

## First Friday of the Month Call to Prayer – July 2014

*First of all, then, I urge that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made for all people . . . This is good, and it is pleasing in the sight of God our Saviour, who desires all people to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth. 1 Timothy 2: 1-4 ESV*

Welcome to our July 2014 First Friday Call to Prayer. Our aim is to provide you with teaching that we trust will enhance your prayer experience and will be an encouragement to you. We will also provide you with praise items and prayer requests coming from within ANiC and the Anglican Communion worldwide.

	<b>Prayer Quote</b>
<p>We encourage you to set aside the first Friday, <b>July 4<sup>th</sup></b>, as a day of prayer and fasting for renewal in the Church and for revival across our land in these critical days, ideally gathering with other believers in your parish or region for corporate prayer.</p>	<p><i>We live in a generation that has never known revival God's way. True revival changes the moral climate of an area or a nation. Without exception, all true revivals of the past began after years of agonizing, hell-robbing, earth-shaking, heaven-sent intercession. The secret to true revival in our own day is still the same. But where, O where, are the intercessors?</i> Leonard Ravenhill 1907-1994</p>

### Revival Prayer: Using Isaiah's Example

When I reflect on the "Prayer Quote" by Leonard Ravenhill immediately above, I am challenged once again concerning my attitude towards revival. As we have discussed over the past few months, there is nothing that is going to change the course of our downward-spiraling, hell-bound culture and society other than a fresh outpouring of the power of God, bringing renewal in the Church and true revival to our world. Despite the best of intentions, making new laws and relaxing others, providing more education or tolerance training can never radically or permanently change the inherent darkness of the human heart. Only God can do that.

But the thought that God actually is calling us to pray for such a revival is totally overwhelming, isn't it. How on earth can we do that? Once we've wrestled through the whole issue of personal repentance that we discussed in May, where then do we even begin? How do we know that we are asking the right things? Does the prayer of one person make any difference in the greater scheme of things?

These questions, and others along the same thought patterns, can so often dissuade us from ever getting started. The task is immense; way too big for me. Maybe I'll just go back to praying for my church and my dear elderly aunt and leave this revival business for the real "prayer warriors". But, somehow, I'm not satisfied with just doing that either. Lord, help me!

The Bible, the original Prayer Book, is filled with prayers that we can use to help us get started on the road of praying for revival. One of the passages that has been frequently recommended over the years is taken from the book of Isaiah. Just before we look at it, let's reflect for a moment on Isaiah and the world in which he ministered.

Not a great deal is known about Isaiah's personal life, but we do know that he lived 700 or so years before Jesus, in the time of the divided kingdoms, Israel and Judah. Isaiah lived in Jerusalem and his prophetic words over the course of many decades warned Judah of God's anger over their rebellion, their hypocritical religious observances and God's coming judgment as a result. However, he also speaks of the coming of the promised Messiah, the suffering Servant who will bring forgiveness and amnesty to all rebels who will turn to him. The culture that Isaiah ministered in was one of increasing

decadence, hollow religiosity, and political intrigue driven by selfishness and greed. Sound familiar? Not much has really changed in 2700 odd years!

Now let's have a look at how Isaiah prayed as he longed for the fulfillment of God's promise.

*Look down from heaven and see, from your holy and beautiful habitation. Where are your zeal and your might? The stirring of your inner parts and your compassion are held back from me. For you are our Father, though Abraham does not know us, and Israel does not acknowledge us; You, O LORD, are our Father, our Redeemer from of old is your name.* Isaiah 63:15-16 ESV

Isaiah is concerned that God is withholding himself from his people as a direct result of their rebellion and increasing drift away from their covenantal relationship with him. Again, the parallel with the contemporary church is not lost on us. We can pray, "Lord, where are your zeal and your might? Show us your power, Lord. Show us your glory! Do what you have done in the past!"

*Your holy people held possession for a little while; our adversaries have trampled down your sanctuary. We have become like those over whom you have never ruled, like those who are not called by your name.* Isaiah 63:18-19 ESV

Isaiah remembers days gone by when God's people were more faithful to serve him with their hearts and not just religious observance. But now, they look just like the heathen nations who are not called by God's name. There is little to no observable difference between the world and us; no salt and light positively influencing the culture here.

*Oh that you would rend the heavens and come down, that the mountains might quake at your presence— as when fire kindles brushwood and the fire causes water to boil— to make your name known to your adversaries, and that the nations might tremble at your presence! When you did awesome things that we did not look for, you came down, the mountains quaked at your presence. From of old no one has heard or perceived by the ear, no eye has seen a God besides you, who acts for those who wait for him.* Isaiah 64:1-4 ESV

The prophet pours out his heart before the Lord, exhorting him to rend the heavens like a vast curtain and enter our time/space world with his mighty Presence so that even the nations of the world with all their military might and political superiority might quake at the reality of who God really is. Nothing and no one can compare to the glorious majesty and omnipotence of our God and King!

*We have all become like one who is unclean, and all our righteous deeds are like a polluted garment. We all fade like a leaf, and our iniquities, like the wind, take us away. There is no one who calls upon your name, who rouses himself to take hold of you; for you have hidden your face from us, and have made us melt in the hand of our iniquities.* Isaiah 64:6-7 ESV

Isaiah returns to a time of repentance, an experience that is inevitable as we draw closer in prayer to the holiness of our God. He includes himself as a sinner, just like in the similar prayers of Daniel and Nehemiah. There's no finger-pointing or expressions of "if only 'they' would get their act together".

*There is no one who calls upon your name, who rouses himself to take hold of you; for you have hidden your face from us, and have made us melt in the hand of our iniquities. But now, O LORD, you are our Father; we are the clay, and you are our potter; we are all the work of your hand. Be not so terribly angry, O LORD, and remember not iniquity forever. Behold, please look, we are all your people. Your holy cities have become a wilderness; Zion has become a wilderness, Jerusalem a desolation. Our holy and beautiful house, where our fathers praised you, has been burned by fire, and all our pleasant places have become ruins. Will you restrain yourself at these things, O LORD? Will you keep silent, and afflict us so terribly?*

Isaiah 64:7-12 ESV

Here Isaiah reminds God (and, more specifically, himself) that he is our Father; we are but clay, God is the potter. We are but the work of his creative genius. He points out the terrible distress that Zion is in because of the judgment of the invading armies, and cries out to the Lord, "Will you hold yourself back any longer?"

You may find that praying these words of Isaiah into our current situation a little strange at first. But I believe that we all find encouragement at the similarity of his situation to ours, and we will echo in prayer his words, “Oh, that you would rend the heavens and come down once more!” For we are powerless to change anything by ourselves, but as we cry out to God, as Isaiah did, we can begin to sense that the revival we seek is also deep in the heart of God and his will for our world.

Church, may it not be said of us in this generation, *There is no one who calls upon your name, who rouses himself to take hold of you!* Amen!

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### **Praise God ...**

- For the incredible gift that God has given us in prayer – immediate access to our Father at any time of day or night. Thank Him for the incredible privilege of participating with him through prayer in his grand redemption plan.
- Praise God for the election of **Archbishop Foley Beach** who succeeds Archbishop Bob Duncan. Pray for great wisdom and for a smooth transition in leadership. May God be pleased to glorify Himself through the ACNA.
- For the many ANiC “projects” and church plants – the small, but growing congregations of faithful Anglicans that He is adding to our number.
- For faithful Anglican primates, bishops, clergy and laity – throughout the Communion – who are standing for truth even when their stand for Christ and His Word makes them targets of attack.

### **Confess if needed...**

- Our **complacency and prayerlessness** when it comes to the salvation of the lost, and our weariness in asking God to send revival to our church and nation. Repent of a **fear of the potential inconvenience and discomfort** that true revival might bring.

### **Please pray...**

- For a new visitation of the **Holy Spirit** upon our bishops and clergy, our parishes and our diocese. Pray that the fresh wind of the Spirit will bring renewal, healing and empowerment.
- For **Bishop Charlie Masters** (& Judy) – Pray for our new diocesan bishop as he leads ANiC. May God grant him vision, spiritual protection, and spiritual and physical renewal.
- For **Bishop Don Harvey** (& Trudy) – Pray for rest and joy as they adjust to a slower pace.
- For **ANiC’s suffragan bishops**: Stephen Leung (& Nona) and Trevor Walters (& Dede). Pray for discernment, energy and grace as they care for their clergy and congregations.
- For our **Archdeacons**: the Venerables Ron Corcoran (Vancouver Island), Dan Gifford (BC), Paul Charbonneau (Ontario), Tim Parent (Ottawa Valley), Paul Crossland (Prairies), Michael McKinnon (New England, USA), and Darrell Critch (Atlantic Region & Quebec) – and our Dean of Multicultural Ministries, the Very Rev Dr Archie Pell.
- For all **ANiC clergy** and families, especially those experiencing spiritual and physical attack.
- For the **ANiC congregations** that have lost their places of worship and are meeting in temporary facilities. May God comfort and pour out His blessing on them. May they be filled with the joy of the Lord as they seek His guidance for more permanent worship facilities.
- That God would continue His work in & through the **Anglican Church in North America (ACNA)**.
- **GAFCon Primates and Fellowship of Confessing Anglican (FCA) leaders** – Pray for the Lord’s courage and wisdom as they seek to guide the orthodox reformation and realignment that is taking place in the Anglican Communion.
- For the Archbishop of Canterbury **Justin Welby**. Pray that the Lord will grace him with wisdom, courage and the faithfulness to follow the teachings of Scripture in his decision-making.

- For the **Anglican Relief and Development Fund Canada** (ARDFC) as it raises funds for a pediatric ward for a busy clinic in South Sudan. Pray also for peace in that troubled country.
- For **Christians in the Middle East, Asia & Africa** who face growing pressure and persecution as countries embrace extreme forms of Islam and Islamic terrorists groups advance their agendas. Pray especially for Christians in Syria, Iraq, northern Nigeria, South Sudan, Egypt & North Korea.
- For **those who serve us and are in authority over us** – our police forces, our armed forces, our emergency responders, our municipal elected officials, our provincial MLAs and premiers, and our federal MPs and Prime Minister.
- For **God's wisdom for the world's leaders** with regard to the tenuous situation in the Ukraine, and the escalating conflict in Iraq. Pray that the evil one's agenda for violence, hatred and bloodshed would be averted. Pray for protection of innocent civilians, adults and children, who so often are the victims in today's urban warfare.