



Pray for the Nation ~ INOI MO TE MOTU

Intercessors for New Zealand

105 Woodman Drive, Tawa, Wellington 5028, New Zealand

ifnz@xtra.co.nz www.Pray-for-the-Nation.org

JUNE 2018

“If you are unwilling to serve the LORD, choose today who you will serve, whether the gods your ancestors served ... or the gods in the land where you are living. As for me and my household, we will serve the LORD.”
(Joshua 24:15)

The perils of rejecting Jesus

We live in a time when, in many or most parts of the world, there is increasing rejection of Christ and His teaching. In fact, in some parts of the world there is increasing opposition to people who call themselves Christians, and often direct discrimination and even persecution of them.

We live in perilous times if we reject the Lord, blaspheme His name and persecute those who are followers of Jesus, for whom He came to save. Climate change, world catastrophes (both “natural” and man-made) are only part of the things we can expect to increasingly see, if we increasingly reject the Lord and His will.

Three times in Romans, Paul says “**God gave them up to ...**” (see Romans 1:18-32). This is very serious, because many of the things Paul mentions in these verses are common in our society today, and yet people “not only do them, but even applaud others who practice them!” (v. 32).

- Please pray that people will have a sensitive conscience to what God does not approve of, and will turn to Him for forgiveness and salvation. Pray that our hearts will be quickened by the Holy Spirit speaking to our consciences, and causing us to acknowledge and live by God’s perfect will, not by man’s degenerate “freedom to choose”.
- Pray for our nation and its leaders, that nothing will be done to encourage unbelief and scepticism about God and His people; rejection of Biblical values and things that are pleasing to God; “going our own way”, “doing our own thing” and choosing to exercise “our rights” when these are contrary to the Lord’s ways.
- Pray against widespread rejection of Christianity, and even opposition to the Church and to Christians.
- Pray that God won’t “give us up” because of unbelief and rebellion, but, rather, that there will be repentance, seeking God, and coming to know Him as Lord, Saviour and Deliverer – both individually, as well as a nation.

The Gospel [Good News] of Hope

The Gospel of Jesus Christ is a message of Hope. Today we live in a world which is largely without hope. If there is no God – or no God we can ever have a meaningful relationship with – then there is no ultimate

hope; we should (and we do) say in effect, “Eat, drink, and be merry, for tomorrow we die.”

One of the problems with Godless evolution is that it brings no hope, for if everything evolved by chance through the goddess called “Mother Nature” (whoever or whatever that may be), then we are without hope. But Jesus came into this world to give us hope – hope of forgiveness; hope of eternal life; hope of a living relationship with God our Creator; meaning to life, death and resurrection. It is a Gospel of Heaven and how to get there; but more than that, this hope is not just for the future, but for this life on earth, now! If our hearts are filled with hope, even in a hopeless world, there is joy and an expectation of even greater things – unimaginably greater things – the life to come. (John tried to describe some of this in the book of Revelation). We all need hope – now, and for eternity.

We need to pray:

- That all Christians will have this glorious hope in their hearts – a joy that will transform their lives – if they don’t already have it.
- That this gladness, hope and joy will radiate out from their lives, and be lights in a world of darkness.
- Just as moths are attracted to the light, pray that the Holy Spirit will draw unsaved people to Jesus, the Light of the World, and our lights will so shine that people will see the hope in our lives, and come to faith and salvation.
- For our friends and family who are not yet saved and do not yet have this hope in God – that they will find hope now and for eternity.
- That hope will dispel hopelessness, darkness, despair and, often flowing from this sense of hopelessness – introversion, addictions, immorality, depression, suicide, anger, violence and so on.
- Praise God for the hope and joy He has given us, even in times of testing.

PENTECOST – and the importance of Prayer

Recently, at an online prayer meeting, a small group of us shared about prayer and its importance in the Christian’s life and the life of the Church. One person mentioned a couple of points: That when we are praying, we need to remember that God is fighting for us, not us fighting for God! Also, our prayer is not dependant on who is praying, but Who is listening! This is not to say, of course, that our lives and hearts still need to be attuned to God.

We need to pray for:

- **A revival in prayer**, and we need to pray persistently and fervently, not half-heartedly or just hoping that God might answer, but having faith that God *will* answer – that is, perseverance in prayer and praying with faith.
- **A greater measure of corporate prayer.** Many people find it difficult to pray on their own, and don't "find the time to pray". But when churches have a specific time when people can join together for prayer (perhaps for an hour or so), then by committing to that prayer meeting it can help people to pray. "*Lord, touch people's hearts for prayer, and call them to pray!*"
- **An awakening in the Church** and for prayer during our times of sharing together. We sing and listen to messages in church, but do we encourage people to pray as the Lord leads them, during our services? The early Church prayed, and amazing things happened!
- **An increased "spirit of prayer"** right throughout our country. We might bemoan the fact that fewer and fewer New Zealanders seem to have any interest in church, or in following Christ, but this calls for intensified prayer, not discouragement.
- **A "House of Prayer"**. God's House is called a House of Prayer, not just a house of preaching, singing, meeting with friends; not just a "social club" (though it should be social, friendly, welcoming and supportive of one another).
- **An outpouring of the Holy Spirit**, throughout our land and the Church. We need the Holy Spirit to convict us of sin and righteousness and judgement – of the ways we act which are not pleasing to God; of our call to righteous living; of the fact that sin and rebellion against God will be judged. We need a "Spirit of prayer" throughout our land. "*Come, Holy Spirit, come!*"
- **A real "hunger and thirst after righteousness"** (Matthew 5:6) – a deep, deep desire to see our nation turned around, back from atheism and complacency about the things of God; and a deep desire to find meaning and purpose to life. A hunger and thirst to find God, to know God and to follow Him. If we Christians don't pray and do something about this, can we expect it to "just happen"?
- **A revival in prayer** – more regular prayer and more spontaneous prayer. There is an urgency for it, and the necessity of it. We need to wait on God, listen to Him when He speaks, and then pray as He leads us. We need to know God's heart and pray accordingly.
- **The Church that Jesus is building.** Jesus said, "I will build My Church and the gates of hades (death) will not prevail against it." (Matthew 16:18). We need to seek God in prayer to see what He is doing, and we need to do our part in seeing His House of Prayer being built – the place where God dwells with us corporately and in unity together, and where we dwell

with Him. Let us "Prepare the way of the Lord", remove all our obstacles, and "build up, build up" the Church that Jesus is calling us to help build with Him. (Matthew 3:3; Isaiah 40:3-5). Our hope is in Him! Our only hope is with Him!

- **Joy, and not just "hard labour"**, as we serve the Lord! God is for us, not against us; He is on our side! We need to delight in what is happening; give Him thanks and praise for that; and continue to pray for the Kingdom of God and its building here on earth. "*May Your Kingdom come! May Your will be done, on earth as it is in Heaven.*" And that includes us and our praying!

Be filled with the Spirit

How often do we, as followers of our Lord Jesus Christ, think about, pray about and act by what we are told to do 'in the Holy Spirit'? The terms "in the Spirit" or "in the Holy Spirit" are used 14 times in the New Testament. The terms "with the Spirit" or "with the Holy Spirit" are used 24 times. The terms "by the Spirit" or "by the Holy Spirit" are used 46 times. For example, we are told to:

Be filled with the Holy Spirit (Eph 5:18)

Pray in the Spirit (1 Cor 14:15; Eph 6:18; Jude 20)

Live by the Spirit (Rom 8:5; Gal 5:16, 25)

Be led by the Spirit (Gal 5:18)

Worship in the Spirit (Phil 3:3)

Walk in the Spirit (Rom 8:4)

Sing in the Spirit (Eph 5:18).

Jesus said "... wait for the promise of the Father ... John [the Baptist] baptised with water, but you will be baptised with the Holy Spirit ... You will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be My witnesses ..." (see Acts 1:4-5, 8). How different the Church (including us) would be if we waited, prayed and did what we are told to do above!

- Lord, please help *me* to do what the Scriptures above tell me to do.
- Lord, help the *Church* and the churches to follow Your instructions, including the above.
- Fill *every Christian* with the fullness of the Holy Spirit so that we pray, live, are led, worship, sing and walk in the ways of God, and to the glory of God.
- Transform us all by the power of Your Spirit so that we are effective witnesses to You, in the needy and lost world around us.

Three major hindrances to the above are: **unbelief**; we are **too busy** with other things so that we do not put God and His ways first in our lives; and we are **too self-centred** to really care about other people and how our lives affect them.

- Lord, give me the faith to really trust You and your Word, and to live accordingly. May my life bring glory and honour and praise to You!
- Help me to give priority to You and your ways, and fit other legitimate things around them.
- Help me to love You with all my heart and soul and mind and strength, and to love other people in the way I love my self [and want others to love me!]
- Help me not to make an idol out of worldly things but to fit them into my life in the right way.



Pillars of Society

1. THE FIRST PILLAR: The LORD

“No one can lay any foundation other than the one that has already been laid – and that foundation is Jesus the Messiah” – the Lord Jesus Christ. (1 Corinthians 3:11)

The first Pillar speaks of the Lord Jesus Christ and His sovereignty over all things (see Psalm 2). Also see Daniel 4:2-3; John 18:36-37; 19:19-22; 1 Timothy 1:17; 1 Peter 2:9-10; Revelation 19:11-16.

The foundation of any society is extremely important. It may be:

- atheistic – ‘There is no God’, *or*
- agnostic – ‘There might be a god but we don’t know, and we’re not interested’, *or*
- humanistic – ‘Even if there is a God, people are more important, and we can get along without a god’, *or*
- nominally Christian – ‘We acknowledge that God exists, and we hope we will go to Heaven when we die. We live reasonably good lives, so everything is okay’, *or*
- it may be a ‘Christian nation’ – ‘Our society is founded on Christian principles, Christians are free to follow the Christian life and faith, and most of society is happy with that. Besides, a good and strong society is one which is built on the Lord and His teachings.’

Of course, the above is a generalisation, but the degree to which we turn from the Lord and His ways and desires for us, will determine the way our society goes and how much God will bless or withdraw from us.

Jesus needs to be (not just in theory, but in practice) both the foundation of society and the strength within its pillars, in order for the superstructure of society to be blessed and for it to be a good, healthy, strong society. Society will suffer to the degree to which its foundation is eroded, and its pillars are weakened. Ultimately, if

the ways of God are *rejected*, that society will collapse.

Three times in the first chapter of Romans, Paul writes, “God gave them up to ...” (1:18-32). In other words, they had chosen wicked ways rather than God’s ways, and God gave them up to their wickedness and its consequences.

When Joshua got somewhat fed up with the children of Israel he said, “Choose today who you will serve: whether the gods of this world [and all the results that brings], or the ways of the Lord [and the blessings that brings]. ... As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord!” (See Joshua 24:14-28)

We can ignore the Lord, refuse to believe in Him, disobey Him, blaspheme His name, and worship other gods. But if we do, we will not succeed, either as individuals or as a nation, in the way God wants to bless, uphold, encourage and save our people.

If we sow to the flesh we will, from the flesh, reap the harvest of corruption. If we sow to the Spirit, we will, from the Spirit, reap a good harvest. The lusts of the flesh are opposed to God and bring a bad harvest. The fruit of the Holy Spirit bring blessing. See Galatians 5:16-26.

The Lord is the *ultimate authority* in Heaven and on earth. He is supreme over all things – but not to be blamed for all things – because He has given people choice as to how they will behave; whether they believe in Him, accept His will and follow Him, or reject Him and His will for us all.

“Blessed (and happy) is the nation whose God is the Lord.” “When the righteous are in authority, the people rejoice! When the wicked rule, the people groan!” (Psalm 33:12; Proverbs 29:2)

The Prayer the Lord taught us to pray, includes the words: “Your Kingdom come. Your will be done on earth even as it is in Heaven” (Matthew 6:10). When we pray these words, we are praying that

God's Kingdom in Heaven will be on earth as well – bringing obedience to His will, praise and glory to His name, blessing to His people, joy to the world and peace on earth! (Luke 2:8-14). May God's will be done – God's way – so that the earth and those upon it may know His blessing!

The LORD God is our Foundation – Father, Son and Holy Spirit – the strong and sure foundation, if we choose to follow Him! He will uphold the pillars by His power, and bring blessing to our society if we will follow His ways.

New Zealand's Foundation

We have much to praise God for:

- Our history since Christmas Day, 25 December 1814 when the Gospel was first preached in Aotearoa New Zealand, by Samuel Marsden.
- Our flag and its crosses: one representing Jesus' cross, and the other being the Southern Cross which God created in the heavens.
- Our National Anthem – *God defend New Zealand:*

God of nations at Thy feet, in the bonds of love we meet
Hear our voices we entreat, God defend our free land.
Guard Pacific's triple star, from the shafts of strife and war
Make her praises heard afar; God defend New Zealand!

Men of every creed and race, gather here before Thy face
Asking Thee to bless this place; God defend our free land
From dissension, envy, hate, and corruption, guard our State
Make our country good and great; God defend New Zealand!

Peace not war shall be our boast, but should foes assail
our coast
Make us then a mighty host; God defend our free land.
Lord of battles in Thy might, put our enemies to flight
Let our cause be just and right; God defend New Zealand!

Let our love for Thee increase; may Thy blessings never cease
Give us plenty, give us peace; God defend our free land
From dishonour and from shame, guard our country's spotless name
Crown her with immortal fame; God defend New Zealand!

May our mountains ever be, freedom's ramparts on the sea
Make us faithful unto Thee, God defend our free land.

Guide her in the nations' van, preaching love and truth to man
Working out Thy glorious plan; God defend New Zealand!

- Our Speaker's prayer which is prayed every day before Parliament sits (since 1962):

“Almighty God, humbly acknowledging our need for Thy guidance in all things, and laying aside all private and personal interests, we beseech Thee to grant that we may conduct the affairs of this House and of our country to the glory of Thy holy name, the maintenance of true religion and justice, the honour of the Queen, and the public welfare, peace, and tranquillity of New Zealand, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.”

Adopted by Resolution of the House, 1962.

Pray our national anthem, and pray the Speaker's pray for our government – that these will always be upheld and maintained, for the good of our nation.

- Please pray that the Name of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, the King of kings and Lord of lords, will be honoured in our land. His Name is above every Name – may it be so in practice too!
- Pray that people will realise the sacredness of His Name and will learn not to blaspheme.
- Pray that Christians will exalt the Lord and lift His Name high.
- Pray that Kings and Queens, Presidents and Prime Ministers will come to recognise Jesus' supreme authority, His ultimate Kingship over all the kingdoms of the earth, and King of the Kingdom of Heaven.
- Pray that people will come to see that all true authority and sovereignty are derived from the Lord, and that the further we depart from Him and His ways, the greater the detriment to our society.

“Blessed is the nation whose God is the LORD” (Psalm 33:12) for *“There is no authority except from God”* (Romans 13:1)

The LORD – Almighty God, King of kings and Lord of lords, Creator and Ruler of the universe – Father, Son and Holy Spirit. *Praise Him!*

Pray for the Nation, 105 Woodman Drive, Tawa, Wellington 5028, New Zealand

Weekly *Prayer Updates* can be found on our website: www.pray-for-the-nation.org/prayer-updates.php

This monthly *Prayer Letter* is also on our website: www.pray-for-the-nation.org/monthly-magazines.php