



CONSERVATIVE CONGREGATIONAL CHRISTIAN CONFERENCE



RACIAL RECONCILIATION

Preamble

“After this I looked and there before me was a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, tribe, people and language, standing before the throne and in front of the Lamb” (Revelation 7:9). The Conservative Congregational Christian Conference (CCCC) embraces this glorious hope of all the people of God, which is the Church of Jesus Christ.

Christ’s desire is for “those who will believe in me...that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you” (John 17:20,21). The Good Shepherd expressed His compassionate desire for His Church when He said, “I have other sheep that are not of this flock, I must bring them also. They too will listen to my voice, and there shall be one flock and one shepherd.” (John 10:16)

The need for worldwide racial reconciliation is great. The sins of prejudice, bigotry, racism and ethnocentrism in all their sinful manifestations exist both individually and institutionally. The lethal combination of prejudice plus power creates racial discrimination in all its depravity. The solution is found only in the atoning death of Jesus Christ and His Church, whom He calls to be ambassadors of reconciliation in the world (II Corinthians 5:15-21; Galatians 3:28).

Moreover, Congregationalists have historically been courageous in speaking out against the godless practice of racism. For example, nineteenth century abolitionist Lewis Tappan, a Congregationalist layman, declared: “Abolitionism is a belief that American slavery is a crime against man and a sin against God...it is a duty to do all we lawfully and scripturally can for its overthrow.” We are called to the same kind of Biblical courage today! Christ’s call to reconciliation between brothers and sisters will require courage and obedience (Matthew 5:23,24).

Scriptural Considerations

God’s written Word declared that all people are sinners by nature; and given the opportunity, sinners by choice (Romans 5:12-21; 3:9-12). This common sinful rebellion has estranged us from our Creator; and no effort of our own is able to reconcile us to our God, who alone is the giver of eternal life (John 3:16-18; Titus 3:5). God, in His gracious mercy and love, sent His only Son, Jesus Christ, to die on the cross in payment for our sins (Romans 5:6-8). All who repent and believe in Him have been born again and are thus forgiven and have gained the right to be called God’s children (John 1:12). In this gracious action, those who were once at enmity with God have been reconciled to Him (Acts 3:19-26; Romans 5:9-11; 8:12-17; II Corinthians 5:14-21).

Sin not only separates us from God; it also divides us from one another. As such, we understand racial and ethnic enmity as a tragic expression of universal human sinfulness (Galatians 5:19-21). Yet, we must affirm that just as we are dependent upon God for our creation and redemption, so He alone is the source of all peace, reconciliation, and fellowship between people. The apostle Paul teaches that the cross of Christ has taken away the “enmity” and the “middle wall of partition” between Jew and Gentile believers (Ephesians 2:14,15). This includes removal of the historical barriers to God’s saving grace, as well as the enmity which had previously existed between these disparate groups (Ephesians 2:11-22. Cf. John 4:1-42; Romans 11:12-21; I John 4:7-11).

This is a very challenging and transforming truth. It exposes the sinful attitudes and prejudices that human beings have toward peoples not like themselves. The Acts of the Apostles traces the achievements and struggles of those called to testify to the Gospel truth that God, in His grace, “shows no partiality” (Acts 10:9-48; 15:1-21; 28:25-29. Cf. Matthew 28:19). This same grace proved a stumbling block for Peter as illustrated when Paul rebuked him for withdrawing from the fellowship of his Gentile brethren (Galatians 2:11-12).

Implementation

Therefore, the CCCC is committed to responding to Christ’s desire for unity among His disciples as expressed in John 17:22 and by reflecting the diversity of the Bride of Christ depicted in Revelation 7:9. To give substance to this commitment requires a continuous, concerted effort. Therefore the CCCC will pursue the following strategies and goals.

1. We will renounce and decry the sins of prejudice, bigotry, racism and ethnocentrism in all their sinful manifestations, individually and institutionally. We affirm there is one human race, and so any arbitrary attributing of particular status based upon color, culture or other characteristics is contrary to the grace of God demonstrated in His making “the two one new man.” When individuals or societies act upon such false distinctions, they perpetuate the sin of racism.
2. The CCCC recognizes the need to evangelize the entire spectrum of American culture, including the fastest growing segment of our population in our urban centers. Our Conference is called to serve all people groups whether in cities, towns, villages, Indian reservations or temporary quarters that house migrant farm workers. Therefore, we will identify, call and support gifted persons to:
 - a. Recruit seminarians into Conference Care who are called to serve in urban settings and among minority people groups upon graduation.
 - b. Seek to bring unaffiliated urban and other churches into the Conference.
 - c. Facilitate networking between urban churches and Conference ministries.
 - d. Stimulate church multiplication in urban and other areas, specifically reaching out to minority communities.
3. We will schedule workshops at our Annual Meetings that address urban multicultural ministry issues. In these ways, we believe the Conference will be reaching out in the spirit of the Great Commission in order to make disciples of ALL nations.