



A Prayer on 50th Anniversary of the Assassination of Martin Luther King, Jr.

The Assassination of Martin Luther King, Jr. (April 4, 1968) is the first world event I can remember. I was one month short of my 6th birthday and I remember my parents and their friends speaking in shocked ways about the events taking place in the United States. I did not know who King was, but I knew that blacks and whites were angry with each other and that King had been killed and that was very sad.

I am very aware as I write that I am a white man and cannot fully understand the way having a different skin colour would change my life. I admit I write this prayer as a white man.

A Prayer:

God of mercy and grace, come weep with us for a world where whites and blacks still live in enmity. Come weep with us that far too often the colour of a person's skin is more important than the quality of their character. Come weep with us that in neighbourhoods in Canada people with skin colours other than our own are looked on with suspicion and fear.

How long, O Lord, must young black men live in fear of interactions with the police?

How long, O Lord, will there be surprise as blacks succeed in school and business and the academy?

How long, O Lord, will black men and women feel they must self-censor, worried about the reaction their words will bring?

How long, O Lord, must stereotypes continue? How long, O Lord, must racial equality be a dream? How long, O Lord, before the hills ring with the songs of freedom?

God of grace, you challenge our world's assumptions and you call people of colour to lead your people towards the community you desire for all human beings: Viola Desmond and Rosa Parks; Martin Luther King, Jr and Josiah Henson. We rejoice that the gospel of Jesus Christ was proclaimed in Africa (Ethiopia) before it was announced Europe (Greece), and that it continues to call people of all races to follow your Son.

Open eyes to see those places where racism still exists in our hearts, in our speech, in our communities, and in the structures of our society. Stir our hearts to action. By the fire and wind of the Holy Spirit change us, for only by the action of the Holy Spirit can the walls of racial discrimination and division, of racial inequality and enmity be torn down.

We pray these things in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

—*The Rev. Peter Bush, moderator of the 2017 General Assembly*