



**Mennonite
Church**
Canada

Resource Centre

From our Churches

Church: Calgary Mennonite Churches

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A Joint Statement of the Calgary Mennonite Churches Concerning White Supremacist Activity in Calgary

Background

Over the past several years, there has been a disturbing increase in white supremacist and hate activity in Calgary. This has resulted in violent clashes between white supremacists and anti-racist activists on several occasions. The following statement is issued jointly by the Mennonite Churches of Calgary to reflect our dissent and concern with the ideology of hate and the associated violence which has afflicted our city. We issue this statement in recognition of the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (March 21). This Statement is based on the biblical text, the “Confession of Faith in a Mennonite Perspective” and the draft “Initial Statement Towards an Ecumenical Declaration on Just Peace” by the World Council of Churches.

Preamble

Recently, our community has been diminished by those wishing to divide humanity in ways that are inconsistent with Gods vision for the cosmosⁱ. As members of the Christian faith community, we are troubled by messages that try to separate us by, among other things, skin colour, family lineage, language, or our places of birth. This we find inconsistent with our beliefs and the gospel of peace.

Statement of Beliefs

As local members of the Mennonite Church that forms a world-wide community of faith and life that transcends boundaries of nationality, race, class, gender and language, we offer the following statement of beliefs.

1. We believe that all people are created in the image of Godⁱⁱ and that all humanity shares a common ancestryⁱⁱⁱ.
2. We believe that God cares for creation and has consequently expressed a universal love for all humanity^{iv}. As such, we are called to live in peace with one another^v and the mission of humanity is to build a just and peaceful world, in the likeness of God, whose work is peace^{vi}.

3. We believe that no portion of the earth belongs to any one particular people or group. The Earth is the Lord's, and we serve as stewards of a portion^{vii}. Consequently, we believe that racism is violence and a violation of the integrity and harmony of human relationships^{viii}.
4. We believe that no one can be whole in a broken world and every part of our being is affected by the world that we inhabit^{ix}. Racism is a "dividing wall of hostility" that prevents all humanity from sharing in the cosmic good^x.
5. We believe that we are called to speak out against injustice and advocate for peace, in solidarity with the oppressed^{xi} and witness against all forms of violence, including hostility between races^{xii}.
6. We believe that God's ultimate goal is to reconcile all creation to himself, and this includes all peoples^{xiii}. Consequently, we believe that we are called to seek reconciliation between peoples while ensuring that past injustices do not continue^{xiv}.
7. We also acknowledge that historically, church leadership has failed to speak out against injustice and has often remained silent in the face of oppression and violence^{xv}.

A Call for Reconciliation

As members of the Christian faith community, we therefore:

- Reject publicly and completely the doctrine of racial supremacy and hate, both as individuals and collectively as a faith community;
- Affirm our belief in non-violence^{xvi} both the violence of those promoting hatred as well as the violence of those opposed;
- Call on all persons and institutions to move toward justice, peace and compassion for all people^{xvii} and seek reconciliation between all peoples in our community^{xviii}; and,
- Express our solidarity with those who have found themselves the victims of racial supremacist ideas or actions or the ideology of hate^{xix}, and call all people to show love and compassion to the stranger in our midst^{xx}.

ⁱ Psalm 67, Isaiah 60:1-22, Acts 10:1-48, Acts 15: 16 & 17, Rom. 10: 2 & 13, Eph. 2:11-14, 1 Cor.12:12 & 13, Rev. 21: 22-27

ⁱⁱ Confession of Faith in a Mennonite Perspective, article 6.

ⁱⁱⁱ John 1:1-5, Isaiah 48:12 -13, Genesis 10

^{iv} John 3:16, 1 John 4:7-12

^v Confession of Faith in a Mennonite Perspective, article 6.

^{vi} Initial Statement Towards an Ecumenical Declaration on Just Peace, 27.

^{vii} Psalm 24: 1 & 2

^{viii} Initial Statement Towards an Ecumenical Declaration on Just Peace, 29.

^{ix} Initial Statement Towards an Ecumenical Declaration on Just Peace, 106.

^x Initial Statement Towards an Ecumenical Declaration on Just Peace, 39.

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- ^{xi} Initial Statement Towards an Ecumenical Declaration on Just Peace, 56.
 - ^{xii} Confession of Faith in a Mennonite Perspective, article 22.
 - ^{xiii} Col. 1:19 & 20, 2 Cor. 5:18 &19, Rom. 11:13 – 16
 - ^{xiv} Initial Statement Towards an Ecumenical Declaration on Just Peace, 70, 72.
 - ^{xv} Initial Statement Towards an Ecumenical Declaration on Just Peace, 73.
 - ^{xvi} Confession of Faith in a Mennonite Perspective, article 22.
 - ^{xvii} Confession of Faith in a Mennonite Perspective, article 23
 - ^{xviii} Initial Statement Towards an Ecumenical Declaration on Just Peace, 70, 72.
 - ^{xix} Initial Statement Towards an Ecumenical Declaration on Just Peace, 56.
 - ^{xx} Hebrews 13:1& 2