

CUIC NOTES

MARCH 2007



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RECORD ATTENDANCE AT 2007 NATIONAL WORKSHOP ON CHRISTIAN UNITY

The 41st annual National Workshop on Christian Unity (NWCU) gathered Jan. 29-Feb. 1 in Arlington, VA. The purpose of the NWCU is to celebrate the spirit of ecumenism. The event brings together national and regional ecumenical officers as well as local pastors concerned about ecumenism. The three-day event includes worship and workshops. Brother Jeff Gros, professor of Church History at Memphis Theological Seminary, delivered the keynote address. For the full text of his address, see www.nwcu.org.

The historic Metropolitan AME Church in Washington DC, considered the "Cathedral of the AME Church," hosted a CUIC service of Eucharist. Rev. Ronald E. Braxton, Metropolitan's senior pastor, welcomed the CUIC congregation of nearly 120 persons. Bishop Adam J. Richardson, Jr., presiding bishop of the Second AME Episcopal district, along with Bishop E. Earl McCloud, AME ecumenical officer, presided at the table. Rev. Patrice L. Rosner, CUIC director, was the preacher. Others involved in the leadership included representatives of the PC(USA), UCC, ELCA, Episcopal, ICC, and Disciples communions.

The 2008 NWCU will be held in Chicago, April 14-17. Plan to join ecumenical colleagues for a time of net-



working and worship. Come learn in seminars and exchange ideas and experiences with others involved in promoting and celebrating church unity. Each year a CUIC service of Eucharist is an important component in the NWCU event.

SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST:

- Those People at That Church
- Local Liturgies
- Pastoral Letter From Heads of Communion
- Meet the EO'S

CUIC AND THE 110TH U.S. CONGRESS

The 110th Congress will, for the first time, include a Muslim, two Buddhists, more Jews than Episcopalians, and the highest ranking Mormon in congressional history, according to the Religious News Service. Roman Catholics remain the largest single faith group in Congress, accounting for 29 percent (129 members) of all members of the House and Senate, followed by Baptists, Methodists (62 members), Presbyterians (43 members), Jews, and Episcopalians (37 members).

The United Church of Christ reports having nine members in Congress, and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America reports having 14 members. Both the African Methodist Episcopal Church and the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) report having two members of Congress.

By a rough estimate, approximately 39 of the 100 Senators and 123 of the 435 House representatives identify themselves as religiously affiliated with one of the CUIC communions.

Since the listing identifies categories such as "Methodist" and "Lutheran," it's difficult to tell how many are members of the United Methodist Church and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. And, some congress persons are identified as Protestant or Christian, which does not aid us in knowing if they are CUIC related.

LENTEN MESSAGE

Read Isaiah 58:3-5.

The Lenten Season, culminating with the celebration of Easter, is the most meaningful time in the Christian calendar. In this season we set aside those things/sins that have separated us from God, and we look forward to the Resurrection where we will arise with Christ with new life.

It is traditional that during the Lenten Season one would engage in some type of fast. Some give up a meal or two a day, some give up meat, and others may give up sweets – all in an attempt to fast for

Lent. The season of Lent has its origin in the early church as a time of preparation for new converts. Today, the church seems to have lost this sense of preparation.

In Isaiah's time fasting was a regular part of Jewish life, but Isaiah finds something amiss in the practice. As he says in verse 4, while the people fasted they also quarreled and fought among themselves. The prophet asks how one can fast and still not live properly with one's neighbors. Is this acceptable to the Lord?

As we begin this Lenten Season, let us remember that fasting is not out of

tradition, custom, or habit, but it is still done to prepare oneself for God and for God's service. The fulfillment of this time is the ability to live ethically with one's neighbors. This is what is acceptable to the Lord.

Prayer: Lord, teach us through this time of fasting and preparation how to serve you by how we live with our neighbors. Amen.

(From *Liberation and Unity* 2007, sponsored in cooperation by the Departments of Christian Education in the AME Church, AMEZ Church, and CME Church, Dr. Reginald D. Broadnax, Dean of Hood Theological Seminary, editor. Used by permission.)

CUIC MARKS THE WEEK OF PRAYER FOR CHRISTIAN UNITY

New York City – At the invitation of Presiding Bishop Katharine Jefferts Schori, Presiding Bishop and Primate of The Episcopal Church, and Bishop Jeremiah Park, United Methodist Church, the Rev. David Henritzky (UMC) joined Bishop Christopher Epting (Episcopal) for a special Eucharist in the Episcopal Church's Chapel of Christ the Lord in New York on January 25. The joint celebration was in compliance with the interim Eucharistic sharing agreement achieved by the United Methodist and Episcopal churches. Such interim Eucharistic sharing is a step toward full communion.



St. Louis – Eden Theological Seminary celebrated the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity and the fifth anniversary of CUIC in a service of worship on Sunday, January 21. Following the theme "Open our ears and loosen our tongues" the service included

African drummers, and a letter from the churches in Umlazi, South Africa was read to the congregation. The letter said, "Through these greetings we hope that we are making a declaration that in Christ we are one regardless of where we are, and we pray with you that the Christian church will be one."

At the end of the service representatives from CUIC member communions together gave the benediction and sending forth. Participants were invited to sign a letter that was sent to the churches in Umlazi. More than four pages of signatures were gathered.

Churches Uniting in Christ is a relationship among ten communions who have pledged to live more closely together in expressing unity in Christ and combating racism. Member communions are: African Methodist Episcopal Church, African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church, Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), Christian Methodist Episcopal Church, The Episcopal Church, International Council of Community Churches, Moravian Church Northern Province, Presbyterian Church USA, United Church of Christ, and The United Methodist Church. The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America is a Partner in Mission and Dialogue, and the Roman Catholic Church participates as an observer.

CUIC NOTES is published several times a year.
Patrice L. Rosner, Director
Patricia Garnett, Secretary

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We welcome your comments and questions. Please send them to: CUIC, 475 E. Lockwood Ave., St. Louis, MO 63119.

To be better stewards of the environment and of the CUIC finances, please send us your email address so that you may receive this newsletter electronically. Send your contact information to: cuic@eden.edu

ANNIVERSARIES

United Church of Christ – This year the UCC will celebrate 50 years as a “united and uniting church.” In one sense this church is 50 years old, having achieved the unity of the Evangelical and Reformed Churches with the Congregational Churches at Cleveland, OH, in 1957. In another, it is as old as the Reformation and, indeed, the early apostolic church.

Under the theme “Let It Shine,” the anniversary celebrates, remembers, and reflects on what it means to be UCC: united and uniting, multiracial and multicultural, open and affirming, accessible to all, and a peace with justice church.

When asked if he would color his hair red if youth and young adults (under 35) outnumbered those over 35 at Hartford’s General Synod in July, John Thomas, General Minister and President, replied, “Absolutely. I’m tired of gray, on my head and at church meetings, and it would make for a nice ‘Still Speaking’ statement.”

When asked what is his most fervent prayer, Thomas replied, “That we may be a people of extravagant welcome and evangelical courage even as we learn to honor and respect one another in the midst of our sometimes difficult diversity.”

Moravian Church Northern Province – March 1, 1457 was the beginning of the Unity of the Brethren in Bohemia. The Moravian Church, or Unitas Fratrum (Unity of Brethren), as it has been officially known since 1457, arose as followers of Jan Hus gathered in the village of Kunvald, about 100 miles east of Prague, in eastern Bohemia, and organized the church. This was 60 years before Martin Luther nailed the ninety-five theses to the Wittenberg door.

Allen Bergman, vice president of the Ohio Moravian Ministries Commission, invites all CUIC congregations to the Mid-States Moravian celebration August 10-12, 2007. For more information, see the website: <http://www.mcnp.org>

“Absolutely. I’m tired of gray, on my head and at church meetings, and it would make for a nice ‘Still Speaking’ statement.”

CUIC’S FIFTH ANNIVERSARY

After the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity service at Eden Theological Seminary in St. Louis, participants celebrated the fifth anniversary of the January 21, 2002 inauguration of Churches Uniting in Christ. A reception complete with a cake picturing the CUIC logo was served. Pictured at the reception are (left to right): standing – Jerry Ruth Williams, ecumenical liaison, Missouri Annual Conference, UMC; John Dorhauer, associate conference minister, Missouri Mid-South Conference, UCC; Rev. Penny Ross Corona, area minister, Southeast Gateway Area, Christian Church

(Disciples of Christ); Bishop Vinton R. Anderson, retired AME bishop; Rev. Suzanne Webb, CUIC president; Rev. Anthony Witherspoon, minister, Metropolitan AMEZ Church; Rev. Paul Reiter, executive presbyter, Giddings Lovejoy Presbytery, PC (USA); Rev. John Kreidler, associate to the bishop, Central States Synod, ELCA; seated – Rev. O.R. Jackson, presiding elder, Third Episcopal District, CME; Rev. W.B. Finney, presiding elder, District 5, AME; Rev. Patrice L. Rosner, CUIC director; and Rev. Emery Washington, ecumenical liaison, Diocese of Missouri, Episcopal.



Central Christian Church in Lexington, KY was the host congregation for “Disciples for the Dream,” which was the 17th annual community-wide Martin Luther King, Jr. worship service held Sunday, January 14 at 6:00 pm. All the Disciples of Christ congregations in Lexington, as well as many of the downtown churches, sponsored this event.

A community choir representing most denominations has evolved out of this gathering over the years and led the congregation in singing during the service. Over 700 persons attended and participated in the worship and in the fellowship reception.

CIVIL RIGHTS MOVEMENT MUST EVOLVE

Having just commemorated Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s birthday and Black History Month, it's a good time to ask about the future of the civil rights movement a half century or so after it began. Marc Morial, President and CEO of the National Urban League states, "Instead of fighting for basic rights guaranteed to Americans, we are now fighting for our economic future." In his address to the annual conference of the Urban League, Morial said that the idea of expanding the American dream and table to everyone is still relevant. "The right to sit at the lunch counter was an important one. But what's the use of winning the right to eat at the lunch counter if you cannot afford the meal?"

In 1967, at the 11th Convention of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. pon-

"Our prophetic voice must once again be lifted. This is our call.

This is our mission."

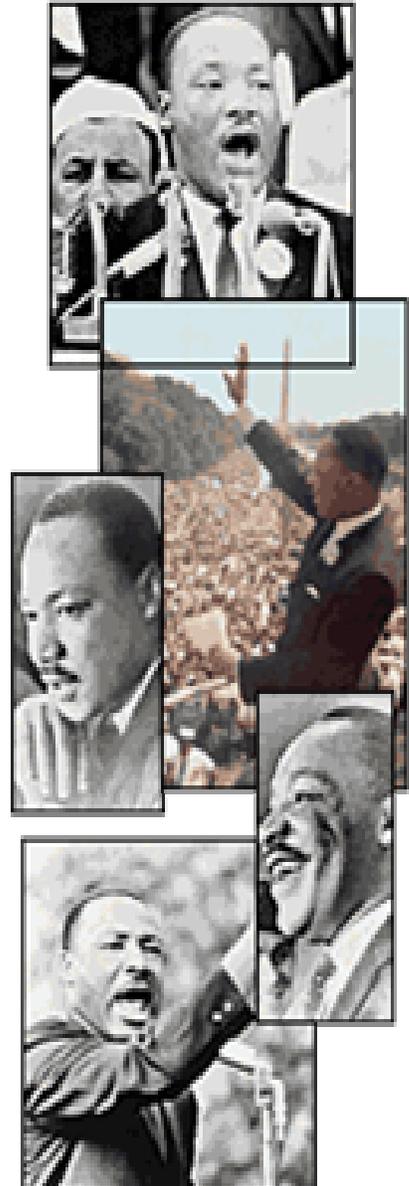
dered the question, "Where do we go from here?" He realized that the movement he helped create was an evolving entity. To grow and flourish it had to expand into something bigger than a concentration on securing basic liberties for people of color. Dr. King stated, "...in spite of a decade of significant progress, the problem is far from solved. The deep rumbling of discontent in our cities is indicative of the fact that the plan of

freedom has grown only a bud and not yet a flower."

Nearly forty years ago, Dr. King realized that economic as well as political empowerment would put the African American community on the track to full equality and prosperity. "The dignity of the individual will flourish when the decisions concerning his life are in his own hands, when he has the assurance that his income is stable and certain, and when he knows that he has the means to seek self-improvement."

To continue to evolve, civil rights groups must begin to cater to the younger generation that possesses no memories of a struggle born well before they were. Without these memories there is no context in which to put current aspirations. Morial contends, "We must concede that the challenges now faced by the Black community are somewhat different from the 1960s. Our youth have our legacy in their hands. We can either engage them and emerge stronger, or ignore them and relinquish our power."

Rev. Vincent Frosh, pastor of First AMEZ Church, Columbus, OH says, "My greatest fear is that the Black Church has silenced her prophetic voice and become complacent in survival mode because of various factors, such as ...the lack of upward mobility out of poverty due to planned systemic institutional racism." He continues, "Our challenge remains to be vigilant in our mission. We must continue to be the conscience of America as Dr. King proclaimed. This means our prophetic voice must once again be lifted. This is our call. This is our mission."



CONGREGATIONAL GUIDE FOR COMBATING RACISM

In every community, whether large or small, urban, suburban, or rural, racism rears its ugly head in subtle – and sometimes – overt ways. Some instances of racism are very blatant, while others get masked by good intentions or bureaucratic manipulation. The following steps may help CUIC congregations identify racism in their communities so that working together as CUIC

partners they can take action to initiate change.

- Step 1: Describe a current community situation, such as: the construction of a new highway or roadway; the rerouting of a public transit line; the construction or closing of school or hospital; the institution by the state of new voting require-

ments; the reduction or elimination of health care benefits from public funds such as Medicaid; the use of eminent domain for economic development in a neighborhood

- Step 2: Identify the decision makers in the situation.
- Step 3: Ask, "Who is

affected by the decision?"

- Step 4: Ask, "Who is advantaged by the decision? Who is disadvantaged by the decision?"
- Step 5: Ask, "In what ways does our faith and our commitment to combat racism challenge us to respond?"

PLANNING FOR A PLENARY

At the recommendation of the Heads of Communion, the CUIIC Coordinating Committee is planning the first ever CUIIC plenary for early in 2008. Suzanne Webb, CUIIC president, named Bishop Fritz Mutti, a retired UMC bishop and the UMC representative to the Coordinating Committee, as chair of the plenary planning team.

Each ecumenical officer named a communion representative to the team. Webb described the planning team's work as follows: "This gathering will address ways to rekindle and recommit our relationships within CUIIC."

Dr. Michael Kinnamon, former General Secretary of the Consultation on Church Union (COCU), declared in his opening presentation at the Memphis celebration of the inauguration of CUIIC in January 2002, "For the past forty years our churches have related to an organization called COCU. Now we must begin to relate more directly to one another....Churches Uniting in Christ is much more a way of living as *church* together."

This first CUIIC plenary will help us live as church together. It will bring together representatives from all eleven CUIIC-related communions for worship, work, and wit-

ness. It will be a time for remembering, repenting, refocusing, recommitting, and renewing.

As the planning team worked on a design for the plenary, they affirmed that the participation of the Heads of Communion during the entire plenary is crucial. Other participants will include members of the Coordinating Council and the three CUIIC task forces as well as other representatives named by the communions.

More information on the details of the plenary will emerge after the March 8-10 meeting of the Coordinating Council.

FOCUS ON LOCAL LITURGIES

In an attempt to assist local congregations in living out one of the marks of participation in CUIIC - provision for celebration of the Eucharist together with intentional regularity - the Coordinating Council named a subcommittee on liturgy. The Eight Marks of Participation in CUIIC adopted at the 2002 inauguration of CUIIC states, "This recognizes that the sacrament is at the heart of the church's life. Shared celebration of the Lord's Supper is a sign of unity in Christ.



"As Christians gather in all their diversity at one Table of the Lord, they give evidence that their communion is with Christ, and that they are in communion with one another in Christ.

"When Christians are unable or unwilling to partake together of the one Eucharist, they witness against themselves and give a visible demonstration of the brokenness of Christ's body and the human community."

Suzanne Webb, CUIIC president, describes the reason for the committee: "While there is a

CUIIC liturgy on the CUIIC website (www.cuicinfo.org), local planning committees seek guidelines for conducting an appropriate CUIIC service of Eucharist in their communities without causing offense to any member communion. Several CUIIC liturgies have been used in national celebrations. We want to reflect on those and to help local communities."

In the initial meeting of the committee, the chair, Bishop Vinton R. Anderson, retired AME bishop, identified several potential issues that could arise in planning local services:

- How many scriptures are needed? Are two sufficient? Do you need an Old Testament, Epistle, and Gospel reading?
- Who should be at the table?
- What about creeds?
- Is it appropriate to include liturgical dancing?

The liturgy subcommittee will make its first report to the March 8-10 meeting of the Coordinating Council.

(All Eight Marks of Participation can be found on the CUIIC website: www.cuicinfo.org.)

When Christians are unable or unwilling to partake together of the one Eucharist, they witness against themselves

THOSE PEOPLE AT THAT CHURCH

By J. Bennett Guess

"As long as there are divisions among Christians and there are people and places in the world that need to be reconciled, we will need the ecumenical movement," says the Rev. Diane Kessler, executive director of the Massachusetts Council of Churches. She believes the "reconciling impulse" is the heart of the gospel.

"At least that's the theory," she jests, recognizing that other demands and agendas too often compete for churches' time, attention and resources.

"[Ecumenism] has always been a minority movement in the life of the churches because we tend to be complacent with what we know," Kessler concedes. "And we're not necessarily very curious about what we don't know."

Yet, Kessler finds that when people do encounter "the other" through ecumenical dialogue and partnership, the experience can be spiritually enlivening and intellectually invigorating.

The ecumenical vision often grew out of necessity as much as from theological conversation. As denominational identities and loyalties became more and more entrenched, ecumenism – much like the Civil Rights Movement – found its energy among young people.

Movements 'move'

Among many Protestant Christians, ecumenism began as a lay movement in the mission field, according to Michael Kinnamon, professor at Eden Theological Seminary. The concept of "movement," however, soon gave way to "structure." The NCC and WCC, as well as multiple state church councils, quickly emerged as powerful symbols of church unity and shared witness, propelled by generous support from participating denominations.

Ecumenism, however, is changing. All ecumenical organizations endured significant financial and organizational struggles in the 1990s, as declining local church

support for denominational bodies translated into reduced contributions to national church coordinating groups.

"One of the things about movements is that they move," Kinnamon says, speaking in October on the "hopes and discouragements" of ecumenism. "But that doesn't necessarily mean the movement is losing steam."

"One of the realities of ecumenical work is that we are at the end of the funding chain," says Nancy Jo Kemper, executive director of the Kentucky Council of Churches. "We are the last to be funded, and the first to be cut."

Once-thriving mainline churches dreamed of a common witness, joint planning and mutual support.

"Now everybody is going it alone, in order to carve out some kind of identity that will stand out in a consumerist religious marketplace," Kemper says.

"There's never been anyone saying, 'Let's give less'," John Thomas, UCC General Minister and President says. "There's never been a shrinking of commitment, but there's just less money in the pot."

Cooperating locally

Lydia Veliko, UCC ecumenical officer, concedes that ecumenism is changing, but not necessarily for the worse. "I've seen a marked upswing in ecumenical understanding, which is very heartening, especially in local communities. So many people, when talking about ecumenism, just say, 'This is who we are.'"

Adds Thomas, "Formal ecumenical agreements really matter, but personal relationships really matter more. But formal ecumenical relations can enhance those personal relationships."

Infusing younger voices

Veliko has been working with UCC members under age 30 who are engaged in ecumenical dialogue. That's significant, she says, because the presence of

younger voices within ecumenical circles is not common.

"Formal ecumenical agreements really matter, but personal relationships really matter more."

Sara Critchfield, now 26, has been a young adult steward for the NCC's General Assembly and a UCC representative to the WCC's 9th International Assembly in Brazil. "When I've been a young person showing up at these meetings, people sort of look at you saying, 'You're young, so what do we do.' But the key decision-making is held by people who are not going to give up power," Critchfield says. Critchfield hopes the ecumenical movement will be infused with new momentum by returning to the days when it was student led and young people powered.

Encouraging the commitment of a new generation of ecumenical leaders is the reason Thomas and Veliko, along with Prof. Mark Burrows, regularly co-teach a course on "pastoral ecumenics" at Ando-

ver Newton Theological Seminary in Massachusetts.

"There's a real heart-felt commitment [among these students] to help deal with the church-dividing issues that divide families, as well as churches."

Continued vigilance

Kessler says the need for ecumenical dialogue isn't always that apparent to the average Christian. But, at some of life's most stressful moments, division becomes apparent. In the United States the church must continue to be vigilant on issues of race and class, Kessler says.

"If we are talking about what it means to be the whole church for the whole world, then the racial and economic divides in our society are often most visible in our worship," she says.

Thomas, too, says racism – like the generations-old church fights over baptism and Eucharist – remain the church's most pressing and divisive issues. On Martin Luther King Day, Thomas joined leaders from Churches Uniting in Christ calling for refocused attention on racial justice.

(excerpted from *United Church News*, Feb/Mar 2007; used by permission)



MEET THE EO'S

Each person who serves as the Ecumenical Officer for a CUIC member communion comes to this responsibility in a different way. Some are elected, some are appointed. Some serve for a 4-year term; some serve an unlimited term.

The Ecumenical Officers sit as advisors to the CUIC Coordinating Council. They name their communion's representatives to the three CUIC task forces (Local and Regional, Racial Justice, and Ministry) as well as to any subcommittees or special committees of CUIC.

These persons currently serve as the Ecumenical Officers (EOs):

Member Communions

African Methodist Episcopal Church: Bishop E. Earl McCloud, Jr.

African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church: Rt. Rev. George W. C. Walker, Sr.

Christian Church (Disciples of Christ): Rev. Dr. Robert Welsh

Christian Methodist Episcopal Church: Bishop Ronald M. Cunningham

The Episcopal Church: Rt. Rev. Christopher Epting

International Council of Community Churches: Rev. Herman Harmelink, III

Moravian Church Northern Province: Rev. Hermann Weinlick

Presbyterian Church (USA) : Rev. Robina Winbush

United Church of Christ: Rev. Lydia Veliko

United Methodist Church: Rev. Dr. Larry D. Pickens

Partner in Mission and Dialogue

Evangelical Lutheran Church in America: Rev. Dr. Randall Lee

Find out more about these leaders and their important roles in their communion by checking out the websites for each communion. You can access those websites from the CUIC website:

2007 CALENDAR

February 13: Absalom Jones Day (First African American priest in The Episcopal Church)

February 21- April 6: Season of Lent

March 1: 550th Anniversary of the Moravian Church

March 1-6: ELCA Conference of Bishops, Galveston TX

March 6-8: Local & Regional Task Force, Denver, CO

March 8-10: Coordinating Council, Denver, CO

March 9-12: Ecumenical Advocacy Days, Washington, DC

March 14-15: PCUSA General Assembly Council Meeting, Louisville, KY

April 1: Annual CUIC Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Memorial Service, Trinity CME Church, Nashville, TN

April 1-7: Holy Week

April 19-21: AME Annual Ministries in Christian Education, Nashville, TN

May 24-27: CME Connectional Young Adult Ministry Retreat

May 27: Pentecost

June 22-26: UCC General Synod, Hartford, CT

July 19-23: On Being Christian Together: The Faith and Order Experience in the U.S., Oberlin, OH

July 22-25: Christian Church Disciples of Christ) General Assembly, Ft. Worth, TX

July 29-Aug. 2: ICCA Annual Conference, Nashville, TN



*May Your Life Be Filled With God's Light At
Easter & Always,
Patrice & Pat*

PASTORAL LETTER FOR MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR. DAY

To commemorate the 21st anniversary celebration of Martin Luther King, Jr. Day and the fifth anniversary of Churches Uniting in Christ, the eleven Heads of Communion of the CUIC communions jointly issued a pastoral letter to be read in all CUIC congregations across the country. The letter reminded congregants that on January 21, 2002 the communion leaders signed an agreement committing the members and partners in mission of CUIC to express their unity in Christ by living more closely together and working to-

gether to combat racism in the church and society. That agreement, "Called to Christian Commitment and Action to Combat Racism," is on the CUIC website.

"The vision of CUIC is that authentic unity may be born in the struggle for racial justice, and that our collective prophetic witness against injustice and oppression in all forms is a measure of our faithfulness to the Gospel."

"We CUIC leaders urge our congregations to join with other CUIC congregations in your community to discern

ways to exercise common witness and common service as together we work to dismantle racism and, in so doing, to be the voice and presence of God's love in the world."

The full text of the letter can be found on the CUIC website: www.cuicinfo.org.

"The vision of CUIC is that authentic unity may be born in the struggle for racial justice, and that our collective prophetic witness against injustice and oppression in all forms is a measure of our faithfulness to the Gospel."

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" T H A T T H E Y A L L M A Y B E
O N E " (J O H N 1 7 : 2 1)



We are on the web

www.cuicinfo.org