



UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

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BEN M. HERBSTER, President • FRED S. BUSCHMEYER, Secretary • CHARLES H. LOCKYEAR, Treasurer
ROBERT F. R. PETERS, JACK E. YATES, Assistants to the President

December 28, 1964

To the Pastors of the United Church of Christ

Dear Friends:

There are two matters of unfinished business concerning Racial Justice Now.

(1) The first has to do with local church declarations of "open membership." Last year our communication did not make it clear that if a congregation was open, either by formal resolution or by practice (this means if you have persons of other racial backgrounds in your membership) it would not need to pass a resolution. By practice, you are open and all that is required to declare "open membership" is that the pastor or the clerk sign one of the report forms and send it in. It is an encouragement to the whole Church to know that many, many congregations are open by practice.

If you with your people have not faced up to the fact that the Church belongs to Christ and that, therefore, all of Christ's people ought to be welcome, both as visitors and as members, your January congregational meeting would present a good opportunity for making your "open membership" decision. Of course, you must be the judge as to the best timing. This is one of the important moral questions of our age and the Church needs to stand foursquare upon the fact that all men are God's children and, therefore, brothers one of another. How dare we shut out our brothers from Christ's church?

(2) The Executive Council has given the Committee for Racial Justice Now the authority to plan a two-year program based on a budget of \$320,000. From July 1, 1963 to this date we have raised only \$259,521.20. Therefore we have six months to raise the balance. This ought to be easy for us. If you have not taken any offering for Racial Justice Now, or if you have not taken the two offerings that were asked, will you not use Race Relations Sunday, February 14, 1965 for this cause? The Stewardship Council will be glad to furnish you the necessary offering envelopes and supplies for this offering. Any help will be appreciated.

You pastors have been more than loyal and devoted to this great cause. It has been a burden upon your hearts, I know. We shall ever give thanks for your support.

Sincerely yours,

Ben M. Herbster

BMH/mc

Council Meeting

1/12/65

Resolved, That United Evangelical Church, in ~~its~~ ~~annual~~ ~~meeting~~ ~~meeting~~ duly convened, hereby does pledge and bind itself to a practice of open church membership, without regard to the race, color or ethnic origin of the applicants for membership, being convinced that the church of Jesus Christ on earth, being concerned in the brotherhood of man and the fatherhood of God, is advanced and fostered by the adoption thereof of this resolution.

E Jones O Hoffman

RETURN THIS PORTION TO THE SECRETARY OF THE UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST
297 PARK AVENUE SOUTH, NEW YORK 10010

Report Form
OPEN MEMBERSHIP ENROLLMENT

The of
..... (Name of Church)
..... (Address) (City and State)
on officially declares that
..... (Date)
..... by vote of the
(check one) by previous policy and/or practice

its membership is open to all persons who accept the obligations of membership in the Church of Jesus Christ, without any restriction as to race, class or ethnic background.

This church agrees to publicize this policy in its community as it deems proper and effective.

..... Pastor
..... Church Officer

RETAIN THIS PORTION FOR YOUR FILES

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