

What takes your breath away?

God's plan – *'the mystery of his will to bring unity to all things in heaven and on earth under Christ'* (Ephesians 1:9-10) – was breathtaking to the Apostle Paul.

God doesn't merely save sinners; he creates a new society in which culture does not separate and race is never a barrier — in Jesus Christ.

Paul is moved to pray – but he delays (3:3, 14) to say more about this mystery. *'The mystery (3:3,4,6,9) of Christ that through the gospel the Gentiles are heirs together with Israel'* (3:2-7).

The mystery must be proclaimed.

1. To the Gentiles (3:8).
2. To the rulers and authorities in the heavenly realms (3:10).

We are God's 'art gallery of grace' put on display to show how people who are naturally hostile; ethnically diverse; sexually different; and socially distant can be joined together in Jesus Christ.

Through the Church, the whole universe sees gospel life with barriers down and divisions removed - here – today – now. Do we understand our part in God's plan?

For what do we pray?

For this reason, I kneel before the Father, from whom every family in heaven and on earth derives its name.

I pray that out of his glorious riches he may strengthen you with power through his Spirit in your inner being, so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith. And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, may have power, together with all the Lord's holy people, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, and to know this love that surpasses knowledge—that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God. Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever! Amen.

We need power to come to church and to be the church before a watching world - growing in our knowledge of God's love.

The love of Jesus Christ is as wide as the universe; as long as eternity; as deep as the sin it has redeemed us from; and as high as the throne of God in heaven.

Wherever – whenever – whatever.
Jesus says: "I'll join you there."

I can no longer condemn or hate a brother for whom I pray, no matter how much trouble he causes me. His face, that hitherto may have been strange and intolerable to me, is transformed in prayer into the countenance of a brother for whom Christ died, the face of a forgiven sinner.

Dietrich Bonhoeffer (Life Together)