



PRAYING FOR REVIVAL IN THE CHURCH & TRANSFORMATION IN THE NATION

# AS ONE!

## PRAYER SHIELD 2016

Pray for Scotland (Pfs) and Parliamentary Prayer Scotland (PPS) invite you to partner with them in a call to raise a Prayer Shield over the nation in 2016. The initial focus will be the 40 days before the elections to the Scottish Parliament, from 27 March (Easter Sunday) to 5 May (election day), but we believe the Shield needs to stay in place for at least the rest of the year.

This is part of a wider 'stirring up' of prayer in 2016, starting with the 40 days of prayer call over Lent – 10 February to 26 March – initiated by David Hill and the Trypraying team ([office@trypraying.co.uk](mailto:office@trypraying.co.uk)). We have worked closely with Trypraying as we see the two 40-day periods as parts of one whole stream of prayer. We believe that God has 'orchestrated' the connection between us and that the Holy Spirit is guiding both groups as we plan, publicise and move forward into prayer 'As One!'. Trypraying have produced a Lent prayer guide and Pfs/PPS will provide prayer notes for the second 40 days and beyond.

### Background

The call to raise a prayer shield over Scotland is the result of a series of pictures (visions) and Scripture verses received by two of the PPS Team, and a word to one of the Pfs Team about '40 days of prayer before the elections'.

The visions and verses are detailed in the attached paper, prepared by the PPS Team following detailed reflection and prayer. The prayer call was first announced at the Pfs prayer conference in Stirling in October 2015, followed by a process of 'raising awareness' with individuals and at ministers'/leaders' meetings in some of the cities.

The aim is to encourage as many as possible in each community/town/region to raise a prayer shield over their own area so that the nation will be covered by a series of connected prayer shields – in the same way as Roman legionnaires were covered in the '*testudo*' or '*tortoise*' formation.

### Why the title: 'As One!'

While looking for a suitable image of the '*testudo*', we discovered that the command the Roman Officer gave to his men, all he had to say to get them into that formation was (English equivalent) '**AS ONE!**' This short, significant phrase has struck a strong chord with many who have heard it. It reminds us powerfully of the unity in the Trinity, our unity with the Trinity and our unity with each other through Jesus and his atoning work on the Cross, and His desire, expressed in John 17:22, that "they (*all believers*) may be one as we are one." [NIV – emphasis added]. That is why we chose '**As One!**' as the title for this prayer call.

Since making that choice and announcing the call last year we have seen 'As One!' referred to by leaders all over the world – in different contexts but having the same meaning - and as part of the title of international conferences and praise gatherings. It is definitely a '**now**' word!

### **'As One!' - Defence and offence**

The '*testudo*' is both defensive and offensive. For *defence* – the interlocking shields protect those within them from the enemy's attacks. For *attack* – the close formation makes it almost impossible for the enemy to break up and disperse any advance. But there is one essential requirement for success when moving forward – those within the shields must keep in step at all times and *move in unity*. If one soldier moves out of step or stumbles, the unity of the force is compromised and they become at best less effective and at worst, defeated.

This is a powerful image of how the Church should be operating at local, regional and national level as we seek to extend the Kingdom of God – '*United we stand, divided we fall*'. In summer 2014 many in the Church united in prayer for Glasgow and the Commonwealth Games – proclaiming the Glasgow motto: "*Lord, let Glasgow flourish by the preaching of your word and the praising of your name*". For that time the spiritual atmosphere over the Glasgow region was changed, and the area and all in it enjoyed a peace and positivity remarked on by many. This does not have to be a 'one off' event – persevering, united prayer can '*bring heaven to earth*' and transform our nation!

We strongly believe that as we stand together in 2016, raising our prayer shields over the nation, there will come a 'tipping point' and our combined prayers **will** change the atmosphere and the circumstances we face. We can dare to dream the impossible, to imagine.....Revival! Transformation!

### **Nahum 2:1-5**

The separate document describing of the Shield visions also refers to the Scripture Nahum 2:1-5. We believe the Nahum verses are relevant to this call as they contain both a warning, and a hope. They start with God's warning of the destruction of the Assyrian capital of Nineveh, which happened shortly afterwards. If Nineveh is a type of the ungodly beliefs, laws and practices that are eroding the Christian foundations of our society, then these verses could mean that the current level of opposition to God's ways is itself coming under attack and is about to give way to even more ungodly forces with an even more devastating effect on the nation. Verses 3-5 describe the confusion amongst both nobles (commanders) and soldiers as they rush about and 'stumble' to the walls to defend the city.

Yet in the middle of this very negative prospect is verse 2, which promises the restoration of the people of God, and it is this verse we wish to focus on, while not ignoring the warning. God is giving us, the Church, the time to prepare both for defence and attack. In the midst of the darkness there will be a great opportunity for God's people to be restored and shine, to God's glory, whatever the outcome. Our response, standing together 'As One' with our shields of faith, love and unity, will become, along with the atonement of Christ, the hope of mercy and protection for the nation – the only effective defence the nation has in the circumstances.

At the same time, under the shield we can advance and extend the Kingdom of God by soaking the atmosphere under it with thanksgiving, praise and prayer - clearing, cleansing and changing the atmosphere, saturating our communities with the presence of God – the result being nothing less than the transformation of our communities with thousands leaving their sinful ways and finding the Lord Jesus. The promise of restoration also implies that God is dealing with the forces that hinder the Church from being seen as the Lord's people walking *together* - the restoration of *togetherness*.

### **The regions**

For an effective prayer shield to cover the nation each region, each town and city, each community, needs praying people interceding for (raising a shield over) their area. As was said in one city leaders meeting – *“this will only happen if we stand together – As One!”*. There are of course many individuals, groups and churches already praying, for which we give God grateful thanks. Through this call we wish to provide a renewed focus, encouraging an increase in both the numbers praying and the areas covered.

For an effective prayer shield, it will be important that praying people in each area take ownership of the call, linking up and working together, in whatever ways that may be appropriate locally. As each local shield is raised, as in the vision, we believe God will lock them together to form the covering over the nation.

### **Connecting the shields**

Over the 40 days, we are sending a shield with the legend 'As One!' around the nation to connect each area, in much the same way as the Queen's baton went around Scotland in 2014. The shield will spend a day (occasionally two) in each local authority area. It will be up to local co-ordinators in each city/county where they take the shield and how they arrange their day, but a common feature is that folk representing one area will pass on the shield to folk representing the next area, and as they do so they will pray a blessing over the next area. Those receiving the shield will in turn pray a blessing over the area it has just come from. With the shield will be a prayer for unity which we will ask be prayed at each location it stops at, but in addition each place it passes through will have the opportunity to add a prayer of blessing for the next village/town. By this we hope to achieve a continuous flow – a river of blessing prayer from one community to the next along the whole route – see the Shield tour details on our website.

### **Conclusion & going forward**

The aim of this document and the other one detailing the visions is to give you as much background as possible as to why we believe this call is important in 2016. As well as the Scottish Parliament elections, 5 May 2016 also sees elections in Wales, N. Ireland and England (local government & London Assembly), all of which will have significant impact on the future of Scotland and the UK as a whole.

Prayer for the period after the elections will be just as important as the period before. A call to pray for the re-evangelisation of the nation from 5<sup>th</sup> – 15<sup>th</sup> May has just been announced, and a UK-wide 40-day prayer call from 15<sup>th</sup> May to 23<sup>rd</sup> June, leading up to the EU Referendum, is being planned.

*“We have reached the stage where only God can help the nation! Our call for the coming year should not just be for special days of prayer but for constant intercession for God to save the nation.” [Clifford Hill, Issachar Ministries, Dec. 2015]*

The prayer shield will facilitate this and go even further, because of the unity with which it is raised and kept in place!

We trust your spirit will say ‘yes’ and ‘amen’ as you read this information, and that you will desire to stand with us in 2016 - **‘As One!’** - to see His Kingdom Come, His will be done in Scotland!

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[With input by members of the PPS team]