



# GOSPEL DEFENCE LEAGUE

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Dear Friends,

Nearly 500 years ago, on 31 October 1517, Martin Luther nailed 95 theses of faith onto the door of the Castle Church in Wittenberg, Germany. It was on *All Saints' Day*. People had come from far and wide to view a collection of more than 5000 relics (of saints) which Frederick the Wise, Duke of Saxony, was exhibiting in the church. As they filed past the door, they read what Luther had written: 1. "*Since our Lord and Master Jesus Christ says: 'Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is near,' (Matthew 4:17) He wants the whole life of a believer to be a life of repentance.*" 2. "*Repentance, as administered by the priests, cannot be understood as a sacrament. (Christ's) words call for an inner repentance... which would be no repentance at all, if it did not bring with it an outward change... a transformation and renewal of a man's whole being...*" Thus Luther stated the way of salvation and exposed the wrongs of the Church. It was the beginning of a spiritual renewal of the whole of Christendom, which eventually led to a cultural liberty and prosperity that was singular in the history of the world. The Bible, which had been a closed book, was translated, read, and applied, and God ruled the nations through the hearts of obedient men.

Today, 490 years later, the remembrance of Reformation Day is almost overshadowed by the celebration of the occult night of *Halloween*, so called because it is observed on the eve of *All-Hallows*, or *All-Saints' Day*. It commemorates the ancient 'Festival of the Dead', at which Celtic tribes and their Druid priests celebrated the change from life to death, and it is a day on which witches celebrate the 'Feast of Samhain,' the first feast of the witchcraft year.

This reversal of religious priorities shows that we have lost much of our culture and are busy forsaking the true God. During the past 60 years our society has, in fact, changed so much that it is almost as if we lived in another country. Previous virtues and values have faded, and ancient abominations reappeared. Blasphemy, abortion, homosexuality, and plain immorality are lauded and legalised, while the Word of God is banished from the public arena. Open criticism of ungodliness is being outlawed by anti-hate-speech legislation, and moral discipline is being banned by laws forbidding the corporal punishment of children. 1) Human rights law has become the religion of a godless age. - "*The fool says in his heart, 'There is no God.'*" (Psalm 14) - "*The mind of sinful man is death, but the mind controlled by the Spirit is life and peace; the sinful mind is hostile to God. It does not submit to God's law, nor can it do so.*" (Romans 8:6)

## **Cultural Marxism**

Though it is said that Political Marxism is dead, another type, *Cultural Marxism*, continues to flourish. It originated with Antonio Gramsci and Georg Lukacs and was furthered by the teachings of Max Horkheimer, Theodor Adorno, Erich Fromm and Herbert Marcuse of the "Frankfurter Schule". 2) Enriched with the teachings of Sigmund Freud this destructive ideology comes into our families through every TV channel, film, magazine, and sex education programme. *Cultural Marxism*, in fact, is far more effective in breaking down God's creation order than political Marxism, and yet, the institutional Church has not done enough to resist it. Church leaders have often accepted Cultural Marxism's social analysis of a world divided into 'oppressors' and 'victims'. They have too readily accommodated alleged 'victims,' such as homosexuals, and have not warned innocent youths against them. They have even allowed radicals to tamper with their doctrinal heritage, giving way before those who would otherwise call them 'racists.'

## **Martin Luther**

Today's world is no less in need of reformation as that of Martin Luther's day. The Church needs to rediscover its first love, to humble itself and return to the Bible. It needs to affirm God's Law, and stand for Truth and against moral relativism. Our religion and our culture are in peril, and every believer needs to be "*salt and light.*" He should not be afraid to confront the destroyers of Christian culture but be ready to fearlessly address contentious issues. He needs to defend Christian values in the secular arena. - For how can a Christian sit by idly when immorality, AIDS, teen pregnancies, and divorce escalate? When the abortion holocaust goes on unabated? When the media pour violent and sexual images into every home?

When our freedoms are eroded? God has called us *“to stand up for Jesus”*. He wants us to make a difference. Of what use is a Christian who does not *“fight the good fight of faith?”*

The Church must stand firmly on the World of God! Martin Luther, who translated the Bible into German, regarded the Word as a matter of life and death. He said: *“If your Word, Lord God, did not comfort me, I would perish. No other book, doctrine, or anything else is able to comfort in need and misery, in death and dying, even among devils and in hell. Only this Bible is able to do what God teaches and let God speak to us like a man to his friends.”* 3) God’s Word inspired him to action, which he undertook without flinching, no matter how difficult the task. He said: *“If I profess with the loudest voice and clearest exposition every portion of the truth of God, except precisely that point which the world and the devil are at that moment attacking, then I am not confessing Christ, however boldly I may be professing Him. Where the battle rages, there the loyalty of the soldier is proved; and to be steady on all the battlefield besides is merely flight and disgrace if he flinches at that point.*

### **The Cultural Mandate**

The Bible speaks of two great *mandates* which God has given to the world: the Cultural Mandate and the Great Commission. The first says: *“Be fruitful and increase in number, fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air and over every living creature that moves on the ground.”* (Genesis 1:26-28) The second says: *“Go and make disciples of all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you.”* (Matthew 28:19-20) The first was given at the dawn of creation and the second at the dawn of the new creation.

In order to reclaim our culture, we need to obey the Cultural Mandate. The well-known American theologian, Dr James Kennedy, said: *“In this century, many Christians seem to be clueless concerning God’s first command – the Cultural Mandate. We are to take all the potentialities of this world, all of its spheres and institutions, and bring them all to the glory of God. We are to use this world to the glory of God. We are to bring it and surrender it at the foot of the cross. In every aspect of the world, we are to bring glory to God and this means in all of the institutions of the world. For example, in the institution of marriage and the home; in the institution of the school; in the institution of the Church (which has not always brought glory to God); in the institution of the state (which most certainly has not always brought glory to God); in the various spheres of life, whether they be music, literature, art, commerce, business, architecture, government, education, or whatever – in every sphere of life, the potentialities, the treasures that God has placed in this world, are to be brought out, fashioned, and offered to His glory.*

*“Providentially, many Christians throughout the ages have taken the Cultural Mandate seriously... Unfortunately, the Church in the last seventy-five to a hundred years has often ignored the Cultural Mandate... We have turned our educational system, which was founded by Christians, over to unbelievers. We have turned science, which was founded by believers in the living God, over to unbelievers in many cases. We have turned much of the media over to the rankest of unbelievers, so that we are continuously bombarded by their godless thoughts and ideas. We have handed over the reins of government, to a large extent, to unbelievers who have been busily engaged in legislating the devil’s agenda for the world. We have been in retreat and have not sought to fulfil the Cultural Mandate.”* 4)

This is a serious indictment, and it should make us call an end to retreat. It should help us to advance and reclaim what was lost. God has worked mightily in the past. Empowered by His Spirit, Martin Luther brought about the Great Reformation to benefit the whole world. May He grant us faith like Luther’s faith. May God again make us the *Church militant on earth and triumphant in heaven*. He calls us to *‘fight the good fight of faith’*, till Christ has made His enemies His footstool and the victory is won.

D. Scarborough

#### **Footnotes:**

1. On 29 June 2007 the National Council of Provinces passed a bill which includes a ban on corporal punishment of children by parents and abolishes the defence of reasonable chastisement.
1. The “Frankfurter Schule”, whose members were mainly Jewish, left Germany in 1934 and re-established itself in New York. Its focus shifted from destroying Western culture in Germany to doing so in the US. After the war it returned to Germany and greatly affected German thinking.
2. Ernst Wilhelm Kohls, Luther oder Erasmus, S. 183-184
4. D James Kennedy & Jerry Newcombe, What if Jesus had never been born? p. 240-241. Thomas Nelson Publishers, 2001.

# PRAYER FOR REFORMATION

Martin Luther's Simple Guidelines for Effective Prayer.

Taken from *"The Power of Prayer Handbook"* by Peter Hammond (chapter 4, shortened)

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Action is always preceded by prayer. Luther described prayer as: *"The hardest work of all – a labour above all labours, since he who prays must wage almighty warfare against the doubt and murmuring excited by the faint-heartedness and unworthiness we feel within us... that unutterable and powerful groaning with which the godly rouse themselves against despair, the struggle in which they call mightily upon their faith...."*

The historical records show that Luther prayed for 3 to 4 hours each day. In *"A Simple Way to Pray,"* he wrote: *"First, when I feel that I have become cool and joyless in prayer, because of other tasks or thoughts (for the flesh and the devil always impede and obstruct prayer), I take my Psalter, hurry to my room... and, as time permits, I say quietly to myself, and word for word, The Lord's Prayer, the Ten Commandments, the Apostles' Creed, and... some Psalms."*

*It is a good thing to let prayer be your first business in the morning and the last at night. Guard yourself carefully against those false, deluding ideas that tell you, 'wait a little while. I will pray in an hour, first I must attend to this or that'... Those who work faithfully, pray twice... Christ commands continual prayer: ask and it will be given to you, seek and you shall find; knock and it will be opened to you... pray without ceasing... we must unceasingly guard against sin and wrong doing, something one cannot do unless one fears God and keeps His Commandments... we become relaxed and lazy, cool and listless towards prayer. The devil who besets us is not lazy or careless, and our flesh is too ready and eager to sin and is disinclined to the spirit of prayer.*

*"When your heart has been warmed by such recitation to yourself of the Ten Commandments, the Words of Christ, etc... then kneel or stand with your hands folded and your eyes toward Heaven and speak or think as briefly as you can.*

*"O Heavenly Father, dear God, I am a poor, unworthy sinner. I do not deserve to raise my eyes or hands toward You or to pray. But, because You have commanded us all to pray and have promised to hear us and through Your dear Son, Jesus Christ, have taught us how, and what, to pray, I come to You in obedience to Your Word, trusting in Your gracious promises."*

Luther recommended that our prayers be numerous but *"brief prayers... pregnant with the Spirit, strongly fortified by faith... the fewer the words, the better the prayer. The more the words, the worse the prayer. Few words and much meaning is Christian. Many words and little meaning is pagan."*

The Lord's Prayer and the Psalms were tools which Luther considered most important for any Christian's prayer life. *"A Christian has prayed abundantly who has rightly prayed the Lord's Prayer."* The Lord's Prayer is the model prayer of Christianity and it is not essentially a prayer of one individual, but a common prayer that binds all Christians together uniting us with all believers, past, present and future, whether in Heaven or on earth, in a Biblical Kingdom-focused prayer.

## **Praying the Psalms**

Luther taught that praying the Psalms brings us *"into joyful harmony"* with God's Word and God's Will. *"Whoever begins to pray the Psalms earnestly and regularly will soon take leave of those other light and personal little devotional prayers and say, 'Ah, there is not the juice, the strength, the passion, the fire, which you find in the Psalms. Anything else tastes too cold and too hard.'"*

## **Structured Prayer**

Luther also recommended that we structure our prayers according to the Apostles' Creed and the Catechism, to connect doctrine and devotion. He also recommended praying according to the Ten Commandments, meditating on each as an instruction, a thanksgiving, confession and petition. By meditating on the

instruction, giving thanks for the blessings that flow from these principles, confessing where we have personally failed in obeying and applying these commands, and praying to be able to honour and obey God's Word in our daily lives, we would revive our prayer lives....

In his preface to the "*Larger Catechism*" Luther wrote: "*We know that our defence lies in prayer. We are too weak to resist the devil and his vassals. Let us hold fast to the weapons of the Christian; they enable us to combat the devil... Our enemies may mock at us. But we shall oppose both men and the devil if we maintain ourselves in prayer and if we persist in it.*"

### **Praying the Lord's Prayer**

"*A simple Way to Pray*" gives some examples of the intercessions Luther was inspired to pray on the basis of the Lord's Prayer:

**"Hallowed be Thy Name.** *Yes, Lord God, dear Father, Hallowed be Your Name, both in us and throughout the whole world. Destroy and root out the abominations, idolatry and heresy of all false teachers and fanatics who wrongly use Your Name and in scandalous ways take it in vain and horribly blaspheme it... Dear Lord God, convert and restrain them... restrain those who are unwilling to be converted so that they may be forced to cease from misusing, defiling and dishonouring Your Holy Name and for misleading the poor people. Amen.*

**"Thy Kingdom Come.** *O dear Lord, God and Father, convert them and defend us... so that they with us and we with them may serve You and Your Kingdom in true faith and unfeigned love and that from Your Kingdom which has begun, we may enter into Your eternal Kingdom. Defend us against those who will not turn away their might and power from the destruction of Your Kingdom so that when they are cast down from their thrones and humbled, they will have to cease from their efforts. Amen.*

**"Thy will be done on earth as it is in Heaven.** *O dear Lord, God and Father, You know that the world, if it cannot destroy Your Name or root out Your Kingdom, is busy day and night with wicked tricks and schemes, strange conspiracies and intrigues, huddled together in secret counsel, giving mutual encouragement and support, raging and threatening and going about with every evil intention to destroy Your Name, Word, Kingdom and children... for Your sake gladly, patiently and joyously enable us to bear every evil, cross and adversity, and thereby acknowledge, test and experience Your benign, gracious and perfect Will...*

**"Give us this day our daily bread.** *Protect us against war and disorder. Grant to all rulers good counsel and a will to preserve their subjects in tranquillity and justice. O God, grant that all people be diligent and display charity and loyalty towards each other. Give us favourable weather and good harvests...*

**"Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us.** *O dear Lord, God and Father, enter not into judgment against us because no person living is justified before You. Do not count it against us as a sin that we are so unthankful for Your ineffable goodness, spiritual and physical, or that we stray into sin so many times every day. Do not look upon how good or how wicked we have been but only upon the infinite compassion which You have bestowed upon us in Christ, Your dear Son. Amen. Also, grant forgiveness to those who have harmed or wronged us, as we forgive them from our hearts... we would much rather that they be saved with us. Amen.*

**"Lead us not into temptation.** *Keep us fit and alert, eager and diligent in Your Word and service, so that we do not become complacent, lazy, and slothful as though we had already achieved everything. In that way the fearful devil cannot fall upon us, surprise us and deprive us of Your precious Word or store up strife and factions among us and lead us into other sin and disgrace...*

**"And deliver us from evil.** *This wretched life is so full of misery and calamity, of danger and uncertainty, so full of malice and faithlessness... but You, dear Father, know our frailty. Therefore help us to pass safely through so much wickedness and villainy..."*

Luther warned: "*I do not want you to recite all these words in your prayer. That would make it nothing but idle chatter and prattle. Rather do I want your heart to be stirred and guided concerning the thoughts, which ought to be comprehended in the Lord's Prayer. These thoughts may be expressed if your heart is rightly warmed and inclined toward prayer, in many different ways and with more words or fewer... Listen in silence, and under no circumstances obstruct them. The Holy Spirit Himself preaches here, and one Word of His sermon is far better than a thousand of our prayers. Many times I have learnt more from one prayer than I might have learned from much reading and speculation.*"