

A PLEA for PRAYER – December 7, 2013 - No. 131

The 72nd anniversary of the attack on Pearl Harbor – We will never forget!

We would appreciate updates on the location of our military because of continued unit movements.

Note: This list and plea will be updated and expanded as God gives information and grace. While this prayer plea is posted on the Internet, every effort is made to keep information appropriately private and with minimum information on mission, units and location. All requests, news and update information should be sent to the editor at: Coie.1@opc.org

Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends (John 15:13). Let us come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need (Hebrews 4:16). And the work of righteousness shall be peace; and the effect of righteousness quietness and assurance for ever (Isaiah 32:17).

The request continues. Please pray for our OPC men and women, sons and daughters who are in harm's way, about to be in harm's way, and who support those in harm's way. *The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much (James 5:16b). Pray without ceasing (I Thessalonians 5:17).*

At that time the disciples came to Jesus and asked, "Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?" He called a child, whom he put among them, and said, "Truly I tell you, unless you change and become like children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven. Whoever becomes humble like this child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven. (Matthew 18:1-4; NASV).

Prayer Focus: Humble as a Child - In Matthew 18:1-4, we have the record of a remarkable declaration of our LORD Jesus on one of the several recorded occasions in which His disciples were debating among themselves as to whom is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven. In response to this fleshly concern on their part, Jesus placed a child in front of them, and said, "Truly, I say to you, unless you are converted and become like children, you shall not enter the kingdom of heaven. Whoever then humbles himself as this child, he is greatest in the kingdom of heaven."

As He often did in His lustrous teaching, Jesus used a simple object to illustrate a profound truth, here a small child. What a contrast to the appetite exhibited by the disciples for personal prestige and promotion! (Compare with Luke 9:46-48; 22:24-27 and Mark 9:33-37.) In His answer Christ briefly but faithfully stated the non-negotiable requirement for conversion. Without being "born again" one cannot even see the kingdom, much less enter it (John 3:3-5), or to put it another way, He briefly stated that a believing embrace of the good news of the Gospel is the first essential for entry into the kingdom of heaven, often called "conversion". His second essential requirement is for us to "become like child (ren)", which immediately raises the question of what Jesus meant by that unusual and compelling statement.

Clearly, Christ did not intend us to imitate any sinful inclination to childish sins such as petulance, disobedience to parents, disrespect towards elders, resentment, making fun of others, whining and so forth. Then what CHILDLIKE characteristics so stand out that He could use a child to illustrate what saving graces should be imitated, yet without enumerating them, except for one exception. And that is humility, or in its active application by one choosing to,

"humbling himself". This is a priceless insight into the mind of Christ, and deserves our most careful consideration.

To make the choice to humble ourselves was elsewhere stressed by Jesus in three very different circumstances as recorded in Matthew 23:12, Luke 14:11 and 18:14, all excellent perspectives on overcoming the root sin of pride, in our daily use of the means of grace to grow spiritually, to be sanctified, to pursue holiness.

What is it about children that illuminates humility (the "queen of the graces"), in children - even in spite of the fact that they are born with a sinful nature? Quite simply it is to TRUST our Heavenly Father, and our Good Shepherd Jesus, for all our needs, including even His protection in times of danger (Hebrews 4:14-16), in other words to trust God with the uncomplicated faith in godly parents which little children exhibit. Before children learn cynical mistrust, and doubt about their parents intelligence, etc., in the first few years of childhood, children in godly homes do not doubt that their parents will take care of them, do not agonize about tomorrow, do not fear about where to sleep, what to wear, or where their next meal will come from. And in times of danger, do not hesitate to run to their mother's arms, nor are they ashamed to receive outward expressions of their parent's love - All manifestations of genuine humility.

Thus, beloved brothers and sisters in Christ who serve in the armed forces, are called to trust as a humble child, in Jesus, and our heavenly Father, especially in time of need or danger, and when in "harms way". Let us pray daily for all who serve, that the perfect, redeeming love of God will cast out all fear (1 John 4:19) and that Jesus' call to cast all our burdens on Him (Matthew 11:28-30) will be a treasured comfort to their minds and hearts.

Please pray for our valiant men of war to call out to God continually for strength to enable victory over the enemy and that they will continue to be well equipped for battle. And please pray that our nation will be led by humble leaders who call on the name of the Lord and rule righteously that we might have peace. Please pray that God will *shew himself strong in the behalf of them whose heart is perfect toward him*. Pray that they will fear only God and not man and be of a good courage. Pray that they will be bold as a lion and that the wicked will flee. (Prov. 28:1)

Pray as we battle forces both foreign and domestic in our long war; plead with our God to make a way of escape and that in doing so, God will restore us as a nation to His righteousness. Pray for the gracious and needed gift from God of genuine national repentance; especially from the iniquities of abortion, supporting homosexuality, the widespread disregard of the fourth commandment and rejection of the Lordship of Jesus Christ.

Continue to pray that we will recognize the true nature of the enemy. Be not weary in hoping, praying and waiting to see the salvation of our great God whose new mercies come every morning! Pray that the Gospel may continue to have free expression. Pray that the culture of death will be defeated and that our nation will stand united and will endure in the defense of freedom. Please continue to pray for the spouses, children, parents and siblings of our warriors. Pray for the families of the fallen and for the wounded that they may all endure and come to rest and trust in Christ. May they defend our nation's liberties as guaranteed by our Constitution with stalwart hearts and minds!

May we be **“animated to pray by the certain hope of obtaining our requests.”** Calvin

We have lives precious to us in harm's way: Andrew (two), Bowe, Brett, Bryan, Chris, Christopher, Daniel, David (two), Doug, Douglas, Gabriel, Isaac, Jack, Jim, John, Nathan, Nicolas, Noah, Paul (two), Rachel, Ray, Reservist R, Robert (two), Scott, Sebastian, Stephen (three), and Timothy. New deployments shown in bold. Please pray for the two chaplains deployed in harm's way: David DeRienzo and Stephen Roberts.

- From his family – After information that was private was posted online, prisoner of war Army SGT Bowe Bergdahl's family released the following statement: "Through the International Committee of the Red Cross, we recently (1st quarter 2013) received a letter we're confident was written to us by our son Bowe. Our family is greatly relieved and encouraged by this letter, which gives us hope that Bowe is doing as well as can be expected under the circumstances. We thank the ICRC for all their assistance and support over these past four years. We want to also thank the many individuals, private groups and agencies who are working to support us and bring Bowe home. We hope Bowe's captors will again consider his parents' plea to release him, but in the meantime, we ask that you please continue to keep him in good health and allow him to keep corresponding with us." [Bowe has been a prisoner of war since June 30, 2009.]

- [11/3/13] – From Bowe's dad - The Bergdahls continue to rely on their faith in the Sovereign God who sustains us by His Providence in history. May our lives be a testimony to this SDG, DV [Soli deo Gloria, God willing].

- From his retired Naval Aviator dad - My oldest son, Bradley Y. W., was just promoted to Captain in the Army. He remains in Germany. Thanks again for your faithful service to the members of our armed forces and chaplains in these trying days of faith.

- [11/25/13] - From Pastor Steve - Both Col. Lee McFall USMC and Maj. Jacob Reynolds USMC, are now honorably retired. And Olivia C. is now at Langley AFB in Newport News, VA, and Samuel G. is now at Portsmouth Naval Hospital, Portsmouth, VA. We are working hard to get the OPC mission work in Virginia Beach established as the Lord pleases, to serve the many OP personnel who get stationed in the Tidewater region.

- The revision of DADT presents difficulties for many Christians, both those serving in line positions and those serving as chaplains. Therefore we urge you to pray:

1. For all who serve in our military who name the name of Christ,
2. For all Christian chaplains who serve not only the military but also their churches under creedal statements of faith and belief,
3. That the implementation of this legislation will be just and righteous,
4. That the heretofore moral standards of our military will not be severely denigrated by those of good moral character leaving this godly calling,
5. That the Committee and Commission will have wisdom in order to protect those who serve. Praise God that the Commission has adopted additional protections for our chaplains. Please pray that God will grant a powerful and sustained protection for our chaplains from this revision.
6. That our military by serving in one of the last bastions of the defense of freedom, will not be diminished or perish,
7. That this trial will not also in time descend on the pulpits of our land.



Chaplains' Reports:

With all of our military might, the greatest weapon we have in the long war against Islamic terrorists is the Sword of the Spirit utilized in the proclamation of the Gospel and empowered by the sovereign Lord of evangelism. The church wields this weapon best when the expectant prayers of His people accompany it. Pray the Lord of the harvest for the success of the Gospel and for more laborers for the harvest, specifically for more chaplains. Plead for a corps of reformed chaplains sufficient to fill every available opening and sufficient to minister to all of our own deployed warriors. Great petitions to Him bring!

CH (CPT) Stephen L. Roberts, USA, Deployed to Afghanistan (Presbytery of Mid-Atlantic)

By your receipt of this message, I will be in Afghanistan caring for a unit that will hopefully help draw this conflict to a satisfactory conclusion. I have a wonderful rapport with this unit, which God in His grace utilizes for the purpose of counseling and accountability. Once we arrive at our destination, I will be charged with leading the 0900 "Traditional Service" on Sundays. I hope to memorize Philippians as I preach through it in these services, thus preaching to my own heart as I preach to others. Even as I struggle and strive in this work, I hope to embody Livingstone's great words concerning his missionary service: "In this work I truly live..."

PRAYER REQUESTS: Please pray for my wife who is raising our precious firstborn baby on her own and could use prayer for her reliance upon our Savior. I need a "battle buddy." I am going without a Chaplain assistant, and while I am close with my unit, I need a fellow believer who will ask me tough questions and hold me accountable in faithfulness to our Lord. Pray also that I would faithfully balance accessibility with holiness - in other words, that Soldiers would know my unconditional love for them, but also see the marks of God's unlimited patience in the chief of sinners.

E-Mail: stevo.roberts@us.army.mil

Mike Myers, SC Army National Guard, 751 CSSB, Newberry, SC (In transition from the PCA to the OPC) Thank you for your prayers and support. I received a couple of emails and comments from people I did not know saying that they are praying for me - it was very encouraging. I have begun work as an intern at Heritage Reformed Presbyterian Church in Royston, GA as of June 30. It is a church plant with the OPC. [We understand he was ordained and installed on Dec. 6.]

PRAYER REQUESTS: Please pray for my labors there, for my family to adjust, and for my continuing work in the SC Army National Guard. Also, do not forget to give thanks to the Lord for His gracious leading and provision.

E-Mail: Michael.l.myers2@us.army.mil

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Pray that President Barack H. Obama, will guide us as a nation in righteousness that is according to God's Word, and that he will *be just, ruling in the fear of God* (II Sam 23:3b). Pray for those who lead our warriors, from those in the cabinet to the NCO in the field, particularly for all those who name the Name of Christ.

Pray for those who serve us, that their courage, strength and wisdom will not waver or fail, that their actions will be swift, victorious and *bold as a lion* (Proverbs 28:1), that God will grant them safety and bring them home to their families. Pray for their wives and families, that as they are without their loved ones, they may endure and support them. Pray that we will minister to the families in the stead of those who serve. Pray for their testimony to the lost. Please pray both publicly and privately.

Pray that our **chaplains will be bold** in the ministry of the Word – that precious Word that not only tells how we can have life eternal, but also instructs how we are to live! Pray for all our members who serve, that the light of the Gospel will burn brightly in their lives.

In His hands, Robert M. Coie, for the OPC Committee on Chaplains and Military Personnel, with monthly Prayer Focus by CDR Robert B. Needham, CHC, USN, Ret.