***The Peaceable Kingdom: We Are One***

**Foreword**

Brian McLaren is a modern theologian/pastor who focuses on emerging Christianity – a movement of the church developing a voice for the future. In writing about how Christians need to be in community with people of other *faiths* (or no specific faith), he said, “[We need] a Christian identity that is both strong and kind. By strong I mean vigorous, vital, durable, motivating, faithful, attractive, and defining. . . . By kind I mean something far more robust than mere tolerance, political correctness, or coexistence: I mean benevolent, hospitable, accepting, interested, and loving, so that the stronger our Christian faith, the more goodwill we will feel and show toward those of other faiths, seeking to understand and appreciate their religion from their point of view.”[[1]](#footnote-1)

As I was working on this curriculum for our small group and worship series on racism and privilege, McClaren’s statement was included in my Thursday morning devotional reading, and it expresses for me why and how we as Christians also need to approach our discussions and reflections on racism and privilege. This is not an “us-against-them” conversation. It is a conversation about being the Body of Christ – all of us. It is about being in community with our neighbors. It is about Christ’s gospel of love and grace. It is about building the Body and not hurting the Body, either individually or collectively.

My soul is grieved every time I hear someone refer to “political correctness,” especially when that term is used to dismiss the important work of inclusion and valuing every single member of the family of God. Political correctness has become a code for something we don’t really want to deal with or value. ***We Are One*** is not about being politically correct. It’s about faithfully living the gospel.

As one part of the Body of Christ, it is our call to be deeply kind in our actions and strong in our commitment to justice and to love and grace, no matter who crosses our path. We need to see every single person as part of the family of God, a citizen of the Peaceable Kingdom.

Just what is *The Peaceable Kingdom?* Isaiah 11:1-9 describes it as a community where lions and lambs can live in peace and harmony together, more than just sharing space on the planet. Edward Hicks painted a series of 61(!) paintings illustrating the Peaceable Kingdom – with small children playing with lions and huge steers and with Native Americans in conversation with immigrants from Europe. Musical compositions also paint the poetic and tonal picture as well. The Peaceable Kingdom is God’s vision for all of creation: hope, love, joy and peace – all of creation living in harmony.

Over the next few weeks, we will answer Christ’s call to be builders of God’s kingdom, to take new, deeper steps to model our lives and our actions on those of Jesus who saw each and every person as a member of God’s great big family. We will seek to be one.

Rev., Vivian McCarthy

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1. Brian D. McLaren, Why Did Jesus, Moses, the Buddha, and Mohammed Cross the Road? (Jericho Books: 2012), 10-11. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)