

Salt of the Earth



Halen y Ddaear • Salann na Talún

www.ctbi.org.uk/weekofprayer



Week of Prayer for Christian Unity 2016



During the past year the World Council of Churches has published *The Church: Towards a Common Vision*. It invites us all to discuss and reflect together what it means to be the Church in the world, both in terms of our journey to unity and our mission to the world. Yet, it is becoming almost fashionable to suggest that Christian unity is the agenda of yesterday whereas today's and tomorrow's agenda is about mission. As though the two were mutually exclusive!

Throughout the nations of Britain and Ireland there are countless examples of how the churches together are working and praying for unity and coming together in service to their community and in mission and evangelism. Unity and mission belong together.

The churches of Latvia have brought these matters forward for our reflection in this year's Week of Prayer for Christian Unity. They draw attention to the words of Jesus in Matthew's Gospel which tells us that as his disciples we are to be light to the world, and salt of the earth: the very things that as human beings we cannot live without, and therefore without the Gospel, without the promise of the good news of God's love in Christ, the world is lost.

This year we are given the opportunity to reflect upon our Christian vocation to be salt and light, to be one in Christ, and to work together in service to our local community and to the world. Like the churches of Latvia you will have your particular story to tell. I hope that you will share your stories with confidence and be enriched by the stories that others tell.

Revd Bob Fyffe, General Secretary, Churches Together in Britain and Ireland

Introduction to this year's theme

This year's material was prepared for worldwide use by the Christians of Latvia.

You are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's own people, in order that you may proclaim the mighty acts of him who called you out of darkness into his marvellous light. Once you were not a people, but now you are God's people; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.

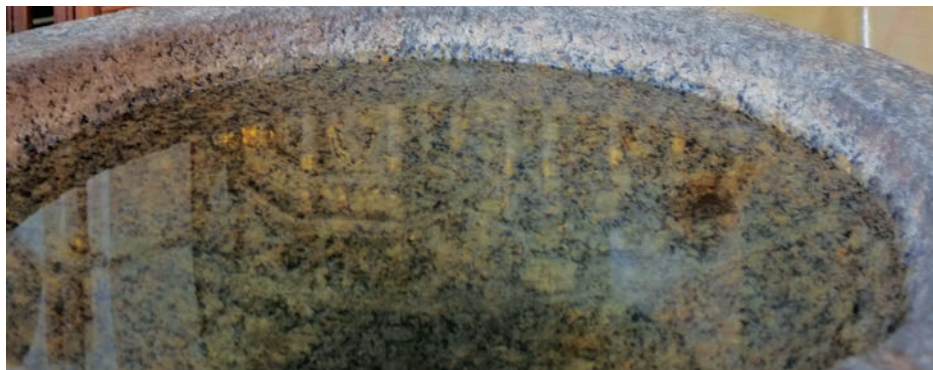
(1 Peter 2:9-10).

Background

Peter's first letter is an encouragement to the newly baptised to live holy lives. The oldest baptismal font in Latvia dates from the time of the great evangeliser of Latvia, St Meinhard. It was originally located in his cathedral in Ikšķile. Today it stands at the very centre of the Lutheran cathedral in the country's capital, Rīga. The placement of the font so near to the Cathedral's ornate pulpit speaks eloquently of the relationship between baptism and proclamation, and the calling shared by all the baptised to proclaim the mighty acts of the Lord. This calling forms the theme of the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity for 2016.

The font in the nave of Riga's Lutheran Cathedral





The bowl of St Meinhard's font now in Riga

Christianity was first brought to Eastern Latvia in the 10th century by Byzantine missionaries. Latvia's story includes the evangelising mission of St Meinhard two hundred years later, and other German missionaries. Riga was one of the first cities to adopt Luther's ideas in the 16th century. In the 18th century, Moravian missionaries revived and deepened Christian faith throughout the country. Their descendants were to play a central role in laying the foundations for national independence in 1918.

During the world wars and the Cold War, Christians were united in common witness to the Gospel - even to the point of martyrdom. They discovered their participation in the royal priesthood mentioned by St Peter through enduring torture, exile and death because of their faith in Jesus Christ. This bond of suffering created deep communion among Christians in Latvia. Through it, they discovered their baptismal priesthood, through which they were able to offer their sufferings in union with the sufferings of Jesus, for the good of others. The Christian churches were leaders in the independence movement of 1991 when unarmed citizens built barricades on the streets of Rīga and stood shoulder to shoulder in defiance of the Soviet tanks.

Today, Latvia is a crossroads where Roman Catholic, Protestant and Orthodox regions meet. Because of this unique location, it is home to Christians of many different traditions, but no single one of them is dominant.

Gathered together by the Archbishop of Riga, members of a variety of church communities and projects in Latvia were asked to reflect on the chosen theme

and the experience of their work. Each of the days has been prepared by one of these diverse Church communities. The 8 Days are linked principally by the experience of being a Christian in Latvia. The authors from Latvia hope their experience of living the Christian faith will speak to ours. The main service is inspired by the verses from Peter's letter and Jesus' metaphors of salt and light which are important cultural themes for Latvia.

This Booklet

The material included in this booklet is inspired by the Latvian churches. The Lections and the Starting Points are their words. The Reflections, Prayers, Questions and 'Go & Do' sections are the fruit of the Britain and Ireland writing group based on the Latvian churches' resource material. The Reflections are intended to stimulate discussion. Readers may be helped to know that they are written from within the church traditions which they challenge.

To find out more on Latvian culture and history visit the CTBI website at: www.ctbi.org.uk/weekofprayer



DAY 1

Ezekiel 37:12-14

I am going to open your graves.

Psalms 71:19 -23

Your power and your righteousness, O God, reach the high heavens.

Romans 8:15-21

We suffer with him so that we may also be glorified.

Matthew 28: 1-10

He is not here; he has been raised.

Starting Point

Reflections from the Catholic Youth Centre of the Archdiocese of Riga

From their experience of organising an annual Ecumenical Way of the Cross, the CYCAR reflect on the meaning of the passion and resurrection in their context, and the Lord's mighty acts that Christians are called to proclaim.

Latvia's Soviet history continues to cast a shadow. The grief and pain of wounds inflicted are difficult to forgive and, like the stone at Jesus' tomb, they can imprison us in a spiritual grave. Jesus' resurrection is the earthshaking event that opens our graves, frees us from pain and bitterness, and re-unites us with our brothers and sisters who have been imprisoned and hurting too. And like Mary Magdalene we must "go quickly" from this great moment of joy to tell others what the Lord has done.

Reflection

The Stone

You have drawn the stone over the door of your fine and private tomb.

A cosy death this.

Night embraces the broken body of Christ, shrouded in complacency on its solid rock of dogma.

Shush!

Let no one roll away the stone lest you must go forth, whole, in his footsteps to meet the day's challenge.

Riga's Roman Catholic Cathedral and the adjacent "Barikades" memorial to the 1991 confrontations against Soviet troops



Questions

- There is an odd comfort about a tomb because it protects us from the strangeness and challenge of Christ's resurrection. What is it in our lives that makes us resist the stone being rolled away?
- How can we share our experience of God with others?

Prayer

Risen Lord Jesus,
the stone was no barrier to you;
your resurrection brings love,
new life, new challenges.

Give us strength and courage
to allow ourselves to believe this
and so to roll back the stones

that imprison us,
embrace the glory of the
Easter morning,
and meet the believers from whom we
are separated.

In your name, O risen Lord,
we pray.
Amen.

Go and Do (see www.ctbi.org.uk/goanddo)

- Exchange stones between churches with a word of peace or blessing written on each stone creating a cairn in each place of worship. When you hold or see these stones pray that each fellowship and congregation would be living stones in your community.
- Together tidy up your local community garden/neglected graves in your cemetery.
- Blessed are those who mourn – in Colombia names are written on stones to commemorate the disappeared. Visit Go and Do to read Maria's story.

DAY 2

Isaiah 61: 1-4

The spirit of the Lord God is upon me.

Psalms 133

How very good and pleasant it is when kindred
live together in unity!

Philippians 2:1-5

Make my joy complete: be of the same mind.

John 15: 9-12

I have said these things to you so that my joy may
be in you.

Starting Point

Reflections from the creators of Christian programming at Latvian State Radio

In the Soviet era a Christian presence
through public media was impossible in
Latvia. Since independence, Latvian State
Radio broadcasts Christian programmes
providing a forum for leaders from diverse
churches to encounter one another. This
public witness of mutual respect, love and
joy contributed to the spirit of Latvian
ecumenical life.

The joy of the Gospel calls Christians to
live the prophecy of Isaiah: ‘...to bring good
news to the oppressed’.

When we are saddened by our own
suffering, we may lack the vigour to
proclaim the joy that comes from Jesus.
Even when we feel unable to give anything
to anyone, by bearing witness to the little
that we have, Jesus multiplies it in us and in
those around us. When we love one another
as Jesus loves us, so we discover mutual love
and joy at the heart of our prayer for unity.

Reflection

Good news

Good news indeed!

Such nice people,
in such a nice part of town:
no immigrants,
no offenders,
no prison.

A new vicar:
young, white, and thankfully male,
to match the new church roof
and the state of the art
kitchenette
that cost thousands.

The poor?
Ah yes. The poor...

Isn't something sent
to a place called the Third World?

And doesn't someone collect tins
and stuff
for a food bank somewhere?

But this is a good area.

The sleepy stillness
of its Sundays knows
no sigh of need,
no howl of pain,
no cry of despair.

Called to be heralds of joy



Questions

- Pope Francis writes of the ‘joy of the gospel’. What do you think the joy of the gospel is for the world and for the churches?
- Joy is Christ’s gift, and he gives it through other people. What can you receive from other Christians so that Jesus’ joy may be in you, inspiring you to witness?

Prayer

Lord Jesus, Lord of joy,
the world craves good news;
the world craves your love and joy.

Fill us with that love and joy.
Help us to see the plight of others,
to hear the sighs of need,

the howls of pain
the cries of despair,
and to respond, always,
in the love and joy of you,
our Saviour and our Lord.
Amen.

Go and Do (see www.ctbi.org.uk/goanddo)

- Agree on a song of joy to be sung in each place of worship during the offering.
- Invite your local community to participate in an activity you enjoy doing together. e.g. a picnic or a walk.
- Blessed are the poor in spirit – in Ethiopia joy is being brought to communities living in poverty. Visit Go and Do to read Adi’s story.

DAY 3

Jeremiah 31:10-13

They shall come and sing aloud.

Psalms 122

Pray for the peace of Jerusalem.

1 John 4:16b-21

Those who abide in love, abide in God.

John 17:20-23

That they may become completely one.

Starting Point

This reflection is inspired by Chemin Neuf.

<http://www.chemin-neuf.org/>

Chemin Neuf is an international Catholic community with an ecumenical vocation that has been present in Latvia since the early 2000s.

Catholic and Lutheran members experience the joy of the 'common life' in Christ which is "to welcome, love, serve, pray and witness with Christians from diverse traditions". They also experience the pain of disunity: "the world cannot believe that we are Jesus' disciples when we cannot receive together the body and blood of Christ." As a sign of this division, they place an empty paten and chalice on the altar during evening prayer.

Reflection

'That they may become completely one'

You weep for your faith, for few come to your festivals; churches are desolate; priests groan.

This, you say, is a second exile. "Our retrograde God will restore his people, as he restored Israel."

Hear the word of the Lord, as you sugar-coat doctrine, water-down liturgy in the futile pursuit of a fractured mission:

"My people divided and unrepentant shall never rebuild Jerusalem".

The Sanctuary in Riga's Roman Catholic Cathedral





Questions

- What does it mean to you to be ‘one in Christ’?
- How does being ‘one in Christ’ help us to overcome the prejudices caused by centuries of division amongst Christians in our own islands as well as in mainland Europe?

Prayer

Lord Jesus, Lord of wholeness,
your prayer for unity amongst
your disciples
has fallen on closed ears and on
hard hearts.

Forgive us our closed ears,
forgive us our hard hearts
which perpetuate suspicion,
prejudice and division:

forgive us our fractured mission.

Open our hearts, eyes and minds
to your love and truth within all
Christian people
and strengthen in us the resolve
to work
to restore the unity of your Church
and your creation
to the glory of your name. Amen.

Go and Do (see www.ctbi.org.uk/goanddo)

- Place a communion cup and plate centrally in your place of worship.
- Host a meal for the wider community.
- Blessed are the meek – in Brazil the Quilombola community are living meekly on the earth. Visit Go and Do to learn from their story.

The Week of Prayer for Christian Unity is traditionally observed from 18th to 25th January (the octave of St Peter and St Paul). However, some groups choose other times of the year, particularly around Pentecost which is a symbolic date for the unity of the church. Do make your own decision, taking local factors into account. To allow for use at any time in the year, the Days material uses the notation 1-8.

The order of service in the centre of the pamphlet can be pulled out and photocopied if you wish. Alternatively, all resources can be downloaded from the CTBI website and you are welcome to further edit or adapt them for local use. Please acknowledge the source of material as Churches Together in Britain and Ireland, Week of Prayer for Christian Unity resources.



Ecumenical worship service order



© Churches Together in Britain and Ireland



I. Gathering

Processional Hymn

Stand

Those leading the celebration enter and may carry a Bible, light and salt.

Words of welcome

Leader

Dear friends in Christ, we gather together in this service of prayer for unity, to thank God for the dignity of our Christian vocation, described in the words of St. Peter: *"You are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's own people, in order that you may proclaim the mighty acts of him who called you out of darkness into his marvellous light"*. We pray this year with the Christians of Latvia, who have prepared this service in the hope that we may grow in our communion with our Lord Jesus Christ and with all our brothers and sisters.

An informal welcome may also be offered.

II. Prayers for the Holy Spirit

Leader

Holy Spirit,
gift of the Father through his Son, Jesus Christ,
dwell in us all, open our hearts
and help us to listen to your voice.

All

Holy Spirit, come upon us.

Leader

Holy Spirit, Divine Love,
source of unity and holiness,
show us the love of God.

All

Holy Spirit, come upon us.

Leader

Holy Spirit, Fire of Love,
purify us, removing all divisions
in our hearts, in our communities and in the world,
and so make us one in Jesus' name.

All

Holy Spirit, come upon us.

Leader

Holy Spirit,
strengthen our faith in Jesus,
truly divine and truly human,
who carried our sins of division to the Cross
and brought us to communion in his Resurrection.

All Holy Spirit, come upon us.

Leader Father, Son and Holy Spirit,
dwell in us
that we may become a communion of love and holiness.
Make us one in you,
who lives and reigns for ever and ever.

All Amen.

Song of Praise

III. Prayers of Reconciliation

Sit

Leader God invites us to reconciliation and holiness. Let us turn our minds,
hearts and bodies to receive the grace of reconciliation on the way
to holiness.

Silence

Leader Lord, you created us in your own image.
Forgive us when we do not honour your image in us
and the world that you gave us.
Kyrie eleison. (This may be sung)

All Kyrie eleison.

Leader Jesus, you invite us to be perfect
as our heavenly Father is perfect.
Forgive us when we fail to be holy,
to be people of integrity
and to respect human rights and dignity.
Christe eleison.

All Christe eleison.

Leader Lord of life, not of death
of peace, not of war
of light, not of darkness
forgive us when we become instruments of war, death and injustice
and fail to build a community of love.
Kyrie eleison.

All Kyrie eleison.

Leader Merciful God,
fill us with your grace and holiness.
Make us apostles of love wherever we go.
This we pray through Christ, our Lord.

All Amen.

IV. Proclamation of the Word of God

Leader The Word of God that we will hear is an explosion of love in
our lives.
Listen and you will live!

All Thanks be to God.

Isaiah 55:1-3 (NRSV)

Ho, everyone who thirsts,
come to the waters;
and you that have no money,
come, buy and eat!
Come, buy wine and milk
without money and without price.
²Why do you spend your money for that which is not bread,
and your labour for that which does not satisfy?
Listen carefully to me, and eat what is good,
and delight yourselves in rich food.
³Incline your ear, and come to me;
listen, so that you may live.
I will make with you an everlasting covenant,
my steadfast, sure love for David.

Reader Listen and you will live!

All Thanks be to God.

Psalm 145:8-9, 15-16, 17-18

Reader I will bless your name for ever and ever.

All I will bless your name for ever and ever.

Reader The Lord is gracious and merciful,
slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love.
The Lord is good to all,
and his compassion is over all that he has made.

All I will bless your name for ever and ever.

Reader The eyes of all look to you,
and you give them their food in due season.
You open your hand,
satisfying the desire of every living thing.

All I will bless your name for ever and ever.

Reader The Lord is just in all his ways,
and kind in all his doings.
The Lord is near to all who call on him,
to all who call on him in truth.

All I will bless your name for ever and ever.

1 Peter 2:9-10 (NRSV)

But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's own people, in order that you may proclaim the mighty acts of him who called you out of darkness into his marvellous light.

¹⁰Once you were not a people,
but now you are God's people;
once you had not received mercy,
but now you have received mercy.

Reader Listen and you will live!

All Thanks be to God.

A Hymn may be sung

Matthew 5:1-16 (NRSV)

When Jesus saw the crowds, he went up the mountain; and after he sat down, his disciples came to him. Then he began to speak, and taught them, saying:

³Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

⁴Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted.

⁵Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth.

⁶Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled.

⁷Blessed are the merciful, for they will receive mercy.

⁸Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God.

⁹Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God.

¹⁰Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

¹¹Blessed are you when people revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account. ¹²Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

¹³You are the salt of the earth; but if salt has lost its taste, how can its saltiness be restored? It is no longer good for anything, but is thrown out and trampled under foot.

¹⁴You are the light of the world. A city built on a hill cannot be hidden. ¹⁵No one after lighting a lamp puts it under the bushel basket, but on the lampstand, and it gives light to all in the house. ¹⁶In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven.

Reader Listen and you will live!

All Thanks be to God.

Sermon/Homily

Hymn

V. An Act of Commitment to Be Salt and Light

The Leader then makes the following invitation to the congregation:

We have listened to the Holy Word of God which we honour and treasure,
We will carry this Word out into the world,
For we are joined in one mission,
To be Salt of the Earth, to be Light to the World,
And to proclaim the Lord's mighty acts.

As a sign of this common mission in which we share, we invite you to come forward to light an individual candle from this one flame. These will remain lit until after the service.

As you return to your seat, we invite you to taste a small pinch of salt and to reflect upon the words of our Lord, who compared us to the salt of the earth.

VI. Prayers of hope

Leader As God's adopted children,
aware of our call to mission,
let us raise our prayers
and affirm our desire to be a holy people of God.

Silence

Leader Gracious God,
transform our hearts,
our families,
our communities and our society.

All Make all your people holy and one in Christ.

Leader Water of life,
quench the thirst that exists in our society,
the thirst for dignity, for love,
for communion and holiness.

All Make all your people holy and one in Christ.

Leader Holy Spirit,
Spirit of joy and peace,
heal the divisions caused by our misuse of power and money,
and reconcile us across different cultures and languages.
Unite us as God's children.

All Make all your people holy and one in Christ.

Leader Trinity of love,
lead us out of darkness into your marvellous light.

All Make all your people holy and one in Christ.

Leader Lord Jesus Christ,
we are made one with you in baptism
and therefore we unite our prayers to yours
in the words you taught us.

All The Lord's Prayer

Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come,
your will be done,
on earth as in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread.
Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us.
Save us from the time of trial, and deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours,
now and forever. Amen.

Mūsu Tēvs debesīs!
Svētīts lai top Tavs vārds.
Lai nāk Tava valstība.
Tavs prāts lai notiek kā debesīs, tā arī virs zemes.
Mūsu dienīško maizi dod mums šodien.
Un piedod mums mūsu parādus,
Kā arī mēs piedodam saviem parādniekiem.
Un neieved mūs kārdināšanā.
Bet atpestī mūs no ļauna.
[Jo Tev pieder valstība, spēks un gods mūžīgi.]
Āmen.

VII. Blessing and Dismissal

Leader The blessing of God Almighty,
Father, Son and Holy Spirit,
who blesses the poor,
those who mourn,
the meek,
the merciful,
the pure in heart,
the peacemakers,
and the persecuted,
be upon you and remain with you always.

All Amen.

Hymn

Leader Be salt of the earth, be light to the world.
The peace of the Lord be with you always.

All And with your spirit.

Leader Let us offer one another a sign of peace.

Acknowledgements

CTBI WPCU 2016 Writers

Each year Churches Together in Britain and Ireland (CTBI) works in collaboration with various writers from within the four nations to produce these materials for your use. In acknowledgment of this collaboration we have listed below the colleagues who have helped us accomplish this task for 2016:

The Venerable Dr Tim Stratford	- Moderator of the CTBI WPCU writers group and Archdeacon of Leicester.
Revd Peter Colwell	- Deputy General Secretary, CTBI
Revd Dr David Cornick	- General Secretary of Churches Together in England (CTE)
The Revd Canon Gwynn ap Gwilym	- Bishops' Advisor for Church Affairs, Church in Wales
Ruth Harvey	- Consultant and Facilitator of Shoreline Conversations and member of the Iona Community
Jenny Sheehan	- Lay Preaching Commissioner, URC Southern Synod
Wendy Young	- Church Resources Officer, Christian Aid

Bible verses from the New Revised Standard Version Bible: Anglicized Edition, copyright 1989, 1995, Division of Christian Education of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the United States of America. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

Photo credits (where not provided by the writers group)

p2: krheesy (www.flickr.com/photos/129440207@N08/17207981461/)

p5: krheesy (www.flickr.com/photos/129440207@N08/17207981461/)

p7: James Emery (www.flickr.com/photos/emeryjl/520147887/)

p9: Jimmy and Sasha Reade (www.flickr.com/photos/readephoto/6072431417/)

p11: Holy Trinity Brompton

p12: Quinn Dombrowski (www.flickr.com/photos/quinnanya/3118334784/)

p23: Holy Trinity Brompton

p25: Holy Trinity Brompton

p29: Richard Gillin (www.flickr.com/photos/photoverulam/8610605877/)

p31: Moreno Berti (www.flickr.com/photos/morenoberti/9601187936/)

p32: Tim Sackton (www.flickr.com/photos/sackton/7086073585/)

DAY 4

Genesis 17:1-8

Your name shall be Abraham, the ancestor of a multitude of nations.

Psalms 145:8-12

The Lord is gracious and merciful, abounding in steadfast love.

Romans 10:14-15

How can they believe in him if they have never heard about him?

Matthew 13:3-9

But some seeds fell on fertile soil.

Starting Point

Reflections inspired by the Producers of *Vertikale*, a Sunday morning Christian programme on Latvian TV.

They have learnt “that only when we recognise other Christians as brothers and sisters can we dare to take God’s Word into the public space.”

Words flood our lives: in conversation, from television, radio and social media. These words have the power to build up and to knock down. Much of this ocean of words can seem meaningless: diversion rather than nourishment. This ocean could drown us, where there is little meaning to grasp. But the saving Word we have heard has been thrown to us as a lifeline. It calls us into communion, and draws us into unity with others who have heard it too. Once we were not a people, but now we are God’s priestly people.

Reflection

Words

Priests of Babel, your words
are launched
like missiles
from your pulpits
to justify where you stand
and why you cannot
in conscience
but agree to disagree.

Words, words, words.
Subtle, serpentine,
their poisonous shells
stifling in the soil the seed
of the one
Word
of the Kingdom of God.

The cross on the site of St Meinhard’s Church, Ikšķile



A Priestly People called to Proclaim the Gospel



Questions

- In what ways do your attitudes to other Christian traditions hinder the proclamation of the Gospel?
- Who hears the word of life from our lips?

Prayer

Lord Jesus,
the Word made flesh and sent to
live among us,
the Word of truth, of love, of joy,
the Word of compassion,
of acceptance, of unity.
Forgive our negative, critical,
wounding and divisive thoughts
and words.

Inspire us with your Spirit
and give us that unity which will
empower us
to speak words of joy, acceptance and
of reconciliation.
Make us life-giving, priestly people in
our communities,
to your glory. Amen.

Go and Do (see www.ctbi.org.uk/goanddo)

- Choose to read the Gospel of John together as churches.
- Hold a poetry evening for your local community.
- Blessed are the persecuted – sometimes the words of the persecuted and the persecutors need to be heard. Visit the Go and Do to hear about Israeli NGO, Breaking the Silence.

DAY 5

Genesis 37:5-8

Listen to this dream that I dreamed.

Psalms 98

O sing to the Lord a new song, for he has done marvellous things.

Romans 12: 9-13

Love one another with mutual affection.

John 21:25

The world itself could not contain the books that would be written.

Starting Point

Reflections from the Editors of an Ecumenical journal *Kas Mus Vieno?* (what unites us?) founded in 2005 as a response to disunity.

Christian disunity hurts. Churches suffer from their inability to be united as one family at the Lord's Table. They suffer from rivalry and from histories of combativeness.

When Joseph shares his dream with his brothers they react with anger and violence as the dream implies they must bow down before him. In Egypt when they ultimately do bow before him they experience reconciliation and grace rather than the abasement and dishonour they feared.

Jesus, like Joseph's story, unfolds a vision of unity to us. But like Joseph's brothers, we are fearful of the vision when it implies we submit to the will of another. We fear what we might lose. But the vision is about gain: regaining our once separated brothers and sisters.

Reflection

Joseph's dream

A dream of abasement this,
turned into a tale
of reconciliation
with suffering brothers
in a moment of grace,

foreshadowing the dream:
“that they may become
completely one”;
estranged brothers and sisters
reconciled
in prayer and mission.

This, you know, must be right.
Disunity hurts,
strife cripples;

and there is even
in your debatable doctrines
nothing that speaks
of a schism in heaven.

Ruins of St Meinhard's Church, Ikskile, the first masonry building in Latvia





Archbishop of Canterbury, Justin Welby, with Cardinal Vincent Nichols at the Leadership Conference 2015

Questions

- What does it mean to place our dreams for Christian unity at the feet of Christ?
- In what ways does the Lord's vision of unity call the churches to renewal and change today?

Prayer

Jesus, our suffering Lord,
our disunity as churches compounds
your suffering
and causes pain to those who long
for your dream of unity to
become reality.
Forgive us our part in

continuing division;
grant us humility to hear your voice
ever urging reconciliation.
Inspire us to work tirelessly to
be one
so that the world may believe in
your name.
Amen.

Go and Do (see www.ctbi.org.uk/goanddo)

- Share your dreams for your church and the community with each congregation in your area.
- Share these dreams with local community leaders in a request for necessary changes to make them happen.
- Blessed are the pure in heart – in India those considered impure, the untouchables, dream of a time when all are treated equally. Visit Go and Do to hear Seema's story.

DAY 6

Isaiah 62:6-7

I have posted watchmen on your walls.

Psalms 100

Shout with joy to the Lord all the earth!

1 Peter 4:7b-10

Be earnest and disciplined in your prayers.

John 4:4-14

Jesus, the spring of eternal life.

Starting Point

This reflection comes out of the experience of an ecumenical prayer chapel in the centre of the small town, Madona. The chapel grew out of the experience of praying through the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity together. The group represents Lutheran, Catholic and Orthodox traditions. They continue to join in round the clock prayer.

As long as God's people are divided, and Christians are estranged from one another, we are like Jesus in Samaria, strangers in a foreign land, without safety, refreshment or a place of rest. Isaiah tells us of the Lord's mighty act: he posted sentinels on the walls of Jerusalem so that his people could worship him in safety day and night.

In the Week of Prayer our churches and chapels become places of safety, rest and refreshment for people to join in prayer. The challenge from this week is to create more places and protected times of prayer, because as we pray together, we become one people.

Reflection

Sentinels

This is the one week
when, as you encircle the church
with prayer
you become,
all too briefly,
one people.

Persist in this prayer.

Persevere,
watchful as the sentinels
upon the walls of Jerusalem.

Be not silent.
Take no rest.
Give the Lord no respite

until, at last, he binds you
together and to himself:
one people,
one mission,
one God,
that the world may believe.

Ruins of St Meinhard's Church, Ikskile, the first masonry building in Latvia





Questions

- What would it mean for the Church to be 'one' in your locality?
- How important is it to pray together?

Prayer

Lord Jesus,
You asked your apostles to stay
awake and pray with you.
May we offer the world sacred
space and holy time

in which to find refreshment
and peace,
so that praying together we come to
know you more deeply.
Amen

Go and Do (see www.ctbi.org.uk/goanddo)

- Organise a 12 hour prayer room where each church commits to one prayer slot. End with a joint time of prayer together.
- Put a prayer box, identify a tree or similar so the local community can post or tie on their prayers and requests for prayer.
- Blessed are the merciful. Many of Syria's refugees to Lebanon are children. Visit Go and do to get a glimpse into their lives.

DAY 7

Isaiah 52:7-9

Messengers of peace.

Psalms 126

The Lord has done great things for us.

Colossians 1:27-29

Christ in you, the hope of glory!

Luke 24:13-36

Were not our hearts burning within us?

Starting Point

Reflections inspired by Latvians who have come to faith through the Alpha Course

remaining open to learning from and being enriched by the gifts of other Christian communities. <http://www.alpha.org/>

The disciples who leave Jerusalem for Emmaus have lost their hope that Jesus was the Messiah and walk away from their community. It is a journey of separation and isolation. By contrast, they return to Jerusalem full of hope with a Gospel message on their lips. It is this resurrection message that drives them back into the heart of the community and into a communion of fellowship. So often Christians try to evangelise with a competitive spirit, hoping to fill their own churches. Ambition overrides the desire for others to hear the life-giving message of the Gospel. True evangelism is a journey from Emmaus to Jerusalem, a journey from isolation to unity.

Reflection

The Road to Unity

You have withdrawn,
baffled and disillusioned,
from the communion
of fellowship,
and taken the lonely road
to your own Emmaus:

a journey of separation
and isolation.

When your eyes are opened
to recognise
him who comes near
and goes with you,

explains to you
the scriptures,
blesses
and breaks the bread,

you will return
at once,
your hearts burning within you,
to your companions, gathered
together
in Jerusalem.

Russian Orthodox Church, Riga





Questions

- Is mission just an excuse for perpetuating our own particular tradition?
- What challenges and opportunities would there be in doing mission together in our localities?

Prayer

Lord Jesus, constant companion
on the journey
you have made our hearts burn
within us,
and have sent us back on the road
towards our brothers and sisters,

with the Gospel message on our lips.
Help us to see that hope and
obedience to your commands
always lead to the greater unity of
your people.
Amen.

Go and Do (see www.ctbi.org.uk/goanddo)

- Organise a pilgrimage around each of the churches in your area.
- Invite the local community on that walk to visit these buildings.
- Blessed are the peacemakers. Pray for those who are working to build peace in the many conflict hotspots across the world. Visit Go and Do to inspire these prayers.

DAY 8

Isaiah 56:6-8

My house shall be called a house of prayer for all peoples.

Psalms 24

Who shall ascend the hill of the Lord?

Acts 2:37-42

They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and fellowship.

John 13:34-35

Love one another.

Starting Point

Reflections from Levi Ivars Graudins, the founder of the Gaizins House of Prayer.

Set on Gaizins, Latvia's highest hill, this house of prayer regularly hosts the 40-hour fellowship of Christian leaders who, for the duration, are supported in prayer and worship by the faithful. These encounters renew the leaders as fellow-workers in Christ, and help shape the visible expression of ecumenical life in Latvia.

Jesus' commandment to love one another is not theoretical. Our communion of love with one another becomes concrete when we gather together intentionally, in apostolic simplicity, as Christ's disciples to share fellowship and prayer.

The more Christians, especially their leaders, encounter Christ together in humility and patience, the more prejudice diminishes, so we discover Christ in one another and become authentic witnesses to the kingdom of God.

Reflection

Fellowship

The sermon was about healing, wholeness, the feast of rich food and well-matured wines, that is for all peoples.

Out in the street,
Christ's body and blood
still sweet on your tongue,
you eye with disdain
strangers
drifting out of alien
churches.

Outcasts, you say.
Children of darkness.

Outcast yourself,
Christ's body and blood
a noxious poison now
in your crabbed soul.

Cloisters of Riga's Lutheran Cathedral



The Fellowship of the Apostles



Questions

- We have no greater gift to give God or others than our time. What gifts have we received from God when we have spent time with our fellow Christians?
- Share a little of what you mean by leadership. How can leaders encourage the visible unity of the Church? How can we support and encourage them in that?

Prayer

Lord Jesus,
you commanded us to break bread
together
and to drink one cup in
remembrance of you
- your imperative ignored.
Forgive us, Lord.
Open the hearts and minds of
Christians world-wide,
especially those entrusted with

leadership in your Church,
to the joys and blessings of
this fellowship.
Create in all of us a passion to
realise the hope
to which you have called us:
one body and one Spirit,
one Lord, one baptism,
one God who is above and
through and in all.
Amen.

Go and Do (see www.ctbi.org.uk/goanddo)

- Identify your nearest mountain or hill and encourage the church leaders to walk it together, if they are able. Set out a bowl of salt to remind you to pray for their expedition.
- Have a reception for your community leaders and gift them with a candle from your churches.
- Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness – many communities across the world experience real food and water shortages as a result of a changing climate. Visit Go and Do to help work for righteousness in the world.

Week of Prayer for Christian Unity 2016



Published by

Churches Together in Britain and Ireland

39 Eccleston Square,
London SW1V 1BX
info@ctbi.org.uk,
Tel: 020 7901 4890

Registered charity no. 1113299
Company limited by guarantee,
registered no. 5661787

Further copies available from:

Norwich Books and Music

13a Hellesdon Park Road,
Norwich, Norfolk NR6 5DR
Order line: 01603 785925,
Fax: 01603 785915
Online www.chbookshop.co.uk

Enquiries to:
orders@norwichbooksandmusic.co.uk

ISBN: 978-0-85169-392-7



Twitter: [#wpctu2016](https://twitter.com/wpctu2016)

www.ctbi.org.uk/weekofprayer