

# Universal Day of Prayer for Students 2006

## Empire

### Context and Theme

#### The Gospel and Empire

"[The gospel vision] sustains an alternative community of disciples of Jesus in anticipation of the coming triumph of God's Empire over all things, including the destruction of Rome's empire. That is to say, the Gospel resists Rome with a social challenge in offering a vastly different vision and experience of human community, and with a theological challenge in asserting that the world belongs to God not Rome, and that God's purposes run through Israel and Jesus, not Rome." Warren Carter

"If we knew only that Jesus was crucified by Rome, we would know enough to say that he must have been perceived as a threat to imperial rule given that crucifixion was used mainly for slaves, rebels and seditious individuals. The crucifixion was a form of state terror used by the Romans to remind subjugated peoples of what happens when imperial rule is opposed"

Mario DeGiglio-Bellemare

#### Today's Empire

'We understand Empire to be the coherence of economic, cultural, political and military powers that constitute a global system of domination. This system is directed by powerful nations towards other countries. The instrument of domination, which is the neo-liberal economic model, is promoted by powerful interests as the means, the method and the end of all intelligent and rational human behaviour.'

WSCF

"The passage to Empire emerges from the twilight of modern sovereignty. In contrast to imperialism, Empire establishes no territorial center of power and does not rely on fixed boundaries or barriers. It is a decentered and deterritorialized apparatus of rule that progressively incorporates the entire global realm within its open expanding frontiers."

Michael Hardt & Antonio Negri

## Preparation information

To prepare for this liturgy please:

1. Read the liturgy through and adapt it for use in your situation
2. Organise the venue, preferably in your university or college or in a church supportive of SCM
3. Find someone (student, senior friend or clergy) to prepare a sermon/reflection. It would be appropriate for the sermon/ reflection to be about the scripture readings chosen or generally on Empire, Basileia, Commonwealth, Kingdom, the reign of God in local and global contexts.
4. In consultation with the preacher/speaker choose the scripture readings.

Possible readings from the Hebrew Scriptures are:

Exodus 1:8-20	Midwives act against the Empire
Exodus 5	The Empire oppresses the Israelites
Daniel 1-3	The four young men recruited by the Empire
Daniel 7-11	Visions of Empires

Possible Readings from the New Testament are:

Matthew 4: 8-11	The Temptation of Jesus to imperial power
Matthew 6: 25-34	'Strive first for the kingdom of God'
Matthew 13: 31-35	The Kingdom likened to a mustard seed and yeast
Luke 17: 20	'The Kingdom of God is among you'
Luke 20:20- 26	'Give what is the emperor's to the emperor'
John 18:33-38	'My kingdom is not of this World'

5. Select the songs and music for before and after the liturgy
6. Find someone to lead the music
7. Find someone to lead the liturgy
8. Organise the seven candles.
9. Organise baskets to collect offerings in
10. Invite students and senior friends to share this liturgy

# UDPS 2006 Liturgy

## Welcome and sharing peace

In the name of God. Amen

The peace of Christ be always with you  
And also with you.

(The worship leader may invite participants to greet one another with words/signs of peace)

Christ is our peace.  
Let us live in his love.

## Invocation

Living Love, beginning and end, giver of food and drink, clothing and warmth, love and hope: life in all its goodness-  
We praise and adore you.

Jesus, wisdom and word;  
Lover of outcasts, friend of the poor;  
One of us yet one with God;  
Crucified and risen: life in the midst of death-  
We praise and adore you.

Holy Spirit, storm and breath of love;  
Bridge-builder, eye-opener, waker of the oppressed,  
unseen and unexpected, untameable energy of life-  
We praise and adore you.

Holy Trinity, forever one, whose nature is community; source of all sharing, in whom we love, and meet,  
and know our neighbour: life in all its fullness, making all things new:  
We praise and adore you.

## Hymn

*O God of Vision*

## Confession

God you heap your love upon us like a mother providing for her family's needs, embracing all her children with tenderness.

Kyrie eleison

Forgive us when, like spoilt children, we treat your generosity as our right, or hug it possessively to ourselves.

Kyrie eleison

Forgive us when we are blind to the injustice in our world and community

Kyrie eleison

Forgive us when we see injustice and choose to do nothing

Kyrie eleison

Forgive our complicity with systems that oppress and destroy your people and your Creation  
Kyrie eleison

Forgive our lack of faith in you, in your people, in ourselves and in the possibilities for change  
Kyrie eleison

We turn to you, O God; we renounce evil; we claim your love; we choose to be made whole. We  
look to you for grace to offer forgiveness and to know ourselves forgiven. Amen

## A reading from the Hebrew Scriptures

Hear what the Spirit is saying to the church  
Thanks be to God

### Song

*Halle, Halle, Halleluja*

## A reading from the New Testament

Hear what the Spirit is saying to the church  
Thanks be to God

## Reflection/ Sermon

### Song

*The Kingdom of God is justice and Peace*

## Silence

## Affirmation of Faith

We believe in Jesus Christ, our saviour and liberator;  
The expression of God's redeeming love;  
the mark of humanness, source of courage, power and love;  
God of God, light of light,  
ground of our humanity.

We believe that God resides in slums,  
lives in broken homes and hearts,  
suffers our loneliness and powerlessness.

We believe that through death and resurrection God gives life, pride and dignity;  
provides the context of our struggle, promises liberation to the oppressor and the oppressed,  
hope to those in despair, vision to the blind.

We believe in the activity of the Holy Spirit who revives our decaying soul,  
resurrects our defeated spirits,  
renews our hope of wholeness and  
reminds us of our responsibility in ushering in God's new order here and now.  
Amen.

## Prayers of the People

(candles shall be lit for each part of the federation towards the end of this prayer)

We pray, O God, for a deeper understanding of Christ's union with his church, and his will for it, and for the renewing action of your Holy Spirit so that your church may be one. Uniting Spirit,

Hear our prayer.

We pray for the awakening of a desire of Christians throughout the world to meet together, to work and witness and worship together. Uniting Spirit,

Hear our prayer.

We pray for a better cooperation among all branches of Christ's church, so that in our unity we may work for justice both outside and within the Empire. Uniting Spirit,

Hear our prayer.

We pray for the work done by the World Student Christian Federation, (light candle) that the federation may bring Christian students together in mission, service, study and justice for a fuller expression of what it means to be the church. Uniting Spirit,

Hear our prayer.

We pray for the regional manifestations of the World Student Christian Federation and their national Student Christian Movements:

We pray for Africa. (light candle) May this candle represent the light of God present in the work of the African Region. Bless their work, O God. Uniting Spirit,

Hear our prayer.

We pray for Asia and the Pacific. (light candle) May this candle represent the light of God present in the work of the Asia-Pacific Region. Bless their work, O God. Uniting Spirit,

Hear our prayer.

We pray for Europe. (light candle) May this candle represent the light of God present in the work of the European Region. Bless their work, O God. Uniting Spirit,

Hear our prayer.

We pray for Latin America and the Caribbean. (light candle) May this candle represent the light of God present in the work of the Latin America-Caribbean Region. Bless their work, O God. Uniting Spirit,

Hear our prayer.

We pray for the Middle East. (light candle) May this candle represent the light of God present in the work of the Middle East Region. Bless their work, O God. Uniting Spirit,

Hear our prayer.

We pray for North America. (light candle) May this candle represent the light of God present in the work of the North American Region. Bless their work, O God. Uniting Spirit,

Hear our prayer.

We pray for the ecumenical movement and for all who suffer, pray and toil in the cause of unity and justice: that all these efforts may bear good fruits to the honor and glory of your most holy name. Uniting Spirit,

Hear our prayer.

We pray for fresh insight that we might find alternatives to Empire and injustice. Renew our commitment and challenge our assumptions as we pray the prayer Jesus taught us, in a new way:

Eternal Spirit,  
Earth-maker, Pain-bearer, Life-giver,  
Source of all that is and that shall be,  
Father and Mother of us all,  
Loving God in whom is heaven:

The hallowing of your name echo through the universe!  
The way of your justice be followed by the peoples of the world!  
Your heavenly will be done by all created beings!  
Your commonwealth of peace and freedom sustain our hope and come on earth.

With the bread we need for today, feed us.  
In the hurts we absorb from one another, forgive us.  
In times of temptation and test, strengthen us.  
From trials too great to endure, spare us.  
From the grip of all that is evil, free us.

For you reign in the glory of the power that is love,  
now and for ever.  
Amen.

Hymn (During which offerings for WSCF may be collected)  
*Cuando el Pobre*

## Sending out

Go forth into the world in peace, be of good courage, hold fast to that which is good, render to no one evil for evil, strengthen the fainthearted, support the weak, help the afflicted, honour all people, and may the blessing of God our Creator, Liberator and Sustainer be with us now and always. Amen

### Sources:

Invocation by Brian Wren, Assurance of forgiveness by Janet Morley (adapted), 'O God of Vision' by Jane Parker Huber, Confession by Jan Berry (adapted), Halleluja from Caribbean arranged by Terry MacArthur, 'The Kingdom of God' from the Taizé community, Affirmation of faith by Yong Ting Jin, Prayers of the People by Lara Blackwood, 'Cuando el Pobre' by J.A. Olivar and M. Manzano, Rephrasing of the Lord's Prayer by Jim Cotter, Blessing from the Book of Common Prayer (adapted)