



THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

North Texas Annual Conference

P.O. Box 866188

Plano, Texas 75086-6188

Telephone: 972-526-5015 • Fax: 972-526-5014

Email: bishop@ntcumc.org

MICHAEL MCKEE
Resident Bishop

JOELL STANISLAUS
Executive Assistant

November 17, 2016

Events in our communities and across our nation since last week's election demonstrate the ugly and evil sin of racism that is still among us. In schools, universities, restaurants, and other places, children and adults have been on the receiving end of words and actions by persons who seek to instill fear and dominance over others because of race or religion. To justify this behavior, some have cried that we are too focused on political correctness. That is simply incorrect. We are focused on being faithfully true to the Lordship of Christ and to our own callings of ministry, whether we are clergy or laity.

How our culture or the norms of our society developed into climates of fear resulting in bullying, intimidation, or physical acts of violence is not easily understood. Yet while the question of how we got to this place can be postponed for another day, what cannot be postponed is how we will respond and intervene. To choose to ignore and not to intervene in what is occurring is a sin of omission.

When asked what was the greatest commandment, Jesus said, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is greatest and first commandment. And a second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets." ([Matthew 22:36-40](#))

In a parable known as The Good Samaritan, Jesus was unmistakably clear who is our neighbor. ([Luke 10:25-37](#))

A few simple questions arise from these well-known Biblical texts regarding our life together in our communities and our country: Does a student need to fear for her safety because another student tries to rip a hijab from her head? Should Hispanic students feel uneasy about graffiti on a sidewalk with the words, "Build that wall"? Should members of a congregation in Tennessee, or Maryland, or Indiana arrive to discover Nazi, racist, or other acts of vandalism on their property? Should an African-American veteran be challenged regarding his military service to our country? Should African-American students be subjected to racist literature and flyers posted on campuses? We would all answer "no!"

But our simple answers are not enough. As Christians, we must affirm the God-given worth of all human beings and acknowledge that persons who have different ages, opinions, occupations, religions, or ethnicities are God's children and our neighbors. What will you and I do the next time we hear a racist or demeaning comment directed at another? Will we be silent? Or will we speak a word of truth ... and justice?

Failing to speak and act now increases fear in others and contributes to their feelings of not being safe. And, if some are not safe, we will all be unsafe.

Let us lay aside the political differences heightened by the last election. And let us remember that we are called to serve the Christ and to love whom He loves. Therefore, despite our political differences, let us join hands and declare to the purveyors of fear and intimidation that their actions and words have no place among us.

Bishop Michael McKee
North Texas Annual Conference