

You are Witnesses

WEEK OF PRAYER
FOR CHRISTIAN UNITY 2010



churches
together
IN BRITAIN AND IRELAND

www.ctbi.org.uk/weekofprayer

The resurrection stories in the Gospel have immense power that touch upon so many different aspects of human experience - dashed hopes, disappointments, grief and loss. But they also speak of a difficulty to accept change and recognise new realities.

This year, the host nation for the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity is my own, Scotland, and they have chosen the vivid account of Jesus' Resurrection as the focus for our thought and prayers about Christian unity.

The unity in Christ that we seek and pray for implies that we are called to embrace something new, something that will change us and the church – from something disunited to a Church that is one in Christ.

At the present time, some commentators have observed that the ecumenical movement is 'becalmed'. Recently, CTBI has been pondering that metaphor and have related it to another - the desert. In Christian spirituality the desert is not only a lonely, sometimes hostile place, but also a place of spiritual renewal and growth, a place where faith is strengthened and deepened. So if there is a sense that we are 'becalmed' in our ecumenical journey we might see this not as a cause for mourning but an opportunity for renewal and rekindled hope.

During this Week of Prayer for Christian Unity I hope you will join with us to pray for that renewed passion for Christian Unity and see in particular the risen Christ in our midst.

Revd Bob Fyffe
General Secretary
Churches Together in Britain and Ireland

Important Note for this Year's Week of Prayer for Christian Unity

This year we have continued the format of previous years with the worship service as a 'pull out' in the booklet. However, for the first time we are offering two versions of the service: "Order of Service A" if you wish to use a liturgical form and "Order of Service B" if you prefer a more informal

Day 1

Theme: Witness through celebrating life

YOU

1. *How do you and your church celebrate life?*
2. *How might others learn through you that Christ is alive?*
3. *In what ways do you feel you are growing more Christ-like, and in what ways do you feel you are not?*

THE WORD

READ: *Genesis 1:1. 26-31, Psalm 104:1-24, 1 Corinthians 15:12-20, Luke 24:1-5* – The resurrection is revealed to the women first.

FOCUS: **Why do you look for the living among the dead?**
(Luke 24: 5)

REFLECTION

A time to mourn,
and not to celebrate;
to anoint lovingly
the tortured corpse
of a beloved master.

Who are the shining strangers?

Resurrection dawns
at the pit of deepest despair;
at the end of a restless night,
fear of what was to come,
oil and spices,
women in tears,
blurred vision and leaden-like limbs.

Morning dawns,
light breaks through,
awesome truth,
the world is changed,
a penny drops.

THE WORLD

O God, who created us out of your love
and who longs for love to flourish,
we pray for those whose spirits are grieved,
whose hope has died,
enduring the gloom of half light

approach. We hope this offers you the flexibility for your own context.

Day 2

Theme: Witness through sharing stories

YOU

1. *Have you ever been drawn into the stories of others?*
2. *Has there been an occasion when you were able to share a story of faith?*
3. *Where can we find the “Gospel Gossiped” using modern communications?*

THE WORD

READ: *Genesis 1:1. 26-31, Psalm 104:1-24, 1 Corinthians 15:12-20, Luke 24:13-17a - The Road to Emmaus*

FOCUS: **What are you discussing with each other while you walk along?** (Luke 24: 17)

REFLECTION

Your story encompasses mine:
all my messy-worded-meanings,
mis-spellings,
crossings out and alterations.
Somehow your story crafts mine,
erasing what I thought was indelible,
weaving your golden threads
through my many-worded-meanings,
making my life a miracle
of your mercy and your grace.

THE WORLD

Author of life and perfect conversation,
we travel life’s journey,
sharing our stories,
so often not knowing you walk with us.
Thank you, for you are always there,
listening to our questions
and giving your answers,
Ask us your questions
and guide us into your Truth.

and longing for morning to come.

Day 3

Theme: Witness through awareness

YOU

1. *When and in what ways are you aware of God's presence?*
2. *Are you aware of today's global celebrations and tragedies, and how do you respond to these in your daily life?*
3. *Is there something more that you or your church could do to respond to these situations?*

THE WORD

READ: *1 Samuel 3:1-10; Psalm 23; Acts 8:26-40; Luke 24:13-19a – Jesus, the unrecognised companion on the road*

FOCUS: **Are you the only stranger in Jerusalem who does not know the things that have taken place there in these days?**
(Luke 24: 18)

REFLECTION

Walking the rough road
back from Jerusalem,
the air heavy with our disappointment,
with sadness, loss, regret.
("Where is the one who should redeem
Israel?")

We were aware of the stranger
matching his footsteps to our own.
How could we guess
that this unrecognised companion
would yet reveal himself
in such a simple action
as the sharing of a loaf of bread?

THE WORLD

Lord Jesus,
you encounter us
and walk alongside us in everyday life.
We pray for the grace to be aware of your
loving presence
and of all that you offer us,
so that we may give greater witness

Day 4

Theme: Witness through heritage and tradition

YOU

1. *Who has inspired your faith?*
2. *What is it in your faith that inspires you each day?*
3. *How has your history shaped you?*
4. *How can you pass on the good things of your tradition?*

THE WORD

READ: *Deuteronomy 6.3-9; Psalm 34; Acts 4,32-35; Luke 24: 19-27 – He opened the Scriptures to them.*

FOCUS: **What things?**

REFLECTION

The past is not entirely past
but flows unseen; a hidden stream,
life-giving source in barren seasons
yet sometimes, sadly, trapped in
stagnant pools.

When broken dreams disorientate
disciples,
leaving them orphaned from meaning
and hope, there comes, afresh, traditions
transforming truth
to reassemble God's life-giving pattern.

Moses and the prophets heard long ago
the promise of one who was yet to come,
in whose life and death and resurrection
earth and heaven were reconciled as one.

THE WORLD

Grant us, O Living and Redeeming Lord,
the eyes to see into and beyond
our traditions.
Give us the gift of discernment
so we can pass to each other those things
which build up your Body, which is
your Church.

Give me eyes to see,
and ears to hear your voice of love.
Lead me so to act each day
that I may display the Unity which is in your

to our faith and trust in you.

God we walk the same road as those from whom the incidents of history have divided us. Draw us ever closer, so that together we may reflect the unity for which your son prayed.

Day 5

Theme: Witness through suffering

YOU

1. *How does the suffering of people you know affect you?*
2. *How has your own experience of suffering affected your faith?*
3. *How do reports of the suffering, oppression and poverty of people you don't know affect your life?*
4. *How does Jesus bring hope for those who suffer?*

THE WORD

READ: *Isaiah 50.5-9; Psalm 124; Romans 8.35-39; Luke 24:25-27 How foolish you are, and slow of heart to believe*

FOCUS: **Was it not necessary that the Messiah should suffer? (Luke 24: 26)**

REFLECTION

Words known from childhood, Moses and prophets, marks of identity, source of security, now burst with new meaning.

Was it not necessary? Unavoidable? Suffering and glory inseparable; life lost for life gained and all our pain redeemed in his rising.

THE WORLD

God, we praise you for the faithfulness of Jesus, embracing us through the suffering of the cross and drawing us deep into your amazing love.

We thank you that we have a Suffering

Church and World.

God, we pray for overwhelmed souls broken by shattering events, dismayed by fading dreams, grieving and grasping in equal measure. May salvation's story in Jesus Christ be their strength and song.

Day 6

Theme: Witness through faithfulness to the scriptures

YOU

1. *What are the passages of Scripture that mean most to you?*
2. *Who or what in your life makes your heart burn with a passion for the gospel and a desire to give witness to Christ?*
3. *Which Biblical passages have helped you to understand more fully the witness of other Christians?*

THE WORD

READ: *Isaiah 55:10; Psalm 119:17-40; 2 Timothy 3:14-17; Luke 24.28-35 – Jesus opens the Scriptures for two travellers*

FOCUS: **Were not our hearts burning within us while he was talking to us on the road, while he was opening the scriptures to us? (Luke 24:28-35)**

REFLECTION

The Word was made flesh and words about the Word made print: mere shapes on a page, potent symbols and signs of God's purpose.

And, balanced by bread broken before them, travellers, burned by digestion of the words, saw and understood.

Words and bread, minds and hearts: twin pillars of persuasion, of staggering truth, turning stumbling travellers into delighted disciples, tripping back to share their joy.

THE WORLD

God, we praise and thank you for your saving Word reaching out to us through the Sacred Scriptures.

We thank you, too, for the brothers and sisters with whom we share your Word and discover together the abundance

Saviour who has known betrayal, persecution and injustice; who has endured torture of body and mind.

We thank you for all whose suffering has reflected your grace and dignity.
We pray, O God, for all who suffer: those who feel forsaken, those who bravely struggle on and those who simply want it to end.

Day 7

Theme: Witness through hope and trust

YOU

1. *How do you cope with your own fears and doubts?*
2. *How might you be a cause of fear and anxiety for others?*
3. *How may Christian communities encourage one another in faith and hope?*

THE WORD

READ: *Job 19:23-27; Psalm 63; Acts 3:1-10; Luke 24: 36-40 - The disciples were startled and terrified*

FOCUS: **Why are you frightened, and why do doubts arise in your hearts? (Luke 24:36-40)**

REFLECTION

We shrink life to fit,
and hope is drained
and trust is strained,
and doubt dominates.

It is not that we don't see,
it is precisely that we do:
that death does not lay to rest
the troublesome truth of faith.

And in the chaos Christ's rising brings,
terror is not ghostly discomfort,
but worldly disquiet,
that now it all changes:
hope is healing
but a heartache too,
and trust costs lives.

THE WORLD

God our comfort and guide,
when our doubts are deepest
and our fears are darkest,
you are there,

of your love.

We pray for the light of your Holy Spirit, so that your Word may lead and direct us into the unity you will for the sake of the world.

God, we pray for troubled travellers:
disappointed by disunity, devastated by loss, submerged in sorrow, fearful of the future, needing hope.

Day 8

Theme: Witness through hospitality

YOU

1. *What hinders your own hospitality?*
2. *Is the place where you live hospitable to strangers?*
3. *What difference does the church make?*
4. *Whose hospitality has touched you deeply?*

THE WORD

READ: *Gen 18:1-8; Psalm 146; Romans 14:17-19; Luke 24:41-48 – Then he opened their minds to understand the scriptures*

FOCUS: **Have you anything here to eat? (Luke 24:41)**

REFLECTION

Fasting is fine,
focusing minds;
feasting is great,
sharing the meat.

Fasting is personal,
quite self-referral;
feasting is communal
where spirits meet.

Loving in giving,
donating approval,
needs of the body
attended with grace.

Each one important,
the first and the least,
all must be welcome
and all have a place.

THE WORLD

God of the open hand,
in whom all find a welcome:

though our clouded perception may
miss your presence.
Make us each secure and supportive,
atune to the sensitivities of others,
that we may be encouraged in faith and hope
on our journey to you.

help us to
feed the hungry,
give refreshment to the thirsty,
provide covering for the
naked,
care for the sick,
extend a hand of friendship to
the isolated,
as fellow pilgrims of Love's embrace.