

Christians Build Community



—Acts 15:16-17a

After this I will return, and I will rebuild the dwelling of David, which has fallen; from its ruins I will rebuild it, and I will set it up, so that all other peoples may seek the Lord—even all the Gentiles over whom my name has been called.

A



CHRISTIANS BUILD COMMUNITY
SESSION 1

Peter & Paul: Building the Church



words to remember

But test everything; hold fast to what is good.

—1 Thessalonians 5:21

prayer Gracious Father, we pray for thy holy Catholic Church. Fill it with all truth, in all truth with all peace. Where it is corrupt, purify it; where it is in error, direct it; where in any thing it is amiss, reform it. Where it is right, strengthen it; where it is in want, provide for it; where it is divided, reunite it; for the sake of Jesus Christ thy Son our Savior. *Amen.*

For the Church
The Book of Common Prayer, p. 816

COMMENTARY

Sometimes it is hard for us to see how we are to build the church. But we are the next generation; we have our own ideas, and we are going to carry Christianity into the future. We are being entrusted with keeping God's word alive. Right now each one of us has to begin by helping others in our daily lives, to realize how we are needed to reach out to others.

Lea, Grade 9

Youth prayer

Dear God, help us to understand your will and your ways. We hope to build up your church by fulfilling your needs and by teaching others no matter who they may be. By helping others, we are helping you use everyone to spread your word. We are your tools and the world needs repairs. Use us to build your home.

Nick, Grade 7

DAILY DEVOTIONS

reflections

Monday—Jeremiah 12:14-17

Tuesday—Amos 9:11-12

Wednesday—Matthew 16:17-19

Thursday—Acts 7:47-50

Friday—I Corinthians 3:9-11

Saturday—I Peter 2:9-10

voices



The Church cannot be content to live in its stained-glass house and throw stones thru the picture windows of modern culture.

Robert McAfee Brown

The breeze of divine grace is blowing upon us all. But one needs to set the sail to feel this breeze of grace.

Ramakrishna

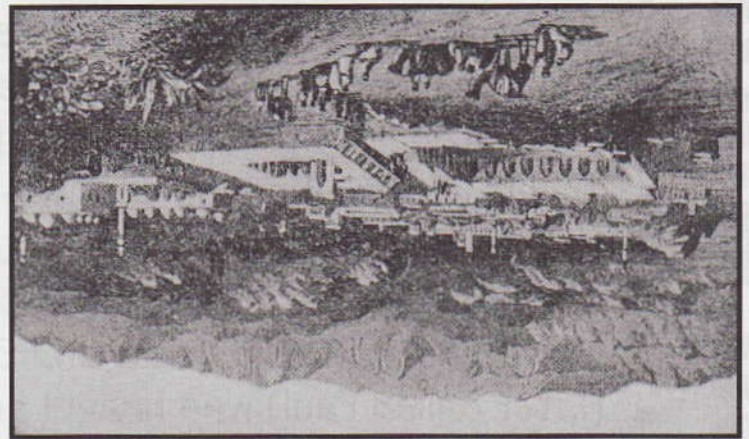
When the early church fathers came together, they talked about their powers; when modern church [people] come together, they talk about their problems.

Arthur J. Moore



—Acts 9:12

and he has seen in a
vision a man named Ananias
come in and lay his hands
on him so that he might
regain his sight.



CHRISTIANS BUILD COMMUNITY
SESSION 2

Ananias: Healing an Apostle



words to remember

Do not say, 'I am only a boy';
for you shall go to all to whom I send you,
and you shall speak whatever I command you,
Do not be afraid of them,
for I am with you to deliver you, says the Lord.

—Jeremiah 1:7b-8

prayer O God and Father of
all, whom the
whole heavens adore: Let the whole
earth also worship you, all nations
obey you, all tongues confess and
bless you, and men and women
everywhere love you and serve you in
peace; through Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.

From Evening Prayer II
The Book of Common Prayer, p. 124

COMMENTARY

Ananias was faithful to the Lord, but when asked to heal Saul, he protested. He had heard many bad things about this man and was puzzled by God's desire to heal Saul. But God wanted to use a sinful person to speak his word. Ananias agreed, and Saul (later called Paul) was healed and baptized.

Nick, Grade 7

Youth prayer

Dear God,
Please help us to realize that we may not always understand what we are called to do, but help us to understand that we are needed to help spread the Church's message. Help us to see that each and every one of us is needed by the Church to participate in this task.

Lea, Grade 9

DAILY DEVOTIONS

reflections

Monday—Exodus 4:11-12

Tuesday—I Samuel 3:10-11

Wednesday—Esther 4:14-16

Thursday—Jeremiah 1:4-8

Friday—Acts 8:1-3

Saturday—Galatians 1:13-17

voices



The prayer that reforms the sinner and heals the sick is an absolute faith that all things are possible to God,—a spiritual understanding of Him, an unselfed love.

Mary Baker Eddy

“Please, tell me where I am,”

Alice said.

“Where are you going?” said the [Cheshire] Cat.

“I don't know,” said Alice.

“Well,” the Cat said, “if you don't know where you are going, what difference does it make where you are?”

Lewis Carroll

Let us have faith that right makes might; and in that faith let us to the end dare to do our duty as we understand it.

Abraham Lincoln



Charles Foster in
Story of the Bible



When Peter began to speak to them: "I truly understand that God shows no partiality, but in every nation anyone who fears him and does what is right is acceptable to him."
—Acts 10:34-35

T

CHRISTIANS BUILD COMMUNITY
SESSION 3

Cornelius: Calling a Gentle



words to remember

There is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male and female; for all of you are one in Christ Jesus.

—Galatians 3:28

prayer Eternal God, in whose perfect kingdom no sword is drawn but the sword of righteousness, no strength known but the strength of love: So mightily spread abroad your Spirit, that all peoples may be gathered under the banner of the Prince of Peace, as children of one Father; to whom be dominion and glory, now and for ever. *Amen.*

For Peace
The Book of Common Prayer, p. 815

COMMENTARY

Being a Christian may be somewhat like a mystery. God will sometimes command you to do mysterious things—things you do not understand. For instance, when you are at school or outside and a “bully” gets hurt, you probably just want to enjoy it. But somewhere you hear yourself being told not to watch and laugh, but to reach out and help this person to be well again. Many times you will be confronted with a problem like this, so you must slow down and do what God says to do, even if you can’t understand why. God will always have a reason.

Kevin, Grade 7

Youth prayer

Dear Lord, help us to do what is right, even though what is right is not always explained. Help us worship you at all times, and have trust in you. Strengthen our minds, bodies, and souls, and we will do all we can to serve you. We will have trust in you, and you in us. Thank you Lord. *Amen.*

Molly, Grade 9

DAILY DEVOTIONS

reflections

Monday—Ruth 2:10-12

Tuesday—Jonah 3:6-10

Wednesday—Matthew 28:19-20

Thursday—Acts 1:6-8

Friday—Romans 2:9-11

Saturday—Galatians 5:5-7

voices



Next to the Blessed Sacrament itself, your neighbor is the holiest object presented to your senses.

C. S. Lewis

For God so loved the world, not just a few,
The wise and great, the noble and the true,
Or those of favoured class or race or hue.

God loved the world. Do you?

Grace E. Uhler

We must stop giving the impression that the church is surrounded by a wall, fighting for its existence against a world that is trying to destroy it; instead, we must realize that the church is a force pushing out into the world.

Isaac K. Beckes



—Romans 16:2

So that you may welcome her in the Lord as is fitting for the saints, and help her in whatever she may require from you, for she has been a benefactor of many and of myself as well.

S...



CHRISTIANS BUILD COMMUNITY
SESSION 4

Lydia & Phoebe: Women Following Christ



words to remember

Then Mary said, "Here am I, the servant of the Lord; let it be with me according to your word."

—Luke 1:38a

prayer O God, the King of saints, we praise and glorify your holy Name for all your servants who have finished their course in your faith and fear: for the blessed Virgin Mary; for the holy patriarchs, prophets, apostles, and martyrs; and for all your other righteous servants, known to us and unknown; and we pray that, encouraged by their examples, aided by their prayers, and strengthened by their fellowship, we also may be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light; through the merits of your Son Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

From Burial II
The Book of Common Prayer, p. 504

COMMENTARY

Women through time have had influence in the Church. They have been heard in Church and also have been consecrated as saints. In churches throughout the country today, women are priests and leaders of committees and church benefits.

Many women, not wanting anything in return, have contributed to the Church and to God.

Meredith, Grade 7

Youth prayer

Dear God, our Heavenly Father, help us to respect and recognize you in our work and everyday life. Help us also respect the work of others, both men and women. In your name we pray, *Amen*.

Meredith, Grade 7

DAILY DEVOTIONS

reflections

Monday—Ruth 1:16-17

Tuesday—Proverbs 31:30-31

Wednesday—Luke 2:36-38

Thursday—Luke 8:1-3

Friday—Luke 10:38-42

Saturday—Acts 9:36-41

voices



I have ploughed, and planted, and gathered into barns, and no man could head me! And ain't I a woman? I could work as much and eat as much as a man—when I could get it—and bear the last as well! And ain't I a woman? I have borne 13 children, and seen 'em mos' all sold off to slavery, and when I cried out with my mother's grief, none but Jesus hear me! And ain't I a woman?

Sojourner Truth

God has placed the genius of women in their hearts; because the works of this genius are always works of love.

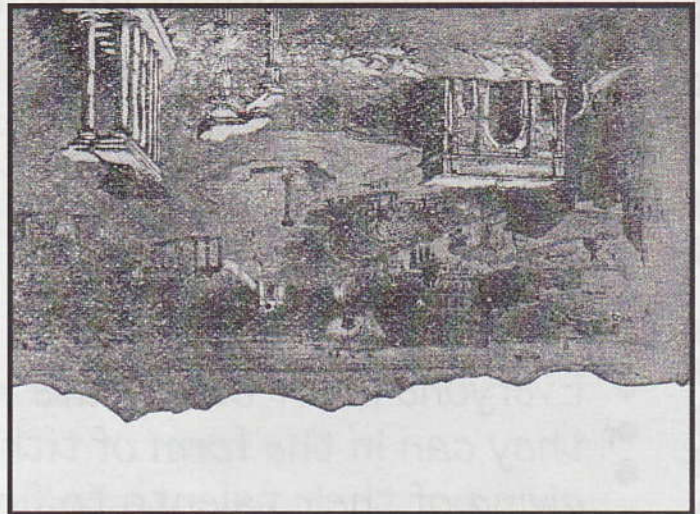
Alfonse de Lamartine

In the beginning, said a Persian poet—Allah took a rose, a lily, a dove, a serpent, a little honey, a Dead Sea apple, and a handful of clay. When he looked at the amalgam—it was a woman.

William Sharp



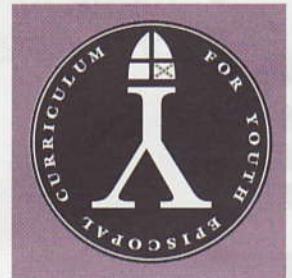
So we, who are many, are
one body in Christ, and
individually we are members
one of another.
—Romans 12:5



SESSION 5

CHRISTIANS BUILD COMMUNITY

Romans: Establishing the Church



words to remember

Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit; and there are varieties of services, but the same Lord; and there are varieties of activities, but it is the same God who activates all of them in everyone. To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good.

—1 Corinthians 12:4-7

prayer Almighty and everliving God, ruler of all things in heaven and earth, hear our prayers for this parish family. Strengthen the faithful, arouse the careless, and restore the penitent. Grant us all things necessary for our common life, and bring us all to be of one heart and mind within your holy Church; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

For the Parish
The Book of Common Prayer, p. 817

COMMENTARY

The actual Church of Christ

is not a building or a group of pews and an altar. It is a congregation of people who are closely related, maybe not as a family, but as neighbors and friends.

Everyone must contribute what they can in the form of tithes or giving of their talents to find their niche in the church. The church is only as strong as the people in it.

Ryan, Grade 7

Youth prayer

Dear Lord, please help us establish a stronger relationship with you. If it is your will, please allow our church to grow and prosper. In Jesus' name we pray. *Amen.*

Ryan, Grade 7

DAILY DEVOTIONS

reflections

Monday—Romans 1:11-12

Tuesday—I Corinthians 2:12-13

Wednesday—I Corinthians
14:10-12

Thursday—I Timothy 4:14-15

Friday—II Timothy 1:6-7

Saturday—I Peter 4:10-11

voices



We are God's house of
living stones,
Built for his own habitation;
He fills our hearts, his
humble thrones,
Granting us life and salvation;
Were two or three to seek his face,
He in their midst would show
his grace,
Blessings upon them bestowing.

Nicolai F. S. Grundtvig

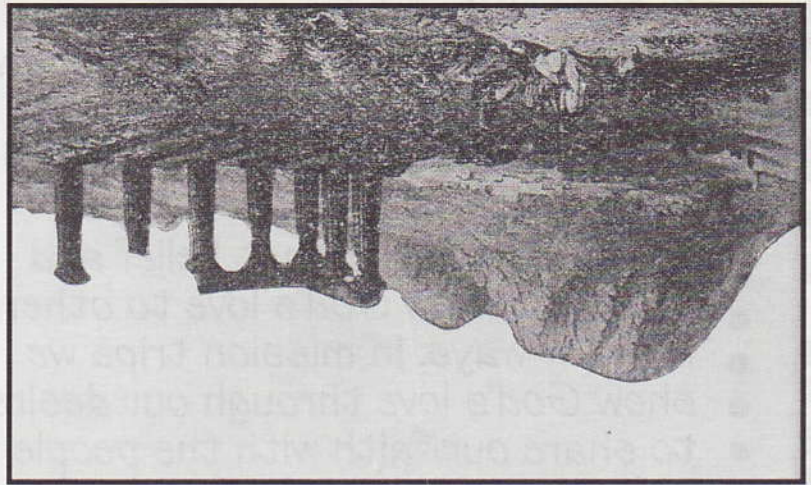
Give to the world the best that you
have and the best will come back
to you.

Anonymous

A church should be a power-house,
where sluggish spirits can get
recharged and reanimated.

Samuel A. Eliot





—1 Corinthians 13:13
and now faith, hope,
and love abide, these
three; and the greatest
of these is love.



SESSION 6

CHRISTIANS BUILD COMMUNITY



Corinthians: Growing in Love

words to remember

Beloved, let us love one another, because love is from God; everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. Whoever does not love does not know God, for God is love.

—1 John 4:7-8

prayer Almighty and everlasting God, increase in us the gifts of faith, hope, and [love]; and, that we may obtain what you promise, make us love what you command; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. *Amen.*

Proper 25

The Book of Common Prayer, p. 235

COMMENTARY

If God did not love us, he would never have made himself known. If we did not know about God's love, we couldn't have belief or faith in God.

Love is related to that belief and faith. We show God's love to others in many ways. In mission trips we show God's love through our desire to share our faith with the people we help. We also show God's love in the way we treat our friends and family.

Josh, Grade 8

Youth prayer

Lord, we thank you for your immeasurable love through which everything is possible. Thank you for giving us a lifeline, your son, because without him our lives would be pointless. *Amen.*

Josh, Grade 8

DAILY DEVOTIONS

reflections

Monday—Psalm 107:8-9
Tuesday—Isaiah 54:7-8
Wednesday—Lamentations
3:21-23

Thursday—Romans 5:1-5
Friday—I John 4:9-11
Saturday—Jude 1:20-21

voices



You don't fall in love and get married. . . you marry and learn what love costs.

Stanley Hauerwas

God doesn't necessarily call us to like everybody, but God does call us to love everybody.

Chuck Murphy, Sr.

You cannot love a fellow-creature fully till you love God.

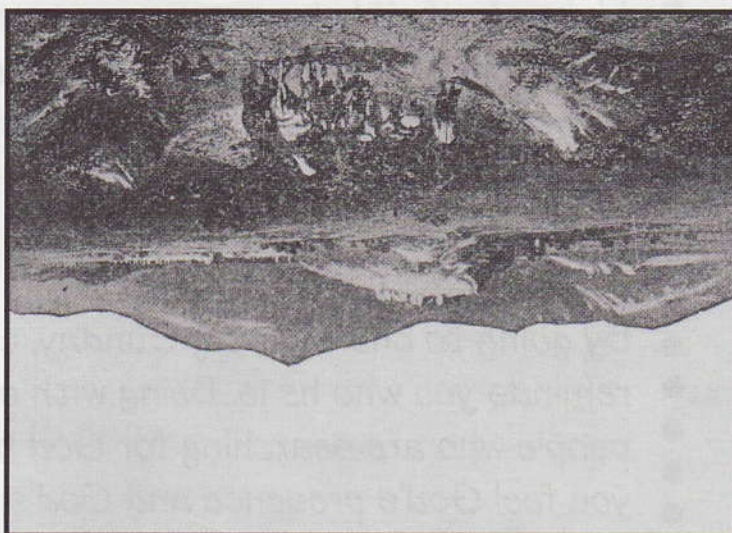
C. S. Lewis

Love is not a possession but a growth. The heart is a lamp with just oil enough to burn for an hour, and if there be no oil to put in again its light will go out. God's grace is the oil that fills the lamp of love.

Henry Ward Beecher



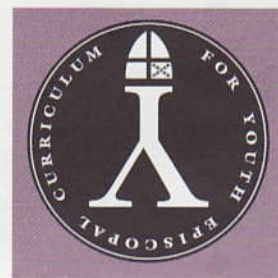
For by grace you have
been saved through faith,
and this is not your own
doing; it is the gift of God.
—Ephesians 2:8



SESSION 7

CHRISTIANS BUILD COMMUNITY

Ephesians: Receiving the Gift of Faith



words to remember

From his fullness we have all received,
grace upon grace. The law indeed was
given through Moses; grace and truth
came through Jesus Christ.

—John 1:16-17

prayer Almighty and
everlasting God,
you are always more ready to hear
than we to pray, and to give more
than we either desire or deserve:
Pour upon us the abundance of your
mercy, forgiving us those things of
which our conscience is afraid, and
giving us those good things for which
we are not worthy to ask, except
through the merits and mediation of
Jesus Christ our Savior; who lives
and reigns with you and the Holy
Spirit, one God, for ever and ever.
Amen.

Proper 22
The Book of Common Prayer, p. 234

COMMENTARY

Living by faith to me means praying every day even when you don't go to church. Sometimes in life you forget that God is with you. You may sometimes shrug off God's presence like dust.

By going to church every Sunday, God reminds you who he is. Being with other people who are searching for God helps you feel God's presence and God's love.

Philister, Grade 9

Youth prayer

Jesus, give me help this day
To follow you the whole long way.
Give me faith to know you're there
And hold me against the wear and tear.

Tanna, Grade 8

DAILY DEVOTIONS

reflections

Monday—Psalm 84:11-12

Tuesday—Zechariah 12:10

Wednesday—I Corinthians 1:4-7

Thursday—I Peter 5:6-10

Friday—James 1:17-18

Saturday—II Peter 3:18

voices



No one who is drowning can pull himself up by his own hair. Someone else must pull him out of the water.

Karl Barth

When gifts are random—that is the highest form of giving.

Rabbi Hillel

But you will find that even those who insist most strongly on the importance of good actions tell you you need Faith; and even those who insist most strongly on Faith tell you to do good actions.

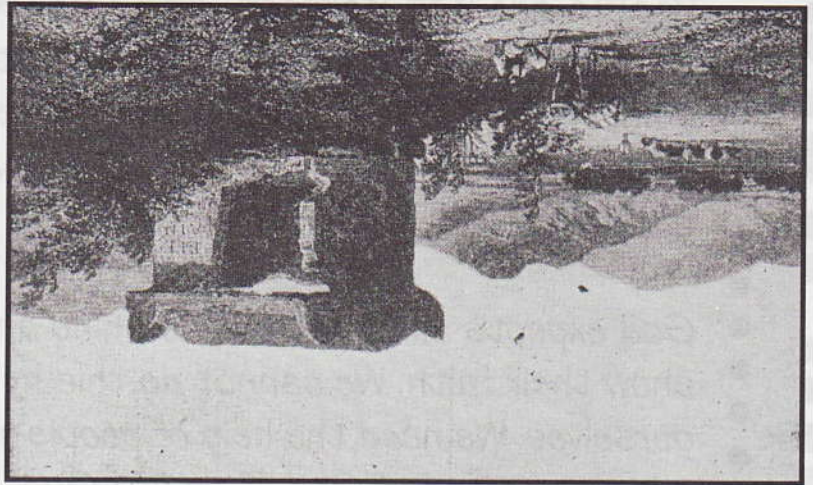
C. S. Lewis

What is faith but a kind of betting or speculation after all? It should be, "I bet that my Redeemer liveth."

Samuel Butler



Do all things without
murmuring and arguing, so
that you may be blameless and
innocent, children of God
without blemish in the midst
of a crooked and perverse
generation, in which you
shine like stars in the world.
—*Philippians 2:14-15*



SESSION 8

CHRISTIANS BUILD COMMUNITY



Philippians: Shining as Lights

words to remember

For once you were darkness, but now in the Lord you are light. Live as children of light—for the fruit of the light is found in all that is good and right and true.

—*Ephesians 5:8-9*

prayer Almighty God, whose Son our Savior Jesus Christ is the light of the world: Grant that your people, illumined by your Word and Sacraments, may shine with the radiance of Christ's glory, that he may be known, worshiped, and obeyed to the ends of the earth; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who with you and the Holy Spirit lives and reigns, one God, now and for ever. *Amen.*

Second Sunday after the Epiphany
The Book of Common Prayer, p. 215

COMMENTARY

People are not perfect, and I believe that God knows that. Shining as light sometimes means that when someone is doing something wrong, you step in and speak for God.

God expects all Christians to shine and show their faith. We cannot do this by ourselves. We need the help of people in our church and of God. If we ask God, he will help us shine as light.

Philister, Grade 9

Youth prayer

God, sometimes I feel that the “crookedness” and “perverseness” in the world are more powerful than the good. It is difficult in these times to remember what you want rather than what I want. Help me be obedient so that I can be a “shining” example in bad times as well as good. *Amen.*

Wynn, Grade 9

DAILY DEVOTIONS

reflections

Monday—Proverbs 4:18-19

Tuesday—Daniel 12:3

Wednesday—Sirach 32:14-17

Thursday—Colossians 1:11-14

Friday—I John 1:5-7

Saturday—Matthew 5:14-16

voices



It is better to light a single candle than to curse the darkness.

Rabbi Hillel

... God is the living light in every respect. From God all lights shine. Therefore, we remain a light that gives off light through God.

Hildegard of Bingen

Give light, and the darkness will disappear of itself.

Erasmus

Fresh light shall yet break out from God's Word.

John Robinson

Religion cannot pass away. The burning of a little straw may hide the stars of the sky, but the stars are there, and will reappear.

Thomas Carlyle



Charles Foster in
Story of the Bible



If he has wronged
you in any way, or owes
you anything, charge
that to my account.
—Philemon 18

SESSION 9

CHRISTIANS BUILD COMMUNITY



Philemon: Settling an Account

words to remember

Yet you say, "The way of the Lord is unfair." Hear now, O house of Israel: Is my way unfair? Is it not your ways that are unfair? . . . when the wicked turn away from the wickedness they have committed and do what is lawful and right, they shall save their life.

—Ezekiel 18:25, 27

prayer O God, from whom all good proceeds: Grant that by your inspiration we may think those things that are right, and by your merciful guiding may do them; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. *Amen.*

Proper 5

The Book of Common Prayer, p. 229

COMMENTARY

An innocent person—
Accused.
No questions asked—
Punishment.

A small child hurt—
Unfortunate.
Wrong place,
Wrong time—
Death.

A young mother—
Unlucky.
Her newborn baby—
No more.

A scared and
hopeful teenager—
Near death.
A second chance—
Lives.

A good samaritan—
Rejected.
Continues with hope—
Acceptance.

A devoted police officer—
Challenged.
Love and hope—
Triumph.

Fate or faith
Which is the right way
to live life?
Blaming God?
Or trusting?

Nancy, Grade 8

voices



God dwells with us in life's most
confining and oppressive cells. . .
The Christian faith makes it possi-
ble for us nobly to accept that
which cannot be changed, to meet
disappointments. . . without aban-
doning our sense of hope.

Martin Luther King, Jr.

Injustice is relatively easy to bear;
what stings is justice.

H. L. Mencken

To obey God is perfect liberty; he
that does this shall be free, safe,
and quiet.

Seneca

Lots of well-fed, comfortable,
middle-class people everywhere
are praying for "situations" like
this all the time. But they don't
seem to do enough about changing
such situations by altering political
and economic facts of life, or help-
ing specific men, women, and
children who are victims.

Malcolm Boyd



Youth prayer

Dear God, I have seen many things that I deemed unfair. I have also lost many friends because of what I thought was unfair treatment of me. Help me find a way to show these people that what they are doing isn't right or just. Help me also to be fair and not judgmental of others, for only you are perfect enough to see others' imperfections. Amen.

Annah, Grade 8

DAILY DEVOTIONS

reflections

Monday—Esther 1:10-22

Tuesday—Psalm 13

Wednesday—Micah 7:8-10

Thursday—Susanna 1:42-49

Friday—John 15:18-21

Saturday—II Timothy 3:10-12