



## 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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Joshua said to the people of Israel, "If you are unwilling to serve the Lord, choose today who you will serve – whether the gods your ancestors served ... or the gods of the Amorites in whose land you are living; but *as for me and my household, we will serve the Lord.* (Joshua 24:15)

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*Children are a heritage from the Lord. The fruit of the womb is a reward.* (Psalm 127:3)

### **CHOOSE LIFE – before birth**

In July, a petition of over 13,000 people was presented to Parliament, opposing any attempt to decriminalise our abortion laws. On the same day, a full-page ad was put in the *Dominion Post*, titled "We love them both" [mother and baby]. It is not a matter of mother *or* baby, but mother *and* baby. As Christians it is our privilege to pray for, and assist where possible, both expectant mothers and their babies, showing love and care for both.

*Curia Market Research* polled more than 1000 New Zealanders in January this year and last year, and some of the results from those polled showed:

- 56% of women want shorter, not longer, time limits for abortion.
- 90% oppose sex-selective abortions.
- 65% want fewer abortions.
- 76% want safeguards against coercion.
- 47% believe that once a heartbeat can be detected, a foetus should have human rights and be legally protected; only 29% disagreed.

Further details can be seen at:

<https://www.familyfirst.org.nz/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/Abortion-Law-QA-Briefing-2019.pdf>

- **Please pray** about the considerations being given to decriminalising abortion so that it becomes a "health issue" and not covered by the current abortion law.
- **Pray** for all pregnant women facing the issue of abortion – for them, their babies, their doctors, the people performing abortions, counsellors and other people involved in the choices that are made.

### **CHOOSE LIFE – after birth**

The formative years of a child's life are *extremely* important – their future depends, to a very large extent, on how they are brought up – what they are taught, how they are trained, what their family life is like, the things that influence them, and so on.

Many children are raised in far-from-desirable ways, and it is part of the ministry of the Children's Commission to help children in danger. Very recently they have published a report on the 6,400 "children who are in care" because of problems in their home life (e.g., child harm), or undesirable ways in which the children are living.

- Please pray for the Children's Commission, its Commissioner Andrew Becroft and other staff.
- Pray for all at-risk children, whether at risk from violent abuse, sexual abuse, use of drugs, involvement in violent or other illegal behaviour, and so on. Pray also for their abusers and the reasons for their behaviour.
- Pray for the 6,400 or so children who are in care.
- Pray for the people who care for children who have been removed from their homes because of their need for safe homes.
- Pray for young people who have been put into care, or older teens who have been sentenced for offences they have committed.
- Pray for everyone involved in seeking to counsel and help young people in need.
- Praise God for every good and loving home – that they will be an example and encouragement to other parents and families, and assist them where possible.

## SHARING THE GOSPEL WITH CHILDREN

Jesus said, “Take care that you do not despise one of these little ones; for I tell you, in Heaven their angels continually see the face of My Father in Heaven.” (Matthew 18:10).

Train up children in the way they should go, and when they are old, they will not depart from it. (Proverbs 22:6).

Don't let anyone despise your youth, but set believers an example in speech and conduct, in love and faith and purity. (1 Timothy 4:12)

There are about **1 million children** in New Zealand who are under the age of 15 years. In only twenty years time (by 2040) they will be 20-35 year-olds who are becoming the new leaders of society. Children need **now**, not only our prayers, but also to know the Lord and His guidance, and the power of His Holy Spirit, in order to lead our nation in the future – in God's ways, not the ways of the world and the devil. Even if some children (say 10%) have already responded to the Gospel in Christian homes or through the Church, about 90% still need to hear the Good News and come to salvation through Jesus Christ.

### Please pray:

- For every child who lives in a Christian home – that they will come to know God's Word and will be born again by God's Spirit.
- For the witness of all Christian children to their friends, and to pray for their friends so that they also will come to salvation and follow the Lord.
- For Christian young people, at college or university; for their witness to their friends at school, university, work, sports or other contacts they have.
- That Christian young people will not be afraid of sharing their faith with others.
- That Christian young people, with God's help, will be overcomers of wrong desires, and the temptations of the world, the flesh and the devil.
- For the propagation of the Gospel, with the inspiration, wisdom, power and leading of the Holy Spirit.
- For relevant and creative ways of sharing the Gospel in today's society. (The Good News doesn't change, but how we share it in ways which people understand, does.)

Much of the above also applies to people 15 years old or over!

- Pray for yourself, your family and friends in the above ways, as applicable.

A **1 Million Children** conference is to be held at the Hope Centre in Lower Hutt, on 20 and 21 September. For further details, see the website <https://www.hopelevin.org.nz/one-million-children.html>

Pastor and evangelist Tony Collis has written a book called “*One Million Children*”. See the website: <https://www.hopelevin.org.nz/>

- Please pray for this conference, and the wide distribution of Tony's book, as they seek to reach one million children throughout our land, with the way of salvation through Jesus Christ our Saviour.
- Also pray for the conference speakers and their ministries: Rock George (from Australia), David Goodwin (Kidsreach), Luke Collis (Unashamed), Kyle Keogh & Stuart Peterson (Cool Bananas), Mike Buckley (Childrens Bible Ministries), Jeremy Dempsey (OAC), Dave Mann (Shining Lights; Hope Project), Hannah Medland (Children's Mission, Salvation Army) and Tony Collis (One Million Children).

## HEALING

Nations need healing, and so do their people and lands (see 2 Chronicles 6:12 to 7:22). Sickness, in its broadest sense, came into the world because of sin. This does not mean that every person's sicknesses, or every nation's major disasters are directly due to their sin. But the Scriptures tell us the ways to find God's forgiveness, blessing and healing (in its broadest sense – e.g., “I will heal their land”).

**Some areas of healing** – individually, as a society, our nation and our land – include:

1. **Physical** healing from accidents or sickness; corruption, injuries (both accidental and deliberate); from so-called “natural events”, violence, etc.
2. **Mental** healing from injury (including memories, emotions, our ways of thinking), resulting from abuse, hatred, tragedy, life events, circumstances, etc.
3. **Spiritual** healing from sin and rebellion against God; from the worship of false gods, etc. Most people in any nation are not worshippers of the one true God, followers of Jesus Christ, and the ways He taught and demonstrated.

**Please pray** for healing in these areas: for yourself, the society in which you live, your nation and its leaders.

**Pray** that people will seek the Lord for His healing and salvation through Jesus Christ, the great Healer.



## **GOD OF NATIONS**

Does God deal with nations, or is He only concerned with individuals? In the Old Testament we read many examples of God dealing with nations: Israel, Egypt, Arabia, Chaldea (Babylonia), Assyria, Media, Persia (Iran), Greece, Syria, Lebanon, etc. But what about in New Testament times – did the God of nations then, become merely the God of individuals? The answer to this question is "No!", as we shall see.

### **God's dealings with nations**

In Jeremiah 18:7-10 we read some very important words, because they are addressed to "A NATION" at "ANY TIME" – they are thus permanently relevant – today, not just 2600 years ago! God said "If at any time I declare, concerning a nation or a kingdom, that I will pluck up and break down and destroy it, and if that nation, concerning which I have spoken, turns from its evil, I will repent of the evil that I intended to do to it. And if at any time I declare, concerning a nation or a kingdom, that I will build and plant it, and if it does evil in My sight, not listening to My voice, then I will repent of the good which I had intended to do to it."

This is, in fact, a shorter and more generalised form of what God told Israel centuries earlier, which says, in essence: "If you are obedient as a nation, you will be blessed; if you are disobedient you will be punished; but if you repent, I will forgive you" (Leviticus 26:3-13, 14-39, 40-45). That is, "repent of evil or face judgement!"

Proverbs 14:34, again written about "A NATION" and "ANY PEOPLE" (not just Israel), says "Righteousness exalts a nation, but sin is a reproach (disgrace) to any people."

Part of the judgement and punishment of sin is inherent in the sin itself. All sin brings its own guilt, defilement and punishment because all sin is contrary to God's perfect will and therefore hinders His blessing, spoils His plans for us and separates us from Him.

Galatians 6:7-8 puts it quite clearly, and although written about "a man", it applies also to a nation: "Do not be deceived; God is not mocked, for whatever a man sows, that he will also reap. For he who sows to his own flesh will from the flesh reap corruption; but he who sows to the Spirit will from the Spirit reap eternal life."

### **A nation's attitude towards Israel**

Psalms 33:12 reminds us that "Blessed is the nation whose God is the Lord." While this no doubt refers primarily to Israel, it is also true that our nation will be blessed to the extent to which we make God the Lord over our nation, following His laws, and worshipping and serving Him as Lord.

Part of this involves blessing Israel as a nation. God said to Abraham, "I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and I will curse those who curse you. Through you all the nations of the earth will be blessed" (Genesis 12:2-3; 18:18; 22:18; 26:2-4; Galatians 3:8). So a nation's attitude towards the nation of Israel is very important! See Jeremiah 12:14-17 and Joel 3.

### **God's Sovereign rulership over nations**

Daniel (2:21; 4:17, 25, 32; 5:21) clearly shows that God has absolute and supreme authority in the raising up and putting down of kings and those in authority in nations – nothing is outside His control. Psalms 46:10; 47:1-9; 75:6-7 and Proverbs 16:33 confirm this.

Paul also affirms this in Acts 17:26-27 when he says that God "made from one [Adam] every nation of men, to live on all the face of the earth, having determined allotted periods and the boundaries of their habitation". In other words, God controls the borders (boundaries) of nations and the times allotted for each regime!

David prophetically declared that blessing comes to a nation when its rulers rule justly, ruling in the fear of God, but godless rulers will inflict pain on a nation (2 Samuel 23:2-7)

Hence, in broad terms, God tells us to honour, respect and obey those in authority over us (Romans 13:1-5; 1 Peter 2:13-17), except when they clearly order us to disobey God Himself – something which is outside their God-given authority to do! See, for example, Acts 4:18-20; 5:28-29. Hence, also, Paul's injunction to pray for good and Godly leaders (1 Timothy 2:1-4)

### **Biblical descriptions of nations**

The Bible describes nations in various ways. Which do you think are most appropriate for your nation today?

**Neutral descriptions:** strange, ancient.

**Good descriptions:** righteous, holy, great, strong, mighty, wealthy.

**Bad descriptions:** nation of fierce countenance, void of counsel, ungodly, sinful, hypocritical, rebellious, bitter, hasty, crooked and perverse, foolish, defiled, divided, and uncircumcised (heathen).

Jesus spoke of the dangers of a kingdom being divided against itself (Matthew 12:25-26; Mark 3:24; Luke 11:17-18). United, we stand; divided, we fall!

The writer to the Hebrews says that through faith we can subdue kingdoms (Hebrews 11:32-33). In other words, no matter how oppressive a regime, our faith can enable us to still be victorious! A number of countries in the world today are examples of this.

Finally, Revelation 11:15 reminds us that one day "the kingdom of the world shall become the Kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ, and He shall reign for ever and ever." "At the Name of Jesus, every knee shall bow ... and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father" (Philippians 2:9-11)

### **How should we respond?**

Just before Jesus ascended into Heaven He said to His disciples, "Go ... and make disciples of all nations" (Matthew 28:19). It is God's desire that people from every nation should hear the Gospel and be saved. Indeed some shall, for Revelation 5:9 talks of people who have

been ransomed "from every nation".

Psalm 22:27 says that one day "All the families of the nations shall worship before Him". This is echoed in the book of Revelation where we read again and again of people from every nation worshipping around the throne (Revelation 7:9-12; 14:6-7; 15:3-4)

Thus the Gospel is to be preached as a testimony to all nations (Matthew 24:14) and God's great Name will be feared among the nations (Malachi 1:11, 14).

Is God concerned about nations? Yes, because nations are people, and God is "not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance" (2 Peter 3:9)

Is the Lord, the God of nations? Yes, because He is Sovereign, and because the redeemed live in *every* nation, worshipping and serving Him. Hallelujah!

Our task is to pray and to witness so that His great and holy Name is feared amongst our people! Our task is to exalt the Lord our God, as King over all the nations of the earth; to let Him reign over every area of our lives – personally, in the Church, and in the nation.

"Reign King Jesus reign, over all the nations of the earth!"

### **QUESTIONS**

1. In what ways is God interested in nations today?
2. Why is a nation's attitude towards Israel important?
3. How does the principle of sowing and reaping (Galatians 6:7-8) apply to a nation?
4. Leviticus 26 has three main sections (v. 1-13, 14-39, 40-46). In summary, what do each of them say? Do they apply to nations today?
5. How do you think God sees *your* nation today?
6. Who sets the boundaries of nations, and who puts people in authority in nations? Which Scriptures support your answers?

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Our *Prayer Updates* are on our website each week: <https://www.pray-for-the-nation.org/prayer-updates.php>