



## 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)

**MAY 2021**

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So they called Peter and John, and ordered them not to speak or teach at all in the name of Jesus. But Peter and John answered them, "Whether it is right in God's sight to listen to you rather than to God, you must judge; for we cannot keep from speaking about what we have seen and heard." (Acts 4:18-20)

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### PLEASE NOTE ...

After 50 years of sending out monthly *Prayer Letters*, by mail, email and online, it has now been decided that the last Prayer Letter will be the July issue. Our weekly **Prayer Updates** will continue to be emailed (and on our website) – if you want to receive these, but don't currently, please email [ifnz@xtra.co.nz](mailto:ifnz@xtra.co.nz) with 'Subscribe' as the Subject. **Bible Studies** can be obtained, in print or online, by going to our website <https://www.pray-for-the-nation.org/> and clicking the 'Bible Study Books' tab. Other material can be obtained by clicking other tabs.

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### Poverty in New Zealand

*One indicator of poverty in New Zealand was mentioned on TV1 News (12 April):*

"Figures released under the Official Information Act show almost 560,000 people now owe \$1.9 billion to the Ministry of Social Development, after taking out interest-free loans for things like school uniforms, the dentist, electricity and car repairs.

Each person owes almost \$500 more than three years ago, with the average amount being \$3420."

**Please pray** about this concerning situation. There are many reasons for poverty in a rich country; pray for assistance for the needy *and* solutions to the fundamental causes.

### Possible changes to our Drug Laws

It has been suggested that some "low level" drug laws should be changed from criminal law to being "health issues". So even though the cannabis referendum showed the majority of people voted against it being legalised, this could easily be ignored because it would not be controlled by a law about drugs – a law would be unnecessary and irrelevant.

This is somewhat similar to our current abortion situation, where abortion which was controlled by law is now simply a "health issue".

**Please pray** about any changes which may be made. Many laws could be changed or decriminalised because of "health issues" – e.g., drunken drivers; crimes committed by people under the influence of drugs, etc.

### The "hate speech" Bill

While the "hate speech" Bill is still in its draft form, depending on what is passed it could have very serious effects on **our freedom of speech** about many issues – including Christian counselling, teaching, prayer, and witnessing ("conversion therapy"); and what is taught in our homes, schools and churches. Ostensibly this Bill is being drafted because of the tragic act of terrorism in two Christchurch mosques, but this Bill has the potential for far more reaching consequences which would aim to silence speech on all sorts of issues – certainly publicly, and potentially in the privacy of our homes, and what parents are allowed to teach their children. "Hate speech" could cover speaking about race, ethnicity, national origin, sexuality, religion, etc. Even some opposition to this Bill, and other Bills or existing Laws, could be perceived as hate speech by the people who oppose them!

**Please pray** concerning the drafting of this Bill, what is included when the Bill is presented to Parliament (which could be in the next few months), that it will be open to public debate and submissions, and what might eventually become law.

## Abortion Act Amendment Bill

When the current Abortion Law was being voted on, there were about 20 amendments which sought to remove some of the worst aspects of the Bill and protect the lives of unborn babies. All of these were defeated, but one of them was that people would not be allowed to meet – or even pray – within 150 metres of an abortuary. This was also defeated “by mistake” when many MPs voted *against* it though they meant to vote *in favour* of it! Now an Amendment Bill is proposed to “rectify this mistake” and prevent people from meeting or praying or talking to people within 150 metres of where abortions are being performed.

**Please pray** about this further attempt to “silence” people with views contrary to abortion.

## Parliamentary leaders

**Please pray for:**

- **Party Leaders:** Jacinda Ardern (L); Judith Collins (N); Marama Davidson and James Shaw (G); Rawiri-Waititi and Debbie Ngarewa-Packer (M); and David Seymour (A).
- **6 Senior Cabinet Ministers:** Jacinda Ardern - PM, Grant Robertson - Deputy PM and Finance; Kelvin Davis - Corrections; Megan Woods - Housing; Chris Hipkins - Covid 19 Recovery Response and Education; Andrew Little - Health.
- The 14 new MPs, including Christian MPs, who have entered Parliament.
- The 7 Christian MPs who have lost their seats and are adjusting to new life.
- Your Electorate MP.

See [www.prayeratparliament.org.nz](http://www.prayeratparliament.org.nz) for other information for prayer.

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### Bible Study (cont. from page 4)

#### What God is doing in many parts of the world today

To a large extent, what God is doing throughout the world today is not recorded in the secular press, but there are real moves of God in many

or most parts of the world. The beginnings of revival – at this stage perhaps small in some places, but spread over much of the world – can be seen as God prepares the ground for the final outpouring of the latter rain.

God is moving by His Spirit, bringing renewal, new life, and enthusiasm to His people. This has affected many hundreds of thousands of Christians as well as some local churches as a whole, and has had a major influence in traditional churches today.

In some places and some countries there have been significant revivals which have not merely touched a few individual Christians but have begun to affect the nation as a whole – reaching out to the lost, bringing many to salvation and many more to a new awareness of the presence of God. The gifts and baptism of the Spirit have played a major part in such revivals.

The latter rain is beginning to be outpoured – let us make sure that as it comes it touches our lives and, through us, the lives of many others! Let us continue to pray for a mighty outpouring of God’s Spirit upon the world, bringing both glory to God and the extension of His Kingdom here on earth.

## QUESTIONS

1. Compare the Pentecostal movement with the charismatic movement in the denominational churches. Where do autonomous charismatic fellowships and home groups fit into what God is doing in the Church today?
2. Must we compromise truth in order to remain in a church which does not believe all that we do?
3. Are both revival and persecution inevitable? How can revival, apostasy and persecution all occur at the same time?
4. What keeps Christians from fear when facing the future?
5. What does the Bible say the Church will be like just prior to the return of Christ?
6. How can we, as individual Christians, and the Church as a whole, “prepare the way of the Lord” for revival?



## REVIVE US AGAIN!

### 15 Revival – the Present

In Joel's prophecy (Joel 2:28-29), quoted by Peter on the Day of Pentecost (Acts 2:17-18), God promised to pour out His Spirit on all flesh. Joel also talks of this outpouring as both "early rain" and "latter rain" (2:23). James 5:7-8 takes up this point too. In Israel, seed was planted just prior to the early rain which caused the seed to germinate, and then, just before the harvest, the latter rain brought the grain to full maturity. For a good harvest, both the early and the latter rains were essential.

On the Day of Pentecost (about 30 AD) God began to pour out the early rain on the seed which Jesus had been sowing for the previous three and a half years. As a result, the seed began to germinate, and the Church began to grow. Throughout the succeeding 2000 years there have been times when God has sent showers of refreshing and revival, gradually restoring the Church to the strength and maturity He desires for it to have. And so the Church has grown over the past 20 centuries.

Just before the harvest, God will send forth the latter rain – the greatest outpouring of His Spirit the world has ever seen, so that the latter glory of the Church will exceed its former glory (cf. Haggai 2:9). The harvest will be ripe and mature, ready for reaping at the return of the Lord of the Harvest, the Lord Jesus Christ. Thus God will have prepared for His Son "a Bride, without spot or wrinkle, or any such thing" (Ephesians 5:27).

Together with this great outpouring of the Holy Spirit, bringing about a worldwide revival, there will also be great apostacy and persecution of the Church. God always prepares His people for whatever they will have to face. "There has no temptation (testing) taken you but such as is common to people, but God is faithful and will not let you be tempted (tested) above that you are able, but will, with the temptation, also make a way of escape, so that you are able to bear it" (1 Corinthians 10:13).

God has also promised, "I will never fail you nor forsake you" (Hebrews 13:5). There is no need to fear persecution, tribulation or suffering for

Christ's sake, for His "grace is sufficient for you, for His strength is made perfect in weakness" (2 Corinthians 12:9. See also Matthew 5:10-12; 1 Peter 1:6-7; 4:12-14). Apostacy, heresies, deception, falling away, etc., will come – and woe to those by whom they come – but the true Spirit-filled Christian is safe and secure in His hands and God will supply all the faith, power and courage we will need to face any situation. This is why God is pouring out His Spirit today and preparing His people for what they will have to face in the future.

It is interesting to notice how God has always prepared His Church before persecution comes, by sending revival. Especially last century, it seems that revivals have always come before, for example, communist take-overs or major wars.

Praise God, His Church may suffer (and is already suffering – great tribulation has already come to many parts of the Body of Christ throughout the world), but God will always see it through. Persecution purifies and strengthens that which is true. The Church, while it may be forced to meet in secret in some places, has never been eradicated, not even in Albania (which once proclaimed itself "the world's first totally atheistic state"!) or China, or North Korea, and other places where Christians are severely persecuted.

In these last days God will separate the wheat from the tares (weeds), so that what is true will be separated from what is false. Read the parable of the Wheat and the Tares carefully, together with Jesus' interpretation of it (Matthew 13:24-30, 36-43).

God's ultimate purpose in allowing persecution, and in pouring out His Spirit, is to purify the Church, separate the true ('wheat') from the false ('weeds'), and bring His Church into unity and maturity, so that His Name will be glorified throughout the earth, and His Son's death will be vindicated.

#### The present state

As we saw in the previous study, God has already restored much truth to the Church. Over the past few centuries, God has been moving by His Spirit, restoring the Church,

imparting the baptism and gifts of the Spirit to His people, releasing new praise and songs of worship, bringing a new joy and a new liberty in the Spirit.

The 'charismatic movement' has affected all branches of the Church. While God does not condone error in the Church – and the Holy Spirit is restoring truth – nevertheless God is looking for those whose hearts are right towards God, and in spite of some “doctrinal errors” and non-Biblical traditions; in spite of denominationalism and a measure of disunity; God is moving, bringing renewal both to individual Christians and local churches as a whole. May we be flexible enough to receive all that God is saying; may we move with God and be open to His moving in other Christians who may differ in some ways from us. As the Church is revived and united, so ultimately it will affect the whole nation.

### **Biblical truths God is restoring**

1. What it means to be a true Christian – a born-again believer in the Lord Jesus Christ; a true disciple, and follower of Jesus, God's Word and His Spirit.
2. The baptism and gifts of the Holy Spirit, and the Spirit-filled life.
3. Praise, singing and worship, in Spirit and in Truth; the writing of new Scripture choruses, hymns and spiritual songs and a new freedom in worship.
4. The priesthood of all believers: a breaking down of clergy / laity barriers; the plurality and equality of elders who are responsible for a local church; the open communion table where all true Christians may participate, irrespective of 'denomination'; and greater participation in the work, ministry and life of the church by all Christians, not just the “ordained” or full-time workers.
5. Unity in the Spirit and increased unity in practical ways; the universal Church as the invisible Body of Christ, and the churches (that is, believers in a community) as the visible expression of the Church; a breaking down of denominationalism – we are one Body in Christ!
6. Healing and deliverance ministries.
7. Evangelistic and missionary zeal, especially in unreached or closed nations and people groups. Water baptism of believers by immersion.
8. Home groups for fellowship, prayer, Bible study, mutual edification and growth, and counselling. Prayer and fasting.

Intercession for the Church, nation, government, etc.

9. The ministries of Ephesians 4:11 – apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors (shepherds), teachers.
10. Autonomous (self-governing) local churches – independent and yet inter-dependent.
11. Generous giving – tithes, offerings and more!
12. Holiness, sanctification and true discipleship.

### **Stay in or come out?**

An inevitable conflict arises when a person sees what God is doing and longs to move with God's Spirit, and yet is involved in a church which does not. Similarly, where serious doctrinal error or immorality is tolerated, and nothing is done about it. What should we do? Some people say “Be loyal. Stay where you are. Let God use you to bring the truth to your church”. Others say, “Come out from among them and be separate”.

There is really only one answer – each individual (or Christian family) must seek God's direction for themselves. There is no point dying in a sinking ship! If staying on leads to compromise, then we may have to come out. But if God is using you to bring light and truth to your church, and if you are having an effect for good in your church, then God may want you to stay.

God will lead some to remain where they are, even in a far-from-perfect situation, in order to minister to the needs of people there and possibly to help lead the church on in God's ways and purposes. Others will find themselves cut off from the church – neither receiving anything from it nor allowed to contribute in any way to it (other than financially!). To these people God may well say “Come out. There is somewhere else where I want you to minister and receive ministry”. Each person must know in their own heart where God wants them and, in whatever situation that may be, fulfill their God-given ministry to the glory of God and for the upbuilding of the saints.

Ultimately, we are all accountable to God for the decisions we make, but He will guide us if we ask Him.

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