

PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING AT THE INAUGURATION OF THE
UNITING CHURCH IN AUSTRALIA - 22 June 1977
The Rev. Dr Harold Wood, OBE

Let us pray -

Thanks be to Thee, Almighty God, our heavenly Father, who rulest over all times and events and who in Thy wisdom and providence has brought us to this solemn yet joyful day.

We submit ourselves in spirit before Thee, lost in wonder, love and praise. Just and true are Thy ways, O King of Saints.

With the great host that no man can number we are caught up into the seventh heaven of adoration and fervent thanksgiving unto Thee for all the wondrous things Thou hast done.

We thank Thee O God, our Father, for the unspeakable gift of Jesus Christ, our Saviour and our living Lord, through whom we have forgiveness of sins and acceptance with Thee.

Thanks be unto Thee, O Holy Spirit, who does perpetuate the presence of our Lord Jesus, who we verily believe stands in our midst now, breathing, "Peace be unto you".

All thanks be unto Thee, O God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, one God ever blessed, for the love, joy and peace, - the fruits of the Holy Spirit now sealing our union.

We thank Thee, O God, for our inheritance in the Uniting Church:

for those who were inspired to write the sacred Scriptures where we view our Saviour;
for those who like Wycliffe and Tyndale translated the Scriptures into our tongue;
for the fathers of the catholic and apostolic church who fashioned our historic creeds;
for Isaac Watts, Charles Wesley and others who gave to us our glorious hymns;
for Luther, Calvin, Cranmer and Knox and other leaders of the Reformation who taught us the doctrines of grace from the New Testament;
and for those who formulated for us our confessions of faith, for the valour of the Scottish Covenanters, and the intrepidity of the Pilgrim Fathers;
for all those who through imprisonment and martyrdom bequeathed to us the privileges and responsibilities of a church free to proclaim the word of truth;
for the experience of the new life in Christ, which our evangelical fathers proved and which we know for ourselves, thanks be unto Thee.

For the message of John Wesley and the Revival of his day and its fruits in Britain, in Australia and the younger churches of Asia and the Pacific Islands. - O God, how can we thank Thee enough for this accumulated inheritance of faith and devotion?

We heartily thank Thee that Thou hast brought to our lands in the Southern Hemisphere the gospel of grace through the pioneers of the churches. We thank Thee for the missionaries on the frontiers; for John Flynn of the Inland, for John G. Paton of the New Hebrides, for James Chalmers and Ruotoka of Papua, for Margaret Carghill, John Hunt and Joeli Bulu of Fiji.

We humbly thank Thee, O God, that Thy spirit has moved us to obey the will of Christ that we should be one, that the world might believe that Thou, O Father, didst send him to be its Saviour.

We thank Thee for those who planned and prayed and prepared for this day. We thank Thee that Thou hast been patient with our slowness and our faltering steps, but now, O God, Thou hast joined us each to each in submission to Thy will. We thank Thee for those who toiled and yearned for this day, for John McKenzie and Alan Watson and J.G. Adams, for Calvert Barber and Hubert Trigge and Frank Hambly, for J. Douglas Northey and all others into whose labours we have entered and who we humbly believe as a cloud of witnesses encompass us on this day.

O God, make the Uniting Church a loving church;

a church that invites men and women and young people into its fellowship and wins them for Christ;
a church that seeks wider union with all Christ's people everywhere;
a church with thoughtful sympathy for those who have not united with us;
a church with overflowing compassion for all who despair and suffer in this land and other lands;
a church with growing concern for this distressed and divided world which has lost its way and looks to us perhaps for a guiding voice and for the healing and reconciling hands of our Master Jesus Christ.

Make the Uniting Church a true reflection of the Spirit of our Master, who loved his own unto the end.

And now, O God, at this moment we know this work is Thine, and we would say in our hearts with the Psalmist, let Thy works appear unto Thy servants and Thy glory unto their children; and let the beauty of the Lord our God be upon us and establish Thou the work of our hands upon us; yea, the work of our hands establish Thou it. This we ask through Jesus Christ, our Lord, who taught us when we pray, to say - Our Father who art in heaven....