

Resources for
THE WEEK OF PRAYER FOR CHRISTIAN UNITY
and throughout the year

Justice and only justice
you shall pursue
(Deuteronomy 16:18-20)

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TO THOSE ORGANIZING THE WEEK OF PRAYER FOR CHRISTIAN UNITY

The search for unity: throughout the year

The traditional period in the northern hemisphere for the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity is 18-25 January. Those dates were proposed in 1908 by Paul Wattson to cover the days between the feasts of St Peter and St Paul, and therefore have a symbolic significance. In the southern hemisphere where January is a vacation time churches often find other days to celebrate the Week of Prayer, for example around Pentecost (suggested by the Faith and Order movement in 1926), which is also a symbolic date for the unity of the Church.

Mindful of the need for flexibility, we invite you to use this material throughout the whole year to express the degree of communion which the churches have already reached, and to pray together for that full unity which is Christ's will.

Adapting the text

This material is offered with the understanding that, whenever possible, it will be adapted for use in local situations. Account should be taken of local liturgical and devotional practice, and of the whole social and cultural context. Such adaptation should ideally take place ecumenically. In some places ecumenical structures are already set up for adapting the material; in other places, we hope that the need to adapt it will be a stimulus to creating such structures.

Using the Week of Prayer material

- For churches and Christian communities which observe the Week of Prayer together through a single common service, an order for an ecumenical worship service is provided.
- Churches and Christian communities may also incorporate material from the Week of Prayer into their own services. Prayers from the ecumenical worship service, the "eight days", and the selection of additional prayers can be used as appropriate in their own setting.
- Communities which observe the Week of Prayer in their worship for each day during the week may draw material for these services from the "eight days".
- Those wishing to undertake bible studies on the Week of Prayer theme can use as a basis the biblical texts and reflections given in the eight days. Each day the discussions can lead to a closing period of intercessory prayer.
- Those who wish to pray privately may find the material helpful for focusing their prayer intentions. They can be mindful that they are in communion with others praying all around the world for the greater visible unity of Christ's Church.

BIBLICAL TEXT FOR 2019

(Deuteronomy 16:11-20)

Rejoice before the Lord your God — you and your sons and your daughters, your male and female slaves, the Levites resident in your towns, as well as the strangers, the orphans, and the widows who are among you — at the place that the Lord your God will choose as a dwelling for his name. Remember that you were a slave in Egypt, and diligently observe these statutes.

You shall keep the festival of booths for seven days, when you have gathered in the produce from your threshing-floor and your wine press. Rejoice during your festival, you and your sons and your daughters, your male and female slaves, as well as the Levites, the strangers, the orphans, and the widows resident in your towns. For seven days you shall keep the festival to the Lord your God at the place that the Lord will choose; for the Lord your God will bless you in all your produce and in all your undertakings, and you shall surely celebrate.

Three times a year all your males shall appear before the Lord your God at the place that he will choose: at the festival of unleavened bread, at the festival of weeks, and at the festival of booths. They shall not appear before the Lord empty-handed; all shall give as they are able, according to the blessing of the Lord your God that he has given you.

You shall appoint judges and officials throughout your tribes, in all your towns that the Lord your God is giving you, and they shall render just decisions for the people. You must not distort justice; you must not show partiality; and you must not accept bribes, for a bribe blinds the eyes of the wise and subverts the cause of those who are in the right. Justice, and only justice, you shall pursue, so that you may live and occupy the land that the Lord your God is giving you.

New Revised Standard Version

INTRODUCTION TO THE THEME FOR THE YEAR 2019

Justice and only justice you shall pursue

(Deuteronomy 16:18-20)

Every year Christians across the world gather in prayer for growth in unity. We do this in a world where corruption, greed and injustice bring about inequality and division. Ours is a united prayer in a fractured world: this is powerful. However, as individual Christians and communities, we are often complicit with injustice, and yet we are called together to form a united witness for justice and to be a means of Christ's healing grace for the brokenness of the world.

The Week of Prayer for Christian Unity 2019 has been prepared by Christians from Indonesia. With a population of 265 million, 86% of whom are reckoned to be Muslim, Indonesia is well known as having the largest Muslim population of any country. However, about 10% of Indonesians are Christian from various traditions. In terms of both population and the vast extension of the country Indonesia is the biggest nation in South East Asia. It has more than 17,000 islands, 1,340 different ethnic groups and over 740 local languages and yet is united in its plurality by one national language Bahasa Indonesia. The nation is founded on five principles called Pancasila,¹ with the motto *Bhineka Tunggal Ika (Unity in Diversity)*. Across the diversity of ethnicity, language and religion, Indonesians have lived by the principle of *gotong royong* which is to live in solidarity and by collaboration. This means sharing in all aspects of life, work, grief and festivities, and regarding all Indonesians as brothers and sisters.

This always fragile harmony is today threatened in new ways. Much of the economic growth that Indonesia has experienced in recent decades has been built on a system that has competition at its heart. This is in stark contrast to the collaboration of *gotong royong*. Corruption is experienced in many forms. It infects politics and business, often with devastating consequences for the environment. In particular, corruption undermines justice and the implementation of law. Too often those who are supposed to promote justice and protect the weak do the opposite. As a consequence, the gap between the rich and

¹ The five principles of Pancasila are (1) *Belief in the one and only God*, (2) *Just and civilized humanity*, (3) *The unity of Indonesia*, (4) *Democracy guided by the inner wisdom in the unanimity arising out of deliberations amongst representatives*, (5) *Social justice for all People of Indonesia*.

the poor has widened; and so a country rich in resources has the scandal of many people living in poverty. As a traditional Indonesian saying goes, “A mouse dies of hunger in the barn full of rice.” Meanwhile particular ethnic and religious groups are often associated with wealth in ways that have fed tensions. Radicalization that pits one community against another has grown and is exacerbated by the misuse of social media that demonizes particular communities.

Christian communities in such an environment become newly aware of their unity as they join in a common concern and a common response to an unjust reality. At the same time, confronted by these injustices, we are obliged, as Christians, to examine the ways in which we are complicit. Only by heeding Jesus’s prayer “that they all may be one” can we witness to living unity in diversity. It is through our unity in Christ that we will be able to combat injustice and serve the needs of its victims.

Moved by these concerns, the Christians of Indonesia found that the words of Deuteronomy, “Justice, and only justice, you shall pursue ...” (see Deut. 16:18-20) spoke powerfully to their situation and needs. Before the people of God enter the land God has promised them they renew their commitment to the Covenant God established with them. The pericope comes in a chapter whose central theme is the festivities to be celebrated by the Covenant people. After each festival the people are instructed, “Rejoice during your festival, you and your sons and your daughters, your male and female slaves, as well as the Levites, the strangers, the orphans, and the widows resident in your towns” (Deut. 16:14, see also 16:11). Indonesian Christians look to recover this same spirit of inclusive festivities across communities, which they previously enjoyed. At the end of this long chapter it may seem strange to have two verses about appointing judges, but in this Indonesian context the links between festivities for all and justice become alive. As people of the Covenant established in Jesus, we know that the delights of the heavenly banquet will be given to those who hunger and thirst and are persecuted for justice “for theirs is the kingdom of heaven” (Matt. 5:6, 10).

Christ’s Church is called to be a foretaste of this kingdom. However, in our disunity we fall short. We fail to be the sign of God’s love for his people. Just as injustice has widened the divisions that have riven Indonesian society, so injustice has also fed the divisions of the Church. We repent of the injustice that causes division, but as Christians we also believe in the power of Christ to forgive us and heal. And so, we find ourselves united under the cross of Christ, calling both for his grace to end injustice and for his mercy for the sins which have caused our division.

The reflections for the eight days and the worship service will be focused on the chosen theme. To deepen our reflection on unity and justice, the topic of each day has been carefully chosen to present struggles that result from injustice. The themes are:

- Day 1: Let justice roll down like water (Amos 5: 24)
 Day 2: Let your word be 'Yes, Yes,' or 'No, No' (Matthew 5:37)
 Day 3: The Lord is gracious and merciful to all (Psalm 145: 8)
 Day 4: Be content with what you have (Hebrews 13:5)
 Day 5: To bring good news to the poor (Luke 4: 18)
 Day 6: The Lord of hosts is his name (Jeremiah 10:16)
 Day 7: Woman, great is your faith! (Matthew 15:28)
 Day 8: The Lord is my light and my salvation (Psalm 27: 1).

THE PREPARATION OF THE MATERIAL FOR THE WEEK OF PRAYER FOR CHRISTIAN UNITY 2019

The preparatory work on the theme for this year's Week of Prayer material was undertaken by a group of representatives of different Christian communities in Indonesia. This ecumenical group was brought together by the Communion of Churches in Indonesia (Persekutuan Gereja-gereja di Indonesia, PGI) under the leadership of Rev. Dr Henriette T. Hutabarat Lebang, and the Indonesian Catholic Bishops' Conference (Konferensi Waligereja Indonesia, KWI) under the leadership of Mgr Ignatius Suharyo. Gratitude is extended in particular to the leaders of PGI and KWI, and those who contributed to these resources:

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- Revd Dr Justitia Vox Dei Hattu (Lecturer at the Jakarta Theological Seminary and Minister of the Protestant Church in Moluccas)
- Revd Dr Henriette T. Hutabarat Lebang (General Chairperson of the Communion of Churches in Indonesia, Toraja Church)
- Revd Irene Umbu Lolo, M. Th. (Minister of the Christian Church of Sumba)
- Mr Williams Bill Mailoa, S.Si. (B. Th.) (Member of the Liturgy and Church Music Division, Indonesian Christian Church)
- Revd Yolanda Pantou (Commissioner of the Faith and Order and Minister of the Indonesian Christian Church)
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- Revd Fr Agus Ulahay (Executive Secretary of the Commission for Ecumenical and Interreligious Affairs, the Catholic Bishops' Conference of Indonesia)
- Revd Sri Yuliana, M. Th. (Executive Secretary of Unity and Church Renewal, Communion of Churches in Indonesia, Christian Church of Southern Sumatra)

The materials of the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity 2019 were presented by the local group to an international team sponsored jointly by the Faith and Order Commission of the World Council of Churches (WCC) and the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity (PCPCU). At this meeting, held at the PGI's Guest House in Jakarta on 3-8 September 2017, the draft text was edited and finalised.

The international team had the opportunity to worship with the congregations of Gereja Toraja Jemaat Kota and Gereja Katolik Santo Yakobus, both in Kelapa Gading, Jakarta. A visit to the Beautiful Indonesia Miniature Park helped the international team to understand the diversity and the richness of various cultures and religions of the people of Indonesia as well as the basic principles that unite this big nation. A conversation session with some members of the Indonesian Christian Forum also enriched our understanding of the ecumenical fellowship of churches in Indonesia and its role in building a peaceful and just society of Indonesia.

On the last day of the meeting, the international team had an opportunity to introduce the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity and how it is being used in a number of different contexts to the students and faculty members of the Jakarta Theological Seminary (JTS) and to church leaders and lay members at the JTS campus. The staff members of the Faith and Order Commission of the World Council of Churches also gave a presentation on the Faith and Order document *The Church: Towards a Common Vision* that has been translated into Bahasa Indonesia.

The international team would like to thank the leaders of the Communion of Churches in Indonesia for their generosity in hosting us at the Guest House and to the staff members who made our stay so comfortable, especially Revd Sri Yuliana and Mr Abdiel Tantias. We also wish to express our gratitude for the support of the staff members of the Catholic Bishops' Conference, in particular Revd Fr Agus Ulahay. Our appreciation also goes to the leaders and staff members of the Jakarta Theological Seminary who helped us in arranging a half-day seminar on their campus.

ECUMENICAL WORSHIP SERVICE

Introduction

This worship service emphasizes the importance of moving from our discourses about unity, justice and mercy to action and concrete commitment, and to acts of unity, justice and mercy in our personal lives and in the life of our Christian communities.

Two particular elements of the worship need to be noted in the preparation of the celebration.

The first concerns the choice of readers in the **Prayer of Repentance**. It is important that the first reader (R1) be either an ordained minister or congregational leader while the other two readers may be members of the congregation.

The second element concerns the liturgical symbolic action which takes place after the **Commitment to Unity through Justice and Mercy**. It will be necessary to prepare two cards or tags for each person. During the service, participants are called to reflect on how they might commit to a particular act of justice, mercy, or unity. They will then be invited to write on each of the two cards what their own concrete commitment is. Each person attaches one of these cards to their own shirt. The second cards will be gathered up at the offering and will be put at the foot of the cross. At the conclusion of the worship, these cards will be distributed to each one as they leave the church, so that each may pray for another's commitment.

Order of the Service

Justice, and only justice, you shall pursue
(*Deuteronomy 16:18-20*)

- L Leader
- C Congregation
- R Reader

Call to worship

- L Let us worship the Triune God.
God, our Father, you crown your creation with justice and mercy.
- C **we come to worship you.**
- L Jesus Christ, your cross brings new life and justice,
- C **we come to worship you.**
- L Holy Spirit, you inspire our hearts to act justly,
- C **we come to worship you.**
- L May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and
the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.
- C **And also with you.**

Gathering hymn (*will be chosen locally*)

Introductory words

- L As Christians from separated communities, we gather here to pray for unity. This year, the theme of the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity chosen by the churches in Indonesia is “Justice, and only justice, you shall pursue.” This theme is imperative due to the recurring situations that bring divisions and conflicts. As we pray together, we are reminded that our calling as members of the body of Christ is to pursue and embody justice. Our unity in Christ empowers us to take part in the wider struggle for justice and to promote the dignity of life.

Hymn of praise

Prayer of repentance

L Beloved sisters and brothers, let us confess before the Lord that we have sinned and ask for forgiveness so that our worship will be pleasing to God.

R1 *(read by an ordained minister or a leader of the congregation)*

Compassionate God,
you have chosen us to shepherd your flock. Jesus, your Son, taught us to act justly. We are aware that in our ministry, we sometimes behave unjustly towards the people whom you have entrusted to us by: prioritizing those who are close to us or those who have higher social status; ignoring strangers, the poor and the least in society; fearing to defend the oppressed; misusing church resources. These deeds have caused some people to turn away from your church.

Lord, have mercy.

C **Lord, have mercy.** *(This response may be sung.)*

R2 *(read by a member of the congregation)*

Loving God,
you have gathered us as members of your flock. Jesus, your Son, taught us to love one another as a sign of being his disciples. We confess that we have failed to live his commandment of love by: regarding those of other churches as rivals; being hostile to each other and slow to forgive; focusing only on our personal interest; ignoring the needs of sisters and brothers; excluding those who do not share our point of view. In these ways, our attitudes strengthen the dividing walls between us.

Lord, have mercy.

C **Lord, have mercy.**

R3 *(read by a different person)*

Gracious God,
You have commissioned us to make our common home a place of justice for all. In your generous love, you send rain on the righteous and the unrighteous and, in Jesus, teach us to love without discrimination. We confess that we have failed to follow this teaching by: disrespecting our neighbours; spreading falsehoods through various social media; participating in the disruption of social harmony. Our conduct risks making the world a barren field that no longer brings forth your justice for all of creation.

Lord, have mercy.

C **Lord, have mercy.**

- L** May almighty God have mercy on us, forgive our sins and lead us to eternal life.
- C** Amen.

Hymn/Song/Meditative music

Proclamation of the Word of God

First reading: Deuteronomy 16:11-20

Responsorial Psalm: 82:1-8 (*read or sung*)

Response: Rise up, O God, judge the earth.

God has taken his place in the divine council;
in the midst of the gods he holds judgement:
'How long will you judge unjustly
and show partiality to the wicked?

Response: Rise up, O God, judge the earth.

Give justice to the weak and the orphan;
maintain the right of the lowly and the destitute.
Rescue the weak and the needy;
deliver them from the hand of the wicked.

Response: Rise up, O God, judge the earth.

They have neither knowledge nor understanding,
they walk around in darkness;
all the foundations of the earth are shaken.

Response: Rise up, O God, judge the earth.

I say, 'You are gods,
children of the Most High, all of you;
nevertheless, you shall die like mortals,
and fall like any prince.
Rise up, O God, judge the earth;
for all the nations belong to you!

Response: Rise up, O God, judge the earth.

Second reading: Romans 12:1-13

Alleluia (*sung*)

Gospel reading: Luke 4:14-21

Alleluia (*sung*)

Sermon

Commitment to Justice, Mercy and Unity

L Jesus Christ prays for the unity of his disciples.
The gift of his life is justice for the world.

R1 As members of the body of Christ, we are called to walk together in his path.

R2 Let us hear his calling.

C **Holy Spirit, unite us in action.**

R1 As members of the body of Christ, we are called to keep our lives free from the love of money, and be content with what we have.

R2 Let us break the cycle of greed and live in simplicity.

C **Holy Spirit, unite us in action.**

R1 As members of the body of Christ, we are called to proclaim release to captives and victims of all forms of violence.

R2 Let us help them to live in dignity.

C **Holy Spirit, unite us in action.**

R1 As members of the body of Christ, we are called to extend hospitality to strangers.

R2 Let us outdo one another in showing honour.

C **Holy Spirit, unite us in action.**

R1 As members of the body of Christ, we are called to proclaim the good news to the whole creation.

R2 Let us protect the life and beauty of God's creation

C **Holy Spirit, unite us in action.**

L To make concrete our individual commitment to work together for justice, you are invited to write your commitment on two separate cards. We invite you to keep one of these cards close to your heart. The second one will be collected and brought forward as an offering.

(A song for unity and/or justice may be sung as the congregants write their commitments.)

Offering

- L** What does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God? (Micah 6:8) We commit ourselves to acts of justice.

(At this point the ushers collect the second card and bring them forward to be put at the foot of the cross.)

- L** Gracious God, you have shown us your compassion and care for all creation. Your love inspires us to offer these commitments to act justly by loving others wholeheartedly regardless of their cultural, ethnic, and religious backgrounds. Accept now our offerings and transform them into action for the unity of your Church. We ask this through your Son Jesus Christ, in the power of the Holy Spirit, who live with you as one God forever and ever.

- C** **Amen.**

Sharing peace

(The leader invites the assembly to exchange a sign of peace, so that together we can proclaim our faith.)

The Nicene Creed

Prayers of the people

- L** Let us raise to the Lord our common prayer for the Church and for the needs of all humanity.

- R** From the islands and the oceans,
we worship you, O God, the Creator of life.
Throughout the mountains and the valleys,
we praise you, O God, the Saviour of the world.
With the tongues of all nations,
we thank you, O God, the Comforter of bodies and souls.
We come before you bearing our burdens and hopes.
Today we ask you:

- C** **O God, hear our prayer and grant us your love.**

R We pray for those who live in the midst of injustice.
Encourage us to lift up their voices and strengthen their hope.
We pray for those who continue to perpetuate injustice.
May your kindness fill our hearts and make us agents of freedom and peace.
We pray for every institution and person who stands for justice.
Let us act justly according to your words.
Today we ask you:

C O God, hear our prayer and grant us your justice.

R We pray for the visible unity of the Church.
Lead us to fulfil Jesus' prayer that we may be one
and work together to manifest your Kingdom.
Today we ask you:

C O God, hear our prayer and grant us passion for unity.

R We thank you for the many colours, cultures, and customs that we share
in this world.
In our differences, unite us by your love.
Enable us to act together to uphold life
and to make this world a just and peaceful household for all humanity.
Today we ask you:

C O God, hear our prayer and grant us your peace.

The Lord's Prayer

Hymn/Song

Dismissal

L As you leave this gathering you will be given one of the commitment cards.
We invite you to pray for the commitment written on the card.

Blessing

L: May God embrace you with love
and make kindness flow out from you.
May God ignite courage within you
and transform you into agents of his justice and peace.
May God grant you humility
and give you perseverance to nurture unity.

C: Amen!

(As the congregants leave, the ministers distribute the commitment cards.)

BIBLICAL REFLECTIONS AND PRAYERS FOR THE EIGHT DAYS

Day 1

Let justice roll down like waters

(*Amos 5:24*)

Amos 5:22-25

Luke 11:37-44

Reflection

Christians can sometimes be very committed to prayer and worship, but less concerned for the poor and the marginalized. Sometimes we pray in church, but at the same time oppress our fellow human beings or exploit the environment. Christians in Indonesia recognize that in their land there are people who passionately try to practise their faith, but who oppress those of other beliefs, even using violence in doing so. But in the Gospel of Luke, Jesus reminds us that the outward sign of true worship of God is acting justly. He is fierce in his condemnation of those who neglect this obligation.

In the prophecy of Amos, God rejects the worship offered by those who neglect justice, until they 'let justice roll down like waters, and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream' (5:24). The prophet insists on the absolute link between worship and doing deeds of justice. When Christians work together to listen to the cry of the poor and the oppressed, they grow in communion with one another and with the Triune God.

Prayer

God of the widow, the orphan and the stranger,

You have shown us the path of justice.

Help us to follow your way by doing justice as our worship of you.

As Christians together, may we worship you not only with our hearts and minds, but also by our deeds.

May the Holy Spirit help and guide us to work for justice wherever we are, so that many people may be strengthened through our works.

In the name of Jesus. Amen.

Day 2

Let your word be 'Yes, Yes' or 'No, No' (*Matthew 5:37*)

Ephesians 4:22-25

Matthew 5:33-37

Reflection

Violence towards fellow humans is not found only in physical assault and robbery, but also in gossip and malicious rumours. Social media have made it easy for untruths to be circulated instantly to a wide audience. Christians in Indonesia are aware of how this has sometimes led to lies and prejudice being propagated by religious groups, including Christians, against other religious groups. Fear and the threat of reprisals can make people reluctant to stand up for the truth and can cause them to remain silent in the face of unjust and untrue statements aimed at causing fear.

Jesus boldly said, 'Let your word be "Yes, Yes" or "No, No"; anything more than this comes from the evil one.' Deceitfulness destroys good relationships between persons and between groups, including churches. Dishonesty disrupts the unity of the Church. The Letter to the Ephesians reminds us that we are members of one another. This is a call for Christians to be honest and accountable to each other, so that they may grow in fellowship. When we do so, it is not the spirit of the evil one, but the Holy Spirit of God who will be with us.

Prayer

God of righteousness,
grant us wisdom to distinguish right from wrong.
Let our hearts be guided by honesty and our lips speak the truth.
Give us courage to be truthful even when others go against us.
Keep us from spreading deceit;
make us, rather, agents of unity and peace,
spreading good news for all people.
We pray in the name of your Son, Jesus Christ. Amen.

Day 3

The Lord is gracious and merciful to all (*Psalm 145:8*)

Psalm 145:8-13

Matthew 1:1-17

Reflection

‘The Lord is good to all, and his compassion is over all that he has made’, said the psalmist, proclaiming that the love of God is beyond boundaries of ethnicity, culture, race, and even religion. The account of the genealogy of Jesus in Matthew’s gospel reflects this expansive vision. While ancient cultures often saw women as inferior, or as the property of their fathers or husbands, Matthew names four women among the ancestors of Jesus, two of whom, Ruth and Rahab, were Gentiles. Three other ancestors in the list were known for their sinfulness, including the adulterous King David. Naming these in the genealogy of Jesus and making them part of God’s human history, proclaims that God includes everyone, male and female, sinner and righteous, in his plan of salvation, regardless of their backgrounds.

Indonesia is a nation of over 17,000 islands and 1,340 different ethnic groups, and churches are often separated along ethnic lines. Such exclusivity can lead some to see themselves as the sole possessors of the truth, thus wounding the unity of the Church. Amidst escalating ethnic and religious fanaticism and a growing spirit of intolerance throughout the world today, Christians can serve the human family by joining together to bear witness to the all-embracing love of God, proclaiming with the psalmist that ‘the Lord is gracious and merciful’ to all.

Prayer

Father, Son and Holy Spirit, one God,
we give praise to you for your great glory made manifest in all of creation.
Give us an open heart to embrace all who experience discrimination.
Help us to grow in love beyond prejudice and injustice.
Grant us the grace to respect the uniqueness of each person,
so that in our diversity we may experience unity.
This prayer we make in your holy name. Amen.

Day 4

Be content with what you have (Hebrews 13:5)

Hebrews 13:1-5
Matthew 6:25-34

Reflection

The writer of the letter to the Hebrews warns against excessive love of money and material things. In the face of our tendency to think we never have enough, the text reminds us of God's providence and assures us that God will never forsake creation. Through the fruitfulness of earth, rivers and seas, God's goodness has provided ample food and fresh water to sustain all living beings, and yet many people lack these basic necessities. Human weakness and greed frequently lead to corruption, injustice, poverty and hunger. It can be tempting, instead of caring about others and sharing our goods with them, to gather and accumulate money, food and natural resources for ourselves, or our own nation or ethnic group.

Yet, Jesus teaches us that material things should not be our main concern. Rather, we should strive first for the reign of God and its values, trusting that our heavenly Father will provide for us. In recent years, some churches in Indonesia have been providing various kinds of financial, human and educational support to small churches in rural areas. In this simple and practical example of mutual love they are demonstrating the unity with their fellow-Christians which is God's gift to his Church. Living more simply, not preoccupied with earning money beyond our needs or with hoarding resources for the future, can enable us to make the earth, our common home, a more just place.

Prayer

Compassionate God,
we thank you for your bountiful gifts.
Give us the grace to accept all blessings
in simplicity and with humble gratitude.
Enable us to be content and ready to share with others who are in need,
so that all may experience unity in the love that flows from you,
our Triune God,
who live and reign for ever and ever. Amen.

Day 5

To bring good news to the poor

(Luke 4:18)

Amos 8:4-8

Luke 4:16-21

Reflection

The prophet Amos criticized traders who practiced deceit and exploited the poor in order to gain maximum profit. Amos also underlined how God observes their wrongdoing and will never forget it. God listens to the cries of victims of injustice and never forsakes those who are exploited and treated unjustly.

We live in a globalized world where marginalization, exploitation and injustice are rampant. The gap between the rich and the poor is getting wider. Economic achievement becomes a deciding factor in relationships between peoples, nations and communities. Economic issues often trigger tensions and conflicts between them. It is hard to enjoy peace when justice is absent.

By virtue of our common Baptism, all Christians share in the prophetic mission of Jesus to proclaim good news to the poor and the weak, in both words and deeds. When we recognise this mission, the Spirit of the Lord will be upon us too, empowering us to work for justice. Our dignity as Christians calls us to speak and act in such a way that the words from the scroll of the prophet Isaiah which Jesus proclaimed in Nazareth are fulfilled each day in the hearing of those around us.

Prayer

God our Father,
forgive our lust for power
and free us from the temptation to oppress others.
By your Holy Spirit of communion,
help us to live in solidarity with our neighbour,
and so share together with your Son Jesus
in fulfilling your promise of freedom from poverty and oppression.
We pray in his name. Amen.

Day 6

The Lord of hosts is his name (*Jeremiah 10:16*)

Jeremiah 10:12-16
Mark 16:14-15

Reflection

The created world is a manifestation of God's wondrous power. The greatness of God is made visible in and through all creation: 'The Lord of hosts is his name.'

Today, however, we are facing a serious global ecological crisis, which threatens the survival of the natural world. Many people have been driven by greed to exploit creation beyond its capacity. In the name of development, forests are cleared and pollution destroys land, air, rivers and seas, rendering agriculture impossible, making fresh water unobtainable and causing animals to die. In this context it is useful to remember that after his resurrection, Jesus commissioned the disciples to proclaim the good news 'to the *whole* creation'. No part of creation is outside God's plan to make all things new. And so conversion is needed from a tendency to exploit to an attitude that values and reconciles us with creation.

Movements among people of different faiths in Indonesia and many other places are inspiring Christians to promote eco-friendly churches, and to take a stand against environmental abuses. This unites Christians in bearing witness to their Creator, 'for he is the one who formed all things'. When we join with other Christians in defence of our common earthly home, we are not just engaging in activism, but are fulfilling the Lord's command to proclaim the good news of God's healing and restoring love to *all* of creation.

Prayer

Loving God,
By your word all things came to be.
We thank you for the universe
which manifests your glory, beauty and kindness.
Grant us the wisdom to walk gently upon the earth
and together to be prophets of your good news to all creation. Amen.

Day 7

Woman, great is your faith! (*Matthew 15:28*)

1 Samuel 1:13-17

Matthew 15:21-28

Reflection

Eli misjudges Hannah's deep and fervent prayer and condemns her, dismissing her supplications as drunken ramblings. Yet the words of her reply, calling on him not to dismiss her as 'a worthless woman' softened his heart and he sent her away with a blessing. Likewise, when the Canaanite woman came to beg Jesus to heal her daughter, he initially dismissed her, saying that he had come only for his own people. Yet she persisted in her begging and challenging and eventually, recognising her great faith, Jesus granted her request. In both cases, a woman who was initially marginalised and judged unworthy of attention turned out to be speaking prophetic words that softened hearts and brought healing and wholeness.

The marginalization and dismissing of women's voices continues in our own times. Indeed even within our churches we are often complicit with cultures that devalue women. As Christians become aware of their own failings in this area, they come to recognize more clearly the horror of violence against women and children, snatched forcibly from their homes and trafficked to other lands. These and many other migrant workers are often treated as less than human, and are denied the most basic human rights. In recent years churches in Indonesia have taken common action against human trafficking and the sexual abuse of children. Their efforts, and those of people of other faiths, are all the more urgent since the number of victims in some parts of their country is increasing daily.

As Christians unite in prayer and study of the Scriptures, truly listening for God's voice, they can discover that God also speaks today through the cries of the most abused in society. It is when they hear God's call together that they are inspired to join in common action against the scourge of human trafficking and of other evils.

Prayer

Gracious God,
You are the source of human dignity.
By your grace and power
the words of Hannah changed the heart of Eli the Priest;
by your grace and power
the words of the Canaanite woman moved Jesus to heal her daughter.
As we search to manifest the unity of the Church,
grant us the courage to reject all forms of violence against women
and to celebrate the gifts of the Spirit
that women bring to the service of the Church.
This we pray through Jesus Christ our Lord,
who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God for ever and ever. Amen.

Day 8

The Lord is my light and my salvation
(Psalm 27:1)

Psalm 27:1-4
John 8:12-20

Reflection

Throughout the eight days of this Week of Prayer for Christian Unity, the daily reflections have considered many difficult situations facing the world today, including greed, violence, exclusion, exploitation, poverty, pollution, hunger and trafficking. Churches in Indonesia are conscious of these issues as challenges facing all Christians. They recognise and confess that some of these sins have tainted the lives of their churches too, wounding their unity and diminishing their witness to the world. At the same time, they recognise as well the many promising instances of churches coming together to witness to their unity in

Christ.² Christians in other parts of the world can name many other examples from their own situations.

Day by day, year by year, and especially during this Week of Prayer for Christian Unity, Christians join together for common prayer, professing their common baptismal faith, listening for God's voice in the Scriptures and praying together for unity in Christ's body. In doing so, they recognise that the Holy Trinity is the source of all unity and that Jesus is the light of the world, who promises the light of life to those who follow him. The many injustices in the world frequently sadden or anger them. But they do not lose hope, they move to action. Because the Lord is their light and their salvation and the stronghold of their lives, they do not fear.

Prayer

God our Sustainer,
we praise you for your loving kindness,
for upholding us in times of trial,
and showing us your light in times of darkness.
Transform our lives so that we may be a blessing for others.
Help us to live unity in diversity as a witness to your communion,
Father, Son and Holy Spirit,
one God now and forever. Amen.

² Cf. The Ecumenical Situation in Indonesia.

THE ECUMENICAL SITUATION IN INDONESIA*

Introduction

Indonesia is a pluralistic society, a home for people of many tribes, languages, cultures and religions. Out of 265 million people, around 12% are Catholics and Protestants. Christianity first came to Indonesia as early as the seventh century, brought by the Nestorians to North Sumatra; however, it did not survive. The gospel was next brought by Catholic missionaries who followed in the wake of Portuguese merchants in the early 16th century. These included the Jesuit St Francis Xavier, who worked in the Maluku islands from 1546-1547. The first baptism was in Mamuya, Halmahera, in 1534. In 1605 the Dutch, under the flag of a trading company called the Verenigde Oost-Indische Compagnie (VOC, the Dutch East India Company), expelled the Portuguese from Indonesia. With the arrival of these Dutch merchants, Protestantism was introduced in Indonesia and Catholics were forced to convert to Protestantism.

The VOC was originally interested in obtaining spices that were mostly produced in the eastern part of Indonesia. In the following years, the VOC also represented the Dutch colonial government and introduced the Calvinistic Protestantism practiced by the churches in the Netherlands in the 17th century. The Reformed Church was the official state church, and as such had special privileges.

Later missionaries who came to Indonesia, mostly from the Netherlands and Germany, confined themselves to working with a particular tribe. As the result, Christian divisions tend to follow tribal boundaries. Most Christian communities used the language of the tribe in worship, but gradually they also adopted Bahasa Indonesia, the national language. With the coming of Revival Evangelical Christianity and the Charismatic Movement to Indonesia in the last century and, more recently, the arrival of Orthodox Christianity, the churches in Indonesia present a wide panoply of Christian traditions, which includes Catholicism, Lutheranism, Reformed, Pentecostal, Evangelical, Charismatic, Baptist, Seventh Day Adventist, Salvation Army, and Orthodox.

In various ways these churches work together through different platforms to address issues related to the unity of the Church as well as common concerns in society, at local, regional and national levels. Women of different Christian

* This text is reproduced under the sole authority and responsibility of the ecumenical group in Indonesia which came together to write the source texts for the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity 2019.

communities in the Kebayoran area of Jakarta, for instance, work together to provide very cheap lunch packs to the *becak* (rickshaw) drivers, low income families, and the homeless. They have regular fellowship meetings, and together with other women's groups in different places, observe the World Day of Prayer annually to pray for peace and justice in the community.

The Communion of Churches in Indonesia

Persekutuan Gereja-gereja di Indonesia (PGI), the Communion of Churches in Indonesia, is a fellowship of the Protestant churches in Indonesia. It was founded as Dewan Gereja-gereja di Indonesia (DGI), the Council of Churches in Indonesia, on May 25, 1950 with the aim of uniting the churches in Indonesia. Even before World War II the idea of having a council of churches had long been dreamt of, especially with the task of coordinating the works of various mission organizations in Indonesia. Inspired by the independence of the nation in 1945, the churches in many parts of the country felt the need to express their unity. In its 10th General Assembly in Ambon in 1980, the DGI changed its name to Persekutuan Gereja-gereja di Indonesia (PGI). The members of the Council came to the point that, after working together for some years, they needed to deepen and strengthen their fellowship and move beyond organizational matters into a common commitment as a communion of churches, working together in concrete ways to promote the unity of the Church and to proclaim the gospel in the context of a pluralistic Indonesian society.

It was during this 1980 Assembly that the PGI produced "Five Documents of Church Unity", which consists of: (1) Common Calling of the Churches in Indonesia, (2) Common Understanding of Christian Faith, (3) Common Recognition and Acceptance among the Churches in Indonesia, (4) By Laws, (5) Towards Self-Reliance in Theology, Resources and Finance of the Churches in Indonesia. These documents reflect the theological and ecclesiological understanding of the member churches in the light of their common striving towards Church unity, manifested in concrete programs for renewing, developing and uniting the churches. These documents are always reviewed by the General Assembly of PGI which is held every five years. The 13th PGI General Assembly in 2000 decided to move forward to accept these five documents as the one unifying document and called it: "Dokumen Keesaan Gereja" (DKG) - Document of Church Unity. It is expected that this document will function as the main reference point for the PGI members as they work together for the unity of the churches and for a common Christian witness in Indonesia. At this moment, PGI has 89 member churches, including Pentecostal, Evangelical and Charismatic churches. There are also provincial PGIs which include smaller and regionally based churches.

From time to time the PGI issues relevant public statements or sends letters to the government of the Republic of Indonesia in response to certain critical issues in

society, including the implementation of religious freedom and advocacy for justice and peace, especially for those who are marginalized. Similarly, the PGI sends pastoral letters to its member churches addressing critical issues in Indonesia, such as freedom of religion, corruption, human rights violations, violence, child protection, etc. The 16th General Assembly of PGI in 2014 was held under the theme “God bring us up from the depth of the Ocean (Psalm 71:20): In solidarity with all the children of the nation, we together implement the values of *Pancasila* to overcome poverty, injustice, radicalism and environmental destruction”. The theme guided the works of PGI and its members specifically for the period of 2014-2019. The PGI member churches share the conviction that greed is the root cause of the four different but interrelated issues above. Therefore PGI promotes the so-called “spiritualitas keugaharian” or “spirituality of moderation.”

Catholicism in Indonesia and the Catholic Bishops’ Conference

Despite early missionary successes in the 16th century, Catholicism was suppressed under Dutch rule until 1807, when political events in Europe again allowed Catholics freedom of worship. Roman Catholicism thus existed only in restricted pockets until the second half of the 19th century and the 20th century when new missionary efforts established schools, seminaries and new worshipping communities. The first indigenous Indonesian priests were ordained in the 1920s, and one of these priests, Fr Albertus Soegijapranata SJ, became the first indigenous bishop in 1940. Something of a national hero because of his support for Indonesian independence, he is remembered for his slogan, “100% Catholic, 100% Indonesian”.

The Indonesian Catholic Bishops’ Conference was first formed in the 1920s and then reconstituted in the 1950s to include bishops from all parts of the newly independent country. Since 1987 it has been called the Konferensi Waligereja Indonesia (KWI). The long existence of the Indonesian Bishops’ Conference enabled its bishops to make key interventions during the Second Vatican Council (1962-1965), which they did, particularly with reference to the Council’s document on Revelation. It is worth noting that the first of these interventions, made by Archbishop Gabriel Manek of Endeh, Timor, opposed the first proposed draft *De fontibus* on the grounds that it would be a source of obstacles in the Church’s dialogue with other Christians. From 1962, therefore, one can see that the Indonesian Catholic bishops were committed to the ecumenical project.

Cooperation of PGI and KWI

For many years, PGI and KWI have worked in close cooperation, particularly in addressing issues of common concern in the country. Since 1980, PGI and KWI have issued a joint Christmas message annually, mostly addressing national issues in the light of the Christmas gospels. This message is read in parishes of

both Catholic and Protestant churches. Gradually, the theme of the annual PGI-KWI Christmas message has been adopted nationally. One of the issues regularly addressed by both bodies is related to the implementation of religious freedom for all citizens as guaranteed by the Constitution of the Republic of Indonesia. Whenever needed, PGI and KWI issue public statements relating to emerging issues in society which threaten justice and peace in the community and the welfare of the people.

Churches in Indonesia are aware of the importance of building and strengthening relationships with people of different faiths. PGI and KWI are very much involved in interfaith dialogue and cooperation. Both bodies have actively participated in the joint collaboration of different faith organizations in Indonesia which recognises six official religions, namely: Islam, Protestant Christianity, Catholic Christianity, Buddhism, Hinduism and Confucianism. Faith leaders from these religions meet from time to time to discuss some crucial issues and often release joint statements regarding particular concerns. At the local level, many congregations and parishes related to PGI and KWI are also actively involved in interreligious dialogue and concrete actions in the society.

The Indonesia Christian Forum

Indonesian participants attended the first meeting of Global Christian Forum (GCF) in Limuru, Kenya in 2007 and were inspired to strengthen the collaboration among different Christian traditions in the country. In 2012, the second GCF meeting was held in Manado, Indonesia. During that event, the Christian leaders representing various traditions in Indonesia launched Forum Umat Kristen Indonesia (FUKRI), the Indonesian Christian Forum. Members of this forum participated actively in the Celebration of Christian Unity held in Senayan Stadium in Jakarta in 2013, which was a special event welcoming the 10th Assembly of the World Council of Churches (WCC) in Busan, South Korea. The meeting was attended by the General Secretary of the WCC. Revd Dr Olav Fykse Tveit, and the local organizing committee of the WCC 10th Assembly in Busan, South Korea.

Since then, the members of FUKRI, which consists of: the Communion of Churches in Indonesia (PGI), the Catholic Bishops' Conference (KWI), the Fellowship of the Evangelical Churches and Institutions in Indonesia (PGLII), the Fellowship of Pentecostal Churches in Indonesia (PGPI), the Fellowship of Baptist Churches in Indonesia, the Salvation Army, the Seventh Day Adventist, and the Orthodox Church, meet regularly every month. Initially meeting solely to build fraternity, over time their discussions have deepened to focus on the place of Christians in Indonesia's pluralistic and rapidly changing society. Together with the National Prayer Network, FUKRI has organized prayer events focusing on challenging issues in society and in the life of the nation. FUKRI also jointly commemorated the 500th anniversary of the Reformation. Recently, FUKRI

discussed the document issued by the WCC, the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity and the World Evangelical Alliance on “Christian Witness in a Multi-Religious World: Recommendation for Conduct”. FUKRI members appreciated this ecumenical document as a valuable guide to the churches in Indonesia as they give witness in the context of a pluralistic society. FUKRI committed to share this document to its respective constituencies for further study.

WEEK OF PRAYER FOR CHRISTIAN UNITY

Themes 1968-2019

*Materials jointly prepared by the WCC Faith and Order Commission
and the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity were first used in 1968*

- 1968 To the praise of his glory (Ephesians 1:14)
- 1969 Called to freedom (Galatians 5:13)
(Preparatory meeting held in Rome, Italy)
- 1970 We are fellow workers for God (1 Corinthians 3:9)
(Preparatory meeting held at the Monastery of Niederaltaich,
Federal Republic of Germany)
- 1971 ...and the communion of the Holy Spirit (2 Corinthians 13:13)
(Preparatory meeting in Bari, Italy)
- 1972 I give you a new commandment (John 13:34)
(Preparatory meeting held in Geneva, Switzerland)
- 1973 Lord, teach us to pray (Luke 11:1)
(Preparatory meeting held at the Abbey of Montserrat, Spain)
- 1974 That every tongue confess: Jesus Christ is Lord (Philippians 2:1-13)
(Preparatory meeting held in Geneva, Switzerland)
- 1975 God's purpose: all things in Christ (Ephesians 1:3-10)
(Material from an Australian group – Preparatory meeting held in
Geneva, Switzerland)
- 1976 We shall be like him (1 John 3:2) or, Called to become what we are
(Material from Caribbean Conference of Churches.
Preparatory meeting held in Rome, Italy)

- 1977 Enduring together in hope (Romans 5:1-5)
(Material from Lebanon, in the midst of a civil war.
Preparatory meeting held in Geneva)
- 1978 No longer strangers (Ephesians 2:13-22)
(Material from an ecumenical team in Manchester, England)
- 1979 Serve one another to the glory of God (1 Peter 4:7-11)
(Material from Argentina – Preparatory meeting held in Geneva,
Switzerland)
- 1980 Your kingdom come (Matthew 6:10)
(Material from an ecumenical group in Berlin, German Democratic
Republic – Preparatory meeting held in Milan)
- 1981 One Spirit - many gifts - one body (1 Corinthians 12:3b-13)
(Material from Graymoor Fathers, USA – Preparatory meeting held in
Geneva, Switzerland)
- 1982 May all find their home in you, O Lord (Psalm 84)
(Material from Kenya – Preparatory meeting held in Milan, Italy)
- 1983 Jesus Christ - the life of the world (1 John 1:1-4)
(Material from an ecumenical group in Ireland – Preparatory meeting
held in Céligny (Bossey), Switzerland)
- 1984 Called to be one through the cross of our Lord (1 Corinthians 2:2 and
Colossians 1:20)
(Preparatory meeting held in Venice, Italy)
- 1985 From death to life with Christ (Ephesians 2:4-7)
(Material from Jamaica – Preparatory meeting held in Grandchamp,
Switzerland)
- 1986 You shall be my witnesses (Acts 1:6-8)
(Material from Yugoslavia (Slovenia) – Preparatory meeting held in
Yugoslavia)
- 1987 United in Christ - a new creation (2 Corinthians 5:17-6:4a)
(Material from England – Preparatory meeting held in Taizé, France)
- 1988 The love of God casts out fear (1 John 4:18)
(Material from Italy – Preparatory meeting held in Pinerolo, Italy)

- 1989 Building community: one body in Christ (Romans 12:5-6a)
(Material from Canada – Preparatory meeting held in Whaley Bridge, England)
- 1990 That they all may be one...That the world may believe (John 17)
(Material from Spain – Preparatory meeting held in Madrid, Spain)
- 1991 Praise the Lord, all you nations! (Psalm 117 and Romans 15:5-13)
(Material from Germany – Preparatory meeting held in Rotenburg an der Fulda, Federal Republic of Germany)
- 1992 I am with you always... Go, therefore (Matthew 28:16-20)
(Material from Belgium – Preparatory meeting held in Bruges, Belgium)
- 1993 Bearing the fruit of the Spirit for Christian unity (Galatians 5:22-23)
(Material from Zaire – Preparatory meeting held near Zurich, Switzerland)
- 1994 The household of God: called to be one in heart and mind (Acts 4:23-37)
(Material from Ireland – Preparatory meeting held in Dublin, Republic of Ireland)
- 1995 Koinonia: communion in God and with one another (John 15:1-17)
(Material from Faith and Order – Preparatory meeting held in Bristol, England)
- 1996 Behold, I stand at the door and knock (Revelation 3:14-22)
(Material from Portugal – Preparatory meeting held in Lisbon, Portugal)
- 1997 We entreat you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God (2 Corinthians 5:20)
(Material from Nordic Ecumenical Council – Preparatory meeting held in Stockholm, Sweden)
- 1998 The Spirit helps us in our weakness (Romans 8:14-27)
(Material from France – Preparatory meeting held in Paris, France)
- 1999 He will dwell with them as their God, they will be his peoples (Revelation 21:1-7)
(Material from Malaysia – Preparatory meeting held in Monastery of Bose, Italy)

- 2000 Blessed be God who has blessed us in Christ (Ephesians 1:3-14)
(Material from the Middle East Council of Churches – Preparatory meeting held La Verna, Italy)
- 2001 I am the Way, and the Truth, and the Life (John 14:1-6)
(Material from Romania – Preparatory meeting held at Vulcan, Romania)
- 2002 For with you is the fountain of life (Psalm 36:5-9)
(Material CEEC and CEC – Preparatory meeting near Augsburg, Germany)
- 2003 We have this treasure in clay jars (2 Corinthians 4:4-18)
(Material churches in Argentina – Preparatory meeting at Los Rubios, Spain)
- 2004 My peace I give to you (John 14:23-31; John 14:27)
(Material from Aleppo, Syria – Preparatory meeting in Palermo, Sicily)
- 2005 Christ, the one foundation of the church (1 Corinthians 3:1-23)
(Material from Slovakia – Preparatory meeting in Piestaň, Slovakia)
- 2006 Where two or three are gathered in my name, there I am among them
(Matthew 18:18-20)
(Material from Ireland – Preparatory meeting held in Prosperous, Co. Kildare, Ireland)
- 2007 He even makes the deaf to hear and the mute to speak (Mark 7:31-37)
(Material from South Africa – Preparatory meeting held in Faverges, France)
- 2008 Pray without ceasing (1 Thessalonians 5:(12a) 13b-18)
(Material from USA – Preparatory meeting held in Graymoor, Garrison, USA)
- 2009 That they may become one in your hand (Ezekiel 37:15-28)
(Material from Korea – Preparatory meeting held in Marseilles, France)
- 2010 You are witnesses of these things (Luke 24:48)
(Material from Scotland – Preparatory meeting held in Glasgow, Scotland)
- 2011 One in the apostles' teaching, fellowship, breaking of bread and prayer
(cf. Acts 2:42)
(Material from Jerusalem – Preparatory meeting held in Saydnaya, Syria)

- 2012 We will all be changed by the victory of our Lord Jesus Christ (cf. 1 Corinthians 15:51-58)
(Material from Poland – Preparatory meeting held in Warsaw, Poland)
- 2013 What does God require of us? (cf. Micah 6:6-8)
(Material from India – Preparatory meeting held in Bangalore, India)
- 2014 Has Christ been divided? (1 Corinthians 1:1-17)
(Material from Canada – Preparatory meeting held in Montréal, Canada)
- 2015 Jesus said to her: Give me to drink (John 4: 7)
(Material from Brazil – Preparatory meeting held in São Paulo, Brazil)
- 2016 Called to proclaim the mighty acts of the Lord (cf. 1 Peter 2:9)
(Material from Latvia – Preparatory meeting held in Riga, Latvia)
- 2017 Reconciliation - The love of Christ compels us (2 Cor 5:14-20)
(Material from Germany – Preparatory meeting held in Wittenberg, Germany)
- 2018 Your right hand, O Lord, glorious in power (Ex 15:6)
(Material from the Caribbean – Preparatory meeting held in Nassau, Bahamas)
- 2019 Justice and only justice you shall pursue (Deut 16:18-20)
(Material from the Caribbean – Preparatory meeting held in Jakarta, Indonesia)

KEY DATES IN THE HISTORY OF THE WEEK OF PRAYER FOR CHRISTIAN UNITY

- c. 1740 In Scotland a Pentecostal movement arose, with North American links, whose revivalist message included prayers for and with all churches.
- 1820 The Rev. James Haldane Stewart publishes “Hints for the General Union of Christians for the Outpouring of the Spirit”.
- 1840 The Rev. Ignatius Spencer, a convert to Roman Catholicism, suggests a “Union of Prayer for Unity”.
- 1867 The First Lambeth Conference of Anglican Bishops emphasizes prayer for unity in the Preamble to its Resolutions.
- 1894 Pope Leo XIII encourages the practice of a Prayer Octave for Unity in the context of Pentecost.
- 1908 First observance of the “Church Unity Octave” initiated by the Rev. Paul Wattson.
- 1926 The Faith and Order movement begins publishing “Suggestions for an Octave of Prayer for Christian Unity”.
- 1935 Abbé Paul Couturier of France advocates the “Universal Week of Prayer for Christian Unity” on the inclusive basis of prayer for “the unity Christ wills by the means he wills”.
- 1958 Unité Chrétienne (Lyons, France) and the Faith and Order Commission of the World Council of Churches begin co-operative preparation of materials for the Week of Prayer.
- 1964 In Jerusalem, Pope Paul VI and Patriarch Athenagoras I prayed together Jesus’ prayer “that they all may be one” (John 17).
- 1964 The Decree on Ecumenism of Vatican II emphasizes that prayer is the soul of the ecumenical movement and encourages observance of the Week of Prayer.
- 1966 The Faith and Order Commission of the World Council of Churches and the Secretariat for Promoting Christian Unity [now known as the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity] begin official joint preparation of the Week of Prayer material.
- 1968 First official use of Week of Prayer material prepared jointly by Faith and Order and the Secretariat for Promoting Christian Unity.

- 1975 First use of Week of Prayer material based on a draft text prepared by a local ecumenical group. An Australian group was the first to take up this plan in preparing the 1975 initial draft.
- 1988 Week of Prayer materials were used in the inaugural worship for The Christian Federation of Malaysia, which links the major Christian groupings in that country.
- 1994 International group preparing text for 1996 included representatives from YMCA and YWCA.
- 2004 Agreement reached that resources for the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity be jointly published and produced in the same format by Faith and Order (WCC) and the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity (Catholic Church).
- 2008 Commemoration of the 100th anniversary of the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity. (Its predecessor, the Church Unity Octave, was first observed in 1908).