

April 9, 2010

Dear Co- Laborer,

God is up to something good!

It is a special privilege to serve in the vineyard of the Lord with you here in Manatee and Sarasota Counties. God is doing so much in our region and I am truly excited about the rising spirit of unity among both pastors and churches. There is a genuine hunger that exists for a powerful move of the Holy Spirit right here where we live. These are truly wonderful times we are living in, even when we endure hardships and difficulties.

I am writing you to request your prayerful participation in something I believe the Lord is calling us to do.

I have been asked to help lead a coalition of churches to participate in a special day here in the Manasota region. The reason I was asked to lead is because a few weeks ago, I was in a meeting of leaders from this region and in the context of that time, shared of my personal and the corporate sin of my church regarding Biblical unity. I became convicted of how I had advertised my church over the years as one that offered great programs and opportunities in many areas of ministry as if we attempting to get others to compare their church experience to ours and therefore benefit by the comparison. Maybe you can relate. Even though I have always considered myself a Kingdom builder, I did this out of my primary concern with my church and was not "seeking first the Kingdom." This was a very humbling time for me as I saw my actions running against the grain of Jesus' clear words in John 17. As a result of my repentance, I have a renewed love for the church and a deeper sense that the Church of Jesus Christ must come together in unity. I believe now is the time.

When asked to help lead the church of this region to this special service I sensed that this was exactly what the Lord was calling me to do. Accordingly, we will be relocating and combining the Sunday services of both Church On The Rock campuses with other Christian bodies from this region. The service will run from 10 am to 12:30 pm on May 23, 2010 which is Pentecost Sunday and the last scheduled Global Day of Prayer. It has been through the leadership of the Lord and the willingness of several ministerial groups and organizations that we have considered joining together for a day of unity unlike most have experienced in their lifetime.

Would you be willing to seek God's leadership and consider joining together with us as one church in our community on Sunday, May 23<sup>rd</sup>?

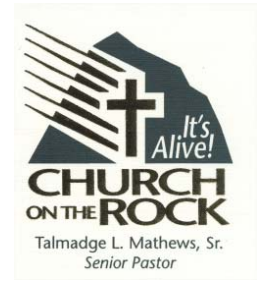
We would gather at the Sarasota/ Bradenton Convention Center (the old Sam's Club) near the airport. The folks involved in the leadership of the Global Day of Prayer have already secured the facility. The facility, I am told, will seat approximately 6,000 people. On this great day we would celebrate the birth of the New Testament Church (Pentecost), offer to God our heart-felt repentance for the divisions that have existed between us and we would pray for the world around us to be touched by the love and power of Jesus (Global Day of Prayer initiative). I feel it is important to re-state that both of our Church On The Rock campuses (Sarasota and Palmetto) have committed to participate completely. We (some local pastor's) are still in the process of seeking the Lord as to how this service would ultimately look, however, whatever the final service looks like you can be sure it will draw all the attention to Jesus and no one person or church will be spotlighted.

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**We're Building Our House On THE ROCK!**

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As a Senior Pastor myself I am aware of the sacrifices involved in participating in an event of this magnitude on a Sunday morning. We have tried to anticipate the sort of questions that first jump to a church leaders mind when contemplating such an event. You will find them on the enclosed sheet under the title: Frequently Asked Questions.

I do wish to personally address the issue of an offering in the context of this letter, as it is a very important issue for all. No honorariums will be given. There is therefore no need for a love offering to be taken. All in attendance will make out their checks to their own local churches and place the checks and/or cash in a special envelope developed for this one occasion and sealed. Each church would then receive all of their own funds still sealed and fully designated as if you were in your own sanctuary. This has already been done here locally for a similar event and no churches suffered financial hardship as a result. We will not bring in outside speakers or musicians. Our own worship leaders will combine to form a praise team. Dale Schlafer has accepted the opportunity to speak to our people on this great day. Dale does not pastor any local congregation and has personally spoken in dozens of our own churches. He is a man of integrity, sound doctrine and carries a true message of unity for our churches and community.

I am aware, along with many others, of the short number of weeks before this event is to be held. I am aware that our church leadership and church families must be immediately informed about this opportunity and sense the leadership of God in order to participate.

It is our desire, but not our expectation, that all local churches will participate. There will be some with schedule conflicts and other issues that prevent their participation. It is my prayer, however, that the vast majority of our local shepherds will prayerfully consider leading their congregations to join together with thousands of other believer's on this momentous occasion.

I truly believe we will please the heart of God and all of our people will be blessed. For those who cannot participate or choose not to participate, there will be no condemnation. We are all brothers and sisters in the Lord and we will respect and honor each other's decisions no matter what they might be.

I can see it now..... thousands of believers worshipping together. I can sense the excitement..... our people becoming one body in Christ. I can anticipate the Holy Spirit..... birthing something that effects our entire region.

I am personally willing to help or assist in answering questions or providing more information as necessary. Please do not hesitate to call or e-mail me.

Please pray about your part in this wonderful event. It wouldn't be the same without you!

In His Love,

Tad Mathews  
Senior Pastor

**P.S. We will be using the Global Day of Prayer web page (GDOP Manasota.org) for communication and for public listing of all churches that are participating in this great service. No church will be listed unless the pastor registers at [www.gdopmanasota.org/connect](http://www.gdopmanasota.org/connect).**

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## ▶ 2010 GDOP FAQ's

Website: [www.gdopmanasota.org/connect](http://www.gdopmanasota.org/connect)

### How did this service come into being?

A group of leaders were meeting on an entirely different subject when one pastor confessed to the group his sin against biblical unity. A discussion ensued about the spirit of sectarianism that is so prevalent in Manatee & Sarasota counties. This in turn led to the suggestion that since the Global Day of Prayer team had already rented the Convention Center why not have a service of repentance for this sin in the AM, followed by the GDOP? A few weeks went by and the idea began to take shape. The GDOP team sensed that if repentance were to happen in the AM service, it seemed wise to combine the two meetings into one service on May 23, which is Pentecost Sunday.

### What will be the components and goal of this service?

It will have great participatory worship; the preaching of the word; a time of repentance for the sectarian spirit in our region; and praying for the Kingdom of Christ to come around the world. The service will be led by a group of spiritual leaders from our region comprising different races, ages and church affiliations. The worship team will be made up of local leaders from various church bodies in the area.

Christian people of all ages, traditions and races, from Manatee and Sarasota counties, joining together in a joint service of worship, preaching of the word, repentance and times of prayer, to demonstrate biblical unity and Jesus Christ's Kingdom rule.

### What is the time and location of the service?

Service begins at 10:00 am and concludes at 12:30pm. The doors will open at 8:45 am at the Sarasota/Bradenton Convention Center just East of the airport. See map on our web site.

### What about the offering?

No honorariums will be given. There is therefore no need for a love offering to be taken. All in attendance will make out their checks to their own local church and place the checks and/or cash in a special envelope developed for this one occasion and sealed. Each church would then receive all of their own funds still sealed and fully designated as if you were in your own sanctuary. This has already been done here locally for a similar event and no churches suffered financial hardship as a result. All love offering will be counted and divided equally among the participating churches.

### What about visitors that will come to my church not knowing about the joint service?

An easy way to handle this is to leave a few leaders at your church building. When visitors come tell them about this exciting day and that you would be glad to escort them to this special service. This will build relationships on a quicker and deeper way and show your commitment to the larger Kingdom of God.

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