

“If My people who are called by My name humble themselves and pray, and seek My face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, forgive their sin, and will heal their land” – 2 Chronicles 7.14 Prayer has always played a central role in the affairs of our nation. For the most part Australians have acknowledged their reliance on Almighty God, both in regard to the affairs of life and at times of death. Our federal and state parliaments have traditionally opened in prayer. The feasts of Christmas and Easter are times of individual and national reflection, and prayer is often an Integral part of ceremonial occasions. Australians have prayed as individuals, as a community, and as a nation – particularly in times of hardship and crisis.

## Praying For The Nation

Fifty years after the arrival of the first fleet, the Governor of N.S.W., George Gipps, a Christian, proclaimed Sunday, November 2, 1838 a national day of fasting and humiliation because of the severe drought. Within two days heavy rains began to fall to such a degree that many came down with the flu.

Fifty seven years later on the 11th September, 1895 a day of prayer was again called in similar circumstances. Three weeks later a day of thanksgiving was proclaimed to thank God for the breaking of the drought. During this time Christians were coming together to discuss the Federation Movement and many were desiring to see God acknowledged as the ruler of the nations and so it was acknowledged in the preamble to our Constitution”... humbly relying on the blessing of Almighty God. . .”

Even the Sydney Morning Herald's Editorial dated 14th April, 1897 stated “no Christian could in conscience vote for a Federation Bill that did not recognise God”! Churches also called for the Governor General to be empowered to proclaim National Days of Prayer, as well as opening Parliament with prayer each day. The first Sunday in the 20th Century was proclaimed Commonwealth Sunday and Christians were called to pray for the Nation. During the 1940's as the second World War began to take its horrific toll and Australia was being threatened, particularly after the bombing of Darwin, several days of prayer were held. One of these was called by King George VI throughout the Commonwealth. Within another fifty years we have arrived at Australia's Bicentenary of European settlement and another National Day of Prayer has taken place.

## National Prayer Gathering

It will of course be of interest to see the longterm outcome of the all night prayer vigil at the National Gathering to celebrate the opening of the new Parliament House. This historic event was preceded by a National Day of Prayer and fasting, when an estimated 500,000 Australians were reported to have met in homes and Churches across the nation. Men and women around Australia were mobilised to pray for the healing of our country. People were zealous to see Australia touched by God's spirit.

Many thousands of people throughout the land dedicated themselves to pray for people in high places, people who have a significant influence on the moral state of the nation. The Lawmakers, Law breakers, and Law keepers. The names of such people were published so that men could pray specifically. Over 300 “prophets of Baal” came down from high places during the three years of Intercession.

Men everywhere prayed about the opening of the new Parliament House and participated in the National Gathering. This was used in turn to remind our members of parliament that Australians still valued our Christian heritage, and valued the system of government that gave us our Biblical based Constitution. It was to remind our national leaders that Australians for the most part did not favour a godless humanist republic, but a nation that once again recognises our privileges and responsibilities before God, and which reflects God's love and righteousness.

Praying men with the support of the praying women of this nation have truly changed the course of history in a short time. We believe “the effectual prayer of a righteous man does indeed avail much.”

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The International Ministries of Ten Thousand Men is a non-denominational Christian organisation of men zealous to see Australia touched by God's Spirit. The ministry sponsors National Days of Prayer and Fasting, and other activities directed at the “healing of the land.”