

Series: Words & Deeds Part 1: “They Matter”
“Respond To The World’s Great Challenges”
Genesis 1:1-2:4a
Psalm 8
2 Corinthians 13:11-13
Matthew 28:16-20

Individuals and churches/faith communities must cry out for reconciliation.

Without the corresponding means of love and compassion, justice and unity, the end of reconciliation with God and others is evasive. Reconciliation leads to a better life for all.

The late professor Jacques Monod, the famous French geneticist and Nobel prize winner, in the course of a television session in Toronto with Mother Teresa, spoke of how in his opinion all our destiny was locked up in our genes, which shape and direct our character and outlook, thus destroying the individual. As he held forth on this theme, Mother Teresa sat with her eyes closed and her hands folded, deep in prayer. On being asked by the programme’s compere whether she had anything to say, she replied: “I believe in love and compassion,” and resumed her devotions. As the Professor was leaving the studio he was heard to mutter: “If I saw much more of that woman I should be in bad trouble!”¹

Living a life of reconciliation with God and others, with the corresponding means of love and compassion, justice and unity is threatening to one who has built their identity and understanding of safety and wellness with divisive and chaotic words and deeds.

The texts in Genesis 1:1-2:4a, Psalm 8, 2 Corinthians 13:11-13, and Matthew 28:16-20 assert that God created and continues to create, redeem, and sustain the kingdom of God on earth as it is in heaven. Which means that reconciliation is at the foundation of creation, redemption, and sustenance, for the kingdom of God on earth as it is in heaven.

¹Kitty Muggeridge, “Gazing on Truth” in *Christianity Today*, Vol. 29, no. 18.

In Matthew 28:16-20, we learn again that the one whose name is Emmanuel, “God with us,” is with us on the journey of love and compassion, justice and unity, bringing about reconciliation. Through our union in Christ, we partner with God to bring about the kingdom of God on earth as it is in heaven. Jesus told the eleven disciples to do the things in the world that he had taught them. They would be the mind, heart, ears, eyes, hands, and feet of Jesus. And such is the case for followers of Jesus today.²

The Confession of 1967 states this about the mission of the Church. “To be reconciled to God is to be sent into the world as his reconciling community. This community, the Church universal, is entrusted with God’s message of reconciliation and shares his labor of healing the enmities which separate women and men from God and from each other. Christ has called the Church to this message and given it the gift of the Holy Spirit.”³ Jesus sent the eleven disciples into the world to bring about reconciliation, that is salvation, as was his purpose.

On this Trinity Sunday, we embrace God’s mission of reconciliation. With this as our end, we adopt the means of love and compassion, justice and unity as we partner with God to create, redeem, and sustain the kingdom of God as it is in heaven on earth. The end of being reconciled matters. The means of love and compassion, justice and unity facilitate words and deeds which engage the world’s great challenges on the journey to reconciliation...with God and others.

²In the two paragraphs of textual analysis above, I have benefited from the thinking of Lynn Japinga, Andrew Foster Connors, Joel Marcus Lemon, Paul T. Nimmo, Sarah S. Henrich, Oliver Larry Yarbrough and Mary F. Foskett in Joel B. Green, Thomas G. Long, Luke A. Powery, Cynthia L. Rigby and Carolyn J. Sharp, editors, *Connections, Year A, Volume 3* (Louisville, Kentucky: Westminster John Knox Press, 2019), 2-5, 5-7, 8-9, 10-11, 12-13, 14-16 and 16-17.

³*The Book of Confessions* of the Presbyterian Church (USA), 9.31.

By being loving of and compassionate toward others, we collaborate with God as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit in bringing about the kingdom of God as it is in heaven on earth. Wherever we see reconciliation occurring, through words and deeds of love and compassion, justice and unity, we know God is at work overcoming divisive words and deeds. As congregations and individuals, God is always with us in words and deeds of love and compassion, justice and unity, while we're in the trenches responding, not reacting, to the world's great challenges. Amen!

*This sermon was preached on Trinity Sunday, 04 June 2023
by the Rev. Dr. Steven M. Marsh at Geneva Presbyterian Church in Laguna Woods, California*

Copyright © 2023
Steven M. Marsh
All rights reserved.