



New Apostolic Church USA

...everyone shall experience the love of God. – Written by Apostle John Fendt
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In the mission statement of the New Apostolic Church it states “everyone shall experience the love of God.” The focus on ‘everyone’ is founded on the teaching of Jesus Christ. The Gospel makes it clear that with God, there is no differentiation of people.

At the end of Matthew, Jesus instructs His Apostles to ‘go and teach *all* nations’ (Matthew 28:19). Further, Jesus Himself testified of His offer of salvation to the Samaritan woman at Jacob’s well. In the context of the culture of that time, this was totally outrageous. A man did not speak with a woman who was not of his own family, and a Jew surely would not stoop so low to speak with a Samaritan. In Matthew 25, He deepens this understanding - those who will be accepted into His kingdom are the ones who fed the hungry, gave drink to the thirsty, took the stranger in, clothed the naked, visited the sick and the one in prison. Here He describes circumstances of life in which anyone might find themselves. There is no reference to racial or cultural differences. Christ makes it clear that helping these individuals is the same as doing it for Him.

As a church that strives to reach out to all people and teach the Gospel of Jesus Christ, the New Apostolic Church does not accept nor condone discrimination or racism of any kind. A key element of the teaching in Matthew 25 is the focus on action, so much more than just a narrow focus on one’s feelings or thoughts about others. Jesus makes it clear that true disciples go out of their way to seek those who are in need and to provide for that need. This instruction is also clear in the Great Commission wherein He said ‘go.’ In a service for ministers in 2017, the Chief Apostle focused on this word from Matthew 28:19 in this way:

***Go** – The mission is go because Jesus knew and wanted that we have a personal relationship, a personal contact with the people.*

***Make disciples of all nations** – To make disciples means our task consists of motivating people to follow Jesus. That means that first we have to believe that the gospel is valid for all men. Whatever the conditions they live in are, whatever their cultural background is, whatever their economic situation is, whatever their past is. That’s my concern when I look into the congregations worldwide, I always ask myself, is that the image of the population of this country? Not yet. But our task is that we should go to all the nations and to every part of the population.*

Throughout Christian history, the carrying out of the Great Commission has always been connected with action. So it must be today. We cannot wait until we trip over the one who is in need. We must go to them.

It has been customary throughout our Church’s heritage, that when one of our members is in need, ministers and members go to them to help, support and offer pastoral care. For example, when someone passes away, the members of our congregations visit those who are mourning.



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Often there are no words to be said to alleviate the pain of those who grieve...*mourn with those who mourn* (Romans 12:15). Truly, one's presence carries weight. But further, the willingness to listen patiently as mourners express their feelings, can have a significant impact.

We have brethren in our congregations, as well as friends and neighbors around us, for whom the death of George Floyd and many others as well, has caused a great deal of personal pain. It is like a scab being torn off a wound. The wound is discrimination – *a lifetime of discrimination*. Those of us who have not experienced this do not really understand. Remember, our calling as Christians is to 'go' to those who suffer. Even if we cannot identify with someone's specific experience, we must strive to understand them. We must make the effort to listen patiently, without becoming defensive and without trying to justify anything. *Just listen* because your brother, your sister, your neighbor is suffering.

To 'go' also implies something more. We need to make it clear, as a church and as individuals, that we reject and decry injustice. To understand injustice, we should consider one of the causes – inequity; the idea that there is a different standard for one group of people than there is for another group. God is righteous – He loves every human being equally. Christ's example and teaching make it clear that the offer of salvation is for all people.

The call to act is made clear in the epistle of James. In chapter 2, verse 14-17 we read, *What does it profit, my brethren, if someone says he has faith but does not have works? Can faith save him? If a brother or sister is naked and destitute of daily food, and one of you says to them, "Depart in peace, be warmed and filled," but you do not give them the things which are needed for the body, what does it profit? Thus also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead.*

Echoing the words of the first Christians at Pentecost: *Men and brethren, what can we do?*

- Go, and approach those around you who seem to be suffering, outside your comfort zone
- Listen, listen, and listen
- Offer what you can to support and comfort
- Thereafter, genuinely self-reflect
- Strive to love and understand people as Christ does

People grieve and suffer due to a lifetime of discrimination and racism. Let us make the effort to learn from our brethren who carry the burden of injustice, discrimination and racism. The way we think about this topic may require significant change. The manner in which we act and react may also require significant adjustments. Being a Christian means that we take the necessary action to fulfill our holy responsibility to *embrace, serve, and love all* in the mind of Christ.