Racial Justice

***A Selection of Prayers and Collects***

*Oceans of Prayer*[[1]](#footnote-1)

Rescue us, O Lord.

We are sinking in deep marsh,

 we have no place to stand any more.

We find ourselves in deep water,

 the waves devour us.

We have cried till we are exhausted,

 our throats are gaping wounds.

Our eyes are inflamed,

 because we have looked for help for so long.

The insults hurled against us

 and hurled against you also,

because you created everyone in your own image…

Praise the Lord you who are suffering,

 for he will give back what belongs to you,

to your children and to your children’s children.

*Centlivres Karuaera, Namibia*

O’ God, who has given us the grace

to carry the sword of your Kingdom of Peace,

who has made us messengers of peace in a world of strife,

and messengers of strife in a world of false peace:

make strong our hand, make clear our voice,

give us humility with firmness and insight with passion,

that we may fight not conquer, but to redeem.

*Tonga*

Our loving Father, and Father of ALL

we thank you for having brought us together

in this land to learn to love you and one another.

We thank you for our Church

with its diverse membership.

We know, gracious Father,

that we have not always been obedient to you.

Give us courage, we pray, to stand up for your truth.

Make us apostles of your love, justice, hope,

reconciliation, and peace.

We ask all these in his name, the Prince of Peace,

our Lord and Master, Jesus Christ.

*Stanley Mogoba, Southern Africa*

Show forth your power, O’ Lord of the nations,

and do a new thing among your people,

establish justice, peace and true community.

Our hearts are heavy, our wounds are deep;

do not wait O’ Lord, but bring your healing before we can no longer forgive;

before, consumed with hatred, we lose the ability to love.

When death had done its worst,

you brought your Son to new life.

You revealed the power of your love and your victory over evil.

Break our bonds and set us all free

that we may know that you are the Lord.

*Southern Africa*

Our Father,

we ask your guidance and wisdom

 in learning to discern your will.

Help us not to lose hope when overwhelmed by

 the enormity of poverty, hunger and oppression among our people.

And, give us the courage to work towards your justice wherever we live,

 so that your kingdom on earth may become a reality.

*Lesley Anderson, Panama*

O’ God,

our suffering sigh in heaven is heard,

and faith in you will ease all pain. *We shall not give up!*

O’ Christ Jesus,

we know that you are alive in all of us.

You strengthen us by your own journey to Calvary.

*We shall not give up!*

O’ Holy Spirit,

You give us hope and courage. *We shall not give up!*

Help us in our struggles for daily bread;

help us in our struggles for justice and peace.

*Gerson Anderson, Sierra Leone*

God, our guide,

we live in hope for the future:

we are determined to go on,

to venture with the help of our partners

making great efforts,

so that ‘those who were *no* people’

may truly become your people.

Difficult days lie ahead,

but we believe that in the end,

with your help – we shall overcome.

*Alain Rocourt, Haiti*

*Praying with the World Church[[2]](#footnote-2)*

Teach me, O’ God,

not to pass judgement on my neighbour

until I have walked many miles in his sandals.

Instead, make me mindful of the needs of my neighbours.

*From Chile*

God, our Mother and Father,

 be with us as we learn to see one another with new eyes,

hear one another with new hearts,

and treat one another in a new way.

*Corrymeela Community, Ireland*

Lord God,

fill us with your Spirit:

 of challenge to reject silence in prejudice,

 of compassion in suffering, sorrow and pain,

 of togetherness to love one another.

*From India*

Father in heaven,

give our beloved leaders your judgement and your justice.

Teach the leaders of our church and nation

to govern your people rightly,

 and bring justice to the oppressed.

*The Revd Fr Eston Dickson, Pembamoyo, Malawi*

*Book of Common Worship[[3]](#footnote-3)*

Lord Christ,

at times we are like strangers on this earth,

taken aback by all the violence, the harsh oppositions.

Like a gentle breeze, you breathe upon us the Spirit of peace.

Transfigure the deserts of our doubts,

and so, prepare us to be bearers of reconciliation

wherever you place us,

until the day when a hope of peace

dawns in our world. Amen.

*Brother Roger of Taizé*

Great God over us all,

destroy prejudice and racism

that turns us against one another.

Teach us that we are all children of your love,

whether we are black or red or white or yellow.

Encourage us to live together,

loving one another in peace,

so that some day a golden race of people

may lead the world,

giving praise to Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

O’ God,

you created all people in your image.

We thank you for the astonishing variety

 of ethnicities and cultures in this world.

Enrich our lives by ever-widening circles of friendship,

 and show us your presence in those who differ most from us,

until our knowledge of your love is made perfect

in our love for all your children;

through your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Almighty God,

in Jesus Christ you have ordered us

 to live as loving neighbours.

Though we are scattered in different places,

speak different words or languages,

and descend from different ethnicities,

give us common concern,

so that we may be one people,

who share the governing of the world

 under your guiding purpose.

May greed, war, and lust for power be curbed,

and all people enter the community of love

 promised in Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

*PC USA, Theology and Worship Ministry Unit*

We pray that someday arrows will be broken,

not in something or someone,

but by each of humankind,

to indicate peace, not violence.

Someday, oneness with creation,

rather than domination over creation,

 will be the goal to be respected.

Someday fearlessness to love and make a difference

 will be experienced by all people.

Then the eagle will carry our prayer for peace and love,

and the people of the red, white, yellow, brown, and black communities

 can sit in the same circle together to communicate in love,

and experience the presence of the Great Mystery Spirit in their midst.

Someday can be today, for you and me. Amen.

*A prayer of the Chippewa Nation*

O’ God,

you love justice and you establish peace on earth.

We bring before you the disunity of today’s world:

 the absurd violence, *the hate speech*, and the many wars,

which are breaking the courage of the peoples of the world;

human greed and injustice,

which breed hatred and strife.

Send your Spirit and renew the face of the earth,

*and the hearts of your people,*

teach us to be compassionate toward the whole human family;

strengthen the will of all those who fight for racial justice and peace;

lead all nations into the path of peace,

and give us that peace which the world cannot give. Amen.

*A prayer from Zaire*

1. Excerpts from ‘Sharing in Suffering and Struggle’ in *Oceans of Prayer,* compiled by Maureen Edwards and Jan S Pickard (Redhill: National Christian Education Council, 1991). [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Excerpts from ‘Make Me Mindful of My Neighbours’ in *Praying With the World Church*, edited by Mike Brooks and Joyce Yarrow, CSF (London: Harling House, USPG). [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Excerpts from *Book of Common Worship* (Westminster/John Knox Press, Louisville: Presbyterian Church USA, 1993). [↑](#footnote-ref-3)