

Dear Genesis Conference Leaders (pastors, BOA, MEG, MAC and Nominating Committee) -

Over the past couple of weeks, two quotes have stayed with me. The first is something one of our pastors said:

*"I grow concerned that when the world scrolls through our facebook posts they don't see Jesus, they see politics and arguing."*

And the second is a Bible verse, James 1:19:

*My dear brothers and sisters, take note of this: Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry...*

We all know that as a country we are in turmoil. Issues of justice and injustice have risen to the surface, boiling over. Both truth and grace are hard to find. We are divided...with too many looking for "support" for their own beliefs, instead of carefully listening to one another. When I look at social media, too often I see us ignoring the directive of James 1... instead of being quick to listen and slow to speak, we are quick to post... inaccurate information, statements and photos meant to make a point or win an argument, or articles which are not meant to work through the complexities of the issues of our day, but instead are meant to defend a position.

As the Body of Christ, we are called to something different. We are a people reconciled with God, called to be reconcilers. The context for the well-loved verse: "if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come" is in the middle of a passage on reconciliation:

*14 For Christ's love compels us... 17 Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here! 18 All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and **gave us the ministry of reconciliation**: 19 that God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting people's sins against them. **And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation. 20 We are therefore Christ's ambassadors...** - 2 Corinthians 5*

Stop for a moment: scroll through your facebook, instagram, twitter (etc) accounts. What do you see in your own posts and shares? Are they filled with Kingdom purpose? Do they reflect the love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, faithfulness, gentleness and self control that is present when we have the fruit of the Spirit? Do they reflect that Jesus came "full of grace and truth"? (Are your posts full of both grace and truth?). Do your posts reflect a desire to understand those who are not like you? Or do they reflect a desire to only promote your position? Do they demonstrate a determination to stand up for those who cannot stand up for themselves? Do we reflect our God who: *"defends the cause of the fatherless and the widow, and loves the foreigner residing among you, giving them food and clothing."* (Deuteronomy 10:18).

As a leader in the Genesis Conference, **I am asking you to be reconcilers**. Remember that you represent the Body of Christ, the FMC, Genesis, and your local church. How am I asking you to do this? In your interactions, both in person and **on social media** (facebook, Twitter, Instagram, etc):

1. Share posts / stories that you have checked are accurate and factual.
2. Share insights / articles that are thoughtful, reflective, and take into account more than one perspective
3. Share joy and laughter... at your own expense rather than the expense of others.
4. Share your own story.
5. Build up rather than tear down.
6. When in doubt, ask someone who is very different than you. (Genesis is a mostly-white conference. We **must** do a better job of listening to our non-white brothers and sisters).
7. If you see a post that bothers you, and you are in relationship to that person, reach out privately and prayerfully. Dialogue is a wonderful thing, when it comes with both grace and truth.

There is much at stake. The Lord is calling the Body of Christ to be leaders in this new territory. In the midst of both pandemic and racial upheaval, we are called to come together, to build community among Christian brothers and sisters, driven by our commitment to Jesus. Our personal interactions and social media must reflect this commitment.

If you have specific questions or comments about what I've written, feel free to reach out.

Always with Hope,  
Superintendent Pam