



Statement In Defense of the Faith in Human Rights Declaration

In recent days, the internet has been the sparring place for a blog riddled with misrepresentations and errors regarding the Presiding Bishop and the right to defend liberty in the face of war, terrorism, the wholesale slaughter of human life. The ceremonial signing of the Faith in Human Rights Declaration document, which convened last December, 2008, at the Hague, Netherlands, was a historic moment for Pentecostal Christianity around the world. The United Nations sponsored-event was a commemoration of a similar document written 60 years prior when the world, on a more global scale, was confronted with wars, dislocation, and victimization of the least among us. Marking this historic moment in world events, it called for the repudiation by world-religious leaders, who among their tenets of faith, hold to a common principle that respects the right to live without fear of lost of life. This, again, is specific to the context of 60 years ago. Given the current global affairs that so mirror 20th century conflicts and strife around the world, the Presiding Bishop Charles E. Blake, through an emissary, unapologetically, represented the ethical and moral position of Pentecostal Christianity, by declaring our obligation to stand against the ravages of war, terrorism, and the casualties of human lives innocently caught in the middle of conflict.

The blog so recklessly, irresponsibly, and superficially, wrote about this important historic moment for Pentecostal Christianity, and chose instead to highlight, interject, and infer, what any rationale thinking person who reads the declaration would never have concluded. The interjection and inference of homosexuality and the rights for gay marriage was a gross exaggeration and literary leap for truth that is incomprehensible, immoral, and reflects all that is wrong with the witness of the Church to the world we seek to win for Christ! This is truly lamentable.

The Church of God in Christ consistently, utterly rejects and uncompromisingly denounces the practice of homosexuality. Our biblical interpretation of the sanctity of marriage as a sacred relationship between a man and a woman uncompromisingly views homosexual relationships as a contradiction and violation of the biblical teaching on marriage and are strongly condemned in the scriptures. " (Romans 1: 26-27; Leviticus 18:22; 1 Co 6:9-10, 1 Kings 14:22-24 Ephesians 5: 25, 32-33). Furthermore, this statement is in accordance with the policy on Same Sex Marriage adopted by the General Assembly of the Church of God in Christ (read [www. cogic.org](http://www.cogic.org))

The Church of God in Christ' support of human rights: all humans, as God's creation, advocates for the right to adequate education and healthcare, a living wage, freedom of religion, freedom of assembly,

democracy, life, security, right to own property, the right to vote, and freedom from slavery. **Presiding Bishop Charles E. Blake Sr., as a pastor, diocesan leader, and spiritual leader of the denomination, has repeatedly affirmed his unequivocal support of the church's position on these matters. (James 1:27)** But, it is not just a matter of towing the line with the denomination, it is a matter of his own conscience and moral underpinning that guides his decisions regarding this matter.

Further, the Church of God in Christ does not endorse, embrace or in any way affirm any religion, any spiritual beliefs or positions that are not in accordance with biblical Christianity. In signing the Faith in Human Rights declaration we in no way enter a religious union with any religion or spiritual teaching which is contrary to biblical standards (John 14:6). We, nevertheless, believe that in the proper context interfaith dialogue that can promote justice and freedom for the oppressed and poor is important for us as Christians who are called to live in the world, even as we are not of the world (I Corinthians 5:9-10).

In 1948, the United Nations Declaration on Human Rights was written and adopted by the UN General Assembly. It was a landmark document basically declaring that all people on the earth, wherever they live, and whoever they are, should be treated with dignity and justice. The United Nations Declaration of Human Rights was a beacon of hope for many of our own ancestors and older generations because for the first time a worldwide statement against racism and oppression of people (especially people of color) in the world by cruel tyrants was written and recognized on the world stage.

The Faith in Human Rights document, signed by Presiding Bishop Blake and nine other global religious leaders, was written sixty years later to reaffirm the tenants of the original document. Neither document makes any reference whatsoever to same sex marriage or homosexual rights. The practice of homosexuality is a preference, and therefore cannot be considered a human right. On the contrary, it is a human wrong.

The "Faith in Human Rights" document affirms the dignity of all people, who have been created in the image of God. The "Faith in Human Rights" statement reads, "we recognize our responsibility towards our believers and to the world at large and reaffirm our intention to take all necessary steps both within our communities and in cooperation with others to promote and protect human rights and fundamental freedoms for each and every person, regardless of religion or belief."

Therefore, it is quite clear that the "Faith in Human Rights" document intends that as religious people of the world, based on our own religious beliefs (in our case, the Holy Bible), we uphold human rights. Injustice, inhumane treatment and violent oppression are not what God, our Father, in Jesus Christ, through the power of the Holy Spirit desires perpetrated on anyone, believer or non believer.

As committed Christians, the Church of God in Christ upholds this godly standard and solidifies our place and position on the global stage in framing and representing Christ to the world from our stream of Pentecostalism. (Matthew 25:31-46)