

URGENT!**CHANGE OF PARLIAMENTARY PRAYER**

Rt Hon David Carter, the Speaker of our Parliament has sent a letter (our understanding is that it was sent on Mon 17 November) to **all** members of Parliament regarding **two options** for the prayer that is read at the commencement of each day's parliamentary business in the House. He has asked them for their feedback by **Friday 5 December 2014**. The Parliament is in recess this week (commencing 17 November) and will sit again for the next 3 weeks from 25 Nov to 11 Dec 2014. Then the Christmas recess will begin.

The two options that have been presented are –

Option 1: The Present Prayer as follows:

Almighty God,

Humbly acknowledging our need for Thy guidance in all things, and laying aside all private and personal interests, we beseech Thee to grant that we may conduct the affairs of this House and of our country to the glory of Thy holy name, the maintenance of true religion and justice, the honour of the Queen, and the public welfare, peace, and tranquillity of New Zealand, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Option 2 The Alternative Prayer has English and Maori elements. The English translation is in brackets.

E te Atua Kaha Rawa (Almighty God)

Ka whakamanawa taua hunga katoa kua riro atu i mua i a tatau – moe mai okioki (We honour those who have gone before us – rest, slumber on.) We recognise the mana whenua, Te Ati Aawa, the kaitiaki of this region, Te Upoko-o-Te-Ika-a-Maui.

We acknowledge the need for guidance and lay aside all private and personal interests so that we may conduct the affairs of this House for the maintenance of justice, the honour of the Queen and the public welfare, peace, and tranquillity of New Zealand Amine (Amen).

Note the following in Option 2 –

1. The English section of the prayer is a 'cut and paste' version of the present prayer. Note the following segments have been omitted,
 - 'and of our country to the glory of Thy name, the maintenance of true religion'
 - through Jesus Christ our Lord".

- There are other words that have been omitted – (please compare the two options carefully).
I am seeking an official explanation of last sentence in Maori).
2. The Speaker has asked for 1 of the 2 options and **no amendments will be allowed.**
 3. The MPs have to respond by **5 December 2014**
 4. Then the Speaker will make the **final decision.**

Knowing that the time is extremely short, (only 11 days from the time of this letter with only one Sunday 20 Nov to promote the churches' response: I am strongly recommending the following plan of action:

1. Get your church members to write, email their electorate MP
 - a) stating he or she is **your** Electorate MP.
 - b) you strongly recommend that we retain our **present** prayer option.
 - c) **Tips for your letter**
 - 1) be **concise** (brief and to the point)
 - 2) be **courteous** and **respectful** always
 - 3) do **not use inflammatory words**
 - 4) be **sensitive**

A few irresponsible people can do great damage to our cause.

- d) **Reasons** for retaining our present prayer: Our main argument is **historical**. Our past as a nation shapes our future. NZ has a Christian Heritage.
 - We are this year celebrating the **200th (Bi-centenary)** year of the coming of the gospel to our shores. Samuel Marsden preached his Christmas message in 1814.
 - Look at our **statutory holidays**. It includes Christmas and Easter. They are not 'private' holidays they are **statutory** holidays (i.e. by law for all New Zealanders).
 - Christianity remains the **predominant faith in NZ** according to the last Census (2013). Those who stated their religious affiliation as Christians (whatever the denomination) totalled, **1,858,980 people**.
 - The **history of prayer** in our Parliament. At the first

sitting of the NZ House of Representatives on 26 May 1854, the first matter to be debated was whether or not there should be an opening prayer.

Charles Clifford, a Catholic had been selected as the first Speaker and Rev F.J. Lloyd an Anglican clergyman was the first one to lead in prayer. Later it was agreed that the Speaker would say the prayer.

Our parliament has opened with prayer every Sitting Day for 160 years (from then till now). The current prayer was adopted in the House in 1962.

ACTION

- Church Leaders we must mobilise as many people as possible to write to –
 - 1) Their **electorate** MP) FIRST
 - 2) A **List** MP) PRIORITY
 - 3) The **Prime Minister**
 - 4) A **Christian** MP
 - 5) If you write to the Speaker he may say he is waiting for MPs response (you can still choose to write to him).

Usually an MP's email address is :

full first name . full surname@ parliament.govt.nz

For further information you may phone Parliament 04- 4719999

- Think of at least **5 people** whom you can email
- Pastors inform **other Ministers** in your area.
- **Pray fervently** that our present prayer will be retained.
- It is imperative that you write as **soon as possible. Now is good!**
- Let us stop further erosion of our Christian Heritage.

In the bonds of Christ

Rasik Ranchord

Spokesperson on Public Issues

New Life Churches International

URGENT! URGENT! URGENT!