

THE SACRAMENT OF LIVING

EPIPHANY 2011

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

Karl Barth

This is the confidence we have in approaching God: that if we ask anything according to his will, he hears us. And if we know that he hears us—whatever we ask—we know that we have what we asked of him.

St John

Walter Wink

Intercessory prayer is spiritual defiance of what is in the way of what God has promised. Intercession visualizes an alternative future to the one apparently fated by the momentum of current forces. Prayer infuses the air of a time yet to be into the suffocating atmosphere of the present. History belongs to the intercessors who believe the future into being. This is not simply a religious statement. It is also true of Communists or capitalists or anarchists. The future belongs to whoever can envision a new and desirable possibility, which faith then fixes upon as inevitable.

Walter Wink

This is the politics of hope. Hope envisages its future and then acts as if that future is now irresistible, thus helping to create the reality for which it longs. The future is not closed. There are fields of forces whose actions are somewhat predictable. But how they will interact is not. Even a small number of people, firmly committed to the new inevitability on which they have fixed their imaginations, can decisively affect the shape the future takes.

Walter Wink

These shapers of the future are the intercessors, who call out of the future, the longed-for new present. In the New Testament, the name and texture and aura of that future is God's domination-free order, the reign of God. No doubt our intercessions sometimes change us as we open ourselves to new possibilities we had not guessed. No doubt our prayers to God reflect back upon us as a divine command to become the answer to our prayer. But if we are to take the biblical understanding seriously, intercession is more than that. It changes the world and it changes what is possible to God. It creates an island of relative freedom in a world gripped by unholy necessity. A new force field appears that hitherto was only potential.

Walter Wink

The entire configuration changes as the result of the change of a single part. When we pray we are not sending a letter to a celestial White House, where it is sorted among piles of others. We are engaged, rather, in an act of co-creation, in which one little sector of the universe rises up and becomes translucent, incandescent, a vibratory centre of power that radiates the power of the universe. 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.

Karl Barth

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Jesus

“This, then, is how you should pray: “Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one. For yours is the kingdom, and the power and the glory, forever and ever. Amen.

THE FATHER'S NAME

Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name

THE FATHER'S WILL

Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven

“The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to set the oppressed free, to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor.”

Then I saw “a new heaven and a new earth,” for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and there was no longer any sea. I saw the Holy City, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, “Look! God’s dwelling place is now among the people, and *he will dwell with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God. ‘He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death’ or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away.*” He who was seated on the throne said, “I am making everything new!” Then he said, “Write this down, for these words are trustworthy and true.”

Deliverance
Righteousness and justice
Peace
Joy
God's presence
Healing
Belonging and return from exile.

BONDAGE > DELIVERANCE
INJUSTICE > JUSTICE
CONFLICT > PEACE
GRIEF > JOY
DESPAIR > PRESENCE
SICKNESS > HEALING
SEPARATION > BELONGING

THE FATHER'S PROVISION

Give us today, our daily bread

1 Peter 5

Cast all your anxiety on him, because he cares for you.

Psalm 34

The Lord is near to the broken hearted, and saves those who are crushed in spirit

Philippians 4

And my God will meet all your needs, according to the riches of his glory in Christ Jesus

THE FATHER'S FORGIVENESS

Forgive us our debts, as we have also forgiven our debtors

Jesus, in Matthew 6

For if you forgive other people when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. **15** But if you do not forgive others their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins.

THE FATHER'S PROTECTION

And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one

1 Peter 5

Be alert and of sober mind. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour. Resist him, standing firm in the faith, because you know that your fellow believers throughout the world are undergoing the same kind of sufferings.

Ephesians 6

Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. Put on the full armor of God, so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes. For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms.

2 Corinthians 10

The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish strongholds. ⁵We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ.

THE FATHER'S KINGDOM

For yours is the kingdom, the power, and the glory, forever and ever amen.

Revelation 22

The Spirit and the bride say, "Come!" And let those who hear say, "Come!" Let those who are thirsty come; and let all who wish take the free gift of the water