



Pray for the Nation ~ INOI MO TE MOTU

Intercessors for New Zealand

105 Woodman Drive, Tawa, Wellington 5028, New Zealand
ifnz@xtra.co.nz <https://www.pray-for-the-nation.org/>

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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"Will You not revive us again, so that Your people may rejoice in You?" (Psalm 85:6)
Lord, revive us again, we pray!

REACH OUT

"Cast out your nets further, to the other side..."

Revival needs Christians to be revived personally – in their relationship with the Lord, in their love for His Word, in their daily lives and their contacts with other people. But not only do *individual* Christians need to be revived, revival needs to spread in and through the churches. To reach the nation, Christians and churches need to make a deliberate effort to reach out beyond each church's boundaries – into the nation and world around them – by word and by action, and with prayer for God-given opportunities to share the good news of salvation, life with Christ, and faith, hope and love – each day, and for the future.

Please pray for...

- Our own personal lives and what God is calling us to do. That we will be "salt and light" to other people – praying for and serving our friends and other people, sharing the Gospel with those who are not yet Christians, and encouraging those who are.
- For revival within our own churches, and throughout the country. For God to breathe afresh, the life, fire and power of His Spirit upon us, as Christian communities reaching out to the communities in which we live.
- For every outreach to those who have yet to come into a life-giving, life-changing, relationship with the Lord God almighty, His son Jesus and His Holy Spirit.
- New Zealand has seen revivals in the past. "Lord, Revive us *again* so that Your people may rejoice in You!"

New Zealand needs spiritual **awakening, renewal and revival!** We need to wake up. We need renewed spiritual life and vitality. See what Jesus said to some of the churches mentioned in Revelation chapters 2 and 3 – "you

have abandoned the love you had at first"; "wake up and strengthen what remains and is on the point of death"; "I know your works – you are neither cold nor hot ... you are lukewarm"; "let anyone who has an ear to hear, listen to what the Spirit is saying to the churches."

THE "Re-" WORDS

Ultimately, what people need is a life-changing, life-transforming encounter with the one true God if we are to see our nation changed for the better. At the moment there are many attacks on the moral and spiritual values of our society. There have been many detrimental changes in our society over the past 50 years or so. What we need to pray for are:

Revival. To revive means to bring back to life again; from death to resurrection of the true way to live.

Renewal. To renew means to take what is old, what is broken, what has decayed, and bring it back to its proper new state. **Restoration** is similar – to restore to what it should be.

Reformation. To reform is to reshape something that has gone from the shape it should be, to a corrupted state.

Reawakening. To awake is to come out of our state of sleep – 'doing nothing' – and starting to do what God wants us to do; to live as the Lord teaches us.

Of course, this all starts with us Christians – we can't expect non-Christians to come to the Lord and into new life, to be reformed or to wake up and really live, if we are lifeless (or seem to be), or our lives are as worldly as other people's.

Please pray for revival, renewal, reformation and reawakening in us; in the Church; and through such a powerful awareness of the Lord demonstrated through His followers, and in answer to our prayers, that many will be saved by God and are "brought back from death" to a totally new life in Christ.

Pray, too, for 'backslidden Christians' – prodigal children who have forsaken their walk with God – that they will **repent** and **return** to Him and His ways.

Please pray that increasingly we will see, in the lives of all Christians:

- *Hunger and thirst for a close walk with the Lord* – seeking Him first, above all else, in our lives and having an ongoing intimate relationship with Him. A passion, zeal and enthusiasm for the Lord, His Word and His ways.
- *Prayer* – both alone with the Lord and with others; calling on Him for revival in our land.
- *Worship* – it is so easy to pray for our own needs, or other people's needs, and forget that we are praying to God who alone is worthy of worship; who alone can forgive our sins; who is worthy of our thanks for every good thing we have and everything He does for us. Worship comes from our hearts, not merely from our heads. It is inspired by the Holy Spirit as we yield to Him.
- *Reading and studying God's Word* – the Bible; the Scriptures – so that the Lord will teach us His will and ways, and that we will not be led astray by false teaching or the ways of the world.
- *Holiness*. Living God's way, not just "believing it". Repentance for sin; confession of it and asking God's help not to live in sin but to live as the holy, saved and sanctified children of God.
- *Witness* by the lives we live, the words we speak, our love for others and our actions.
- *Spirit-filled lives*. Being constantly filled with God's Holy Spirit, led and empowered by Him, and using the gifts He has given us for His glory and the blessing of other people.
- *Spiritual warfare* against the powers of darkness – everything that opposes God and His ways; everything that brings bondage (not freedom) in people's lives; everything that opposes God's people and opposes the sharing of the Gospel.
- *The priesthood of all believers*. We are all called to be priests of God – offering our lives and all that we have, to Him; sharing the Good News of salvation through Him; ministering to one another using our God-given gifts; serving, interceding, worshipping and praising Him!

OTHER ISSUES FOR PRAYER

Please pray as the Lord leads, about:

- Marriage Celebrants being rejected if they won't conduct same-sex 'marriages'
- Cannabis legalisation – due to come up with this year's General Election referendum.
- Euthanasia legalisation – due to come up with this year's General Election referendum.

- Abortion decriminalisation, and abortion becoming simply a 'health issue'
- Child poverty (TV1 News, 9 December, said 150,000 NZ children are living in poverty)
- Child abuse, including domestic violence.
- Trans-gender children and gender confusion.
- Sex education in schools.

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Revival begins with the Household of God – God's family, the Church – which has, in many ways, fallen into disrepair and disrespect (cf. 2 Chr. 29 and Neh. 1:1-4). Hence it is a **revival** which brings back to life those people who were at the point of spiritual death (Rev. 3:1-3); a **renewal** which makes all things new again; a **restoration** of the former glory which Christ gave to His Church in the beginning; a **refreshing** in which the wind of the Spirit blows afresh on the people of God and through the nation; an **awakening** in which the spiritual lives of those who are still living in sin are awakened to their serious spiritual state.

And yet it is more than this: God not only wants to return to the glories of the past; His desire is that "the latter glory shall exceed the former glory" (Hag. 2:3-9) so that the final great ingathering far exceeds even the ingathering on the day of Pentecost.

Revival, renewal and restoration are all part of God's plan for His Church. May we be granted the privilege of seeing such a revival in our land in this day, as God pours out His Spirit upon the world in a way that has never been seen before; as His House is built, His Kingdom is enlarged, His Church is perfected, in preparation for the soon-coming King! ***“Even so, come Lord Jesus!”***

QUESTIONS

1. Some Christians work at moral and political reform, while others pray for revival. How do we find the balance between these two ways of operating?
2. What is revival?
3. Does revival primarily affect the individual Christian, the Church, or the community?
4. What hinders revival?
5. Is revival solely a sovereign work of God, or are there things we must do to encourage it?
6. What past revivals do you know of, and what were some of the key features or characteristics of them?



REVIVE US AGAIN!

1. Introduction: Why do we need Revival?

In these days in which we live, many people (including many people who are not Christians) are concerned about the state of our nation. Morally, racially, and spiritually, especially; and in other ways, our nation is far from what it could, and should be like.

With increasing immorality and permissiveness, the breakdown of homes and families, abuse, serious crime, lawlessness, rebellion, increasing interest in the occult, other religions and cults, drugs, etc., there is great cause for concern.

Many Christians, concerned at these events, have prayed for a tightening of our laws and sought reform at the political level. Indeed, it is part of the Christian's responsibility to be "the salt of the earth" (Matt. 5:13), bringing about and helping to preserve a Christian "flavour" in our society, seeking to uphold Christian standards and Biblical principles in our nation.

Christians are also called to be "the light of the world" (Matt. 5:14), setting before the world an example of what Christlike lives should be. We need not only to protest against evil, but also to demonstrate what good, wholesome, Godly lives are like and how this is really the only sensible way to live.

The only way many non-Christians will get a reasonable idea of what Jesus is like, and what the Bible teaches, is by observing the lives of Christians. What do they observe in our lives?

Many Christians have sought moral and social reforms through the reform of the laws of our country. While it is good and right that we should do what we can to influence our country in this way, this can never be an end in itself because, as any thinking Christian will soon realise, you cannot legislate right living. No-one was made holy by having good and righteous laws enforced on them.

The only way a person can become Godly is by the life-transforming power of Jesus Christ, Who alone can forgive, cleanse and change a sinner into a saint. So in order to see our nation

changed, we must see individuals' lives changed, and this calls for evangelism and a move of God's Holy Spirit.

But here we strike another problem. If the Church is to effectively evangelise, then the Church itself must be in such a right relationship with God that His Spirit can move through it in saving power and demonstration of the Gospel, and it must also be able to teach and disciple those who are brought to Christ.

If 3000 people were converted in one city, in one day, as they were on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2:41) would the churches of that city know what to do? Would they be able to handle such a revival? Or would the "birds of the air", the "stones" and the "thorns" (Matt. 13:1-23) ensure that most new converts never reached any reasonable degree of spiritual maturity?

"The time has come for judgement to begin with the Household of God" (1 Pet. 4:17). There is much that needs to be done in the Church by way of cleansing, personal relationships, unity, humility, discipleship, Christian maturity; and getting rid of apathy, for example, before God can really entrust a revival ingathering of people into the Church. Put simply: are we ready for revival?

We are living in the days of preparation, in which there is relatively little evangelistic outreach and harvesting in our nation, but God is moving and preparing those who are willing, for what He is about to do.

So before we preach to sinners, God has to speak to Christians – to revive the Church; and this revival, in turn, calls for fervent intercession.

Our nation needs changing:

- This means peoples' lives must be changed.
- This means that we need effective evangelism.
- This means that the Church must be right, in order to evangelise and disciple properly.
- This means we need revival.
- This means we need intercession.

**Intercession → revival → evangelism →
salvation → a nation turned back to God**

This, surely, must be the longing of all true Christians who have a heart for God, for His Body the Church, and for the lost.

While intercession must, at times, deal with “negative” influences and pray against certain things (evil, sin, the powers of darkness, etc.), it is primarily positive. We must always pray from the position of faith, not from doubt or despair.

Through intercession we have “to pluck up and to break down, to destroy and to overthrow” in order that we might then “build and plant” (Jer. 1:10). This is the work of revival.

What is revival?

When we refer to revival, we do not simply mean a revival meeting, in the sense of an evangelistic meeting at which the Gospel is preached and a few people are saved. This may bring personal revival to the individuals concerned, but it usually does not awaken the Church or community at large.

Strictly speaking, revival refers primarily to the Church, not to the world; although, having affected the Church it must, of necessity, affect the world afterwards. No true move of God can fail to reach out to a lost and needy Christless world. We are saved, healed, delivered, filled with the Holy Spirit, not only to worship God, but also to be Christ’s ambassadors to a dying world.

There are a number of words in the Bible which are similar to revival, and while they do not have exactly the same meaning, they each bring a particular perspective to the whole concept of revival.

Revival

To “revive” means to bring back to life again. “Will You not revive us again, so that Your people may rejoice in You?” (Ps. 85:6). “O Lord, revive Your work in the midst of the years” (Hab. 3:2). See also Isaiah 57:15; Hosea 6:1-3 and Ezra 9:8-9.

Renewal

To “renew” means to make something new again. “Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me” (Ps. 51:10). See also Is. 40:31; Lam. 5:21; Ps. 103:5; Rom. 12:1-2; Eph. 4:22-24; Col. 3:10; Tit. 3:5.

Restoration

To “restore” means to bring something back to its original, new, fresh state. “I will restore to you the years that the locust has eaten” (Joel 2:24-25). See also Ps. 51:10-12.

Refreshing

To “refresh” means to make something fresh, clean and new again. “Repent, therefore, and turn again, so that your sins may be blotted out and that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord” (Acts 3:19). See also Philemon 7.

Awakening

To “awake” means to come out of a time of sleepiness, apathy or sleeping. “Now it is high time to awake out of sleep” (Rom. 13:11-14). See also Eph. 5:14.

Each of these five words has a similar idea behind it: something was alive, new, glorious, fresh, awake, but it is no longer. In revival it is restored to its former newness, life, glory, vitality and alertness. Surely we need to earnestly pray that the Church will be revived in these days!

So we see that revival is more than just an evangelistic meeting; more than simply God’s blessing poured out on a small group of believers; more than a time of spiritual excitement.

What we mean here by “revival” is something far greater and more widespread than this. By “revival” we mean a Sovereign move of God’s Spirit upon people in such a way that there is deep conviction and repentance for sin, and a real seeking after God, both on an individual and city- or nation-wide scale. There is an awareness of the presence of God throughout the community and a whole nation becomes God-conscious.

This does not mean, of course, that everyone becomes a Christian (people still have free-will, and some will still stubbornly and arrogantly refuse to bow their knee to the Lord), but everyone will know that there is a God. No longer will people say, “Where is their God?” (Joel 2:17)

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