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continues to search for answers outside of God’s wisdom. We, who have been rescued by God’s grace and through his mercy, are very familiar with this way of life. It was once our journey as individuals outside of Christ, trying to live our lives our own way only to continue down the path of destruction. Yet, praise be to the Lord our God for saving us from this corrupt generation!

We are now faced with another occasion for our light to shine brightly. It may be that our diversity and our love for all people will be used at this very hour to be a beacon of hope to those who are searching. Today as we gather together, brothers and sisters from, quite literally, all backgrounds, we are preparing to walk out into a world that is in turmoil. Society is telling us that we have to choose sides in a battle where no one wins. Borrowing from the principles of Jesus and God’s Word, the late Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. said, “Darkness cannot drive out darkness; only light can do that. Hate cannot drive out hate; only love can do that.”

Yes, as disciples we do choose a side—but not a side defined by the world around us. We choose the side of Jesus. We choose love. We choose compassion. We choose reconciliation. We choose forgiveness. We choose to follow the way of God’s kingdom. We choose weapons that are not of this world (2 Corinthians 10:4).

Many of us, when we became disciples, changed the future of our families for generations to come. We left our old ways of thinking and responding and embraced God’s way. At the Reach2016 Summit in St. Louis this past week, nearly 18,000 of us sang songs together, laughed together, cried together, and prayed together. We not only noticed our diversity, we celebrated it. Together, along with those following online from across the world, we couldn’t help but think of the impact true Christianity has had on our broken society and our own broken lives.

Today, let us continue taking God’s message of hope to those without hope, and his message of love to those who clearly need it. The message is not based on our race or ethnic background, or our political views, or even our life experiences and perspectives. The message is based on the love of Jesus. “For he himself is our peace, who has made the two groups one and has destroyed the barrier, the dividing wall of hostility...” (Ephesians 2:14)

We continue to pray for the families of those who lost their lives at the hands of authorities sworn to serve and protect. We continue to pray for the families of the police officers who were slain while bravely doing their jobs. All of these families need our compassion and our prayers. Most importantly, all of these families and our entire world need to see the light and salvation of Jesus and the unity forged from following him.

Let us commit, as a fellowship, to pursuing love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control, as these come from God’s Spirit (Galatians 5:22-23). For these qualities will shine brilliantly in our darkened world and be a beacon of hope to all who seek true peace.

With gratitude for our partnership in the gospel,
AT Arneson, Lead Evangelist, Chicago Church of Christ
Ed Dawson, Dwight Decker, Todd Fink, Darren Gauthier, Jim Lefler and Mike Rawls, Elders of the Chicago Church of Christ

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• ***Spots Available for HOPE^{ww} Single Corps, “Dare to Serve” Trips***
HOPE worldwide — Monday, 25 July 2016

As we write this, we are in the middle of HYC season. Five trips took place in June (Alaska 1, Philadelphia 1, Chicago, Scotland, and Hawaii) and they were ...

• ***What Can a Christian Do for Racial Unity in the Church?***
Michael Burns, Minneapolis, MN — Monday, 25 July 2016
“There is just one race, the human race.” Have you heard that one? “The only answer to racism is Christ, because we are all one in Christ.” How about that one? These are the types of phrases that we routinely hear...

• ***DT Heart & Soul Hosts Speed Dating, Marrieds Event at Reach2016***
DT Heart & Soul — Thursday, 21 July 2016
DT Heart & Soul had an incredible time at Reach2016, with over 400 singles showing up for speed dating! We held four rounds of speed dating on one side of the room, along with interactive games, ice-breakers...

• ***John Oakes Reports on Missionary Teaching Trip to Ukraine, Moldova and Russia***
John Oakes, San Diego, CA — Wednesday, 20 July 2016
I arrive in Kiev after 24 hours of travel. I am met by Lyosha and Inna, who do administrative work for the church. I am staying at a hostel on the largest technical university here in Ukraine. I get some time with...

Chicago Church Leadership Letter on Unity

• ***UPCOMING EVENTS***

- 2016 West and Central African Discipleship Summit***
Accra, Ghana
August 5-7, 2016
- 2016 Korean Christian Conference***
Pyeongchang , Korea
August 19-21, 2016
- Egypt Church of Christ Conference***
Cairo, Egypt
August 22-25, 2016
- 2016 Australian Discipleship Summit***
Sydney, Australia
September 23-25, 2016
- Las Américas Discipleship Summit***
Lima, Peru
October 20-23, 2016
- 2016 Biblical Study Tour***
Tel Aviv, Jerusalem, Israel
October 21-31, 2016

CONNECTING DISCIPLES IN
CHURCHES AROUND THE WORLD

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AT Arneson & Elders, Chicago, IL

Editor’s note: The following is a letter read throughout the Chicago Church of Christ last weekend.

Dear brothers and sisters,

Today we want to address and acknowledge the crisis going on in our country. When we turn on the television, read the newspaper, or scan social media, we are reminded that our world is a fallen place. As disciples, we live in this world; we work in this world; we go to school in this world; we raise our families in this world. In short, we are affected by the fallen state of this world as much as anyone.



The violence, sin, evil, and the resulting tragedies coming from these spiritual forces continue to wreak havoc, damage our world, break our hearts, and threaten our unity. We, as disciples of Jesus, coming from all walks of life, stand in solidarity and yet we grieve. We grieve with all of the black families that have lost young men due to extrajudicial force and we grieve with the families of the victims of the hateful violence against police officers this past week.

Many of us are contemplating where we fit into what we are seeing unfold around us. Some of us are grappling with the personal impact of such events and their bearing on the unity within our fellowship. Though all of us know we need to pray for peace, we may wonder what else to bring before God. We may even wonder how to process the complex issues as they continue to emerge. Ultimately, we wonder: what is the role of true disciples of Jesus in our world at this time?

Jesus tells us in Matthew 5:14-15: “You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden. Nor do people light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a stand, and it gives light to all in the house.” (ESV)

Jesus’ words give us an enormous amount of encouragement as well as a high calling. As Christians, we are the light of the world. We have been given the opportunity to shine a light to lead the way to God. The world is lost, confused, hurting, and filled with anger and violence. The secular world

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