

praying for world mission

St Andrew's Tide

MESSAGE FROM THE ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY

It is difficult not to feel that this year has been overshadowed by atrocities. The echoes of the terrible events in Beslan are still with us, and there have been so many other instances of utterly heartless slaughter all over the world. While many labour at great risk for healing and rebuilding – in Iraq, in Melanesia, which I visited with great gratitude this summer, in West Africa – the destructive spiral continues.

I wrote of 'heartless' slaughter. Mission is always about the heart. It is connecting the heart of God – loving, endlessly giving, broken by sin on the cross of Christ – with the heart of human beings – self-obsessed, self-deceived, a heart of stone. When the Word of God touches the human heart, it becomes a heart of flesh. And the first commitment of all our mission endeavour must be to do what we can to make that encounter possible, the encounter in which the human heart is broken and restored by Jesus Christ.

Shakespeare makes one of his characters say, 'Is there any cause in nature that makes these hard hearts?' We don't know and can't easily judge what hardens this or that heart; but we know what God wants to do with it. And as we pray for all our mission agencies and partnerships, we can pray too that our own hearts will be opened more fully to God's as we contemplate a world desperate for healing and cry out in this coming Advent season, 'Come, Lord Jesus'.

+ Rowan Williams



partnership for world mission

THOUGHTS ON ST ANDREW

Andrew was something of a natural missionary. He had no manual on 'personal evangelism', but he led his brother to Jesus. He had not studied a primer on 'intercultural dialogue' yet he introduced some inquisitive Greeks to Jesus. There was no social responsibility board to raise concerns about five thousand hungry men (sic!), but he broke the stalemate that enabled the crowd to be fed by Jesus. The picture we get is impressively holistic; mission as care for spirit, mind and body.

It is no surprise, then, that we take inspiration from Andrew when praying about world mission. The mistake we sometimes make is to formulate rigid principles from his flexible practice. That is the root of much sectarian dogmatism which is so inimical to the Gospel. There is nothing contrived or artificial about the Andrew we meet in the gospels. On the contrary, it is his unselfconscious response to situations that is so endearing. There are no sophisticated techniques, rather a spontaneous openness to each situation as it develops.

By definition, such naturalness cannot be taught or learned. There is, however, one common factor in all effective mission: an awareness of the presence and the person of Jesus. An unashamedly Christocentric worldview is no optional extra.

Being with Jesus and telling the story of Jesus is the simple, yet hugely demanding core of all Christian mission activity. And the Christian will tell that story 'simply as one who has been chosen and called by God to be a part of that company which is entrusted with the story' (Lesslie Newbiggin). That is why prayer for world mission must begin with Jesus, for prayer involves being with Jesus, interceding for his Church and pleading for God's world, the world for which Christ died. It is that kind of praying that refreshes our vision and makes credible our storytelling.

Colin Bennetts, Bishop of Coventry

OPENING SENTENCES

The God of heaven is present on earth
Christ dwells among us and is one with us

Highest in all creation, living among the least
Christ journeys with the rejected and welcomes the weary

Come now all who thirst
And drink the water of life

Come now all who hunger
And be filled with good things

Come now all who seek
And be warmed by the fire of love

From north and south, east and west, we meet in the presence of God
And we do not meet alone

With the angels of heaven
We gather to worship the Lord

With the saints of every age
We gather to worship the Lord

With the church throughout the world
We gather to worship the Lord

COLLECT FOR ST ANDREW'S TIDE

Almighty God
who gave your apostle Andrew
grace to believe in his heart
and to confess with his lips that Jesus is Lord;
touch our lips and our hearts that faith may burn within us,
and we may share in the witness of your Church
to the whole human family;
through Jesus Christ our Lord who lives and reigns with you
and the Holy Spirit, one God,
now and forever. Amen.

Church of Melanesia Alternative Services 1997

Almighty God
you gave grace to your holy Apostle St. Andrew
to be quick to obey the call of your Son Jesus Christ,
and to follow him without delay.
Grant us all, who are called by your holy word,
to obey and give ourselves at once to do what you command,
through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

Melanesian Prayer Book 1965

MEDITATION ON THE THEME OF WORLD MISSION

'Mission is the creating, reconciling and transforming action of God, flowing from the community of love in the Trinity, made known to all humankind in the person of Jesus, and entrusted to the faithful action and witness of the people of God, who, in the power of the Spirit, are a sign, foretaste and instrument of the reign of God.'

[Silence]

As **individuals** we can experience that 'creating, reconciling and transforming action' as we seek to live our lives in the power of the Spirit working through us, shaping us into the likeness of Christ. This challenges us to treat the people in our lives in the way that Christ would.

'But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control.'

[Galatians 5:22]

Is there someone you struggle with who you need to learn to love as Jesus does?

[Silence]

Within our **communities**, we are called to serve, often sacrificially, in order to share God's love amongst those in need: working for peace, justice and reconciliation. We are each called to share in God's mission in the myriad situations we each find ourselves: at work, within our families and friendship groups, in our neighbourhoods.

'And what does the Lord require of you? To act justly, and love mercy and to walk humbly with your God.'

[Micah 6:8]

Is there an issue at work, in the family or local community that you are being called to be involved in, to bring about new life, reconciliation and transformation?

[Silence]

When Jesus was asked 'Who is my neighbour?' he encouraged the questioner to look beyond the local and obvious. Due to technology, our **world** is ever-shrinking, and we are closer than ever to those across the other side of the world. But what about those in our communities who have recently travelled to Britain: overseas students, asylum seekers? How can we share in God's mission amongst those who are perhaps experiencing loneliness or victimisation because of their circumstance?

'For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me.'

[Matthew 25:35]

Are you being challenged to do something practical to share God's love amongst those who have recently travelled to Britain?

[Silence]

Debbie Orriss, Church Army

May God who created each one of us with infinite variety
Who made us together as beautiful as the rainbow

Teach us to cherish the beauty within, to appreciate the gift of others
To be grateful for the enrichment so much difference brings

FURTHER PRAYERS

From the Melanesian Church

God of all the people of the world,
remember the great number of those who were made
in your likeness but do not know your love,
and because of forgiveness of sins through your Son Jesus Christ,
grant that the prayers and work of your holy Church
may set them free to trust in you and bring them to worship you,
through him whom you sent to save us,
who is the rising again from death, and the life of all who trust you,
the same your Son Jesus Christ, our Lord.

God, our heavenly Father, you showed your love
by sending your only Son into the world that all might live through him;
pour your Spirit upon your Church that it may obey his command
to preach the good news to every man; send out, we pray you,
labourers into your harvest; keep them in all dangers and temptations;
and quickly bring the time when all shall be brought in;
through the same your Son Jesus Christ our Lord.

Heavenly Father, grant that the Brothers may know
you to be present with them at all times, wherever they are.
Keep them strong in faith, especially when the powers of evil
are working against them. Show them how to do your will
in the places where they serve, and give them power to do it.
May your Holy Spirit so work through them and in the hearts
and minds of those to whom they go, that those who do not
know you may be led out of darkness into light, and Christians
who have fallen away may be brought back to you,
through our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ.

*'Litany for the Brotherhood'
Melanesian Brothers' Office Booklet
(adapted)*



A CD-ROM containing the illustrated presentation given to the General Synod of how the story of the mission agencies can encourage us in our mission in Britain.

Also, it contains information about the Mission Agencies and material to help parishes review their involvement in world mission.

Available from the PWM office at a cost of £2.00
Please make cheques payable to
"The Archbishops' Council"

For further background resources, including pictures and reports of the Archbishop of Canterbury's recent visit to Melanesia, go to:

www.pwm-web.org.uk

This leaflet can also be downloaded, as a PDF or *text only* document from our website or requested as an attachment from
pwm@c-of-e.org.uk

Produced with the help of the World Mission Agencies of the Church of England which come together with the Archbishops' Council in



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