

Are you concerned about the tenor of the current presidential elections? The leaders of Indiana-Michigan Mennonite Conference have prepared a pastoral letter to others in the conference, calling us to "act like Jesus during this election cycle" in a climate of "overt racial, ethnic, and religious intimidation." You can read the full letter [here](#).

Greetings in the Name of Jesus, our Lord,

Many people have been caught up in the political fervor that has invaded our lives. We are attracted to different candidates, for various reasons, who will articulate our fears and hopes. As a consequence, we have witnessed an increase in overt racial, ethnic, and religious intimidation. We have seen violence breakout as people demand their rights.

We are writing today asking you to call on people in your congregation and communities to act like Jesus during this election cycle. Though we do not look to human institutions for salvation, government does make a difference in our lives.

We are tempted to treat those who disagree as less, as enemies to be defeated. But we are convinced by Paul's words in Ephesians 6, "For our struggle is not against enemies of blood and flesh, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers of this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places." Regardless of our political bent many of us are now tempted to fear about the future for ourselves and those important to us. Whether it is the (white) middle-class experiencing diminished status and earning power in the new economy of haves and have-nots, or the immigrant wondering whether they will be separated from their spouse and children, or the parent who fears that the lives of his/her black children do not matter.

Many in our congregations are looking for something different than they currently have. We want safety. We want security. As human beings, followers of Jesus, what hope can we offer? To what source of hope can we point? Just as always, our hope is in Jesus, and the coming reign of God. Jesus does not always promise security, but does offer hope.

Consider these words:

"Come to me, all you that are weary and are carrying heavy burdens, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me; for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light."

In this is love, not that we loved God but that God loved us and sent-Jesus to be the atoning sacrifice for our sins. . . . There is no fear in love, but perfect love casts out fear;

How shall we walk in this time? People are searching for answers. You are all devout leaders seeking God's preferred future. How might you lead during these turbulent times? What ideas come to you as you study scripture and pray for racial, ethnic and religious healing and reconciliation? We ask that you join us as we commit to:

- Pray for all who are afraid, to be sustained by love.
- Engage our community, listening especially to the fears of those who support candidates we would not.
- Where there is hatred in the congregation and community, teach that hatred and violence are not the way to a reconciled community. Following the example of Jesus, who has demonstrated what love for God and humanity can do.
- Pray for guidance and participate in the election cycle as we are led.
- Find ways to address needs in the community.

May God grant us grace to act in hope, not seeking status quo calm, but encouraging change that brings healing.

Grace,

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