

Truth Justice Peace – Prayer update – September 2014

Party conference season is once again upon us, and no doubt the airwaves will be filled with claims. Promises, counter-claims and better promises as each party competes for our allegiance at the next general election. Members of parties will gather at a significant time in the political life of our nation, not least because of the ongoing implications and questions arising out of Scotland's decision to remain in the United Kingdom. But it is also a time of tension and violence in many parts of the world.

For several years, a delegation comprising leaders in the Baptist, Methodist and United Reformed Churches along with representatives of the Salvation Army have attended each of the major conferences. This has provided an opportunity to engage with key leaders and those who advise them, to listen, to share and to engage in issues of mutual concern.

Please pray for those who will be joining these delegations, the people they will meet and those who facilitate this initiative.

Pray for all Christians engaged in politics and public life, that they might have courage and wisdom in applying their faith values.

Pray that those in political leadership in our nation and beyond might truly embrace the virtues and values of God's Kingdom

Within the Christian community there is a fair breadth of political opinion and allegiance. As we listen to and absorb the various messages and concerns, our calling is to consider how these resonate with or contradict our faith values. In so doing, as followers of Jesus, we might uphold and promote three core principles which emerge from his life and teaching.

TRUTH: In 2013, the Joint Public Issues Team published a report "the lies we tell ourselves". It highlighted how often public policy and popular opinion can be shaped and developed by stories and perspectives. In much of the political dialogue around poverty and benefit reform these stories have been at best exaggeration and at worst blatantly untrue. It urged that whatever our political opinion, we ensure that stories and statistics are honest, truthful and properly researched, and reject narratives that are based on anything else. As a Christian people we are called to seek truth, speak truth and stand for truth.

JUSTICE: A number of recent reports have highlighted increasing inequality and unfairness in our nation and world. Whether it is the gap between north and south, rich and poor, young and old, we live in a society that is becoming increasingly divided. Whatever our views about the need for austerity, immigration policy and a raft of other issues – but we can unite around the principle that people and communities should be treated fairly and justly.

PEACE: As we commemorate the 100th Anniversary of the First World War, our world remains torn by strife and conflict. Sadly the "war to end all wars" heralded a further century of conflict, strife and militarism. While many in our world struggle for their basic survival, billions of pounds are spent on weapons, armies and military hardware. Jesus declared his blessing on those who would be peacemakers, and described himself as the Prince of Peace. Peace can never be achieved simply through military intervention; our world needs leaders who will take risks for peace, set an example of peace and not be afraid to tackle the underlying causes of conflict and war.

God of all humanity
Help us to be a people who embrace truth
And challenge those narratives that distort reality
And serve the interests of those who promote them.
Grant us the courage to challenge injustice,
The resolve to work for a fairer world
And the wisdom to recognise where our actions and inactivity
Add to the struggles of others.
As we pray for all people caught up in conflict
We ask that those who wield power and influence on our world
Might find the resolve
To truly commit themselves to bring peace and healing to all nations.
Through Christ our Lord and King
AMEN

The Joint Public Issues Team
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