



Anglican Network
in Canada

BUILDING
BIBLICALLY FAITHFUL,
GOSPEL SHARING,
ANGLICAN CHURCHES

The Charge of Bishop Charlie Masters

Diocesan Bishop

Anglican Network in Canada

10th Annual Synod – October 25-27, 2017

Theme: *Remember Jesus- 2 Timothy 2:8-10*

Remember Jesus Christ, risen from the dead, the offspring of David, as preached in my gospel, for which I am suffering, bound with chains as a criminal. But the word of God is not bound! Therefore I endure everything for the sake of the elect, that they also may obtain the salvation that is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory.

2 Timothy 2:8-10

O God, you have made of one blood all the peoples of the earth, and sent your blessed Son to preach peace to those who are far off and to those who are near: Grant that people everywhere may seek after you and find you; bring the nations into your fold; pour out your Spirit upon all flesh; and hasten the coming of your kingdom; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

WELCOME THIS ANNIVERSARY YEAR

My dear Bishops, clergy and people of this wonderful diocese of the Anglican Network in Canada and guests, it is my great joy to welcome you to Burlington Ontario for our annual diocesan Synod.

Of course, it is a joy to welcome you every year but this year is special for many reasons.

In just a few days, October 31, 2017 the Christian world will be celebrating the fact that 500 years ago Martin Luther nailed what are known as his 95 theses on the door of the church in Wittenberg Germany. And so we celebrate the 500th anniversary of the Reformation.

Yesterday, our first Day of Synod which is our workshop day in which five of the workshops were based on the five foundations of the Reformation known as the five “solas” for the Latin word “alone”.

Scripture alone
Through faith alone
By grace alone
In Christ alone
To the glory of God alone.

These foundations continue to be foundations of our life as Anglican Christians.

This past summer, July 1, 2017, we celebrated the formation of the nation of Canada which was named by the Fathers of Confederation as the Dominion of Canada because of the verse, Psalm 72:8- “ may he have dominion from sea to sea, and from the river to the ends of the earth!”

The “he” of course is Jesus and it is a prayer that He will be known and trusted and obeyed as the Lord that He alone is. For He alone is Lord and King.

This is our heritage and this is our prayer. The nations of the world continue to stream to Canada and it is our prayer that they will come to know the Lord Jesus as Lord and Saviour and that He will have dominion over each life and the impact of His saving grace would flow from here to all the nations of the world. To that end, wonderfully, in His mercy, many are actually being sent by the Lord to Canada from the nations to bring the good news of Jesus to us who desperately need it so that truly He may have dominion.

But what is of particular interest to us as a Diocese which is now called the Anglican Network in Canada is that 10 years ago, on November 22, 2007, right at the place that we met yesterday for first day of Synod, in the building called the Crossroads Centre,

there on the screen by a video presentation, Archbishop Greg Venables, the Primate of what was known as the Province of the Southern Cone, declared that he would give spiritual coverage to this new Diocese which was being formed that very day with a Moderator and founding Diocesan Bishop, the Right Reverend Donald Harvey and another great bishop, as our first Suffragan Bishop, the Right Reverend Malcolm Harding along with two two priests and 2 deacons leading two congregations from both in western Canada.

That day, 10 years ago the Anglican Network went from being a movement to being an Anglican diocese, ANiC, with those wonderful two bishops and priests and deacons and congregations. It was fun to see that the two congregations were both on the West Coast whereas the Diocesan Bishop resided when he was home in St. John's Newfoundland, and our Suffragan Bishop lived in Brandon Manitoba with our Diocesan offices were here in Burlington Ontario. It just helped to emphasize that this new Diocese was to span the country from coast to coast and what a joy it is that we're not only here in Canada but wonderfully we have parishes in New England as well.

So this Synod we celebrate the 10th anniversary of our Diocese- our first 10 years.

It is particularly a joy and I believe of great significance that we are here in this beautiful church home of St. George's Burlington. St. George's was not one of the first two congregations on November 22, 2007 but was part of that first wave after that three months later had votes to secede from their respective Dioceses (for St. George's-Niagara) in which I believe 12 more congregations joined the new Diocese now often known as ANiC. St. George's like so many lost their building on Guelph Line, just north of Burlington called Lowville and from May 2008 until Easter 2015 met in the chapel that we worshipped in yesterday at the Crossroads Centre.

To date, there are still only a few of our congregations who actually own their buildings. Almost all of us are tenants with the flexibility, mobility and sometimes cost-saving that goes with that but also the vulnerability and at times the lack of profile in the community that goes with being a tenant. St. George's here where we're meeting right now is the first building which has been erected from the ground up by the generosity of the congregation for their place of worship and the platform for ministry and witness.

It is a source of great joy to know that the gift of this building has provided an incredible opportunity for the gospel which they, as a congregation, are seizing.

I want to thank the Rector the Rev. Ray David Glenn and all the leadership and people of St. George's for their wonderful hospitality. Their volunteers are amazing and the serving spirit which they are demonstrating towards the worship and life and fellowship of the Synod is greatly appreciated.

So we are here to celebrate 500th anniversary of the Reformation, the 150th anniversary of the nation of Canada and the 10th anniversary of the Diocese of the Anglican Network in Canada. We are eager to be like the one leper as recorded in Luke 17 who unlike his other nine friends chose to drop everything and return to Jesus to give thanks for what he had so obviously done.

Everything we have is gift. Everything for good that has happened is His doing. Paul rightly challenged the Corinthian church: "what do you have that you did not receive? If then you received it, why do you boast as if you did not receive it?" (1 Corinthians 4:7b)

This evening and what will be a simple and I hope humble but glorious family Holy Communion Celebration we will be joining the angels and archangels giving thanks to God.

"Not to us, O Lord, not to us, but to your name give glory, for the sake of your steadfast love and your faithfulness!" (Psalm 115:1)

it is my prayer that this evening in our wonderful family service there will be time for An Act of Thanksgiving to God and later a time for renewal and recommitment in An Act of Commitment, as we begin the next 10 years our life as a Diocese.

THE THEME OF SYNOD- REMEMBER JESUS

Two years ago in Vancouver at Good Shepherd Church, based one 2 Timothy 3:14-17 our theme was "Thoroughly Equipped for Every Good Work." That Synod rightly was

all about the Bible. It is in the Bible alone that we find the salvation of Jesus. It is in the Bible alone that we can get to know God and know his will. It is in the Bible alone that we are taught and trained, reprov'd and corrected in what it is to be a follower of Jesus. And it is in the Bible alone that no matter what ministry we are called to it is the Bible that will equip us for every good work.

Like the reformers of 500 years ago we have taken our stand on the Bible. We are committed to becoming Biblically grounded such that all of us whether clergy or laity have framed our lives truly by the Bible alone.

Last year, 2016, our theme was based on Colossians 4: 2-4 and the summary phrase to describe those three verses was "praying for an open door for the gospel."

It is the Lord's will to build as Jesus builds the church to be using the prayer of God's people. "unless the Lord builds the house they labor in vain who build it" - so we do well to look to the Lord to build a house in prayer.

ANiC is about building biblically faithful gospel sharing Anglican churches. For this to happen there must be prayer.

"And without faith it is impossible to please him, for whoever would draw near to God must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who seek him." (Hebrews 11:6) So we do well to seek him diligently in prayer.

As I have traveled the country I'm encouraged by the growing environment, even a climate of prayer, which I believe I detect.

Thinking of the building in which we are now meeting, I am aware that long before the ground had been broken and this building had begun to be erected, members of St. Georges regularly conducted prayer walks in this community and I believe continue to do so.

It should therefore come as no surprise then that out of the prayers of God's people here there has been not only a heart for the community which has grown-up in this congregation but there is evidence of great fruitfulness and an "adding to their numbers daily" which is actually happening.

2015- The Bible- more Bible- the necessary path to gospel life and health
2016- Prayer for an open Door for the Gospel- more prayer- more gospel effectiveness

And so this year 2017 it should come as no surprise that the theme of this Synod is building on what we have concentrated on over the last few years. This year again based on three verses from 2 Timothy this time, 2 Timothy 2:8-10, our theme is Remember Jesus.

Now before Synod, our new communications officer, Scott Hunt kindly distributed an introduction to 2 Timothy which I wrote as hopefully some helpful background for this great letter that we are focusing on during these few days.

I'm guessing for many the information provided in that introduction would not be unfamiliar at all. Perhaps for some they would not have put it altogether in the way that I have attempted to do so. All the information, however, which I've attempted to put on paper can easily be gleaned by reading the Acts of the Apostles and by the Epistles of Paul.

Whether it was new information to you are not, my main concern is that you will have grasped the fact but the situation that Paul the writer found himself in as he wrote this great letter was about as dismal as any situation we could ever imagine:

- Alone in a horrible prison cell in Rome
- Abandoned and forgotten by most he had served in his ministry in the Gospel
- about to be martyred and knew it- his only crime was to be a follower of Jesus and an apostle who proclaimed the good news of Jesus

And he's writing to a young man, Timothy, who though in a very different kind of situation, himself is dealing with a church that Paul had founded but is now distressingly dysfunctional in so many ways. Timothy would seem was intimidated by the situation and by no means a natural leader in the way that typically we think of leaders.

It was into that kind of dismal situation and into that kind of dysfunction that the apostle Paul declares with such power and such real resolve- joyfully, confidently and in a sense he makes all the setbacks, even death itself, seem very small in comparison to the certainty of the glory that will be revealed all because of the gospel of Jesus Christ. And so he urges young Timothy to carry on in the grace that is in Christ Jesus with the gospel.

Remember Jesus- the gospel of Jesus stands- the Gospel works – the word is not bound

For the sake of the elect- living our lives as those sent by Jesus for the sake of those who are yet to receive the salvation that is Him alone- by choosing to be witnesses.

For which I am suffering bound with chains is a criminal- There is suffering, there is push back, from Satan, the world and our own flesh. This is a guarantee but the mercies of the Lord are there too and as John said in his first epistle” for he who is in you is greater than he who is in the world.” 1 John 4:4

With eternal glory- there is rejoicing in heaven over every sinner who repents– glory, and there is a day, the Day, when men and women, boys and girls from all tribes, nations, languages, cultures will gather around the Throne and worship the Lamb who was slain– glory!

My friends, this is where we stand as a Diocese and this is what it is to be with Paul and Timothy a gospel people because good news even when you are on death row you can know- the gospel works.

IT'S HARVEST TIME!

At this point in the church I believe I need to share my heart with you and seek to be as clear and open and transparent as I can. I don't want anyone to be unclear as to what it is I'm trying to say so I asked the Holy Spirit to give clarity.

All this discussion and all of this teaching on the gospel is for me no small thing. As of

today I am 66 years old going on 67 (kind of like the song and the Sound of Music). You do the math and you will know that my tenure as Diocesan is very limited. As such, I have spent some serious time this past summer praying and thinking about this mid term Synod and how I can best spend my next few years and what it is that I pray and hope and long will happen during these coming years.

Early in July, Bishop Trevor kindly hosted a bit of retreat in his home in Victoria for himself and Bishop Stephen and myself and delightfully Bishop Todd Atkinson was present with us, as well, which was very helpful. At the time we all shared our hearts longing and I asked these bishops from the bottom of my heart to support me in praying for an expansion of the witness and the harvest for the gospel through each congregation and therefore the diocese of ANiC. They graciously and fervently joined me in a prayer for this next 10 years that it would be seen to be a decade of evangelism.

At the time, we thought about the Anglican communion through the Lambeth conference of 1988 designating from 1988 to 1998 as a decade of evangelism. If you're old, like me, and were a member of the Anglican Church of Canada at the time, you may remember that occasionally this decade was mentioned but I'm not aware that the designation of a decade of evangelism led to much serious gospel initiatives as result of this focus. (The north would likely be the exception.) This is the way it was in the Western world and of course during that decade and since rather than there being gospel growth and growth in numbers the statistics show a steady decline which continues.

But for provinces like Nigeria, Uganda, and Kenya they turned their attention towards serious witness and evangelism and the result has been staggering growth which again continues to this day. The connection between the decade of evangelism and the profile of these great churches is very clear and it is my hope that in the future Synods we may hear from some of our GAFCON friends about what that decade was like and how they prayerfully proceeded through those ten years.

After the summer, I came upon the Diocese of Singapore Diocesan Digest of May 2017. I am a big fan of their Diocesan Bishop Rennis Ponniah. in his covering article for this paper the title was "It's harvest time", based on John 4: 31-38 which will be our gospel reading this evening. In his wonderful article he begins by asking a question; " "have

you ever been so happy that you did not need to eat? In this account in John 4, Jesus did not need food because he was exhilarated by the prospect of many, many lives being hungry and ready to receive the good news of the kingdom of God.”

I can assure you by this opening sentence he had me hooked because I long for that kind of heart and experience not only for myself but for all of you all of the members ANiC including our boys and girls. For years now I have been deeply impressed by what Paul described of what happened in the church of Thessalonica: 1 Thessalonians 1:5- because our gospel came to you not only in Word, but also in power and in the Holy Spirit and with full conviction.” I believe the Lord wants this to be the routine experience of all our churches and it is my prayer that in the next 10 years this will be our testimony more and more.

I have been praying dear friends for a capacity by the Holy Spirit to urge this Synod with as much urgency and fervour as I can muster so that you and I may take steps to not only talk about being witnesses, bold witnesses but to do everything in our power by prayer and preparation to be ready and willing to open our mouths and speak about Jesus regularly to the people around us, and invite them to respond to Jesus in repentance and faith and to believe God that many will , who will in turn do the same with others, who will in turn do the same with others, until he come.

I don't want to “guilt” you into anything but I do pray the Holy Spirit will create in us an exhilarating longing, that Jesus had as he shared with the woman at the well. I pray the Holy Spirit in these days will “up the ante” and create in us a deep sense of expectation and commitment to witness to Jesus.

Yes there are five priorities but all five are gospel priorities and all five ultimately look to us to grow as witnesses.

Would you join me in praying and would you join me in committing yourself to be a bold witness and to do everything in your power to see the gospel go forward in power?

It would be possible, I believe, in the short term, for us to organize and set up church plants and make provision to enjoy wonderful worship and deep fellowship but all that would fall far short if the end result of this diocese was not an expansion of the kingdom by people coming to salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. That's where the

glory is and that is the priority of why the Father sent the Son into the world and why it is that a man who was about to be martyred writing a letter to another discouraged young man could say: “ I endure everything for the sake of the elect that they also may obtain the salvation that is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory.”

Dear friends, the next 10 years of this Diocese needs to be a harvest time.

POSITIONING OURSELVES FOR HARVEST!

ACNA and GAFCON- Right from the start, we have been so blessed as a Diocese to be part of a company of Anglicans worldwide who have a same heart for the Lord Jesus, for the gospel, for the word of God and a commitment to the harvest because without the Lord Jesus people are lost. Everyone needs a Saviour.. Everyone needs Jesus.

In 2007 the Lord provided us with the Primate, Archbishop Greg Venables and Primate of what was known as the Province of the Southern Cone, with our own Moderator and Diocesan, Bishop Don Harvey. Later in June 2009 we became one of the founding Dioceses of what is known as the Anglican Church in North America ACNA with Archbishop Bob Duncan as our first Primate. Later in 2014 Archbishop Foley Beach became our second Primate which happened to coincide with me following Bishop Don as the second diocesan of ANiC.

We are truly blessed to be part of ACNA and thank God for all the Dioceses and all our fellow members of the Province and particularly for our first and now our present Primates.

The recent conclave in Victoria was a source of great prayerful concern for many of us as we prepared for that meeting. I am very grateful that the outcome was to uphold the Constitution which is of great importance and enables us now as a Diocese to move forward, full steam ahead, with **all** hands on deck in our Gospel harvesting ministry.

The story of GAFCON, like the history of the progress of the church itself, continues to be a bit of a roller coaster. This should come as no surprise that it is this way because this is so important and therefore, once again, as we would have expected ,based on 2 Timothy, there is lots of pushback. The recent communiqué from the Primates Meeting

in Canterbury, this month, was a source of great disappointment to many of us but the most recent letter of the GAFCON Chairman, Archbishop Okoh was a complete joy and a great assurance that we are in the right place. The strength and clarity of his letter and the strong encouragement for us of ACNA was very heartening and timely. Clearly our home is in GAFCON and we look forward to the next GAFCON Conference in Jerusalem in June 2018.

I believe by our membership in ACNA and GAFCON, Fellowship of Confessing Anglicans, we are exactly where we need to be for the harvest.

Five Priorities- From 2014 on we have all been praying that these five priorities would become a transformational reality in every ANiC congregation. To stand with our congregations we have five National committees to provide resources, encouragement and consultation towards each of these priorities taking root and thriving in each congregation. This continues to be our whole plan. It is our conviction that each of these priorities needs to be operative in every congregation for there to be a optimum harvesting for the kingdom. This afternoon there will be introductions, thanksgivings and reports and updates provided from each of these five areas. Remember that all the real action happens in the congregation.

New website- It is well-known that in ministry today your website presence is of great importance. Accordingly, to begin our next 10 years, we have overhauled our website and believe that the new website is going to build on what has been our website in the past and be a very useful, attractive and accessible window to the world of who we are and what we're about. At this time I want introduce the Rev. Alastair Sterne who will give a brief presentation on this new website.

More gathering- The Lord is always way ahead of us and doing things that we would never have dreamt were possible. Of course we are all aware that the whole Anglican realignment can be confusing and disruptive. But in the mercies of the Lord however it is also very exciting to see how God is bringing together folk for the sake of harvesting in these days. This is entirely the Lord's mercies and his leading and working and has nothing to do with our good planning. In the goodness of the Lord, he continues to bring us individuals to join us from other previous jurisdictions to help us

plant congregations for the harvest. He is also drawing us and whole groups together in unexpected ways. From an Anglican polity viewpoint, from a governance viewpoint this can be a challenge but nevertheless the Lord keeps doing it and we stand back with joy. Though we want to be a source of encouragement and be available to folk always when God brings groups or individuals and us to them, it really is ANiC who are the ones who are enriched as a Diocese by our growing fellowship and partnerships in the gospel all for the sake of the harvest.

At this time then, I want to publicly give thanks to God particularly for blessing us with a growing partnership with three groups and welcome their leaders to represent them. Each of the three we have a different relationship with but in each case a very significant level of fellowship and sharing in ministry. With one, we are now canonically connected, with another we are in communion with them and prayerfully seeking to move with the support and encouragement of our Primate and in consultation with our Provincial bodies towards full incorporation and one that is simply a great joy to labour side by side in our shared gospel mandate.

1. In June 30, 2017 Bishop Andy Lines was consecrated to be a bishop at the ACNA Provincial Assembly and at that time was designated by GAFCON Primates to be a Special Missionary Bishop to Europe and also at that same time amazingly and wonderfully, for us, he became temporarily a Bishop of ANiC and those congregations who will be connected to him become members of our Diocese too. This is a huge honour for us and the fact of this temporary special relationship, though it might rightly be brief, will always be for us a source of great joy. It is our humble prayer that in some way our relationship in these days will enhance growth in the harvest of people to Christ both here in North America and in the United Kingdom and all of Europe. Very briefly then I want to introduce Bishop Andy Lines by video and then the Rev. Andrew Symes who graciously has traveled all the way from England to represent +Andy.
2. For the past three years it is been our joy to draw closer and closer to Bishop Todd Atkinson and the group that he represent called Via Apostolica. Bishop Trevor has been to Lethbridge several times to their annual CANON and I once and of course Bishop Todd and some of their clergy have joined us in our last three Synods and Provincial Assembly and at the personal invitation of Archbishop Foley, he and Cheri, his wife were at our January, 2017, College of Bishops. Most recently a priest from Via, the Reverend Chad Block has become the rector of Ascension ANiC Church, Langley. It is our prayer and hope that in

the near future we could actually come together. At this stage we consider ourselves to be in communion together and in the days ahead we intend to consider the complexities of what it would mean to be even more closely connected and how to get there for the sake of the harvest.. It is my joy to welcome Bishop Todd Atkinson.

3. Happily for us in ANiC, seemingly by a unexpected fact of geography our Diocesan offices in Burlington are not many miles away from the Canadian office and training Centre for Gospel for Asia at Stoney Creek, ON. The Rev. Pat Emerick is their leader and has very faithfully traveled to most of our recent Diocesan Synods and Provincial Councils and Provincial Assembly along with others from GFA. It is also such a joy that many staff and students are very involved in a number of our local ANiC congregations and several are volunteers here at this Synod. I welcome the Rev. Pat Emerick.

Assisting bishop for missionary planning (organizing ourselves for the harvest)- A few days ago I sent out a notice to let everyone know of the the fact that in the summer I had appointed Bishop Ron Ferris to be our Assisting Bishop for Missionary Planning. I am thrilled and relieved that he accepted this extremely important and timely function. As you can imagine, all the developments as described above in **more gathering** and even the fact that one of our priests and his family are making plans to move to Israel- all these exciting developments require a lot of thought and wisdom as to how to organize these various relationships all in a way which is compatible with Anglican polity and governance and facilitates the most harvest for the kingdom. As a Diocese when I began as Diocesan, you may remember that I signified at the time that I wanted to put the notion of multiple dioceses coming out what is now one Diocese called ANiC on hold. At this stage then, I am asking Bishop Ron as part of his mandate to include this along with all the other developments in our thinking and planning for the future and that he would help us decide what is the best way forward for the sake of the harvest. Bishop Ron is not only highly skilled in this area but is very passionately involved already and has represented us wonderfully most recently at The mission roundtable in Singapore and it's just arrived directly from there.

Protecting the harvest- in our study of 2 Timothy we will see that always as the church goes forward there is pushback from Satan, from the world and from our own

flesh- all of which hate the things of God. To cheerfully wander into a battlefield without any thought of the fact that there is an enemy with serious weaponry would be very foolish and we must not do that.

We must- pray and trust the Lord for the covering by the blood of Jesus over every part and every person that make up our Diocese.

We must- Study the Scriptures such that we can handle accurately the word of truth and be warned and reprov'd of danger. David in Psalm 19 said of the Scriptures: 'moreover, by them is your servant warned; and keeping them there is great reward.' (vs.11) we must put on the whole armor of God that Ephesians 6 speaks about.

We must be prepared and equipped, when needed, to deal by the resources the Lord has given, all very carefully and strictly according to Anglican direction with the permission of the bishop in Deliverance Ministry where there is obviously activity by Satan and his demonic realm that requires this ministry. I am very grateful that our Episcopal Vicar, Bishop Don and Archdeacon Paul and the Rev. Ann Crossland have been studying and being trained and will be giving leadership to this area in our Diocese.

There has never been a time in recent history where speaking of protection is more necessary. The ongoing free use of abortion to terminate pregnancies is so horrific most of us don't even want to think about it. But who will stand up to protect the unborn if the Church doesn't. And now in Canada, the legislation which is quickly becoming part of our nation and culture, a culture of death, is medically assisted dying which is putting doctors, medical institutions, families and patients in an impossible and evil situation. Anglicans for Life Canada, under the direction of our own Reverend Vicky Hedelius, the AFLC National Director as a group lives to help you and your congregation in this area. Make no mistake, the killing of babies and the killing of those who are in immense suffering is Satan, who hates life and seeks to steal kill and destroy, it is his preemptive strike so that these dear dear vulnerable people cannot hear the good news and receive the salvation that is in Christ Jesus. I urge you and your congregation to pray about becoming a Life Affirming Church for the sake of the harvest.

We must all continued to be vigilant particularly for vulnerable peoples who are the

younger and the older members of our congregations. I'm very grateful for our Plan to Protect policy and count on all of us to be vigilant and careful in these areas.

Two new Canons Since our beginning as a diocese, it has been a joy to see there develop a growing group of Canons and Archdeacons, all of whom are giving great leadership not only in their respective congregations but beyond for the Diocese. Today, I am delighted to announce the appointment of two new Canons. I am appointing **the Reverend Ray David Glenn to be our Canon for Community Outreach Initiatives** and **the Reverend Mike Stewart to be Canon for Church Development**. I am excited about these appointments because I believe both have already shared much with the Diocese but have much to offer in the days ahead. Both men have been part of our Diocese leading their respective wonderful congregations right from the start and in that capacity they and their churches are wonderful examples of what they have been named for as Canons of our Diocese. As it happens, the **now Canon Ray David is host rector of this Synod** and it is my joy to further announce that **next year's Synod the host rector will be Canon Mike** as he and St. Matthew's, Abbotsford have graciously invited Synod to their parish in Abbotsford.

A wonderful team for the harvest- When the Bible talks about harvest, there is always joy. There is great joy in the harvest. For me labouring with my fellow bishops, clergy and each congregation, our Archdeacons and Canons, our amazing Diocesan staff and our ANiC Council already is a great joy. I thank God for the privilege and the joy of laboring together in partnership in the gospel with all of you faithful servants of the Lord- all this for the sake of the elect that they too will receive the salvation that is in Christ Jesus.

OPEN OUR MOUTHS AND SPEAK ABOUT JESUS

At the end of Acts 8 there is the account of the Spirit of God calling Philip to leave the excitement of a revival that was going on in Samaria and travel into the desert and there he came upon one individual who happened to be a court official of Queen Candace of Ethiopia. He had been to Jerusalem and now he was returning home and interestingly was reading the Scriptures as he rode along in his chariot.

Philip, led by the Holy Spirit rushed up beside the chariot and offered to be of service. When asked a question from the book of Isaiah, he was ready as he knew the Word and then it says: “Then Philip opened his mouth, and beginning with this Scripture he told him the good news about Jesus.”

This is exactly what I want to do in my remaining days and I invite you to join me. What joy there will be in the harvest!

Dear friends, let's open our mouths and talk about Jesus.

Lord Jesus Christ, you stretched out your arms of love on the hard wood of the cross that everyone might come within the reach of your saving embrace: So clothe us in your Spirit that we, reaching forth our hands in love, may bring those who do not know you to the knowledge and love of you; for the honor of your Name. *Amen.*