



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)

DECEMBER 2020 – JANUARY 2021

First of all, then, I urge that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgiving be made for everyone, for kings and all who are in high positions, so that we may lead a *quiet and peaceable life* in all *godliness and dignity*.

This is right and is acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour, who desires everyone to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth. (1 Timothy 2:1-4)

OUR LEADERS

Now that we have a new Government, we still need to pray for their leadership in our nation.

Our Parliament has been opened with prayer every sitting day since it first sat in 1854. The following prayer has been prayed from 1962 until three years ago when the Speaker changed it, but we can still pray it for, and on behalf of, our Government.

"**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 [Parliament] 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.**"

Parliament will be sitting every Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday from 1-17 December. *Our leaders need our prayers!* The major instruction in the New Testament about praying for our leaders (1 Timothy 2:2) says we should –

Pray that we may lead *"a quiet and peaceable life, in all godliness and dignity"*.

Pray also for those things which encourage good government and leadership, including: righteousness, justice, truth, freedom, wisdom, unity, honesty, fairness, protection and provision for those who need help, etc – *in policies, and in legislation, and in action!*

Pray for everything that helps build up a good, strong and healthy society.

Pray that Christians, especially, will live in these ways and be God's examples of how we all should live.

The ultimate need for a good and Godly nation is that people are born again, filled with the Holy Spirit and follow God's Word and His ways. **Pray** for this in our own lives, the lives of other Christians, in our own church, and in the Church as a whole!

OUR SUPREME AUTHORITY

In the world in which we live, we have authorities and leaders over us. In a democracy, the government we get, and the laws they pass, reflect the society in which we live, for better or for worse. But Ephesians 1:17-21 speaks of our supreme authority – our Heavenly Father and His Son Jesus Christ. Morally and spiritually, politics won't change the world for the better – people's hearts and lives need to be changed! We all have the choice as to how we live. Politics, government and laws can't save us, make us more moral or "better". We have spent several months praying about our elections, and we may have been disappointed, but now it is time to:

Pray the above verses for the Church, all Christians, and ourselves.

Pray for the salvation of all those people who have not yet come under the supreme authority of the Lord and under His saving grace, blessing and eternal life.

CHRISTMAS IS COMING ... *are we ready?*

God's Word from ...

Matthew 22:4, 8; 24:44; 25:10

Again he sent other slaves, saying, "Tell those who have been invited, 'Look, I have prepared my dinner, my oxen and my fat calves have been slaughtered, and *everything is ready*; come to the wedding banquet'."

Then he said to his slaves, "*The wedding is ready*, but those invited were not worthy."

Therefore *you also must be ready*, for the Son of Man is coming at an unexpected hour.

While they went to buy it [oil to keep their lamps burning], the Bridegroom came, and *those who were ready* went with Him into the wedding banquet; and the door was shut.

Christ is coming ... *are we ready?* Tragically, the vast majority of our country's people are not. Worse still, many Christians are not, either. Is the Church as a whole, ready?

We have had months of talking and praying about our Elections and Referendums; even months of talking about the Presidential elections in the United States.

Now it is time to share the Gospel even more and more – Christ has come, and we remember and celebrate this. But He is coming back for those who know, love and follow Him. Yes, He loves us; but do we truly love Him? Jesus said, "If you love Me, you will keep My commandments" (John 14:15, 21; 15:10)

- He came to give His life for us – have we given our lives to Him?
- He came as the sinless One – are we seeking to live without sin? (After all, there's no sin in Heaven, and therefore no sinners either!)
- He rose again and returned to Heaven; and He's coming back! Are we ready?

There's a whole nation, a whole world, waiting to hear this Good News – the Gospel of salvation, and eternal friendship and fellowship with the one True God, our Creator, Saviour and Lord.

Please pray ...

1. For the widespread sharing of the Gospel, especially at this time of the year; that people will come to know who Jesus is, why He came, His love for us, His death for us and His return for us.
2. For every act of witness, teaching, encouragement of Christians to see people's eyes opened to the truth, their hearts open to knowing Jesus and following Him.

3. For organised ways of sharing the Gospel message by means of:
literature distribution (e.g., the Hope Project, distributing Christian booklets to every home in New Zealand); **radio** (e.g., Rhema, Life FM, Christian Broadcasting Association); **television** (e.g., Shine TV and other Christian TV channels); **online** websites and social media, etc.
4. For outreaches via camps, beach missions, etc., as well as church services and personal witness.
5. For every Christian to prayerfully ask God for opportunities to share their faith, look for those opportunities, have divine wisdom and inspiration to share their faith and the Good News with other people.

The wedding banquet is ready!

The Bridegroom is ready!

But are the Body of Christ, and
the wedding guests, ready?

Pray that they will be!

THE NEXT GENERATION

Paul wrote to Timothy: "Let no one despise your youth, but set the believers an example in speech and conduct, in love, in faith, in purity." (See 1 Timothy 4:6-16)

Perhaps somewhat surprisingly, the word "youth" is used 65 times in the Bible. The Bible is not just for adults; it has a lot to say *about* youth, and *for* youth. Those of us who are in the older (or much older!) generations, need to remember to pray fervently for those who are in the younger generations. The following contains some of the prayer items from one Monday's **Pray as One NZ** online prayer meeting (see www.prayasone.nz for details about joining in with these weekly Zoom meetings).

There are many areas of young people's lives that we need to cover in prayer:

For safety and God's protection over them – physically, mentally, socially, spiritually, emotionally and in their families; also with regard to the media (especially online).

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REVIVE US AGAIN!

11 Evangelism

Revival and evangelism

Revival is not evangelism – it is not even mass evangelism on a large scale. Revival may come as a result of evangelism, and evangelism always comes as a result of revival, but the two are not the same.

Evangelism is basically an organised means of reaching non-Christians with the Gospel and bringing them to Christ and into His Church.

Revival cannot be organised – we cannot turn it on, nor can we turn it off! In true revival, God simply takes over; we see a supernatural, sovereign God at work, and human organisation is almost incidental. Also, revival primarily and mainly affects Christians – the Church. It is a restoration of life, vitality and glory to the Church. Certainly this will affect the nation and unbelievers as a result, but that is the second step, not the first.

Evangelism has to do with the initial stage of the Gospel, and revival involves the backslidden state of the Church. Though they may occur together, they are not the same – saving (evangelism) has to do with the spiritual state of the unconverted; sanctifying (revival) has to do with the spiritual state of the converted.

Revival is a time when God breaks through into human history to awaken spiritual fervour in Christians, to touch them afresh by His Spirit, bringing renewal to the Church and creating a greater impetus for evangelism.

Evangelism can be, and ought to be, occurring everywhere in the world at all times, in obedience to Mark 16:15 and 2 Timothy 4:5.

Revival is a sovereign act of God on whom He will, and where He will. When God sees the necessary requirements being fulfilled, He can begin His work of revival.

The greatest revival in the Bible took place in an upper room when 120 fearful believers were filled with the Holy Spirit and their lives were completely revolutionised. No longer fearful,

frightened, confused and uncertain, they now had boldness, authority, zeal and eloquence in preaching and testifying. They went out to turn the world upside down, and won 3000 people to Christ on the first day! (Acts 2).

During times of revival there will be much evangelism, not in the power of the flesh, but in the power of the Holy Spirit, with multitudes being converted as a result (Acts 5:11-16). All facades are stripped away, materialism, pride, sophistication are dealt with, and lose their power, and in their place there is a real openness and brokenness, a new love, joy, praise, worship, liberty and concern for the lost.

Demonic activity frequently increases during times of revival, but demons will be cast out in the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ, and God will confirm His Word with signs following – miracles, healings, visions, dreams, prophecies, etc. (Mark 16:15-20; Acts 2:16-21). The new love and fervour will also result in much greater social concern – it will unite people; people will share with one another and help each other in times of need (Acts 2:41-47; 4:31-37).

The answer to moral degradation

Many Christians are deeply concerned at the rapid decline in morality these days. While there is a place for protesting against the lowering of standards, and for encouraging the government to uphold decency and morality, ultimately the solution to the problem is not legislation but in people's lives being transformed by the power of Jesus Christ. Evangelism is thus the ultimate and only totally effective means of dealing with the moral and spiritual problems our nation is facing. When a person's life is changed by the power of God (2 Corinthians 5:17), when God puts a new heart and a new spirit within a person (Ezekiel 36:25-27), the external legislation loses its importance – God's law is "written on our heart" (Jeremiah 31:31-34) and we become a new person. As a nation is evangelised, the character of the nation can be changed – a nation can be turned back to God. Of course this does not mean that everyone will be converted, but there can be a God-consciousness throughout the land – the presence and power of God are obviously real, even to the non-Christian. The whole of the book of Acts demonstrates this fact.

What is evangelism?

Evangelism is the proclamation of the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ in the power of the Holy Spirit. Evangelism should be the spontaneous overflow of Spirit-filled lives – “a spring of water welling up to eternal life” within our hearts and then overflowing to those around us (see John 4:13-14, 39-42).

Evangelism is ordinary people boldly sharing Jesus with the lost.

Our nation needs to know real conviction of sin; it needs a revelation of the Cross of Christ and all that means; it needs deep repentance, cleansing and salvation. In short, it needs *revival* in the Church, and *evangelism* in the world. We need to see lives transformed and the fruit of righteousness in our land.

The alternatives

The Church is surrounded by a dying and needy world. If the Church does not evangelise, it too will die, and God will require the blood of the lost at our hand (Ezekiel 33:1-9). Conversely, evangelism will bring life, growth, vitality and freshness to the Church. It is an interesting but tragic fact, that if a church does not reach out to the lost, it begins to stagnate and die; it often becomes introverted and actually turns in on itself in criticism of one form or another, splits, or in other ways dries up. Evangelism is not optional, it is imperative – “evangelise or perish”.

Many churches in our land today would see their problems of doctrine, leadership, criticism, disunity, apathy, discouragement, etc., disappear if they turned their prayers and energies towards evangelism. On the whole there is not a great deal of evangelism being engaged in either individually by most Christians, or by churches. Our nation is largely unevangelised as far as having a clear Gospel message preached in the power and under the anointing of the Holy Spirit, is concerned. “We are not doing right. This is a day of Good News; if we are silent and wait until the morning light, punishment will overtake us. Now therefore come, let us go and tell ...” (2 Kings 7:9).

QUESTIONS

1. Why is the Church not effectively reaching our nation with the Gospel? What can we do about it?

2. To what extent do we again need to see God “confirming the Word with signs following” (Mark 16:20)? What effects would this have on our nation?
3. What is the relationship between evangelism and revival? How do they differ?
4. “Evangelism, rather than legislation, is the real answer to our nation’s moral problems”. Discuss.
5. What are some of the problems that a church is likely to face if it does not have an effective evangelistic outreach? What are some of the blessings a church will experience if it does have effective evangelism?
6. “Evangelism should be the spontaneous overflow of Spirit-filled lives”. Discuss. See Acts 1:8.

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For the “orphan” generation – those who are unfortunately separated from either or both father and mother, and who feel a sense of rejection and loneliness; those who may find some support and encouragement in somewhat undesirable company. The Lord is a “Father of the fatherless” (Psalm 68:5)

For their salvation and close relationship with the Lord, His Word and His people. For the fullness of God’s Spirit to dwell with them; for His calling, anointing, gifting, wisdom and discernment. (Joel 2:28-29; Acts 2:16-18)

For God’s protection and empowering to overcome temptation and the attacks of the evil one.

For other Christians’ encouragement to seek the Lord for His will for their life; for courage to step out as He calls and enables them.

For all Christian workers who are seeking to reach out to this generation of young people – to share the Gospel, counsel, encourage and assist in other ways. For effective ministries through churches, schools and other youth groups; showing young people that they are loved, valued and needed in our society.

For solutions to the problems faced by young people, including non-ideal home life; bad influences, unemployment, drugs, immorality, lack of work skills and/or good education; depression, lack of self-worth, etc.