

FROM THE PULPIT

God speaks through new Scripture today

By Brad Bryant

FOR THE PANTAGRAPH

In March, representatives of the Community of Christ's 250,000 members from more than 50 nations met in Independence, Mo., at the 2007 World Conference, for community formation, dialogue, prophetic discernment, multicultural worship, renewing friendships and to transact the necessary business of a global church. In support of our international delegates, conference events were simultaneously translated into French, Spanish, Tahitian, Portuguese, Russian, Korean, Japanese, German, and Mandarin Chinese. Worship services allowed global participation via satellite and Web cast. Clips are available at <http://www.cofchrist.org/wc2007/updates/>

My wife Donna and I served as elected delegates from our area of Illinois, along with 2,800 other global delegates. At the March 25 evening worship, Steve Veazey, the church's

prophet/president, shared the inspired counsel that God had laid upon his heart.

As is our faith's practice, we don't just blindly accept such documents. We entered into several days of individual and collective prayer, discernment, study, and dialogue, seeking to understand God's intent for this message.

On Friday, March 30, the conference delegates voted to accept this message as modern-day scripture, representing the divine mind and will for our time.

You can find the entire document online for your prayerful study at <http://www.cofchrist.org/D&CI63/section163.asp>

We also understand that God is NOT just the God of the Community of Christ. His timeless messages are for the entire world, so I felt strongly led to share portions with you here through the pages of the Pantagraph.

The new scripture emphasizes the church's calling to

share the peace of Jesus Christ throughout the world, saying,

"2a. Jesus Christ, the embodiment of God's shalom, invites all people to come and receive divine peace in the midst of the difficult questions and struggles of life. Follow Christ in the way that leads to God's peace and discover the blessings of all of the dimensions of salvation."

The message goes on to emphasize that:

"4a. God, the Eternal Creator, weeps for the poor, displaced, mistreated, and diseased of the world because of their unnecessary suffering. Such conditions are not God's will. Open your ears to hear the pleading of mothers and fathers in all nations who desperately seek a future of hope for their children. Do not turn away from them. For in their welfare resides your welfare."

The emphasis on peace extends to all of the world's peoples, saying,

"3c. There are subtle, yet powerful, influences in the world,

some even claiming to represent Christ, that seek to divide people and nations to accomplish their destructive aims.

That which seeks to harden one human heart against another by constructing walls of fear and prejudice is not of God." And scripture itself is addressed:

"7b. Scripture is not to be worshiped or idolized. Only God, the Eternal One of whom scripture testifies, is worthy of worship. God's nature, as revealed in Jesus Christ and affirmed by the Holy Spirit, provides the ultimate standard by which any portion of scripture should be interpreted and applied.

It is not pleasing to God when any passage of scripture is used to diminish or oppress races, genders, or classes of human beings. Much physical and emotional violence has been done to some of God's beloved children through the misuse of scripture..."

God continues to speak today! The Community of Christ

maintains an "open" set of scriptures, allowing God to continue to speak today, as He did in times of old. The book of Doctrine and Covenants is one of three books affirmed by the Community of Christ as scriptural witnesses of God's love and Christ's ministry. The Bible is the foundational scripture for the church.

I invite you to read and prayerfully consider these inspired words, from God to you. How is God calling you forward in your spiritual journey toward him? May you be blessed, as you choose to grow in your relationship with God's Spirit in your daily life. Remember: God loves YOU unconditionally, and wants you to find him and choose to be with him. Search until you find a church family that helps you meet the living, loving God, who knows you personally and wants to be your life partner.

Bryant is a missionary, serving the 29 Community of Christ congregations in the Central and Southern Illinois area. Contact him at brad.bryant@ipc.com.

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