

A PLEA for PRAYER – June 14, 2014 - No. 137

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).*

A wise man will hear, and will increase learning; and a man of understanding shall attain unto wise counsels: The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom: and the knowledge of the holy is understanding. (Proverbs 1:5; 9:10) Please also read 2 Timothy 1-14.

Prayer focus: *The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom* - One of the greatest incentives to prayer is to the fear (revere) the LORD, so that we no longer fear people.

"Do you want to begin to be wise in your prayers? Then don't fear people when you pray, fear God alone. First of all, you must understand what the Bible means when it says, "Fear the LORD". It means that you fear God in the sense that you revere God, that you hold him in awe and in utter reverence because of His All-Holy Majesty, His absolute sovereignty, His infinite purity. Reverence for God and zeal for His glory will incite us to pray: "Our Father, who art in heaven, Hallowed be thy Name. Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven!"

And the apostle Paul, under the infallible inspiration of the Holy Spirit in his letter to Timothy (II Timothy 4), tells you in the first chapter of his second letter about how to revere God, not fear people! Paul tells you to fear God by remembering Jesus Christ, raised from the dead, as preached in God's gospel; (II Timothy 1:22)

Fear God by remembering Jesus Christ raised from the dead, as preached in God's gospel. Fear, as we humans experience it, at root, is the fear of loss, the fear that I'm going to lose something, whether my health, or my wealth, or my family, or my life. That's why the Lord Jesus said, "Don't fear the one that can kill the body, and having done so can do no more. I will tell you who to fear. Fear Him Who has the power to cast both body and soul into hell." (Matthew 21:28). God is the One whom you should fear. Fear GOD, not people.

God, by removing the fear of death by the power of Christ's resurrection frees His people to revere Him and serve Him unreservedly. That's why when you understand who God is, as "the God who raises the dead" (II Corinthians 1:3-12), you can fear Him, not people. Proverbs 9, verse 10 says that, "The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom, and the knowledge of the Holy One is understanding." If you know Him Who raised Christ Jesus from the dead (Romans

8), you have come to a knowledge of eternal life. Isn't that what the Lord Jesus said in John 17 verse 3? "This is eternal life, to know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ Whom You have sent." If you truly know God, you will fear God, and if you truly fear God you won't fear people. These alternative "fears" are mutually exclusive and exhaustive. You either fear God or you fear people. If you don't have a healthy understanding of and commitment to fear the LORD who raises the dead, then you will fear death, instead of revering God.

The fear of man is enslavement. That is why the Proverb writer says in chapter 11, "The fear of man leads into a trap, but the one who trusts in the sovereign LORD will be safe." The people whom I fear have power over me. And the Lord Jesus said, "No one can serve two masters. You cannot serve God and people."

This is why the Lord Jesus also says, "Don't fear the one who can kill the body, and having done so, can do no more." And Paul says here to Timothy in this same chapter, "Hence I remind you to rekindle the gift of God which is upon you by the laying on of my hands, for God did not give us a spirit of fear".

The point Paul made to timid Timothy was, "Don't be timid! Fear God..." Remember, that God has given to you, not a spirit of fear, but of power and of love, and of a sound mind." "Sophronismos" is the original word there for "a sound mind". God has given believers in Christ the ability to "think with sober judgment according to the measure of faith that God has given you" (Romans 12:3-4), even in extreme situations by the power of "the Spirit of Him that raised Jesus from the dead" (Romans 8).

So don't fear bad news, or bad people, but fear the LORD. You do so, according to II Timothy 1, verse 22, by obeying God's command to "Remember Jesus Christ, raised from the dead, as preached in the Gospel." That's what Paul says. If by the grace of the risen Christ, you have dealt with the fear of death in principle, seeing yourself by faith as one already raised with Christ (Colossians 3:1-4) and looking forward to the final resurrection (Philippians 3:12-14), there will be many battles ahead, but the decisive battle has been fought and won.

That's why the writer of Hebrews said in chapter 2 that the way the devil enslaves people all their lives is through the fear of death (Hebrews 2 around verse 14). So if, by faith in the Risen Christ you overcome the fear of death, the rest of the battles are part of the mop-up campaigns. And reverent prayer unto the Resurrecting God is the "call for heavenly artillery fire" that prepares the battlefield for the soldiers of Christ to advance. That's why Paul emphasizes to timid Timothy, "Remember Jesus Christ, **raised from the dead**, descendant of David, as preached in my Gospel." So the way to revere the LORD and not to fear people is to pray as you "Remember Jesus Christ, raised from the dead."

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 *show 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 from defeat, from losing heart in the battle 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, Nicolas, Noah, Paul (two), Rachel, Ray, Robert (two), Scott, Sebastian, Stephen (two), and Timothy. New deployments are shown in bold. Please pray for Chaplain David DeRienzo deployed in harm's way.

- In the wise providence of our Sovereign LORD, we are thankful to acknowledge that on 31 May, 2014, Sgt. Bowe Bergdahl USA was released from Taliban captivity, to the custody of a Special Forces unit of the United States Armed Forces.

Consequently, we encourage those who have a heart to pray to include in their prayers the following (or similar) petitions:

Father in Heaven, gracious and compassionate Lord of all, we beseech you for the grace to resist the temptation to rush to judgmental conclusions in the absence of sufficient factual information. We pray for your enabling grace both to see, and seize, this unusual opportunity to set a godly example in a truly Christ-like manner before our neighbors, by responding kindly and carefully when confronted with questions about this difficult situation.

We thank you, Lord of all, for answering the many supplications for Bowe's release, and pray for full recovery from any and all harmful effects of his imprisonment, and for his family members as well.

Almighty God, grant us the grace fearlessly to contend for the Truth, to make no peace with Falsehood and evil; that we may reverently use our freedom in the maintenance of justice among our communities, to the glory of your holy Name, through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you, and the Holy Spirit, one God now and forever. Amen.

The 81st General Assembly passed a shorter version of this that can be found on [opc.org](http://opc.org/feature.html) at the end of the GA article - <http://opc.org/feature.html>

- Chaplain Bryan Weaver - Please continue to pray for me and my family while I continue to recover from surgery in late January, 2014, to remove a cancerous brain tumor and during follow up testing and procedures at the Medical University of South Carolina located in Charleston. I have been at peace with this providence in my life and testify to several remarkable opportunities in conjunction with this illness to bear witness to the Gospel of Christ. Shelly and I give thanks for the MUSC medical team and my Christian Navy doctor who is our

neighbor at Marine Corps Air Station Beaufort. We are truly grateful for all the support we have received from the Orthodox Presbyterian Church, the Presbyterian and Reformed Commission on Chaplains, and Navy & Marine Corps families. Please pray for Shelly's physical stamina & strength as she is my primary caregiver and driver (SC law forbids neurosurgery patients to operate a vehicle for 6 months). Pray for our three sons as they seek to adjust to my illness. Our youngest son is a "knob" at The Citadel. Pray that the proposed treatment plan will be efficacious in eliminating the cancer. Please pray for relief from sleep-depriving headaches.

- [05/10/14] From Chaplain Stephen Roberts - I am back in the States and enjoying time with my family. I will hopefully be assigned to my next unit (military intelligence at Ft. Meade) in MD within the next couple of months.

- From Retired Chaplain and Pastor Doug - MC2 Matthew Cole, USN, was honorably discharged from the Navy last month. Matthew, his wife Hayley, and their son Ajax, are home from Yokosuka, Japan, and are in Raleigh with Pilgrim OPC. Thanks again for your service!

- From Pastor Doug - Continuing thanks for your faithfulness and perseverance in maintaining the prayer list. Would you please add LTJG Matthew G., USN to the prayer list? He and his family are about to become members of the OPC next Lord's Day by letter of transfer, and their first covenant child, a son now about 2 months old, will be baptized at that time. Matt is a submarine officer aboard a boat home-ported at Pearl Harbor.

- ROTC Cadet Isaac C. has been commissioned! He is now 2nd Lieutenant Isaac D. C. and is off to pilot training at Vance AFB, Oklahoma.

- Please pray for a fruitful General Assembly this week and for our committee as it reports.

- 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, which has taken an oath defend the Constitution of the United States against all enemies foreign and domestic, will not be diminished or perish,
7. That this trial will not also in time descend on the pulpits of our land.

.....

Chaplains' Reports:

Officer O-6 Retirements, twice over – The two reports below are from two dear brothers who are this summer both retiring again. Brothers, may God reward you for your faithful service and continue to bless your service to Him in the days ahead. Fair winds and following seas!

Chris Wisdom is retiring the second time from service as an Army chaplain, his last tours as chaplain over all the Army garrisons in Europe. He has also served twice as a member of our

OPC Committee on Chaplains and Military Personnel. As you can see from the Prayer Theme above, he still fills in when needed as a ready volunteer as well as a constant encourager to our committee and particularly to this editor.

Jack Unangst, who began his military career as a Marine Corps platoon commander, retired as Navy Chaplain (CAPT) before he served as a Veterans Administration "command" chaplain. In the early days of the Iraq war he was often recalled to Camp Pendleton to minister to families of the wounded and those who paid the ultimate price for freedom. Readers of the Plea have seen evidence of his methodology of relating to veterans in language they understand to apply Biblical truth and seen again below.

CH (COL) Chris Wisdom, USA, Installation Management Command, Europe

Region, Germany (Presbytery of the Southwest) Give thanks with us to our all-gracious triune God for the great "privilege", (to use the word that CH (COL) Dave Peterson (USA RET) taught me 28 years ago, even before he became the PRJC endorser), that I have received from God to serve 28 years as an endorsed Army Chaplain with ministerial credentials in the OPC from the Presbytery of the Southwest. Give thanks also for the faithful prayer support and encouragement of the (now) PRCC and the OPC Committee on Chaplains and Military Personnel, especially OPC elder Bob Coie, for his tireless efforts over the years to this very day in promoting prayer for all our OPC Chaplains and our warriors. Give thanks especially for pastoral oversight and visits to our overseas stations by our former and current endorsers, including, but not limited to current endorser CH (BG) Doug Lee, USAR, RET, and to our former pastor, the Rev. Jack. J. Peterson, OPC Emeritus. In this latter regard, give thanks for our sponsoring churches, and for our calling and primary sponsoring church, Grace OPC, San Antonio, Texas, which Pastor Peterson led for over 20 years, and from which Mrs. Peterson still supports us with a total of over 1400 Sundays of prayer for us as evidenced in their bulletins she has sent. **PRAYER REQUESTS:** Please pray for us as we move to Columbia, South Carolina in military retirement and ministry renewal, for new and promising opportunities, to preach, teach, and lead for Christ and His church. Pray especially for me as I continue PhD studies in Reformation catechetical history for the glory of God and for the growth and good of Christ's Church. There will be more to follow on future ministries once they are confirmed.

EMAIL: christopher.h.wisdom.mil@mail.mil

CH Jack Unangst Jr., VA Medical Center, Prescott, AZ (Presbytery of New

York and New England) This is my final report since I am retiring today, July 9th, from the Chaplaincy, Dept. of Veteran Affairs (DV). Using such authors as Pink, Spurgeon, Ryle, Sproul & 100's of others from the Reformation Study Bible, et. al. I have been pressing the claims of the Lord Christ on the consciences of Vets these 14+ years. USMC Commandant Krulak years ago divided Marine recruits into 4 categories: (1) Squared Away (SA)-healthily adjusted; (2) Empty Vessels (EV)-no true normative moral compass; (3) Slightly Damaged (SD)-lack of direction with minor moral infractions; (4) Fundamentally Damaged (FD)-failure to disclose prior ethical/legal violations /disqualified as Marines. With some variations I have seen these categories in the religious sphere: (1) A Few (SA) ready to persevere as disciples in faith & repentance, (2) A Personal Standard (EV) for works righteousness, often some personal workers /"sinners prayer" conversion event; (3) The "I've tried that" (SD), temporary experience of belief & now callous to Gospel demands; (4) The outward hostile (FD) to any approach of Gospel witness. **PRAYER REQUESTS:** Pray the Lord would continue to thrust forth faithful Preachers into the harvest who present a "felt Christ" (as G. Whitfield said) in demonstration of the Holy Spirit and of power to every category of soil/hearer. Pray the Lord will direct my wife and me to new fields of service for His Glory.

EMAIL: Jack.Unangst@va.gov

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 the Prayer Theme by CH (COL) Christopher Wisdom, USA, Ret.