

Chant:

Adapted by Brian McLaren

This is a simple chant form that I've been teaching people around the world. Drawing from our monastic heritage, chant allows us to savor words of Scripture, unifying our hearts and voices in a desire to hear the Word speak to us through the words as we form them and hold them with our lips, lungs, and voices. This poem from Paul's letter to the Colossians may have been a hymn in the early church. It presents a vision of Christ as the true authority, relativizing Caesar and all other "principalities and powers." Christ brings peace – not through swords and spears (or bombs and guns), but through love that led him to forgive even as he died. Caesar used the cross to dominate; Christ used the cross in a radically different way, celebrated in this chant.

You can use this chant form by putting a passage of Scripture in singable lines. Any line that is printed or projected at the left margin is sung on a single tone until the last word, where melody goes down a full note and then back up to the original note. Any line that is printed or projected with indentation (or perhaps with a different color) is sung on a single tone, but then at the last word, the voices rise by a minor third interval and then back to the original note. Of course, there are many other forms of simple Scripture-singing too – and new forms waiting to be invented as well.

Christ is the image of the God who can't be seen.
Christ is the image of the God who can't be seen.
 The firstborn of all creation.

In him all things were created.
Things in heaven and on earth
 Things visible and invisible
 Whether thrones or dominions, rulers or powers
All things have been created through him
All things have been created for him.

And he is before all things.
All things hold together in him.
 And he is the head of the body, the church
 He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead.

So he has the first place in everything.
 For in him all the fullness -
 The fullness of God -
 Was pleased to dwell.

In Him God was pleased to reconcile all things
 All things to himself,
 All things on earth,
 all things in heaven

By making peace through the blood of his cross.
By making peace through the blood of his cross.