



NORTHERN DISTRICT COUNCIL  
PENTECOSTAL ASSEMBLIES OF THE WORLD, INC.  
5TH EPISCOPAL DIOCESE



*Office of the Diocesan Bishop*  
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**REAFFIRMATION OF THE POSITION, HELD SINCE 1919,  
OF THE PENTECOSTAL ASSEMBLIES OF THE WORLD  
IN REGARD TO CIVIL RIGHTS AND HUMAN DIGNITY**

Today our nation finds itself in the midst of the period of social transition of staggering proportions. The struggle for civil rights and human dignity is fast approaching a crest. It is clear to men of good will everywhere that the church must speak out in this crisis in effort to give guidance and clarity to the situation. Since our Lord has said, "Ye are the light of the world," it would be a dereliction of duty if we stood silent and permitted the forces of radicalism and reaction to assume leadership.

We recognize that there are two kinds of rights, civil rights and divine rights. Civil rights are those rights given to man by civil law. Divine rights are those rights bestowed upon man by God. Since no civil law can abrogate divine law, it is clear that all laws made by man must be in harmony with, and designed to uphold, the law of God.

It has been pointed out by others that the founding fathers recognized this principle when they inserted in the Declaration of Independence the statement that "all men are created equal, and they are endowed by their creator with certain inalienable rights; that among these are life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness." The founding fathers further recognized that it was the duty of government to sustain and protect these divine rights, for they said, "to secure these rights governments are instituted among men."

It is easily seen that life is given to us of God. We cling to it and seek to preserve it. We hold it so dearly that the saying "self-preservation is the first law of nature" is accepted as being universally true. Even when a man deviates from this and succeeds in taking his own life, he is described by most people as being, at the time he took his life, mentally deranged.

Liberty also is a divine right. No people, regardless of race, creed, or national origin ever voluntarily submits to slavery. It must always be imposed upon the weak by the strong. Even those who would impose slavery upon others would die fighting to maintain their own liberty, and those who are under the yoke constantly yearn for the freedom that is theirs by divine right.

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"He hath showed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the LORD require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?" – Micah 6:8

The pursuit of happiness, although elusive, and hard to define, is also a divine right. All political and economic systems are designed ostensibly to bring happiness. All men are constantly seeking security from financial and physical and mental disaster. He seeks a good mate, a good home and lovely children. His friends, his vocation, his profession, his hobbies, everything is intended to bring to him the maximum in happiness. Even his relationship with God is in some respects designed to achieve this end, for the book of Revelation tells us of a place where there shall be "neither sorrow nor crying."

In view of the fact that life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness are gifts of God, we who are Christians and members of Christ's church firmly believe that racial segregation and discrimination in any of its varied forms and manifestations is un-Christian and un-Godly in every sense of the word. No man, government or state has the right to erect artificial barriers that tend to take away those divine rights that God has bestowed upon men.

It is doubly evil when men attempt to use God's word to destroy that which God has ordained. There are men, some evil, some misguided and some uninformed who preach racial division. They seek to separate rather than to unify; they seek to destroy rather than build. To those who are evil we leave them to the righteous judgment of the Almighty; those who are misguided or uninformed we pray for and ask our Lord to be merciful unto them.

The Scriptures throughout teach us that we should love one another. When Christ was asked which was the greatest commandment he answered by saying we love God with our whole being and love our neighbors as ourselves.

The Holy Scriptures also teach us that God so loved the world, not just a particular race, but the world, that he sent his only begotten Son. When the stroke fell upon Christ upon Calvary, it fell upon Him for all men.

We, therefore, reaffirm the principle taught in Scripture that all men are of infinite worth in the sight of God and that segregation and discrimination on a basis of race, in all its varied forms and manifestations (economic, political, religious, and social), is un-Christian and contrary to divine law.

For clarification, we remind all of our brethren and friends that the Pentecostal Assemblies of the World was organized in 1919 and that this statement is not a result of the present unrest in our country, but a reaffirmation of our principles held and practiced by us, since we have been from the very beginning, an interracial organization embracing all spirit-filled people regardless of race, color, or national origin.

**Authored by:  
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