



National Council of the Churches of Christ in the USA
OFFICE OF THE GENERAL SECRETARY

May 5, 2008

Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ:

Grace and peace to you in the name of our risen Savior!

There are numerous issues of pressing concern for the churches in this election year, including continuing violence in the Middle East, a domestic economy that is squeezing the poor, the escalating price of food around the world, and the need for affordable health care and immigration reform in our own country. Alongside all of these, however, must be the issue of racial justice.

The United Church of Christ has taken a lead in calling for “a sacred conversation on race” prompted in part by the controversy surrounding Dr. Jeremiah A. Wright, Jr., pastor of Trinity United Church of Christ where Senator Barack Obama is a member. But all of our churches are affected by the persistent, appalling legacy of racism in this culture. And all of our churches are committed to the biblical truth that every person, regardless of the color of their skin, is an infinitely-valued child of God to whom Christ says: “I have come that you may have life, and have it abundantly” (John 10:10)

With this in mind, we urge you to encourage this sacred conversation in your own communion. Materials that may be useful in your setting, including prayers and litanies, are available on the UCC website (www.ucc.org).

Every church, of course, is different. Some of you have been victims of white privilege; others have been more complicit in the continuation of systemic racial prejudice. All of us, however, have much to contribute to, and take from, such a conversation. All of us can ask: What does our faith have to say about this evil? How can our church respond to help make this society more just for every one of its citizens?

We are deeply grateful for the ministry God has done and continues to do through each of your churches, the community of communions that is the National Council of the Churches of Christ and for the heritage of opposing racism together through the National Council of Churches. May this invitation serve to build up our common life and to strengthen our shared witness to the gospel.

Sincerely,

Michael Kinnamon
General Secretary, NCC

John H. Thomas
General Minister and President, UCC