

Enduring Principles #6 PURSUIT OF PEACE (SHALOM)

WELCOME

Pursuit of Peace is one of the Enduring Principles of Community of Christ. Here is a short video that one of the young adults made to share their ideas about this core value.

PLAY COFCHRIST YOUNG ADULT SOCIAL MEDIA POST – PURSUIT OF PEACE

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JV0yVghX6mA&list=PLXP-JHfXN3a39UbWkeB_M92QtbO7mCa_s&index=4

Today, we will look at 3 statements related to this enduring principle.

SCRIPTURE

D&C 165: 1d,e

Undertake compassionate and just actions to abolish poverty and end needless suffering. Pursue peace on and for the Earth. Let nothing separate you from this mission.

OPENING PRAYER

STATEMENT 1

God wants Shalom (justice, reconciliation, well-being, wholeness and peace) for all creation.

HYMN CCS 143 – Morning Has Broken

Message on Statement 1

Read Genesis 1:31 – God saw everything that he had made, and indeed, it was very good.

‘God wants Shalom for all creation’ – All creation, all humans, all creatures, all of nature.

Shalom is more than peace.

- Justice - It starts with justice. Without justice there cannot be peace.
- Reconciliation – God wants conflicts to end.
- Well-being and wholeness – God doesn’t want us to just be okay. God wants us to be well and whole. God wants all humans to be well and whole. God wants the world which is being destroyed through carelessness, ignorance and greed to be well and whole.

DISCIPLES GENEROUS RESPONSE

Our generosity is a positive action in pursuing peace.

STATEMENT 2

Jesus Christ, the embodiment of God's shalom (peace), reveals the meaning of God's peace in all aspects of life.

Message on Statement 2

Read Colossians 1:15-20

Jesus is the image of the invisible God. It is through Jesus that we understand what God is like.

The Sunday before the start of Advent is 'Reign of Christ' Sunday.

The word 'reign' is often associated with 'ruling over.' Another definition is that which is 'the best or most important.'

Today we celebrate that Jesus is the best and most important thing, for the world and in our own lives.

Through Jesus we come to understand what is the peace or shalom that God wants to all creation.

HYMN CCS 149 – My Peace

Message on Statement 2 (continued)

Examples of How Jesus Reveals God's Peace

1. **Love your enemies** (Matthew 5:43, 44) - *'You have heard that it was said, "You shall love your neighbour and hate your enemy." But I say to you, Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you.'*

Peace is not easy. But this has to be the principle on which all pursuit of peace or shalom has to be grounded.

2. **Entry into Jerusalem** (Matthew 21:1-9)

Passover was the most important of the annual Jewish festivals, celebrating the exodus of the early Israelites from Egypt. Hundreds of thousands of pilgrims came to Jerusalem.

Pilate rode into the west side of the city on a mighty horse with a procession of cavalry and foot soldiers. The whole scene is a show of power.

The message is clear - the Romans are in control and will take whatever violent steps are necessary to make sure it stays that way.

On the east side of Jerusalem there is another parade taking place – a much smaller affair. A man from Galilee, a rabbi called Jesus, is approaching on a donkey along with a small band of disciples.

Why a donkey? The prophets had spoken of a humble king entering Jerusalem on the colt of donkey, a king of peace who would banish chariots and warhorses. Jesus was that king.

This parade was a demonstration of the kingdom of God, a kingdom of peace not violence.

This was a deliberate action to stir up the crowd and to challenge those in power; maybe not what we would associate with pursuing peace. But this was a demonstration for justice.

3. Jesus cleanses the Temple (Matthew 21:12, 13)

This wasn't an act done in a fit of temper. Jesus knew what was going on in the Temple courtyard before he entered it. His actions were planned. Injustice was happening. The poor and marginalized were being abused by those in power. And without justice there will never be peace. So, Jesus stirred things up. His actions were a way of saying, "Things have got to change."

Through Jesus, we see that God's peace is not a placid thing. It's about taking action for justice; justice for those who do not have a voice, those who are marginalized and oppressed.

PRAYER FOR PEACE (A prayer offered on the World Plaza – June 2, 2025)

Dear Lord,

Who views all people as precious and of worth,

We are gathered to offer our prayer for peace, surrounded by the beauty of people from across our world, each one made in God's image and loved with an everlasting love.

May we recognize our shared humanity and that our collective well-being is intricately linked. May we see the suffering of others as our own.

Help us raise our voices, to speak out for the voiceless. Help us to courageously challenge systems and laws that are unjust, to take actions that bring peace, wholeness, and justice in a hurting world. Help us realize we are all children of the same God and members of the same human family.

Hear our prayer, O God of all the nations.

In the name of Jesus, the Peaceful One. Amen.

STATEMENT 3

We courageously and generously share the peace of Jesus Christ with others

Hymn CCS 298 – I Am Standing Waiting

Message on Statement 3

Read the story 'Walking with Jesus' about Ed Guy (*see end of notes*).

This is a story of courage. Who knows what the consequences of Ed's actions might have been but he had a clear vision of what was needed and his generous nature meant that nothing was going to persuade him to do anything different.

Maybe our courage does not reach the levels of that of Ed Guy, but there are always things that we can courageously and generously do to share the peace of Jesus Christ.

Love Your Enemies

A few days after the 911 attack on the World Trade Centre, Community of Christ staff pastor Rich Kohlman shared the following words:

This has been a terrible week for the United States and in fact for the whole world. The cry for peace and justice which is our cry will be tested in ways we can only guess at...How will we love the enemy? How will we love the terrorist? Will we remember that we are also the enemy? Will we remember that terrorism comes in immediate destruction to the World Trade Centre and thousands of lives, in excessive consumerism, in the slow death of children to hunger and disease, in racism and isms of many kind and in a multitude of other ways we often fail to acknowledge. Will we realize that this is not the first war of the 21st century, but that wars have been going on in many lands already! Will we be able to sit down and talk and think and ponder on new more just solutions to the needs of our world?

Will we "become a people of the Temple--those who see violence but proclaim peace, who feel conflict yet extend the hand of reconciliation, who encounter broken spirits and find pathways for healing." D&C 161:2a.

These words from over 20 years ago remain relevant today. Pursuing peace is never easy. It wasn't easy for Jesus. It isn't easy for us. But we need to remember:

- God wants peace
- Jesus reveals the meaning of that peace
- We are called to pursue that peace in all aspects of our life.

Hymn CCS 605 – Make Me A Channel of Your Peace

CLOSING PRAYER

Walking with Jesus

**Testimony by Darrell L. Mink
April 9, 2002**

We had just finished a weekend with a National Conference. We had been together on Saturday and then on Sunday for the business and normal activities of a Conference. Almost everyone had gone home and we went back to Ed's Place (Ed's hotel). It was about 4:00 p.m. and Ed said to me, "Darrell I promised a young lady that I would come by and pray for her husband. He has been in a coma now for several weeks. Let's go and pray for this young man." It sounds very simple and straight up, but then things started to change. By the time we went to get transportation we had five people to go and pray for the young man: brother Joaquin Navas from Sonsonate, brother Rolando Alvarado from

Guatemala, Ed, myself, and Tony. Those small taxis will take four but not five. We got there with five. That is another story.

At the door, as it was a military hospital, there was a guard. He had not thought it important to tell me that piece of information. They are very strict. I told Ed, "They won't let all of us go in Ed. You go ahead and I will wait here with the other guys." Ed got that little glimmer in his eye and said, "We all need to get in." Everything told me we would not get in and even if we did there were too many of us for a quiet, sensitive, and meaningful prayer visit. The guard asked Ed who he wanted to see. After an exchange of words he told Ed, "Only one of you can go to the room." Ed started to go and then returned to the guard and said, but this man has come all the way from Guatemala to pray for this person." The guard looked at him and said, "Okay, he can go with you." Ed started off and returned after two or three steps. He said to the guard, "See this guy? He came all the way from the United States to be here and pray for this man." The guard after thinking it over for a few seconds said, " Okay, he also can go." There were still two others. Ed walked away two or three steps and turned around to the guard to started to ask the guard about the other two and the guard said, "Okay, all of you can go. Just go."

We got to the room on the fourth floor. I kept telling Ed on the way up that there were too many of us and we should be quiet and respectful and have a short visit so as not to tire the person too much. Ed would just acknowledge what I said and continued to direct us to the room. There we met the young man's father and mother, the wife and her mother and father, and the patient in a comatose state. After a few words about why we were there Ed asks them if they would like to sing some coritos (songs based on scripture that are repeated two or three times). Without waiting very long he started the first one. I said to Ed, "They are going to throw all of us out. This is a military hospital. They are very strict here." Besides this was not a part of the kind of experience I had in my mind. We continued to sing ,and then there was a knock at the door. I said, "Ed they are here to throw us out and we haven't even prayed yet." I was the nearest to the door as I was kind of standing back and saying, "This is not what I would do--a little reluctant to really get involved." It was a young lady from the room next door. She said that her mother was in the next room and how they wanted to have prayer, and would we please come over to her room after we finished and have prayer with them. After about 45 minutes of sharing songs, stories, and talking about the power of the Lord, we had the prayer.

We went to the second room. The same activity was more or less repeated. In the middle of this there was a knock at the door. I said to Ed, "Now we've done it and they are going to throw us out." It was the man across the hall and he wanted us to go there and have prayer for his son. Due to the fact that both the son of the man and another patient were very seriously sick, we needed to have the prayer in the hallway with the family. This young man had been shot in the head and had not regained consciousness from that moment. I was standing so I could see the nurse's station. I saw the nurse in charge start toward us. I thought, "I knew that this was going to happen. She is going to throw us out. When she got to us she asked if we could stop by the nurse's station on our way out and have prayer with the workers on that wing of the hospital. We did.

On the way down to the third floor, Ed said to me, "There is a really good lady here and she is by herself--no family--and we should stop in and have prayer with her." By now, I was more or less losing my fear of being thrown out. What I didn't know was Ed did not know which room she was in. We finally found the room. You can imagine her response. She was so overjoyed that she wept. We didn't do all of the singing and other activities, but we did share some experiences about the power of prayer. She was in a room with three other ladies. You can guess what happened. After the first laying on of hands with prayer, the other three women wanted the same thing. Those four older, lonesome women experienced the presence of the Lord Jesus.

It was now close to 10:00 p.m. Not only after hours, but in a military hospital. As we were walking down to the first floor, Ed said to me, "Darrell, there is a little boy on the children's floor..." But before he could finish, I said, "Ed, not tonight, we and the people have been blessed, but let's not push it anymore."

Only one thing was motivating Ed and that was touching the lives of those people who needed the touch of Jesus in their lives at that moment. As I have looked back on that experience, as I relive it, I know now that that night in San Salvador, El Salvador, in that military hospital, I had walked with Jesus. Even now my heart burns within me.