



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)

APRIL 2021

You have been called to this, because Christ also suffered for you, *leaving you an example, that you should follow in His steps.* (1 Peter 2:21)

The steps of a good person are ordered by the LORD, and He delights in their way. Though they fall, they shall not be utterly cast down, for *the LORD upholds them with His hand.* (Psalm 37:23-24)

The Way of the Lord

Much of the Bible teaches us about the way of the Lord. Isaiah 30:21 says, "Your ears shall hear a word behind you, saying, 'This is the way, walk in it', whenever you turn to the right hand or whenever you turn to the left." This is why Eli said to the boy Samuel, "If God calls you, you must say, 'Speak, LORD, for Your servant hears'." (1 Samuel 3:9)

Jesus said, "Enter by the narrow gate; for the gate is wide and the way is broad which leads to destruction, and there are many who go in by it. But the gate is narrow, and the way is difficult, which leads to life, and there are few who find it." (Matthew 7:13-14)

This is why we need to be led by God's Spirit as we pray, regarding various issues, such as the following:

Pray about ...

- Our government, and the laws and decisions it makes; for good and righteous decisions.
- The way Christians live – their love, example, generosity, serving, witness, and kindness.
- The moral and spiritual values in our nation – that we will follow *God's* ways.
- The salvation of our people – that we will not follow the "broad, liberal, worldly" way which leads to destruction, but follow Jesus – *the Way* – His teaching and example.
- The many needs within our community – poverty, health, education, faith and hope, and so on.

On our *Pray for the Nation* website there is a book called "*Pillars of Society*" which contains 12 major areas for prayer for our nation. It can be read online, or downloaded. It is available (free) from our website, which is:

<https://www.pray-for-the-nation.org/resources/Pillars.pdf>

Vaccinations

- Praise God that New Zealand continues to have no new community cases of covid, and we have relatively few people in managed or home isolation.
- Pray for the vaccination program presently being implemented – that it will be effective in preventing transmission of covid and minimise any effects on people who do catch it.
- Pray that any new strains of covid will be less transmissible and have minimal effects on those who do become infected.

Government spending

Covid has already cost our country well over \$50 billion, and there are many other areas of government which have large and increasing financial needs as well.

- Pray for wisdom for our government to make the best possible decisions on government spending – which areas are most important and how much is given to help meet these needs.
- Pray especially for needs of funding and help for those people who have been made unemployed; and for businesses that are struggling or have had to close.

Government decisions

Covid has also had a huge effect on tourism and its associated businesses, including travel, loss of income that tourism normally brings into our country, the airways, and a lot of confusion and

costs in regard to whether events can go ahead as planned, or not.

- Pray for our government regarding possible covid response level changes (presently at the lowest Level 1 throughout the country)
- Pray concerning the possible/eventual opening of our borders to people from other “safe” countries – e.g., Australia and South Pacific countries.
- Pray concerning the worrying rate at which house prices are increasing and the huge effect this has on people trying to buy their first home; and the large rises in rents, too.
- Pray about a possible capital gains tax which our government could introduce, and the effects this could have on house and rental prices. Pray also about the desperate need for new, reasonable-cost, housing.
- Pray about a Bill that is being considered which would decriminalise cannabis use. What drugs will follow the decriminalisation of cannabis? “Party pills” are already being tested (voluntarily) to make sure they do not contain other more-harmful drugs as well.

Hope – there is Hope!

- Please pray for the distribution of this year’s “Hope for all” booklets which are currently being distributed to almost every home in NZ. They are also available for person-to-person distribution, or through churches, etc. and share our nation’s history and how people can come to the Lord. See their website:
<https://www.altogether.co.nz>

Fear or faith?

Anxiety or peace?

We live in a very troubled world, and even as Christians we may be afraid or anxious about many things around us. But we need to remember what the Lord said about this, pray, and receive His assurance – faith, not fear; peace, not anxiety. We also need to pray about the following, amongst other things.

Climate change

What can we do, and our country do, about “cleaning up our environment”? The climate will always change, but **we need to pray:**

- That people will do what they can to help minimise pollution and its harmful effects.
- *Spiritually*, we can receive God’s promises and pray that people will come to know the Lord, His righteous, salvation, deliverance from fear, and the peace He promises.

Covid

Covid is impacting countries worldwide and is still affecting our country in many ways, such as: the disruption to all of our lives through lockdowns and their restrictions; the effects on people’s health and lives; our economy as a nation, industries and businesses; people’s loss of income; unemployment; national debt; travel restrictions including overseas travel.

- **Please pray** about each of these effects; for effective vaccination; the rapid decrease in new infections; our border security, health workers and many people whose jobs involve assistance with covid-related issues.
- **Pray too** about what churches can do in these situations to help people, including those in their churches, and other people directly involved with fighting covid.

Hate speech Bill

Our government is presently preparing a so-called “hate speech” bill to present to Parliament. This requires a huge amount of wisdom because it could stop our freedom to talk about certain issues, including moral and spiritual values, even with our children; or to speak about them publicly; or to pray for people *who ask for our counsel and prayer!* Our present government would decide what the issues are, and it would be illegal to speak against what they decide! This could include what perspectives could, and could not, be taught in schools. People could speak *for* these pre-chosen issues, but *not against* them, which stifles discussion and debate. The law would be our moral judge as to what we can believe, and say, and what would be illegal.

Please pray about:

- The repercussions if a very restrictive law is passed, especially on issues of morality and our Christian faith.
- What issues would be covered in the bill and what would not.
- A limitation on our freedom of speech, and the restrictions it would put on counsellors.
- Our government deciding and dictating what issues we can discuss and what we can’t.
- Parents’ right to teach their children what is right and wrong; moral and immoral, etc.
- What Christians can teach from the Bible, including their present doctrines and values!



REVIVE US AGAIN!

14 Revival – the Past

(continued)

Steps in restoration

Let us look briefly at the history of the Christian Church and see what has already been restored. In doing so it is most important to bear in mind that this is a generalization, and is in no way intended to be a criticism or condemnation of Christians in any particular denomination – its aim is simply an objective look at the historical facts.

In the past we have obviously seen two streams of restoration:

1. **Personal:** salvation by faith; water baptism; the fullness of the Holy Spirit; unity; outreach; sharing the Gospel; evangelism.
2. **Church leadership:** pope, bishops, clergy, elders, pastors, autonomous churches, lay people in ministry.

How will we receive what God has been restoring to the Church? Will we move on, step by step, wave upon wave, like an incoming tide, or will we stop short (or even go back) on what God is revealing? Will the Church, in a few decades time, be one which has seen “the restoration of all things which God has spoken” (Acts 3:21) and thus be ready for the return of His Son? That depends on us!

Ezekiel 37:1-14

Through the Dark and Middle Ages, and even in more recent times, the Church in many ways has been like a valley full of disunited, dead, dry bones. But God’s Spirit is moving, God is speaking, life is coming back! Ezekiel was told to prophesy to the bones and say, “Hear the Word of the Lord”. Let it be emphasised once again that God is not saying new things – He has not changed His mind – He is saying what He has always said in His Word, and we must start to preach it and teach it again. “Hear the Word of the Lord” – listen to what God has to say! “He who has ears to hear, let him hear what the Spirit is saying to the churches”.

Restoration has always come through prayer, proclaiming the Word of the Lord, the leading of God’s Spirit; and it always will come this way.

First, the bones must come together. If ever the Church is to be restored, then unity must come. Three types or illustrations of the Church are: a Bride, a Building, and a Body. In each case there is only one – one Bride, one Building, one Body. Today we are seeing a coming together of God’s people, but having come together we then separate into our own little denominations again. Not only must the bones come together but they must be joined together in a true unity of the Spirit.

Second, sinews must join these bones together – they must be bound together in such a way that they will not come unstuck again. This is far more than just bringing the bones together; this is uniting them in a way in which they will not break apart again. Only divine love and our willingness will bring about this unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace (Ephesians 4:3, 15-16). As we pray together, worship together and serve the Lord together, this bond will be strengthened, and the world will know!

Third, flesh must come upon the skeleton. Bones are good and necessary, but until they are covered with flesh and skin, they will not be functional. Love and unity are but the start of what God is wanting to do. God is building, and He will not be satisfied until that building is complete. Until every member is added to the Church, until every person who will respond to the Gospel has heard and responded, God will not rest.

Fourth, the flesh is covered with skin. There is little beauty or purpose in raw flesh, so God covers the bones, sinews, and flesh with skin, so that the beauty of His creation may be seen. The Church that God is creating will be a beautiful Bride for His Son, without spot or wrinkle (Ephesians 5:25-27). “Behold how good and pleasant (beautiful) it is when brethren dwell together in unity!” (Psalm 133).

Fifth, when the body is complete it still needs the life of the Spirit breathed into it. (The same Hebrew word “*ruach*” means both “breath” and

“spirit”). Then the Church will become like a mighty army – an exceedingly great host.

Let us not stop short of what God is wanting to do. By His grace may we move on with Him. Let us heed the sign which says, “NO STOPPING”, and keep moving! Let God complete His work so that He may send His Son “Whom Heaven must receive until the times of restoration of all things ...”

Revivals in the past three centuries

During the past three centuries there have been some wonderful times of revival when God has moved by His Spirit, bringing new life to the Church, and bringing the lost into salvation. The Church has been restored (at least in part) and extended by these sovereign moves of God. Biographies and historical accounts of the following people, and the revivals associated with them, are well worthwhile reading, and help to build a hunger for, and faith for, a similar move of God in our own day.

Jonathan Edwards (1734)

Charles Finney (1857)

John Wesley (1738)

Dwight Moody (1880)

George Whitefield (1738)

Evan Roberts (1904)

... and many more in the past century, including times of revival in the Congo, Indonesia, South Korea, South America, Cambodia, parts of Africa and the Western world. There are many books, videos, etc., concerning these and similar events.

It is most encouraging to read accounts of these moves of God in the past few decades, and pray that once more God will move by His Spirit, bringing renewal, restoration and revival.

Helps and hindrances to revival

What factors have helped to bring about revival, and what has hindered or stopped revivals? Over the past three or four centuries, the following factors stand out as those which seem to have **promoted** revival:

1. A desire for simplicity in the Christian life. Overemphasis on theology and doctrine have tended to have been replaced by simple, practical Christian teaching and living.
2. A return to the study of the Bible and an acceptance of it as authoritative, divinely

inspired, and a source of daily practice and inspiration.

3. A belief that the new birth is a definite act, more than just ‘growing up’ in the Church.
4. A desire for an experiential faith, not merely intellectual belief.
5. Fervent, continual prayer led by the Holy Spirit, praying for a revival of faith, and the power of God to come in new ways.

The following factors have **hindered or stopped** revivals in the past:

1. Opposition to “emotionalism” and “revivalist methods”.
2. Excessive (fleshly) emotionalism and lack of wisdom, discernment, real love and consideration for non-Christians.
3. Liberalism and a denial of the Scriptures; rationalism, heresies and some practices which have split the Church.
4. Pre-occupation with other things – the world and all its ‘attractions’; politics and the world’s problems; the efforts of satan to try to distract Christians from God’s calling, and distract those who are not Christians from hearing about, believing in, and following Jesus Christ.

May God again raise up people who are true and faithful to Him, so that we may again see the Lord “open the windows of Heaven, and pour down such an overflowing blessing that there will not be enough room to contain it!” (Malachi 3:10).

QUESTIONS

1. Why did denominations form? Did people intend to start them? Was it necessary for them to be formed? Are they helpful?
2. What truths is the Holy Spirit revealing to the Church today?
3. What do you think is hindering revival today?
4. What is our part in helping to bring about revival?
5. What is unique about the current move of God’s Spirit?
6. What are some of the blessings and problems associated with the charismatic renewal within denominational churches today?