

Prayer Strategy for the Spheres of Influence

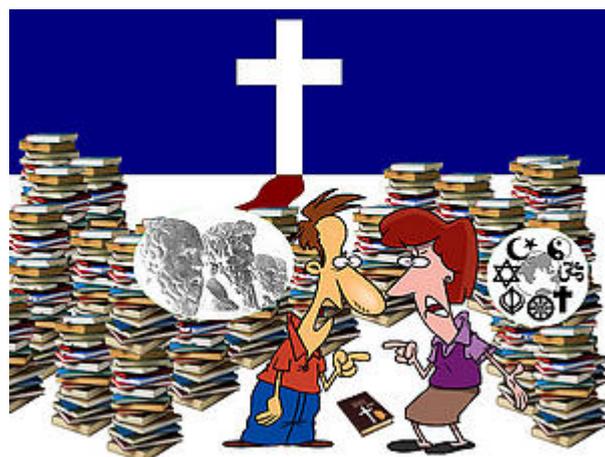
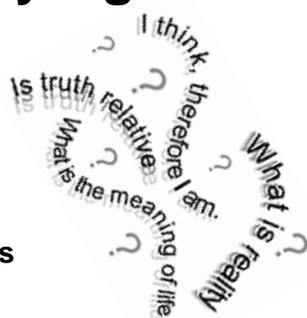
June 2016 - Praying for Religion and Philosophy

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Catholic Singles Conference
Religion and Christianity

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Pam Proudfoot



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These articles reflect the opinion and witness of the respective authors, which may or may not align with your own; consider this with Ephesians 4:1-7 in mind.

From the National Coordinators

Dear friends,

Charles Spurgeon said, *“prayer is the slender nerve that moves the omnipotent muscle of God.”* The Bible commands us to pray for authorities, because all authority has been established by Him to accomplish His purposes. With the calling of the Australian Federal Election 2016 we now begin a season of prayer.

When the prophet Jeremiah wrote to the Jewish exiles who lived in Babylonian captivity, he encouraged them not to protest or rebel against their captors, but to pray for them: *“Seek the peace of the city where I have caused you to be carried away captive, and pray to the Lord for it; for in its peace you will have peace”* (Jeremiah 29:7). Even in the midst of an evil and wicked land, Jeremiah focused the Hebrew captives to pray for God’s blessing.

Turn our hearts to You so that we walk in righteousness:

“Righteousness exalts a nation, but sin condemns any people” (Proverbs 14:34 NIV)

Holiness in Government and all parties:

“Hannah prayed and said, ‘My heart exults in the LORD; My horn is exalted in the LORD, My mouth speaks boldly against my enemies, Because I rejoice in Your salvation. There is no one holy like the LORD, Indeed, there is no one besides You, Nor is there any rock like our God. Boast no more so very proudly, Do not let arrogance come out of your mouth; For the LORD is a God of knowledge, And with Him actions are weighed.’” (1 Samuel 2:1-3)

We ask that You guide and direct our leaders:

“I urge, then, first of all, that petitions, prayers, intercession and thanksgiving be made for all people - for kings and all those in authority, that we may live peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness” (1 Timothy 2:1-2 NASB)

Give them wisdom as they lead us:

“He changes times and seasons; he sets up kings and deposes them. He gives wisdom to the wise and knowledge to the discerning” (Dan. 2:20-21)

For lack of guidance a nation falls, but victory is won through many advisers (Proverbs 11:14).

Blessings

Lilian Schmid

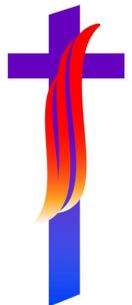
National Coordinator

Prayer Strategy for the Spheres of Influence

prayerstrategy.org

businesswomenhealingministry.org

transformingsydney.org



TRANSFORMING
SYDNEY



Catholic Singles Conference

Catholic Youth Services and the Life, Marriage and Family Centre of the Archdiocese of Sydney are excited to be hosting the first **Catholic Singles Conference** to be held from **16 to 18 September 2016 in North Sydney**.

The Catholic Singles Conference is all about giving single Catholics the opportunity to meet other like-minded singles, share their Faith and be encouraged. The Catholic Singles Conference will provide a range of social opportunities, but it is not primarily about finding a relationship; there will be a range of prayer opportunities, but it is not primarily a spiritual retreat. The hope behind the Catholic Singles Conference is to encourage attendees to live their singleness well and to become happier and holier people according to their current state in life. In a mix of keynote addresses, men/women sessions and workshops the Conference will discuss themes such as;

- *Where is God in my singleness*
- *Dating and chastity*
- *The Feminine Genius*
- *Spiritual motherhood and fatherhood*
- *The importance of friendship*
- *Practical Living as a Single*
- *Pornography and Lust*

The Catholic Singles Conference will feature two international keynote speakers flying out especially for this event. Fr Thomas Loya is the pastor of Annunciation of the Mother of God Byzantine Catholic Parish in Homer Glen, Illinois and is a popular conference speaker on a range of faith topics. Mary Beth Bonacci is the author of the books, “We’re on a Mission from God” and “Real Love”, and has addressed thousands of young adults on issues of sexuality and the Theology of the Body. Both have presented on previous occasions at previous Catholic Singles Conferences that have been held in the USA.

Prayer will be incorporated throughout the Conference. Mass will be celebrated at the beautiful St Mary Mackillop Memorial Chapel where the tomb of St Mary of the Cross is located. Morning Prayer, Evening Prayer and Adoration will also be included. For more information please visit the website

<http://www.catholicyouthservices.org/catholic-singles-conference/>



Religion and Christianity

By Pam Proudfoot

What comes to mind when you hear the word religion? Is it a place of worship? A person who goes to church? A set of rules of what you can or cannot do?

Is it someone who religiously plays a sport each week? Someone who has the same meal each Monday evening? Someone who religiously rings his girlfriend each evening? A group of friends who go to the same place for holidays each year?

When someone asks what religion are you, how do you answer? Do you answer with the name of a denomination that you go to or a faith that you belong to? Do you say that you are 'a believer'? Perhaps Catholic, Anglican, Presbyterian, Methodist, Baptist, Pentecostal, or one of the others out there? All these denominational names give us an idea of a person's sets of beliefs and practices, whether it means they pray to Jesus, to Mary and the saints, or they dance in church, speak in tongues, sing hymns or choruses, read the Bible and pray.

But what does all this boil down to? Religion? Christianity? Are they in fact the same? Without looking up the definition in the directory, yes they are different. We can be a believer in Christ, go to church, follow a set of rules, pray each morning and evening, read our Bible and do many other things. But is this Christianity?

I asked my husband, who is a believer in Jesus Christ, what Christianity means to him, and he said it is a relationship with Jesus. A relationship with Jesus, but is this not a religion? I personally agree to disagree. A relationship – and an intimate one at that – with the Son of God is Christianity in its fullness. We can say we are religious and that we go to church, that we live a good life and would not harm anyone, but are our lives being continually changed? Are we becoming more like Jesus?

Are we doing or are we being?

Being in God, allows Him to fill us to overflowing. I have a saying: "Out of our being comes our doing. Our being does not come out of our doing. We do not do in order to be". We are by being in Him, allowing Him to touch our lives. By being in Him, everything flows. We do because we have been with Him. What does that look like for me? Yes, it is going to church, reading God's Word, praying, being led by His Spirit, having an intimately personal relationship with Him, being in His presence. I do because I have been with Him.

Jesus said in John 5:19, (NIV), *"I tell you the truth, the Son can do nothing by Himself; He can do only what He sees His Father doing, because whatever the Father does, the Son also does."*

Jesus also said in John 8:28-29 (NIV), *"When you have lifted up the Son of Man, then you will know that I am the one I claim to be and that I do nothing on my own but speak just what the Father has taught me. The one who sent me is with me, He has not left me alone, for I always do what pleases Him"*.

Everything we do should come out of being with Him, not out of obligation, or guilt or a set of man-made rules, but by choosing to be with Him. We spend time with Him because we want to live this life of Christianity: a life of being, a life of intimacy with him, a life of presence, being in step with Him, going where He leads us. Psalm 119:105 (NIV) says, *"Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light for my path."* Galatians 5:25 (NIV) says, *"Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit."*

My prayer is that each and everyone of us will know and experience the fullness of Christ, that each one of us will experience this relationship of being with Him which will lead to our doing, simply because we love Him and believe what is said of Him in Ephesians 1:4-5 (NIV):

"For He chose us in Him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in His sight. In love He predestined us to be adopted as His sons through Jesus Christ, in accordance with His pleasure and His will."





POPE FRANCIS

Posted by Kris Vallotton on <http://krisvallotton.com/pope-francis/> - reprinted with permission

June 13, 2016

This week I had the privilege of meeting with Pope Francis. It was probably one of the highlights of my life. He was funny, warm and very spiritual.

I was invited, along with several other pastors, to a small connect forum with Pope Francis because he has a deep passion for unity among Believers – and I do mean DEEP!

We spent about two hours asking him questions about whatever was on our hearts. His opening comments blessed me. He said, “We must invite the prophets back into the church and welcome them with open arms.” I thought it was interesting that this was his opening comment. Of course, many of the pastors looked over and smiled at me.

THEOLOGIANS

Pope Francis said, “Theology is a very complicated subject and we should let the theologians argue it out (figure it out). In the meantime, we should love each other and learn to value people who are different than ourselves.”

He made it clear that theology shouldn’t divide us. I also think he was making a point that he wasn’t a theologian, in that he said “they” should work it out while “we” love people.

QUESTIONS

Mike Bickle gets the “guts” award! Everything was going quite smoothly, partly because of the benign questions the pastors were asking. Then Mike stood up and asked the Pope if he believed that Jesus was the “only way” to heaven. (There have been rumors circulating that Pope Francis is a Universalist). The tension instantly rose in the room... the moderator was noticeably shaken. But the Holy Father didn’t blink an eye. He answered, “We might be surprised by who we meet in heaven. BUT the only way into heaven is through Jesus Christ. There is no other way into heaven.” We all breathed a sigh of relief!

SPIRIT FILLED

Pope Francis went on to share about his relationship with the Holy Spirit and indicated that he had experienced the baptism in the Spirit. (I don’t think he used those exact words but that was clearly the connotation I left with).

Maybe one of the most historic moments happened when the Pope spoke of the atrocities the Catholic Church perpetuated on people through the centuries. Then he asked us all to forgive them for their sins. This inspired us to

do the same. Suddenly the room was filled with a beautiful spirit of reconciliation.

I admit that I was slightly ignorant because I was pleasantly surprised by his knowledge of the Bible. He shared several scriptures, expounding on some Greek words – their meanings and the impact they should have on our lives.

PRAYER

As our time came to a close, we held hands to pray for one another. Then we gathered to pray for him and he for us. Finally, the Pope got up and greeted each of us, giving us a gift (a book). He allowed each of us to take photos with him, although he was clearly not a selfie guy. The guy is incredibly humble, touchable, and comfortable in his own skin. Although he is obviously famous, he has a way of making everybody in the room relax.

I don't think I have ever asked a famous person for a picture because I personally hate being photographed. But I had a mandate from my mother. She said, "Bring back pictures of your meeting with the Pope so our relatives will believe you met him." Like Jesus, who made wine when he didn't want to, I know how to obey my Spanish mother.

IMPRESSIONS

The meeting was so surreal – I mean a guy from Weaverville meeting with the Pope! What are the chances?

I've heard so much about the Pope in general, and Pope Francis, in particular. Some think he is the Antichrist, while others call him a false prophet, or the leader of the new world order.

When I got saved, my leaders taught me that the Roman Catholic Church was the "mother harlot" in the book of Revelation. About that time, the Holy Spirit decided to fill the Catholics the same way He did us Protestants, and suddenly the Catholic charismatic renewal was born. It became kind of hard to teach that junk after that (though some still do). Especially when the person sitting next to you in the meeting was singing in the Spirit, and is a Catholic! Surprise!!!

JUDGMENTS

I posted our meeting with Pope Francis on my social network pages and true to nature, many people couldn't help but unleash hell on him. For some the reconciliation of Believers on the earth is the sign of the new world order – the ushering in of the Antichrist's reign.

It's hard to imagine how a proactive move towards loving an entire people group, forgiving one another, and reconciling after 500 years of hatred and persecution can lead to the rule of satan. But religious people can find a problem with every opportunity!

It's also disturbing to me how selectively people apply scripture. How do you justify spewing hatred for Catholics in the name of "they are not bringing salvation to people," while ignoring the second commandment to love your neighbor? It's funny to me how people spiritualize their dysfunctions. I think some people need to record themselves and then play it back. They might be surprised at who is really inviting the Antichrist to the planet!

FLOOD ZONE

In Acts 2, Peter made it clear that in the last days God would pour His Spirit out on EVERYONE! Is it possible that on this 500th anniversary of the Protestant Reformation that God would take the two and make them one again?

I mean, could God have raised up Pope Francis with a spirit of reconciliation to tear down the walls of mistrust and unforgiveness that have been erected over five centuries between brothers?

Three decades ago, Ronald Reagan famously shouted, "Mr. Gorbachev, tear down these walls!" The rest is history – communism has been crumbling like a house of cards ever since.

Pope Francis once again is raising the same cry for reconciliation, and it feels like the walls of hatred and disunity are finally falling down. But reconciliation always has its detractors; whether it's Jews and Gentiles, blacks and whites, or male and female, there will always be a spiritual reason that one group feels justified in rejecting or reducing another group.

When we love people, we are not saying we agree with them, or even that we have a value for their belief system; we are saying that we love and value them as a person – as another human being who is made in the image of our beautiful Creator.

IT'S PERSONAL

Pope Francis, thank you for having the guts to brave the religious system, and reach beyond the borders of tradition to love a group of people, some of whom refuse to love you back. God bless you! You have become one of my heroes.

If you would like to subscribe to my newsletter, sign up here: <http://krisvallotton.com/>



The Silence of the Lamb

3rd June 2016 by Dr. John Yates - <http://cross-connect.net.au/the-silence-of-the-lamb/>

Personal Matters

Why does God sometimes not reply to our requests?

This issue was raised for us by Jesus' rebuttal to a man who sought personal justice; "who made me a judge or arbitrator over you?" (Luke 12:14). But a request denied is not the same as *no answer* from God at all. When Jesus requested of the Father in Gethsemane that "the cup" be taken away he knew his plea was refused; he did not have to endure silence (Mark 14:36). A "No" from God is a definite revelation which communicates something of his character. Paul's appeal for the "thorn in the flesh" to be removed was likewise *denied by a concrete reply* (2 Cor 12:8-9).

How are we though to respond to situations of no manifest divine presence of any sort? The silence of God today seems at times to verge on cruelty. I believe however that despite all appearances he is up to something great, and Jesus will tell us about it if we ask him (Am 3:7; Matt 27:42). To know such things we must respect the whole counsel of God in scripture.

How are we though to respond to situations of no manifest divine presence of any sort? The silence of God today seems at times to verge on cruelty

A God who Hides

God's intentional absence from Eden opened up the possibility of sin, and Isaiah blatantly testifies; "Truly, you are a God who hides himself," (45:15). This prophet was commissioned, "Make the heart of this people dull, and their ears heavy, and blind their eyes; lest they see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their hearts, and turn and be healed." (Isa 6:10).

The ministry of prophecy to idolaters acts as a judgement to conceal; "They (idols) have mouths, but do not speak; they have eyes, but do not see; they have ears, but do not hear....Those who *make them become like them*," (Pss 135:16-18).

Jesus applied Isaiah's words about blinding eyes and deafening ears to the power of his parables to judge, "everything is in parables...lest they turn and be healed" (Mark 4:10-12). In Jesus final dispute with the Pharisees Isaiah's threatening words are applied once again, and we are told, "he (Jesus) departed and *hid himself from them*." (John 12:36; 40).

As long as the Church keeps on manufacturing religious experiences as substitutes for the presence of God we will never be able to discern just how hidden he is

The Lord also hides things from the redeemed (2 Ki 4:27). The revelation of the cross was hidden from the disciples even when Jesus was prophesying. "The Son of Man is about to be delivered into the hands of men." 45 But they did not understand this saying, and *it was concealed from them, so that they might not perceive it*." (Luke 9:44-45 cf. 24:16).

This is scary stuff for idolaters, saved or lost. . As long as the Church keeps on manufacturing religious experiences as substitutes for the presence of God we will never be able to discern just how hidden he is.

None of this needs to happen; whilst "all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge are *hidden in Christ*" our lives likewise are "*hidden with Christ in God*" (Col 2:3; 3:3). We live in the place where things are obscured from others. But why this game of "hide and seek"?

He Who has a Pure Heart (Ps 24:3-4)

Jesus' promise that God will be found by those who "ask...seek...knock" surely means that those with "a pure heart" know the Lord (Matt 5:8; Luke 11:9-13). Yet no one, especially the impure, can accurately check the purity of their own heart (Tit 1:15)! "LORD...you alone know the each human heart" (2 Chron 6:30).

The state of the heart of the Church in the West is

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The Silence of the Lamb (...continued)

presently being hidden from itself. Many sins are not being openly confessed to God and one another, but far more seriously the Lord is hiding from us the revelation of our impure hearts (1 John 1:8-10). Behind our moral and spiritual confusion is a failure to understand the gospel of reconciliation.

The state of the heart of the Church in the West is presently being hidden from itself ... far more seriously the Lord is hiding from us the revelation of our impure hearts

Consider James' warning in the light of the materialism and consumption he forbids, "Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Therefore whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God." (4:1-3, 4). How can the mass of Australian Christians live like enemies of the Lord when "while we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son," (Rom 5:10)? Our hearts need purification through a renewed vision of the cross.

Christ cries, "why have you forsaken me?" when he is immersed in the experience of an absolute idolater for whom God is deaf, blind and dumb (Mark 15:34). Jesus endures a sort of reverse testimony/prophecy about his own cries and groans and the blood he sees streaming from his flesh. To us these testify love and forgiveness, to Jesus they testify of the absolute absence of God (cf. Ezek 18:32). For the crucified one there is no manifest presence of God; there is no "No" or "Yes" or "Wait". God seems dead to his Son in our place so that we might never have to manufacture anything in His place (2 Cor 5:21)!

Hearing God Today

Given the morally and spiritually bankrupt condition of Australian Christianity, people of honest conscience will witness that God is fully justified in not answering our requests. But *the gospel is much greater than my conscience* and has nothing to do with our morality or spirituality.

Equally, Christ crucified and risen eliminates the need for any religious acts and attitudes we conjure up to convince ourselves that God does have reasons for answering our prayers.

The one reason why God will answer my requests is "the blood of Christ" that cleanses an "evil conscience" proclaiming forgiveness and *releasing it from any testimony of personal good or evil* (Heb 10:19-23; 12:24). The heart of God is infinitely greater than our hearts (1 John 3:20).

Listen to what the blood says about the heart of your Father! The blood of the cross cleanses the eyes of our hearts and restores our blinded minds so that we can *see and hear in fellowship Jesus* (1 John 1:7).

Conclusion

God wants to restore a quality of prophetic witness to the Church today so that we might know for sure when he is not answering us, and why. Only in this way will we stop trying to manufacture his presence by religious means.

It is time to stop hiding from the power of the blood of Christ. After all, who wouldn't want to

Listen to what the blood says about the heart of your Father! The blood of the cross cleanses the eyes of our hearts and restores our blinded minds

listen to a someone who has been raised from the dead, the testimony of the pure heart of Jesus is true. This testimony is one of love, peace and perfect reconciliation. Hallelujah.

A prayer: "Please Lord Stop Hiding the Power of Your Blood so that The Silence of The Lamb might come to an end." If you have prayed this prayer and desire an end to idolatry anticipate greater presence of God, but be prepared materially or metaphorically to mix your blood with the blood of the cross (Rom 6:7; 1 Pet 4:1-2; Rev 12:11).

It is worth it.



Religion & Philosophy

By James Kenny, Light of Life Ministries

As a believer and follower of our Lord Jesus, I am confronted with what I call the world's view every day. Indeed it would be hard to say that an hour can go by without some person or authority proclaiming a view point that is contrary to God's word and therefore things which are at the core of our beliefs. A study I did more than 10 years ago said the average primary school student in Australia is bombarded with over 3,000 messages every week. Messages which must be discerned and understood to determine their intent.

Just a couple of months ago Sydney celebrated the gay Mardi gras, an event that our PM and opposition leader chose to attend. Whilst I intend not to make any dispersion upon any one group of people, it is blatantly clear that society's views have changed dramatically in recent years. It felt only a short time ago that such behaviour was frowned upon in society instead of being celebrated as we recently saw, so what has changed?

Though man's opinions have changed, God's word will never change and with that the very nature of God himself as Hebrews 13:8 says "Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today and forever". The question is what brings about these changes in society? Is it some "big brother" determining our thoughts and therefore opinions or is there a more subtle change that influences society? I would say from experience that there is predominantly two ways in which society's views change, one is of the latter and therefore slowly over time and the other is through dramatic circumstances such as recent ISIS attacks that we have seen of late.

It is the more subtle and slower type that I wish to explore and hopefully bring some understanding of the forces at work in society today. When we think of philosophy we think mainly of those famous men and women who through their reasoning have influenced or at least analysed man's thoughts, the likes of Socrates, Plato and Aristotle. There is no doubt these people have brought about a greater understanding of the nature of man and the very concept of thought which I find most intriguing. For in thought and reasoning we find one of the most unique aspects of being human as opposed to being merely animalistic or complex mammals as some might try to call us.

It is man being "made in God's likeness" which enables humans to reason in the first place. So philosophy in its purest form should not be despised or frowned upon but celebrated.

Yet despite this we also know that not everything that comes from man is good. Isaiah 55:8-9 explains this in a very straight forward way in saying "For My thoughts are not your thoughts, Nor are your ways My ways," says the Lord.⁹ "For as the heavens are higher than the earth, So are My ways higher than your ways, And My thoughts than your thoughts.", Our Lord Jesus goes on to say that it is not what goes into man that defiles but that which comes out of him" referring to the corrupted nature of man through sin. It is therefore that which lies beneath the outer shell of man or at least the heart of a man that truly exposes his intentions whether for evil or good.

Scripture tells us that it is only God who knows the heart and intentions of man, whether man's motives are evil or good. It is therefore imperative when understanding societal change that we know from what view point this change has come, that is the angle that we view man's motives whether they are God pleasing or simply to please man or build man's kingdom as opposed to God's.

Jesus in his own life continually set about asking the "Father" of His plans and His desires rather than simply pursuing his own or the status quo. Not content in examining and reasoning with his own thoughts, though without blemish I would imagine, our Lord was determined to please only one, His Father in heaven. This displays our Lord's heart and desires, to bring honour and glory to the Father rather than himself. Even in the garden of Gethsemane we see this in his words "not my will but your will Father".

We must therefore be able to compare our thoughts and intentions to that of the Father in knowing whether the change we bring is for the Glory of God or for ourselves. There must always be a measuring stick to determine whether our ways are selfish or truly to see God's will be done and kingdom come on the earth.

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Religion & Philosophy (...continued)

Philosophy is described as a theory or attitude that acts as a guiding principle for behaviour. It is therefore imperative that at the heart of any philosophical reasoning is the desire to please God over man, at least for those of us who are of the Family of God and His precious Church.

When we look at societal change today there is no doubt that dramatic events can bring about great change in man's views and thoughts on many things, yet is the underlying belief and faith in our creator that can be the guiding force that causes great change even in these last days. Scripture says in 2 Chronicles 7:14 "If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land.." Indicating we the church of Jesus Christ, whom is the head and we the body, have the ability and dare I say calling to bring about the change that society truly needs. God pleasing change as opposed to man pleasing change.

The church today is in continual change. Yet one thing must always remain, that is a determination to see the fulfilment of God's plans and purposes for all of mankind. Again, scripture says in Matthew 28 "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. 19 Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, 20 teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age."

God Bless,
James Kenny
Light of Life Ministries

For more studies, sermons and ideas feel free to visit James Kenny's Blog spot at blogger.com



Pentecost Reflection

By Debbie Ouyang

RICE Pentecost is a new worship night for young adults who are no longer in high school where for the first time in RICE history, we celebrated the risen Lord Jesus as he acted by sending the promised Holy Spirit and birthing the global church through the transformed lives of His followers.

In a cosy hall in Epping Church of Christ, we cleared the room of the normal pews and just had open space. The walls were lined with fairy lights which twinkled away as we sang about the Holy Spirit in songs such as "Spirit Break Out" and watched a video re-enacting the moment the Spirit came upon the believers. In the act of celebrating Pentecost, it was interesting how much we paralleled certain themes. It was like the tradition came to life as it was lived out in our modern day context – waiting on God, gathering the believers from different churches, breaking bread and having communion together, worshipping God and being sent out to minister to a lost and broken world who needs to hear the gospel.

Our speaker Adrian Tam spoke from Acts 2 and the particular meaning behind the the wind, tongues of fire and the Holy Spirit- as well as how Pentecost impacts our lives as Christians today. I loved this one thing he mentioned in his talk: Revival looks like Pentecost. Such a simple but profound statement. I believe that as we gathered that night as the body of Christ, God planted a seed of revival among us. Later in the evening we also broke off into smaller groups among us to share words of encouragement.

I believe a particularly powerful moment was when we prayed over Steve and Naomi Chong (our movement director and his wife) as they were preparing to visit the persecuted church in the Middle East. [Ed: read the May 2016 Prayer Strategy Newsletter for their report.] I think this is what the Spirit reminds us – that it's not about any one of us as individuals, but about coming together as the body of Christ – united in cause to go out and witness to the world.

A video of highlights for the Pentecost event is at

<https://www.facebook.com/RICEMovement/videos/1051804578228966/>



“Lest We Forget What?” A Reflection on Anzac Day

Published on April 25, 2016 by Rev. Peter Robinson

- <https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/lest-we-forget-what-reflection-anzac-day-peter-robinson>

What we can be very sure about Anzac Day is that collectively we have forgotten the meaning of “Lest We Forget”. These words originally did not refer to those who served and died.

Outside St. Andrew's Cathedral in Sydney the War Widows Guild invites members of the public every year to place small wooden crosses in memory of fallen family and friends.

I like to place one for my uncle Ken whom I never knew. Ken Taubman died in a trainer aircraft during an electrical storm over Northern Ireland in 1944. He was only 19. He's buried in the Eglantine Church of Ireland churchyard with 24 other Commonwealth fliers just outside Belfast not far from where the plane came down. I saw his grave for the first time last August. His widow had just four days with him after their wedding before he left for overseas. Recently she gave me photos of his burial taken by a thoughtful chaplain.

We also have a photo of him having his RAAF wings placed on his chest just months before he died. His old school was shocked to lose their popular former School Vice-Captain and Captain of Athletics.

Recalling the loss of her favourite brother a few years ago I heard my mother utter a heartfelt imprecation against "Bloody Hitler" while we watched a war documentary. My mother never said Bloody. I'd never before heard her express her loss like this.

Lest we forget.

What do we remember on Anzac Day? Foremost is the national trauma of so much loss of life in our first military campaign as a nation. Then the cost of every military commitment since.

Uncle Ken died in a training accident - like thousands of others. Training deaths are not often mentioned on Anzac Day. Nor do we name Allied atrocities even though we know war can bring out both remarkable good and terrible evil in people. It's selective memory we pass on, the events and stories we find most significant.

But our hearts are not pure. The best of our national characteristics are imperfect and corruptible. From the outset of Anzac commemorations there has been significant purpose in alluding to the sacrificial death of Jesus Christ for the sin of the whole world in the symbolism of Anzac with crosses for the fallen and the language of sacrifice.

The challenge in alluding to Jesus' service, sacrifice and humility is to allow their meaning to refresh and renew our culture and national life. The best hope of our

nation is young people discovering the truth of his humility, servant-hearted sacrifice and resurrection to break free from the self-obsession and loss of direction in our current culture with its hedonism, narcissism, addictions, materialism, sexualisation and too frequent lack of hope.

But our need for deep renewal in the culture is demonstrated in our loss of knowledge of the meaning of Lest We Forget.

“Lest we forget. Lest we forget” is the refrain of Rudyard Kipling's Poem The Recessional often sung as a hymn on Anzac Day. The words were coined for the first commemorations for the fallen even before World War 1 was over. But they weren't written to remember the fallen. Their secondary use to memorialise the dead makes sense when we know what Kipling meant.

Written for Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee in 1897 at the height of the power of the British Empire, Kipling was (surprisingly for his critics then and now) reflecting on its impermanence, and calling for a “humble and a contrite heart” because God could sweep even the British Empire away.

Kipling is quoting Deuteronomy 6.10-12, where Moses says to the Children of Israel, "When the LORD your God brings you into the land he swore to your fathers.... be careful that you do not forget the LORD, who brought you out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery."

In the King James Version of the Bible most commonly used at the time it reads, "... beware *lest you forget the LORD...*" Kipling applied these words to himself and Great Britain under Queen Victoria. He is saying don't take God's blessings for granted. Arrogant pride in our own achievements that has forgotten God's abundant blessings and his command to love others with humble and contrite hearts will bring judgement.

It is the same sentiment that we read in the Preamble to our national constitution where the federating states are "...humbly relying on the blessing of Almighty God."

In the face of the appalling losses of Gallipoli and the First World War Kipling's words struck a powerful and necessary note of contrition and humility, while providing words that also evoke remembrance for the fallen.

The pride of six empires had brought civilization to the brink. In what followed four of those empires collapsed and millions died.

“Lest you forget the LORD....”

Lest we forget.



Announcing a Special Event for Grandparents

Grandparent's Day of Prayer- September 11, 2016

Recently a Grandparent told me, "I am really worried because our grandchildren are growing up in a desperate moral and spiritual climate navigating in a world hostile to truth."

I agree, the enemy has launched an aggressive attack on all fronts using media, technology, education, social influences and political pressures. The boundaries of truth and righteousness that hold nations and families together are being desensitized and clouded.

One thing grandparents can do is to unite in **fervent and intentional prayer** to rescue our precious grandchildren from the aggressive attack of the enemy. *Prayer is the most powerful weapon for praying grandparents to pull down strongholds.* We read in James 5:16, "The prayer of a righteous person is powerful and effective."



In accordance with its mission **Christian Grandparenting Network** is asking grandparents all over the world to unite in prayer for their grandchildren on **Sunday, September 11, 2016.**

This date coincides with the official United States **National Grandparents Day** designated by a Senate proclamation signed by President Jimmy Carter in 1978.

This will be our sixth Grandparents' Day of Prayer. Many grandparents will be joining in prayer with other grandparents in their homes, churches, and community and around the world for an intentional day of prayer on behalf of the next generation.

Imagine the difference grandparents can make in the world by praying daily, intentionally and deliberately for their grandchildren and their parents to walk wholeheartedly with the Lord. **Now is the time** to unite in **one voice calling on God to rescue** our grandchildren from the enemy.

If you are willing to join us in praying fervently for our grandchildren and their parents on September 11 for our sixth Grandparents' Day of Prayer goto www.grandparentsdayofprayer.com.

For additional information and to order promotional resources go to the above website. If you have additional questions email me at lpenner@christiangrandparenting.net I would love to hear from you.

May God show favor on you as you pray for your grandchildren.

Lillian Penner,
National Prayer Coordinator
Christian Grandparenting Network



Spiritual Trust Fund

Have you Invested in a Spiritual Trust Fund?

Have you thought about investing in a spiritual trust fund for your grandchildren and future descendants? We may not have wealth to pass on to our children, grandchildren, and future descendants, **but we can give them a spiritual trust fund.**

Author, Jennifer Kennedy Dean shares in her book, *The Legacy of Prayer* about a spiritual trust fund that will only increase in value with time. She writes, "We can leave behind for our descendants a spiritual trust that can never be stolen, squandered, or lost. We can lay up a storehouse of imperishable wealth by praying for our grandchildren and future generations. **Our prayers are deposits in their spiritual trust fund and will be there for withdrawals when needed.**"¹

According to Isaiah 55:11, "God's Word will not return empty." When we claim the promises in His Word and pray according to His will, I believe God hears our prayers and then saves them for the right time to answer according to His time, which may not be our timing.

Our descendants do not inherit salvation. Nevertheless, we can pray our descendants will live in a constant awareness of God's presence and be firmly established in His Word. It will prepare their hearts for the time when they are presented an opportunity to step into a personal relationship with Jesus Christ.

Jennifer Kennedy Dean also writes, "As we seek the Lord ourselves, we are laying up treasures for our grandchildren and future generations by the way God is reflected in our lives. As we invest in our own walk with the Lord and our prayers for our grandchildren and future generations, we are investing in eternity."² Now that is a great investment return we would all enjoy seeing.

Ask yourself: Do I have a Spiritual Trust Fund for my grandchildren and future descendants?

Prayer

Dear Lord, thank you for my family. Give me a greater passion to pray for them.

Satan is seeking to destroy our families. Help me to be more intentional in praying for them.

May all those generations who come after me find me faithful?

In Jesus' name, Amen.

By Lillian Penner, National Prayer Coordinator,
Christian Grandparenting Network,
lpenner@christiangrandparenting.net

¹ Jennifer Kennedy Dean, *Legacy of Prayer*, Birmingham, New Hope Publishers, p. 15.

² *Ibid* p 48-49



HOW GOD IS WORKING IN RUTH FATTAL HAUTE COUTURE

By Ruth Fattal

The beginnings:

As a young child, I used to watch my Mother and Aunt sew and create beautiful dresses. I was fascinated by their dedication, meticulously pinning, pleating, creating patterns, draping and creating these beautiful pieces. I grew up with this memory in my mind and a creative seed was planted.

Growing up with three brothers who were born with a life threatening disease called cystic fibrosis shaped a different perspective of life for me. When I was young I found it hard to accept their disease, seeing them in and out of hospital placed resentment in my heart. I had failed all my subjects and was about to get expelled, I was ready to quit and not have a care in the world. I remember crying to my parents and although my Dad looked disappointed, he always had an encouraging heart. My Dad said to me "you need something more". I grew up in a Christian home and my Dad is an elder at our church and I was known to be the Preacher's kid, however my life did not reflect that. I still remember that day I was crying to my Dad, feeling lost and hopeless. I needed something to fill the empty void in my heart. I really needed a miracle... I needed my Saviour. That night I came to Jesus and surrendered all to him. God started working in me, changing my "know it all" attitude and showed me he can turn a bad situation into something far greater. I went from failing to topping the class in all of my subjects. I also realised that God was nurturing my creative side and put this proverb on my heart... Proverbs 3:5-6 it has been a wonderful life lesson: 'Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways submit to him, and he will make your paths straight'.

After high school, I made it into The University of Sydney to study a Bachelor of Psychology, but God had another plan. God sent me to fashion school and I graduated with a Bachelor of Design at the Whitehouse Institute of Design in 2010. I learned that in the fickle world of fashion the best thing a designer can do is "be true to yourself and make and do what you love with all your heart".

God had showed me throughout my degree that if you take a stand for Him he would take a stand for

you. I was struggling with my degree, struggling with the whole fashion industry. I made a promise to God and said "God you help me get through my degree, I promise you I will honour you with my designs".

I graduated with my Couture collection called Genesis to Revelation, where each design was inspired by my Christian beliefs. The collection embodies romance, elegance and beauty. I was inspired by biblical colour palettes evoking white, gold, red and black made from an array of luxurious silks, hand crafted laces, & intricately beaded fabrics.

Straight after my degree yet again I had to take a leap of faith. I started applying for jobs and was getting disappointed by how hard the industry was and how you were treated in this "fashion world". Although I faced so many challenges, I trusted in God and believed that he had already ordained my life and he had a bigger plan that I couldn't even imagine. I remember reading Psalm 139 over and over again. One of the first companies I had sent my CV to had contacted me for an interview. In 2010 God blessed me with a Designer Assistant role at Silva Guanta. There I had learned so much and I was able to grow and see a need in the

fashion industry. God had instilled in me a great desire to use the talents that He has blessed me with to inspire and show others who Jesus is through my designs and ultimately glorify Him.

The journey to opening my own boutique was all thanks to God. I just had to trust in Him so I said "Hey God use me, use my talents and creativity for you." I knew that if I surrendered all He will take control of the wheel and steer me in the right direction. In 2012 at the age of 22, I had an

urgency to open up my own business even though I had no business experience or any idea on what to do or where to begin.

I started looking at shop fronts and researching all

(continued next page)



GOD IS WORKING IN RUTH FATTAL HAUTE COUTURE (...CONTINUED)

the possibilities of how I could start my own business with little funds. My parents took me under their wings and supported me in pursuing my own fashion label. I come from a very close family, over dinner we would sit and discuss our dreams and ideas; it was such a blessing to see my parents encouraging my brothers and I to follow our dreams. My parents' words resonate so deep in my heart till this day... "If God sows a seed in your heart, a vision, a talent it is your duty to fulfill it, to go out there and give it your best shot and never give up. You will have many ups and downs and more downs than ups but God wants to shape and use you, he wants to shine his light so bright in you so others can ask why are you different?" My brothers also advised me that no matter what life throws at you always persevere and live each day to it's fullest.

During this time I was working in the back of my parent's house, all my sewing machines, fabrics and mannequins were scattered around the house. Deep within my heart, I knew that something was going to blossom out of this. I was talking to a friend of mine and was expressing my desire to one day open up my own business, however I desperately needed a space to work in. Funnily enough, he said his cousin was in a similar position but just landed a studio space to work in for minimal rent through a council initiative. I got all the details I needed and the next day put through my application to Pop Up Parramatta. An initiative that takes empty spaces and turns them into creative spaces. I prayed and said God if this is where you want me to be, open the door if not please close it and show me where you want me to be.

A few weeks had passed I was called in for an interview there I met Merryn, she greeted me with a warm smile, I knew God wanted me to be here. We had a look at the shop front, it had grey walls, grey carpet, it was old and needed a lot of work, but when I saw it I knew that this was going to be

my boutique.

Its been 4 years since I opened up my boutique Ruth Fattal Haute Couture in Parramatta and all I can say is that God has worked and moved me in so many ways. Through the enormous support and prayer of my parents, family and friends He turned an empty space into a place where God's word was shared and people's lives were touched. He turned my dreams into a reality and opened doors I couldn't possibly imagine. I would of never have thought that my now husband was going to walk through my shops doors. Well he did, and now we work together and share this deep desire to touch people through our designs. Through this dream, God had placed my husband in my life so that we could work hand in hand in the business and share God's love through our work. It's been a true blessing and joy to see the broken, the needy, and the lost walk through my shops door. They didn't need a pretty dress but they needed the love of Jesus. And that is my success story, it is not about how many dresses I have sold but rather how God has used me to impact others and show his love through my designs.

Ruth Fattal Haute Couture Vision

Established in 2012 Ruth Fattal Haute Couture is an award winning Fashion Boutique based in Parramatta, it is a place where women can come and feel beautiful and experience traditional couturier methods in a modern environment with personalised service offered to each client. The Designs are bespoke, tailored, carefully crafted, fashionably high-end and truly unique.

The Designers philosophy is that each design and garment has it's own story, the process begins with an initial inspiration, to the designers illustration, from fabrication to colour palettes to tailoring/making, to the finished gown that is then translated into the Designers collection.

www.ruthfattal.com.au shop@ruthfattal.com.au
By appointment 0411019977



Jesus' First Miracle - A Change within a Vessel

By Errol Meaney, Wakefield Parish Uniting Church

It's been said that first things are important. There is even a principle of Biblical interpretation called, "The Law of First Mention" where scholars trace a line of thought or teaching to its first mention. E.g. the first man, the first sin, the first promise, the first offering etc.

So, was there anything significant about His first things Jesus did? The answer of course is, yes!

Everything He said and did was significant. His whole life was significant.

He did not just come from God with a message, He IS the message from God!

He is the language of God in human form. The Word of God made flesh. His words were a sermon. His life was a sermon. His actions were a sermon. His life and His words have been studied and observed more closely than any other.

To find Him is to find Truth and to know Him is to know Life. He has become the reference point for the Christian life, and indeed the human race.

In Him we discover Who God is and who we are. He is the Will of God on display. The personality of God in Person. The fullness of the Godhead in bodily form . . . Praise Him! And we could go on!

There is much we could say about Jesus and even more He could say about us. Suffice to say, that everything about Jesus is important.

So the question is not IF His first Miracle was important, but rather, why?

His First Miracle

It's amazing to me that His first miracle was not a healing, a deliverance or a feeding of the multitude – though He did all of those things and more.

His first miracle was this . . . **A change within a vessel!**

Jesus turned water into wine. (See John Chapter 2)

For many years, this miracle intrigued me. Why did Jesus turn water into wine? Have you ever wondered?

Was He making a statement about weddings, about parties or even alcohol??

Why was this miracle chosen to be included in the Gospel??

It must be important, for John wrote later that Jesus did and said many more things than were recorded in his gospel and that indeed, there was not enough room in any amount of books to contain all He said and did. (Jn 21:25)

But notice! John says that this was not just the first recorded miracle of Jesus – but the actual *first* miracle. *"This, the first of his miraculous signs that Jesus performed at Cana of Galilee". (Jn 2:11)*

The power of the Gospel in a Picture

The Gospel is great news.

When God looked at the world full of corruption, problems and pain – He did not withdraw or push the world away, but rather moved towards it in the person of His Son, to rescue, redeem and reconcile.

Jesus gets to the heart of the human problem by changing the human heart. He can do what no human effort could do. What no rule, ritual or religion could do.

Even though this miracle of changing water to wine is so well known, it is so often overlooked or misunderstood. For me, it is a constant inspiration and a powerful reminder of the ministry of Christ, and the Power of the Gospel to change lives. I'm encouraged whenever I read it. It is a powerful picture of promise and grace. May you also be encouraged as we revisit this story.

The context

I think it's worth noting that John records the miracles of Jesus as "signs"

This miracle, John calls the first of the *"miraculous signs" that Jesus performed and He thus revealed His glory and His disciples put their faith in Him (Jn 2:11)*

What is a sign? Put simply, a sign is something that points to something else. A sign never points to itself.

This is the first key to the message of this miracle.

I have heard people argue about whether the wine was alcoholic or non-alcoholic! In a culture that celebrated wine, I think we can be sure that it was not non-alcoholic. No drinkers rejoice at the end of a party when they hear that the fruit juice has been brought out.

But, this is to miss the point! The point is that what Jesus did, was a sign. It pointed to something. It was a message, a sermon and a most powerful object lesson.

This Miracle had less to do with the fact that the wedding banquet had run out of wine and more to do with what His ministry would do in the lives of people. What His "Wine" would do!

Consider the order of events.

(continued next page)

Jesus' First Miracle - A Change within a Vessel (...continued)

Jesus' mother comes to Him after the wine had run out with a simple observation and comment. "They have no more wine." Jesus response is startling. "Dear woman, why do you involve me?... My time is not yet come." (Jn 2: 3-4) Jesus seems to be abrupt with his mother and makes a connection between their lack of wine and "His time".

What other "Time" could Jesus have been referring to, other than the "time" where He would offer up the "wine" of His blood on the cross?

A few short years later, speaking of His death, Jesus said, "Now my soul is troubled, and what shall I say? 'Father save me from this hour'? No, it was for this very reason I came to this hour" (Jn 12 27)

There was an hour, an appointed time for Him to give His life, but it was not at this wedding. Further to that point, Jesus later, and for all time, associated wine with His blood at the last supper. So, if that was the case, His answer makes perfect sense. It's as if He says, "It is not my time to give my wine (blood) now, but I will show you something!"

He then proceeds to make a powerful statement about His mission and purpose.

*"Nearby stood 6 stone water jars, the kind used by the Jews for ceremonial washing, each holding from 20 to 30 gallons. **Jesus said to the servants, fill them to the brim**" (Jn 2:7)*

(Emphasis added)

Now, you remember the rest of the story. The servants drew water from the jars and took it to the master of the banquet who was shocked and said, "...you have saved the best wine been until last!?" (Jn 2:10)

The Punchline!

What make this miracle so amazing, is not just that He turned water into wine (as amazing as that is) but in the *type* of water He turned into wine!

This was not drinking water!

This was "holy water" or ceremonial washing water! The type used by the Jews for ceremonial and religious cleansing. Jesus deliberately pointed to *those* stone jars and said fill *them* to the brim. He takes that water, which was for external use and changes into something that is taken internally! His Ministry, His Blood, would make the jar clean on the **INSIDE**.

Jesus ministry would bring a change within a vessel! What an amazing statement this miracle is! No amount of external washing or ritual can cleanse the conscience or heal the heart!

The writer of Hebrews puts it this way, "*Much more... (than old Testament sacrifice and ceremony) will the Blood of Christ . . . cleanse our consciences from acts that lead to death, so we may serve the Living God.*" (Heb 9:14 with brackets added) Such wonderful news!

A change with in a vessel

The same old Jar – but something wonderfully new inside. That which was for external washing has been upgraded for internal transformation. This has become one of my favourite pictures of the Gospel.

Nothing in side that jar was so stained or corrupted, so dark or even empty – that it would not be transformed by the work of Christ.

The Jars were filled to the "**Brim**"!! Did you notice? When I saw this, I thought that God must have put that in there just for me! This tells me there is nothing in your life so stained... so damaged, so broken or even so empty that the blood of Christ and the life of Christ cannot transform it to the full.

The New Covenant is one in which God redeems the Whole person. Not half. Not part. There is nothing in you that repulses Him or intimidates Him. He can transform you fully from this inside out.

The Apostle Paul said, "*We have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God and not us.*" (2 Cor 4:7) How wonderful that it is His power and not our own that transforms. We simply receive Him. Who He is and What He is, He imparts.

The world may see you, and me, as just another, "cracked pot" But God is not in the "Vessel comparing" business. Man looks at the outward but God looks at the heart

No wonder Jesus chose to this as His First miraculous sign! Could there have been a more profound picture of what His "Wine" would do in the lives of ordinary clay vessels?

Why not allow Christ into your life?

He does not give Himself in portion, but in Person.

His love will fill you to the brim.

He is not intimidated by the condition or the content or any vessel – His Life and His Love will transform it to the full.

He thus revealed His glory!

Praise him



Always Laboring Fervently, Solomon Islands update, YWAM Emerge update

From Rick Rupp, 13-Jun-2016

Hello Everyone! I did not initiate my YWAM Emerge trip June 9 -11 to Colorado Springs, CO. which was a conference primarily for marketplace entrepreneurs. The trip was a fully funded gift and I am so glad that I went. I got to pray over many of them. I got to listen to numerous powerful testimonies of businessmen and women in the marketplace who make prayer a priority and who acknowledge that Jesus is the CEO of there businesses. I've returned home enriched and greatly encouraged to witness how God is moving in the hearts of these "sold out for Jesus" business people!

I also want to testify that I did not initiate the making of the new video, nor the current Australian fund raiser nor the current USA fund raiser. These were all gifts to **www.CleanWater4Life.com**. I am a "Prayer Guy". My heart is just overflowing with gratefulness that the Holy Spirit would speak to people about the urgency of funding these Solomon Islands water well projects! Folks in one week we now have funding for 7 of the 25 water well projects! More Lord!

Plus IHOPKC honored me by posting this new Clean Water 4 Life video on both their Forerunner Christian Fellowship, and on there International House of Prayer, Face Book pages! And hundreds more shared it on Face Book and several people emailed the You Tube link out to there email lists! After one week of it being on Face Book our new video has been viewed 30,000 times! If you have not watched this video yet here it is.

<https://youtu.be/66ZwRzABRAE>

So far this new Solomon Islands water well fund raising effort has netted donations from Canada, England, Australian and the USA. Several people in the USA sent checks to sponsor one complete well directly to the National Christian Foundation rather than donating online at this link: **<http://www.cleanwater4life.com/DonateNow>** which I pray more will do!

Likewise in Australia several contributions were sent directly into the World Mission Aid / Clean Water 4 Life Fund to sponsor one complete well project which I believe will continue! Here is the online link for the Australian House of Prayer for All Nations tax deductible contributions: **www.cleanwater4life.com.au/25wells**

I'm headed back to the Solomon Islands in exactly two more weeks on June 26. Our water well projects will be evangelistic and so I'm needing lots of prayer coverage and lots of finances. Please don't even think that your \$10.00 or \$20.00 gift is too small. We need small, medium, and large contributions. Please pray, listen to this new video and give as the Holy Spirit directs ok? I believe several people this week will sow the full amount needed for one complete water well project!

Michael has a birthday on July 9. So here is his address if you want to bless him with a Birthday Card or write him while I'm gone on this trip. Thank you!

Michael Rupp 23160 031
FCI Fort Worth, Federal Correction Institution
P.O. Box 15330
Ft Worth, TX 76119

I only need to raise another \$2,300.00 for my upcoming July/August trip expenses. If you would like to sow into my travel expenses for this trip, you may do so online at IHOPKC giving e-link eGiving Code **RR587249**
<https://www.ihopkc.org/give/staffsupport/form/?cid=701d0000000OMOnAAO&sname=Richard%20Rupp>
or with PayPal using my email **rickrupp@ihopkc.org** or mail a check:

Make check payable to **National Christian Foundation, in the memo write Acct # 1121806**

Mail checks to: **National Christian Foundation, 11625 Rainwater Drive Suite 500, Alpharetta, GA 30009**

On June 26 - August 28 I'm ministering in Solomon Islands and Sept 1 - Sept 12 onto Australia.

Thank you partners for praying and sowing!

This link explains our goals for 2016 in the Solomon Islands: **<http://www.rickrupp.com/newsletter/goals.php>**

Online giving for these water wells projects use **www.Cleanwater4Life.com** or Go Fund Me link.

Please contact me if you are interested in joining me for a future trip to the Solomon Islands!

Thank you!

Please contact me if you are interested in having me come share my "Islands Slide Show Presentation." I promise anyone hearing these many wonderful testimonies of answered prayer, and listening to Fa'arau House of Prayer as they sing and worship Jesus will be deeply inspired!

(continued next page)

Always Laboring Fervently (...continued)

Leviticus 6:12 The Fire on the altar shall never go out!

Oh Father God, Lord Jesus Christ, bring us to our knees. Find us contending in prayer until the breakthrough is birthed in Jesus name. Amen

God Establish Your Topeka House Of Prayer

Meditation: **Proverbs 3:5-6**

"Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding: in all your ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct your paths."

"Prayer is not for the strong. It is for the weak. It is simple and it is doable, but you have to admit that you cannot do it on your own. First we must remember that the power that raised Christ from the dead lives on the inside and we have access to that power! Second, the way that we access that power is by abiding in the Vine. Remembering that true fellowship and abiding involves a 2-way dialogue, I have found the acronym T.R.U.S.T. to be a helpful tool to start a conversation in prayer.

T - Thank you: Recognize the Spirit's indwelling presence. "Thank you Holy Spirit, for Your presence in me. I love Your presence.

R - Release Revelation: Ask the Spirit to release revelation "Holy Spirit, open my eyes to see God's glory and to encounter His heart."

U - Use me: "Thank you, Spirit, for manifesting Your gifts and power through me to help others."

S - Strengthen me: Ask the Spirit to strengthen your mind, emotions, and speech with His divine might. The fruits of the Spirit are already in you (Gal. 5:22-23). Therefore, pray: "Thank you for the presence of Your love, joy, peace, patience, and self-control in me."

T - Teach me: Ask Him to teach you about God's Word, will, and ways, and to manifest His leadership in every issue in your life including finances, schedule circumstances, emotions, physical body (diet, health), relationships, and alignment of the people you are responsible for (home, office, ministry).

When I think about prayer I think about connecting and accessing the power of Christ on the inside, agreeing with the truth of the Word, and dismantling the accusations of the enemy. I want to live in the truth of what the Lord says over me. Living in that reality makes me excited about prayer!"

It is urgent that we return to covenant relationship with God and with one another in the Body of Christ. This is essential to provide security and protection from the spirit of this age that is destroying our children and youth, our marriages, families, congregations and communities. Why not Topeka! Why not NOW!

"What an unspeakable privilege united prayer is and what a power it can be...God rules the world by the prayers of His saints...prayer is the power by which Satan is conquered...by prayer the church on earth has at its disposal the powers of the heavenly world."

Join us as we stand in the gap for Topeka and surrounding cities in worship and intercession. The Topeka HOP meets at the Open Way Church at 200 NW Gordon St. 66608. THOP meets every Friday night from 6:00- 9:00 pm, Also on Friday nights we offer soaking prayer for those needing healing. This is a city wide prayer meeting and all churches are welcome. For information on how you can become trained or involved in participating on a worship team simply email me at rickrupp@ihopkc.org

Rick Rupp | NightWatch Dad

RickRupp@ihopkc.org

IHOPKC Intercessory Missionary

www.rickrupp.com

Director Of Topeka House Of Prayer

www.CleanWater4Life.com



A Prayer for the Preservation of Marriage in Australia

10 June 2016

The Structure of a Doctrinal Spiritual Warfare Prayer Patterned on the Lord's Prayer

No	PART	The Lord's Prayer ¹	CONTENT
1	ADDRESS GOD	Our Father in heaven,	Bring Yourself before the One True God
2	WORSHIP	hallowed be Your Name,	Praise, Adore, Ascribe etc.
3	DECLARE	Your ² kingdom come, Your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.	Declare God's will and purpose based on the Truth of His Word
4	PETITION	Give us today our daily bread.	Bring relevant needs before God
5	CONFESS, REPENT and FORGIVE	And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors.	Confess sins of commission and omission, sins of identification etc., repent, ask for forgiveness and forgive others
6	DEMOLISH STRONGHOLDS	And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one.	In the Name of Jesus, take authority over every work and deception of the enemy and make it obedient to Christ
7	GIVE GLORY	For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are Yours, now and forever. Amen	Declare God's Kingdom authority and give thanks for the victory

WELCOME

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Welcome to this prayer for the preservation of marriage in Australia³ – the Great Southland of the Holy Spirit! It is written as a doctrinal spiritual warfare prayer. When Jesus prayed and fasted for forty days in the wilderness,⁴ He quoted the written Word of God to counter the attacks of Satan. This prayer is an attempt to follow the example of Jesus.

As shown in the table on the previous page, it is patterned on the seven parts of the Lord's Prayer. All quotes from Scripture are taken from the New International Version (NIV). It is formatted so that it can be printed as an A5 booklet.

We encourage you to pray through this prayer at least once in its entirety, and then as led, before the Federal election. Then afterwards, in anticipation of a plebiscite or a vote on marriage, we ask you to do the same.

As it is a lengthy prayer it can be prayed through at different times. You can focus on different segments as you feel led. You may, for example, want to give more time to making petitions or you may feel a burden to pray for a particular stronghold.

Before praying this prayer I recommend that you ask for God's protection over yourself, family, friends, church fellowship and all you are doing for the Lord. You can refer to Scripture passages such as Psalm 18:1-3, Psalm 91:1-16, Romans 8:28-39, Ephesians 6:10-18, 1 Peter 5:6-11 and Revelation 12:10-12.

After praying you might like to sing songs of victory into the heavenly realms. You might even sing a hymn traditionally sung at weddings, such as *'When Love is Found'*, *'O Perfect Love'* or *'Love Divine, All Loves Excelling'*. Your feedback or suggestions on how to improve this prayer are very welcome.

So much is at stake for the future of our nation and our children. Please share this prayer with others. As we pray for the preservation of marriage in Australia, let us declare with the apostle Paul, *"thanks be to God! He gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ"*.⁵

Yours faithfully,

David Rowsome

Email: drowsome@gmail.com

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¹ Parts 1 to 6 are from Matthew 6:9-13 NIV and Part 7 is from a 1988 **English Language Liturgical Consultation (ELLC)** version of the Lord's Prayer

² In this document, capitals are used for pronouns referring to God in the text and in the Scripture quoted.

³ **DISCLAIMER:** I, David Rowsome, have written this prayer in an individual and personal capacity only, and it should not be construed or interpreted in any way as having the endorsement of the Canberra Declaration, the National Day of Prayer and Fasting, or any affiliated entity.

⁴ Luke 4:1-13

⁵ 1 Corinthians 15:57

A Prayer for the Preservation of Marriage (...continued)

ADDRESS GOD

Loving Father, Wise Creator, Most High God,
WORSHIP

You are *"worthy to receive all glory and honour and power, for You created all things, and by Your will they were created and have their being"*.⁶

You are *"the compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger, abounding in love. You do not treat us as our sins deserve or repay us according to our iniquities"*.⁷

You alone are God who is love - not that we first loved You, but that You loved us and *"sent Your Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins"*.⁸

We give thanks and praise to You that *"while we were still sinners, Christ died for us"*.⁹ For You *"so loved the world that You gave Your one and only Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life"*.¹⁰

Thank You that Your Word assures us that nothing *"will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord"* and that *"we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us"*.¹¹

Thank You for the precious privilege of interceding for the preservation of marriage in Australia knowing that the *"Holy Spirit Himself intercedes for us with groans that words cannot express"* and that Jesus is at Your right hand and *"is also interceding for us"*.¹²

DECLARE

God in Heaven, this day we bring before You the attempts from different segments of our society to radically alter the definition of marriage as found in the Marriage Act - *"the union of a man and a woman to the exclusion of all others, voluntarily entered into for life"*.

Your Word declares that in the beginning *"God created man in His own image - male and female He created them"*.¹³ You created the first man from the dust of the earth and the first woman from the man's flesh and bone. In so doing, You showed us Your design for marriage saying, *"a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and they will become one flesh"*.¹⁴ This we acknowledge is the mystical union of a man and a woman that is ordained by You. The two become one flesh in the intimacy and commitment of sexual union that is reserved only for marriage.

You gave marriage as a gift and any sexual union outside the sacred bond of marriage is detestable in Your sight. We thank You for the beautiful and intimate story found in Your Word in the Song of

Songs of a man and a woman - their love, their courtship and their marriage. We furthermore declare the precious and *"profound mystery"*¹⁶ that the sacrificial love of a husband for his wife is a picture of how *"Christ loved the Church and gave Himself up for her to make her holy"*. We rejoice that even now Jesus is *"cleansing her [the Church] by the washing with water through the Word ... to present her to Himself as a radiant church, without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish, but holy and blameless"*.¹⁶

In the light of these unchangeable truths, we acknowledge that this recent move to redefine marriage did not happen overnight but is the culmination of decades of the undermining of marriage and family in Australia. In particular, we look back to the Sexual Revolution of the 1960s which ushered in a plethora of unrighteous and unjust laws such as the Family Law Act 1975. This legalisation of no-fault divorce in Australia has had long term effects and continues to devastate thousands of marriages and families every year. Lord, we are grieved by the subsequent suffering of men, women and children and the weakening of our society.

You declared through the prophet Malachi that *"I hate divorce"*. For as Malachi explains, *"has not the LORD made them one? In flesh and spirit they are His. And why one? Because He was seeking godly offspring. So guard yourself in your spirit, and do not break faith with the wife of your youth"*.¹⁷ Jesus also sternly warned in regard to divorce, *"so they are no longer two, but one flesh. Therefore what God has joined together, let no one separate"*.¹⁸ teaching that divorce is not permissible *"except for marital unfaithfulness"*.¹⁹

We are particularly grieved that Australia, like many Western nations founded on Judeo-Christian values, is now rejecting the foundational truth that true marriage is exclusively between a man and a woman. Even though You have clearly stated in Your Word that homosexual behaviour is *"detestable"*²⁰ in Your sight, much of our society has been seduced to believe that it is normal and acceptable.

Your Word declares that homosexual behaviour has its beginnings when men and women *"suppress the truth"* about You as the Creator and Sustainer of the heavens and the earth.²¹ Because of this You *"gave them over in the sinful desires of their hearts to sexual impurity for the degrading of their bodies with one another"*.²² Then as they continued and *"exchanged the truth of God for a lie"*, You *"gave them over to shameful lusts"* and *"indecent acts"*.

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⁶ Revelation 4:11

¹¹ Romans 8:37-39

¹⁶ Ephesians 5:25-27

²¹ Romans 1:18-20

⁷ Psalm 103:8-10

¹² Romans 8:26,34

¹⁷ Malachi 2:14-16

²² Romans 1:24

⁸ 1 John 4:10

¹³ Genesis 1:27

¹⁸ Matthew 19:4-6

⁹ Romans 5:8

¹⁴ Genesis 2:24

¹⁹ Matthew 5:32

¹⁰ John 3:16

¹⁵ Ephesians 5:32

²⁰ Leviticus 18:22

A Prayer for the Preservation of Marriage (...continued)

As a result some men and women have *“exchanged natural relations for unnatural ones”* and have embraced a homosexual lifestyle. In so doing they have *“received in themselves the due penalty for their perversion”*,²³ for the person *“who sins sexually sins against his [or her] own body”*.²⁴ And for the Christian this is even more serious because the *“body is a temple of the Holy Spirit”*.²⁵

But we declare that while You, O God, hate the sins of divorce and homosexuality, You love the sinner. You have declared in Your Word, *“I take no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but rather that they will turn from their ways and live”*.²⁶ So great is Your compassion that You are *“not wanting anyone to perish but everyone to come to repentance”*,²⁷ so that all might live! Thank You for calling us to be ministers of Christ's love and compassion to men and women held captive by sexual immorality. We steadfastly resolve to pray for them and *“speak the truth in love”*.²⁸

PETITION

Righteous God, we ask that You preserve marriage in Australia as exclusively between a man and a woman as You ordained in the beginning.

We acknowledge that in ourselves we are powerless before political leaders, homosexual advocacy groups, media magnates, leading academics and corporation heads in our society who want to redefine marriage. Our society stands at a critical point in time, when all that we cherish about marriage and family, is gravely threatened. We acknowledge that *“we do not know what to do, but our eyes are on You”*.²⁹

Abba Father, the apostle Paul fearlessly proclaimed Your truth during the persecution of Christians by the Roman Emperor, Nero. He urged that *“supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made for all people, for kings and all who are in high positions, that we may lead a peaceful and quiet life, godly and dignified in every way”*.³⁰ For Your Word states that *“the king's heart is in the hands of the LORD; He directs it like a watercourse wherever He pleases”*.³¹

We therefore pray that in the upcoming Federal election on 2 July 2016, that godly politicians will be elected who will be surrounded by godly counsellors. We pray that those elected to form a new government will go ahead with a plebiscite that is well-worded and fair and according to Your appointed time.

We pray that in the debate leading up to the plebiscite that You put a guard over our mouths by Your Holy Spirit, so that our words convict but do not condemn. As we take part in the national debate let *“no weapon formed against us prosper”*.

Help us *“to refute every tongue that rises against us in judgment”*.³² Give us the strength and perseverance to fight this battle. Cause us to be sober and vigilant watchmen.

Your Word tells us that *“the person without the Spirit does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God but considers them foolishness, and cannot understand them because they are discerned only through the Spirit”*.³³ And speaking to those who were ready to kill Him, Jesus said, *“He who belongs to God hears what God says. The reason you do not hear is that you do not belong to God”*.³⁴

O God, reveal Yourself to our political, civic, corporate, academic and church leaders who support the push to redefine marriage. May the fear of God come upon them! For those who have not invited Your Son Jesus into their hearts, bring them to repentance, faith and life in the Lord Jesus Christ. Bring them to faith by the convicting work of Your Holy Spirit for as Jesus said, *“no one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him”*.³⁵

For those who are already believers reveal to them by Your Holy Spirit, the Spirit of Truth, any matter where they have been seduced or deceived. Have mercy on our leaders. Open their eyes and unblock their ears to the insidious and destructive dangers of this **agenda to redefine marriage**.

We bring before You –

- Rodney Croome (National Director of Australian Marriage Equality)
- Penny Wong (Labor Senator who is outspoken on LGBTIQI issues)
- Bill Shorten (Leader of the Opposition who has said he will call a vote for homosexual ‘marriage’ without a plebiscite within 100 days of being elected)
- Tanya Pliabsek (Deputy Leader of the Opposition who made a push to force Labor MPs to support the redefinition of marriage without a conscience vote)
- Richard Di Natale (Leader of Greens Party which has made many attempts to redefine marriage in Australia in the past)
- All Federal, State and Territory Supreme Court Justices
- Daniel Andrews (Premier of Victoria who recently had a rainbow flag flown on top of the Parliament of Victoria as part of a ‘Gay Sorry Day’)
- Graham Quirk (the Lord Mayor who recently

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²³ Romans 1:26-27

²⁷ 2 Peter 3:9

³¹ Proverbs 21:1

³⁵ John 6:44

²⁴ 1 Corinthians 6:18

²⁸ Ephesians 4:15

³² Isaiah 54:17

³⁶ James 4:12

²⁵ 1 Corinthians 6:19

²⁹ 2 Chronicles 20:12

³³ 1 Corinthians 2:14

²⁶ Ezekiel 33:11

³⁰ 1 Timothy 2:1-2

³⁴ John 8:47

A Prayer for the Preservation of Marriage (...continued)

declared Brisbane a 'Marriage Equality' city)

- Over 800 Heads of Banks and CEOs of Corporations who advocate a change in the definition of marriage
- Gay and Lesbian Rights and LGBTQI Lobby Groups
- Latrobe University's Australian Research Centre for Sex, Health and Society
- (others as you feel led)

God our "*Lawgiver and Judge*",³⁶ be with our Prime Minister, Malcolm Turnbull and political leaders, newspaper columnists and church leaders as they speak against changes to the definition of marriage.

Let media, social media and other discussions bring traditional marriage out of the shadows and into the public square. Give them (pray by name as you feel led) courage, wisdom and the right words to say.

Gracious Father, We thank You that marriage has been preserved thus far in Australia despite eighteen attempts to legislate to redefine marriage. Thank You that our previous Prime Minister Tony Abbott promised a plebiscite and that our current Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull has honoured that promise. We ask You for a decisive victory that will allow our Government to more effectively govern.

Sovereign God, thank You that You use Christian ministries to bring awareness to the Body of Christ and to the general public. Give them Your strategies to address this flood of evil across our land. Enable them to spur us on to boldly pray and speak out against the redefinition of marriage. We bring before You these organisations, their leaders and workers -

- Australian Christian Lobby
- Australian Family Association
- Australian Marriage Forum
- Australian Prayer Network
- Canberra Declaration
- Christian Federation
- Culture Watch
- Family Voice Australia
- National Civic Council
- Salt Shakers
- (others as you feel led)

Give the Body of Christ the courage to speak fearlessly in unity and strength. The preservation of marriage in Australia is pivotal to the future of our nation and our children. Move us to contend for marriage so that it will not be pushed aside and ignored in debate. Stir us to shout the truth about marriage from the rooftops!

CONFESS, REPENT and FORGIVE

Holy God, we now confess our part in not dealing with

those things in our society that have made us vulnerable to the push to redefine marriage. We bring before You our actions and lack of actions which have undermined the Judeo-Christian foundations of religious freedom, marriage and family and the sanctity of human life.

- We confess our part in **looking to the wisdom of man** and not "*humbly relying on the blessing of Almighty God*" as set out in our Constitution. We are sorry for our ingratitude for all the blessings You have bestowed upon us. In our affluence we have vainly imagined that we do not need You. O God, forgive us.
- We confess our **prayerlessness in regard to the on-going effects of the Sexual Revolution of the 1960s**. This rebellion against You separated sex from procreation and sex and procreation from marriage. It now attempts to deconstruct the gender differences between men and women. We are sorry for not resisting Satan, the instigator of the Sexual Revolution, as we ought. In our apathy we have let things spiral down. Please forgive us.
- We confess our **complacency with no-fault divorce** to the extent that the number of divorces have dramatically increased since the Sexual Revolution. We are sorry that the divorce rate amongst Christians is also high. This has left behind a legacy of fatherless or motherless homes. Many young children are living with undeserved rejection and disillusionment. Many are blaming themselves for the break-up of their parents. They have not been listened to and their lives have been permanently scarred. We have lacked real empathy. Have mercy on us.
- We confess our **silence in allowing legalised prostitution to go unchallenged**. This sends the message that sex outside a marriage relationship is wholly acceptable. Many do not know that sex is a sacred part of the mystical one flesh union of a married couple. Since the Sexual Revolution, sex has been reduced to a commodity that can be purchased in any registered brothel. We have not adequately confronted this evil. Please forgive us.
- We confess our **lack of outrage for the shedding of innocent blood of unborn babies through abortion**. This has wiped out, on the altar of convenience, a third of a whole generation since the Sexual Revolution. We are saddened that more and more children and young adults are realising that they are the 'survivors' that their parents' generation chose not to kill. This can only alienate the generations with a huge wedge of distrust between them. We mourn for the atrocious and deliberate killing of approximately 4

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A Prayer for the Preservation of Marriage (...continued)

million unborn Australian babies. Our hearts cry out! O God, we are sorry. Have mercy on us.

- We confess our **indifference to the teaching of atheistic evolution in our schools**. This unproven worldview has convinced a whole generation since the Sexual Revolution that they are just another animal on the evolutionary ladder. We are sorry that we have allowed our schools to continue teaching that man is just a cosmic accident and that emotions such as love are just evolutionary mechanisms which help to ensure the survival of the fittest. Without You life is meaningless. Without You, there is no accountability for how we live and no right or wrong. In our dullness we have not spoken out. Please forgive us.
- We confess our part in **allowing the insidious pornification of our society**. This means that a whole generation since the Sexual Revolution cannot escape early and frequent exposure. Indeed our society has been so saturated with pornography that our collective attitude toward sex has been poisoned with perversion, violence and self-gratification. We are appalled at what goes into our children's minds through television, the internet and public advertising. Such things have hastened the sexualisation of our children and robbed them of their childhood. For too long we have been looking the other way. Have mercy on us.
- We confess **distancing ourselves from those caught in a homosexual lifestyle**. We confess our part in rejecting men and women, made in Your image, who are ensnared in homosexuality. Please forgive us. Fill us with Your unconditional love and move us to help them to be set free.

We now repent and turn from these sins.

We ask You Father to have mercy on us and forgive us. Give us wisdom, discernment and strength to resist the continuation of these sins that have shaped a whole new generation since the Sexual Revolution. Burden our hearts in such a way that we take steps to overcome these evils. Help us to make restitution or restoration where these are needed.

Please also move us to forgive and have compassion on those who are perpetrators of these things. In many cases they do not know what they are doing. Stir us to pray and fast for revival so that the Church and society will be transformed. Then marriages and families as You ordained will once again have their rightful place in our society.

DEMOLISH STRONGHOLDS

[Ed; for the content of this section, please download the full document from our website at www.transformingsydney.org/PPMA.pdf Strongholds covered are:]

- Stronghold 1 – **Rejecting God's Design for Marriage**
- Stronghold 2 – **Depriving Children of their Birthright of a Mum and a Dad**
- Stronghold 3 – **Validating a Sexually Immoral Lifestyle**
- Stronghold 4 – **Claiming Homosexuality is Normal**
- Stronghold 5 – **Using Intimidation to Silence the Truth**
- Stronghold 6 – **Claiming Love and Commitment are All that Matter**
- Stronghold 7 – **Denying the Freedoms of Religion, Speech and Conscience**
- Stronghold 8 – **Inflicting Radical Intolerance**
- Stronghold 9 – **Embarking on New Stolen Generations**
- Stronghold 10 – **The Flaunting of God's Judgment**
- Stronghold 11 – **The Imposition of Queer Theory**
- Stronghold 12 – **Desecrating the Colours of the Rainbow**

GIVE GLORY

"Be exalted, O God, above the heavens, let Your glory be over all the earth" [Psalm 57:5]

"[Your] works are perfect and all [Your] ways are just" [Deuteronomy 32:4]

"[You are] faithful to all [Your] promises and loving toward all [You] have made" [Psalm 145:13]

"[You] are near to all who call on [You], to all who call on [You] in truth" [Psalm 145:18]

"Your compassions never fail. ... Great is Your faithfulness!" [Lamentations 3:23]

Thank You for the promise of Jesus that we may ask for anything in His Name and He will do it *"so that the Son may bring glory to the Father"* [John 14:14]

We delight in the privilege You have given us, as Your sons and daughters, in sharing Your love in the power of the Holy Spirit to a lost and dying world.

Thanks be to You, O God, *"You give us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ!"* [1 Corinthians 15:57]

"May the earth be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the LORD, as the waters cover the sea" [Habakkuk 2:14]

In the most precious and glorious Name of Jesus we pray.

Amen.

