

Transformation – NOW!
CREATED EQUAL BY GOD

Introduction: Made in God's image

You have given us eyes ...
but we have not always looked at creation's beauty.
You have given us ears ...
but we have not always listened to nature's speaking.
You have given us tongues ...
but we have not always joined earth's song of praise.
You have given us hands ...
but we have not always been makers and menders.
You have given us feet ...
but we have not always shared in the dance of life.
You have given us minds ...
but we have not always thought beyond ourselves.
You have given us wills ...
but we have not always chosen the good.
You have given us hearts ...
but we have not always loved without reserve.
You have made us in your image ...
forgive us that we do not always display your likeness

Pat Bennett

Hymn: There's a wideness in God's mercy
sung by St Martin's Voices

Frederick William Faber (1814-1863)

There's a wideness in God's mercy
like the wideness of the sea;
there's a kindness in his justice
which is more than liberty.
There is no place where earth's sorrows
are more felt than up in heaven;
there is no place where earth's failings
have such kindly judgement given.

For the love of God is broader
than the measure of our mind,
and the heart of the eternal
is most wonderfully kind.
But we make his love too narrow
by false limits of our own;
and we magnify his strictness
with a zeal he would not own.

There is plentiful redemption
through the blood that has been shed;
there is joy for all the members
in the sorrows of the head.
There is grace enough for thousands
of new worlds as great as this;
there is room for fresh creations
in that upper home of bliss.

If our love were but more simple
we should take him at his word;
and our lives would be all gladness
in the joy of Christ our Lord.

Reading: *adapted from the Beatitudes in Matthew 5*

Blessed are you who are the lowly, the grassroots, powerless yet filled with a passion to grow and make good. You understand God's purpose. Blessed are you many, now, who have found such depth of expression in your grief. You shall find comfort in what you have caused to change. Blessed are you who understand that justice must be made present always. You shall see it happen in time.

Blessed are you who show compassion to those who repulse you. You shall experience compassion yourself.

Blessed are you who do not judge but see everyone with clear eyes. You see God in all creation.

Blessed are you who are peacemakers. You are my own.

Blessed are you who are excluded, suffering abuse, ridicule and scorn for what you are doing for me. To you I give my deep unstinting love.

Be happy my prophets, you are not the first, and most likely will not be the last, but I love you for what you are doing.

You are the salt of the earth, bringing integrity to my world.

You shine as a light on the world, O my people, illuminating cities, lands and continents exposing injustice.

Shine your light for all to see and understand who I am and what I ask of you, this day.

Reflection: Those on the margins

Wild Goose Publications

God of Rahab and Joshua,

God of those on the margins,

we pray for our world:

for the people you show goodness to,

for the people you show goodness through —

the unlikely people — the marginal people.

People like Joshua, a tentative leader of a ragged nation chosen to bring God's glory to light in the world;

people like Rahab, a prostitute whose act of self-preservation helped God to restore Israel's fortunes;

people from the margins whom God brought in ...

We pray for the marginal people known to us today:
those worried about their lives,
those concerned about their future,
those who don't feel at home in the place they now live,
those of our community who are hurting today.
From the margins bring them in, O Lord,
and in your mercy hear our prayer

We pray for the marginal people in our land: `
those driven by poverty to sell themselves,
to steal or to deal in deadly drugs,
those struggling to find decent work or any work at all,
those who bring up families alone,
those who live lives that are the object of society's censure.
From the margins bring them in, O Lord,
and in your mercy hear our prayer

We pray for the marginal people of the world:
for those displaced by war,
for those who need land and food,
for those hoping for peace.
From the margins bring them in, O Lord,
and in your mercy hear our prayer

Bring them in, O Lord,
all those outside of power,
all those deprived of peace.
Bring them in, with our help,
for this is the work you have placed into our hands.
And faced with the awesome responsibility of this work,
bring us in too
right in to love and serve you
with joyful obedience in the light of your world.

Hymn: All Are Welcome

with Chet Valley Churches

Marty Haugen

Let us build a house where love can dwell
And all can safely live,
A place where saints and children tell
How hearts learn to forgive.
Built of hopes and dreams and visions,
Rock of faith and vault of grace;
Here the love of Christ shall end divisions;
 All are welcome, all are welcome,
 all are welcome in this place.

Let us build a house where prophets speak,
And words are strong and true,
Where all God's children dare to seek
To dream God's reign anew.
Here the cross shall stand as witness
And a symbol of God's grace;
Here as one we claim the faith of Jesus:

Let us build a house where love is found
In water, wine and wheat:
A banquet hall on holy ground,
Where peace and justice meet.
Here the love of God, through Jesus,
Is revealed in time and space;
As we share in Christ the feast that frees us:

Let us build a house where hands will reach
beyond the wood and stone
to heal and strengthen, serve and teach,
and live the Word they've known.
Here the outcast and the stranger
bear the image of God's face;
let us bring an end to fear and danger.

Let us build a house where all are named,
their songs and visions heard
and loved and treasured, taught and claimed
as words within the Word.

Built of tears and cries and laughter,
prayers of faith and songs of grace,
let this house proclaim from floor to rafter.

All are welcome, all are welcome,
all are welcome in this place.

Prayers: And in your love answer

The United Church of Canada, prepared by Miriam Spies.

Passionate God, we are ever grateful for your love for us,
for your patience and trust.

This day we are thankful for the joys of community.

We see signs of love everywhere—from handshakes and hugs to
conversations and praying for one another.

We pray for our community, that you continue to be with us in our
happiness and weariness, our celebrations and struggles.

O God, hear our prayer, and in your love answer.

Merciful God, we pray for our world that faces so much violence.

We pray especially for the people suffering war conditions and the
threat of war.

May leaders at every level learn to speak in favour of humanity and
justice.

We pray that all people can walk the path of peace, the path of
forgiveness, the path of equality.

O God, hear our prayer, and in your love answer.

Embracing God, we pray for those who suffer in our community and
throughout the world.

We remember all those who face daily persecution and discrimination.

Enfold them in your loving arms. Teach us the power of love and forgiveness, that our words may be ones of healing.
O God, hear our prayer, and in your love answer.

Almighty God, we offer prayers for those voices that have been silenced.

We ask for your spirit of reconciliation to be near.

We pray that there may be an end to bullying in schools, harassment in homes and workplaces, discriminatory laws and practices.

May we learn the call to be bearers of peace and spread this vision through love and solidarity.

O God, hear our prayer, and in your love answer.

Mary Sumner Prayer

All this day, O Lord,
let me touch as many lives as possible for thee;
and every life I touch,
do thou by thy spirit quicken:
whether through the word I speak,
the prayer I breathe,
or the life I live.
Amen.

Mary Sumner's personal prayer ©Mothers' Union

Hymn: Brother, sister, let me serve you

sung by St Martin's Voices

Brother, sister, let me serve you,
let me be as Christ to you;
pray that I may have the grace
to let you be my servant, too.

We are pilgrims on a journey,
and companions on the road;
we are here to help each other
walk the mile and bear the load.

I will hold the Christlight for you
in the night-time of your fear;
I will hold my hand out to you,
speak the peace you long to hear.

I will weep when you are weeping;
when you laugh, I'll laugh with you;
I will share your joy and sorrow
till we've seen this journey through.

When we sing to God in heaven,
we shall find such harmony,
born of all we've known together
of Christ's love and agony.

Brother, sister, let me serve you,
let me be as Christ to you;
pray that I may have the grace
to let you be my servant, too.

Richard Gillard (born 1953)

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Sending out

Rev Gord

Gift-giver, you call us together,
with our different gifts,
our different ideas,
our different tastes.

You call us together,
to share what makes us special,

**to build each other up,
to serve each other in love.**

You call us together,
**knowing that we need all parts of the body
if we are to be whole.**

You call us together,
**to sing, to pray, to listen, to speak.
To be refreshed
so that we can go out and serve.
Amen.**

Material: as stated

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