



Pray for the Nation ~ INOI MO TE MOTU

Intercessors for New Zealand

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The LORD said, "If My people, who are called by My name, will humble themselves, and pray, and seek My face, and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from Heaven, and I will forgive their sin, and heal their land." (2 Chronicles 7:14)

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When Jesus saw the crowds, He had compassion for them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. He said to His disciples, "The harvest is plentiful, but the labourers are few, therefore ask the Lord of the harvest to send out labourers into His harvest." (Matthew 9:36-38)

BROADCASTING THE GOSPEL

Two thousand years ago, Jesus came and said to His 11 disciples, "*All authority in Heaven and on earth has been given to Me. Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. Remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age.*" (Matthew 28:18-20)

2000 years is a long time, and huge changes have occurred in the world since Jesus spoke the words above. How do we communicate the Gospel to the world today – all 7.5 billion of us? That's a very important question that Christians need to think about! In the 1940's (nearly 80 years ago), Dr J.W. Welch, Director of Religious Broadcasting for the BBC, wrote:

"How do we communicate the Christian faith so that people will listen? Conventional church services and religious talks will not be of any interest whatsoever to the majority who do not give Christianity the time of day. ... While today the majority are not gripped by the Church, or Christian dogma, or even by the word 'God', scarcely anyone denies the attraction of Christ Jesus and of His teaching. For many, Jesus is a man who lived 2000 years ago, who is not relevant today. ... For them, he belongs to the teaching of a remote childhood, or to stain-glass windows ... The task is to destroy the unnecessary and false, and so release the Truth. The task of the Christian Church, in any age, is to reveal Jesus. ... *Could we, for people today, and in the language of today, make Christ and his story alive again?*" [Quoted from a letter by Phil Guyan, CEO of Christian Broadcasting Association]

This is the task of the Church today. How do we share the Gospel of Jesus Christ with a world of

7.5 billion people, in ways which are relevant to people of every nation?

Media Prayer Day was held on 9 September, when Christians were encouraged to support and pray for all Christian Media. Christian Broadcasting Association www.cba.org.nz and Rhema Media www.rhemamedia.co.nz are just two of the many Christian groups who are sharing the Gospel in relevant ways, to the people of New Zealand. Through television, internet, radio, printed material and so on, the message of the Good News of Jesus Christ is being shared to many thousands of people.

Please pray for **Christian media**, and the support of every Christian, every Christian organisation and every church, so that the Gospel will go out to the whole nation and people will hear and respond to the call of Jesus to "**Follow Me!**"

How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of the messenger who announces peace, who brings Good News, who announces salvation, and who says to Zion, "Your God reigns." (Isaiah 52:7)

Go into all the world and proclaim the Good News ... and they went out and proclaimed the Good News everywhere, while the Lord worked with them and confirmed the message by the signs that accompanied it. (Mark 16:15, 20)

THE MEDIA

For better or for worse, the media has a very significant influence on what people think, believe and do. Consider the many ways in which people hear and see the news through the media: newspapers and magazines, radio, television, the internet, social media and by email. While much of this may be good, there is also "fake news", lies, distortions of the facts, selective reporting, one-sided news, and so on.

On the Media Prayer Day last September, Christians were asked to pray for the media – both secular and Christian. Below is a prayer which can be prayed in churches, prayer groups and by individuals, or in homes. Please uphold and support Christian media. Pray for all media, that truth will be presented in fair, honest and balance ways, and not be used to promote evil or cause fear; that media will promote those things which are beneficial to society, bringing encouragement, good inspiration and hope.

Our Father in Heaven,

We bring before You in prayer all who work within New Zealand's media.

We ask for Your blessing on the producers, directors, presenters, managers, writers, journalists, editors, technicians, publishers and the vast array of others who make up New Zealand's media.

Your Word instructs us to pray for people in places of responsibility (1 Timothy 2:2). So, God, to these media professionals, grant wisdom and discernment. May they be more concerned with character and integrity, than profit alone. Bless them – and their families. May Your will be done in their lives.

Help media decision-makers and content-creators to be sensitive to the needs of our communities and the values our children are exposed to. Use their words, pictures, and stories to touch hearts and engage people's minds towards goodness, truth and beauty. May their work bring healing and impart hope.

We pray for those behind the scenes and those in the spotlight; for those who know You, and for those who don't. We thank You for their talents and technical abilities. As they write, edit, film and broadcast, please use their skills to shine light where there is darkness, to comfort those who are suffering and bring joy to the lonely.

We pray for Christians in both secular and Christian media organisations. May they embody and creatively communicate Your Way, Truth and Life.

May we, as followers of Christ, always seek to bless, love and serve – rather than criticise. And when we do experience media that is destructive, Lord, help us to maintain a constructive attitude of grace and prayer.

By Your guidance, may the people of our media seek to make New Zealand a better country, replacing division, judgement and blame ... with love, empathy and understanding.

By Your grace, we pray for New Zealand's media to be raised to its highest purpose; to be a vehicle for good, for inspiration and

truth, for dignity and courage. Lord, make our media a blessing in this nation.

We pray all this in the name of Your Son, Jesus Christ, Amen.

CHRISTIAN MEDIA – Hope and Joy

Christian friends, whatever is true, whatever is honourable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is pleasing, whatever is commendable – if there is any excellence and anything worthy of praise – ***think about these things***. Keep on doing the things that you have learned and received and heard and seen in me, and ***the God of Peace will be with you***. (Philippians 4:8-9)

If you look at the news – on television, the internet, in newspapers, and so on, you will see a huge amount of bad news, depressing news, and shocking news. This may cause fear, whether we are conscious of it or not. We may despair, and wonder what hope there is for the world we live in. **But – things happen when we pray!** Of course, this is why we *Pray for the Nation*, and for good things to happen in our land. It's not all bad news! The ***Daily Encourager*** is one Christian organisation that seeks to major on the good news, not the bad. It is designed to encourage people by sharing stories of good news about things which have happened in people's lives. These are things to praise God for! The *Daily Encourager* is available by email, and can be requested from info@encourager.co.nz or see their website <https://dailyencourager.co.nz/>

- **Praise God** for the wonderful things He is doing! Good news is ... good news! Praise God!
- **Please pray** for this ministry and all the people who are blessed through it.
- **Please pray** for Wayne Graham and his team as they prepare the material for these emails.
- **Pray** that they will receive many useful articles to share.
- **Pray** for their financial and other needs to be fully met.
- **Pray** that these emails will encourage thousands of people – and for these people, in turn, to bring hope and encouragement to others, through their lives and their actions.



Pillars of Society

6. THE 6th PILLAR: WELFARE

Often, when we hear the word “Gospel” (Good News) we think of our salvation and what Jesus has done in order that we might be saved. Of course, this is the primary meaning of the word. However, the Bible (including the New Testament) has much to say, not only about our spiritual needs, but also our welfare as a whole – body, soul and spirit.

God is concerned about our material needs, and the needs of other people, as well as our spiritual needs. The welfare of all people is an important pillar in any nation.

The word “welfare” means to “fare well”. In the old days when people said Goodbye they would say, “Fare ye well” – that is, may you be well, and do well, in every way. Paul wrote, “May the God of peace Himself sanctify you entirely; and may your *spirit* and *soul* and *body* be kept sound and blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.” (1 Thessalonians 5:23). Jesus also said, “You shall love the Lord your God with all your *heart, soul, mind* and *strength* ... You shall love your neighbour as yourself” (Mark 12:30-31). Everyone needs to be loved by words and by actions!

So, using our *bodies* to serve the Lord, and to bless others, is also important; not just our prayers, church attendance and reading the Bible – good and essential though they are.

Jesus demonstrated the need to seek after people’s welfare physically, as well as spiritually, when He fed the hungry, raised the dead, healed the sick, restored rejected people and outcasts, and so on. He cared about their welfare in *body*, as well as in *spirit* and *soul*.

The parables of the Good Samaritan, and the Prodigal Son, also showed His care for the physical needs and welfare of people, as well as spiritual needs.

God used Joseph, in Old Testament times, to help Egypt and Israel in the time of famine; He also provided for Israel’s physical needs as they journeyed for 40 years through the desert, to the Promised Land.

In the New Testament, the words welfare, poor, needy, outcast, hungry, widows and orphans, etc., are used many times to show love and concern for the welfare of people. For example, see Matthew 25:35-45 where Jesus says, “I was hungry, and you gave Me food; thirsty and you gave Me something to drink ...” When? “Just as you did it for one of the least of these, My people, you did it to Me.”

Acts 2:44-47; 4:32-37; 6:1-4 all speak of how the early Church operated in terms of people sharing with the poor, needy and widows – that is, they cared for their physical welfare as well as their spiritual welfare.

In fact, Paul says that “anyone who does not provide for their relatives, and especially for family members, has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever” (1 Timothy 5:8)

Welfare needs

Some of the areas in which welfare is commonly needed are: financial (poverty); unemployment; homelessness; poor health; disability; needing safety, care and protection; abuse; loneliness, and so on.

At another level, there are the welfare needs for people facing: drug and other addictions; work and home pressures; depression; hopelessness; neglect or rejection; boredom, and so on. See Isaiah 1:17 and James 1:27, for example.

The role of government

The purpose of good government is the welfare of the people. Government does not exist to serve itself or to rule over people for the sake of ruling – it is there to serve the people, to look after their welfare, and to help bring about a good, ordered, decent society: “... so that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life, in all Godliness and dignity” (1 Timothy 2:1-3). The two pillars, of **good government** and **social welfare**, are very important. An interesting thought comes out of the story of Samson and the two pillars (Judges 16:23-30) – when this strong man destroyed the two pillars, the whole house collapsed, and it destroyed those people who were under its covering!

Jeremiah 29:7 says, “Seek the welfare of the city where I have sent you into exile, and pray to the Lord on its behalf, for *in its welfare you will find your welfare.*”

Nehemiah 1:2-4 says, “I asked them about the Jews that survived, those who had escaped the captivity, and about Jerusalem. They replied, ‘The survivors there in the province who escaped captivity are in great trouble and shame; the wall of Jerusalem is broken down, and its gates have been destroyed by fire.’ When I heard these words, I sat down and wept, and mourned for days, fasting and praying before the God of Heaven.”

Of course, government represents the people, but government has little influence unless the people respond in the right way. We cannot leave everything for the government to do; we must do our part in seeking the welfare of our people too.

- We need to seek the welfare of people in their physical needs, as well as mental, social and spiritual needs.
- We need to seek to help people financially; and those who are lonely, unemployed, abused, neglected or who have special needs.
- We need to pray for those people who assist our society in many different ways, such as police, social welfare, medics, fire brigade, ambulance, search and rescue, and so on.

The Church also has a special role to play in helping people socially as well as spiritually. Christians can do a lot to help the welfare of our communities and society as a whole.

The **welfare** and **wholeness** of society and our country has untold benefit to us all. We need to pray for these areas and do whatever we can to help in these ways.

QUESTIONS

1. What is the difference between good health and wholeness?
2. What can the Church do, and what is it already doing, by way of people’s welfare? What is my church doing? What am I doing?
3. What are some of the *causes* of people needing welfare support?
4. How can we help to minimise these causes and their effects?
5. What is my church doing to help in the welfare of its needy members?
6. Who do I know that I could help?

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

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