

Jesus said: 'I have said these things to you, that in me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation. But take heart; I have overcome the world.'

John 16:33 (ESV)

Bishop Ben Kwashi
is Bishop of the Anglican Diocese of Jos in Northern Nigeria.

PEACE AMIDST TURMOIL

Jos was known as a peaceful, welcoming city, but it all changed in September 2001 when fighting, killing and destruction began. Since then hundreds have been killed, homes destroyed and livelihoods lost. Outwardly there is relative peace in the city now, but recently more than 40 surrounding villages have been totally destroyed.

It is not spectacular programmes which bring peace; moves for peace do not make media headlines. Important factors are:

- **Prayer – by thousands of people all over the world;** this is what has held the church.
- **The building of relationships, on a personal basis as well as on a community level.** For example the members of a church and of a mosque acknowledged each other's festivals; Christians reached out to non-Christians with programmes teaching handicraft skills, or offering free education to Muslim as well as to Christian children.
- **A determination that life must continue in as 'normal' a way as possible.** Families must be built; patterns of work must be maintained; sports must continue. Christians gather for worship, even when the church is a high risk target, and to get there may mean walking for several kilometres.

Through crises, faith can be built as the power and the presence of God is seen. Jesus did not promise to save us from trouble but he did promise to be with us in the trouble.



PRAYER
Almighty God, you sent into the world your Son, the Prince of Peace, to save us from the power of sin and evil. May we know his presence even in the midst of suffering; may violence cease, and may his justice and peace prevail. We pray in Jesus' name. Amen

ACTION
Pray for those who have lost families, homes, possessions and whose lives have been shattered. Go and talk to five church members and five non-church goers whom you do not know.

But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far away have been brought near by the blood of Christ. For he himself is our peace, who has made the two groups one and has destroyed the barrier, the dividing wall of hostility.

Ephesians 2:13-14 (NIV)

Rev Richard Church
serves as Deputy General Secretary (Discipleship) within the United Reformed Church.

BUILDING BRIDGES

In the social and civil context as well, I appeal not to create walls but to build bridges. To not respond to evil with evil. To defeat evil with good, the offence with forgiveness. A Christian would never say "You will pay for that." Never. That is not a Christian gesture. An offence you overcome with forgiveness. To live in peace with everyone.' Pope Francis speaking about attitudes to migrants in February 2017.

PRAYER
Lord Jesus, When we find it so easy to remember the faults of others and so difficult to understand our own, give us the will to build understanding between people and so dismantle the walls of hostility, in pursuit of your gift to the world of peace.

'The Lord said, 'I will go with you and give you peace'.
Exodus 33:14 (CEV)

Matt Summerfield
served as Chief Executive and President of Urban Saints for 18 years and is now Senior Pastor of Zeo Church, Hitchin.

REST IN PEACE

'Rest in peace.' It's a phrase commonly spoken over a loved one who has passed away. Often we say it because the person may have experienced many battles during their earthly life. A huge part of our Christian hope is that when we step into eternity with Jesus, all suffering will end. But we don't have to wait until eternity to experience something of God's precious peace. In Exodus 33, Moses is looking for some assurance from God as he leads the Israelites

from slavery to freedom. In this moment God makes a beautiful promise – I will go with you, giving you peace and rest. It's the amazing promise he makes to all of us.

PRAYER
Jesus you are the Prince of Peace who has promised to be with us always. Help us every day to be more tuned in to the reality of your presence and, as we do, may we experience your peace and rest, here and now – even on this side of heaven.

8

AUGUST

96 DAYS

Snub evil and cultivate good; run after peace for all you're worth.
1 Peter 3:11 (MSG)

Warren Evans
is Chief Executive for Sports Chaplaincy UK.

RUNNING AFTER PEACE

lessed are the peacemakers, and one sure way of peace-making is to let the fire of contention alone. Neither fan it, nor stir it, nor add fuel to it, but let it go out by itself. Begin your ministry with one blind eye and one deaf ear.
Charles Spurgeon, 1834-1892.

PRAYER
God of Peace, in calling us to be people of peace, your Word reminds us of the need to reject evil and run after good. We pray that you would give us strength when we are feeling unable to run. Amen

9

AUGUST

95 DAYS

What does the Lord require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God.
Micah 6:8 (NIV)

Rev Mike Long
is minister at Notting Hill Methodist Church, close to Grenfell Tower in West London.

FROM TRAGEDY TO HOPE

n the face of tragedy, neglect and disaster - whether through war, terror or events such as the Grenfell Tower fire - it is right to lament the destruction of lives and communities. In doing so we can be brought from a realm dominated by individual pain to a shared resolve for a better world. In reading the scriptures (especially psalms of lament) we can become more sensitive to the sufferings of others whose experiences may be very different, and begin to hope. Our increased understanding helps us to see what justice, peace and reconciliation might look like, and how they might be accomplished. This will take not only

PRAYER
God of infinite compassion, give us the strength to seek healing, justice and peace for all; the humility to listen to the voices of the marginalised and those who feel excluded; the ability to pursue tolerance amid difference, yet be intolerant towards evil and injustice, for the sake of your kingdom, demonstrated in Christ. Amen

10

AUGUST

94 DAYS

I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world.
John 16:33 (NIV)

Jon Stockley
is Christian Vision for Men's National Director for Wales.

BLESSED PEACEMAKERS

hen Jesus preached the Sermon on the Mount, he declared: 'Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God!' I love that God is so committed to bringing peace into our world, communities, families and lives. Yet, we see from the life of Christ that peace always comes at great, personal cost. The purpose of Christ's life was to bring peace and reconciliation between God and humanity, yet his life here on earth culminated in the most brutal death. For this everlasting peace to be won, Christ had to

go to war with the enemy of our souls. He did that, then he came back from the dead and now we can all have peace with God. Father God, we thank you that when your Kingdom comes, it always brings peace and reconciliation. We ask you to use your people to be true peacemakers, by bearing witness to your love and sharing the great news of Jesus Christ with everyone we meet. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen

PRAYER

My command is this: love each other as I have loved you. Greater love has no one than this: to lay down one's life for one's friends.
John 15:12-13 (NIV)

11

AUGUST

93 DAYS

LIVING FOR OTHERS

loving one another as Jesus first loved us and walking in the way of justice and of peace.

PRAYER

Lord Jesus Christ, you have commanded us to love one another as you first loved us. Fill us today with your Father's love, so that our lives might be lived serving others. We pray this too for those who lead our nations, that peace and love might prevail over conflict and military action. Amen

n 1918, this quote from John's Gospel began appearing upon war memorials across Europe, commemorating those who had died. Many had indeed given their lives in battle in the hope that others might be saved. A century on, these are verses to be reclaimed in the hope that we might be able to live out Jesus' words in peace, rather than war. That instead of dying in battle for others, we might live our lives in service that emulates Christ's life. Our call is to live a life of love,