

March 2017

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## “Bring Those Prayers Down Here!”

New doors are opening in the most interesting places

*I urge that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made for all people, for kings and all who are in high positions, that we may lead a peaceful and quiet life... --1Timothy 2:1, 2*

A fun-loving supporter, presented us with a hot-off-the-press partisan political guide by Michael J. Knowles that conservative commentator Ben Shapiro calls “thorough.” The 261-page book Reasons To Vote For Democrats, suggests subjects ranging from economics, foreign policy, and civil rights, to crime, immigration, and values. But other than chapter titles, every page in the book is blank. Seriously. Every page. It’s a very quick read! :)

Although, this tongue-in-cheek “book” would perhaps trigger a smile even from some of the Democrat lawmakers we have become acquainted with in Olympia, we don’t plan to find out. That is not to say we forego the distribution of other worthwhile reading materials to our lawmaking friends here in the State Capitol. But more on that in a moment.

Meanwhile, does it seem all hell has broken out in Washington, D.C.? Ne’er before have we witnessed such contempt and hostility directed at a newly elected president and his cabinet appointees—especially during the early days of a new administration. Dominating headlines are angry demands for the Justice Department to investigate for possible treasonous election-related liaisons, as well as the lower house to initiate impeachment hearings. What is that all about?

Can we say Holy War? On November 8<sup>th</sup>, an eviction notice was placed on the front door of the House at 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue. Foul spirits have been embedded there for some time, and the Church, under the authority of Jesus, and the unction of the Holy Spirit, is calling them out.

Notwithstanding, a similar “house cleaning” has been under way just up the hill at First and East Capitol Street where 535 members of Congress and staff go to work each day.

In 2005, a small group of U.S. House and Senate members, calling themselves *The Congressional Prayer Caucus*, began meeting in Room 219 of the U.S. Capitol, to pray for our nation. This bipartisan group which meets before session every week to pray for God’s Divine wisdom in governmental affairs, has grown exponentially, and now ministers to some “200 sincere followers of the Lord in the House and Senate.”<sup>1</sup>

According to Prayer Caucus leaders, local area pastors are also very involved in the Capitol campus ministry. It is not unusual to have as many as 90 pastors worshipping and praying together in the Rotunda on Wednesday nights while controversial bills are being debated in the nearby chambers.

Moreover, in the past two years, four weekly Christian worship services have been launched. Called the *Jefferson Gathering*, more than 150 members have attended services, and several have recently given their lives to Christ. Is this huge? Well, since it has been nearly 150 years since the last worship services were held in the Capitol Building, we would certainly think so!

According to historians, the United States Capitol Building was actually used first as a church before it was occupied by Congress.<sup>2</sup> While the building was still under construction (two years after the cornerstone was laid on September 18, 1793), “Reverend Mr. Ralph” ministered each Sunday at 11 AM. Since “D.C.” was a new community—out in the sticks—there were simply no houses of worship and no other options for local church-goers at that time. One thing for sure—the House was usually full.

Congressman Cutler noted in his diary (Jan 9, 1803), “...Attended in the morning at the Capitol...Very full services.” Another reported that since “the floor of the House offered insufficient space, the platform behind the Speaker’s chair, and every spot where a chair could be wedged in” was filled. <sup>IBID</sup>

Indeed, overflow services at the Capitol were normative for decades. According to The Library of Congress, Charles Boynton was Chaplain of the House of Representatives in 1867 while fundraising for a sanctuary for his own local First Congregational Church. In a letter to prospective donors, Boynton wrote; “the audience is the largest in town...nearly 2000 assembled every Sabbath for services making the congregation in the House (of Representatives) the largest Protestant Sabbath audience...in the United States.” <sup>IBID</sup>

While many applaud the vision, and organizing efforts of former Virginia congressman Randy Forbes as well as Rev. Dan Cummins, Associate Pastor at Skyline Church in San Diego, both much appreciate House Speaker Paul Ryan for enthusiastically opening many doors to make things happen. Yet, all three, defer to the numerous local, national, and international prayer groups that have long maintained a vision and have prayed without ceasing for these providential turns.

In 2005, the very year the Congressional Prayer Caucus was forming, the Lord also seemed to be speaking to certain lay prayer leaders in the Pacific Northwest. It was their impression that they were being called to immediate and targeted intercession on behalf of state officials here in Olympia at our Capitol campus. Within months, a stately house—literally within yards of the campus, was leased and designated for prayer on behalf of our state government leaders.

Again, two years ago, as the Lord was speaking to the *Congressional Prayer Caucus* about starting up campus worship services, HE began speaking to those of us involved with the Prayer House in Olympia, to get up and take the Gospel across the street. It seemed the Lord was pleased that prayer was going forth for lawmakers, but now it was time to start moving the ball down the field towards the end-zone.

Admittedly, it was awkward at first. But, armed only with nervous smiles and chocolate truffles (literally), doors were opened and so were our eyes. We had had no idea how many “Daniels” were already in place in government circles—many just waiting for a little encouragement.

But the favor experienced, even in the offices where no “Christians” have been detected, is remarkable. Last week, two of our men were in an arguably liberal office in the Legislative Building. Just in the door, a teasing voice shouted out from far down the row, “**Bring those prayers down here!**” All enjoyed a laugh.

And finally, we appreciate many legislators who welcome our prayer teams. Several have requested personal time with pastors, and so far, 20 lead pastors are on board. We will also be inviting them to help us distribute a newly published book The Bible, America’s Source of Law and Liberty. Thanks to special discount pricing by author Stephen McDowell with the Virginia-based Providence Foundation, and donations from a local adult Sunday class, each of our 147 state lawmakers will receive a copy.

So, if you haven’t been to Olympia in a while, why don’t you “bring those prayers down here!”

*Rick Forcier*

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<sup>1</sup> Cummins, Dan, “You won’t hear this reported on CNN or Fox News...,” Charisma News, 8/18/2016

<sup>2</sup> Barton, David, “Church in the U.S. Capitol,” 12/31/16, <https://wallbuilders.com/church-u-s-capitol/>