

## AN ORDINATION PRAYER

DANA W. WILBANKS

O Lord of all times and places; God of the entire cosmos, all of the peoples of the earth and of our innermost selves; sustainer of the world and power of the future; we give you thanks for the gifts of life. Especially do we praise you for your spirit which moves us to act in love, to struggle for justice and peace, and to embrace the mysteries of hope.

O God, we confess before you our weak faith, our failure of nerve, our stiff necks and our hard hearts. You have given us eyes to see, and we close our eyes to your light. You have given us ears to hear, and we have refused to listen to your word. You have given us arms for embracing our neighbors, and we have used them to keep our neighbors away.

We pray that you will heal our brokenness and bring us to new life. Invigorate the church with the power of your spirit that we may no longer be ruled by fear and timidity but by your liberating truth. Bring the church to such faith that persons no longer worship the weapons of war but trust in your gracious care.

We praise you that in Jesus Christ you have given us the vision of a world at peace; where every person's dignity is affirmed; where people truly love and care for each other; where families are centers of support and nurture; where nations and their diverse peoples work together in harmony; where your kingdom shall come and your will shall be done on earth as in heaven.

We thank you for the church, particular and universal, whose unity transcends the chasms of generations and places, yet whose diversity makes clear the fresh and specific ways your gospel claims us. We

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Dana W. Wilbanks is Professor of Christian Ethics, The Iliff School of Theology. This prayer was delivered at the Ordination Service of Amanda Shipman in the Ministry of the United Church of Christ, September 29, 1985. She will be serving as a missionary and school chaplain in Zimbabwe.

thank you for our calling, laity and clergy together, as ministers of good news that promises liberation from bondage, wholeness out of brokenness, and reconciliation out of alienation and hostility.

In this service of ordination, we are reminded that in each time and place you raise up people for special responsibilities in your church. We pray that Amanda and others of this generation will be your prophets for justice, your agents for peace, your ambassadors for truly inclusive community in the church and in the world. May Amanda's ministry lead us to an ever-expanding awareness of our covenantal relation with sisters and brothers in Zimbabwe, indeed in all parts of the world.

Lord, hear our prayer. Nourish us in the hope that this world is "bound for glory." Bring all creation together in the shalom of your beloved community. In your name we pray, to whom be all honor and praise. Amen.

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