

Prayer at the AMBS Service of Lament, Confession, and Commitment
March 22, 2015

Gracious God, we need you. We have been driven here by grievous sin and injury. We gather angered, sobered, saddened—sickened—by what makes it necessary to lament. We gather humbled by the need to confess our mistakes, failures, shortcomings, and sins. We gather sorrowful for the pain thrust upon John's victims, and also upon the Yoder and Miller families, and many, many others.

Yet, dear God, we are thankful that voices of victims have been heard and honored. We are grateful for confessions and apologies offered, and for commitments made. We give thanks for the grace-filled witness we have heard.

We confess our *faith*: Creator God, you have lived among us in the human, Jesus Christ, who reveals you to us as one "full of grace and truth." For this we are infinitely grateful.

But we also confess our *condition*: None of us is like him. Although you made us in your likeness, call us to "follow him,"—and we try to do so—we are not "full of grace and truth."

Truthful God, we confess that often we are afraid to see or speak truth.

We confess that sometimes we fool ourselves, convincing ourselves that we can speak *the* truth.

We confess that sometimes we are confused and unable to see or speak truth.

We confess that at our best we see truth only partly, from our particular perspectives. We see it more clearly when we look back than when we look forward. We do not see with your eyes or speak with your voice. We are not *full* of grace and truth.

Truthful God, We know that the fully human one, Jesus, did not hesitate to speak the truth in condemning sin. We too must make moral judgments and speak about right and wrong, as we have been doing today. Thank you for truth spoken, however belatedly. And reveal to us where we have not seen and spoken rightly. Keep us from arrogantly believing that we have now finally got it right. Through our attempts to speak truth, and perhaps even in spite of them, we beg you to heal us through the power of your Spirit.

And, dear God, remind us that while we must make judgements about right and wrong, you are the only just and wise judge—full of truth and grace. We gratefully leave to you the responsibility and right to finally judge us all.

Our faith and our hope, O God, is that in you truth and grace are not opposites, but one. We believe that the deepest **truth** about you is this: You created us your beloved children, you desire our wellbeing, you are gracious. When we are wounded by the sin of others or by life's hardships you offer us healing grace: the possibility of healed wounds, of new life. When we sin you offer us forgiving, merciful grace: the possibility of turning and receiving new life. And when we are confused, weak, afraid, you offer us empowering grace.

Move us to know your love more deeply, dear God. Move us to respond to your love *with* love, of you and of others; to be more truthful and more gracious. Move us to be more like the one who shows us your character, and the one who shows us what we *humans* are called to be—Jesus the Christ. It is in his name that we pray, with gratitude and much love. Amen.

Written and prayed by Ted Koontz