

## A Plea for Prayer – February/March, 2016 – No. 157/158

**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 (1 Thessalonians 5:17).*

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**Prayer focus: THE RAREST GRACE?**

*At the same time came the disciples unto Jesus, saying, Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven? And Jesus called a little child unto him, and set him in the midst of them, And said, Verily I say unto you, Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven. (Matthew 18:1-3)*

Fellow believers, you who are serving in one of the military services of this country, do you believe what most of the holy and wisest of the thinkers of the Reformation believed, namely that pride is the mother of all other sins, and that genuine humility is the rarest—and the most beautiful of all the Christian graces (J.C.Ryle)?

Our blessed Saviour and Commander-in-Chief, Jesus Christ on more than one occasion warned against the danger of pride. Consider one of the occasions when the disciples were arguing among themselves (Matthew 18:1) as to which one of them would be the greatest in the kingdom of heaven—a blatant exercise in self promotion and unblushing self-serving arrogance! Cosmic pride!

To their sinful focus, Christ declared an astonishing correction, " ...unless you are converted, and become like children, you will not enter the kingdom of heaven" (v.2). Since children come into the world with a sin nature, and can display, without any prior instruction, jealous, angry, selfish, self-centered, unkind and many disobedient behaviors, what aspect of childhood, in general, could Christ possibly use that would clearly exemplify God blessed, heavenward (Colossians 3:1-2) thinking and behaving?

The inescapable conclusion is that this remarkable form of humility, indeed one of its most helpful examples, is the unrecognized, common grace type of humility found in little children, growing up on a loving home. That early humility comes in two ways (almost always lost by adulthood unless saving grace triumphs). One is the unembarrassed, unashamed and unquestioning acceptance of the fact of their total dependence on the life-sustaining care furnished by their parents. The other

way childhood humility has redemptive illustration is when children, in a loving home do not question their acceptance as beloved individuals, who do not need to strive for acceptance by the parents through personal achievement and earned merit. The Gospel calls for both these aspects of saving faith in Christ.

Thus the common problem of one's ultimate status, for the believer, is beautifully resolved, "Whoever then humbles himself as this child, he is the greatest on the kingdom of heaven." This is a powerful truth for those who labor in a meritorious system where the temptations to strive for personal advancement are numerous.

Confidence in Christ's magnificent promise can be revealed in many ways, all scriptural, such as refusing to return evil for evil; the willingness to confess sin and with a repentant heart seek forgiveness; the willingness to practice careful speech combined with careful listening (cf. Matthew 12:36-37); the willingness to serve humbly without trying to obtain recognition or credit for it (Luke 17:6-10); and so forth, thus being an effective witness to Christ in a world becoming more and more hostile to Him, and even the speaking of His name.

So, in our military culture, which reflects in many ways the prideful evils of the society which supports it, can a competent enlisted or commissioned Christian maintain a light and salt testimony that is grounded in Christ-centered humility? Absolutely! If we *trust* our Redeemer to honor His calls to practice humility as that of a little child (Matthew 23:10-12; Luke 14:11; 18:14). Dear reader; do *you* believe humility is a rare and beautiful grace from God? Do you believe a humble heart is an obedient heart (John 14:15)? Do you believe I Peter 5:5-6?

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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: Cody, Neal and Samuel. New deployments are shown in bold.

- God has been most gracious to your Committee and our Commission which both met in Atlanta the last week of February. The Committee determined to relieve our Chairman of the editorship of the *Plea for Prayer*, allowing him greater freedom to carry on other established ministries. Your former editor has agreed to fill in until Committee member Col. Mike Cloy, USA, Ret., assumes this ministry role after August when he completes graduate studies enabling him in his roll of supporting those who have served and are in great need of care.
- Your Committee is working toward producing aids in dealing with the potential of any implementation of attempts to add 18 year old females to those subject to draft registration. Please pray for this effort.
- Your Committee is also considering asking presbytery stated clerks or another representative of each presbytery to be a conduit to inform the *Plea* Editor of information of warriors in each presbytery. This, if implemented, would allow a more Presbyterian input to what is posted in the *Plea for Prayer* by God's people.
- Please continue to pray for Chaplain Bryan Weaver as he, by God's grace alone, continues in his fight to recover from cancer. His wife Shelly's verse through all of Bryan's serious health trial is Romans 12:12 - *Rejoicing in hope; patient in tribulation; continuing instant in prayer*. Thank you and please continue to be in prayer for complete healing for Bryan and for his family as they support him.
- Please pray for the continuing recovery of Carolyn Parker, wife of retired Navy chaplain Stephen Parker. After a long recovery from a badly broken leg after a bad fall last July, last week she suffered a heart attack. Praise God for sustaining her life, for their daughter Anna's care and the support of the Bonita OPC session and congregation.
- We are most grateful for your response to the extensive requests for updates to our lists over the last few months. Thank you so much for your gracious efforts and responses to our inquiries, which, we believe, have a full update of our list of those serving.
- 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.

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**Chaplains' Reports:**

**CH (CPT) David DM. eRienzo, USA, Portland, ME.** I reported to Fort Bliss on December 14th for my very first Active Duty Army assignment. We are excited about this new chapter in our lives but also nervous. We added two beautiful baby girls to our family back in October which makes the transition even more intense. The unit I am headed to, just returned from a yearlong deployment to Turkey. **PRAYER REQUESTS:** Please pray for my wife as she navigates transition to Active Duty life with 4 small children. Please pray for the Soldiers of 5-52 ADA in their transition back home. Please pray that I would find many opportunities for Gospel ministry with my new unit.  
**david.derienzo@yahoo.com**

**CH Kenny R. Honken, Federal Correctional Institution, Oxford, WI, Fort McCoy, WI.** I will complete my second full unit of Clinical Pastoral Education this January, Lord willing. This will open up new opportunities for service for me in the federal Chaplaincy. The holidays are also a very busy time for all staff at the institution, but a very lonely and sad time often for our inmates. I will be seeking opportunities to minister the good news to the hearts of those for whom it is old news that they will be stuck here another holiday season. **PRAYER REQUESTS:** Please pray that God will give me and my wife Trella discernment in the most appropriate place of service for us. Please pray that our travels for the holiday season are safe, and our time with family is refreshing and filled with the peace and love of the gospel. Please pray that my work at the institution will bring the mercy and compassion of Jesus to bear on the broken hearts and lives of many men.  
**khonken@bop.gov**

**Ch (Capt.) C. Phillip Hollstein III, USAF, deployed to Thule, Greenland.** Christmas season was a huge morale lifter for the base during the 24 hours of darkness that we have had since November. Many people participated in a drive to give gifts to the native village children around the island, so that brought the base together as well. **PRAYER REQUESTS:** Attendance at Chapel increased around Christmas time; please keep praying that God would bring His people in and that they would commit to staying and being a part of the covenant community. People come from diverse faith backgrounds, so not all appreciate the need for regular church attendance and commitment to the church body. Please continue to pray also for people's morale during the dark season, as we go for about four months without seeing the sun! Other than that, it is a blessing to be able to focus so much on ministry in this small community; we don't have as much admin overhead or additional activities as at a stateside base, so that frees us up to spend more of our time/focus just on ministry.  
**charles.hollstein@us.af.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 the Prayer Focus by CDR Robert B. Needham CHC USN Ret..