

# Prayer for the Kingdom of God in July<sup>1</sup>

## Reimagining the Future

‘Believers are summoned to cooperate with God on his way to the future of his kingdom by their actions and prayers. They will not bring in the kingdom by what they do. Only God can do this, and only his providence knows how our various acts can relate to this goal and be effective. Thus in our awareness of the limits of human action prayer is the highest form of our participation in bringing in the kingdom of God, and prayer again is a stimulus and pointer for believers’ action.’

Wolfgang Pannenberg.

‘History belongs to the intercessors, who believe the future into being. If this is so, then intercession, far from being an escape from action, is a means of focusing for action and of creating action. By means of our intercessions we veritably cast fire upon the earth and trumpet the future into being.’

Walter Wink.

“To clasp the hands in prayer is the beginning of an uprising against the disorder of the world.”

Karl Barth

## Call to Worship

Rabbi Eliezer [Elijah] was one of the most distinguished Jewish scholars and poets of the 12<sup>th</sup> century. At the end of his life, when his health was failing, one of his students asked him during a visit: ‘Our master, teach us the ways of life that we may merit through them the life of the world to come’. Rabbi Eliezer [Elijah] replied: ‘When you pray know before whom you stand’.

Where there is no vision, the people perish.

Proverbs 29.18

‘The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord  
and of his Messiah,  
and he will reign for ever and ever.’

Then the twenty-four elders who sit on their thrones before God fell on their faces and worshipped God, singing,

‘We give you thanks, Lord God Almighty,  
who are and who were,

---

<sup>1</sup> Mk 1.15, Mt 6.10.

for you have taken your great power  
and begun to reign.’

Rev. 11

‘And the one who was seated on the throne said, ‘See, I am making all things new.’ ‘It is done! I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end. To the thirsty I will give water as a gift from the spring of the water of life. Those who conquer will inherit these things, and I will be their God and they will be my children.’

Rev. 21

‘From now on, therefore, we regard no one from a human point of view..If anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation: everything old has passed away, see, everything has become new! All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation; that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting the message of reconciliation to us. So we are ambassadors for Christ, since God is making his appeal through us; we entreat you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God. As we work together with him, we urge you not to accept the grace of God in vain. For he says, ‘At an acceptable time I have listened to you, and on a day of salvation I have helped you.’ See, now is the acceptable time; see, now is the day of salvation! We are putting no obstacles in anyone’s way, so that no fault may be found with our ministry.’

2 Cor 5.16 – 6.3

‘All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age.’

Mt. 28

And the one who was seated on the throne said, ‘See, I am making all things new.’ Also he said, ‘Write this, for these words are trustworthy and true.’ Then he said to me, ‘It is done! I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end. To the thirsty I will give water as a gift from the spring of the water of life. Those who conquer will inherit these things, and I will be their God and they will be my children.

Revelation 21.5a, 6

‘Some put their trust in chariots and horses, but our trust is in the name of the Lord.’

Psalm 20.7

‘Not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit, says the Lord of hosts.’

Zechariah 4.6b

Very truly, I tell you, the one who believes in me will also do the works that I do and, in fact, will do greater works than these, because I am going to the Father. I will do whatever you ask in my name, so that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If in my name you ask me for anything, I will do it.

John 14.12-20

If the Son makes you free, you will be free indeed.

John 6.36

For freedom Christ has set us free. Stand firm, therefore, and do not submit again to a yoke of slavery.

Gal. 5.1

Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom.

2 Cor 3.17

## **Introduction**

Bishop Paul has called us to prayer in July. He has called us to pray for our leaders and governments, for world situations, for the church, for ourselves. We do not know how to pray, but the Spirit helps us in our weakness, with cries too deep for words. And God, who searches the heart, knows what is the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints with cries too deep for words, said the Apostle.

A number of years ago, I found myself earnestly seeking the Lord, when as part of a local prayer movement, we sought to gather with other Christian leaders, in prayer for spiritual and social transformation. When I received what I can only describe as a vision. Which I'd like to share with you today.

I was in the Spirit in prayer, in the name of Jesus. I received a vision in which I saw the nation of Australia as a desert land. I asked, what are you wanting to say to me, Lord? And I saw the crust of the desert land thick and red from the hot sun. It appeared to me impenetrable. I despaired and said, Lord, it is so hard! What are you wanting to say to me? Why are you showing me this? And from behind me there came a wind that moved slowly and steadily across the

desert. As it moved from west to east, trees were being raised up in its path. I asked again, what are you wanting to say to me, Lord? Why are you showing me this? The wind continued across the desert and the trees were being raised up, when suddenly I heard a loud ‘crack!’ that came from deep down within the land, from deep below the desert crust. It was like a sudden and final tectonic movement had taken place deep in the earth. And, incredibly, I saw the whole desert begin to move very slowly and yet surely downward, in a vertical direction. Despite the movement, I despaired again and said, But Lord, the desert remains so hard! Who can transform it? And then I saw beyond the desert the deep, blue sea. This desert is surrounded by water! And suddenly through my despair, hope sprung up. I said, Lord, what are you doing?! And I watched as the wind completed its path across the desert. It reached the east coast, and there were now trees all across the land. And I watched as the land was brought down toward the level of the sea. And then I saw water break into the desert. I saw the dry, red riverbeds fill with blue water. I saw blue springs gush into the dry, red desert plains. And I saw the thick and red crust of the desert land buckle and break to make way for the new water. I praised the Lord for the water in the desert! And then I asked, Lord, but why are you showing this to me? What has this to do with me? And the Lord showed me, I am one of the trees.

A year later, as I sought to pray into that vision, received a second vision in which I saw the desert buckle here in Melbourne and new water gushed up through the break in the desert. As the new water flowed, a harvest of new corn moved passed me. Thousands of new corn emerged and I asked the Lord what he wanted me to do and he said to witness to him; that he is the One who has done this; that he is the one who has broken the desert open and who has brought this new water and this harvest into the land; that he alone is God.

## **Prayer for the Kingdom of God**

Father,

Your Son Jesus Christ promised us that whatever we ask in his name, he will do it.

To the response, ‘We ask this in Jesus’ name’ the response is ‘Amen.’

Father,

Fulfil your vision for your world and for your church.

We ask this, in the power of your cross, and in the power of your Holy Spirit.

We ask this, in the name of Jesus.

**Amen.**

Open with the Lord's prayer - in whatever version and language each person is most comfortable with.

Father,

We thank you:

for the ancient Israelite theology of history that taught us to understand reality as a history of your presence and activity in your world;

that in Christ you taught us to understand reality as a history of the reconciliation of the human race to you<sup>2</sup>;

that you have elected your Christian people to carry out your purposes within history;

that your purpose within history is for a true order of society, on the basis of your own reign of freedom, justice and peace, in Christ.

Father,

We have not:

carried out your purposes in history;

accepted our broad social responsibilities as Christians;

shaped a true order of society on the basis of your own reign of freedom, justice and peace; and

your elected purpose of us to be a blessing to all the nations of the world.

Father,

We repent.

Forgive us.

---

<sup>2</sup> 2 Cor 5.16-21.

Help us to live our new life in Christ.

We ask this in Jesus' name.

**Amen.**

Father,

Thank you that:

in Christ you revealed yourself to be the God who is reconciling a lost world to yourself;

your calling of every individual human being by name<sup>3</sup> changed the world by placing for the first time an eternal value on the life of every individual human being<sup>4</sup>;

the Christian understanding of human nature, as reconciled to you in Christ, has illumined the self-understanding of human beings in this world for nearly two thousand years.

Father,

We have not preserved:

your image as the God who in eternity is reaching out with reconciling love to every individual who is lost in this world;

your image of human being as a history of human being with the dignity and the destiny of your image, and your children;

your revealed understanding of human nature as reconciled in Christ;

your reconciliation of the human race as the basis of a true order of society;

the social order of modern western democratic society;

Father,

We repent.

Forgive us.

---

<sup>3</sup> Lk 15.

<sup>4</sup> See Jesus' life and ministry, and his parables of the lost sheep, the lost coin, and the lost son.

Help us to live our new life in Christ.

We ask this in Jesus' name.

**Amen.**

Father,

Thank you that:

in the peculiar reserve of the Jewish people, and of Jesus himself, toward the government of their day, we see clearly that they did not expect the Kingdom of God to come from the government or from changes to the form of government, but from the replacement of every form of control of human beings, sinful from birth, over other human beings;

to the radical problem of evil and oppression in society, the result of the rule of individuals, sinful from their birth, over the society, Christianity proclaims the good news of your Divine Kingdom, your own reign of freedom, justice and peace directly in the hearts and lives of your people;

the democratic ideology of modern western society after the English revolution of the 17<sup>th</sup> century lives out of this vision.

Father,

We have not maintained or preserved:

the Christian proclamation of your Divine Kingdom, now come in Jesus Christ<sup>5</sup>, as the basis of a true order of society in freedom, justice and peace;

the Christian proclamation of the future final definitive fulfilment of your Kingdom, and of the human race, in freedom, justice and peace, at Christ's return;

the modern western democratic society that lives out of this vision, and is a present anticipation of Your future reign in and over all things in perfect freedom, justice and peace, at Christ's return.

Father,

We repent.

---

<sup>5</sup> Mark 1.15.

Forgive us.

Help us to live our new life in Christ.

We ask this in Jesus' name.

**Amen.**

Father,

Thank you:

for the family of modern western democratic nations, for their central organising principle of universal, individual freedom, that is based on the reconciliation of the world of individuals to you in Christ, as a present anticipation of your future consummation of the world in Him;

that we see this whole dynamic at work, in the reunification of the western democratic family of nations, and in their united response against the Russian state, and its unjust invasion of the Ukraine;

that by the light of a true order of society, revealed within the history of the family of modern western democratic nations, your Kingdom of freedom, justice and peace, and societies based your Kingdom, the destiny of all people in the future of your kingdom is revealed to the world. Revealed, too, is the oppression and evil of that part of the world's population who continue to live under repressive, authoritarian, political rule;

we remember to you today, and ask that you would remember and help, the people of China, Russia, the Ukraine, Iran, North Korea, and everywhere the rights of the individual is trampled upon, by repressive states, in geographical areas outside the historical spiritual, cultural, and social impact of Christianity;

thank you for the dramatic spread of democracy throughout the world in our day.

Father,

We are sorry:

We have not seen in the modern family of western democratic nations, with their historical origins in Christianity, based on the Christian claim of the reconciliation of the human race to you in Christ, an anticipation of Your own



future reign of freedom, justice and peace in and over the human race, and a light to the whole world, of the future destiny of the whole world in the future of your Kingdom, at Christ's return;

We have not worked cooperatively with you in shaping a true order of society within the human race, justice and peace, based on the principle of individual freedom, corresponding to your Kingdom, now come in Jesus Christ.

Father,

We repent.

Forgive us.

Help us to live our new life in Christ.

We ask this in Jesus' name.

**Amen.**

Father,

We confess to you our failure:

of Christian unity, that sin of Christian division, that after the religious wars in Europe in the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> century led to a process of the secularisation of culture, and ultimately to a purely secular culture, emancipated from its historical roots within Christianity;

of Christian election, that in seeing election in abstract, non-historical terms, has failed to accept responsibility for the shaping of a true order of society corresponding to your Kingdom;

of Christian theology, that in seeing the church only, and not society, too, in relation to Your Kingdom, has failed to accept responsibility for maintaining the Christian religious interpretation of society, leading to civil religion, leading to the secularisation of modern culture, and to its alienation;

our contribution to the alienation of modern western society, and of the individual within modern society, and to all of the tragic consequences of that alienation, for the church, for society, for its economic, cultural and political order, for the meaningless of life within a purely secular order of society, leading to a general spiritual malaise within western society, for the ruthless exploitation of nature that now threatens ecological disaster.

Father,

We repent.

Forgive us.

Return us to:

You, as the source of life, as the source of the common life of society and of nature;

Your church, and to the unity of the church, as the basis of the unity of society;

The urgent task of ecumenical unity, on a new basis of plurality, as the worldwide Christian church;

The restoration of Christian church's function as a sign and an instrument of Your Kingdom;

Your mission of the reunification of society, based on the reunification of Christianity;

Your ministry of reconciliation in Christ as the basis of the reconciliation of the world to You in him;

Your ministry of the renewal of creation itself, based on the renewal of humanity's relationship with You;

Your ministry of the reconciliation of the world to You in Christ, that is the ministry of Christ and of the Apostles, and the purpose of your election of us as your Christian people, to be a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, your own people, in order that we may proclaim the mighty acts of You who has called us out of darkness into Your marvellous light.

We ask this in Jesus' name.

**Amen.**

Father,

We lament the erosion of the originally Christian principles of the individual and of national election by the forces of secularisation, leading to their

ambiguity, and finally to their blasphemous distortion, and final impotence, within a purely secular, liberal order within modern society.

We confess the failure of the Church:

to capture, and represent, the true meaning of these principles;

to faithfully proclaim the Christian religious interpretation of human nature, election and history within western society;

in succumbing to a non-religious reinterpretation of these originally Christian principles, and of western society;

by leaving the field of western society open to replacing the originally Christian foundation of society with a purely secular, non-religious basis of society, to a civil religion;

leading to the captivity of all people, and to the captivity of Your Church, in a civil religion, whether secular liberal, so-called liberation, or socialist.

Father,

We repent.

Forgive us.

Deliver Your people from their captivity within a civil religion.

We ask this in Jesus' name.

**Amen.**

Father,

We accept, with lament, your judgment upon modern western society, whose origins are in Christianity, for the sin of making itself independent of you.

We accept this, in the rise of socialism, the subordination of the individual to some acceptable image of society, and the control of the individual by the power of the state.

We lament.

Father,

We repent.

Forgive us.

Relent of your judgment of our society for the sin of making itself independent of you.

Turn back your judgment.

Turn back socialism.

Renew the face of the earth here in this place, here in Melbourne, we pray.

We ask this in Jesus' name.

**Amen.**

Father,

Raise up new political leadership within Victoria who will serve you, and your righteous will for all people, leading to the flourishing of all people.

Come, Lord Jesus, come.

Come, Holy Spirit, come.

And renew the face of the earth, here in this place.

We ask this in Jesus' name.

**Amen.**

Father,

We thank you that this is still the hour of liberty.

We thank that this is still the hour for the realisation of the principle of universal, individual liberty within the common life of our society.

We thank you that this is still the hour for the revocation of every form of control by human beings, sinful from their birth, over all other individuals.

We thank you that this is still the hour for the overcoming of the radical problem of evil and oppression in society, by the radical solution of the reign of

God himself in and over the life of the people, by the radical solution of the Christian proclamation of Your Divine Kingdom, now come in Christ, in replacement of every form of human government, of every stripe, that in every case involves the control of an individual human being, sinful from their birth, over all other individuals.

Father,

We confess to you the failure of your elect:

to proclaim the good news of Your own Kingdom, that was the content of Jesus' preaching, as the actual and the only sustainable basis of modern western democratic society;

to proclaim Your Kingdom as the spiritual power and sustenance necessary to preserve western society, as a family of democratic nations, as a social order of justice and peace corresponding to Your Kingdom;

to proclaim Your Kingdom as the basis of the freedom of the world of individuals within western society from the evil and oppression that inevitably follows from every exercise of control by individuals, sinful from their birth, over all every other individual;

to proclaim, and to open wide, the gate of liberty to the human race, within western society, and to the ends of the earth, in Jesus Christ;

Father,

We repent.

Forgive us.

Keep open, and equip us to keep open, the window of the modern era, the era of the Christian culture, of universal, civil freedom, based on Christian freedom.

Keep open, and equip us to keep open, the window of the fulness of its realisation within the common life of western society, and throughout the world.

Keep open, and equip us to keep open, your own reign of freedom, justice and peace throughout our modern western society, and throughout the world.

We ask this in Jesus' name.

**Amen.**

Father,

Thank you that in your judgement of western society, for the sin of making itself independent from you, in the form of socialism, you have made us more keenly aware of the unpredictability of irrational forces still shaping the course of history<sup>6</sup>, within your Divine world government<sup>7</sup>.

Help us to trust in your Divine government of the world, by seeing that the less secure the future of a liberal, secular society appears to be, the more secure the future of religion is.

Help us to put our trust in the future of religion – not a future in relation to economic or political liberation, in which we see an unintentional contribution to the spread of evil and oppression in the world - but the future of religion in the true sense of the word.

Thank you that we can feel confident about the future of religion, that religion can feel more secure today than it has for a long time, that it will outlast every ideological regime. Thank you that the only serious challenge to Christianity in the future will not be secular society, which is badly in need of religious support in our own day, but rival religions.

Father,

We confess to you:

Our participation in socialism that is an expression of our sin of despair;

Our participation in movements of economic and political so-called liberation, that unintentionally contribute to evil and oppression, that tempt away from the true Messiah, that manipulate the human hope, for the sake of the rise to power of the next political elite;<sup>8</sup>

Our participation in civil religion, whether secular liberal, political, or socialist, in replacement of true religion, as the basis of the order of society;

Our relinquishment of the political function of Christianity, to remind the political order of society that it is not the kingdom of God, but a provisional order of society, that coexists with the Christian church as an ultimate order of

---

<sup>6</sup> Eph 6.10-20.

<sup>7</sup> Isa 45.7.

<sup>8</sup> Mt 16.13-28.

society, in a society as a whole within the Christian religion, that bestows meaning on society, that bestows legitimacy on the social order, by assuring the citizens of that society that the political power is being exercised with a legitimate authority, with a divine authority, and not according to the mere exercise of power by individual human beings, sinful from their birth, over every other individual;

Our failure to see:

- the crisis of legitimacy that is there within western society by its failure to receive the necessary legitimacy from any religious authority;
- the social function of religion within the social history of the world, in providing the necessary authority and legitimacy to the social order;
- the precariousness of contemporary western society, due to its crisis of legitimacy, in the absence of the necessary divine authority, that only religion can bring;
- the basic need of modern western society for the Christian religion as the basis of its common life; and
- the essential nature of Christianity to the future of modern western society.

Father,

We repent of the sin of our despair, leading to our turning toward:

Socialism;

Political ideology;

Civil religion.

We repent of the sin of our failure to fulfil in and through us, in fulfilment of the social purpose of your election of us:

The essential need for Christianity within modern western society;

the essential nature of Christianity to the future of modern western society; and

the social function of Christianity in providing the religious legitimation that is essential to the future of modern western society.

Father,

Forgive us.

Deliver us.

Renew us in our baptismal promises to you:

We turn to Christ.

We repent of our sins.

We reject selfish living, and all that is false and unjust.

We renounce Satan and all evil.

Almighty God, deliver us from the powers of darkness and lead us in the light of Christ to his everlasting kingdom.

Strengthen us to live as disciples of Christ.

Strengthen us to fight the good fight, to finish the race, to keep the faith.

Strengthen us to confess Christ crucified, proclaim his resurrection, and look for his coming in glory.

We ask this in Jesus' name.

**Amen.**

Closed with prayers for Anglican Bayside Deanery parishes, vicars and ministries.

Rev'd Jonathan Chamberlain

Area Dean, Bayside

29<sup>th</sup> July 2023