AN EDITORIAL ON THE TRAGIC EVENTS OF THE SYDNEY SIEGE

Australia has been deeply impacted by the tragic events of the past 36 hours which have been played out in front of our eyes on our television screens, enhancing the feel that we were personally involved in the siege ourselves.

Our concern for those involved has been heightened by the advent of live coverage of such events and the advent of social media which draws us into the events almost as if we ourselves were participants.

Many today are asking the questions, why? How could this happen in Australia? It could have been me in that café! How do we pray now? There are no easy answers to any of these quite legitimate and understandable questions. In tragedies such as this it is easy to make quick judgements but usually it is upon reflection and in our quiet personal times with the Lord that the still small voice of God speaks most deeply of the revelations, truth and understandings that He wants us to grasp from these situations. In this editorial therefore it is not my intent to try and interpret all that God would want to say to us through this tragedy but simply to express my opinion as to what should be our response at this time.

Now is the time for all of us to grieve – for those who have lost their lives and for those whose families have been torn apart by this tragedy, but also for ourselves as a Nation for we will never be the same again. Evil has come against us all in the form of twisted theology, radicalised religion, personal torment, and insensitivity towards our fellow human beings. Our nation has been shaken like never before. Now is the time that our Nation needs the One in whom we place our faith, to bring healing to us all. Our nation needs the One who Himself grieves at the impact sin can have on an individual person’s life that causes them to want to take the lives of other people they do not even know. Now is the time for us to rise up in the way we know – to pray.

It is not that we haven’t been praying. For the past 15 years the Australian Prayer Network has coordinated thousands of Australians to be praying for our nation 24/7. At any given time of day or night there have been hundreds, if not thousands, of people praying for our nation. I believe the prayers of these and so many other Australians over many years have shielded us from this kind of terror beyond what we could reasonably have hoped for in the desperate and fallen world in which we live. But today begins a new season where our innocence has been lost and we enter a new world where our faith must go deeper, our commitment to live as Christ demands grows stronger, and where, as Christians, we set the example as to how to live a life of peace and victory in the midst of attacks against our nation and even against our personal
lives as individuals. We must pray for and allow God to bring out of this situation that the enemy intended for evil, the good that He wants for all of mankind.

So how should we pray at this time?

* Firstly let us pray for those directly impacted by this tragedy. For the loved ones grieving the loss of family and friends.

* Pray for those who have been traumatised by the events that we have witnessed or have been caught up in them, that they would find healing, peace and a measure of understanding that will enable to them to return to some normality of life.

* Pray for the Police and emergency service personnel at the centre of this tragedy that they too will be able to recover from the impact upon their lives as they have witnessed evil take the lives of innocent people before their own very eyes.

* Pray for our leaders that they would be able to comfort and lead our nation in its grief.

* Praise God for the empathy expressed by our Head of State, the Governor General, in travelling to Sydney to lay flowers on behalf of us all at the memorial shrine that Martin Place has become.

* Pray that the Lord would give wisdom to Christian leaders as they make public statements to a nation many of whom may be angry that God has allowed such things to happen to innocent people.

* Pray for the Muslim community in our nation who at present will be feeling very vulnerable, as someone who shares their faith has perpetrated such an atrocity. Pray that as they search their own hearts and faith for answers to this situation that Truth will be revealed to them.

* Pray against reprisals that come from a spirit of anger and frustration.

Let us as a nation respond to this situation with the love and actions of Christ, identifying with those who mourn, offering hope and understanding to those who are confused, and setting the
example of a life lived in the security of our faith in Jesus Christ, by gently ministering His love to all in need who cross our path.

May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God our Father, and the Fellowship and comfort of the Holy Spirit, be with us all in Australia today and in the days and weeks to come, that out of the darkness of this hour may come His glorious victory which He makes available to all who will believe in Him.

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Source: Australian Prayer Network

www.ausprayernet.org