effect where the blind see and the deaf hear. He is powerful, benevolent, and funny.

He lives very deep in the heart of prayer. You have to be skilled enough to go a long way into the heart of God in order to find him. He likes tranquil lakes, and walks beside the still waters finding his nourishment, sometimes entering them knee-deep and deeper.

Once in a while he wanders into town on his own. God's grace sometimes produces an unexpected, traffic-stopping physical miracle, in just such a way.

Just because a prayer track is large doesn't automatically mean that it's a moose track. The moose effect is often considered an unusual, or even an unbelievable, effect. If you had never seen a moose

and I described one, no one could blame you for being skeptical.

My dad's unusual result on the soldering iron test, where the yeast he prayed for did not get hot, was a moose effect. Perhaps that is why my dad did not keep doing the test. He sensed it was best, at that time, to let the moose go back into the wilderness of prayer unmolested. I was still blessed to have seen it.

We find the moose by taking risks, by hiking along the outer edges of our ability. Often we see the nose of a healing first, like a moose swimming. Suddenly the healing effect emerges and it's so much bigger than just our lives.

Try not to look too hard for the moose. The moose is big but shy. If you look away once in a while he's more likely to come out of the water.

These animals stand for data patterns. Children learn the parameters of each pattern and know when an effect should be recorded in the eagle, bee, ant or moose folder. The use of animal metaphors takes the fear out of both math and prayer. It sometimes makes me wonder how we managed to put so much fear into both in the first place.



## **Chapter Ten**

### **By the Numbers**

When looking at animal tracks the first thing you need to do is count the toes. When looking at prayer tracks the first thing you need to do is count the ratios.

A ratio is a pattern, and a pattern is a track. Most rodents have four toes up front and five in the rear. Cats have four toes up front and four in the rear.

GR prayer tracks have three ratios and IR prayers have four, so you need to look for three things in one case and four in the other. This isn't as hard as it sounds. I am going to teach you how to count your toes.

In laymen's terms, in order to measure both IR and GR prayer, you need to know three things about that prayer; its potency, its quantity, and your ability to apply it to the research organism.

To obtain measurable results with IR prayer you have to include another factor. Identity-referenced prayer cannot be measured directly. It can only be measured in terms of its patterning effect.

Every measurement of IR occurs in relationship to resistance. Therefore, you need to measure how far the system being measured is from optimal pattern. This makes a difference with IR thought, but not with GR thought.

There is no direct measurement of spiritual power. Spiritual power can only be measured in terms of its patterning effect in experience.

John Klingbeil, *The Spindrift Papers*

In the physical sciences, the strength of an electromagnetic field is measured by introducing a unit charge into the field and then measuring the characteristics of the field in response to that charge.

Without that charge there is no way to measure the field and the equations which describe the field show no field without the charge. In the case of identity-referenced testing there is no way to measure the field without introducing holy thought into the field, and there is no field without resistance.

Bruce Klingbeil, *The Spindrift Papers*

GR prayer moves a system in one direction or another. IR prayer brings order to a system - it moves the system toward optimal pattern. If the system is already at optimal pattern there is no immediate measurable effect. This is why with IR prayer you have to start with something deviated from the norm.

For example, if you pray for someone who is sick, and they get well, you have a strong measurable

effect. But if you pray for someone who is already healthy, you won't see any change. In order to get measurable effect you need someone who is sick - deviated from optimal pattern.

If you pray for corn, and it is stressed, the IR prayer will help the corn to grow normally - you will see a measurable effect. If the corn is already healthy and growing normally you won't see an effect.

This is not true with GR prayer. With GR thought you don't need to have stress to measure. With GR prayer you can move in any direction you want to. You could, for example, get healthy corn to grow faster through GR prayer, an effect that you would not normally have with IR prayer. By definition IR prayer is prayer that is measured in reference to pattern.

This is where theory really counts because the pattern is not merely physical. The power of IR prayer appears to accommodate a holistic pattern (mental, physical, spiritual, and emotional) and it does this within the context of the optimal pattern for the community in which the research organism resides.

Healers know the landmarks of this pattern-mending, pattern-sustaining force. They can set up an experiment because they know what the patterns are that they need to measure in reference to - or at least they know them closely enough to begin the research. Surprises occur frequently in prayer tracking as they do in all research.

If you aren't familiar with this mental force, and you don't have enough of a background in spiritual healing to theorize the pattern you need to measure against,

expect to monitor a large number of systems in order to identify the patterns, at least in the beginning.

Goal-referenced thought, which is also referred to as intentional/volitional thought, is pattern indifferent. The goal direction of such thought is its measurable characteristic just as the pattern-forming and pattern-sustaining power of identity-referenced thought is its measurable characteristic.

Again, to measure either IR or GR prayer you have to know how strong it is, how much of it there is, and how closely it is identified with the system being measured. To measure IR prayer you also need to know how far the system being measured has been deviated from optimal pattern.

All the ratios must be held steady in order to measure. If you are comparing two tests, and on one of the tests the quantity of prayer was increased or decreased, you would not get an accurate result.

When setting up a prayer tracking test using IR prayer, four elements must be identified both in the experimental design and in the final mathematical analysis. These elements were originally described in *The Spindrift Papers* as follows:

At present, (and with some experimental backing)

we consider the functions involved to be simple

ratios. With “E” representing measurable effect,

with “Q” representing quality of thought, “q”

representing quantity of thought, “a” representing degree of associational linkage, “r” representing degree of deviation from norm, and with “k” representing the appropriate constant, we can express

these ratios as  $E=kq$ ,  $E=ka$ , and  $E=kr$ .

It should be noted that the constant “k” is “the appropriate constant”. This constant will be constant for each individual norm under a given set of environmental conditions and for each relationship (each equation). The constants are appropriate to the conditions and are not interchangeable.

With these simple postulations in place we felt we had sufficient conceptual structure to begin our tests.

How do you measure and hold steady the quantity, potency (quality) and application of prayer?

### *Quantity*

IR and GR measurement techniques differ in regard to measuring the quantity of prayer. GR prayer is measured in reference to a goal, therefore it can be measured effectively in minutes. The more time spent in prayer, the more likely you are to reach your goal.

You need to be aware of the skill level of your prayer providers and not have them pray so long that they tire. You want to have them pray at least 15

minutes (it can go much higher) because GR prayer tends to build up strength at the end of a run.

To help explain the theory here, you can compare this to painting a house. The longer you paint, the faster it gets done. It doesn't matter when you start or stop.

This doesn't work with IR prayer. In IR prayer you are measuring in reference to pattern, or identity. The measurable effect does not come from movement toward a goal, but from the perception of pattern. This is more like painting a picture than painting a house.

One person may paint an elaborate still life; a child may draw a simple stick figure. The point is that they are each a complete expression. The person knows when she is done. It might take my friend a half hour to paint a picture; it might take me three hours.

It is a characteristic of IR prayer that instead of seeing measurable effect build up toward the end of a run, you will often see measurable effect kicking in during the first few seconds, before the prayer provider even has a chance to start praying, before she mentally sets up her easel.

Intention appears to be a factor, and this intention should be allowed to flow to completion rather than being stunted. Conversely, if a person is finished with her painting, she shouldn't be forced to keep dabbing paint on the canvas for another twenty minutes.

Whether the prayer is a "stick-figure" or a masterpiece does not appear to matter in terms of measurable effect. Whether the prayer provider strives to do their best does appear to matter.



With IR prayer it is most effective to quantify prayer by counting prayer sessions, instead of counting prayer minutes. You count how many times a person prays, allowing them to take their prayer to their sense of completion in each session.

They may, for example, pray twice a day for ten days. In each of the two daily sessions the picture, the perception through prayer of the identity of the research organism, will be brand new. It's like painting a flower from many angles and in many lights.

In GR prayer the sense of completion comes from the achievement of the goal; in IR prayer a sense of completion comes from the spiritual perception of the organism, no matter how many times that occurs.

Although both IR and GR prayer are effective, the "active agent" producing change (measurable result) is different in each. GR prayer is measured in reference to the completion of a goal. IR prayer is measured in reference to the perception of a pattern (identity). My brother wrote in *The Spindrift Papers* that "pattern is the measurable dimension of identity."

It is most effective to measure the quantity of GR prayer in actual time spent. All the research subjects should receive the same total amount of prayer time, in whatever segments are convenient.

It is most effective to measure the quantity of IR prayer in sessions rather than in minutes. All the research subjects should receive the same total number of prayer sessions, regardless of length.

Effective measurement comes from theory development - with understanding the "active agent" or

source of change present in differing modes of consciousness.

I might just mention here that inexperienced IR prayer providers often pray too long. With GR prayer you can't really pray too long - the more you paint, the more you get done.

With IR prayer, it's as if people don't have confidence that their prayer (painting) is good enough, so they keep dabbing on paint and sometimes spoil the effect. When teaching IR prayer one of the first lessons to convey is when to let the prayer go, like the butterfly I mentioned before, that lands for a moment on your hand, and then flutters off.

### *Quality or Potency*

A drop of perfume has more potency than a drop of cologne. No matter how well you regulate the amount of prayer given, if the ability to pray among your prayer providers is radically different, you will not have comparable results.

Prayer providers should always have a chance to practice on several runs before tracking starts. Prayer tracking does not measure your ability to pray, it measures your ability to apply prayer to the organism. Even skilled healers, if they have never prayed for anything non-human before, need some practice.

Also, even the best healers have their off days. When working with prayer providers enough experiments must be done over a period of time to account for this.

The best way to bring some measure of control to the quality of prayer being provided is to use experienced prayer providers with known prayer profiles. A prayer profile could consist of a questionnaire that revealed basic approaches to prayer and could also include test scores from tests on a wide range of organisms.

Using prayer providers with similar prayer profiles – which should be updated annually – helps to make the mental input comparable from test to test.

If you are doing a controlled study you need some control. Using large prayer chains to pray for your research organisms means that lots of people you don't know, and haven't screened, are pouring in lots of mental input of unknown kinds at unknown times and in unknown amounts. This is the equivalent of setting up your test tubes in a busy Greyhound bus station.

I'm not saying that prayer chains aren't good and useful because they certainly are. I am saying they need to be screened and categorized in order to use them in research.

In research it is most practical to choose healers with a similar prayer profile, whether you choose an IR or GR prayer profile or any other type you desire.

### *Researching the Organism*

*The Spindrift Papers* calls the ability to apply prayer to an organism an associational link. This boils down to the matter of knowing what you are praying for.

If you are praying for corn in the lab, you need to know the difference between the control corn and the corn you are praying for. Since the two groups are purposely as much alike as possible, for research purposes, and since most people are not used to praying for corn, this can take some adjustment.

Let's say that I have an injured foot, which is causing me a lot of pain, so that I cannot sleep. I call you and ask for your help in prayer. It is easier to pray for me under these circumstances than it would be if all you knew was that someone somewhere in America had some sort of a need and wanted some prayer.

Testing has shown that a clear associational link – a clear idea of who you are praying for – results in higher measurable effect.

To express this in reverse, research in *The Spindrift Papers* has shown that measurable effect is cut by as much as one third if the prayer provider is not sure of what or who they are praying for. This is an area where many more studies are needed. The fact remains that with identity-referenced prayer you need to identify the identity you are reaching out in prayer to perceive.

If I call you and ask you to pray for me, you don't mistakenly pray for my brother, or my dog, or my boss at work. You pray for me. The fact that you pray for me doesn't mean that you dislike my brother, my dog, or my boss. You are simply responding to a request for prayer.

It seems so simple in human terms, because that is what we are used to. In the lab, where you are asked

to pray for one batch of corn, but not the other (the control) it can be more confusing.

Associational links are one of the hardest concepts for those unfamiliar with spiritual healing, and even for some who are pros. Many healers experience prayer like a symphony, in its entirety, rather than being aware of each note. They may not even be aware of what their thought rests on, or of the fact that they are establishing an associational link.

With IR prayer, unlike with GR prayer, an associational link is not the bridge over which healing flows nor is it the agent of healing. It is easy to think of this pictorially. With GR prayer you often have a picture of one person sending or transferring mental energy to another. With IR prayer you have two people (or two beings) both receiving at once, rather than sending and receiving to each other.

With IR prayer an associational link is something like a lever linking two windows so that they both open to the sunlight at once. The sun does not flow through the lever, although it may rest on and warm the lever. Our prayers, in other words, may improve and uplift our relationship.

In IR prayer the healing does not flow from one person to another. It flows from divine Love to where the need is. The reason you need an associational link is that without the lever only one window would open, only one being would receive.

Most people establish associational links unconsciously or at least without much thought or effort.

Establishing the link has nothing to do with the prayer itself.

It's easy to establish a link or relationship with another person. If I ask you to pray for me, you don't get confused and pray for my Aunt Joan or my dog Scooter.

It is harder to establish a relationship with a soybean, especially with one soybean as opposed to another. Since control and treated groups purposely are as much alike as possible, this makes it even more difficult.

Until we learn more, the easiest way of insuring a clear associational link with a seed or a soybean is by establishing visual contact with it, in person or via web cam.

The web cam is the soybeans' equivalent of a person's phone call to a spiritual healer. It's the way the soybean lets the healer know: "This is who I am. Pray for me."

The easiest way to establish an associational link, or relationship with the soybean, is to simply let the prayer provider see what she is praying for.

### *Variations*

Once you know the elements of prayer tracking you can play around with them. You can change the quantity of prayer only – perhaps by praying for two containers of seeds one day and three the next, so that certain containers are getting a third more prayer than others. By doing so you can find out if the increased

effect is linear – does a third more prayer give a third more measurable effect?

You can also play with quality of prayer, using different types of prayer providers (maybe IR and GR prayer providers), on different tests and then comparing the different processes set in motion.

By changing one element slightly while holding the others steady one gets a better idea of why prayer does what it does, and also of how to improve our individual prayer style.

You can even change the resistance factor, to create a clearer picture of the differences between IR and GR prayer processes. You can hold the other three elements steady, and just change the stress the organism is under.

An identity-referenced test is the measurement of the movement of a system toward its norms or the measurement of the development of the norms of a system. A goal-referenced test is the measurement of the movement of a system without reference to its norms.

John Klingbeil, *The Spindrift Papers*

### *The characteristics of IR and GR prayer tracks*

Sometimes a quick overview of how the tracks look is easier to relate to than technical language. Here is such an overview.

1. GR prayer works well with less resistance, IR prayer works better with more resistance.

Since GR prayer is goal oriented it moves in a certain direction. Whatever blocks you from moving in that direction lessens measurable effect.

You can of course use GR prayer to get an effect by praying for something stressed - as when you pray for a sick person - but your measurable effect will be increased as the stress lessens. With IR prayer it's just the opposite, measurable effect will increase as the stress intensifies.

If I was doing a GR experiment, and I wanted to pray for corn, I would start with healthy corn. The measurable effect would be greater - the corn would grow higher and faster or whatever it was that I wanted to make it do.

With IR prayer you cannot test measurable effect without resistance. If you pray for something healthy there will be no immediate measurable effect. (Although, there will be an evolution effect that can be traced over time.) The greater the resistance the bigger the measurable effect because you are measuring the distance back to optimal pattern.

If I were using IR prayer to pray for corn, I would pray for corn that was stressed.

**2.** In GR prayer the order in which the data comes in is usually not that important. It is the end result that counts, and analysis patterns reflect this.

In IR prayer the order in which the data comes in is absolutely crucial, and your analysis pattern must reflect this.

Again, GR is like painting a wall as opposed to painting a picture. The order in which you put the paint



on the wall doesn't matter as much as how much of the wall gets painted.

In painting a picture, the order in which the paint is applied is the whole picture.

My brother, John, described it this way in *The Spindrift Papers*. He said that GR prayer was prayer in which “divergence from a mean is the focus of experimental attention” while in IR prayer “the focus shifts to the internal order of the sequences generated by the processes involved.” He reminds us that trying IR prayer tracking when you are accustomed to doing GR prayer tracking involves a sizable “conceptual shift”.

**3. Visualization** - holding in thought the picture of a healthy state or whatever else you are trying to accomplish, - is a great aid in GR healing. You definitely want to picture that little “Pacman” gobbling up the cancer cells.

In IR healing, your prayer will be more effective if you don't picture “Pacman” eating the cancer cells. In IR prayer you do not want to project any image onto the prayer. If images come to you while praying, that may be helpful; the research in this area is not yet clear. We do know that to begin with an image comes close to beginning with a goal or agenda, and this retards IR prayer.

Visualization is an area where many more prayer tracking experiments need to be done. In medicine, computer visualization has spawned powerful technologies. Today you can see a picture produced by a CAT scan. This picture is based partly on data

and partly on highly accurate computer modeling or simulation. Viewing such images changes the way we perceive our body, our health, and even our prayers.

In prayer the visualization occurs in our mind, not on a computer monitor, but it is still based partly on simulation.

Medicine has affected American prayer. Visualization in prayer has become more popular.

So far research has shown prayer visualization to be very effective in GR prayer but detrimental in IR prayer. We don't know exactly why. We also don't know if different types of visualization (visions that come to you in prayer as opposed to those you start out with for example) can be categorized and if they have different effects.

As prayer tracking moves beyond the "gee whiz it works!" stage these areas will be explored. We live in a fertile time of research.

**4.** Generally GR prayer takes time to kick in and you will see the greatest build up of power and measurable effect toward the end of a run. Research design should capitalize on this.

With IR prayer, effects are more apt to peak early, but of course this depends on the pattern being formed. You want to look very early in the run for effect with IR prayer, even in the first seconds of a run.

**5.** The longer you pray with GR prayer, usually the more effect you get. With IR prayer, praying too long during one session (treatment) can sometimes retard measurable effect, although multiple sessions will increase effect.

**6.** With GR prayer you can control the outcome of your prayer to an extent.

With IR prayer you cannot. You need to know going in - and the research subject needs to know - that effect may be something unexpected.

**7.** GR prayer research can be done in any environment in which the healer feels comfortable.

IR prayer research is environment sensitive - it acts differently in different contexts and in different environments.

**8.** The measurable effect of GR prayer is usually specific and directed.

Measurable effect from IR prayer is more likely to be spread out all over the place, because it affects the whole system, or environment, and causes multiple interactions to occur.

When measuring IR prayer you want to find the place of most rapid change and use this as a window for taking measurements, then step back and get as much of the rest as you can.

GR prayer is easier to measure because you only have to monitor one or two specific changes. GR prayer can be measured by looking at only one independent variable.

IR prayer is more complex. Your measurable effect will increase if you create a natural environment for your research organism to respond within.

**9.** The measurable effects from GR prayer tend to fade more quickly than the effects of IR prayer. IR prayer often shows up a year later, or even in the next generation of the research organism, without any

additional prayer input. GR prayer often needs to be repeated to keep the organism healthy.

Long-term studies are needed with IR prayer, because it tends to be more cumulative than GR prayer.

**10.** GR prayer is more easily adaptable to group prayer than IR prayer.

IR prayer can be done in teams, especially for collective problems, but it takes coordination. Again, it isn't hard to get a lot of people to help paint a wall, but if you are painting a mural, there has to be more communication, more coordination, and more similarity of style among the people involved.

When doing IR prayer studies you need to pay a little bit more attention to the prayer profiles of the prayer providers to get the strongest results.

One of the great promises that prayer tracking offers is the potential to better coordinate teams of prayer providers. All prayer is good because love is always helpful in any situation. But research has shown that there are many ways of organizing prayer teams, and that some ways may be more effective than others when dealing with large collective problems. I am not speaking here of theology but simply of coordination. More research is needed on this topic.

The Red Cross does not begin teaching disaster relief classes on the day a disaster happens. One of the reasons Americans respond so well to situations where relief is needed is because of their many

layered, orderly, and well-practiced responses. You do not see relief workers simply milling around.

In the same way, with prayer, it is sometimes good to respond to a collective problem that has many layers in a way that is more than just mentally milling around. Practice and preparedness can make a big difference when it comes to saving lives and reducing suffering. Also, research bears out what we have always known – that prayer can be preventive.

Prayer tracking gives us a practical tool for exploring these issues. It allows us to expand the prayer element in crisis prevention and response.

In our society people already pray spontaneously, sincerely, and generously when there is a need. Prayer tracking allows us to access the power of such prayers. Just as farmers have learned to grow more crops per acre, so prayer tracking increases the harvest of healing. It gives us a higher yield on our collective prayers.



## **Chapter Eleven**

### **Concentric Circles**

In IR healing, physical change is secondary, insight is primary. The physical track is not the important thing in tracking, the important thing is becoming one with what you are tracking.

When I see a track I know the track isn't the animal, and I know the animal did not purposely cause the track. The track is merely a by-product of that animal's being, a physical change caused in the earth by its identity.

A track helps me gain insight into the animal just as a physical healing helps me gain insight into divine Love.

Divine Love doesn't heal because we ask it to. Divine Love heals because it is Love and cannot be anything else. In the same way, the animals don't walk in the woods for our entertainment. They walk there

because they live there. You have to go out in the woods – you have to enter into the habitat of healing, the terrain of divine Love, and then you will see all that you long for.

One of the first lessons one learns in tracking is the lesson of interconnectedness. Tom Brown Jr. (*The Tracker*), whom I quoted at the beginning of this book, calls it the lesson of concentric circles. He tells of how he first learned this lesson from Stalking Wolf, his Apache teacher, when he was a child.

The following quote is from the book *Tom Brown's Field Guide to the Forgotten Wilderness*, Berkley Books, 1987, pp. 2-4. Stalking Wolf was the grandfather of Brown's best friend Rick, and both boys called him Grandfather.

Because Grandfather taught by example instead of word, we never took our eyes off of him . . . we would watch his head and if he turned to look at something we would do the same. Nothing he did escaped our notice; we did not want to appear foolish by passing by something obvious . . . As we passed under a rather large pine tree, Grandfather turned around and said, 'Don't disturb him.' We were flabbergasted and embarrassed. What could we possibly have missed? We looked all around, especially at the ground, as that was where Grandfather was looking when he passed this spot. For the life of us we could not find anything - that was, until Rick looked up. To our stunned amazement there, not ten feet over our heads, was a

huge great horned owl . . . I had never seen Grandfather take his eyes off the ground..

. . . We ran to him pleading with him to tell us how he knew that the owl was in the tree. At that point a normal teacher would have taken us through the lesson by hand, pointing out every nuance until we had, at best - and if we remembered everything - a vague understanding of the owl. Grandfather . . . answered simply, 'Go ask the mice.'

Mice act differently when predators are around. By looking at the ground, and seeing the behavior of the mice, the Apache teacher knew that the owl was in the tree overhead. This wise Apache teacher knew that all things are interconnected. He did not consider mice too small to teach grand lessons.

Jesus told us that the rocks and stones themselves could bear witness to the Christ (Luke 3:8). For those whose prayer life includes the lesson of the concentric circles, nothing is too mundane or small to pray for or observe. Tom Brown Jr. speaks of the need to watch for "the concentric rings thrown off by various entities moving about the landscape" and writes:

Grandfather taught us also the great spiritual lesson of Oneness . . . Meaning runs far deeper than the physical . . . the most majestic teaching came from the little things of nature, not the grandiose vistas.



Perhaps the most important thing we can learn from Stalking Wolf is this description of him:

Grandfather considered himself only a guide or catalyst to our learning, one whose task was to urge observation and the patience to grasp the profound, multifaceted, and essential truths of nature.

Experience, not words, is also the best way to teach prayer. Prayer tracking can become a guide or catalyst to our learning about prayer. By praying for the little things in nature, and observing their response, we can teach ourselves meanings that run far deeper than the physical.

### *Going in Circles*

In the circle of healing, resistance is part of the pattern. When you reach the mountain top where there is nothing left to be healed, and divine Love is seen as All, resistance disappears. In the same way, if you get far enough into outer space you can see that the earth is round. The rest of the time it looks pretty flat, and its curvature is a matter we accept through educated faith.

You are going to find yourself lost in the woods and going around in circles in prayer if you don't learn to deal with resistance. The amount of stress an organism is under is not the only type of resistance present in prayer tracking.

Anyone who has ever prayed in a crisis knows that it isn't just a matter of thinking a few nice thoughts.

Fear pushes back, doubt pushes back, and sometimes an overwhelming desire to sleep pushes against your best efforts to pray. Sometimes you just feel like you're drowning.

Every action causes an equal and opposite reaction. This is as true in prayer as it is in physics. It is normal to run up against resistance to prayer. If tracking were simple, if you could do it lying on the couch with the TV on in the background, it would not be much fun. You need to get out in the wilderness of prayer, and that means encountering a few predators.

### *Deep patterns*

Experimenter effect is the effect of your unconscious expectation on the research organism or system. It appears as a small GR effect.

Before you can separate resistance, or "r" tracks, from the measurable effect of the prayer that you are tracking, you must first learn to find experimenter effect and separate it from measurable effect.

When looking for a missing person, professional trackers wear shoes with a notch cut in the heel so that others on the team will be able to distinguish their tracks from that of the person they are tracking.

Experimenter effect needs to be clearly marked, and statistically factored in, like making a notch in the shoe of your unconscious mind.

Team trackers will study a track in depth, and then mark different sets of tracks with different colored

flags, to help the next person identify what is going on at a glance.

In prayer tracking we don't mark the effects with flags, but we often use many kinds of graphs, and experiment with marking different effects with different colors. A visual effect on the graphs is a way of helping us distinguish the measurable effect we are looking for from all the other tracks.

I never thought I would fall in love with graphs, but I did. Standing at the intersection of art and science, graphs are the tracks of a world unseen to the naked eye. Just as cartographers once decorated the compass rose of a map, I always want to decorate, frame, and celebrate my graphs, in a way that is not yet part of the culture of science.

When tracking you have to let the details of the track seep into your mind, until you see the deeper pattern.

There is a simple example of a consciousness pattern that lies below the surface. It can be found in what is known in parapsychology as the card-calling test. Certain aspects of this test have been adapted to some prayer tests also, in studying the defenses of the human mind that block spiritual healing.

In the classic form of the card-calling test, a person takes a shuffled pair of cards and lays them down one by one, face down, guessing each time whether the card is red or black. Hits or misses are counted.

Statistically, hits should occur about half of the time, and that is exactly what happens if you repeat the test enough times.

If you were to just look at the end result, you would just see the 50 percent figure, and you would miss the deeper pattern.

If you look longer at this track which is made by the human mind, you will find that it isn't the final result but the order in which the data occurs that is important.

Most people will call a card correctly (guess its correct color) just after the color changes. In other words when the color changes from a red card to a black card, people will guess the next card correctly, even though they can't see the cards.

We learn from this that the human mind for most people senses movement, just like an animal in the woods. When an animal sees movement, he focuses. Apparently our mind does the same, although research has also shown that a small percentage of people react more to groupings than to movement.

Since the great majority of people tested appear to have minds attuned to movement you can change your test design to reflect this. If instead of scoring this test by counting how many cards you get right, you score it by looking at how many of the cards you get right just after a color change, the statistics will be higher than what the law of probability predicts.

IR prayer tracking always takes notice of the order in which data comes in.

*The tricksters: The bear, the fox, and the crow.*

By looking at the order in which data comes in, and not just at the final results, we find different kinds of

tricks being played with the data. I do not know whether it is our unconscious mind that plays these tricks, or whether it is some outside mental influence. Perhaps it is both.

The book, *The Spindrift Papers*, describes all of this in technical detail. When introducing the subject I find it easier to steer clear of technical language and to describe “r” effects (resistance) with animal names. I call them the tricksters and give them names like bear, fox, and crow.

### *The Bear*

One day my girlfriend, who lives in northern Wisconsin, was on her way to work. She had made herself a cup of coffee, put it in the cup holder on the dashboard of her truck, and was just about to start her engine, when she realized that she had forgotten something.

Dashing back to the house she came out a minute later to find a black bear sitting in the driver’s seat. The cream and sugar in her coffee had attracted him. It was actually non-dairy creamer and Equal, and therefore not of much use in fattening a bear for the winter, but apparently it tasted good.

The bear left some clumsy scratch marks on her dash board in his effort to grab the cup, guzzled the hot coffee with pleasure, and then ambled off. If she had locked the truck it wouldn’t have happened, but who locks their truck when they are only going to be gone one minute?

You need to lock the truck. If you live in the woods, lock the truck. And when you are praying – lock the truck at all times.

When you pray, you always need to be alert even though the bear is not a malicious form of resistance. Banging on a few tin pans – or in prayer singing a hymn or shouting a few prayerful affirmations at the top of your lungs - will usually send him scuttling back into the woods.

If you aren't alert, if you forget to lock your food up (forget to treat the nourishing love of God as a precious valuable thing) the bear will come in and steal your honey.

In folklore the bear, unlike the fox and the crow, is not known as a trickster. In real life bears, especially cubs, like to play tricks. In prayer tracking, bear is a name that I have given to a low-level type of resistance.

On the card-calling test, for example, the bear would be a family of mathematical patterns that typically appear if you are calling cards with the TV on in the background and you aren't paying much attention to what you are doing.

The fox is a high-level resistance. Fox is a family of mathematical patterns that might typically come into play if you were concentrating very hard on the card-calling test and perhaps were even praying during such a test.

In *The Spindrift Papers* a variation of the card-calling test was done called the VIUR test (Visual Image, Unconscious Response). This test does not

require prayer. It works off the unconscious mind and is useful for demonstrating the nature of mental effects.

We did, however, have people try the test with and without prayer, and also with and without close concentration. In one version of the VIUR, we encouraged them to have the TV on and not think too hard about each call they made. In other versions we had them concentrate and pray before making a call. By doing this two different ways we were able to see clearly the two different data patterns that I call bear and fox.

In this test people were not calling cards. They chose two images, one image that was positive for them and one that was negative. For myself I chose a cross-and-crown as my positive image and a photograph of a man, whose face was blistered with a painful skin disease, for my negative image.

These pictures were photocopied in black and white, cut out all the same size, and put in a “deck” of sealed envelopes. Instead of calling the color of cards, you called whether you thought the image in the envelope was the positive or negative image.

Based on the data from the test, we came to believe that part of your unconscious mind skews the results whenever a certain level of perception is reached. This defense mechanism acts to conceal the perceptive power of your mind, a power that is equally evident in the data if you know where to look.

The skewing occurs in two different ways, corresponding to your level of concentration.

The theory behind the test, the test itself, the data,

and the conclusions, can be found in *The Spindrift Papers* in an article called *The VIUR Test: Massive Psi, Massive Defenses*.

My concern here though, is simply with the different defense mechanisms found, which I call the bear and the fox.

Defense mechanisms (at least the ones we know about) don't work perfectly. Action and counteraction leave their trace.

### *The Spindrift Papers*

It is that slight trace, that faint track that intrigues me.

Old bear is a type of resistance, the type that comes when you don't pay attention. Swift fox is also a type of resistance; a type that appears when prayer comes close to discovering the truth.

These types can be expressed as mathematical constructs, and are expressed that way in *The Spindrift Papers*. For ease in talking about them to children, I give them animal names.

Early in *The Spindrift Papers* the researchers claim to have accomplished the following.

“accumulated strong evidence that the knowledge or use of psi is defended against by the unconscious mind of each of us.

determined that the defense mechanisms [resistance] involved act in programmed instead of conceptual ways.



- found that the defense mechanisms employed different strategies under different circumstances . . . ”

Furthermore they conclude that, “ . . . the long history of peek-a-boo powers, evanescent results, and conflicting data” which has been a part of prayer tracking since the beginning, “can now be explained . . . by defense mechanism activity.”

Defense mechanism activity is what the researchers called these effects. I call them bear, fox, crow and other animal names.

In prayer tracking you can't just take at face value what the end result of the numbers tell you, even though they are actual. In the same way a psychiatrist can't take at face value what his patient tells him, even though it may be true. The influence of unconscious thought must be taken into consideration in both cases. You have to dig a little deeper.

Psychology accepts that our mind plays tricks on us. The ink blot test, and other psychological ploys, are used to get around the tricks of the unconscious mind and to get at the truth.

In prayer tracking, looking at the order of the data, and not just the end result, is a method of getting around the tricks of the unconscious mind in order to get at the truth.

The amazing thing isn't that the old bear mechanism will mess up your numbers in a certain way. The amazing thing is that if you are aware of what is going on, and if you pray about it, the pattern changes. The

bear pattern will disappear and a more complex fox pattern will appear.

Two different effects are walking all over the trail

Let your guard down and old bear will come in and raid your numbers, like a bear raids your camp, making a mess of everything.

He will arrange the data so that you get an average of 50 percent hits, even though, when the order of the data is paid attention to, the statistics show that you actually were aware of the identity of the unseen card or image more often than that. Old bear will fool you into thinking it's all a matter of 50/50 probability, when it isn't.

If you catch on to the bear, and mentally bang some pots and pans to send him scurrying, you will then have to deal with the fox.

### *The fox*

The fox is a different story. Swift sly fox knows you are tracking him and purposely hides the trail from you, even if you are on to his game.

Yet the red fox is an endearing canine. In real life, he barks like a poodle with a sharp yip. He eats strawberries whenever he can find them. He curls up in a ball, using his tail to keep his nose warm. He glints in the sun like melting copper and has a coat to die for. Because of this beauty he has often done so, though he cares for his beauty not at all. Deception can be beautiful and deadly. Make no mistake about it.

Fox breath is the stuff of which magic is made. You

can see it as vapor coming out of the fox den. Finding a fox den is not easy, but it is possible, like finding your way home. In deep winter you may hear the den before you see it, but only if you are very very quiet. Fox breath icicles are miniscule wind chimes, a tinkling fox-charmer music that sings to the creature which sleeps within.

Despite this, every rotten thing you have heard about the fox must be confronted. He appears sneaky, cunning, and incredibly sly. He can act mischievous and devilish, and he kills with precision. There is a reason that the practical English drag out enormous poundage in horseflesh, humans and dogs, to catch one skinny old fox. Even then, he often gets away.

In prayer tracking the fox is a high-flow resistance mechanism. He comes into play when you are aware of resistance, and are praying through it. He tries to trip you up when you are very close to physical healing. In this way, it's quite a hopeful thing when fox effects occur. It means you are close.

In real life, a fox will walk along a wall or a rocky ledge to avoid making tracks. He will enter the water and swim until his scent cannot be found, and he will even walk on a highway, where his tracks are unseen and the smell of pavement and gasoline deaden his scent.

A wolf walks by moving his feet from side to side, like a human does, so that the tracks appear in pairs. A fox walks by putting each foot right in front of the other, so that his tracks appear as a straight line.

Appearances are deceptive. So is raw data. Look for the deeper pattern.

A fox may appear to walk in a straight line, and the end result of a test may appear to indicate an obvious conclusion, but neither is reliable.

The fox's favorite trick is the dead end track in which he will reverse himself while walking. Stepping in his own tracks he will circle back to a place of cover where he can jump off the trail.

The casual tracker is left with a trail that leads nowhere. The skilled tracker studies the track and sees just where the fox reversed himself and where he jumped for cover. He meets him full circle.

I have gained a lot of respect for statistical analysis. Statisticians can see clearly where the data reverses itself, and where the measurable effect disappears into deep cover.

Let me teach you how to catch a fox. The fox is a creature of habit. That is his downfall. Foxes follow ancient runs that have been used by foxes for centuries, even when they are no longer safe. Once you are on to his patterns, you will know what he is going to do in advance.

It helps to understand that the fox works by instinct. Though he may seem malicious, he is just following his instincts. His actions are not a personal attempt to trick you, nor is he targeting you above all others.

When you pray and you run into some resistance, don't take it personally, even though it will probably come in some form that feels very personal. Resistance may take the form of a relationship problem or

a financial problem that occurs when you stand up for what is right. These are vulnerable spots, and the fox knows it.

Don't let these problems fool you or slow you down. They are a good sign, a sign you are on the right trail. Remember that prayer, like action, causes reaction, and the reaction will go away by itself if you keep moving forward.

A fox likes to take a nap after eating and he will head for home. It will be almost impossible to follow his tracks except after a snowfall. Then, for a short time, the fox is vulnerable, his tracks stand out in sharp relief, and you can find his den.

Problems are like snowfall, heavy or light. We think of them in an entirely negative way, forgetting that problems allow us to encounter the fox, allow us to track our weak points and confront them.

There is a fox inside of all of us but you aren't going to encounter him when you are healthy and happy. Only when problems blanket your life, obliterating normal landmarks, will the tracks of the fox stand out. These are the tracks that lead to the fox den, the place where you have hidden your pain. We can be grateful for any problem which leads us to the creature that sleeps within.

Defense mechanisms, like the kingdom of heaven, lie within.

Do not fear the confrontation. Foxes tame easily. Once you are face to face, the trickery ends. The smoke and mirrors vanish. The true endearing nature of the fox is uncovered. You are healed.

## *The Crow*

There is one very interesting type of resistance that only comes into play the very first time something useful or constructive is recorded in the world.

For many years no one could run the four-minute mile because people believed it was impossible. Once that mental limit was broken several people were able to run the mile in four minutes.

This is not because in the space of a few months runners around the world suddenly grew physically stronger. It was because the mental limit had been lifted, the opinion of collective consciousness was revised, and a new record had been recorded on the disk of consciousness.

We see this in the sciences all the time. Many discoveries are made almost simultaneously in different parts of the world, once the mental door to discovery is opened.

The first time a new prayer tracking test is done, of an entirely different type than other experiments, you run into a resistance pattern that can be expressed as a mathematical construct.

At first we thought it was just a learning curve, until we found that the pattern was not repeated the first time other prayer providers tried the test. It only appeared the first time a test was ever tried, no matter how experienced or inexperienced the person praying was.

I call this form of resistance the crow call, because crows are the scouts of the forest. When something new occurs, or when someone steps onto territory where they have not been seen before, crows make a racket. They sometimes even fly at you in an attempt to make you turn around and go back.

Crows are very brassy, but if you ignore them, they stop squawking, and watch you with interest. Like the fox they tame easily, and you can make them your allies.

I recall one time when my family was doing a rather off-the-wall seed test. We did not see the data pattern we had come to expect with a first time test in a new field. We did not hear the call of the crow.

“Someone has already tried this,” my dad said.

I did not take him seriously. Who else would try such a strange test?

Many years later I found that the experiment had indeed been successfully done before we tried it. It had never been published although it had been written up privately. I ran across the man who had those records and he showed them to me.

It was not necessary for my dad to know who had done the tests or exactly when. He knew that this test had been done before - that it had already been recorded on the disk of world consciousness - because the data pattern of a certain kind of resistance was missing. The crow did not call. The test did not break new ground.

You can learn a lot from crows.



## **Chapter Twelve**

### **Making Prayer Tracking Accessible**

When I was a kid my mother sometimes had business in downtown Chicago. If she couldn't find a baby-sitter she would pack up my brother and I for the long bus ride. Once downtown she would leave us at the Art Institute, to play, while she took care of her business.

I realize this dates me. This was long ago, in an age when people never thought about things like child abduction.

My brother and I loved those trips to the art museum. We gave the two lions on the outdoor steps names. We knew all the Thorne rooms (miniature rooms as in a doll house) and made up elaborate stories about the little people we imagined lived in them.



The guards hated us, with reason. We climbed under the ropes. We touched when the signs said "Don't." We played tag behind statues and used certain large paintings as "home base". We threw Frisbees (soon confiscated) in the modern art exhibit. We played with invisible friends in front of Impressionist paintings and talked to the people in the paintings, including them in our game. I once threw up all over a guard's leg in front of a Winslow Homer painting.

Once a year our grade school took us on a field trip to the art museum. In contrast to our other visits, these occasions were ghastly. They made us sit on little folding chairs in front of famous paintings and they would drone on and on about the merits of the painting while all the kids fidgeted, wishing they could go to the lunch room or the gift shop.

The paintings we were forced to learn about are paintings I still dislike. I remember one in particular, a cross looking Madonna with a chubby smug baby. Even today seeing a reproduction of this painting makes me feel cross too.

But the paintings and statues I played under - and, in the case of the Winslow Homer, even threw up under, - are dear to me. When I see them reproduced or hear about them on the news I feel a twinge. They are my paintings. When one was stolen I felt real pain.

No one ever taught me about these "great works of art". I just soaked up an intimate knowledge of them by playing. If you've hidden breathlessly from your brother behind a marble statue you know exactly what marble looks like up close. You know it isn't just white. It has

blue yellow and pink flecks, and feels cold, hard, and immovable. It seems impossibly miraculous that anyone could ever make it become the shape they wanted.

People who know me well are always surprised that I like modern art. I am a little surprised myself. When I was a child, playing hide-and-seek among the abstract bolts of color in the modern art exhibit was as exciting as hiding beneath the lilac bush in our yard. The dappled light and color of both still have pleasant associations for me. The paintings don't smell as good as the lilacs, but I love many of the ones I know from Chicago's Art Institute.

When I became an adult I found myself seeking out more information about the art works I had played around as a child. I took out library books and learned about them properly. I attended art appreciation programs at the Art Institute. I made a point of being nice to the guards on such occasions, to make up for all I had put museum guards through as a child. I went back to the paintings I had played Frisbee in front of and I looked. It was long and satisfying looking.

Some paintings had been put in different frames. I noticed immediately. The adults in the group didn't notice.

Children don't know just to look at the inside of a painting; they experience it as a whole. Adults tend to look at what they've been taught to look at, which I guess is why they don't notice the frames on paintings much.

I think it is much the same with the Bible and other religious writings. Too often we look at a verse in only one context. We frame the message in only one way because we don't see the frame. We don't even notice the frame of mind we put around the text.

Or else we metaphorically plop children in front of a sacred text and drone on and on about it, like they did to us on field trips to the art museum with the folding chairs and the boring lectures.

We need to help people experience the play part of praying. We need to let them run riotously through the wilderness of prayer, slipping under the ropes, touching and getting close, and somehow making the terrain of holiness their very own.

Then, as they grow in prayer, they will seek out the higher meanings even as I did with art. They will study, and observe, and go back over and over. They will never tire of looking. They will never feel roped off.

You need to start with play when introducing prayer to people. In the past, churches have resisted this. They wanted formality and "proper respect" and folding chairs and adult lectures. They were afraid that you might hurt the beautiful traditional masterpieces if you got too close to spiritual healing.

Theology teaches special dispensation and medicine teaches dispensation from specialists. In both the message is the same; hands off, let the experts dispense healing, you have to be a saint, or a M.D., to work miracles. You have to be a great artist to have a painting in a museum

Great artists started when they were children, by

doodling. Prayer tracking encourages prayer doodling. It encourages people to feel at home in spiritual healing, to feel confident of their ability to heal and bless others, even if they are no saint.

Jesus understood holy playfulness. When children were brought to him, his disciples tried to act like museum guards and rope the children off. But the Bible tells us:

Jesus said, Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these. And when he had laid his hands on them he went on from there. (Matthew 19:14, 15)

The kingdom of heaven - the very stuff of sacredness - belongs to exuberance. Discipline is important too, but that develops naturally when you love. When the love, the freedom, and the playfulness, are first experienced, then we aren't afraid of the majesty and awe later on.

I have always wanted to share the kind of prayer tracking my dad taught me with other people. There is an old saying that "It's never too late to have a happy childhood."

Most prayer tracking is done in universities and laboratories. Such research advances the sciences, sheds light on the mind/body connection, and communicates the power of prayer.

There are many reasons for supporting such research. For me, as a Christian Science nurse, such research lays the foundation for an eventual legal

definition of my vocation. That was one reason, among many, that drew me.

It wasn't until I actually started doing prayer research that I discovered another benefit to prayer tracking, one that I had never thought of. I discovered that prayer tracking was an ideal self-teaching tool for teaching yourself how to heal through prayer. Experiments can be set up as a programmed learning experience.

Doing this by making prayer tracking available to people outside of laboratories is not easy. Few people can afford the scientific equipment needed or know how to use it. Even a decent balance (scale) will set you back a hundred bucks.

Few people have the time or the patience to count out hundreds of thousands of rye grass seeds, or to repeat seed tests the number of times that is needed for results to be statistically significant.

It's hard to find a place in your house to set up tests where they won't be disturbed by pets, children and general interruptions.

Doing both the technical parts of research and the praying, on the same test, sometimes compromises results, yet it isn't easy for the average person to run out and hire technicians.

These problems can all be worked out with enough study, practice and ingenuity.

For the last five years I have been doing prayer tracking with others on an informal basis. I had no funding, no organized program, and limited time. Since I was working full time I did this on and off, whenever I

could, working with my patients, my friends, and their children and grandchildren. As word of mouth spread more people became interested than I could work with.

I stopped this effort about the time I started writing this book. I thought that I would not be able to continue it in the future.

During the process of writing this book a small miracle occurred. A group of volunteers came forward to help me start a non-profit organization dedicated to making prayer tracking available to the public in some practical way.

I am calling the organization Prayer Tracker Inc. The paperwork, applying for tax exempt status, was sent in at the same time this book went to press. I hope to receive that status in 2002.

Part of the proceeds from this book will go to Prayer Tracker Inc., to help it get started. It is going to be a member organization.

Prayer Tracker Inc. has four specific goals.

First, to develop practical prayer tracking tests that can be used by people who want to teach themselves how to heal through prayer, meditation, or love.

Second, to develop practical formats in which to make these prayer tracking projects available to the public, including to patients, to caregivers, and to children.

Third, to create a network of prayer trackers, and to provide a forum for discussion, communication, and joint projects, between them

Finally, to open up new vocations in spiritual healing, for example praying for research organisms,

praying in agricultural settings, working on interdisciplinary teams, working on prayer teams for disaster prevention and relief, and working to heal the environment, as well as praying for people.

I want to see the children I have worked with have a chance to grow up and be able to work in the ministry of spiritual healing. Spiritual healing should be a diverse ministry where people can make a living, like in any other form of ministry one is called to.

With enough help, and with a core group of people willing to try different tests and to work out any problems, this work will be able to go forward. This book has brought forward such a core group, and the work is starting now.

As far as I know this will be the only organization anywhere in the world to deal with this side of prayer tracking, with its potential as a programmed learning tool. The tests we design will be valuable for people of any faith tradition who want to teach themselves how to heal the sick through prayer or its equivalent.

My experiences in this area during the last five years have been limited. There are still many challenges to meet before formal programs could be made available. But the potential of such an approach to prayer tracking is undeniable.

Kitty Ferguson is a well-known science writer whose books include *The Fire in the Equations: Science, Religion and the Search for God* (Eerdmans), *Measuring the Universe* (Walker), and the Sunday Times best-seller, *Black Holes in Spacetime, Stephen Hawking: Quest for a Theory of Everything* (Bantam).

In the May 2001 issue of the newspaper *Research News and Opportunities in Science and Theology*, she writes:

My work in the area of science and religion has been, and continues to be, on the grass roots level, in books and lectures for the non-expert public.

It is my conviction that if we can't reshape attitudes on this level, it will be difficult to realize any significant vision in which the scientific and religious communities work meaningfully and productively hand in hand. It is at this level that we find the most of the voters, most of the law-makers, most of the corporate executives, most parish clergy and church-goers, and most of the young people who are scientists and leaders of tomorrow . . .

. . . The visions of experts in science, theology and other areas of academe, no matter how far-sighted and imaginative, may be left in the dust unless there is a change in the thinking of many educated and not-so-educated people whose daily business is neither science nor religion.

Perhaps some of the experiences I have had doing prayer tracking with the grass roots during the last five years will give you a flavor of the possible blessings embodied in this work.





## **Chapter Thirteen**

### **The Man Who Prayed for Trees**

His short-term memory was poor. He often thought he was fishing. He would sit on the couch for a while and then say, “I’ve been fishing here for an hour and haven’t caught a thing. I think I’ll try a different spot.” And he would move to the recliner.

I was always happy on “fishing days” because I knew he was happy. Stephen loved northern Wisconsin, had built his own log cabin there, and had gone there to fish when he needed to get away.

When he started asking me if I had caught anything (while I folded laundry in our town apartment), or told me he thought we should wait a few days before “going back”, I knew he thought he was in his cabin. I knew he felt safe and well cared for. That meant a lot, because it hadn’t always been this good.

I first met Stephen in an assisted living home. He was Danish and had the most soulful blue eyes I have ever seen. I did not know then that his mother had died at an early age and that he had been taken from a loving family and put into an abusive orphanage. I did not know that he had been punished and physically beaten for laughing, that the man he called the “old man” had taught him that laughter was disrespectful to God.

When I learned about the orphanage it was a factor in my bringing him home. I didn’t want him institutionalized at both ends of his life.

I didn’t know any of it at first. I didn’t know about the “old man” which is what Steve called the man who ran the orphanage. I didn’t know about the scars on his back where he had been whipped as a child. I didn’t know that fishing had been his only escape, his chance to be alone and in the woods. The old man had let him fish because he was good at it . He could catch enough to feed the other children and save on the food bill.

It was much later that I learned that, in his loneliness, Stephen had tamed a wild crow, which would come to his window when he was locked in his room. It was much later that I learned of his lifelong love of trees, an affinity that started in childhood when he would cry beneath them.

The day I walked into his room at the assisted living home and found a nurse’s aide yelling at him, I did not yet know how painful that yelling was.

Stephen had dementia, and it is a symptom of dementia that one remembers the past better than the present. The past was not completely pleasant. Revisiting his childhood brought memories to the surface. When I walked into his room to find the nurse's aide yelling at him, I watched his face turn to stone and his blue eyes turn to water. He did not come out of it for several hours. They said he was difficult. They said he needed more medication. They were wrong.

Stephen lived with me for a year and a half. Normally I would not speak so openly about the personal details of care, but his daughter has given me permission to do so. We both feel his story is important.

Stephen was pure joy to care for, though I will admit that his care was challenging. He would ask the same question over and over, and if you turned your back for a minute he was into something. One day while he was eating lunch I got a phone call. When I came back 5 minutes later I found that Steve had decided to paint the kitchen – with his split pea soup.

“Stephen,” I said, taking a deep breath and reaching for the paper towels. “I don't think this is a good idea.”

“No,” he answered. “Neither do I. I don't much like the color.”

I didn't realize until after he died and the house filled slowly with silence, how often he had made me laugh.

Even at his most exasperating he was kind and

protective. Once when I was giving him a bath he began throwing water all over the floor. Reminding myself of my training – that it is important to understand what a patient is doing, instead of yelling, I talked quietly to him. I soon realized that he thought he was in a canoe and that it was sinking. He was bailing out. As I tried to reassure him he returned the favor.

“Don’t worry!” he told me. “I’ll get you back safely. Everything will be OK.”

I pulled the plug. Watching the water draining away he took my hand and said kindly, “We’re sinking. I’m afraid we’re going to have to swim. I will take care of you. We will be all right.”

You will be glad to know that we both made it to shore, and that even while cleaning up the bathroom I had to smile at his kind concern and protectiveness of me.

“It takes a village” not just to raise a child, but to care for anyone. Caring for a person with dementia can be wonderful - if you have enough help and support. I did. That made all the difference.

Although his daughter was a second caregiver and understood her dad, many people in Stephen’s “village” did not. Stephen had been the mayor of our town for many years. People would come up to us in the store when they recognized him, and tell me how he had helped them, how he had plowed their driveway in a snow storm, how he had helped their daughter when she was struggling with a drug problem.

He didn’t remember much about politics, although one

time, when one of the dogs was barking, he said playfully to the dog, “I hope you’re not going to bark while I’m giving my speech.”

People thought it was very sad that he didn’t act the same way he had during the years he was mayor, yet our life was anything but sad. Some people even said they couldn’t bear to watch him “dying by degrees.” He wasn’t dying. He had a disease, but he was living, and teaching me about the Life that is God every day. I never knew him when he had his memory but he was my friend, and our relationship was rich and joyful.

Just because someone’s memory is gone doesn’t mean the rest of his mind is gone. Stephen still had a mind, and he still had a soul. He was still Stephen.

He remembered some things. He remembered trimming trees. He had had his own tree trimming service at one time, and there was nothing he didn’t know about trees. When we drove down Spring Street he would point to some trees he had trimmed, something his daughter later verified as being true. He would tell me when and how and where a tree must be trimmed.

He shared my love of weeping willows and knew there were nine weeping willows around the duck pond at the hospital across the street. He would put his hand on the trunk of each one, and he would bless the trees out loud.

The blessings were among the most sincere prayers I have ever heard but I am not sure if he would have called them prayers. Official prayer for him meant that certain words were supposed to be used. At

home, he prayed with all the right words, or at least with as many as he could remember.

“In the name of the Father, the Son and the . . . .” Here he would pause, unable to remember the rest.

“In the name of the Father, the Son and the... well Lord, whoever it was. Anyway I’m done praying. Thank you. This was Stephen who prayed. Amen”

Despite his Parkinson’s he would often get down on his knees to pray, when he thought I wasn’t looking (for he was shy about it). Knowing I would have to help him up, I would wait out of sight until his prayer was through, and so I got to eavesdrop on his conversations with God.

He often prayed to bless me, asking for my health and happiness, though it was a toss up from day to day as to who he thought I was; a daughter a wife, a mother, a fishing buddy, or even, when I had told him to do something, the foreman at a factory where he once worked. He knew my voice more than my name, and he knew my heart – as was obvious in his prayers for me.

It seemed natural to share the prayer tracking I was doing with him. Prayers came so naturally to him, and he already prayed for trees. I gave him a jar of sprouting mung beans soaked in saline to add stress. I hid the control jar where he could not find it or see it. I wrote on his jar “Please bless me.” I let him do his own thing.

He would carry that jar around and often say a blessing. I would sometimes find him picking it up to look at, or sound asleep in the chair with the jar

cradled in his arms. Sometimes he would sing hymns to the beans.

The experiments lasted about one week, and we did them for almost a year. The beans he prayed for, or loved, or whatever you want to call it, grew on average about 38 percent better than the control. Mine only grew about 11 percent better than the control. If I had been farming back then I would have put Steve on a chair out in the field every day.

He sang a lot, and not just to his plants. The week before he died he sang the same hymn over and over, about gathering at the river. When he was really happy he sang a song that started out, “Oh there once was a man with a double chin, and he liked to play on his violin. . . .” His favorite song was “Let me call you sweetheart” and he would sing this to the winter jasmine that he “blessed” in another prayer tracking experiment. He would make up his own words, because he couldn’t remember the whole song anymore. “Let me call you sweetheart, cause I like this plant . . . .”

His daughter Jackie bought him a karaoke machine. He was enough of a ham to enjoy microphones, and he had a beautiful baritone voice. Since he couldn’t remember the words, having them appear on the TV screen, in karaoke style, was a big help.

Once, when “Let me call you sweetheart” was on the screen and he was looking elsewhere and singing “Tra la la”, I tried to get him to look at the words. “Look at the words Stephen” I would say over and over. Finally he did, but not at the words on the screen. He

looked down at the words of a magazine called *Wisconsin Natural Resources* that was sitting on his lap (it had an article about fishing). Immediately he began to sing:

“Nat-Ur- AI Resources, I’m in love with you  
Nat-Ur-AI Resources, tra la la for me.”

And then he laughed, because he knew it wasn’t right, and I laughed, and the dogs came to sit by his feet, for they loved the laughing.

Stephen was the first patient that I did prayer tracking with. It was the first time I could see, by the numbers, that disease, resulting in a lack of memory, does not mean that your prayers are not effective.

In our society mental and physical abilities are valued. This is one reason elderly and sick people are marginalized; they often have diminished mental or physical capabilities.

There is a third type of ability - spiritual ability. Patients have untapped spiritual resources by the very nature of their experiences. We are entering an age where spiritual abilities are about to be recognized and valued on a different level than they are now. Spiritual ability, unlike mental and physical ability, is not affected by age or disease, and it is much needed.

Stephen’s spiritual qualities were obvious. He was so kind. When he first came home he could go to the bathroom on his own at night, but I would listen to be sure he made it back safely to bed. Inevitably I would hear him walk over to the dogs and cover them with blankets (they would throw the blankets off as soon as he left the room,) and then he would quietly come into



my room and cover me with an extra blanket too. Like the dogs, I took it off after he went to bed.

Long after he was asleep I could feel his love for me, the dogs, and for our good God, lingering in the house.

When it became obvious that he might fall if he got up alone at night, it took some time to make the arrangements needed to keep him safe, to be sure I woke up when he did. For a day or two, until those arrangements were in place, I slept in a sleeping bag on the floor next to his bed. That way he couldn't get up without my knowing.

I woke one night to find him sitting on the side of the bed very concerned. "Did you fall?" he asked in a kind voice, "Can I help you?" I explained to him that I was fine. "You mustn't sleep on the floor" he said, "Here, you sleep in the bed and I will sleep in a chair. Tomorrow morning I'm going to buy some lumber and build you a bed."

While we may know instinctively that people don't lose their spiritual qualities just because they get sick – and in fact sickness sometimes brings out these qualities, like using muscles you didn't know you had – society still does not know how to access these abilities. Prayer tracking will be a way to access the spiritual abilities of everyone, including patients.

Stephen's kindness was not just kindness. It was a spiritual force that helped plants grow and probably did many other things we will never know about. I know it helped me grow in grace. Stephen had a healing effect on me and not just on his plants.

We may be a long way from “proving” this, but the process is worth looking into. Christians especially have need of enlarging the context in which they view what makes a person valuable.

Christians are taught that it is better to give than to receive, and they do not always look at the context in which Jesus said these words. They forget to offer patients balance by reminding them that Jesus also said it was the Father’s good pleasure to give us the kingdom – implying that it is all right to receive in the right ways (see Luke 12:32).

Patients often think that because they are receiving instead of giving care that they are lesser Christians. They may not articulate it, but the feeling of spiritual uselessness is there. If you can’t do something – serve on a church committee, make dinner for your family, earn a living, serve the needy, make a pie for the church festival – you aren’t a good Christian.

It’s very seldom that pastors preach about the Jesus who quietly, reverently, and passively received. They almost always represent him as actively doing something – healing, teaching, and preaching.

It is very seldom that Sunday School students are invited to think about the Jesus who received care, who was a good dinner guest as well as a good host, who could receive a compliment or a gift graciously, whose feet were washed, whose head was anointed and whose physical body was tenderly cared for even after death.

Someone must have made Jesus the seamless robe he wore on the most important night of his life. I

feel sure they put love into every stitch. Jesus knew how to accept love graciously and, through example, teaches us to do the same.

Stephen had given so much to so many in his life, yet he could also be a gracious receiver. I always admired that about him.

Prayer tracking is a resource that spotlights the spiritual abilities of those that are ill, and shows how practical and effective such abilities are when accessed, although it may take some ingenuity to access them.

The week before he died Stephen caught a fish. I drove him down to a lake. Since it was muddy I put him in the wheelchair to reach the shore, though he was still walking; it would be a day or two before he took to his bed.

I did not bait the hook or expect him to catch anything. I should have. It's not good to patronize a patient; they always know at some level. I have learned that if I do an activity with a patient I must really do it, and not just go through the motions.

Steve found some kind of caterpillars on the bushes and was standing up collecting them before I could stop him. His new tennis shoes and his rented wheel chair were both full of mud.

I had considered a hook too dangerous so there was none on the line. He tied the bait on. Stephen could tie a knot in anything. He dipped his line in and out of the water like a tea bag, very excited to be by the water. He caught a good-sized fish. I hadn't

brought anything to put a fish in, because I had not expected him to catch anything.

Not wanting him to carry the slippery fish in his lap, for it was a long way to the car, I finally emptied out my purse, folded the fish in half, and stuck it in there. It was all I had. He ate the fish for dinner. I never saw Stephen happier.

Within a week Steve had passed away. By the time he died he had been able to pray many times for “the old man” . He had forgiven him, and let it go. It was a spiritual journey we had taken together.

The last day was hard for both me and Jackie, his daughter, but he died in his own bed, surrounded with love, the dogs by his side, and peace, gallons of peace, that beat against my consciousness in waves for a long time after he was gone.

I had to buy a new purse for the funeral. I had to start new in a lot of ways. But one thing I have kept just as it was – the winter jasmine he prayed over and blessed still blooms on my window sill. Every winter, when it fills the house with its heavenly fragrance, I feel once more the love – that mighty spiritual force that blesses both people and plants – that was put in motion for me by this good man.



## **Chapter Fourteen**

### **Prayer Tracking with Adults**

Nurses know that patients - the sick, the elderly, the disabled, the mentally ill, the retarded - live in a different world than the healthy. It is part of the nurse's job to bridge the gap. By this I mean not only to bring the sick back into the world of the healthy but also to educate the healthy about this other world and the lessons it teaches.

I knew a breast cancer survivor who told me that she no longer was comfortable functioning in the world of the healthy despite her gratitude for physical health. Her priorities had changed so much during her experience of illness that many of her friends no longer shared her values.

It's no wonder that so many people seek out support groups even after recovery. They are refugees from the world of the sick and they miss others from

the same place. This is definitely not because they want to be physically sick. It is because their experiences have made them more sensitive to the unseen spiritual illnesses in society and because they now have life experiences the world of the healthy may not be able to relate to.

Facing death, or simply suffering, often makes us more aware of what really matters.

Prayer tracking with patients is a way of exploring the connections between the world of the healthy and the world of the sick. It's a communication path. Prayer tracking is also a way of demonstrating that patients have power, and that they bring valuable gifts to society from their experiences.

I am not a big fan of doilies, but I have two that I keep on my dresser. They were hand-made by the intricate process called tatting, a process similar to lace making. They were made by a woman who is now 93, in the days before her arthritis. I am calling this woman Amanda, which is not her real name. Amanda is cultured and cordial, with a faith as intricate and detailed as the doilies she once made.

A lifetime devout Catholic, she worked as a RN in the tubercular wards in the days before TB could be cured. In those days a lung with TB was often collapsed to save the patient. Amanda had strong fingers from her girlhood days milking cows on a farm. She was often asked to attach the binders TB patients wore; she had the strength to do it quickly which meant less pain.

She herself came down with tuberculosis. Medicine

held out no hope. She healed herself through prayer and by pondering the life of a saint who was also healed of TB. After her healing she went back to work.

Amanda wanted to be part of a prayer tracking experiment because she believes deeply in the power of prayer. She says it helps her to have something alive in her room at the nursing home. A reminder that she was alive in her room produced a small and bitter laugh.

When I first began doing a prayer tracking activity with her, she was having trouble praying due to deep anger over problems in her family, financial worries, and the recent death of a friend. Her anger was interfering with her prayers.

She is deeply religious, and also pathologically polite, so her rage and her difficulty praying had frightened her. Having little to do all day she had, by her own account, turned inward in an unhealthy way.

Things got so bad - she refused to eat or come out of her room - that she was forced to submit to counseling. It was not a success. The therapist asked "impertinent questions."

Praying for seeds was her first step out of depression. She later said that she found it easier to pray for the seeds than for herself. They weren't human and she couldn't blame them for anything. They couldn't reject her.

The first few weeks that she did this Amanda was interested in the results. After that, she lost interest in that part of prayer tracking. She simply enjoyed the process of prayer, and the discipline of having

something in her room that needed to be prayed for daily.

She still had anger, but the presence of the seed experiment in her room was a considerable comfort. Her blood pressure went down and her weight (which was too low) went up. She stopped barricading herself in her room, although she still felt safer there than anywhere else.

I can't claim this all resulted from the prayer tracking project, but certainly the lessening of stress and the daily time of prayer helped. Feeling useful and having a purpose helped too.

Amanda is definitely what was once known as a lady. I visited her again, when doing research for this book. We drank tea out of lovely cups, as seemed fitting for a visit with Amanda. It has been two years since she did the prayer tracking. I asked her what she liked about it, and if she would recommend it.

She said that research is generally done on patients, not by them, and she liked the feeling of breaking new ground. She said it was good to know that she had the power to bless this world before she left it, and that since the project she had been praying much more, with confidence that her prayers would have a healing effect in the world.

She said she would recommend prayer tracking to anyone and that she would like to do more.

She also said that, as an activity in a nursing home, it beat the heck out of Bingo.



## *Prayer Tracking for cancer patients and caregivers*

Except for Stephen and Amanda, and several disabled children, I have not done much prayer tracking with patients. I did, however, do a few projects with three cancer patients and their family members.

For the families I set up a prayer tracking experiment where they could pray for sunflowers that had been inoculated with crown gall disease, also known as plant cancer. Although not related to human cancer, the disease produces tumors.

Confronting tumors on a flower was easier for these caregivers than confronting it on the body of a loved one, especially when they saw that the flower continued to blossom, and was beautiful.

Seeing the tumors reduce in size when prayed for – which occurred in all three cases – was very reassuring to these caregivers. It gave them confidence in praying for their loved ones.

The three women with cancer had a different project than their caregivers.

Wisconsin Fast Plants is a system for teaching about biology and plant systems that was developed in Wisconsin and is used by educators all over the world. Dr. Paul Williams, a plant pathologist at the university in Madison, came up with dozens of experiments using rapid cycling plants. They are convenient, detailed and reasonably easy.

Many of the Wisconsin Fast Plants kits, and the projects in the Wisconsin Fast Plant workbook, are adaptable to prayer tracking although those who

invented the kits might cringe at our addition of the prayer element.

I had set up a simple prayer tracking projects using the Wisconsin Fast Plant system. It was not practical to set it up in the hospital room. Among other things the project required artificial light.

I talked to each woman about the test as something they could do when they got home from the hospital. Each woman told me that she felt awkward praying for plants and wanted something to practice on while in the hospital, even if it was just a potted plant.

Wisconsin Fast Plants has seed necklaces. They are designed for children but were very effective in a hospital setting. This kit comes with small colored plastic tubes. You fill them with dirt, plant a tiny seed in them, and put the cap on. The cap has a small hole. You water the seed through that hole with one drop of water a day. You wear it on a chain around your neck. The warmth of your body helps it germinate.

After it germinates, as a tiny seedling poking through the hole in the cap, you cut off the bottom of the tube and plant it, tube and all, in a flowerpot. Then you put it under the grow light, and soon you have a tiny, very pretty, yellow flower.

The women loved wearing a seedling around their neck. They didn't know at first how to pray for it, but they said it was easy to feel love for it and prayer came naturally after that.

Sometimes with cancer you feel repulsive because of the odor, and the tumors, and the scars from surgery. These women loved the idea that their body

heat was nourishing life. It was such a simple thing, but it helped them overcome that sense of dislike for their own bodies. It helped them feel connected to life, and to nature.

It also helped them deal with the language of cancer. Often people speak of the seeds of disease, or speak of a tumor being seeded. They needed a model for a loving relationship to a seed.

When the women returned home (the three cases were not connected and occurred at different times) they all got eagle results on the seed tests, results higher than usual. Two got GR results, one got an IR result. All three said they felt less helpless than before. They said that even if they couldn't change everything, they could at least, through their prayer, change this little seed. They could see and measure the result of their prayer.

One woman's son said to her, "Mom, the seed may be little, but it's a lot bigger than a cancer cell. Maybe your prayers can change more than you think."

### *Prayer Tracking with Other Adults*

Not many adults have yet had the opportunity to try IR prayer tracking, or any kind of prayer tracking. Because of this, people often ask me what my experience has been like, doing this for almost three decades.

I have developed through this work an increased sense of the friendliness of the universe. The world today is not perceived as a friendly place. Everyone

who works in health care cannot help but be aware of blood-borne pathogens and air-borne pathogens. Unless one arrives at work in a space suit it seems inevitable that you will someday come into contact with something that can hurt you.

Hexed “sharps” (contaminated sharp objects) are offered up in sacrifice to giant orange and black Biohazard receptacles in order to keep us keep us safe from evil, as in ancient Halloween rites. As with all the lesser gods, however, one is never sure if something might go wrong. The contagious spirits might escape; the ritual might not be strong enough; nothing is to be trusted.

Today many people believe that God is Love, rather than believing in a vengeful God that wants to hurt you. It seems, instead, that modern society has replaced the old tribal vengeful “God” with the viruses that are out to get you.

One could almost say that these small invisible microorganisms are omni-present and omnipotent, and that standing before them we are helpless.

Genetic coding has replaced predestination. The language is new; the fear of damnation is just the same. We are still afraid of hell in so many ways. We walk in fear of pesticides, pollution, and germ warfare. It seems that everything we eat causes cancer or heart disease or punishes our body in some way. Severe bodily punishment - for smoking or overeating or an “unhealthy” lifestyle - has replaced punishment for moral sin. We confess to high cholesterol and to not

getting enough exercise. We accept the most terrible physical penance without protest.

In the air we breathe and the water we drink and the food we eat and the patients we touch, we always fear a mysterious and invisible danger. All the while we congratulate ourselves on our scientific superiority to those superstitious fearful people that lived in the old dark ages.

There are many dangers in our society. I do not deny or underestimate them. Some of the danger develops from projecting fear onto our environment. That may seem far-fetched unless you have been in a prayer lab and seen how you can alter the activity of an organism under the microscope either by projecting fear or by projecting love.

The difference is not only measurable; it's awesome. I have seen predator cells not harm other cells when prayed for. I have seen the roots of plants form patterns that enabled them to share nutrients with other plants more effectively. I have seen aggressive "weeds" coexist with less aggressive plants. I have seen "lions" lying down with "lambs", at least under the microscope.

I am not denying the dangers in our society. I am only saying that dangers can be lessened through prayer. We are not helpless.

For me prayer tracking has been the first step of accepting the friendship of creation at a deeper level. There is a melting of egocentricity when one prays for other organisms, especially microorganisms. You have

to attribute the same dignity, worth, and love of God to them as you do to yourself or you can't pray.

Once you do this it is hard not to enjoy other life forms, hard not to feel happy, hard to accept the demonization of so much of the microscopic world. You cannot pray for something and still fear it.

It isn't prayer tracking that has changed me. It is prayer. Prayer has changed me as much as it has changed the organisms I pray for. But it is prayer tracking that got me praying regularly for many more hours a day than I ever would have otherwise. It is prayer tracking that made me excited about prayer. It is prayer tracking that taught me that we are the subjects of our research as much as what we pray for.

We are prayer partners with every organism that we pray for and, like them, we are not in charge. Prayer tracking has taught me to feel safe and to trust the Ordering Force. It has taught me so much about myself and about God. It was prayer tracking that drilled into me the lesson that love is the most constructive force there is, in the laboratory or out.

And love needs no language, no words, no data. Perhaps that is the ultimate irony. The research itself leads us beyond the research. The more we use our tools the more we learn, and the more we learn the more we can lay aside the tools. When nothing can take away your power to love then you have no need of the tools which teach you to love.

Diverse types of prayer leave diverse tracks. We follow different trails but they all lead to the same place.

That place is inevitable. That place is Love. In that place I have the blessed opportunity of meeting you and every other created thing.

### *Easter 1997*

The only prayer tracking I ever did with adults in the general public (who were not my patients) was one version of the yeast test which was set up in my friend Betty's basement at Easter of 1997.

The test turned out to have some flaws in it that I could not fix, and so I dropped it. Even with the flaws, it was a learning experience.

I learned small things; for example that using a ticking kitchen timer to time the test made everyone nervous. Digital is definitely the way to go. I learned practical things, for example that some people need to begin with a group prayer experience, to gain confidence.

I learned that it is helpful to set up a system so that test results can remain anonymous, known only to the people taking the tests. I also learned that people need to be given some context before being let loose on the tests.

Feeling a certain amount of intimidation is natural the first time you are faced with actually monitoring the result of your prayers; but for most people this passes and the tests become an adventure where one learns as much from the runs that don't go well as from those that do. Sometimes, too, you change your idea of what it means to be "successful" on a test.

With some people the feeling of intimidation builds instead of being a momentary reaction. These people are better-off trying the test first as part of a group prayer experience, where they can receive support and build their confidence.

A trained scientist is quite accustomed to not getting the results she wants. She may pour years of work into a project only to find out that another approach is better.

It is quite different for an untrained person especially if they have been in any religious situation where their self-esteem has been assaulted, - where they have been told for years that they are a sinner, or where they have been taught to be afraid of God.

Such people can be devastated by the normal circumstance of not always getting a result on every prayer tracking test.

Adults have often been out of school a long time and have forgotten the ins-and-outs of the scientific method. A catching up process is sometimes needed.

Like Gulliver's Travels, traveling into the tiny world of microscopic organisms through prayer and data is an adventure. The yeast test was no exception.

Yeast is fungus, but don't let that prejudice you. Just think of it as a very tiny houseplant. The yeast we used was almost an endangered species. During World War II there was a shortage, and at that time people didn't know how to save it in a dried active form. They also had no way of putting the same amount of punch into one teaspoon of yeast as into another. Cakes of yeast were not standard.



The Red Star company of Milwaukee (now part of Universal Foods) was a major player in learning how to preserve and save several commercially useful types of yeast including the kind we were using.

We tend to think of bio-diversity in terms of the *Rain Forest* and *Saving the Whales* but microscopic bio-diversity is equally important.

Yeast has a short life span. Prayer tracking often makes a person more conscious of the vast differences in organic life spans. You might pray for something whose life span is an hour, or a year, or five hundred years. It gives you a different sense of your own mortality.

People doing such tests begin to think of a physical life span as only part of a process. The organic life span of the yeast is a time when I am aware that the yeast and I, like ships passing in the night and flickering their lights in passing, are momentarily in the same sphere or plane of existence.

If we could see the form of our prayers, the holiness in us mingling with the holiness connected to the microscopic organism (for the flow is not one way), we would see something as beautiful, as unique, and as fleeting, as the blossoming of a flower. Other flowers of prayer will open, but in that moment of transcendence the blossoming is both unique and beautiful.

I said to one woman taking the yeast test, "Isn't it wonderful to think that you will be able to hold this yeast in love for its entire life? Wouldn't it be great if someone held us in love every second of our lives?" And she said, "Perhaps someone, or something,

does.”

The Bible tells us that “A day unto the Lord is like unto a thousand years” (II Peter 3:8), reminding us that our own physical life span is only a moment in a larger eternity, an eternity in which we come to know both who and what the holy One is and who and what we are.

Physical yeast does not have a conscious state of existence that we know of. It has no brain, no conscious means of knowing itself. It responds to our love when we pray without knowing that we are holding it and praying for it, protecting it, calling it by name, and loving it.

The state of the yeast echoes the Biblical description of our own state. In Isaiah 45, verse 5, several translations talk about how God holds us though we know it not. Translations differ. The King James Version translates this as God “girding” us, dressing us like a child, though we don’t realize that it is God.

To be girded can mean to be clothed, but it also has the connotations of strength, like the steel girding of a building under construction.

Other translations say that God is putting armor on us and around us to protect us although we don’t realize it. The Revised English Bible translates the same verse this way: “I have called you by name and given you a title [identity], though you have not known me.”

There is a certain humility and melting of ego that occurs when people pray for a microscopic organism. This is one of its greatest benefits because humility (a

word that has been defined by a Catholic nun named Sr. Chittister as “a proper sense of self in a universe of wonders”) is a powerful healing agent.

Sometimes people come in with a “football” mentality. They are quite focused on the “score” or result of the test. This usually falls away quickly as they become absorbed in the process of prayer.

I tell people that prayer tracking is like whale-watching. When the boats take you out to see whales, the crew cannot promise that you will sight one. This doesn't mean that there are no such things as whales.

Usually people have a wonderful time even if they don't see a whale and they also learn about the environment in which such creatures live. Also, whale-watching trips are full of surprises. Whether or not you see a whale you might see a whole host of other fascinating things from sea turtles to dolphins.

During one evening where three groups were doing the yeast test, we not only came up with some surprising new effects - like seeing something unexpected in the ocean – but also our “whale” came up under the boat and blew us out of the water.

Not only was the effect of prayer on yeast larger than expected (it was a whale of a result), but the yeast gained weight instead of losing weight and we had to run back to the chemist to see that meant.

It is not hard to make the connection between praying for a microscopic organism and praying for people. Betty first tried the yeast test on the Monday evening after Easter. On Tuesday she attended an all

day class for hospital chaplains at a hospital in Zion, Illinois.

As she was leaving the hospital at about 9 P.M. she went by the emergency room and saw some young people standing about, obviously upset. Their friend had been brought into the ER. She could see the blood dripping down the gurney. She explained that she was from the Pastoral Care Dept. and asked if she could help. Gratefully they asked for prayer repeating over and over, "He's going to die. He's going to die."

Although she had not been in the emergency room before, and was nervous and unsure how to proceed, she found herself praying with and for the family and friends of the injured young man and also directly for the young man himself. Unsure of how to pray, and feeling the tug of her emotions because of the distressful situation, she tried to re-create the feeling she had had during the yeast test.

Prayer tracking is a good way to practice prayer because in a simple test, like praying for yeast, one isn't swamped by the emotions that one feels in a situation where people are bleeding or crying or in pain.

Betty had gotten a result on the yeast test - the container of yeast solution that she had prayed for had reacted differently than the control, had been strengthened and was able to be more active because of her prayers. Reaching back to that feeling of prayer that she had during the yeast test, Betty prayed in the emergency room and continued to hold that feeling as she drove home.

The next day she visited the hospital. The young man was being moved out of intensive care. He looked at Betty and said, “You saved my life”. He obviously valued her prayers.

A Greek Orthodox woman who took the test compared the experience to icons. The word icon means doorway. Religious icons, such as those used in Orthodox traditions, are religious paintings. To those outside the tradition, seeing someone praying for hours in front of an icon hasn't much meaning. “Why don't they pray to God instead of to a painting?” a westerner might ask, not realizing that the person praying has been taught how to use the picture as a doorway to prayer.

Westerners are more familiar with computer icons. When you turn on your computer, especially if you have *Windows*, you might see several little pictures called icons. You click on one and immediately the program appears on the monitor. The icon is a doorway into the program.

Everyone has mental icons. Sometimes a word or image can be a negative icon. The word “cancer” or the word “terrorism” are examples. When we hear those words it is like clicking on an icon and experiencing a pre-programmed response. Fear, helplessness, and certain images may appear on our mental monitor.

At such a time it is important to have doorways to the divine, so that you can get out of that program and into prayer. You can replace the fear with something more constructive.

Several people mentioned feeling a little intimidated when first praying for a microscopic organism. They reasoned that when it came right down to seeing if their prayer had an effect or not, they would rather find this out while praying for yeast than while praying for people. If they didn't get a result they could practice until they did.

When they did get a result they felt relieved and validated. It is easier to affect a single cell than a human being through prayer, and sometimes this entry level experience is really helpful, especially for someone who feels stuck in their prayer life.

One person said she felt so strongly after the test that it was like a feeling of having been ordained as a minister. I reminded her of the passage in the Bible that all people are "kings and priests unto God" (Rev. 1:6). "Yes," she agreed, that's just how it feels."

Two people said that they felt an added sense of responsibility after seeing that their prayers had an effect. They felt an added responsibility to pray for situations where help was needed.

One person said that seeing a physical change in the yeast made her feel close to God. Just as being in a room with someone is pleasant - you know that they are there and you enjoy being with them - in the same way she was always aware of God's presence with her. But if the person in the room with you gives you a hug, you are aware of their presence in a different way, there is a moment of closeness, of being touched. The experiment was like that she said. It was like being

physically touched by God. It was a moment of particular closeness.

Some people said they had strong feelings but couldn't articulate them. They needed time to sort things out.

Another question came from a woman who came from another town to try the test. She had been crying on the trip because of some personal problems and wanted to know if that would affect the test adversely. The answer was that, if anything, it would probably give her a bigger result.

Although not enough studies have been done to be conclusive, preliminary findings show that people in crisis, or people who have recently been through a crisis such as illness, the loss of a loved one, a divorce, and so on, do very well on these tests. We are not sure why.

This woman got a powerful result and felt comforted.

Many people found it easier to accept a "healing" of the yeast than of a person. They said that doing this test was a first step for them toward considering the possibility that people could be healed through prayer.

Some people have negative feelings toward prayer tracking. They feel it is irreverent to set up such tests. I can understand some of their concerns, but I have also noticed that there is almost a chauvinism when it comes to the holy. As long as God speaks in poetry and psalms and stays at home in the churches "where God belongs" everyone is happy. But when God starts showing up in the laboratory equipped with hard data

people feel uncomfortable. A God that works outside the church is viewed suspiciously.

Solomon, thousands of years ago, recognized that God did not dwell in a house made with hands. In Biblical language, “What cannot God do?” Can God do science? Can divine Love be expressed through the scientific method?

Ask a prayer tracker and she will not answer “yes” or “no”. A true prayer tracker will respond, “Come and see.”





## Chapter Fifteen

### Prayer Tracker Jr.

“Children leave tracks wherever they go  
In the mud, on your floor, at the beach, in the  
snow.

Prayer leaves tracks too. When you pray you will  
start

To see the tracks made by the love in your  
heart.”

From Grayhaven’s  
*A Habitat is Where It’s At* collection of verses.

As I wrote this book I went back to talk to some children that I taught to be prayer trackers. In the process I happened to watch them playing with LEGOS. LEGOS have changed since I was a child. Today they can be programmed creating a variety of robots bearing bits of the child’s own intelligence.

Mark Pesce, author of *The Playful World: How Technology is Transforming Our Imagination*, writes:

A child plays with an animatronic pet that speaks to her, responds to playful caresses, becomes cross when ignored and happy when well fed.... This toy has a will of its own and no off switch...[Modern children] carry within them a new animistic consciousness.

When MIT researcher Dr. Sherry Turkle asked children to classify Furby, the popular simulated pet, as alive or not, they refused to do so. Pesce also says, "We use toys to guide children into culture."

Children are living in a different culture than adults. They are being exposed to newly discovered physical laws, and changing cultural mores, during their formative years.

Children today are influenced profoundly by modern science. Science is moving forward more rapidly than religion.

Prayer tracking helps children catch up on the religious side.

Prayer tracking helps children feel comfortable with both the scientific skills and the prayer skills they will need in order to cope with the world they will live in. It also helps them be comfortable using those skills and insights simultaneously.

### *Did My Experiment Work?*

This is a natural question for children to ask when

they pray for a research organism. With GR prayer tracking the question makes perfect sense. GR means goal-referenced. With GR prayer you have a goal. If you achieve the goal, your experiment worked. If you don't, it didn't. If you sort of achieved your goal, then the experiment sort of worked.

Often with children I start with GR prayer, and then move to IR prayer. It helps children to see and experience both mental effects.

It helps adults too. Sometimes people need to start with GR (directed) prayer, and see a result, before they can admit that prayer affects the physical world. After that they can experience IR prayer (non-directed prayer) more easily.

In IR prayer tracking, the question, "Did my experiment work?" has no meaning. Let's say that seeds are the research organism that you are praying for. With IR prayer you are not measuring in order to see if your prayer did something to the seed, or to see whether you got a measurable effect. You are measuring to learn something from the seed.

Data is language, and it is the only language the seed and you have in common. Rather than you doing something to the seed, the seed is going to do something to you. It is going to lead you on a journey into a deeper place of love than you have experienced before.

Sometimes there will be no measurable effect. That is OK. This no-response is part of the language of the seed. You have to figure out why there is no effect.

First you have to check your experimental set-up to be sure that environmental factors weren't affecting the treated more than the control. Once you rule that out, you need to think about what the no-response means.

If I am walking with you in the woods and I see a deer, I may stop suddenly and motion you to be quiet. You will know, by the fact that I am suddenly very still, that something is nearby that I want you to see.

The seed often speaks of God's love in just this way. By doing nothing, it may be calling attention to something in the forest of divine Love. It is up to us to stop and listen.

Sometimes we get mad or feel bad because the seed didn't "do" anything when we tried to move it along toward our goal at the end of the trail. Then we risk missing the beauty of a deer standing close in the forest.

Sometimes the seed may react negatively to prayer. People get very upset by this. They say they will never pray again, for fear of hurting someone. This is an understandable response, but it comes from a pre-programmed GR mentality, a goal-referenced assumption of how prayer ought to work. Sometimes we need to re-wire our mentality until we are comfortable letting go of both personal expectation and personal fear.

If you were about to step into a patch of poison ivy, I might call out to you, "Be careful!" Through data, a seed can tell us this, too. Maybe without realizing it, we are about to step into a patch of negative emotions. The seed will warn us by a negative response.

When this has happened to me, I thank the seed. It doesn't make me feel like I am not good at praying because prayer involves the ability to learn and this is just what I am doing.

I also do not fear that the seed will be harmed forever by giving the warning. The seed is an expression of divine Love, a way that God is speaking to me. The seed is doing just what it ought to under the circumstances, and so am I.

Negative responses are normal under some circumstances. They are also useful and helpful.

As soon as I try a different prayer path, the seed responds accordingly. I don't keep telling you to be careful after you have moved away from the poison ivy, and in the same way the seed stops having a negative response, stops "telling" us to be careful, after we have moved away from the danger.

I am oversimplifying here. The data patterns are intricate, and none of us know what they all mean. The point is that in IR prayer you are not trying to do something to the seed or research organism. You are setting out to learn from it. Whatever happens in an experiment, even when nothing happens, and maybe especially when nothing happens, you will learn.

IR prayer does have a goal, but its goal is not to affect the physical world, although that will occur as a "sign following." The only goal of IR prayer is to increase our capacity to love. We can all go into training to become as skilled as Olympic athletes in the field of spiritual love. Prayer tracking is a pretty good

spiritual fitness program. Once that level of love is reached, you cannot help but heal.

People often think that love is something that they can turn on and off. They think that when someone they like comes along they can turn love on, and when someone they don't like comes along, they can turn love off.

It is impossible to turn love on or off because God is Love, and God cannot be turned on and off.

What we can do is pull shades down that block the light of Love. We can think of our consciousness as a long tunnel with a light shining through it all the time. The tunnel has many windows, and some of them have the shades pulled down. If you drive by the tunnel it will look like the light is flickering on and off, because of the effect of the shades. However, no one is turning the light on and off. It is actually shining steadily.

As we learn to lift the shades one by one, we experience and communicate love more as the eternal stream that it is. There is often a sense of shifting into a new place mentally, a feeling of unveiling hidden areas of joy and entering them. That level of love brings healing, even without conscious effort.

The shades are defenses and fears that have either been put in place or that we have been born with. Prayer tracking helps us to lift all the shades, one by one, even the little ones.

Prayer tracking teaches us to love even a seed. Once you do that you will find it harder to "turn love off", harder to pull the shades down and block out

whole areas of creation. You will begin to experience more of the continuous stream effect of love. It can be a powerful feeling in prayer. Frozen love is released, like ice melting, and the healing gushes free.

In IR prayer, love and prayer are always the same thing. You already express love. That means you are already praying, even if you don't know it.

Prayer tracking means to become more conscious of how you pray already, of how you already express love. It means to learn to become aware of that love, concentrate on it, sustain it, increase it, project it, embody it, deepen it, share it, and also to receive it. Prayer tracking sharpens all of those skills.

Just as a boat leaves a wake when it moves, in the same way physical healing and other incarnations of joy are the inevitable wake caused by the movement of divine Love through the tears of the world.

### *Praying for bugs, seeds, and “stuff” like that*

When teaching children to be prayer trackers I have found that I needed to cover four bases. First I taught them to feel comfortable praying for non-human subjects, then I taught them that care and prayer go together. Third, I have gone over the basics of the scientific method with them, and finally I have taught them how to do the actual tests that produce prayer tracks.

Almost all prayer tracking is done with non-human research organisms. Most people, including children, have never prayed for anything but another person.

This means that you have to give them appropriate models for how to pray for bugs, seeds, and other non-human beings.

If your child is very lucky she has perhaps seen or been to a blessing-of-the-animals service. It is likely that only a member of the clergy blessed the animals, and the child did not participate in doing so. But these wonderful services do send a positive message to children that God loves our pets just as we do.

Unless you are a Native American it is very unlikely that your child has any cultural model that would make her think it would be OK to pray for top soil, trees, microorganisms, the environment, rivers, or insects.

Since these are the things that prayer trackers pray for, I begin by helping the children to be comfortable with praying for non-human things. I do this long before we start measuring results.

Some people will not pray for bugs,  
They think that bugs are creepy.  
But bugs are fun when they're awake  
And cute when they get sleepy.  
Next time you run across a bug  
No matter what the season,  
Be kind to it. Remember that  
God made it for a reason.

From the poem *Pumpkin* in Grayhaven's  
Care and Prayer collection of verses

Caterpillars and butterflies are a good place to start. Last year Linda Bestor, who created the Grayhaven







change. When your parents get divorced that is a big change. What changes have you been through?

Love grows when we pray. First it might be just a feeling. Later it becomes a thought. Thoughts might turn into prayers. Prayer turns into the good things we do.

The butterfly grows like this: **Egg, Caterpillar, Chrysalis, Butterfly.**

Love grows like this: **Feeling, Thinking, Praying, Doing.**

You can act out the changes in a butterfly.

### Egg/ Feeling.

First find a quiet place to sit and feel love. What do you feel? Wait for a good thought to hatch.

### Caterpillar/Thinking.

Caterpillars like to crawl. Can you crawl under a table or over a chair? Thinking is like crawling because your thoughts move over everything. Just like caterpillars eat everything they see, we can love everything we see.

Do you see a chair? How can you love a chair? Crawl on the chair and think about how nice it is not to have to sit on the floor.

Do you see a wastebasket? Can you crawl around it? How can you love a garbage can? Well, if it weren't for

the garbage can the garbage would be all over the floor. We are really glad to have garbage cans. We love them.

Do you see a ladybug crawling? You can crawl too. It is easy to love a ladybug. Just put her outside gently, where she will be happy. Aren't ladybugs awesome? They can move and fly even though they are little, and they don't have a motor.

Hey, being a caterpillar and crawling around loving things is lots of fun.

### Chrysalis/Praying

A chrysalis needs a good place to hang on to. What do you see that you can hang on to with both hands? Put your hands around it tight. Do you think it will hold, even in a strong wind?

Try holding on to my arm. Here, I will try holding on to yours. How strong are you?

A prayer needs a good thought to hold on to. "God will keep everyone safe" is a good thought. How strong do you think God's arm is?

When you feel scared, or sad, hang onto the thought that God's loving arm is around everyone, because this is true.

Keep thinking that thought. Don't let go of it. Let the wind blow, but don't let go. Can you say, "Blow wind blow, I won't let go?" That is how we hang onto a good thought, like a chrysalis hangs on to a tree.

Whoosh - comes a bad thought and a sad thought and a huffing and puffing mad thought, but we don't let go. We just say, "Blow wind blow, I won't let go."

### Butterfly/Doing.

Congratulations. You have made it to a butterfly. Can you flap your wings and fly around the room hugging people?

Now you don't just feel love, now you don't just think a loving thought, now you have wings, and can do loving things.

Say it out loud, "I have wings, I can do loving things."

Before a butterfly can fly it has to flap its wings. This pumps blood into each wing so that the butterfly can fly. Before we do a loving thing we say prayers. That is like flapping our wings. It pumps the love into our thoughts so that we can do loving things.

Can you flap your wings while you say a prayer out loud? Do you feel love start to move as you flap? It warms you up. That is just how a butterfly gets ready to fly, and just how we get ready to help people.

Doesn't it make you feel warm and happy to pray?

## Mobile

The children can also make a mobile of each stage of the butterfly's life, cutting out an egg, caterpillar, chrysalis, and butterfly from construction paper. They can write "Feeling, Thinking, Praying, Doing", on the other side. These can be decorated. You can hang each piece from a clothes hanger to make a mobile. Mobiles are very nice gifts for a grandma or grandpa in a nursing home.

### *Care and Prayer*

A six year old girl named Lashonda was learning prayer tracking. "Lashonda" I said. "Come sit on my lap. Lets pray for your mom."

Immediately she became nervous. At the age of six she already associated prayer with fear, with nervousness.

"You pray, Debbie." she said to me. "You're better." She had already picked up that lesson too, absorbing the cultural lack of self-esteem Americans have in the spiritual arena. In six short years this girl had already developed religious emotional baggage.

"Never mind, Lashonda," I said. "I tell you what. Lets just sit here and send some love to your mom."

"Oh. OK." This she was happy with. No nervousness now. No uncertainty as to what to do next. She closed her eyes and sent love to her mom. Then she

wanted to send love to her teacher, the dog, to me, and even to herself. She had a wonderful time. She was praying and she didn't know it.

I had tricked her into praying. I occasionally have to resort to that. People who are creative happy and funny sometimes shut all of those things off when you ask them to pray.

If I take Val, my rabbit (you can also use a cuddly toy) and I ask children to show me how they pray for the rabbit, they are shy and quiet. If I ask them to show me how to love the rabbit they come tumbling out of their chairs to pet her, kiss her, and say nice rabbit things.

Is there a difference between love and prayer? The two should not be separated in the minds of children if they are going to learn to pray effectively.

Care and prayer go together. It is helpful in prayer tracking to encourage children to be the ones who physically water the plants, and to say a blessing while they do so. It is helpful to encourage them to walk, pet and brush the dog, to care for the dog (or any pet) and to pray for him at the same time.

Care and prayer can be taught together, until it is so ingrained to put them together that it becomes second nature.

I teach the children that being the technician – doing the measuring, watering the seeds, or doing whatever is necessary to care for the research organism, is just as important as praying. I let them take turns doing both.

There are prayers of the hands and prayers of the heart. Sometimes we pray by helping with our hands, and sometimes we pray by helping with our mind or our heart. God loves both kinds of prayers.

Training racing pigeons was one way I taught children about care and prayer. Many of these children were city children and had never held a bird in their hand. I taught them how to call a bird right out of the sky. It became a metaphor for calling forth blessings.

Although it may seem miraculous to call a bird out of the sky, there is a method to it. It's done by letting a fantail pigeon fly off a roost while a racing pigeon is in the air. The fantail is beautiful but flutters a lot when flying. The motion attracts the interest of the racing pigeon, who dives to see what the motion is. As he dives, you whistle. Soon the pigeon associates the whistle with diving, and you can call him right out of the sky.

Racing pigeons are good research organisms because there has already been a lot of research and breeding done with them. You don't have to build all your databases from scratch. They are fun to race too, although the children were all "pigeon whisperers" and taught them to race with gentle methods.

Taming the birds was an effective way of teaching the children about prayer. The pigeons wouldn't come if the children were racing around or noisy. They wouldn't come if they were unkind or threw things. There had to be trust.

Praying is like taming a bird. Prayer doesn't mean making demands or telling the blessing to come down



here right now. If you throw a lot of angry emotions around, the blessing will just fly further away until you calm down.

You have to tame the blessing - speaking softly and moving your thoughts gently and establishing trust. Then you can call a blessing right out of the sky. The blessing will come and take the gift of love you offer right out of your hand. That moment is priceless.

It helps to be still.

Prayer means looking at the healing, even if it isn't close enough to touch. You might gently call the healing to you. You learn to watch and wait.

Blessings, like birds, look back at you. They inch closer every time you pray.

Spiritual healing requires maintenance, just like birds. You can't just pray once and forget it. Gratitude is a way of cleaning the goop out of your thoughts, like cleaning droppings out of a cage. It feels good to start clean every day. The children did the work of caring for their birds, and their blessings, even when they didn't feel like it.

Often I don't feel like praying. Years of prayer have taught me to do it anyway. Once you start, and the birds or the blessings sit on your shoulder, you realize how glad you are to be doing this.

Our junior prayer trackers liked the song from *Mary Poppins* called *Feed the Birds*, where the saints in the cathedral look down and smile whenever you feed the birds. They soon began singing their own version of a bird-feeding blessing, to the tune of *Chim-chim-a-nee*,

*Chim-chim-a-nee Chim chim Che-ree*, also from *Mary Poppins*. This is their version:

Chick chickadee chick chickadee

Chick chick-a-ree

The birds they are blessed, as blessed as we.

Chick chickadee chick chickadee chick chick-a-roo

If you pray for birds it will rub off on you.

Or give them some fo-od, for that's blessed too.

For people to pray for the birds it is rare,

They say that in heaven just humans are there.

But I know each creature is held in God's care

And that's why I love them and touch them with prayer.

For the good God has numbered each feather and

hair.

(chorus)

If you don't happen to be raising racing pigeons you can teach the same lesson with houseplants, pets, or anything that your child can physically care for as well as pray for.

You can also incorporate books from the library into the care and prayer curriculum. With little children you can encourage them to pray for the animals in the book, to touch the pictures, and to pretend to pet them.

Anything that rhymes is usually a big hit with the littlest ones. Here is the rhyme I use to introduce the smallest children to care and prayer. After each verse is read they have to do something.

## Grayhaven Farm

Look at the wonderful cow.  
What is she doing right now?  
She's eating and chewing  
But mostly she's mooing.  
Perhaps I could someday learn how.

*(Can you make a noise that sounds like a moo?)*

Look at the beautiful pig.  
How did he grow up and get big?  
He gratefully ate  
Everything on his plate  
and he found some potatoes to dig.

*(Pet the pig. Say, "Oh my, you are beautiful".)*

The rabbit inside of her hutch  
Her nose will allow us to touch.  
She needs care and prayer  
and to know God is there.  
Please tell her we like her so much.

*(Touch the rabbit's nose very gently and tell her you like her a lot.)*

Look at the chickens at play  
I hope they will ask us to stay.  
For it's starting to rain  
and we must move our game

To the barn with the straw and the hay.

*(Please say “thank you” so the chickens will know that you like to play with them.)*

The worm as he plays in the dirt  
Must never be stepped on or hurt.  
He bends like a pretzel  
and God thinks he’s special.  
When walking in rain be alert.

*(Shake your head “no” to show that you will never ever step on a worm.)*

Look at the sweet little sheep.  
I think she is falling asleep.  
Please do not pull  
on her nice curly wool-  
Her hairstyle took almost a week.

*(Say goodnight to the sheep and pet her soft wool.  
Maybe she will sleep better if you sing to her so she is not scared.)*

Our animal friends are the best  
In the barn and the hutch and the nest.  
When you say bedtime prayers  
please don’t forget theirs  
and may God hold us all while we rest.

*(Do you know any animals? Can you say a prayer for them and hug them with your arms or with your thoughts?)*

Good night!

From Grayhaven's  
*A Habitat is Where It's At* collection of verses

### *Teaching the Scientific Method*

It isn't hard to teach the scientific method to children, because they are already learning it in school. Science fair projects teach them how to present data. Any good education store, or any place where they sell home schooling materials, will provide posters and other easy aides for presenting and teaching the scientific method.

People have asked me how I add the prayer element. They have trouble imagining how you can teach both prayer, and how to do experiments, together. As a brief example I will quote here a portion from a class called, "*Can A Dog Ask Questions?*" which I developed to use with children when we did prayer tracking. I am presenting it in writing here, from my notes, but in real life the children were talking and answering questions while I explained these points verbally.

### *Can a Dog Ask Questions?*

Did your mom ever tell you that you were asking too many questions? Mine did. It was when I was little and I wanted to know something about everything.

Children like to ask questions because that is how they learn things. Usually when you ask a question you use words and the answer is given to you in words.

What if you asked someone a question in English and they only spoke Spanish? They would not understand your question and you would not understand their answer unless you learned a new language.

If you ask your dog a question can a dog answer questions? Not with words of course. But if you want to ask your dog the question “Are you hungry?” maybe you could do it without words. Maybe you could point to his bowl. He might be able to answer without words. He might answer “yes” by running toward the bowl and begging or he may answer “no” by lying down and paying no attention at all.

What if you wanted to ask a star a question? It couldn't hear you because it has no ears and it couldn't answer you because it has no mouth. It couldn't even come running over to where you are like a dog can. But you can still ask it questions and it can still answer. You can do this through using science and by measuring things.

There are lots of questions I would like to ask a star. What would you ask a star? I would like to ask it how hot it is. Maybe you could measure it with a thermometer and get the answer. Except that the

thermometer would melt and anyway you couldn't get close enough to measure.

Maybe you could think up a whole new way to measure how hot the stars are. Scientists have done this. They have invented new kinds of thermometers and measured how warm the things are near the stars and then figured out how hot the star would have to be to make other things warm, like the sun making the earth warm.

Maybe someday you can invent a whole new way to measure how hot the stars are. By inventing a way to do this a scientist is asking the star the question "How hot are you?" and the star is answering, not in words but in numbers, numbers that tell what its temperature is.

When scientists ask questions they call them experiments. An experiment is a question that you ask the universe. Do you know what the universe is? It is every single thing that exists all together; like stars and potatoes, clouds, thoughts, the moon, gold fish, bicycles and people. It is everything that you can see through the most powerful telescope or the most powerful microscope in the world and it is also the things that no one can see even with microscopes and telescopes. The universe is everything that there is.

Everybody asks their mom or dad a lot of questions but not everyone knows how to ask the universe questions. We are going to teach you to do this by doing experiments. The kind of an experiment we will do depends on what kind of a question we want to ask.

In experiments we use numbers to talk with instead of words. It is important to measure carefully so that you get the numbers just right. Just think if you wanted a hot dog and you asked your mom for an umbrella. If you use the wrong word she will not understand you and she will give you the wrong thing. In an experiment the numbers have to be right to get the true answer just like when you talk the words have to be right.

One thing to remember about an experiment is that, like your mom, it won't always give you the same answer every time. If you ask your mom if you can go outside and play she may say "yes" or she may say "no". There might be two answers for the same question. It will depend on how dark out it is and if supper is almost ready.

We are going to experiment with seeds. When you ask a seed a question it won't always give you the same answer even if you ask the same question. The numbers it answers you with will change depending on how warm it is and many other things. But there will always be an answer to your experiment.

Even if nothing happens that is an answer because the seed is trying to tell you something by doing nothing, just like your dog may tell you he is not hungry by lying still and doing nothing instead of begging for food. You have to think hard to understand some answers. It is harder to ask a seed a question than it is to ask your mom.

People who pray say that God made everything in the universe, including seeds. In some ways an experiment is like asking God a question. Praying is



another way you can ask God a question. When you put prayers and experiments together you can ask God the same question in two different ways.

[At this point the children do the experiment, measure, and get an answer, in numbers, by weighing or measuring the seeds in some way].

Now that we have an answer we have to think about whether we asked the right question. Maybe prayer changed the seed in a way we couldn't see. It's like being in a house. Things could be happening outside but you can't see through the walls so you can't see what is happening.

You need to make a window, a spot that you can see from. Our seed experiment was a little window and we could

see through it to watch God helping the seed.

The problem is that it was a little window. It only showed us a little bit of what was happening. Even in a house you can't see everything through a small window. You can only see what is right in front of the window.

In our next seed experiment we are going to build a bigger window. We can build a really big window and see more things.

This is also true when you pray for people. First you pray a little bit and maybe they feel a little better or a little happier. To pray some more you need to learn

more about them and get to know them. You also need to learn more about God. Then you can make your prayer bigger, just like we are going to make our experiment bigger.

Famous scientists like the ones who send rockets to the moon, sometimes do one experiment and then make up a new one to ask the same question in another way. Sometimes they do all sorts of different experiments all at once, asking the same question in different ways. This is like building windows on every side of your house so that no matter what happens outside you will probably get to see it.

That is a lot of work but it is a good way to get answers.

One reason that it is important to do experiments is that lots of things can't talk to us in words. The only way to talk to and listen to many things in the universe is by doing experiments. Seeds can't talk to you in words but they might change in a way that you can measure just to let you know that they feel you when you love and pray for them. It's like talking in a secret code. With experiments you can ask anything in the universe a question and it might even ask you a question.

When you learn to talk without words you can pray without words sometimes and sometimes you can pray with words. And you can do other things too. You can ask your dog a question without using words and without using words the dog can answer and talk to you. You can talk to your dog or to the seeds or to a star or to lots of other things and you can even talk

right to God, with words, or without. God likes to talk to you in both ways.

What questions do you want to ask?



## **Chapter Sixteen**

### **Hands-On Experiences**

Once children have been introduced to praying for non-human organisms, to combining care and prayer, and have learned the basics of how to set up an experiment, they are ready to do real prayer tracking.

Children have prayed for seeds, plants, microorganisms including bacteria, crickets, fish, algae, and many other organisms and systems. Their prayers have had measurable results. The tracking has been full of laughter and surprises.

In the past I have worked with a group of children over a period of several weeks, sometimes daily, but more often once a week. To establish the tracking metaphor I begin by letting them make track-boxes.

Since I am not much of a carpenter I don't make the boxes from scratch. I cheat and buy the plastic trays meant to go under dishwashers to keep them from

leaking. You can get them from a home building supply store. They are large, low and easy to fill.

I let the children mix dirt and sand with their hands to make a medium that will show tracks easily. The children then take off their shoes and “test” the mix they’ve made to see if they can make clear detailed tracks in it. In the summer the children, who get dirty doing this, can be sprayed with a garden hose, much to their delight.

I tell them their heart must be soft, like the earth in the track-boxes, but that discipline is also needed. We use a brick to press the soil down, to make the soft earth firm enough to make tracks in. I tell them that being pressed a little now and then is not a bad thing. It makes us a better medium for the tracks of angels.

Then the children prepare a gift of food for the animals.

I put a variety of foods appealing to animals on a table (peanut butter, sunflower seeds, bacon, cat-food) and let the children make a plate for the center of each track box. We bless the food (and more often than not they sample the peanut butter!)

I tell them they must prepare these plates with as much love as if it was mother’s day and they were making their mom a special meal. We want the animals to feel the love in our gift. We want to give them a beautiful dinner, like at a restaurant.

Then we go out, place our gifts in the middle of each box, join hands around each track-box, and say a blessing.

After that we go inside and start doing prayer tracking experiments. I tell them that doing each experiment is like building a track-box, except that it is for prayer tracks and not animal tracks. I tell them that we will make our heart soft with love, but also press it with hard work, so that the tracks of many different prayers will be clear and distinct.

Instead of offering a gift of food with our hands we offer a gift of love with our hearts. I show them that there are different ways to express love, just like there are different kinds of food to offer. You can offer an animal peanut butter, suet or sunflower seeds, and you can love a seed by singing to it, talking to it, or just being with it and being aware of it. Being aware is central.

There are many animals in the city and in the woods. Sometimes we walk down the street and we think we are all alone. If we were aware we would find that we are not alone. There are stray cats looking out at us from under the bushes, dogs and people looking out at us from the windows, chipmunks, mice, raccoons, birds, insects, and all kinds of other beings present with us. We will not know it if we are not aware.

Prayer is a way to learn to be more aware. Sometimes we feel we are walking through a problem all alone. We are not. Many blessings are right there with us, many angels, many thoughts from God, and many right ideas as to how to solve our problems. We just need to be aware, and to offer our gifts, in other words express our love.

After the children come inside, from putting out the track-boxes, I help them to set up prayer experiments, prayer track-boxes. I start with seeds as a research organism. Seeds are easy to relate to. Even in kindergarten children plant seeds and watch them grow. A seed is a more familiar organism than an enzyme or other microorganism.

Seeds are a good place to begin because they represent beginnings. A seed has everything in it that it needs to become a flower or plant. A seed is complete. It does not need to run around and look for more of what it needs in order to become a marigold or a radish. It already has everything it needs. It just needs to unfold, and grow. It needs to open.

A seed is a beginning and therefore a promise. It is a wonderful place to start prayer, because we can pray and know that all God's promises are kept. We can open up our minds as we watch the seeds open.

As far as the actual tests, I usually I start with a simple GR prayer experiment using seeds. Using a watering system that waters from the bottom evenly, and sorting seeds carefully so that they are of uniform quality, I have the children plant a tray full of seeds, put a string down the middle, and pray for half of them every day for about a month. This experiment is our first and simplest "track-box".

This is the type of set-up most people think of when they think of a prayer tracking experiment. They do not realize that other test designs exist.

First, children need to do a simple test, and learn to feel love for a research organism. Later the children

will learn to widen the test design (track-box), even as they learn to deepen the love they feel for the research organism.

This test is a way to introduce children to the physical set-up for seed tests, just like they have learned how to make animal track-boxes. I also do this test as a way to get children used to praying for a seed. It is a way to help them develop the discipline of praying for a research organism every single day, even if it is only for five minutes.

When you go into training as an athlete, you don't start with 50 push-ups a day. You ease into it. Daily prayer for a month helps the children use spiritual muscles that may not be called into play every day. It's a warm-up exercise.

The next experiment or "track-box" is where the children pray for seeds that have been soaked in a saline solution to add stress. I use standard kits designed for grade school science classes to do this, adding only the prayer element. There is, of course, a control and a treated (prayed-for) group of seeds.

The children now have to think about the two results they got, from the two experiments. How were they different? What kind of prayer tracks showed up in each box? Did their prayer have a bigger effect when the seeds were stressed than when they weren't and if so, or if not, why?

Now the children have to hypothesize. They have to start thinking about terrain, and not just prayer. Before the class started we had placed more than one track-box, and we put them in different places. Sometimes



we find a place that always gets more tracks. Sometimes we find an experiment that always gets a lot of effect too. We have to think about why.

Generally GR prayer will make the healthy seeds in the first experiment grow faster, while IR prayer will kick in during the second experiment where the seeds have more of a need. By introducing these two types of terrain to children, and seeing which children pray more effectively in each, I start having a sense of each child's prayer file.

Then I can start effectively exposing her to new prayer styles, in order to increase her prayer repertoire, while also helping her value her natural gifts.

I can also start putting together effective groups for group prayer, putting children of similar prayer styles together so that they don't cancel each other out which surprisingly, prayer research has shown is possible.

Group prayer is effective, like having more people to row a boat, but it works best when you are all rowing in the same direction.

The first experiment I introduce where I have the children pray with another child as their prayer partner is usually an acid rain experiment. In this experiment children pray together for plants that have been dosed with artificial acid rain.

Later they collect rainwater and measure the toxins in it. They then go out in their community and pray together for the plants actually affected by the acid rain they collected.

If they see in the lab that their prayer helped a plant to be protected from acid rain, they usually feel more

motivated to go out and pray for the plants growing outside. They also learn about how pollution hurts the animals, including the ones using their track-boxes, and they pray for them too.

Pollution is a collective “sin” and so it is a very good subject for group prayer. Prayer causes us to change, to be less selfish and less polluting. It can cause better ideas to come to the surface in industry, ideas that decrease pollution. These are effects that we cannot measure.

We can measure how our prayer protects an individual plant from the effect of acid rain. From this movement of prayer, this pebble dropped into the community through our experiment, we know that larger concentric circles of love will go out into the world.

As we continue, each experiment builds on the next, helping the child to observe, hypothesize, test, interpret data or analyze, record, and communicate results. Bit by bit we build up a working knowledge of prayer.

Prayer Tracker Inc. will be developing many “science fair” types of experiments, such as the ones I have just described. It will work on making larger prayer “track-boxes”, in other words, making better experiments. During 2002 I will be improving these tests, making them more user friendly, putting them in context through written explanations, clarifying the concepts covered in each test, and trying them over and over with a core group of volunteers, until good workbooks and instructions can be written.

At the end of each prayer tracking session with the children I take them outside to check the animal track-boxes. Sometimes there are no tracks. Sometimes there are. Sometimes the same animal comes over and over. Sometimes an animal we never expected drops by to accept our gift of food and love.

Sometimes we go out after dark and look at the boxes with our flashlights. That is exciting. Animals are blessings. Certain blessings, whether they are animals or some other kind of blessing, are active in the dark. When we are scared or feel sad, we can know that there are special blessings that Love has made active in the dark. These blessings will accept our love and leave an impression in our lives.

Once in a while we make a plaster of Paris cast of some of the tracks, and the children get to keep them. They can use them as paperweights on top of the graphs and charts, which show the prayer tracks from their experiments.

### *Rat Rage*

Some people still ask me why I pray for “all this weird stuff” instead of for people. It isn’t a question of one or the other. As to why I pray for research organisms I have five good answers.

They are five young women who, when I worked with them a few years ago, were all teenagers. They had all once been physically abused but were no longer in abusive situations. They were all three to five years away from the abuse. Four were Americans who

survived abuse from an adult they had lived with. One was a refugee who survived professional torture. All had physical scars which they were afraid made them unattractive to the opposite sex.

I chose American laboratory white rats (the BALB variety) as our research organism. I chose them because they are cute and amusing enough for the girls to love - but they are also sometimes abusive to their offspring. It was an issue to meet head-on.

The first month the girls prayed for the rats in a group because none of the girls had the confidence then to tackle prayer alone. They had no particular goal in praying for the rats, other than to love them. The rats in both the treated and the control groups had slight deformities. Prayer was shown to heal a small percentage of these, and also to lower the aggression rate of the males, though the results were small.

In an experiment we can introduce a rival male into a colony he does not belong to. This would be unlikely to occur in nature, because mice follow scent paths and are warned away from rival territory.

In our experiment we lowered the white rat into the rival colony in a Plexiglas cage with holes, so he couldn't be hurt. The local rats would have bitten him to death if they got a chance. When we saw how scared the original white rat became, we experimented with other ways of doing the experiment. We discovered that merely the scent of the rival male on a cotton ball would cause aggression, if the scent was strong enough.

It was pretty funny to watch the rats attacking a cotton ball and getting it all over their whiskers when they tried to bite it. Not that Rat Rage is anything to laugh about, but it does seem to be easier to talk about than human rage.

Max, a dominant male, got so mad when he smelled his rival, that when he couldn't bite through the plexi-glass he turned and started biting his own family. They were standing nearby.

I quickly removed him and placed him in a dark box until he calmed down. Not only did he bite me right through my gloves, he refused, once in the isolation box, to be deprived of a target. He ended up biting part of his own tail off in a fit of anger. His whiskers were shaking so hard with Rat Rage that we thought they would fall off.

This is an example of how an experiment can sometimes get out of hand. I wouldn't have tried the experiment if I had known what would happen. This is not an experiment I will put in any future workbook; but I am mentioning it here as an example of how even tests that don't work well can still teach you something.

Prayer didn't do anything for Max, at least nothing that we could measure. Although he quickly got over his tantrum and let us clean his tail wound, his aggressive response to a rival got worse instead of better after prayer. Eventually we disqualified him. I would have disqualified him much earlier but the girls were desperate to "save" him and wanted to keep trying.

You see, normally he was a favorite, being one of the most acrobatic and entertaining rats. The girls taught him several tricks. When he wasn't in rival-mode he was a charming fellow who would ride around happily in their pockets and eat out of their hand. One girl had beaded hair ribbons. Max loved to grab hold of one and swing like Tarzan. After he bit me of course, I could no longer allow it, but the girls loved him.

Which brings us right up to the hard question of whether it's possible to love an abuser and what do you do if your prayers for the abuser have no effect on them?

A few white rats were affected positively by prayer, going into defensive stance and squeaking at the scent of a rival, but not physically attacking the way they did, and the way the control group did, without prayer.

Before we switched to cotton balls, when we were still lowering a white rat into a rival colony in a plexi-glass cage, the rat in the cage would get so scared that he would wet himself.

We were lucky that's all he did. I found out from someone who works with BALB rats in labs, testing hormones and aggression rates, that the male in the Plexiglas sometimes dies of fright. Again, had I known that I would never have tried the experiment.

All of the five teens in this group were having problems with wetting their beds when the class started, something they were deeply ashamed of.

It was so mortifying to them, you can't imagine. At 15 and 16 you are beginning to think about boys, and sex, and marriage. Who would ever sleep with them if

they wet the bed? It's a serious issue to girls who already feel unattractive due to physical scarring.

It was easier for them to talk about this subject when they saw that the rat wet himself because he was scared. I was touched by their tenderness in cleaning the scared wet rat with a cotton ball soaked in warm water.

Studies have shown that wounds on research rats heal more quickly if the rat is handled and petted. I showed the girls copies of this study. I wanted them to know that their tenderness was power.

You should have seen how tenderly they took the wet rat out of his cage, cleaned him up, reassured him, and let him sit cupped safely in their hands until he stopped shivering with fright. They were praying - they were loving that little white rat - but they didn't know it yet.

Once they realized that prayer was simply the love they already had, it was easy to pray also in a verbal way for the rat, and then, slowly, for themselves.

It was less mortifying to talk about this, and to pray about this, when the girls saw that even white rats get scared and that fear, not urination, was the problem.

At first, the girls would only pray as a group, because they were afraid to pray alone.

Prayer is love, and these girls were not yet skilled at receiving love. At that point they had difficulty praying for, that is they had difficulty loving, themselves.

The fact that the girls could enjoy praying solo by the end of the class, and that they prayed confidently for themselves and others, was a miracle in itself.

Prayer tracking accessed the power of prayer for these young adults, where more traditional settings for prayer had not.

We held hands and prayed about the bed-wetting together. After three prayer sessions there was only a one incident relapse, with one girl. Three months later, at the end of the class, none of them had had any more incidents. Before this prayer class some were wetting the bed two or three times a week, some more often.

I should add that they had already sought medical help and the cause did not appear to be physical.

Also, each of these girls had received professional counseling. I encouraged this, but it hasn't been my experience that you can educate rage or fear out of a child. That is why I think the prayer element is also important.

It may well be that the friendship and support the girls felt in the class helped them as much as the prayer tracking, but it was the tracking that helped them open up and talk about things they normally would have been too shy to share.

I am only actively in touch with one of these girls. In the years since we did this they have moved away to college and one has gone overseas. The young woman I am still in touch with reports that she has not had any more bed wetting incidents, and remembers this prayer tracking class as a very healing time in her life.

The girls were not open or trusting. They did not talk easily about things. After their past experience of



abuse, this was not surprising. Sexuality was a big issue for them. White rats are highly sexual - females come into heat every three days. It was not hard to talk about sexuality with these precocious and amusing little creatures right in front of you doing what comes naturally. The rats acted as an icebreaker. Both sexes are uninhibited to say the least.

All of the girls in this class, who were 15 to 17 years old at the time, wanted to have babies as soon as possible. I don't know enough about abuse to know if that is a symptom of the abuse or a symptom of our society. I do know these young women needed someone to love. They wanted to be treated like adults, to be in control, to be the grown-up instead of the child.

If you feed the female rats certain hormone additives (low doses are available through biological supply companies) they will be good mothers. If you feed them other kinds of hormone additives they will try to kill their offspring. Same rats, different chemicals.

These girls didn't want to be manipulated by their hormones. It was helpful for them to see that the purely physical urge to have children is chemical. We prayed together to affirm that we could not be fooled by chemical signals, but that through God's grace (expressed love) we could cut through all the chemical noise to the true feeling of love.

I did not tell the girls that it was wrong to have a baby. At least one has since become a loving mother. I just taught them, or I should say the white rats taught

them, that they can reach a layer of love beyond the chemical.

A rat will often kill a baby rat that isn't its own offspring. In one of our best experiments, prayer for the rats changed this behavior. Two mother rats, out of 25 prayed-for (we also had 25 control) accepted an adoptee after prayer. She continued to nurse it as long as she nursed her biological offspring. This was despite the fact that the adopted baby was dosed with a rival scent.

Since four of the teens in this class were adopted or in foster care this was a powerful result for them to see, brought about by their own prayers.

Some of these young adults suffered abuse when one of their parents remarried and the stepparent didn't accept their presence. They could relate to what was happening with the white rats. When the rats wanted to start new families they would abuse the older offspring until the babies left the nest.

Real love, love that isn't just a chemical instinct but something much more, is the kind of love that doesn't depend on a biological trigger to decide whether to accept someone or not. We talked a lot about how God looks at our heart, not our genes.

All five girls had issues with not liking to be touched. Research rats may not sound lovable but they really are funny and cute creatures. The girls loved to touch them, and hold them, and it helped them open up.

All five adopted their favorite white rats, taking them home as pets after the experiment ended, although this had not been my original plan. The idea of being

parted from their pets after the experiment was over was unthinkable.

I only let the girls have two males together, or two females. That way they wouldn't reproduce but they also wouldn't be lonely. I gave them away in twos because white rats like to have company. In our group, it wasn't harder to be adopted because you had a sibling.

These girls would not have talked about their problems, much less have prayed about them, without their little white rats, their research organism. Prayer tracking can give people "permission" to heal, and sometimes people need that.

The data was a further validating element. To someone with little self-esteem, someone who feels that they have no control over their lives, it is quite a powerful thing to see that their prayers can physically affect another creature in a positive way.

These girls were afraid they would not be good wives, good lovers, good anything. In these experiments they found out that they were powerful agents of love, not defective victims. They were the strong ones. They experienced the proof that they are good at loving.

Maybe in the long run it was Max, the one who didn't respond to their prayers, who taught them the most. He taught them that their love may not change the abuser, but it does change the situation by empowering the person who prays. He showed them that love doesn't depend on the Max's of this world.

These women do not now have perfect lives. This prayer tracking experiment was not a cure-all. But it was a first step into the healing forests of divine Love. It was enough to convince these young women to put their hiking boots on and keep tracking.

### *Go drown Moses*

Having a habitat to work with, instead of just a single research organism, is a big aid in observing how IR prayer works. After doing some work with fish and algae, I decided to build an indoor river and repeat all the prayer tracking experiments the children and I had done, but in a more natural setting.

*The Indoor River* is a book created by a non-profit group called Common Roots, and it teaches you to build one. Such a river could be a cost-effective project for a Bible camp or a weeklong retreat. The average river costs about \$200, for a 10 foot river, and can be planned and built in 6 hours. Usually that would be two 3-hour sessions.

Once it is built there are a variety of learning projects that can be done with the river, which are described in the book, *The Indoor River*. To that I added about a dozen prayer tracking projects. I hope to some day weed out the good prayer projects, try them again, write out proper instructions, and make them available to others.

These are the kinds of projects that I hope Prayer Tracker Inc. will make accessible.

There are three phases to the river project: planning and designing the river, construction, and hands-on learning.

We did a 25-foot section (to scale) of the Root River in Racine, Wisconsin, for one of our prayer tracking projects. Building a river is expensive but can accommodate a large number of people working on the projects. Twenty to thirty people can participate easily, more if you maintain the river for a longer period. Since each person participates in many projects, it can be very cost effective, with each project coming in at less than 50 cents per person, per experiment.

The indoor river is comprised of three parts: a grow-lab or marsh, which acts as the source of the river, the river itself, and the drainage pond or wetlands. Materials can be bought at hardware and pet stores, or collected on field trips to the river. A small, inexpensive submersible pump circulates the water back into the marsh. We used rubber roofing material that could be cut and curved to scale to form the riverbed.

The main purpose of the river was to form a natural environment for prayer tracking experiments, but as long as we had our own river I thought I might as well use it to teach the Bible. I found a small doll to use as a baby Moses; although I do realize that Moses never visited Wisconsin and did not live near the Root River. Some poetic license was called for.

I sent Moses down the river to illustrate the story. Unfortunately, the only thing I illustrated was that I couldn't make baskets as well as Moses' mom. Moses

sank almost the minute he was placed in the water. The children pulled him out and did “first-aid”, including “CPR”, with their pinkie finger, but apparently it was too late. They informed me solemnly that Moses had “drowned dead.”

“Good.” said one girl. “No commandments.”

That led to a discussion of whether, if Moses had not received the commandments, God might have given them to someone else, provided that this someone was listening.

I asked everyone what God was saying to them. We decided to all have a mountaintop experience. I turned down their urgent request to build an indoor mountain with dry ice mist, which they felt would make them able to hear God better because it would be more “authentic”, like the description in the Bible. Divine Love, I felt, could manage to get through even without the dry ice. Besides, I don’t remember any part about dry ice in the Bible.

The Jewish term for the Ten Commandments is the Ten Speakings. The concept is, that these are not laws from outside of yourself, or outside of the world, but laws written on your heart. Spiritual law speaks from within us, and from within every element of the world.

Even if Moses had not received the speakings, the law of God would still speak within everything and everybody.

Every child and their senior prayer partner, (these were intergenerational projects) went off into their own corner for their own mountaintop experience. Then they had to write what they felt during that experience,

what they thought God was speaking to them and through them, on two large tablets made of white packing paper.

Some got very creative visually, drawing cracks in their tablets to show that they were supposed to be made of rock, and sometimes drawing a few crickets crawling around reading the commandments. The children wrote in huge letters. One girl needed three tablets for her commandments. A boy pointed out these were made of rock and you couldn't have three tablets because you couldn't carry them. "I'll get my dad to do it" the girl said, then added as an after-thought, "Anyway, I have a wagon."

One wonders how many commandments we would have today if only Moses had owned a wagon.

I made a display of all the new commandments but I took them down before the children's guardians came to see the river. Rewriting the commandments, I decided, might be considered a bit nervy.

### *Small children, big prayers*

Aware Dare is a game I learned about by reading the excellent bug books for children written by Michael Ross. He's an entomologist at Yosemite. His wife is a nurse. He writes:

Let us be good scientists who study living things with care and concern for the lives of small creatures. The gentler you are the more successful you will be.

Aware Dare is a game of observation. Prior to an experiment where crickets would be the research organism, I had the children get a piece of paper and sit down with their crickets. Each one would make an observation. "The cricket is brown." "The cricket has a red dot on its forehead." Which crickets do have, by the way. Scientists don't seem to know why crickets have red dots on their forehead. The children know why. It's because it looks cool.

You are allowed to use a magnifying glass or pick the cricket up to make a better observation. It's kind of like a spelling bee. When you can't think of any more observations, you're out.

I used this game of Aware Dare with all the organisms that the children prayed for. I expanded it beyond the organic identity. When physical observations ran out I encouraged the children to observe the different qualities the crickets expressed. One was quiet, another excitable, one was curious, one was smart, another was a loner.

From qualities it was a short step to becoming aware of the soul of a cricket. The children were learning to pray. Awareness is heightened in prayer. Everyone loved the game Aware Dare.

We played Aware Dare with plants too. Mother earth is the traditional mother for baby plants. We admired how potting soil, also called "mother earth", raised a baby radish; nurturing it and giving it support. We put a chalky medium in the middle of the potting soil, to give the radish some stress, and had radish races, watching the prayed for and control radishes



growing roots through the chalky medium via a Root-View box.

But we also grew seeds in non-traditional mediums for some experiments. One growing medium we used was a crystal like gel that came in hot pink.

If you are going to plant something you may as well put it in something pretty. You can measure it just as well. Who says that a science experiment can't come in designer colors?

The children could see that the non-traditional crystal soil "moms", even the ones wearing hot pink, did just as well as traditional mother earth, when they raised their baby radishes. The baby radishes got all the nurturing they needed from these non-traditional growing mediums.

For children living in foster care, this was good to know. The Bible tells us that "God setteth the solitary in families" (Psalm 68:6). Sometimes these families can be non-traditional, even for a radish.

### *A Prayer for Chickens*

Claire was my friend in Sunday School  
but when I moved away  
I didn't see her any more.  
I missed her every day.

She visited for two whole weeks  
at Easter, in the spring.  
I showed her 'round the woods  
the farm, the house and everything.

“Why do you keep some chickens  
Beneath the bedroom stair?”

“Cause the ducks are in the kitchen”  
I explained to my friend Claire...

...Baby birds need to be warm.  
My dad told mom to figure  
they'd have to stay inside the house  
until they got much bigger.

When we bought our day-old chickens  
they forgot to trim their beak  
and now the chicks were pecking  
at some others who were weak.

Why do small chickens peck and fight?  
Why don't they get along?  
Why do they gang up, pecking at  
the one that isn't strong?

I was afraid to go to bed.  
I thought some chicks might die.  
My mother took me on her lap  
and told me not to cry....

...Sometimes we start out happy  
but our joy gets pecked away.  
We lose it slowly bit by bit  
from fears that bite all day.

But if we pray God holds our thoughts  
Love makes them safe and good.  
And even chicks can learn to love  
For Love tells them they should.

My mom and Claire and I all prayed  
until we felt real quiet.  
Prayer can help you not be scared.  
You really ought to try it.

We got up in the morning.  
We heard a “peep” and swish.  
We saw a small chick splashing  
in the dog’s big water dish.

The chickens had all gotten loose.  
They played beneath the sink.  
They took a bath in Buster’s bowl  
and lined up for a drink....

...We did not lose a chick that year.  
They did not die or sicken,  
for God, who loves the whole wide world  
can even heal a chicken.

A hymn tells us that we must get  
along like “brother birds”\*\*\*  
and never peck each other with  
mean thoughts or with mean words.

Instead we all can cuddle

beneath Love's sheltering wing.\*\*\*  
God hold us safe, you, me and Claire,  
the chicks, and everything.

Excerpts from the poem *A Prayer for Chickens*,  
in Grayhaven's Care and Prayer collection of verses.

\*\*\* refers to hymn #30 in the Christian Science  
Hymnal,  
*Love* by Mary Baker Eddy

Chicken prayers may not be your idea of a religious experience, and following chicken tracks may not be your idea of a wilderness adventure, but this poem is based on a true story and for the people involved the experience became both.

"Prayer can help you not be scared - you really ought to try it". I can think of no simpler explanation of why we need to teach prayer tracking.

In our quest for spiritual heights we often overlook the miracle of the mundane. Prayer tracking puts the entire field of prayer research into a humanitarian context; it ensures that such research benefits everyone including children and patients, caregivers and clergy, you and me.

Divine Love brings spiritual healing even to a chicken. Jesus assured us that God cares even about a sparrow. If even these are cared for by divine Love then we do not need to be afraid. Love is infinitely available.

Spiritual healing can be learned by people who are sick, people who are scared, people who are grieving,

and people whose raw spiritual needs are spilling out of the boundaries of their current understanding of healing prayer.

Prayer tracking is a self-teaching tool, a way to learn directly from the holy One, and from the holiness in all beings.



## **Chapter Seventeen**

### **When the Trail Leaves the Physical**

Many times when my dad taught me tracking I wasn't sure if he was teaching me animal tracking or prayer tracking. The trail would suddenly leave the physical and the lessons overlapped.

Here are some of the lessons he taught me that applied both to animal tracking in the woods and to prayer tracking in the lab.

*The animal is not the track*

In prayer tracking the spiritual identity of the being that you pray for is like the animal in the woods. When, in prayer, you glimpse the Soul of the person prayed for, it's like sighting the animal itself, and not just the track.

You may pray for someone for days. You may find yourself chasing a feeling of spiritual love, which can

be as elusive as shy deer in good cover. Then suddenly you are overwhelmed with love for the person you are praying for, because you suddenly have an insight into the good and eternal nature of their being.

This is what I mean by actually sighting the animal, and not just a track. It is often sudden, thrilling, and overwhelming, like coming upon deer in the sunset, perhaps just a few feet away.

In IR prayer tracking, it is the animal, not the track, that is our primary object. It is this Soul-glimpse, however brief, that is the primary object, the most thrilling part of healing.

### *Prayer Moccasins*

Being in the forest at night is bliss. You learn that darkness has different colors. It isn't simply dark out, it is misty dark, or dull hard slate colored dark, or glossy burnished glistening dark.

You learn that the moonlight also has colors, ranging from white, to yellow gold, to pale lilac, to the melon orange of a harvest moon.

At night you see the depth of the stars. They seem to appear directly in front of you, as well as above, as though they were hanging at different heights.

In the city it is barely possible to see the twinkle of a star. In the wilderness the stars don't just twinkle, they crackle.

In the dark we become more at one with the animals in that we learn to use our sense of smell like

they do. I don't know why things smell more intense in the dark; probably because we are deprived of the primary use of sight and must rely on other senses.

Across the night breeze comes the scent of hay from a field a mile away, the odor of a passing skunk, the perspiration of a moose, and even the smell of old honey, from a long abandoned hive.

Every tracker is aware of how the gentlest breeze blows, and whether their scent is up or downwind of the animal they are studying. A good night tracker will sniff the wind like a puppy, reading the scents that it carries to her.

The animals and insects that are nocturnal open up an entirely different world, as though there were two forests for the price of one.

Many people wear hiking boots when they go night tracking. Nothing could be worse. Not only do they make so much noise that you will scare all the wildlife away, but you can't feel anything through them.

At night you cannot walk by sight. You must feel your way with your feet. In prayer you cannot go by your head. You must feel your way with your heart.

That they should seek the Lord, if haply they might feel after him, and find him, though he be not far from every one of us. (Acts 17:27)

Nothing can beat the traditional moccasin. It is flexible, often beautiful, and it helps you feel.

That is not a bad description of prayer either.

You must walk gently through the woods at night,



on the balls of your feet only, because if you walk in a traditional heel-toe manner your foot will make two noises, as the heel, and then the ball of your foot, touches the ground.

Walking like a dancer in the woods means that only the ball of your foot touches the ground. It is important to recognize yourself as graceful creature of the night woods, if you want to be at one with the other graceful creatures of the night woods. Wolves move like a dancer. So can you.

It's hard on the calf muscles though. My dad always encouraged us to ice skate; it got us in shape for night walking. He encouraged us to read the Bible too, to get us in shape for prayer.

Many people pray hiking-boot prayers instead of moccasin prayers. They pray impassioned prayers full of pounding words and emotions. They move through prayer like a football player, ready to fight until the end.

Walk like a dancer, in the woods, and in your prayers. Pray with the light touch of the moccasin.

In a moccasin you can feel the change of terrain beneath your feet. Before you step, you place your toe down lightly, to feel.

The Bible says "Try the spirits." (I John 4) When you are listening in prayer-silence, and a thought or idea comes to you, touch it lightly with your prayer moccasin, explore it a little, and then step ahead very lightly.

Prayer is not a battle. It is felt revelation.

### *Transitioning*

Unless you prepare, there is no point in going out into the woods at night and expecting to see anything.

My dad taught me to sit in a dark room for an hour before going out in the woods at night, to transition my eyes to the dark. It was not a wasted hour; it was a time of transitioning into prayer also.

To walk in the woods without prayer, without a nose for the truth, the eyes of Love, and the ears of God's Mind, would be like walking in the woods with your eyes closed and your feet tied.

My dad taught me many ways of transitioning, into the woods, and into prayer. The easiest way of transitioning into prayer is to spend time in gratitude before prayer, just as you spend time in the dark before walking in the woods at night.

Gratitude attunes our eyes to Soul. Mentally list the things you are grateful for, even in a difficult situation. It will turn your consciousness around. It will help you move away from the city lights of the world, transitioning you into Soul awareness.

### *The eye of the owl*

In the woods at night, to get a better glimpse of some object, you can cup your fingers around each eye so the dim light surrounding what you are looking at is concentrated in the area of your eye. This also excludes the light from other objects.

This is fun to try outdoors in the yard with your children after dark. The effect of the concentration will

sometimes cause the object you are looking at to appear larger.

In prayer also we need to learn to shut out negative distractions, and concentrate on the light, or holiness, of whatever we are praying for. We need to magnify the good. This takes practice.

Owl-Eye is most useful at dusk and dawn. In prayer also, distractions hit you hardest when coming into or out of prayer.

### *Point Last Seen*

As in animal tracking, so in prayer tracking, where to start is always primary. Not only is starting a prayer one of the hardest parts of praying, but knowing where to pick up the track – what experimental window of activity to measure prayer within - can also be difficult.

You may remember that in the yeast test my dad and brother discovered that yeast that was out of storage for three days created the best place to measure the prayer track. That is where they started, but it took a lot of experimenting to find that point. When tracking you often have to look around for quite a while before you find the best starting place.

When tracking a lost person you start at the PLS, or point last seen. You go back to the last familiar thing, before the person became lost, became enmeshed in the unfamiliar.

In prayer also, I find that it is best to start with what you recognize. Begin with what you've experienced personally of love, truth, or justice. It will keep you from

getting lost or going around in circles in your prayers.

When you read about disasters, crimes, and problems in the newspaper, about ninety-eight percent of it may cause you to feel compassion. If you are like most people, probably only about two percent of what you read in newspapers will actually make you get up and do something about the problem; write a letter to a senator, send a check to a charity, fly a flag, begin recycling, or whatever it is you decide to do.

Religion is like the newspaper. Lots of religious thoughts make us feel compassion or love, but that is not enough. The Bible says that Jesus was “moved with compassion.” (Matthew 9:36).

In my experience only about two percent of the religious ideas that people love actually move them to action. You want to access your two percent, the things that move you to action, because that is where your heart is. This is your PLS, the point where you last saw (experienced) divine Love.

Keep it as simple as possible, access the part of you that is sincere, the one good thing you really know in your gut. Find something one hundred percent sincere inside you and begin your prayer right there.

### *Cutting For Sign*

Don't ever walk on the tracks you are following; don't even walk near them. The tracks may peter out and you may have to come back to a previous point in the trail and study them again. If you've obliterated the trail, you can't find your way back.

Don't ever forget the healings you have had. We think we will never forget some great blessing, but life overtakes us, and we do. Keep a record. Then, when you are discouraged, you can find your way back.

Once you start keeping a record you will be surprised at how many miracles, little or big, are occurring in your life daily.

Birrell Walsh, one of the volunteer editors of this book, reminded me of this in an email. He wrote:

. . . I remember that Augustine believed that the age of miracles was over, but he'd heard a story or two. So when he became Bishop of Hippo (how's that for an image?) he had an inquiry conducted. To his surprise he found that healing miracles were happening frequently in his diocese.

His source was one of Morton Kelsy's books called *Healing and Christianity: A Classic Study*.

Sometimes when a miracle, physical healing, or blessing occurs, it is so wonderful we think we will never forget it. But we do.

Then the hard times come, we feel overwhelmed, and the argument presents itself in our mind that we cannot heal, that we cannot even help ourselves much less others, that this prayer doesn't work and blah blah blah.

That is why it is good to keep a record of our prayer tracking, and to occasionally review the things that God hath wrought. It helps you find your way back.

I want to warn you also that it is easy to be

ungrateful for miracles when they occur often, easy to want your life to get back to normal and feel in control again. If it happens to you don't feel like you're the only ungrateful wretch in the world. Many people react this way. The more prayer tracking you do, the more miracles you see, and sometimes it can be unnerving.

The children of Israel probably felt like this at times. It must have been emotionally tiring when Moses kept parting the seas, making rocks gush water, and getting manna to appear out of nowhere. It must have been unsettling to have your entire worldview overturned on a daily basis. I bet they sometimes thought "enough already" and wished they could just sit down to supper without some damn miracle occurring. I have felt that way at times even though I know I shouldn't. Be patient with yourself. It is often easier to be grateful after a little time has passed and you stop feeling overwhelmed by all the changes that healing brings.

Prayer tracking can tap into some pretty deep emotions. It can challenge deeply held beliefs. Learn to "cut for sign". Learn to step to the side and move slowly on this trail.

Professional trackers cut for sign. That means they work from the side, several feet out, looking not only at the track, but also at any movements or disturbances, any signs off to the side of the track, that might give them some clue.

In prayer, objectivity is the way we cut for sign. We step back, and stay several feet away from our emotions. Instead of using your emotions to pour fervor into a prayer, step aside and look at the situation

objectively. Cutting for sign is a way of keeping perspective. Move carefully with a light touch in prayer, and don't judge the outcome before you know it. You'll just muddy the trail.

Stay a little distant from the case you are praying for. This doesn't mean that you aren't filled with love, it just means that you step far enough back from the case so that you can be genuinely helpful.

My dad used to tell me that I should pray for a case, not for a person. When cutting for sign, you aren't just following the tracks. You are looking at every relevant thing, on the trail and off the trail. You are looking at side issues that may affect the path of the tracks.

### *Silhouetting*

When trying to see an animal at night, you should try to position them against the skyline, or against a lake or river, where a little more light is reflected.

You can also silhouette the animal by moving it across the stars or the moon. You do this by moving your eyes from side to side. As your eyes move there will be a point where the object blots out the light, and you get a glimpse of the outline, or shape.

In prayer also, if we want a glimpse of the person's immortal Soul, or spiritual nature, we need to place them in the lightest part of our thoughts, in the most loving, most holy place we can find in our heart.

If anger or fear block out the light, we need to move the eyes of love back and forth until we get a glimpse of the spiritual being. In other words we have to

activate that love, and put it in motion, going back and forth over every good thing we can think of about that person, even if we have to do this several times.

When silhouetting, it is helpful to blink rapidly. This helps the animal come into focus. Sometimes blinking ten or fifteen times in rapid succession will show you clearly that an animal is a bear or a moose or whatever, whereas if you simply look at the animal, you will not see it's shape clearly.

Opening and closing is an important motion in terms of spiritual love. We open our arms wide to the world; we close them around a person. We think in universal terms and then in individual terms. We go back and forth, like the blink of an eye.

Perhaps you are praying for a child. You can close your love around that child, hugging them in your thoughts, and then you can throw open the arms of your love by affirming that this prayer will bless all children. Again you close your love tenderly around the child in question, and then you open again and say a prayer for all the children in your community. You pray again for the child at hand, and then pray for all the children in his school. Go in and out, focusing, and refocusing, and suddenly, the healing will stand out clearly against the light of love.

I once knew a woman in her 80's who taught me to silhouette. Her name was Emma. She had fallen and broken her hip. She was able to recover quickly, fully, and without a pin in her hip. She did this by relying on prayer and receiving nursing care at the Christian Science nursing facility where I worked.



After she was healed, and was walking freely, she did not go home right away. Christian Science nursing facilities are often pleasant places with extra rooms available to people for individual retreats. We don't use the word retreat though. We call it "Rest and Study".

Emma stayed on, in a Rest and Study room, for several weeks after she was healed. There was pressure on her to go home, from her family, and also due to her financial situation. She would not budge.

During this time I fell down some stone steps while running for a bus. I was not hurt, though I fell a distance and landed heavily on my shoulder.

I told this to Emma while I was sitting at lunch with her one day. That's when she told me the reason she had stayed on. She said she didn't feel it was enough to pray for herself, and to receive only her own healing. She wanted to pray for everyone before she went home. She wanted to pray for all her friends who had fallen and all her elderly friends who lived in fear of falling.

She didn't feel she could go home until she really knew in her prayers that her healing was everyone's healing, and that Love was universal.

I can't prove that her prayers helped me, but I know her love touched me. This is a beautiful example of silhouetting, of moving from the individual to the collective.

When silhouetting don't forget to rest your eyes. When tracking for long periods it helps to close your eyes for ten minutes, and then to open them very very slowly.

Don't talk all the time in prayer. Just rest in silence, with your eyes closed and then open up to divine Love very gradually. Give yourself permission to be healed, and accept the healing gently, like an animal sitting in the sun and letting warmth remove bit by bit its winter sluggishness.

### *Seeing through a glass darkly*

Often a person new to tracking looks for the entire animal. He expects to see the entire bear all at once. An experienced tracker looks for a paw, a nose, a movement. You almost never see the whole animal at once.

Look for things out of the ordinary. For example, my dad taught me that true black seldom occurs in the woods. If you see a spot of black, stand still. It could be the wing of a raven, or the paw of a bear. If you look long enough the spot will take shape, and you will see.

In prayer we may first get only a glimpse of the Soul of another being. If we stop and focus, that glimpse will grow into a full awareness, and the awareness will bring healing.

“The bear has a soul like ours and his soul talks to mine.”

### *Bear-With-White-Paws, Oglala Sioux*

In prayer tracking we get glimpses of divine Love, behind a tree, underneath a problem, or looking out at us from inside our heart. It's a way of playing peek-a-boo with the Holy Spirit.

Why shouldn't the Our Father, like any good daddy, play happily with His children, creating trust in good? In modern language we might say that it's a way of bonding. Bonding with the holy, like bonding with a human mom or dad, tells us that we are family, that we belong, and that our relationship is secure. It's the way we learn prayer because it's the way we learn love.

*The second look of the wolf*

A fox will stand up on its hind legs when it wants to look at something. A wolf will turn around and take a second look behind him, even when running for his life. A wolf never looks at you just once. Wolves are known for their second looks.

Live with prayer. If some insight, some good thought, comes to you while praying, think about it, look at it, many times a day. Always take more than one look, until the intuitions that come to you in prayer are fixed in your mind, not vague.

Don't get too focused on the track itself, on the physical healing, the measurable effect. My African friend Paul told me that back home in Ethiopia experienced trackers could track running, which they need to do because big game moves quickly.

Even here in Wisconsin, a common coyote can exceed the speed limit on a country road. We think that we need to be in a church or a quiet place to pray, and that prayer takes time, but as needed it's possible to learn to pray running, while in action.

These African trackers have learned to look at terrain, with only occasional glances at the track. When

learning about God we need to do more than study the track, the measurable effect of prayer. We need to learn what kind of terrain divine Love moves most readily in. We need to find, live, and move, in a habitat of healing.

Even in designing experiments of prayer we must think about terrain. You don't look for wolf in an open field, and you don't look for a coyote in heavy cover.

In the yeast test we found that the first half of the test, when the yeast was stressed, was the terrain of IR prayer, like cover is the preferred terrain of the wolf. The last half of the test, when the yeast was at rest, was where we were more likely to see the GR effect moving, like the coyote gliding across a prairie.

You learn this from experience, just the same way you learn about wildlife.

Inexperienced trackers get more caught up in the track than in the terrain. When looking at a track I look carefully at the terrain it was made in. I ask myself what clues the track gives me as to what the animal was doing when he made it. What kind of terrain does he feed in? Rest in? Hunt in? Hide in? By learning about the terrain, you learn about the animal.

Are we ready to receive healing, to accept love, to be a terrain in which a prayer track can be made?

Terrain, as well as the track itself, receptivity, as well as the power to heal, is vital to spiritual healing.



## **Chapter Eighteen**

### **Conclusion**

In the matter of both physical terrain and spiritual terrain, there are a lot of developers out in the woods. There are a lot of people who look at prayer and prayer research as a way to build useful measurable effects to house the healing of the world.

We need development projects. We also need balance.

Balance means having a few more prayer trackers who approach prayer not in order to build measurable effect, but with the desire to see what kinds of measurable signs and changes occur naturally in the habitat of divine Love.

It means looking at a few more wildflowers of prayer in the laboratory, along with studying prayer's planted

crops. Diversity is vital. We need IR prayer trackers as well as GR prayer trackers.

I often find myself looking at the faces of children. Will there be anyone left to teach them these skills, or will the master IR prayer trackers continue to be as rare as the old Indian scouts are?

All spiritual healers, GR and IR, need to network, to learn more about each other, and so relieve our backpacks of the heavy loads of competition and prejudice. We need to climb the spiritual heights together.

One of the surprises of prayer research has been that results do not follow denominational lines.

A major impetus in writing this book came from reading the dissertation of Birrell Walsh, who was also one of the volunteer editors for this book. He recently finished his dissertation on spiritual healing titled *The Practice of Praying for Others*, which will be published in spring of 2002 by Crossroad Publishing.

For his dissertation he interviewed people who heal through prayer but who come from widely different backgrounds. They included a rabbi, a cloistered Catholic nun, myself, as a Christian Science nurse, a Buddhist, a traditional Baptist, a Shaman, a Reiki healer and a Religious Science Minister/Practitioner among others.

In an email he sent me dated August 26, 1999, as he was drawing to a conclusion, Birrell makes the interesting point that it had not been hard to find people who were spiritual healers in this day and age.

He also noted in his email these similarities, which he had found among the healers:

That the practice of prayer does exist, that practitioners pray for others as they do for themselves, that they experience unknown and unexpected good results, positive surprises, that they have all learned to “let it go”, that they all say the “Other” does the work but pray as if it were them doing it, that they all experience situations melting and then reforming, that they all experience peace as a sign of completion, and that they all feel that keeping company with the Holy is their reward.

Birrell goes on, however, to stress the benefits of diversity.

But I think my main point will be that the places where they [the healers] do not agree, actually represent the opportunities. One does not go trading for goods that one can grow at home . . . [These things] are going to be more valuable because they are NOT shared. We shall see . . . Hope the woods are full of beauty for you. May God come and sit with you, and angels run like retrievers through your life until we talk again.

Since this reminder, that there is a diverse community of healers out there, that it is possible to be true to your own path while still being part of a larger community, I have been more aware of the angels, the retrievers, the woods, and the holy. I have had hope.

Prayer tracking can be either a unifying force or a divisive one, among the people of prayer. It can be used as a public relations tool to “prove” that a certain religious position is right, as a way of competing, or it can produce a consolidation of love, a mighty spiritual power going out to bless the world.

It is up to the people of prayer to determine the outcomes. Prayer research, which I call prayer tracking, is an emerging field of science. People of prayer have an opportunity to shape the form it takes in the world, and by doing so, to ensure that this research produces humanitarian applications, that it doesn't just become an academic or theological testing ground.

There is always the danger that more emphasis will be put on methodology than on the nature of prayer itself, or that prayer research will be used as a new tool with which to fight old religious wars.

This will not occur if people of prayer nurture this field. The next time you read about a prayer research experiment in the media, think of it softly, and send a prayer its way. Take a moment to be grateful to the pioneers who are opening this new branch of science and you will help to smooth the way.

My hope is that this book will encourage you to educate yourself about new developments in this field, including the ethical questions, and that this book will encourage people to support research into both IR and GR prayer.

Up until now many of the books and articles written about prayer research have focused on bringing the



facts and figures of prayer tracking to the attention of the scientific community.

In this book I wanted to focus on bringing the heart and soul of prayer tracking to the attention of the prayer community. I would like to acknowledge Dr. Walsh's dissertation for alerting me to this need, by shedding light on the diversity and depth of this community.

I also want to thank you for reading this book.

Information about Prayer Tracking Inc, a kind of travel agent for spiritual prayer tracking journeys, is at the end of this book.

People think that the ultimate of tracking is when you see the animal that you've learned so much about from its tracks. The ultimate is something more. The ultimate of tracking is when you attain such a oneness with the animal that you can reach out and touch it.

In prayer tracking we are studying the tracks of divine Love.

Let us become one with Love. Let us reach out together and touch the face of God.

## **Contact Information**

Would you like to join and support Prayer Tracker Inc.?

At this time, a donation in any amount gives you a membership for one year. Checks should be made out to Prayer Tracker Inc. Membership puts you on our mailing list. It also allows you to vote once a year on many issues, including on what kind of projects Prayer Tracker Inc. will develop and in what order. Voting will be once a year in January, beginning with Jan. 2002, and can be done through the mail. You will receive a ballot and have until February 1, 2002 to return it.

Please send us the following information when you send in your donation, for membership: name, address, and email address if you have one, and also let us know whether you have any computer access. We are considering building a web page, and if you don't have computer access I want to be sure you get the information posted there in some other form.

Also, if you have time to donate or if you have any skills to offer, regardless of where you live, please let us know. We would be very grateful for any help that people can give us.

Eventually we may or may not have membership categories, including Prayer Tracker Jr. categories, but for now I want to keep it simple. At this point, Prayer Tracker does not have a newsletter, or any public speakers available. Its programs are in the formative stage. Members will receive regular informal updates

on our progress, in the form of letters, whenever there is anything new to tell.

You may contact Prayer Tracker Inc. at:

Prayer Tracker Inc.  
c/o Deborah Klingbeil  
4027 Hwy V  
Franksville WI 53126 USA

Or by email at [grayhaven3@juno.com](mailto:grayhaven3@juno.com)  
Grayhaven's website is [www.grayhavencsn.com](http://www.grayhavencsn.com)

You may also contact me at the above address if you wish to be on the mailing list for current and future Grayhaven publications.

Thank you very much.  
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### **BOOKS**

SPIRIT TRACKING -- \$8.00, plus 75 cents each for postage

or, \$1.75 postage for first class

THE SPINDRIFT PAPERS – at this time no bound volumes

are available. Photocopies may be purchased at a cost of \$20.00 plus \$1.75 postage. This work will be available on CD-ROM in the future.

### **CARE AND PRAYER COLORING BOOKS**

The Stray That Came to Stay (a cat story) - \$3.50 plus 70 cents each for postage

How Scooter got Cuter (a dog story) - \$3.50 plus 70 cents each for postage

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