

Nov 10, 2023 by [Cathy Ketcher](#)

Ripples of Prayer Lead to Multiple Ministries Reaching the Lost for Christ in Reno and Beyond

Terry and Sherrie Fred found persistent prayer to be the answer to bringing about transformational change in their Nevada community.



Terry Fred and his family moved to Reno, Nevada, in 1996 with one goal: to minister among college students at the University of Nevada-Reno. In less than one year, what is now known as [Destiny Church](#), was planted near the university campus. Terry Fred, a U.S. missionary with [Church Mobilization](#), and his wife, Sherrie, found their days packed with ministry and activity.

But Fred believed God had much more in store for Reno, long known as the “Biggest Little City in the World.” He was well aware of its issues and the broken lives created by them:

- Nevada is the only state where prostitution is legal.
- Nevada ranks at or near the top of U.S. states in child and youth homelessness.
- Reno has long been known as the divorce capital of the United States.
- About 17% of Reno’s families live in poverty.
- Gambling, violence, and drugs contribute to Reno’s plight.

Faced with such overwhelming issues, Fred cried out to God — and God answered.

IT BEGAN WITH PRAYER

“I was in prayer one day when a scene unfolded before me,” says Fred. “I’ve never had an experience like it before or since. A downtown neighborhood in Reno was being transformed into something like a mission base. All types of ministries and outreaches of compassion were working in unity to lift up people in the neighborhood and model Christ’s love. Each ministry complemented the others.”

The ripple effect created by the ministries in Fred’s vision gripped his heart. Since moving to Reno, he had spent little time in the inner city, but now he felt compelled to walk and drive around the area and pray. A few others agreed to join him, so they rented a space — across the street from the Lucky Motel — and opened what Fred called a “weeping window” to intercede for downtown Reno.

A growing number from Destiny Church as well as several local pastors joined in the times of prayer. Every night, people gathered to look out the windows over the neighborhood and seek God’s healing and restoration. The weeks of prayer stretched into months with no apparent breakthrough.

“Nothing seemed to change until one cold winter night,” Fred recalls. “I was driving in the neighborhood, and as I turned a corner I noticed that the house on my left was different. Until that night, anyone coming into the neighborhood came face to face with a life-size mannequin of a red devil staring at them through a lighted window. But on this night, the light was on but the devil was gone, and the house was for rent.”

PERSISTENT PRAYER

Prayer at the weeping window continued. Intercessors called on God to make the neighborhood a landing zone, allowing a variety of ministries to impact the area in ways that would ripple throughout Reno and beyond.

More changes occurred. A building down the block came up for sale and was purchased by [Vertical Church](#), an Assemblies of God congregation pastored by Angelo Austria. The building where the weeping window (now known as the [Nevada House of Prayer](#)) leased space was sold to a nonprofit organization focusing on victims of sex trafficking. Momentum was building and the prayers persisted.

In 2019, Destiny Church took a long-awaited leap of faith. Since its beginning, the congregation had met in rented facilities. Attempts to purchase property and build a church had fallen through. But when an abandoned building came up for sale in the heart of downtown Reno, Fred knew it was time to act.

“The building had been abandoned for years and was being used by squatters,” Fred remembers. “All the electrical and copper wiring and anything else of value had been stolen. Human waste and hypodermic needles littered the building, but we believed in the dream of our church and our vision for the future. Assisted by many generous contractors and missions partners, we went to work to clean up the place and begin renovations. We are now in the final phases of renovating this 37,000-square-foot building in inner-city Reno and using it fully for the glory of God.”

PRODUCTS OF PRAYER

Much has changed in downtown Reno since Fred and his team began praying specifically over the area in 2003. Five churches have been planted where none existed. An after-school program gives disadvantaged and homeless

children a place to feel loved and valued. A ministry among the sexually exploited offers them a chance for a new way of life. An outreach to the homeless provides job training and apartments to help keep families intact. A weekly food pantry, the combined effort of neighborhood churches, addresses the nutritional needs of the area. These efforts are led by a variety of ministries, but they all have one goal: reaching the lost with the love of Jesus.

Most of the people coming to Christ have little or no spiritual foundation. These first-generation Christians must be taught basic biblical truths and the fundamentals of walking out their faith. As a result, discipleship is a top priority at Destiny Church. The work is not without challenges, but the results are undeniable.

One young man had spent his childhood in poverty and homelessness. Through the ministry of Destiny Church, he committed his life to Christ. Today he and his wife own a business and are active in reaching the inner city. Each year they buy Christmas gifts for 300 children. Along with the gifts is an invitation to accept Jesus and find a spiritual family.

Fred emphasizes that prayer provides the underpinning for everything taking place. Intercession at the House of Prayer continues 24/7, and similar prayer ministries have sprung up in three other cities in Nevada. The ripple effect continues.

“Our vision is to be a center for change in our community,” he says. “The body of Christ is what brings real cultural change and renewal. And our main weapon is prayer.”