



Uniting Aboriginal & Islander Christian Congress

PASTORAL LETTER – RACISM AND POLICE BRUTALITY

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Over the past week we have seen the great outpouring of grief in the United States with the loss of Mr George Floyd and the impact that this had had on his family, the African American community and the world at large.

It boggles the mind as to how such inhumanity continues to exist in the modern world in which we live, yet it still does

I recall the words of Rev Dr Martin Luther King who observed that:

“Man's inhumanity to man is not only perpetrated by the vitriolic actions of those who are bad. It is also perpetrated by the vitiating inaction of those who are good.”

Here in Australia I am constantly reminded of the journey that First Peoples, my people, have had to endure and are continuing to endure, and yet the resilience of the First Nations continues to shine through such great adversity.

As Christians we are called to stand up against injustice and oppression. The Prophet Amos (Amos 5:24) speaks very clearly in relation to this matter where he says; “But let justice roll down like waters, and righteousness like an ever flowing stream” – a line Dr King famously echoed in his “I Have a Dream” speech.

The context of this powerful statement is a prophetic denunciation of the ‘sacrifices and meal offerings’ of a people who have failed to keep the covenant, which is constituted by justice and fairness.

The noblest of intentions can lead to the worst outcomes.

In his famous work “A Model of Christian Charity” (1630), the Puritan John Winthrop called on fellow departing colonists to be a “light unto the nations” and a “city upon a hill”, and to build a community based upon principles of justice, fairness, and regard for others.

What a disaster that enterprise turned out to be for our North American First Nations brothers and sisters.

Almost 400 years later, I hope a new generation of Americans can reclaim that dream of the “city upon a hill” – and make it a reality in a way that includes all of their countrymen and women regardless of the colour of their skin, in a way that also honours First Nations peoples.

Today, along with so many people and communities worldwide, I encourage us to be a light that shines upon the darkness of bigotry, racism, intolerance and hatred and to be that beacon of hope and life with a message of hope and peace that emanates from the Prince of Peace, our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

Rev Mark Kickett
Interim National Chairperson
Uniting Aboriginal and Islander Christian Congress

3 June 2020