



Episode 063: How to Pray for the Nations - Operation World

Molly Wall serves as a researcher, editor, and Co-director of [Operation World](#). She joined the Operation World team in 2009 and is based just outside of London, in the UK.

Molly, please tell us a little bit about your current role at Operation World.

- The Operation World team is a small group of missionaries from various organizations working together.
- My role is Co-Director, but I also help with other tasks such as researching, writing - and making coffee and washing dishes!

Operation World is a book, but there are other resources as well. Tell us just a little bit about the family of resources.

- The seventh edition of [Operation World](#) world came out in 2010.
- In 2015 we released a handbook called [Pray for the World](#) which is about 300 pages. It is an abridged version of Operation World with a few updates, in simpler English. It makes it easier for non-native English speakers to read. It made it easier for people who are intimidated by the big book. It made it easier for translators to translate and distribute in other languages.
- We also have [the Operation World app](#) that just came out a couple months ago. That has been really well-received.

You can get the app on your phone, and it'll send you an update on a daily basis for a country of the world. You can even indicate if you're praying, and you can see that others are praying too.

- It really does bring home the fact that this is not just a resource, it is a movement of people praying all around the world for the world.

You also alluded to translators. Tell us a little bit about that.

- Operation World has been translated into a number of languages, but "Pray for the World" has been translated to at least 10 languages.
- What we've seen is reflective of what we're seeing in global Christianity and where the church, mission movements and prayer movements are growing. Languages other than the usual French or German have been used before for translations.



- We've seen translations taken up in Indonesian, Chinese, Portuguese, Spanish, Arabic, Amharic, Hindi, Urdu, Russian, and Korean. Some of the places that over the last 10 to 30 years have seen mission movements taking off are some of the places that are grabbing up Operation World, translating it, and getting it into the hands of the praying Christians there.

Why is it so important that Christ-followers pray for the world?

- This is a big question with lots of answers, so I'm going to do my best to talk about a few of them.
- Perhaps the most basic answer is that it's something that Jesus commands us to do. It's an act of obedience where we're to pray for the Kingdom to come on Earth as it is in Heaven. We're to pray to the Lord of the harvest to send out workers into the harvest. You can find multiple verses throughout Scripture that have us being told what to pray for, and it relates to praying for the world. Fundamentally, that's one of the key reasons.
- A second reason is the role of prayer in unifying the church. We are a very fragmented church globally. Often, coming together to pray for a nation or to pray for the world is somewhere we can set aside some of our other differences and unify in prayer across denominations, across ethnic groups, across language groups.
- Another reason is that we believe prayer changes the world. We believe that when we pray, somehow, God chooses to include that in His work in the world. We believe that prayer will make a difference.
- Somewhere in those mix of reasons - as well as many others - is the answer to why do we do this.

Let's talk a little bit about how individual Christ followers, during their day-to day lives, can pray for the nations. What are some practical ways that we can use the Operation World resources to pray for the world?

- There are two key ways to go about it. One is what you've already mentioned, which is the ability to pray through the world in a year. You're going to miss a few days, but get right back on track and join in with thousands of believers around the world, praying through the world in a year. There are several key ways to connect with that.
- The book may be your preference. You may want to read a full article or even just pull out a point or two as part of your daily devotions. We know some people keep Operation World right next to their Bible and just have it as part of their daily quiet time or routine. But not everybody's going to do it that way.
- We post a prayer point of the day on [Facebook](#). If you would rather have a little quick fact or prompt several times throughout the day, we've got that coming through on our [Twitter](#) account. You can follow us there.
- For myself, personally, it's been the app that has a daily notification. It can be set for weekly, or twice a week; it doesn't have to be daily. I set it at a time of day I can take a quick break and say a prayer.



I've really appreciated the app also. It gives you a little map of the country, major cities there, prayer requests, and statistics about the country. It's really tidy and concise, and I recommend that listeners go and have a look at this. I'm on the iOS, but I assume it's on Android too.

- Yes, it's available on both iOS and Android.
- Not everybody is using smartphones. If email is the way people connect, there is a way to sign up for a [daily email](#) through our website that sends you a link to a page with some information.
- [Prayercast](#) is producing a video for each country, usually with somebody from that country narrating the video, as a prayer for their nation. Some of those videos are on the [Operation World website](#). The videos are usually less than 3 minutes. It's a wonderful way to pray along with the person from that country for that country while you're watching scenes from the nation. That's a great way to connect if you prefer something visual.
- Another way people approach it is to pray as countries come up in day-to-day life. As you hear about somebody who's about to travel to Uzbekistan, for example, pull out the resource and look up, read about and pray for that nation and for the person you know going there. Or maybe keep Operation World where you get your news, and as a country comes up in the news, read a little bit more about the spiritual context and climate and how to pray into that.
- We also recommend using maps. We're researchers and we think maps are really cool and exciting. There is an [Operation World map](#). Or just grab a map, and you'd be amazed sometimes what you can learn if you just look at a map. Or put a hand on a country and pray for it. If it's a map that has physical geography, that gives you some more clues about the country and the people. Our Operation World map actually has information on it as so you've got more to pray into that way.

Let's turn our attention to families. Many of us as parents would like to model for our kids how to pray for the nations and to pray together with them for the nations. What advice do you have for parents and for families in this regard?

- If you have any inkling at all to do it, do it. Go for it. It doesn't take lots of training or planning. It just takes doing it and going forward.
- Having a map can help. We've heard of people putting a globe or a map placemat at the table. A lot of families will pick a time of day - maybe it's at breakfast, dinner, or bedtime - when they try to fit in a prayer for the country of the day into their routine.
- There is a children's edition of Operation World, which is called [Window on the World](#). Or you can even just use the larger Operation World or Pray for the World book and just pick out one point or paraphrase a point and pray for that.
- You can pray through the world in a year or you can let each child pick a country each day. Or you can encourage your kids to find countries, and try to identify and name countries. The process doesn't have to be long, and you don't have to read the entire entry. The key is doing it and being persistent. Over time, you'll start to see the difference in yourself and your kids and family time.



You mentioned a version that's especially designed for kids. Let's talk a little bit about that.

- It's been an exciting part of the Operation World family of resources to have these children's editions along the way. There were two editions early on in the 70s and 80s, and then the latest version came out in 2001. That's quite some time ago but it is still selling and being used. It's called [Window on the World](#).
- I can report that our team is working hard in these months to get an updated version of Window on the World ready to be released next year, probably next summer. That's through [InterVarsity Press](#). Until then an old copy has got the pictures and some stories in it, even though it's quite outdated. Otherwise, just use the Prayercast videos or something visual like that.

Many of our listeners are involved in mission through their church. These are faithful Christ followers who want to help their church pray for the world. What are some of the ways that these folks can help their churches pray for the nations using this resource?

- Excellent question. We're asking the same question. We do have some answers, but we're also looking for answers. We're looking to hear from churches who have tried different things, or who will be willing to try some different things and let us know how it works. Feel free to get in touch if your church would be up for something like that.
- There are number of ways to go at it. Different small groups or home groups can easily work in the country of the day whenever they're meeting together. Working it into church services seems very doable. Churches can have a PowerPoint slide of the country of the day and working that into the intercessory prayer time. If you've got a church bulletin, you can put in a quick little point for the country of that day or for the countries that will be covered in the week.
- We actually have a project in development to prepare church bulletins. That will be available soon.
- We're eager to see how churches can pray for the nations, and integrate prayer for the world into the daily, weekly and monthly rhythms of the church - into the children's programs, into the young adults and youth group programs, student groups, home groups, Sunday school classes, church services - so it can just be a normal part of what church groups do when they already meet.
- Rather than starting whole new programs, work it into what you already have going. It doesn't have to be something big and new.
- We're eager to see that develop, as well as adding prayer events for the nations if a church wants to run that or collaborate with other churches in the community.



Molly, you've given us a bunch of ideas. Out of all the churches and groups that you've heard from, is there a story that you could tell us about how something has changed for the good because of the way they've used Operation World?

- The first one that comes to mind is one you might have heard of. In the book ["Radical" by David Platt](#), there are five challenges. One of them is to pray through the world in a year using Operation World. Many people who had never used Operation World before suddenly were going through this Radical experiment, and so they were posting on blogs about their experience.
- We've read story after story of families or individuals saying "I've never done anything like this. I never had any idea what all was going on around the world. You don't get this on the news. You don't really even get this in church. Where has this resource been? How have I been missing this? This is really changing my perspective. I find my understanding of God is starting to change, and I'm learning about how He works and where He's working." Time after time we were getting input from people who were following this Radical experience. It was quite exciting to see. That's just one of many stories.

If you could speak to people who are listening to this podcast who want to begin praying for the world, what would you say to them?

- I would say two things. One, just get started and start small. You don't go out and run a marathon having done no training at all. Start with just one point a day. Start small, but start.
- The second thing I would say is be persistent. If you're like me and a lot of other people, you've got ambitious goals. The key is to be persistent. If you miss a day, pick up the next day. You don't have to make it up. You don't have to make up loss time. Just pick up. Do another point. Do another day. Start building that muscle. We sometimes forget that prayer is something that has to be developed, just like any other spiritual discipline.

Are there resources that you would like to mention? If people would like to contact you or Operation World, how do they do that?

- Operation World resources can be found [on our website](#). We do love to hear from people. The best way to get in touch would be through our [website](#). There's a contact form there or on our [Facebook Page](#).

Remember that Molly said they're looking for churches that have used Operation World and for feedback and ideas on how you have used it fruitfully. If you have used it and can be an encouragement and help to them, reach out them!

