

## **CELEBRATION, LAMENT, HOPE of the People of Color of NCJ**

Bishops, guests and delegates of the 2024 NCJ,

I stand here today with my colleagues and partners in ministry to celebrate, lament and hope! It may seem odd to do all that at the same time, but yesterday, our episcopal address reminded us that we are indeed an ODD people of God!

Bishop, we celebrate all that we have accomplished at the Jurisdictional gatherings in this week. and we lament for all the missed opportunities!

We created space for conversations around gun control, and we lament that we continue to use ableist language, such as ‘being deaf to the voice of God,’ knowing that God’s people who are deaf are unable to connect with God.

We celebrate that we have elected Rev. David Wilson as the first First Nation Bishop in our connection, and we lament that we continue the habit of tokenism- electing one person of color to the episcopal office, and then returning to “business as usual.”

We celebrate the fact that we have elected the Rev. Héctor A. Burgos-Núñez, as the first Puerto Rican Bishop in our connection, and we lament that we continue to keep close guard at our door and hearts and miss becoming the church where all have a place at the table.

We celebrate the election of Bishop Carlo Rapanut, parent of a non-binary child in one Jurisdiction, and lament at the treatment of our queer sibling in another.

We celebrate that we have begun conversations about White Christian Nationalism, and yet we lament that when the time comes- we only invite the privileged guests to the table.

We celebrate that we are moving our denomination to being a fully inclusive church, and yet we lament that we often fail to invite those often neglected.

We celebrate that we have begun our work towards becoming an antiracist church, and yet we lament that our Brown and Immigrant siblings continue to be labeled as ‘others.’

We celebrate that all delegates of color were invited to have a ‘heart to heart’ conversation with the bishops of color, which was, in fact, a blessing, and, we lament that conversations like such are still needed.

Bishop, we, as people of beautiful colors and identities, celebrate all our accomplishments as a church, as we continue to strive to truly be the body of Christ.

We hope that this Jurisdiction will continue to put our dollars where we say our commitment is, so the conversation that begun at this Jurisdictional Conference among Bishops of color and delegates of color may not be a ‘one and done’ or a mere ‘check in the box,’ and neither be limited only with Bishops of color.

And we hope that we will remember to not default to the familiar Black/White binary that ignores our Brown and Immigrant siblings, and their unique challenges, when we engage in anti-racism work.

And we hope that we will be clear about the ways anti Blackness manifests itself, even in these sacred spaces

And we hope that we will remain sensitive to the fact that women of color and queer persons of color bear the burden of erasure even more so than our male counterparts. This must be remembered when planning meetings and events around anti-racism work.

**So, Bishop, I move**, that all leaders of color of the North Central Jurisdiction and the entire College of Bishops will meet at least once a year, and more as needed, to share, strategize and develop magnanimous spaces of HOPE, reconciliation, thoughtful conversations and extravagant welcome to all people of God!

**Motion** approved 131 – 8.