

CONTENDING FOR THE GOSPEL THROUGH PRAYER

Dear Conference Registrant;

Thank you so much for your decision to attend the “Building on the Solid Rock” conference.

These are days of great importance and many choices made at this juncture will have a momentous impact on the future face of Anglicanism in Canada. As the moderator of the Anglican Network in Canada, Bishop Don Harvey, put it in his letter of invitation: -

“After much consultation and collaboration with the global south Primates and other orthodox Anglicans in North America, and in response to the desperate needs of some Canadian Anglicans, the Anglican Network in Canada will present a substantive option for biblically faithful Canadian Anglicans who are in ‘serious theological dispute’ with their bishop, diocese or the Anglican Church of Canada.”

If this conference is to reveal the Love, Power and, indeed, the full Purposes of God for us, then it must be saturated with a massive wave of prayer. The stakes are too high, and the task too daunting to be accomplished in human strength. The true nature of the battle in which we have all been engaged over recent years has been about which gospel we are going to follow, and the outcome of this conflict will be decided by many faithful Anglicans from coast to coast, crying out to the Lord in prayer.

Listen to the words of the apostle Jude:

*“Dear friends, although I was very eager to write to you about the salvation we share, I felt I had to write and urge you **to contend for the faith that was once for all entrusted to the saints**. For certain men whose condemnation was written about long ago have secretly slipped in among you. They are godless men, who change the grace of our God into a license for immorality and deny Jesus Christ our only Sovereign and Lord.”*
Jude 3-4 NIV

In anticipation of your attendance at the conference, please commit yourself to be a part of that “massive wave of prayer”, contending for the Faith. The Network leadership has called for a special **day of Prayer and Fasting on November 1st, All Saints Day**. Each of the twenty-one days that lead up to the conference from there should be filled by our prayers as well. Suggested formats for both All Saints Day and the days that follow are included with this letter.

Personal Preparation

Before we undertake the task of intercession for this conference, may we recommend that some personal spiritual preparation would be desirable. Here are a few suggestions that we might all follow to help us be as attuned to the Spirit as possible.

1. **Read through slowly and meditatively the entirety of Psalm 139, giving special attention to the last two verses:**

*Search me, O God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts.
See if there is any offensive way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.* NIV

Note the tender intimacy that is the hallmark of the psalmist David’s relationship with the Lord. Just as David did, let us ask the Holy Spirit to shine on anything in our hearts that displeases our Saviour. Let’s not be in a hurry here. Listen for the voice of the Spirit.

2. **Surrender to the Lord any personal agendas or preconceptions.**

After all that has transpired over the past few years, we may feel like we know what the next step is and how God should bring it about. Perhaps we've even been telling Him how He should do it. But listen to the words of the Lord recorded in Isaiah: -

"For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways", declares the Lord. "As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts."
Isaiah 55: 9-9 NIV

Let's come with hands that are empty of expectations but are raised in worship and faith.

3. **Refresh and nourish your soul through praise and worship.**

Whether it is by using the daily offices in the Book of Common Prayer, reading out loud the Te Deum or Psalms 146 through 150, or playing some worship CD in the car, let's spend lots of time before the conference in adoration of our glorious Saviour. Nothing restores our joy, our focus and our perspective like worship, the one eternal activity in which we can participate now!

"Praise the Lord, O my soul. I will praise the Lord all my life; I will sing praise to My God as long as I live. . . . The Lord reigns forever, your God, O Zion, for all generations. Praise the Lord!"
Psalm 146: 1,2, 10 NIV

Daily Meditation and Prayer

Beginning with All Saints Day, November 1st, you will find below a brief meditation for each day until November 20th. The Rev Canon Charlie Masters, Network's National Director, has suggested that we use Jesus' high and priestly prayer for the Church as recorded in the Gospel of John, chapter 17 (NIV). Let this prayer of our Lord's provide both encouragement to us, and serve as a clear vision for the Church.

We also commend to you for daily use the prayer items listed in the All Saints Day Prayer Service included with this document.

November 1- All Saints' Day - Network National Day of Prayer and Fasting-

After Jesus said this, he looked toward heaven and prayed: "Father, the time has come. Glorify your Son, that your Son may glorify you. For you granted him authority over all people that he might give eternal life to all those you have given him."
John 17: 1-2

Surely our deepest heart's desire for both the conference and the expression of Anglicanism in Canada that flows out from it is that Jesus will be glorified. Let us pray that all decisions made before, during, and after the conference will bring glory to our Lord.

November 2 – *"Now this is eternal life: that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent."*
John 17: 3

What an amazing statement! Eternal life is defined as the opportunity to actually **know** the Father, and the Son whom He sent, in a vibrant, intimate way. Spend some time today just telling Him that you want to know Him better, and thanking Him for the privilege.

November 3 – *"I have brought you glory on earth by completing the work you gave me to do. And now, Father, glorify me in your presence with the glory I had with you before the world began."* John 17: 4-5
As someone has said about the Lord Jesus, "We have no 'mean' monarch!" No longer a simple carpenter in the dusty city of Nazareth, nor a crucified victim of the Roman justice system. No, He is our majestic, glorified King who has had restored to Him the glory that He had even before the world began. And when He returns, and we see Him as he is . . . joy unspeakable!

November 4 - *"I have revealed you to those whom you gave me out of the world. They were yours; you gave them to me and they have obeyed your word."*
John 17: 6

Jesus came to show a fallen and confused humanity what God is like. He told the disciples, "If you have seen Me, you have seen the Father". In the power of the Holy Spirit, we too can reveal to all we meet what the Father is like. Let's pray that everyone we encounter, from conference attendees to hotel clerks, restaurant servers or billet hosts, will see a measure of the Father's character expressed through us.

November 5 – *"Now they know that everything you have given me comes from you. For I gave them the words you gave me and they accepted them. They knew with certainty that I came from you, and they believed that you sent me."*
John 17: 7-8

A church that is called to minister the life-transforming Gospel of Christ to a hurting and lost world must accept His words and believe that He was who He said He was – the only begotten Son of God, sent by the Father. Let us pray for the Anglican Communion world-wide that any intellectual pride or evil deception that would dilute the reality of who Jesus is would be exposed and eradicated, and that a fresh, inspired revelation of the biblical Jesus would be birthed.

November 6 – *"I pray for them. I am not praying for the world, but for those you have given me, for they are yours."*
John 17: 9

Have you ever considered the fact that God the Father gave you as a gift to His Son? Amazing thought, isn't it. Jesus' prayer for His followers was not just on this one occasion, but Hebrews 7 tells us that He also continues to this day to intercede for us, and for the whole Church.

November 7 - *All I have is yours, and all you have is mine. And glory has come to me through them.*
John 17: 10

The expression of ultimate unity among the members of the Trinity is frequently documented in John's Gospel, including this passage. That we are invited to have intimate fellowship with the Divine Community through the blood of Christ is a mystery beyond our comprehension, but, sad to say, we in the Church frequently settle for far less. Pray that the Body of Christ will embrace all that God has provided for us in Christ.

November 8 – *"I will remain in the world no longer, but they are still in the world, and I am coming to you. Holy Father, protect them by the power of your name—the name you gave me—so that they may be one as we are one."*
John 17:11

Jesus prays to the Father, asking Him to protect us while we are still in the world, concluding with this incredible petition – that we might be one as the Father and Son are One. Think about the ramifications of this request. What is the context for our unity? Is it not unity based in truth. As we pray for true unity in the Church, ought we to ask for anything less?

November 9 – *"While I was with them, I protected them and kept them safe by that name you gave me. None has been lost except the one doomed to destruction so that Scripture would be fulfilled."*
John 17: 12

Jesus was so faithful with everyone the Father gave to Him – only Judas was lost. We know now that having Him with them, albeit a great comfort to the disciples, was constraining. Jesus returned to the Father so that the Comforter could come, empowering and equipping each believer for service.

November 10 - *"I am coming to you now, but I say these things while I am still in the world, so that they may have the full measure of my joy within them."*
John 17: 13

Jesus wants "the full measure" of His joy to be within those who follow Him. What would that look like? As individuals? As the Church? Could it be that there is a wellspring of joy that the Church has rarely tapped into? A joy that is not dependent on pleasant surroundings, rosy circumstances and an absence of difficulty? Let's pray for the manifestation of such joy at the conference and in our Church!

November 11 – *“I have given them your word and the world has hated them, for they are not of the world any more than I am of the world.”*

John 17:14

Scripture says that *“The word of God is living and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart”*. No one can ignore the Word of God. As someone has said, it makes people either glad, sad or mad! The world hates the Word, just as it hates any who follow the Word. Let us pray that, at least within the Church, the authority and truth of the Word of God is embraced with gladness.

November 12 – *“My prayer is not that you take them out of the world but that you protect them from the evil one.”*

John 17: 15

Jesus prays that the Father will protect His followers from “the evil one”. Despite the fact that many in the Anglican Church consider believing in such an entity as medieval superstition, Jesus knew the reality of His adversary. Just as He asked the Father to protect us, so should we pray for such protection for our clergy, lay leaders and ourselves, especially in the days leading up to the conference.

November 13 – *“They are not of the world, even as I am not of it. Sanctify them by the truth; your word is truth.”*

John 17: 16-17

Jesus makes it very clear that His followers are no longer “of this world”. To allow today’s hedonistic, pantheistic culture to set the moral and even theological standards for the Church makes a travesty of this statement. Let us pray that the sanctifying Word of Truth would direct our leaders in all decisions to be made

November 14 – *“As you sent me into the world, I have sent them into the world. For them I sanctify myself, that they too may be truly sanctified.”*

John 17: 18-19

Although we are not to be “of the world”, we are very clearly being sent “into the world”, set apart to share the life-transforming message and power of the Gospel. Jesus knows clearly and intimately the pressures and persecutions that we face because He faced them, too. Let us pray that the message proceeding out of this time of reformation will clearly and fearlessly proclaim the Gospel “that was once for all entrusted to the saints” and will carry the power to radically heal broken and hurting lives.

November 15 - *“My prayer is not for them alone. I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message,”*

John 17: 20

If there had ever been any question that Jesus was praying just for the Eleven, that question is settled here. We all fit into the category of those who believe in Christ through the message of the apostles. Once again, however, the question remains: what is the Message? As we did yesterday, let us pray for clarity and power as the true Gospel message of the Crucified and Resurrected Lord Jesus is proclaimed and received.

November 16 – *“... that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you. May they also be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent me.”*

John 17: 21

Jesus prays for a unity for His believers that is akin to the perfect unity that is shared by the Trinity. Incredible! Then He asks the Father that we may be “in” Them, just as He is in the Father and the Father is in the Son. Meditate on this for a moment. What an unbelievable privilege! Again, we must ask in prayer: are we settling for a great deal less than our Saviour is asking for on our behalf?

November 17 – *“I have given them the glory that you gave me, that they may be one as we are one: I in them and you in me. May they be brought to complete unity to let the world know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me.”*
John 17: 22-23

Here Jesus irrevocably links this unity to the unredeemed world believing that the Father sent the Son. Notice too that unity with God is impossible apart from unity with the Son. No wonder the evil one ferociously attacks the unity of the Church and the unique divinity of Jesus Christ and the salvation He offers! Let us pray for the Network leadership, the Common Cause leaders, and the Global South Primates – and bible-believing, God-fearing Anglicans world-wide – that God will grant us true and cherished unity in the Holy Spirit that is impervious to satanic assaults.

November 18 - *“Father, I want those you have given me to be with me where I am, and to see my glory, the glory you have given me because you loved me before the creation of the world.”*

John 17: 24

This chapter just gets better and better! It should thrill us to hear Jesus express His desire for us to be with Him, and to see His glory. Ultimately, we will see His glory, fully expressed in heaven, but let us ask Him to reveal His glory (as much as we can handle!) in our conference, in our Church, and in our lives. People are drawn to the Lord by an experience of His manifest presence in our worship.

November 19 - *“Righteous Father, though the world does not know you, I know you, and they know that you have sent me.”*

John 17: 25

Why does Jesus seemingly belabour the fact that the Father sent Him? Perhaps because He knew that this truth would be assailed by philosophers, sceptics and the “religious” establishment throughout the centuries. As we begin the week leading up to the conference, let us rejoice in the knowledge that our Saviour was indeed sent by our loving Father *“that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life”!*

November 20 – *“I have made you known to them, and will continue to make you known in order that the love you have for me may be in them and that I myself may be in them.”*

John 17: 26

This is not mere theological verbiage but a heartfelt prayer by our Master on the eve of His death. He is making the Father known so that the Love that the Father has for His Son will be in us. We can love our Lord Jesus with the same love that our Father loves Him. Could this be how we are enabled to love God with *“all our heart and soul and mind and strength”?* Pray that we all arrive on Thursday filled to overflowing with the Father’s love for Jesus! Amen!

November 21 – On this, the last day before the conference, let us pray this well-known Prayer for the Church found in the Book of Common Prayer:

Most gracious God, we humbly beseech thee for thy holy Catholic Church. Fill it with all truth; in all truth with all peace. Where it is corrupt, purify it; where it is in error, direct it; where any thing is amiss, reform it; where it is right, strengthen and confirm it; where it is in want, furnish it, where it is divided and rent asunder, make it whole again, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen

Our Father, which art in heaven, hallowed be thy Name, thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive them who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen.

ALL SAINTS DAY PRAYER SERVICE

A suggested format for a group prayer service

Thursday November 1, 2007

Unless the LORD builds a house, the work of the builders is useless. Unless the LORD protects a city, guarding it with sentries will do no good.. Psalm 127: 1 NLT

... on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not overcome it. Matthew 16:18 NIV

There has never been the slightest doubt in my mind that the God who started this great work in you would keep at it and bring it to a flourishing finish on the very day Christ Jesus appears. Philippians 1:6 MSG

Welcome, and Collect for All Saints Day

O ALMIGHTY God, who hast knit together thine elect in one communion and fellowship, in the mystical body of thy Son Christ our Lord: Grant us grace so to follow thy blessed Saints in all virtuous and godly living, that we may come to those unspeakable joys, which thou hast prepared for them that unfeignedly love thee; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Corporate worship

Individual prayer and meditation on **God's intention and commitment to build His Church.** It is so imperative that we remember whose church we are and who is ultimately going to build it.

Read Ephesians 4:1-16 and reflect on the good gifts the Lord has given to His Church. Spend some time in Psalm 105 and notice the relationship between Israel and our covenant-keeping God. Re-read carefully the verses at the top of this page and allow the Holy Spirit to imprint them on your heart. Let's also seek forgiveness where we have doubted God's willingness to build His Church or, indeed, where we have tried to insist that He do it our way.

Corporate prayer:

- For Bishop Don Harvey, Charlie Masters, and the other leaders of Network, particularly those involved in the enormous task of preparing for the critical "Building on the Solid Rock" conference. Pray for wisdom as they consider specific options for the provision of pastoral care.
- For discernment and courage for the global Primates as they respond to the decisions of the North American churches and work together to develop a response.
- For the myriad of logistics and details involved in such a conference; i.e., accommodation, billeting, scheduling, transportation, communications, audio/video equipments, musical instruments, refreshments, etc.
- For the partners in Common Cause – including the Anglican Network in Canada – who are building the foundation of an orthodox, biblically-faithful Anglican province in North America that can remain in full communion with orthodox Anglicans worldwide.
- For biblically faithful clergy who are experiencing intensified pressure from their liberal bishops.
- For those who feel they no longer have a spiritual home in the Anglican Church of Canada. Our deep desire is that they will find fellowship with other biblically-faithful Anglicans and help us build the foundation for authentic, faithful Anglicanism in Canada.
- For the leaders of the Anglican Church of Canada – including the Primate, Archbishop Fred Hiltz, and members of the Council of General Synod – that they would truly seek God and His wisdom.

Holy Communion (optional)

Let us not seek to do the work God must do. Let us simply trust Him to do it. Our duty is to seek a prepared heart in waiting, longing, and praying and in studying, gazing, loving, worshipping, and believing that the wonderful vision of Christ is the promise of what we can be. Then, putting aside all that can distract, in stillness of soul, silent unto God, we allow His Light to do the work. Andrew Murray 1828-1917