



Community of Christ

CHRIST'S MISSION, OUR MISSION

June 1, 2020

Dear friends,

It has been a difficult week. We continue to face racial injustice in our country. As US citizens we have the right to speak in the public square. As disciples we have the responsibility to speak when we see injustice. Silence is complicit with perpetuating injustice. Our voices name injustice and expose unnecessary suffering. This is an important first step toward cultivating the seeds of change.

As a church we speak clearly on the Worth of All Persons and making Responsible Choices:

“...human beings often fear, hate, and abuse each other because of ignorance about such factors as socioeconomic status, culture, race, gender, age, size, sexual orientation, and mental or physical disability. Such prejudicial behavior undermines the personal and spiritual development of both abuser and abused and denies the mutual benefits of shared giftedness.”

—Human Diversity, World Conference Resolution 1226, 1992, page 45
www.CofChrist.org/common/cms/resources/Documents/WCR-Texts-July2019.pdf

You who are my disciples must be found continuing in the forefront of those organizations and movements which are recognizing the worth of persons and are committed to bringing the ministry of my Son to bear on their lives.

—Doctrine and Covenants 151:9

God, the Eternal Creator, weeps for the poor, displaced, mistreated, and diseased of the world because of their unnecessary suffering. Such conditions are not God's will. Open your ears to hear the pleading of mothers and fathers in all nations who desperately seek a future of hope for their children. Do not turn away from them. For in their welfare resides your welfare.

—Doctrine and Covenants 163:4a

Oneness and equality in Christ do not mean uniformity. They mean Unity in Diversity and relating in Christ-like love to the circumstances of others as if they were one's own. They also mean full opportunity for people to experience human worth and related rights, including expressing God-given giftedness in the church and society.

—Doctrine and Covenants 165:3e

“...since the time of Jesus and his first followers, God has called for the rise of communities of disciples that live in oneness and equality as a witness of the power of the gospel to reconcile and bring peace. As we go forth from this Conference focused on “One in Christ,” we must resist the efforts of those trying to hijack the gospel and the church to promote their visions of intolerance, prejudice, and hate in the name of Christ.

All my life I have heard sermons, sung hymns, and listened to discussions about Zion. According to the vision before us, God sees a church that doesn't just speak and sing of Zion. God sees one that "live[s], love[s], and share[s] as Zion: those who strive to be visibly one in Christ, among whom there are no poor or oppressed."

—Doctrine and Covenants 165:6a,
President Steve Veazey, 2016 closing address

As disciples we continually must examine our prejudices through study and spiritual practice. This equips us to engage in constructive dialogue and creative, nonviolent actions to bring change. Various avenues to explore as we increase our understanding include:

- National Council of Churches USA [statement](#)
- *White Fragility: Why It's So Hard for White People to Talk about Racism* by Robin DiAngelo and Michael Eric Dyson
- Resources provided by organizations dedicated to the work of antiracism, such as the NAACP.
- Learning how to advocate for racially just policies in your community
- Consulting with the Community of Christ Diversity and Inclusion Team

Our commitment to addressing racial injustice must not fade with media coverage or languish in partisan political divide as we move to the next crisis. It is an ongoing struggle. We are far from realizing the dream expressed in the words of Martin Luther King Jr., who wrote, "I have a dream that my four little children will one day live in a nation where they will not be judged by the color of their skin but by the content of their character."

In these uncertain and troubling times, let us remember we are engaged in divine purpose. We will find hope, strength, and resolve as we journey together.

As Christ's body, lovingly and patiently bear the weight of criticism from those who hesitate to respond to the divine vision of human worth and equality in Christ. This burden and blessing is yours for divine purposes.

And, always remember, the way of suffering love that leads to the cross also leads to resurrection and everlasting life in Christ's eternal community of oneness and peace. Trust in this promise.

—Doctrine and Covenants 165:b–c

May the Spirit bring assurance, hope, and stubborn persistence for the journey ahead.

In Christ's peace,

USA Apostles

Barbara Carter
Janné Grover
Ron Harmon
Robin Linkhart
Lachlan Mackay
David Nii
Arthur Smith (Mexico-Texas MC)
Mareva Arnaud Tchong (Pacific Island MC)