

Saturday August 12, 2017 10:30 pm

FROM BISHOP TRIMBLE OF THE INDIANA UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

Brother and Sisters,

I come to you this evening with a message that I did not intend to send today. In fact, I began this day with another topic on my heart and mind, however as I listened, watched, and learned more about the recent news in Charlottesville, Va., the Holy Spirit changed the words of my brain to expose what weighs heavily on my heart and the hearts of many across our country tonight.

Initially, I hoped to address the wide variety of preaching styles that I was fortunate enough to hear throughout my travels across the state throughout the past year; each richly unique in their ways of delivering God's word to all of God's people in our churches and our communities.

God's call and claim on our life is real and, most importantly, it cannot be ignored, as we would be running from what we are truly created to be.

For those of us called to live the Gospel message, in a time such as this, we must remember that the world needs the Church and we need the world, for neither can survive without the other.

I am reminded that there is division and discourse inside the walls of our Church, our homes, our government, on the walls of our Facebook accounts, and from the characters that we publish on Twitter. Many would argue, convincingly, that these are not ordinary times. Fear is on sale for half price and evil is ever present in global threats, relational discord, and dysfunctional leadership.

We are flooded with news that stirs us to our core, and that makes us more fearful of our brothers and sisters which threaten the health of a world in desperate need of what I heard a preacher share more than twenty-five years ago. "The Church has something to offer the world that the world can get from no other place." God reigns and the God we believe in is Love. We declare that Jesus Christ has and can make a way out of no way.

However, for the world to get anything from us, we must be honest and truthful. We can not avoid naming or calling out what is evil in its purest form ever manifested. Naming hate, injustice, and the sin of "-ism" is the only way for us to tackle the forces that would divide us and that would have any one of us believe that there is less opportunity to reach our highest God-given potential because of one group of people or another.

Brian Stevenson, founder and executive director of the Equal Justice Initiative and author of Just Mercy, said in an interview earlier this year, "In faith perspectives, to get to salvation — at least in the Christian tradition — you have to repent. There is no redemption without acknowledgment of sin. It's not bad to repent. It's cleansing. It's necessary. It's ultimately liberating to acknowledge where we were and where we want to go. We haven't done that collectively."

As our communities continue to wrestle with senseless acts of violence, as well as a recent rise in snakes that many thought to be dead and gone or at least they lied dormant in their appearance for years - it is the Church who can help unite and break down barriers and free those who are chained by society or by their own views, born in the falsity, that any human being is less than another.

So as the Body of Christ, I implore each of you to join me in living Truth by:

1. Sharing this in your congregation, communities, mission fields, workplaces, at your dinner tables, and beyond in the days ahead;
2. Recommitting to the vows that we took for our membership as United Methodist;
3. and Being living examples of the peace of which we are praying for in every corner of the world.

As we do all of these things remember that Together we are more.

Be encouraged,

Bishop Julius C. Trimble