

**THE
CHRISTIAN MISSION
IN THE LIGHT OF
RACE CONFLICT**

**Report of the
JERUSALEM MEETING
of the
INTERNATIONAL MISSIONARY COUNCIL
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PART THREE
STATEMENT

**ADOPTED BY THE INTERNATIONAL
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JERUSALEM, 1928**

STATEMENT ADOPTED BY THE COUNCIL

RACIAL RELATIONSHIPS

THE DUTY OF CHRISTIANS

ALL Christian forces, and particularly the International Missionary Council, dedicated as they are to prepare for the establishment among all mankind of the Kingdom of God, are bound to work with all their power to remove race prejudice and adverse conditions due to it, to preserve the rights of peoples, and to establish educational, religious and other facilities designed to enable all alike to enjoy equality of social, political and economic opportunity.

The Fatherhood of God and the sacredness of personality are vital truths revealed in Christ, which all Christian communities are bound to press into action in all the relationships of life. These truths are too often denied and defied in inter-racial relationships. Antagonism and suspicion, envy, greed, pride and fear blight the growth among the races of mankind of 'the fruit of the Spirit, which is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance.'

Our Lord's thought and action, the teaching of His apostles, and the fact that the Church, as the Body of Christ, is a community transcending race, show that the different peoples are created by God to bring

each its peculiar gift to His City, so that all may enhance its glory by the rich diversities of their varying contributions. The spirit which is eager to 'bear one another's burdens and thus fulfil the law of Christ' should permeate all inter-racial relationships. Any discrimination against human beings on the ground of race or colour, any selfish exploitation and any oppression of man by man is, therefore, a denial of the teaching of Jesus.

While we thank God for the courageous, persevering and prophetic action taken by many communities and individuals toward achieving the will of Christ in the improvement of inter-racial relationships in areas where such friction is particularly acute, we confess with humiliation that we in the Christian churches are still far from realizing this principle even within our own borders.

It is the duty of the Christian forces everywhere, and particularly of the International Missionary Council and its constituent bodies, to learn more fully the mind of Christ on the problem of inter-racial relations, and to press forward boldly the realization of permanent world-wide understanding.

A CONSTRUCTIVE PROGRAMME

The Christian forces require a constructive programme of action, based on scientific knowledge and successful experiment, and perpetually adjusting itself to the new demands of changing situations.

Contacts between economically more powerful and weaker races frequently lead to exploitation, resulting in widespread injustice and suffering. It is imperative that Christians, and especially those in the immediate areas concerned, should take steps to end

these conditions by creating, informing and influencing public opinion, by presenting their constructive plans before responsible administrative authorities, and, where necessary, by pressing for legislative action.

The situation confronting us is both grave and complex. Racial contacts, prolific in friction and discontent, occur under different conditions which appear to call for different approach.

A. Two or more Races living side by side in the same Country

The difficulties which arise when two or more peoples, differing in colour or race, live side by side in the same country would, this Council believes, be mitigated if steps were taken :

1. To establish the utmost practicable equality in such matters as the right to enter and follow all occupations and professions, the right of freedom of movement and other rights before civil and criminal law, and the obtaining and exercise of the functions of citizenship, subject always to such general legislation as, without discriminating between men on grounds of colour and race, may be necessary to maintain the social and economic standards of the community as a whole.

2. To secure that the land and other natural resources of the country are not allocated between the races in a manner inconsistent with justice and with the rights of the indigenous peoples.

3. To apply the Christian principle of brotherhood and equality in the eyes of God to matters of social relations and to the common life of the community.

B. Subject Peoples

Where the case is that the affairs of a subject people are administered by a governing class of another race, the ruling race should regard itself as entrusted with the duties :

1. Of ensuring that the economic resources, and still more the human potentialities, of the country under its administration are developed in the interests of the indigenous population.

2. Of aiding the peoples so to conduct their affairs that at the earliest possible moment they will be able to stand alone and govern themselves.

3. Of aiding peoples to protect themselves against such evils as alcohol and noxious drugs, which come in the train of western civilization.

C. Migration and Colonization

Migration and colonization raise problems which are again different. Almost all large migratory movements are due to one of two causes : political or religious persecution, and the endeavour to secure better economic conditions.

1. In the former case the duty of Christian people to succour the oppressed and persecuted is clear, and that these should be received in the spirit of Christ, and admitted to the fullest participation possible in the common life of the community in which they seek refuge.

2. Migration in order to improve the economic circumstances of life is more general in modern times, and more productive of friction. It may be considered to take two forms, each with its peculiar dangers.

a. The migration may be from a more advanced country towards a less developed one. In this case the danger is that the indigenous peoples should be ousted from the rights and privileges they enjoy, and the considerations given under the first heading are applicable.

b. When the migratory movement is in the reverse direction, the danger is that the standards of civilization and of economic welfare attained by the more advanced nation may be threatened by the influx of people accustomed to, and able to accept, a lower standard, both of civilization and of welfare. The Council recognizes that it is reasonable for the higher civilization to protect its standards, and to that end it may be expedient to restrict immigration into its territories. But such restriction, it believes, should never make discrimination among intending immigrants upon grounds of colour or race, neither of which can, in the opinion of this Council, be held to be in itself a legitimate ground for exclusion.

Further, it is desirable that a country should have regard, not merely to its own economic situation, but to that of other peoples, and that it should not yield to the temptation of adopting short-sighted measures, which impede such redistribution of population as may be in the best interests of the world as a whole.

D. Other Inter-racial Problems

In concluding the examination of the circumstances which tend to produce inter-racial ill-feeling, the Council cannot overlook the fact that while international organizations exist which can bring the public opinion of the world to bear upon issues which

would otherwise be treated from an exclusively national standpoint, there are nevertheless certain grave problems which still escape the salutary check of the international conscience. In particular :

1. The relations between the peoples of a metropolitan state and those of its colonies, possessions and other dependencies.

2. The virtual hegemony exercised by one people over another as a result of the establishment of financial and economic control.

3. The acquisition of special privileges, of which the leading example is the status of extra-territoriality.

The Council cannot refrain from expressing the conviction that in these and similar cases the states concerned are responsible, not to themselves alone, but to the moral judgment of mankind as a whole, and to God.

The Council looks forward to the time when such relations, where they still exist, will be made amenable to the public opinion, not of any one nation or group of nations, but of a world, organized and equipped to judge them by the standard of universal justice.

E. Research

Authoritative research is called for into many aspects of the problem. For the purpose of a Christian solution the following projects are eminently needed :

A searching analysis of the social, political, cultural, psychological, biological and religious factors that contribute to create inter-racial antagonisms.

A careful study as to where, at this stage, inter-racial friction is most critically and dangerously at work ; in what other areas it is beginning to develop ;

in what forms it emerges ; and in what direction its results trend. Sources of friction, relatively small and temporary in character, but with important repercussions, such as labour and, to a less extent, even student migrations, call for special attention.

New light must be sought from the life and teaching of Jesus in face of the conditions of His own time, in their bearing upon this problem, as well as from the teaching of the apostles and the nature of the Christian Church in itself.

In making provision for the efficient pursuit of such research, which is incumbent upon the Council, one of the outstanding practical elements of hope in the situation is the existence of numerous organizations and personal activities in every continent that are beginning to work toward a solution of the problem. It need hardly be stated that it is desirable for the International Missionary Council to enter into relations with these, and to share the results of their researches and of the experience that they and the Council are accumulating.

F. Immediate Action necessary

Christians, collectively and individually, are also called, under the guidance of God and in faith in His supernatural resources, to courageous and discerning action, with a view to the ultimate victory of the will of Christ over all inter-racial antagonism. We would emphasize the need that each national missionary or Christian council or committee, where unchristian conditions provocative of such antagonism prevail or threaten to develop, should work toward a Christian solution.

Action should be directed immediately at least to the following ends :

1. To bring knowledge and Christian conviction to bear powerfully upon the shaping of individual conscience and public opinion which will be decisive in solving this problem.

2. Continuously to keep the churches everywhere aware of the world-wide nature of the problem and of efforts toward its solution, and sensitive to their responsibility in relation to it ; and in particular, to make this integral to the training of the missionary, and the education of the younger generation in the older and younger churches.

3. To cultivate in the home and the school, through books, periodicals and speech, as well as through personal contact, that natural friendliness of children toward each other without regard to race which God has implanted in their hearts.

4. To encourage the exchange of students and teachers of different countries in order to strengthen mutual understanding ; and to influence all those engaged in education as well as in the production of books, of films and of the press.

5. To develop the consciousness in every nation that the common courtesies of life are an elementary duty, whether in relation to members of other races who may be guests or fellow-citizens in our own land, or in relation to the peoples whose countries we may visit. In lands where different races live side by side full participation in social, cultural and, above all, religious inter-racial fellowship, and the development of personal friendship which such intercourse engenders, are the natural expression of our common Christianity, and are obviously to be welcomed as a step towards world-wide understanding.

6. The members of every race should be encouraged to express their missionary conviction in personal service, and measures which debar them from so doing are to be strongly condemned. The desire of the Negro Christians of America to witness for the Gospel in the homeland of their forefathers, as well as in other fields, under such conditions as those defined in the report on the conference on the Christian Mission in Africa (held at Le Zoute in 1926), is a ground for profound satisfaction.

CONCLUSION

The missionary enterprise itself, as an instrument of God for bringing into being among all races the Church of Christ, has it in its power to be the most creative force working for world-wide inter-racial unity. For ultimately our closest union with each other is our union with Him; and His commandment, 'Do unto others as ye would men should do unto you,' and 'That ye love one another even as I have loved you,' if carried into practice in all relationships, would solve the problem, and rid the world of this stupendous menace.

All our work, therefore, must have as its conscious goal the fulfilment of our Lord's prayer, 'That they all may be one,' and the realization of the triumph of His Kingdom when all peoples shall bring their glory into the City of God.¹

¹ At a session of the Council, subsequent to that on which the report on racial relationship was passed, the following resolution was unanimously carried:

That the principle and ideals which this Council has adopted in the report on racial relationships with regard to equal rights for races, it declares and maintains also with regard to the equal rights of men and women in and between all races.