



Churches Uniting in Christ

“That They May Be One”

January 14, 2007

January 15, 2007 marks the 21st anniversary celebration of Martin Luther King, Jr. Day and the fifth anniversary of Churches Uniting in Christ (CUIC).

The Rev. Dr. Suzanne Webb
Christian Church
(Disciples of Christ)
President

Bishop Ronald M. Cunningham
Christian Methodist
Episcopal Church
Vice President

Elder James Tse
Presbyterian Church USA
Treasurer

Mr. Abraham Wright
International Council of
Community Churches
Secretary

The Rev. Patrice L. Rosner
Director

On January 21, 2002 leaders representing 10 denominations assembled in Memphis, Tenn. at the historic Lorraine Motel, stood and viewed the site where the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. was slain on April 4, 1968. They gathered to sign an agreement committing the members and partners in mission of CUIC to express their unity in Christ by living more closely together and working together to combat racism in the church and in society. In their statement the Heads of Communion affirmed that we must hold a common vision for *God's Beloved Community* that is a community “committed to eradicating racism and making no peace with oppression.”

Growing out of the 40-year history of the Consultation on Church Union, the members of CUIC chose this sacred site of the National Civil Rights Museum to honor the prophetic vision for which Martin Luther King, Jr. lived, worked, and died. They pledged themselves “to be the church of Jesus Christ proclaiming and doing justice, and seeking peace.” The members of CUIC are called to be ambassadors of reconciliation in a world sold on the idolatries of privilege and racial exclusivity that continue to divide and alienate the family of God, denying the truth that we are all created in the image of the one God.

Common witness and service are two marks of our unity in Christ. Our partnership in CUIC recognizes that one barrier to the expression of unity in the Christian family is the continuing reality of racism in the church and in the human community. The vision of CUIC is that authentic unity may be born in the struggle for racial justice, and that our collective prophetic witness against injustice and oppression in all forms is a measure of our faithfulness to the Gospel.

Religious and secular reports remind us that there is still much to be done to dismantle and eradicate racism. We are hopeful that our efforts will not be in vain. We believe in the words of Martin Luther King, Jr. “There is a power in love that our world has not discovered yet.”

We CUIC leaders urge our congregations to join with other CUIC congregations in your community to discern ways to exercise common witness and common service as together we seek to dismantle racism and, in so doing, to be the voice and presence of God's love in the world.

Bishop Preston W. Williams
President, Council of Bishops
African Methodist Episcopal Church

Bishop George W. Walker, Sr.
Senior Bishop
African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church

The Rev. Dr. Sharon E. Watkins
General Minister and President
Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)

Bishop William Graves, Sr.
Senior Bishop
Christian Methodist Episcopal Church

The Rev. Mark Hanson
Presiding Bishop
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

The Most Rev. Katharine Jefferts Schori
Presiding Bishop and Primate
The Episcopal Church, USA

The Rev. Michael Livingston
President
International Council of Community Churches

The Rev. David Wickmann
President, Provincial Elders
Moravian Church Northern Province

The Rev. Clifton Kirkpatrick
Stated Clerk of the General Assembly
Presbyterian Church USA

The Rev. John Thomas
General Minister and President
United Church of Christ

Bishop William B. Oden
Council of Bishops Ecumenical Officer
United Methodist Church