



## Recalling the Ministry of Reconciliation

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The November 2024 election results left me, and many of my friends, neighbors, and family members, feeling deeply disappointed and fearful of what the future could hold if the country continued to be as divided as it seemed. Moving forward to the paradoxically conflated dates of the celebration of the Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and the inauguration of the 47th president of the United States, my fearfulness became conjoined with dread as woefully unqualified persons were and are actively being considered for the highest-level positions in our government. I can only dimly comprehend the panic, disbelief, and sense of betrayal of those whose lives are being uprooted and whose pain is being diminished and dismissed by the policies and executive actions currently being enacted.

From my Judeo-Christian perspective, I had hoped that the country would elect a president who possessed at least some of the characteristics of the leader described in Psalm 72, one endowed with righteousness, who would judge the afflicted of God's people justly, who *"will deliver the needy who cry out, the afflicted who have no one to help. He will take pity on the weak and the needy and save the needy from death. He will rescue them from oppression and violence, for precious is their blood in his sight."* [Psalm 72:1-2, 12-14, NIV]. And, that the elected leader would take to heart Jesus' admonition, *"For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me.' Then the righteous will answer him, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you something to drink? When did we see you a stranger and invite you in, or needing clothes and clothe you? When did*

*we see you sick or in prison and go to visit you?’ The King will reply, ‘Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.’” [Gospel of Matthew 25:35-40 NIV].*

Without doubt, Christians hold differing views on how not only to interpret the Biblical texts, but also on how to apply the Gospel to our lives. In our churches we have people who voted for and support the current president, those who hold opposing views, and those who fall somewhere betwixt and between. I wonder how many are familiar with the *ministry of reconciliation* referenced by the Apostle Paul in 2 Corinthians 5:18-21 [NRSVUE], wherein God has made us *ambassadors for Christ* so that we become reconciled to God, and by extension to *one another*. Actively engaging in the *ministry of reconciliation* may bring Christians closer to realizing Jesus’ prayer, “that (we) would all be one” [Gospel of John 17:21 NRSVUE]. Holding divided opinions on how to regard the poor, the immigrant, the exiled, the “least,” including our Christian siblings, is contrary to Jesus’ teachings. To defend injustice is contrary to the prophetic cry to heed God’s requirement “*to act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God.*” [Micah 6:8 NIV].

We, as Christians, are living in a time that is becoming more critical to live as Jesus the Christ’s ambassadors, to recognize Jesus’ face in those who hunger and thirst for righteousness. I pray that a plea for [mercy](#) for the least and marginalized is heeded by all who call themselves Christian.

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

The Rev. Dr. Renee Jackson serves as the Minister for Ministerial Formation for the Ministerial Excellence, Support, and Authorization (MESA) team in the National Setting of the United Church of Christ.

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