

# VOICE OF CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP

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## WHERE ARE WE AS A CHURCH?

## PRAY FOR OUR NATION

That is a very legitimate question, especially as we are entering our twenty-fifth year. A look in retrospect reveals the hundreds of people who have been blessed by our Praise and Teachings. People who are not a part of our work anymore recognize the foundation that we helped lay in their lives. Our church has blessed other churches with wonderful, spiritual people who have been a part of our body. These foundations go beyond what many denominational religions offer. Please allow me to note that I am not referring negatively toward those religions, because our very root systems run deep in their waters. We have offered a message of hope with answers that help us maintain a high quality spiritual life. That's a glimpse into the past. Personally, I feel that the quality of Praise and Teachings has increased dramatically with the experience and time in which we have been involved. When people embark on new adventures in life as we have, they make mistakes and hopefully correct and learn from them. The mark of a true Gospel Church is the attendance of the Holy Spirit. He is faithful to guide us and always will as we continue to seek Him. As a church, we will continue to march forth as soldiers of the Master and hopefully affect people in the future as we

I will admit that one thing I have been slack in is praying for the leaders of our nation, and our nation as a whole. It is easy to pray for your friends and family, but to pray for someone you don't know personally and can't put a face on, is usually a remote thought. What does the Bible say about it? 1 Timothy 2:1-4 tells us, **"I exhort therefore, that first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men; For kings, and for all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty. For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior; Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth."** It is interesting to note that we are told here to "first" offer up prayers, intercessions and giving of thanks for all men. Those in authority over us that rule and determine the state of the world we live in. Why is this so important? We all have witnessed and know the influence that leaders have over people. An unjust king or President can influence a generation of people. It can take generations to overcome that influence, if it ever is. Change in the world is inevitable, but our Heavenly Father does not change. He exhorts us to pray, so that godly leaders will be led of God in the decisions they make, and so that ungodly leaders can be influenced by the power of God and by godly advisors they may have in their inner circle. There is really no way that we can know the power that God exerts on behalf of those that faithfully pray and stand for what they know to be right.

Why is it so important to pray for our leaders—not just those in office now, but those that will be exalted to leadership positions in the future? God is empowering His people to lead every day. He has the man or woman selected, so that His Word is fulfilled according to prophecy. Our prayers place us in the place of obedience when we lift up these people. Even those that are evil need our prayers, that they will make the correct decisions. We may not agree with their philosophy on life or politics, but we still want them to make good and beneficial decisions day by day. God is calling His people to stand in the gap and pray for this nation. Ezekial 22:30 says, **"I looked for a man among them who would build up the wall and stand before me in the gap on behalf of the land so that I would not have to destroy it, but I found none."**

2 Chronicles 7:14-15 reads, **"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. Now mine eyes shall be open, and mine ears attent unto the prayer that is made in this place."** Our Heavenly Father is always attentive to the prayers of His people. He listens carefully to our heart's desires and He knows what is best. When we pray the Father's will, He is faithful to fulfill that prayer. We already know it is His desire that we pray for our leaders, so when we pray He hears that prayer. It is our heart that prays and it is the Father's heart that hears.

Finally, why me? Who am I that I should be responsible to pray for world leaders? Isaiah 62:6 tells us, **"I have set watchmen upon the walls, O Jerusalem, who will never hold their peace day or night; you who [are His servants and by your prayers] put the Lord in remembrance [of His promises], keep not silence."** We are called to "keep not silence" which means we are to voice our prayers and petition the Lord for those things we need or want to see in this world. After all, if we don't do it, who will? It is not our duty to let others do it, although we should encourage others



**"HE IS LORD OF ALL."**

ACTS 10:36, NRSV

# BLESSING

Luke 6:27— “But I say unto you which hear, Love your enemies, do good to them which hate you, **Bless them that curse you, and pray for them which despitefully use you.**” (KJV)

To bless them that curse you is a very tall order; it definitely is not the way of the world.

The world wants to lash back at those that hurt

us; to cause them more hurt than they caused us. Jesus gives us a higher way to deal with hurt in this scripture. It is not easy, but when we learn this principle it will set us free from the hurt and bitterness within us.

There are four steps in the healing process: (1) Hurt, (2) Wisdom, (3) Blessing and (4) Beauty.

**Hurt:** There are many ways in which we are hurt, they vary from severe such as a spouse being unfaithful to a family member or friend saying something hurtful. There are even imagined hurts, when we take offense when none was intended. All of these will cause spiritual decay if they are not dealt with; many will manifest themselves in natural sickness and disease.

**Wisdom:** When we look we can learn from every situation in our lives, whether good or bad. The things we learn for these situations is wisdom in our lives. That does not mean we wanted to experience them to gain the wisdom or that we want to go through them again; it simply means we draw wisdom from them.

1 Corinthians 10:13— “There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it.” (KJV)

Temptation as used in this verse can be translated experience or test; every test and experience we have has been previously experienced by man. Good news! God will not allow us to be tested more than we are capable of withstanding. When we find ourselves in a tough experience we could praise God that He considers us capable of handling the situation we are experiencing. When we fail it is because we considered ourselves unable to withstand and did not consider that God considered us capable! God sees the experience from it’s end; He knows what the outcome should be, it is up to us to experience the outcome He sees as the end of the experience.

**Blessing:** To totally heal the hurt, we should bless all aspects of the experience; of course this includes forgiveness. Some hurts are so bad that it seems impossible to forgive; we know that through Christ all things are possible, therefore forgiveness is possible. When we bless all aspects of the hurt we can come to a place in which we can forgive. Blessing all aspects of the hurt means to verbally bless everyone and everything touched by the hurt; this can and probably should be done in private; you don’t have to say the blessing in person. Bless the incident; bless the one that caused the hurt; bless those that were present; bless yourself; bless those that were touched in some way by the experience.

**Beauty:** Beauty comes when you experience the peace that comes with the healing experienced by blessing the hurt. The beauty of knowing that you are capable of enduring the experience, the beauty of experiencing God’s power working in and through you, and the beauty of not living with the hurt and bitterness caused by the experience.

I hope that blessing now takes on a new meaning for you, that you bless every situation in your life, that when you see an ambulance rushing somewhere, you bless the ambulance crew and the person they are going to assist, when someone hurts you that you immediately bless them under your breath, when a tragedy happens you bless the tragedy and all those affected by it, and on and on and on.

May you be **BLESSED** in all that you do in the name of the Lord!

Your servant in Christ, Ray Jennings

## THE POOR PEOPLE

One day, the father of a very wealthy family took his son on a trip to the country with the express purpose of showing him how poor people live. They spent a couple of days and nights on the farm of what would be considered a very poor family. On their return from the trip, the father asked his son, “How was the trip?” “It was great, Dad.” “Did you see how poor people live?” the father asked. “Oh yeah,” said the son. “So, tell me, what did you learn from the trip?” asked the father. The son answered; “I saw that we have one dog and they had four. We have a pool that reaches to the middle of our garden and they have a creek that has no end. We have imported lanterns in our garden and they have the stars at night. Our patio reaches to the front yard and they have the whole horizon. We have a small piece of land to live on and they have fields that go beyond our sight. We have servants who serve us, but they serve others. We buy our food, but they grow theirs. We have walls around our property to protect us, they have friends to protect them.” The boy’s father was speechless. Then his son added, “Thanks Dad for showing me how poor we are.” Isn’t perspective a wonderful thing? Makes you wonder what would happen if we all gave thanks for everything we have, instead of worrying about what we don’t have. Appreciate every single thing you have, especially your friends! “Life is too short and friends are too few.”

# DEAR CHURCH,

I am sitting here in Alaska looking at the beauty. It is white with snow. The trees are covered in snow and ice and glisten when the sunlight hits them. It is so beautiful. Everything is white and just glistens with purity when the sunlight hits it. There is no darkness

when the sun is shining, just pure white light. It reminds me of heaven, light, no darkness.

I left Wednesday, January 9th, at 2:30 PM, from Jackson and scheduled to be in Anchorage at 11:54 PM. Flights to Houston and Seattle were on time, smooth sailing. We left Seattle going to Anchorage and got half way when the pilot announced we were having mechanical problems and he would keep us informed on what the plan would be. Church, I went to sleep, very unlike me on a plane. I seldom ever sleep on a plane. I, like my pastor, love to fly.

About two months before I left, many problems occurred in my life. I asked my Father, "What is this all about?" He told me, "I am preparing you for what you are about to face. You have to stand and not be moved in the midst of any circumstance knowing you are resting in the palm of My hand." I am not bragging, I am praising the Lord and thanking you for the prayers you pray for me. They are so comforting and restrengthening to me. In the midst of this storm, I went to sleep. I woke up and we were landing. I looked out the window and saw it was raining. I thought, what is this? Miss Mary said it was snowing in Alaska. The stewardess announced they were sorry for the inconvenience and would inform us if we would change planes or stay on the same one and they repair it when the part arrived. The girl sitting next to me said, "We are back in Seattle. We had to turn around because the navigation system went out on our plane." We had to wait on them to repair the plane. They did not let us get off, we had to just sit there. We finally arrived in Anchorage at 4:30 AM here, 7:30 AM at home, a very long day. I am so excited because I did not move! I slept in the palm of my Father's hand! GLORY! Thank you church for your prayers. I truly do feel them. I know that we (you are with me in my heart) will face trials this trip. I want to follow the Word in James 1, "**Count it all joy when you fall into trials, knowing the testing of your faith bringeth forth patience, and it will have her perfect work that ye may be perfect and entire lacking nothing.**" I do not want to waver any or be double minded. I want the end result, verse 12, "**Blessed is the man that endureth temptation; for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love Him.**" We are more than conquerors because of Jesus. We are overcomers! GLORY!

We will be traveling a lot this trip. We leave the 15th of January going to Seoul, Korea, stay the night, go on to Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia on the 18th. We stay in KL, our home away from home, until the 24th of January. We leave then going to Bangalore, India. We will be traveling and ministering in India. Catherine, Yo, and Melanie, all from Malaysia, will be coming to India with us for some of the trip, so keep them in your prayers also. We have a big ministers conference in Bangalore on the 18-22 of February and then leave on the afternoon of the 22nd to go to Sri Lanka. We will be there until March 4, we return to KL and then leave on the 10th to go to Jahor Baru, Malaysia. This is where Catherine is. We have many services here and in Singapore. We then leave on the 31st to return to KL. We leave on the 3rd of April to go to Australia and will be there until the 17th and will go to Kota Kina Balu, Borneo, where we will be until the 30th of April and then return to KL until we leave on the 6th of May to return to the states. I will keep you informed of any changes.

I have been blessed with a trip to Seward, Alaska, when we get home and God has blessed us with a ticket for my mom to meet me in Alaska when I return. I am so excited to know my mom will be waiting for me here when I get here. I know I will be ready to feel those loving arms around me. My mom's unending love has been a great strength for me throughout the trials of my life. Keep her in your prayers also.

I already miss you all but I am honored to be about my Father's business. Thank you all for your support of the ministry call our Father has on my life. I hold you in my heart and you truly go with me. I will see you all in May.

Much love to all, Your

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Missionary, Bess Graham

It is not a duty we can pass on. We are called to prayer for our nation, for our leaders, and for the world system. Right or wrong, it is the world we live in, and for it to be better we as children of God must pray for it. God has placed us here as light and hope for a dying world. Let your light so shine that others will be drawn to that light, in Jesus our Lord.

Bro. Mike Woods





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DEUTERONOMY 30:14, NIV