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How the News Shapes Our Prayers and Preaching: Deepening our Lovign Engagement with the World God Loves

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**How the News Shapes Our Prayers and Preaching:
Deepening our Loving Engagement with the World God Loves**

2016 Calvin Symposium on Worship

Discussion with Elizabeth Dias, Richard Mouw, Anne Zaki, moderated by John Witvliet

If our public prayers and preaching are at all responsive to the needs of the world, then how we glean information about the world is crucial. Whether through new or old media, journalists have a key role to play in whether and how we pray and preach about everything from the persecution of Christians, conflict in the Middle East, creation care, and abortion to local concerns related to public education and social services. .

Note: this session continues a key theme in our programming over several years. Here's a summary of a key session from our 2014 Symposium:

- <http://worship.calvin.edu/resources/resource-library/public-intercessory-prayer-that-renews-worship/>
- <http://worship.calvin.edu/resources/resource-library/learning-from-and-praying-for-the-worldwide-church/>

See also several model prayers throughout the *Worship Sourcebook* (Faith Alive 2013).

MODELS FOR PUBLIC INTERCESSORY PRAYER

MODEL 1: PROJECTED NEWSPAPER HEADLINES, FOLLOWED BY PRAYERS

Introduction

Our prayers will be divided into three sections

- *prayers for national and international concerns*
- *prayers for local, community needs*
- *prayers for personal, individual brokenness.*

To make our prayers concrete, each prayer will be preceded a list of newspaper headlines from the past week.

Prayers of Lament and Intercession

We pray now for the brokenness of our nation and world.

(Read or project news headline)

Dateline, March 2011

- Egyptian Unrest continues
- South Africa Death Toll Rises to 25 in Attacks
- Agents Discover Fake Visa Ring
- Two More Arrested in Tourist's Death 2 God of power,

God of mercy, We lament before you the brokenness of our world, a world of war of disease of mistrust of violence. We claim your promise to be with us. In your power, heal our world we pray. . . . [silent prayers] 1

We pray now for the brokenness of our local community

(Read or project news headline)

March 2011

- Vandals Break in at Local School
- Charges dropped in Prostitution Case
- One Hospitalized, Another Arrested in Stabbing 2

Our gracious God, Our community, too, is broken The institutions that hold us together often seem to be breaking, The comfort of our lives is often disturbed by fear. We claim your promise to be with us. In your power, heal our community, we pray. . . . [silent prayers] 14 1

We pray now for individual, personal needs and brokenness

(Read or project news headline)

Dateline, March 2011

- Loneliness America's Greatest Killer
- Two More Press Claims of Sex Discrimination
- Numbers of Abused Children up this Year
- Worker Dissatisfaction High at Local Plant 2

Loving God, so many lives are broken and filled with pain, haunted with memories of failure, guilt, abuse stuck in ruts of boredom and loneliness, searching for meaning and happiness. We pray for your comforting presence, for your power to heal and forgive. Work powerfully in our world, we pray. . . .[silent prayers] Through Jesus Christ our Lord, Amen.

Response: Assurance of God's Promise—Rom. 8: 18-20

¹⁸I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory about to be revealed to us. ¹⁹For the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the children of God; ²⁰for the creation was subjected to futility, not of its own will but by the will of the one who subjected it, in hope ²¹that the creation itself will be set free from its bondage to decay and will obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God.

Adapted from J. Witvliet, "What about Liturgical Lament?"

https://www.academia.edu/20220148/Reflections_on_Lament_in_Christian_Worship

MODEL 2: Single Prayer Leader Draft Prayer Text

Almighty and loving God,

We bless and thank you for creating us, redeeming us, and calling us to follow Jesus. We offer our petitions in his name, grateful that he perfects our prayers. And so, in a spirit of unspeakable gratitude, we come to you in Jesus name.

We bless you for the challenge of your Word. We now for the courage to obey it (and for the discerning wisdom to know how best to obey in our individual lives), *[add here reference to sermon theme]*

For those with particular needs, we pray

- X, who mourns,
- Y, who is in the hospital
- Z, who needs a job
- Others, as appropriate

For our city and region we pray, for the institutions that enable life together—schools, hospitals, government agencies, courts and police, those working to provide affordable housing, restorative justice, accessible healthcare, public and private education, prophetic art, wholesome entertainment.

- Add specifics

For our congregation as we minister here.. May the work and witness of each of us in this congregation be salt and light in this city.

- Add specifics

For our nation and the nations of the world, and all peacemakers, that in concrete ways, this coming week will feature greater justice, peace, nourishment, and health than last....

- We pray for those churches in Pakistan, Syria, and Iraq that have been destroyed—and for all who minister in the context of trauma.
- Add specifics

For the church around the world—Orthodox and Pentecostal, Catholic and Baptist, Lutheran and Reformed—that many congregations will experience a concrete sense of unity with the whole body of Christ. Even as our Lord Jesus prayed for the unity of the body, so we pray. . .

- Add specifics

All of this we pray, in the strong name of Jesus Christ,

The One who redeems all creation and invites us to the feast,

The One who lives and reigns with you and the Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.