

## Readings on revival, renewal or confessional litanies

### *Option One*

Gracious God, you reached out to the founders of our nation. You led them to this land. And from a wilderness, they fashioned a powerful and influential nation. Simple people, you inspired them to dream the impossible dream - that you would forge a handful of colonies into a nation that miraculously secured its freedom. Overflowing with promise and hope, through faith in you, they created these United States.

**Forgive us, O God, that too many have come to believe that this nation arose by without your providential intervention.**

So many times, we might have faltered, but you guided us. We grew ever stronger. We stood for truth, becoming protectors around the world. We fed the hungry. We rushed to provide care around the world.

**Forgive us, that we have forgotten that we could be good, because you have been good to us. Forgive us, when we now think we can save ourselves – and others. Forgive us, that we now act as if any God is as good as you, O God of our Fathers. Forgive us for abandoning you.**

Merciful and Holy God, Jesus came to offer truth, truth that frees and liberates, truth that keeps men free, truth without which we re-enter slavery to sin. Jesus revealed the great depth of his love by his determination to withstand evil when that posture cost him his life.

**Forgive us, O God, that we have preferred convenience, that we have avoided conflict with culture, that we have allowed the power of evil to flourish because we fear that taking up one's cross would be just too costly an exercise.**

*Silent reflection after these words.*

Gracious God, forgive our lack of bold trust,  
**Have mercy on us and forgive us.**

Help us when we hesitate to stand for truth and right, publicly,  
**and strengthen us when we are weak**

Breath on your Church, refresh our hearts and minds, move us to action. Give us the courage to follow Jesus wherever he takes us.

**Amen**

Option Two

Gracious and Patient God, we confess our reluctance to enter the wilderness places of our land, dark and evil places, dangerous and disoriented places. We confess that we avoid danger, that we drive around the slums. We confess our tendency to prefer the safe places of our homes and our quiet neighborhoods.

**Forgive us, for failing to be salt and light. Forgive us for staying in salt-shaker, for fashioning our churches to serve us, rather than others.**

We confess that we enjoy immersion in the idea that you love us. We thank you that you are reminding us that our renewed status in Christ should not isolate us from those who do not yet know your love. Rather, it should cause us to invade the dark and depressed places around us with love and light, with joy and care.

**Forgive us, God, for receiving your unconditional love without being transformed into loving people who give that love away, to the most powerless among us. Forgive us, and love through us.**

We confess that on our watch, the nation is being lost. That we have been far too silent, too passive, too disengaged. We confess a sense of being overwhelmed by the rapidness of cultural change. We confess that we are disturbed by the moral and spiritual state of the nation. We are alarmed for the next generation.

**Forgive us, God, for the sin of failing to act. Forgive us and have mercy on us. Have mercy on our land. Have mercy on the generation of our children. Heal our land. Send a revival – a nation changing spiritual and moral renewal.**

The only route to renewal and national revival is to acknowledge our wrong, and have the courage to change. Therefore,  
**We repent.**

For the failure to protect the unborn,  
**We repent.**

For the legal and legislative attack on the family, the failure of our own homes in the church,  
**We repent.**

For the easy access to drugs and mind-bending chemicals,  
**We repent.**

For schools without prayer and Biblical values,  
**We repent.**

For music and art, for entertainment values so void of moral substance,  
**We repent.**

**Forgive us, O God, and increase our capacity to actively and openly trust in you.**

*Option Three*

Dear God, as we see the darkness around us deepen, forgive us that we excuse ourselves from responsibility. Forgive us that we have fashioned for ourselves a nurturing, rather than transforming faith; a God who serves us, rather than being a people who serve God and others. Forgive us, for making faith about us.

**Forgive us, O God, and change us.**

Dear God, forgive us for our pride. You resist the proud and give grace to the humble. We have been a proud church, proud Christians.

**Forgive us, we humble ourselves before you. Break our hearts. Wet our eyes over our national need for you.**

O God, may we not lean to our own understanding in these times. We declare, that unless you build the house, we labor in vain. Unless you watch the city, the watchmen watch in vain. You alone are our salvation.

**Forgive us, O God, and increase our trust in you.**

When we are tempted, in our personal lives to race through the day without pausing to invoke your guidance, without intentionally seeking your face, without 'praying without ceasing,'

**Forgive our independence, O God, and lead us into a state of constant contact with you, of walking in the spirit.**

*A time of silence for personal confession*

Merciful God, save us from the time of trial and deliver us from evil. Forgive us our sins and those of our nation. Assure us of peace. May we walk in the security of your grace. Save us, O God.

This we pray in the name of Jesus. Amen

*Option Four*

Lord Jesus, the cross is the wisdom of God to those who are saved. We confess our bewilderment over the dreadful act of the crucifixion of Jesus, your Son and our Lord. We wonder - why did it have to happen? Why, was love crucified?

**Right our thinking God, when it seems as though evil has triumphed in this despicable deed.**

And now, when it seems that Christ is being crucified again, rejected by our nation, that the name of Jesus has become such a public offense, we are again bewildered.

**Give us courage, in the face of such rejection, not to run for our lives, not to miss our moment and not to deny you before men.**

When we fear what the price of discipleship might be to us, remind us that you called us to take up the cross and follow you. In the long view of history, we now see the crucifixion as a powerful, sacrificial act of love. Help us to boldly love as we boldly stand for truth.

**Remind us that good did triumph over evil, that life swallowed death.**

Forgive us when we get caught up in the quest for achievement and power, and we lose sight of the eternal for temporal gains. Forgive us, when we forget that Jesus' power was made perfect in weakness.

**Forgive for any reluctance, O God, to proclaim Jesus, as Savior and Lord, with both our lips and our lives. May the crucified and risen Christ be our Lord. We now empty ourselves of all that hinders such a bold proclamation of Jesus to our world.**

*Silent reflection on these words*

Have mercy on us. Strengthen us. Give us boldness, tempered by gentleness. Give us a passionate voice, tempered by reason. Give us wisdom, informed by divine values. This we pray in Jesus' name. Amen

*Option Five*

Lord Jesus Christ, we long to praise you with our heart, our life and our voice. May we not only wave the palm branches and shout "Hosanna." We sense a growing distance between our space-age world and the dusty streets of first century Jerusalem. That city welcomed you as a king, when you rode in on a lowly donkey. They greeted you with cheers and acclamations which too soon turned to jeers and condemnation. From this side of history, we confidently assure ourselves that we could never have been part of the jeering crowd. But such presumption is dangerous. What would we have done if we had been there?

(silent reflection)

When with both our words and actions, we reflect a reluctance to confess  
you publicly as Lord of our lives:

**Forgive us.**

When we fear, that by humbling ourselves, we might be seen by others as weak in  
push and shove culture:

**Forgive us.**

When we betray your love for us through our lack of committed love for you and  
others:

**Forgive us.**

When we find ourselves glossing over the gruesome reality of your passion and  
crucifixion, of forgetting that over and over, we nail truth to a cross, we diminish  
the bright light of holiness to conceal sin, we reject even the rule of a benevolent  
God in favor of deadly self-rule:

**Forgive us.**

Lord Jesus, agent of Creation -  
**remake us in your likeness; renew our nation.**

Lord Jesus, the one who redeems us -  
**Claim us as your own. Save us.**

Empower us with the Holy Spirit so that our lives continually glorify you and our  
tongues forever confess Jesus as Lord. This we pray in Jesus' name. Amen

Special thanks to P. Douglas Small for compiling these responsive readings.