

THE LIFE OF

KJELL SJÖBERG

(1933-1997)

In 1951 the revival wind is blowing in Sweden. During New Year the young Swedish preacher Algot Niklasson visits Stockholm and preaches in a crowded Philadelphia Church. He preaches a message of repentance and complete surrender to God. A wonderful presence of God touches the people and many people experience a profound work of the Spirit in their lives. A deeper longing for holiness are born in the Christians. Pastors ask each other for forgiveness, old sins are being confessed and sinners are saved. One of the young persons who get a life changing encounter with Jesus is the 18-year-old Kjell Sjöberg. On the way down from the balcony of the church after one of the meetings he receives a prophecy from a man. The prophecy reveals that Kjell is going to be baptized in the Holy Spirit within two weeks, that God is going to lead him to his future life partner, and that he is going to travel in many countries and speak to many people. The prophetic speech affected him with power and Kjell renewed his commitment to Jesus. It was the start of a ministry that would span over five continents and affect thousands of people's lives.

Growing up in a preachers home

Kjell was born in Stockholm on the 9th June 1933. His father Tage was during this time one of the associate pastors in the Philadelphia church in Stockholm, one of the largest Pentecostal churches in the world at this time. He would later come to serve as the senior pastor in Örebro, New York, and the Swedish-speaking congregation in Helsinki, Finland. In 1948 Tage became sick with an incurable cancer tumor. He had to undergo surgery but was sent home with the tumor remaining in his body. The doctors gave him no hope and he got painkillers to stand the suffering in the short time that he had left. But through prayer and his wife's relentless belief in a divine intervention Tage was healed, not instantly, but he recovered and the tumor could be removed by doctors. During his sickness Tage had given God a promise, that if he prolonged his life, he would go to the darkest places on earth. This would later become a reality when he was serving as a missionary in different periods in Sri Lanka, Iran, Pakistan, Japan, Greece, Thailand and Turkey.

Although Kjell did grow up in a preacher's house, which was marked by fervent prayer and a warm faith in God, it was not an obvious choice that he would give his life to serve God. Kjell had some time before the revival (the meetings in the Philadelphia church), broken with his parent's faith. Tired of politics that existed in the church, and attracted by the big city excitement pulled him and his brother Stanley gradually away from the warm faith that had characterized their home. The change didn't go unnoticed in the home. Kjell went to sleep many times to the sound of his mother, Helga's tearful prayers as she cried out to God for her children. Their father Tage called his children and said in tears that he could not continue to be the pastor when his own children were not walking with God. God would respond to the parents' prayers and both Kjell and Stanley would later serve God together with their father. After the experience at the Philadelphia church, Kjell went home and was reconciled with his parents and asked them for forgiveness for the pain he had caused them.

As an evangelist

The same year Kjell chose, together with a record of students, to enroll at the bible school at the Philadelphia Church. While in bible school, his calling and focus in life got clearer in his heart. The following he wrote before he was going to give a speech in a church:

Salvation gives to the worthless value preserving, which is kept only by giving it onwards. Then it hit

me like a lightening. Here was the solution to my problems. What I had experienced was not just for myself, it belonged to the whole world. When the fire came into my heart, I was filled with compassion for the world. I was awake one night after another. I cried and prayed for the young Swedes. My heart was ready to explode if I could not find an outlet/outcome for my distress. I asked God for great things. I prayed that God would give me an opportunity to reach other young people and the people of Sweden. I was caught by the vision, the great vision. The world needed young people who knew what true Christianity is. I would be one of these. My calling was clear. The fight was over. My future belonged to Jesus ... I'm filled with a holy awe for the short time we have left to work on. I cannot wait. I am forced to go out and win the world for Christ.

Shortly after the bible school Kjell, together with his brother Stanley, went out to serve as evangelists. Now came a time when Kjell would try out his calling and mature in his faith. From the beginning, there was in Kjell a clear pioneer spirit which would be a theme in his life. It was in the unbroken soil that he enjoyed the most. Taking the Gospel to areas that had not yet been reached was constantly burning in his heart. At times the evangelists went through both sadness and despair, but also victories and breakthroughs. It would also be a useful preparation for what was laying ahead of him. It was not uncommon for Kjell to do three meetings on a Sunday. During this time he would also lay the groundwork for the prayer life that would come to characterize his service. Together with his brother, he prayed at least two hours every afternoon. Kjell often locked himself in his room and prayed loudly so that the "walls were shaking". Further, it was during this time when Kjell met the woman who later would become his companion. The prophecy which he had received had revealed that his future wife would live somewhere between Halmstad and Nässjö (two cities in Sweden). When he later came to know that his father would do a Bible study week in Smålandsstenar (which is between Halmstad and Nässjö!) Kjell was not slow to join. Here he would, indeed, meet Lena Thelin who later became his life companion.

Church planting in Strömstad

Kjell had quite early felt a call to world mission. A calling that certainly was influenced by his father Tage's intensive mission trips to Europe and Asia. Kjell was constantly in touch with his mother and father by letter or telephone, and his father Tage urged his son to prepare for his future missionary task in the best possible way. As part of that preparation Tage encouraged his son to start a Pentecostal church in Sweden where there was still no one. In 1956 an opportunity was opened to become a co-worker in Bohuslän (region in Sweden) mission and go into a churchplant in Strömstad (a town). About two years after Kjell and Lena arrived in Strömstad they proclaimed the Strömstad Pentecostal church. It did not go without opposition. Initially they met a fierce struggle and conflict where many opposed the decision. There were even writings in the newspapers. The opposition mainly came from other Christians, who argued that it was unnecessary with another church, where there was already a Christian church. Kjell replied by pointing out that the new churches always had risen as a result of that the believers found new truths in the Word of God.

It was during this time that Kjell's apostolic gift blossomed in a more clear way when he quite early had a vision to evangelize the entire Bohuslän region. He united the various small Pentecostal groups across the district and succeeded in mobilizing them for a joint outreach. During the summer months when tourists flocked to the West Coast Kjell was occupied doing outdoor meetings on the bridges and beaches. In 1958 he rented a boat that could help them evangelize effectively. He managed to mobilize evangelists, singing groups and ordinary people from across the country who traveled in the boat along the coast and stopped at the bridges to witness, sing and preach about Jesus. This idea of ministry spread to other parts of the country. Later also in cooperation with IBRA (a Christian Media Center) similar ministry works were done with teams of young people from Sweden who were sent to various

countries in Europe for various evangelistic efforts. Kjell and Lena would after their four years in Strömstad look back to a fruitful time, which had resulted in the formation of a church whose membership had doubled in the short time they were there. There were also many important experiences and new lessons that would be of great value in which was laying ahead.

Call to Pakistan

While Kjell had been pastoring in Strömstad his father was a missionary in Pakistan. Tage continuously sent letters where informed about the situation and the need for more workers. Soon it would be clear that Asia was the field that God called Kjell to. In 1961 Kjell and Lena arrived by boat to Karachi, in what was then West Pakistan. At once they started to learn the language. There was already a Pentecostal church in Lahore so they decided to live in Rawalpindi. Kjell wanted to establish churches where there were no ones. The year after they had come to Pakistan, Kjell's father Tage, came to stay with them for a while. He arrived directly from preaching in Iran. Now father and son stood side by side in the ministry. A very intense time began, but very fruitful, where the Pentecostal message spread from city to city. Land was purchased, churches were built, orphanages and literacy training centers were started together with other missionaries and local pastors and leaders. An important part of the ministry was also leadership training, which primarily consisted of Bible study weeks, which provided training for local preachers. There was also an extensive distribution of Bibles, and study materials for evangelists and preachers.

The model of Paul

After three and a half years, the local church in Rawalpindi had grown to one hundred and twenty members. A short time after, Kjell appointed the work to a local pastor, so that he could start working in other locations. Kjell clearly saw the danger of controlling the ministry that had been built up. He stated that this could hinder the national preacher's development and eventually lead to the stagnation of the entire ministry. For Kjell Paul's missionary principles was the model for effective missionary work. Kjell wrote:

He (Paul) was a travelling missionary, on long term missionary journeys that took him from place to place. The Bible does not talk about mission at just one place. Paul and his associates were moving, they traveled a lot. If they stayed, they worked themselves out of a job and put others to work. If the missionary stays too long, he hinders the local leaders. A missionary should only do that which the locals cannot do until they have got the training to do it.

After 3 ½ years in the country, Kjell and Lena moved to Lahore, one of the largest cities in the country. Kjell and Lena lived next door to Stanley and his wife Kerstin, who at this time also served as missionaries in the country. In the coming years Kjell and Stanley would travel from one place to another, and see how people were saved, healed, baptized in the Holy Spirit and in water and churches being planted. Only in Karachi, they saw dozens of new Pentecostal churches grow up in the city and the surrounding suburbs.

Social Work

In addition to the evangelistic work, Kjell was also involved in the social work that saved the lives of many, and raised the quality of life for the people. One of the projects that meant a lot to many were the already mentioned, the literacy training centers. The literacy rate was at this time in Pakistan around 20 %, and Kjell noticed how many illiterate people were deceived when they worked in the brick factories. Since they could not calculate their salary, the employer used this to his advantage and paid lower salaries than the agreement. Many were so poor financially that they had to borrow from the brick factory. But the missionaries started courses where the workers to learnt how to read, write and even

get the basics of mathematics. In this way, they brought up a number of people from a life of dependency and poverty to a decent life where they could earn a living. As the gospel spread it gave a boost to the whole community.

In 1963 and 1964, East Pakistan (now Bangladesh) was hit by floods, which had devastating consequences for the people. The worst affected were the people in the poor neighborhoods whose simple huts had been completely washed away by water. Having nothing they now pleaded for help. Kjell and Stanley traveled to the disaster area to see what they could do. An intense period of work began, where they took part in organizing humanitarian aid. They were in contact with people in Sweden and they distributed money from Erikshjälpen (aid organization) and from various churches and individuals who had heard about the disaster.

During the second flood in 1964, persecution broke out against the Christians in the area and many Christians fled to India. Kjell and Stanley helped to organize help and give people a chance to start over by purchasing land, basic agricultural tools and building new homes.

Right proportions

Kjell said that it is not right to be in a poor country without making a difference for the poor. The gospel is for the whole person - spirit, soul and body. At the same time Kjell pointed out that there must be a balance and a right proportion between the preachers and the social workers. He puts it in words:

In the Jerusalem church they didn't only preach, there was also the caretaking of widows, a ministry that the deacons did. What was the ratio between the apostles and the deacons? There were twelve apostles and seven deacons. Nearly twice as many were engaged in the preaching of the Gospel comparing to those who helped the poor. Today it is not like this. The mission's social work usually gets too large dimensions in relation to evangelization efforts.

That the mission is necessary to save the lost is an argument that is not so common today. Kjell meant that the compassion for the lost, historically, has perhaps been the main motivation for an active mission involvement.

There is nothing worse than being cast away from Christ. Where he is, heaven is. Are we satisfied that people without Christ will be cast away from Christ?

Without Jesus there is no hope for mankind and we would all be judged to an eternity without God. A truth, which if you take it away, soon leads to that the zeal for the salvation of souls, disappears. Understanding that mission is about saving people for eternity is that which will make us willing to sacrifice time, money and convenience.

Times of revival in Pakistan

During the second half of the 1960s, the charismatic movement affected Pakistan. Christians from older traditional churches had a personal experience of the Holy Spirit. The gifts of the Spirit came more into operation and the love of Jesus was deepened. The consequence was that Christians came closer to one another, a new love arose between Christians, sins were confessed and "walls" between denominations were demolished. Kjell had previously been a very distinct Pentecostal, where he almost found it difficult to see his brothers and sisters in other denominations as equal spiritually. Now deep friendship was established with people from all sorts of church backgrounds. Ecumenical meetings and conferences were organized where many Christians experienced many things of the Spirit. This new openness also led to that the Pentecostal churches in Pakistan became more accepted. These had previously been treated with suspicion, and sometimes even opposed by the more established churches.

The Pentecostal churches experienced open doors and outstretched hands. During this time, the churches that belonged to the Full Gospel Assemblies of Pakistan also had a large membership increase. They baptized around a thousand people every year.

The power of prayer

Shortly after the age of eighteen, where Kjell had given his life to Jesus, he read an article which was about John Hyde, the famous missionary to India. This missionary also went under the name of *praying Hyde*, since he spent hours on his knees before God and prayed for the salvation of sinners. His life became an inspiration to Kjell's own life. Kjell kept the article for many years in his own Bible, and it lit a fire in his heart for prayer and fasting. When he later in life would go to Pakistan as a missionary, he did not know that he would come to work in the same areas where the praying Hyde had been working. When Kjell traveled to these places, he noticed something remarkable. In some places Kjell found it very easy to gather people, the receptiveness to the preaching was good and he also saw much fruit. In some areas, he could preach to hundreds of Muslims. When he preached it was easy and he felt their hearts were open. People listened to every word. In other places it was almost impossible to gather Muslims. Persecution was common and he together with local pastors were cast out of the village. In other villages the Muslims were in line to invite the Swedish missionary to their homes. When Kjell later came across the autobiography of John Hyde's life, which had a map of the places where Hyde worked, new light was shed to him. The places that Kjell had felt as open and receptive to the gospel were the places where John Hyde had visited many years before, and performed his prayer service. This led to the discovery that there was a "spiritual geography". Because of the praying Hyde's prayers the spiritual hierarchy and the balance of power had been changed in some places, which made it easier to win people to God and to start churches.

When Kjell was facing new challenges, when difficulties arose in the work or when they needed direction for their mission work, it was also the path of prayer that Kjell chose to go. Often, he arranged prayer and fasting weeks. When he for a time became sick with malaria he saw in a special way the power of prayer. The only thing he could do during this time was to pray. When he became well he got the report that forty had been saved in the church and soon the church would have a large water baptism service. Experiences such as these, he would often refer to when he later in life took the initiative in various prayer conferences and prayer trips.

Signs and wonders paves the way for the Gospel

During the years in Pakistan, Kjell also understood the importance of preaching the full gospel with signs and wonders. Many times it was the healing miracles in Pakistan that paved the way for the spreading of the kingdom of God. When people saw that Jesus healed the sick and set people free from demonic oppression people were drawn into the kingdom of God. The last two years that Kjell worked in Pakistan, he helped to set up many major campaigns across the country. One of those whom God used in a powerful way, was the female healing evangelist Alice Shewkenek from Canada. In 1969 she was invited to hold a few campaign meetings in Gujrat. During one of the meetings a Muslim man who had been paralyzed for over thirty years was completely healed. The rumor of what had happened spread like wildfire over the town and people flocked to the meetings. Kjell Sjöberg writes in his very first book, **Vision for Mission:**

A faith in Jesus evidenced by the accompanying signs and wonders are means to convince people... signs and wonders are an evangelism tool. Bring faith in the supernatural in the school evangelism, the outreach, street mission and public meetings. While we talk about that Jesus saves, we can also tell that Jesus heals the sick.

In other meetings where Alice had preached, a number of blind people got their sight back, deaf ears were opened and the mute spoke. Many of the events were like taken from the book of Acts. So also the persecution. Several times Kjell had to flee villages, stones rained upon him and his coworkers, and sometimes there were riot scenes. At one campaign, there was a riot where the opponents hung up dolls that represented Kjell and the campaign speaker. Together with the traveling team Kjell succeeded to escape the angry mob at the last moment in a car. Kjell was quite sure that there would be a price to be paid if they wanted to see success among the Muslims. In a letter to Sven O Svensson, pastor of Örebro Pentecostal church, one of the sending churches, he writes:

Since revival came we have got faith for the salvation of the Muslims. We talked about this during the week with the pastors. The thought came was that we all should be prepared and be willing to sacrifice our lives. Those whom we win for God, we must give such an instruction that they too are prepared to sacrifice their lives for Jesus Christ.

Kjell would literally experience the truth of the words from Mark 16:17: "If you drink anything deadly, it will by no means hurt you." Kjell and one of his Pakistani co-workers were on one occasion on their way home from a village meeting. When they both were hungry and thirsty they stopped to get some tea. Outside was a group of Muslims who gladly surrounded them and started to ask questions. Kjell told them that he was a missionary from Sweden. After a while they wondered if they could buy Kjell a glass of milk. After he had drunk half of it, he realized that his Pakistani friend didn't get anything. As it was usual to drink from the same glass, he gave half of that which was left to his friend who quickly drank it. On the way home they started to feel dizzy. At once they realized that they had been poisoned. The evangelist who had drunk the things in the bottom had a very tough night and Kjell had to stop the car many times during the night. The small thought that Kjell got, to share the glass with his friend, probably saved his life that time.

Fruit-bearing years

Throughout his whole ministry Kjell set out clear goals which he then prayed through and worked to see fulfilled. Before they left Sweden for Pakistan Kjell set several of such clear goals of faith. One of those was that the family would stay in the country until there were about one hundred Pentecostal preachers who could carry on the work. A key tool in achieving this goal was the Bible School which was launched in 1967. Previously Kjell had gathered his Pakistani co-workers and potential leaders for bible study weeks, but as the work grew, he saw the need to establish a more permanent bible school. When Kjell, Lena and Samuel, their son, after eleven years of missionary work went home to Sweden there were nearly two hundred pastors gathered in the pastor meetings/seminars. During these years Kjell also saw the number of churches in the country grow from five to seventy. The bible school where Kjell was the first principal is still in operation, and many of the pastors and leaders in various Pentecostal denominations in the country are graduates from there. Today FGA - the Pentecostal denominations that Kjell worked in – has more than fifty thousand members.

Pioneering work in Sweden

Back home in Sweden Kjell immediately went back into pioneering work when he accepted the Stockholm Philadelphia Church's call to become a preacher in Järfälla, a suburb of Sweden. The Pentecostal movement at this time lived by the principle that there would never be more than one Pentecostal church in a city. The reason was that they wanted to preserve the spiritual unity and protect the movement from religious fanaticism. But in a time of urbanization and when

it became difficult for the suburban residents to travel to the inner city churches, it was a principle that was not fruitful. The time in Lahore had also taught Kjell the importance of forming independent local churches in the suburbs of major cities. In 1974, just a year after he started the ministry, the small outpost of the group in Järfälla proclaimed the formation of Järfälla Pentecostal church. The decision to become an independent church was criticized but God put his hands to the work. The first three years the church grew to two hundred and fifty people. In 1980, there were six hundred and thirty members. Kjell's teachings about prayer, faith, mission, discovering of gifts and church growth was also spread in the country through tapes and books which were sold in the thousands. After some time, the church started a Bible school that trained new evangelists and church workers. The church also planted another church: The Christian Church of Bro, a nearby suburb. Kjell emphasized the importance of each church discovering and developing the natural and spiritual gifts God had given them. He writes in his book about *Discovering your gifts and calling* which were written during the time in Järfälla:

A church is like a gold mine. Someone once said that if a congregation has 150 members, the potential that all gifts and abilities of Christ's earthly body, is present in that church.

The result of the teachings about discovering of gifts was that many of the members got a strong awareness of their calling and a spirit of creativity came forth. Many new initiatives were taken. For example: The Youth With A Mission (YWAM) Sweden was started by some young people from the church and also a Christian publishing house, was started by members of the church (which still exist).

Prayer missionary

In 1983, Kjell and Lena left the church as the pastors for a travelling ministry. A few years earlier Kjell had taken the initiative for "Intercessors for Sweden" - a prayer network consisting of leaders from a number of denominations working together to mobilize and inspire churches across the country to pray. Inspired by the prayer movement in the U.S., Kjell wanted that churches in Sweden in a more concrete way would pray for various social issues, working for setting the agenda in society and be a prophetic voice in time. Kjell got in touch with prayer leaders from different countries, and once again he would have the whole world as his workplace. Kjell's father Tage had a short time before his death been praying for Kjell and Lena before their departure and future service in Pakistan. In the midst of the prayer, the Spirit of God came upon him, and he began to pray under prophetic inspiration for Kjell's future ministry in Iran, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Burma, Malaysia and Japan. Finally he cried with a loud voice: - Kjell, the whole East is open to the Gospel!

Kjell would later visit all the countries which his father Tage had prophesied and thus taking the mantle from Tage's own mission work. From his time in Pakistan Kjell had in a very concrete way seen the importance of strategic prayer trips. During his first time in Pakistan Kjell with other intercessors had traveled in a bus from Rawalpindi to Lahore and in every city that didn't have a church they stopped and cried out to God that he would raise up a church in that city. In 1971, about nine years after that trip, churches would be in all these places where they had prayed. Kjell clearly saw that the commitment among the intercessors increased when they were at the spot where they were praying. In his schools of prayer he pointed out the importance of being geographically located at the place for praying. He illustrated it with the promise God gave to Joshua, "... every place your feet shall tread shall you take" (Joshua 1:6). Kjell said that the intercessors are called by God to break the ground in the spirit. They are sent by God to go

first. Kjell writes:

The ones who are praying are very much God's kingdom ambassadors. They are today being sent on missions ... it's becoming more and more common with prayer missionaries. We are discovering how important their service is. They are sent to go first. God needs them in an important preparatory work here on earth.

Kjell said that the intercessor had the function of being an ambassador for the Kingdom of God that paves the way for other workers. We need to in a large extent, discover how important this service actually is.

Exodus II

Life as a prayer missionary was sometimes a very tough job, long journeys, often in a harsh and cold climate under very simple conditions. The prayer journeys preceded and were also often under a heavy spiritual warfare, and many times the prayer journeys were done in countries closed to traditional missionaries. One example of this was when Kjell in 1987 with other intercessors went for a prayer journey to former Soviet union in order to pray for the Russian Jews to return to Israel. The days chosen for this operation was the 70th anniversary of the October revolution. In a prophetic light Kjell saw that just as the Babylonian Empire had been given a deadline to keep the Jews in captivity, the Soviet regime had its days countered. Now it was time for an Exodus II. But the condition for this to happen was that the intercessors, like Daniel in the Babylonian captivity, went into the strategic prayer. A team was gathered which consisted of twelve people from different countries. The team arrived in Moscow when the Jews celebrated the Feast of Tabernacles, and on the same street as the group stayed at were twenty thousand Jews gathered. Soon, the entire team went out on the streets and spoke to the Russian Jews in English, German and French about the great Exodus II. During the short time the team spent in the country they carried out the numerous prayer tasks. A special task was carried out in the subway, which ran under the KGB headquarters. The timing of the action was one minute past midnight, between the 17th and 18th of October. In other words, exactly seventy years after the revolution. During the prayer they proclaimed the words from the Book of Daniel "MENE, MENE TEKEL U FARSIN" which means that God has counted the days of your reign and now made an end of it. You are being weighed on a scale and found too light. This was the inscription that the Babylonian king saw on the wall and which foretold the fall of the Empire.

After that they prayed:

- In Jesus' name we bind you, the power of Pharaoh, you Assyrians controlling demonic power, and we put you under the feet of Jesus. We proclaim that your grave has been prepared, may you, fall into the abyss. We cut off your power from the root.

The team then prayed from a few chosen words from the Bible. The praying action lasted a total of twenty minutes. After the completed operation that had gone under the name "Clean Sweep" they got a good illustration of what they thought had already been made in the spirit world. Kjell and the other intercessors finished by going round the KGB headquarters and prayed when a tanker came and sprinkled/cleaned the building. While the water was flowing down the streets and staircases they thanked God that he would set free the spiritual water to flush and clean in the spirit world. It was with great emotion and gratitude to God when Kjell a few years later, saw the Jews in large numbers began to return to Israel and that the Christians had liberty to preach the gospel in the former Soviet Union.

Prayer journey to the four corners of the world

When Kjell went on a prayer mission he was careful to seek God for instructions about timing and place, what he should do, what he would work with and the prophetic acts he would perform. In the spring of 1989 Kjell and Lena were set apart as prayer missionaries by several churches in Sweden. The vision was to mobilize intercessors for cities and inspire individual Christians to take a prayer responsibility for the country. That same year, the Holy Spirit had spoken to Kjell to carry out a prayer journey to the four corners of the world. For two months in the fall, he carried out the journey, that stretched from the biting cold climate of Alaska, to the howling wind on the coast of South Africa, to the burning heat in New Zealand. Kjell, together with the prayer team, prayed during the journey for a renewed pioneer spirit among the people of God, that the Jews would return to Israel, that funds would be released for world evangelization and for healing of the creation affected by environmental degradation. When they returned from the trip they heard the good news that twenty three thousand Russian Jews had sought visas to Israel.

Prayer with a focus on the unreached

In some of his books Kjell writes of the need for intercessors who can pray beyond themselves and pray based on what is on God's own heart. To pray for one's own needs are, Kjell said, usually not very difficult, but to take responsibility in prayer for the nation, or to pray for the unreached requires a greater spiritual maturity and a deeper commitment and responsibility.

Kjell said that it was only in prayer that we could get God's heart for the lost and capture the world-wide missionary vision that he wants to give us. Further, it was in prayer that the ground was prepared for the gospel to be proclaimed with power. The invisibly preparatory work in prayer was an absolute prerequisite to ensure a breakthrough for the kingdom of God in a certain place. On his travels Kjell always brought - except his Bible, a copy of Patrick Johnstone's book "Operation World" which he used as a starting point when he prayed for nations and peoples. For several years in the late 1980s and early 1990s Kjell gathered intercessors in the City Church in Stockholm to pray for Sweden and for world mission. In his prayer room at home, he also prayed for the vision and did and dreamed of the day when the last white spots on the mission map would be covered with the blood of Jesus. He writes in one of his newsletters:

My prayer room has been a place where I have done a prayer work. I put up maps on the walls. There was a world map, map of the northern countries and the map of Stockholm and the map also of Europe and other countries. I have loved to stand in front of the map and pray for unreached peoples and pioneer workers.

During the 1990s Kjell's missionary commitment would be renewed through his involvement in the AD2000 Movement. A missionary movement whose vision was to establish a church in every language group by 2000. It was the so-called 10/40 window that was in focus, an area that stretches from the 10th and the 40th parallel, between Morocco in the west to Indonesia in the east. In this area live ninety-five percent of the world's unreached people groups. It is also in this area that the injustice between men and women, rich and poor is most evident. The caste system and child labor are common phenomena and the area is totally dominated by the three largest non-Christian religions: Buddhism, Hinduism and Islam. Together, the area is the largest missionary challenge of our time. The leaders of the international prayer movement felt that the

time had come that the gospel would break through in this area and therefore they took the initiative to intense intercession work worldwide. While mobilizing churches to pray for these areas two hundred and forty-nine teams were sent from YWAM (Youth with a Mission) and the AD2000 movement to various countries in this area to evangelize and pray strategically. Kjell lead one of these teams. The trip went to Saudi Arabia, the birthplace and spiritual key site of Islam - the world's second largest religion. Kjell had ever since his time in Pakistan had a big heart for the Muslim world. And after the fall of communism, this was the part of the world that he was in a special way focusing his prayers on. Kjell managed with the rest of the team to get to a mountain not far from Mecca and the next day they went into Medina and prayed a few hundred meters from the place where Muhammad was buried.

Even if the AD2000 Movement failed to reach its pre-set goal - to reach all the unreached people groups before the year 2000 - the movement still meant a lot because of the prayer work for the unreached, and that they helped to mobilize churches for an increased mission involvement. The intense prayer work for the Muslim world that Kjell, together with many others, is now beginning to show visible results.

The work goes on

In the fall of 1995, Kjell became ill in what the doctors originally thought was an inflammation. But a closer examination revealed that the cause of the pain was a cancer tumor. Many people around the world were engaged in intercession for his recovery. And together with Kjell's fighting spirit he soon regained his strength. But this was only for a time. In the early 1996 he was declared completely well by the doctors and he was able to make many new trips that year. But at the end of the year, after another surgery, it was clear that the end approached, also for Kjell. On April 2 1997, he closed his rich life on earth.

Kjell's service had a clear apostolic and prophetic focus. His original and creative biblical interpretation, and his sometimes rather unorthodox methods sometimes led to criticism. In one of the biographies about his life where the title is; *A step head* – is an apt description of Kjell's life. He was not afraid to try untested approaches and broke with tight corporate structures to achieve results. He was in many ways a pioneer with his teaching on spiritual warfare, his prophetic intercession initiative and many times he was misunderstood. But if Kjell sometimes was criticized in his home country, his service was more respected internationally. He received constant invitations from churches, mission organizations and international prayer networks worldwide. Kjell's funeral service, which took place in the City Church in Stockholm was a manifestation of his major life's work when intercessory leaders and pastors from around the world gathered to honor his life. During his life he had served as an apostle to the Muslim world, a strategic missionary, a prophet, a teacher, a prayer leader and a spiritual father to many. Kjell's pioneering spirit manifested itself in that he always wanted to break new ground and his breakthrough faith inspires until today. Kjell Sjöberg had a vision that there would come a new wave of Swedish young people who wholeheartedly gave themselves to the mission service. In his book *Spiritual Vikings*, he writes:

Vikings in the Nordic countries were people with a fighting spirit and a heart to travel. The harvest that has begun, as many young people come to faith in Jesus, is planned by God for a greater purpose than what we can see. The Lord wants to make the Nordic countries into one great mission base with a strong missionary interest towards the continent of Europe. I have a vision for new Viking expeditions to Europe. I think of campaigns with teams of young people who travel to European countries to evangelize.

Kjell pointed out that the ancient Vikings, with their ships bearing the snake and dragon heads had traveled throughout Europe and had put fear into people when they came to steal, rob and destroy. But God wants to raise up a generation that in the lamb's service will be spreading the love of Jesus to Europe. Where the old Vikings destroyed the churches and devastated the holy places, God now wants to raise up a generation that is conquering and building new churches. Where the old Vikings left the road with corpses, the new spiritual Vikings will leave the roads lined with new believers passionate about Jesus disciples.