

## **There Will Be a New Day**

### ***Remarks for the 2018 Dr. King Commemoration with Centennial Christian Church, St. Louis, MO***

Mark D. Anderson, NBA President and CEO

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Good Morning! I bring you greetings on behalf of the National Benevolent Association of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ). Disciples, in partnership with NBA, the health and social service ministry of our denomination, are creating communities of compassion and care by responding to injustices in their local communities across the United States and Canada. They are engaging in meaningful ministry to stop the school-to-prison pipeline. They are serving food and offering shelter to those who have been pushed to the edges. They are standing up to police brutality and the killing of black and brown people. They are responding to God's call to be the feet and hands of Jesus Christ. We are a movement for wholeness in a fragmented world.



To my African-American friends here today, I want to say thank you. Thank you for being on the front line, whether you wanted to be or not. On a daily basis, you put the armor on and go out to face the arrows and rocks hurled at you because of your skin color. You are constantly in this struggle for justice. There is no way that I can comprehend the level of anxiety, anger, fear you may face on a daily basis. If my teenage son encounters a police officer, I don't panic thinking he may not make it home alive. When my spouse gets that much deserved promotion at work, I don't worry that co-workers will think it was given because of skin color. And, I'm pretty much guaranteed that my ancestors' homeland will not be referred to as shitholes. As a white male, I live in one America where I have life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness, while African Americans oftentimes live in another - one of prejudice, discrimination, and injustice.

To my white family members who are here today:

We can do better.

We must do better.

Dr. King stated, "that to ignore evil is to become an accomplice to it." I can no longer stand by and be an accomplice. I can't be complicit in the ongoing racial struggles that divide our country and our city.

More times than not, our silence is deafening. We must acknowledge our privilege walking around in our white skin. I didn't ask for this privilege, but because I have it, there comes great responsibility to seek justice for all. As white folks, we must speak up, speak out, and then act.

Working, attending school, and worshipping in institutions that have been mired in systemic racism for generations, demands that the status quo to be challenged. Sitting on the sidelines while our young sisters and brothers of color are being systematically moved from our schools to prison is no longer an option. And yes, we also need to be in the streets - crying out for justice when our black brothers and sisters continue to fall at the hands of a criminal justice system that is blinded by racism. My white friends, this is our work. This is our work, to do together with our African-American sisters and brothers

In Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s Acceptance Speech, on the occasion of him being awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1964, he accepted it on behalf of a civil rights movement in which he was mindful that at that very moment, 22 million black men and women in the United States were engaged in creative battle to end the long night of racial injustice. And the day before this speech, more than 40 houses of worship in the State of Mississippi alone were bombed or burned because they offered a sanctuary to those who would not accept segregation.

My friends, we must continue to be engaged in this creative battle that Dr. King spoke of not so long ago. It is going to be a long night, but we have enduring hope, unconditional love, and truth and righteousness on our side. There may be bombs thrown our way, fires started all around us, but we will not falter...we will be sanctuary to one another. We will stand with one another. If there is injustice anywhere, most definitely there is a threat to justice everywhere. There will be a new day.

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*As the health and social services general ministry of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), the National Benevolent Association partners with congregations, regions, general ministries, and a variety of Disciples-related health and social service providers to create communities of compassion and care. Founded in 1887 by six women responding to the needs of the day and on their doorsteps, for more than 130 years the NBA has continued to serve "the least of these." Learn more at [www.nbacares.org](http://www.nbacares.org).*