### Asian Sunday: Make Us Reconcilers, O God!

*These worship materials for Asian Sunday, celebrated on the Sunday before Pentecost, were prepared by Dr. Hope Antone and Mr. Carlos Ocampo from the Christian Conference of Asia, a global partner of The United Church of Canada.*

*Note that the service has been slightly modified with the kind permission of the Christian Conference of Asia. Please credit Dr. Hope Antone, Carlos Ocampo, and the Christian Conference of Asia when using this material.*

#### Preparation

Have some symbols of division, estrangement, alienation, and enmity at the worship centre.

#### Gathering

#### Call to Worship

In Asia, we call ourselves to worship by the ringing of the bell, the gong, or by a call to prayer.

(*Ring the bell, gong, or other instrument.*)

In Asia, we prepare ourselves for worship with the lighting of the candle, the incense,

or the lamp.

(*Light the candle, incense, or lamp.*)

In Asia, we come together to worship God, bringing concerns from our individual lives, communities, the region, and the world.

(*Plan ahead for* *a short dance, mime, or video that treats of urgent issues or concerns in Asia today, e.g., poverty, injustice, hunger, sickness, war, ecological destruction.*)

Together, prepared and gathered. Let us worship.

#### Invocation

**Gracious and loving God,**

**we come to you out of habit and also because of our need.**

**You are the source of our lives,**

**our refuge in times of trouble,**

**our strength in times of difficulties.**

**Be present with us in this time of worship.**

**Surround us with your Holy Spirit—**

**teach us with your truth,**

**enlighten us with your wisdom,**

**and fill us with your strength.**

**Amen.**

#### Possible Opening Hymns and Responses

“Here, O God, Your Servants Gather/Se-ka-i no To-mo to Te o Tsu-na-gi”

(*Voices United* (VU) 362)

“God, Be Praised at Early Morn/Qing-chen zao qi zan-mei Shen” (VU 414)

“Holy Spirit, You’re Like the Wind/Sheng ling ru feng” (*More Voices* (MV) 5)

“God of All the World/Mi pela i bung” (MV 22)

“Come, O Come, Let Us Praise/Lajahle, htaora Hp’ya” (MV 56)

“Lord, Your Hands Have Formed/Imegmoy pitak ay yay” (MV 181)

“Ay, Ay Salidummay” (MV 184)

#### Time with Children

* Use the story “The Story of Moon IkHwan – The Man who Crossed the Line” at [www.united-church.ca/planning/seasons/asian](http://www.united-church.ca/planning/seasons/asian); and <http://youtu.be/GHWM5dFx3Ek>.
* Discuss the meaning of reconciliation and how it is understood/ taught in different Asian traditions.

#### Listening

#### Scripture

2 Corinthians 5:17–20

Ephesians 2:14–16, 19

Luke 19:1–10

#### Reflection: The Gift of Reconciliation

* **Reconciliation is a gift**: Jesus invited himself into Zacchaeus’s home as a reconciling act, a gift.
* **Reconciliation is a task**: admission of wrong (which can cause alienation, estrangement, separation, brokenness, enmity), asking forgiveness, reparation
* **Reconciliation is multifaceted**: to oneself, to God, to one’s neighbour/community, to the world

Encourage reflection on similar stories of reconciliation in your current cultures.

Challenge the congregation to become agents of reconciliation—at home, in the workplace, in church, in the wider community, with God’s creation.

#### Possible Hymns

“Jaya Ho” (VU 252)

“With the Wings of Our Mind/Ttugoun Maum” (VU 698)

“You Are My Father/Too’n mera pita” (MV 105)

#### Responding

#### Pastoral Prayers

(*Use some or all of the following intercessions and add more depending on your context and the needs in your community*.)

Dear God,

We come to you from our fragmented lives and divided communities,

for you are the source of our reconciliation and wholeness.

Help us to be at peace with ourselves by remembering your gift of reconciliation through Christ Jesus.

**Make us reconcilers, O God, as you have reconciled us to you.**

Dear God,

We pray for communities caught up in violence in Kandhamal, India,

whose houses and worship places were razed to the ground.

May they find hope for the future and may they continue trusting in your love and mercy.

**Make us reconcilers, O God, as you have reconciled us to you.**

Dear God,

We pray for the communities of (*add Asian communities that you would like to hold in prayer*).

**Make us reconcilers, O God, as you have reconciled us to you.**

Help us to bring peace where neighbour is set against neighbour,

and where people regard one another as enemies.

**Make us reconcilers, O God, as you have reconciled us to you.**

Help us to stand with the Okinawan people in Japan

and those in Kangjeong Village in the Jeju Island, South Korea,

as they face the construction of new bases in the islands;

they have suffered for many years in the aftermath of wars,

and their livelihoods and cultures have been lost to alienating industrial development.

**Make us reconcilers, O God, as you have reconciled us to you.**

Help us to bring justice where the weak and helpless are beaten by the mighty,

and where people look down on others as lower than them in status.

**Make us reconcilers, O God, as you have reconciled us to you.**

Help us defend people who are being arrested, detained, or even killed as they actively work for peace, justice, and human dignity in the Philippines, Myanmar, Sri Lanka, West Papua in Indonesia, and other countries in Asia.

**Make us reconcilers, O God, as you have reconciled us to you.**

Help us to bring freedom where children are forced to fight,

where women are trafficked as sex objects or cheap labour,

where people are discriminated against due to who they are.

**Make us reconcilers, O God, as you have reconciled us to you.**

Help us to advocate and defend the rights of farmers losing their lands to mining companies that place profits over people and their right to their land and access to productive resources.

**Make us reconcilers, O God, as you have reconciled us to you.**

Help us to bring care and connectedness to your creation

where greed and abuse have caused a lot of destruction.

**Make us reconcilers, O God, as you have reconciled us to you.**

Help us to bring humility where people depend upon their strength and beliefs

rather than on you.

**Make us reconcilers, O God, as you have reconciled us to you.**

Help us to acknowledge our divisions and bless our willingness to reconcile ourselves to one another, to become one body in Christ, and to become credible instruments of reconciliation in the world.

**Make us reconcilers, O God, as you have reconciled us to you.**

#### The Lord’s Prayer

**Sung Response:** “Come Now, O God of Peace/O-So-So” (VU 34)

#### Offering

(*During the offering people may rearrange the symbols of division, estrangement, and enmity at the worship centre to create something symbolic of peace, reconciliation, and wholeness*.)

#### Doxology

“God Created Heaven and Earth” (v.2) (VU 251)

“Dear Lord, Lead Me Day by Day” (refrain) (VU 568)

#### Prayer of Dedication to Be Reconcilers

***Leader:*** O God, make us your instrument of peace and reconciliation.

***Voice of Youth:*** Where there is hatred, may we bring love.

Where there is wrong, may we bring pardon.

Where there is discord, may we bring harmony.

***Leader:*** To those cut off from what they believe;

to those who are tortured;

and to those awaiting execution,

***All:*** **may we be instruments of your justice and your freedom.**

***Voice of Youth:*** Where there is despair may we bring hope.

Where there is sadness, may we bring joy.

Where there is pain and suffering,

where there is oppression and inhumanity,

***All:* may we bring your loving presence.**

***Leader:*** Fill us with your spirit of peace.

Help us to hunger and thirst for justice.

So that we may give ourselves in service to those who need us

and deliver them from evil.

***All:* Amen.**

#### Benediction

#### Sung Blessing

“Jesus, Loving Lord/Yeshu supriya” (MV 210)

“May the Love of the Lord/Wei yuan Shen di ai” (MV 218)

“Amen” (MV 225)