

UCJCA 2020 International Convocation Theme:

The You in Christ and the Christ in You...” *Discovering Spiritual Identity and Purpose*”

2 Corinthians 5:14-17 New King James Version (NKJV)

*14 “For the love of Christ compels us, because we judge thus: that if One died for all, then all died; 15 and He died for all, **that those who live should live no longer for themselves**, but for Him who died for them and rose again. 16 Therefore, **from now on, we regard no one according to the flesh**. Even though we have known Christ according to the flesh, yet now we know Him thus no longer. 17 Therefore, **if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation**; old things have passed away; behold, **all things have become new.**” [“...**behold the new has come.**” ESV]*

Philippians 2:13 Amplified Bible (AMP)

*13 “**For it is** [not your strength, but it is] **God who is effectively at work in you**, both to will and to work [that is, strengthening, energizing, and **creating in you** the longing and **the ability** to fulfill your purpose] for His good pleasure.”*

Galatians 2:20 Amplified Bible (AMP)

*20 “I have been crucified with Christ [that is, in Him I have shared His crucifixion]; **it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me.** The life I now live in the body I live by faith [by adhering to, relying on, and completely trusting] in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself up for me.”*

Galatians 4:19 New King James (NKJV)

*“...I labor in birth again until **Christ is formed in you,**”*

Colossians 1:27 English Standard Version (ESV)

*27 “To them God chose to make known how great among the Gentiles are the riches of the glory of this mystery, which is **Christ in you, the hope of glory.**”*

Romans 12:2 New Revised Standard Version (NRSV)

*2 Do not be conformed to this world, but be **transformed by the renewing of your minds**, so that you may **discern** what is the will of God— what is **the good and acceptable and perfect will of God.**” The **New Living Translation** states: “Don’t copy the **behavior and customs** of this world, but let God **transform you into a new person by changing the way you think.** Then you will **learn to know God’s will** for you, which is good and pleasing and perfect.”*

Recently I wrote this Prayer for Guidance at a local Affirmation Service of a recently consecrated Bishop. I begin this theme explication with it.

“I still have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now. ¹³ When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth; for he will not speak on his own, but will speak whatever he hears, and he will declare to you the things that are to come.” (John 16:12-13)

*“So Lord I pray an **endowment of wisdom** upon your servant. Enable him through your Spirit **to hear what the Spirit is saying**, and to **discern your voice** above the many voices circulating around him.*

*May he **see beyond sight and hear beyond sound**...may he become acutely **aware of the spiritual and atmospheric disturbances** that shield the transmission of divine thought and will for the critical moments of decision making.*

*May the **inevitable moments of uncertainty not obscure the clarity of vision** and the power of his ability to discern the will and mind of God as he listens for your guiding presence.*

*We pray for spiritual awareness...for **his ability to declutter the collusion of opinions that congest the portals of divine thought transmissions**. May he hear your voice clearly and be guided by it, be it loud and boisterous or as soft as a whisper. Let him have **ears to hear what the Spirit says to the Church**.”*

We are faced with many challenges as people of faith commissioned to advance the Gospel to a world deeply divided and troubled. The impact of environmental/climate change is a scientifically proven fact and is evidenced with every emerging storm and every glacier meltdown. Disruption is impacting world systems; governments as well as social and religious paradigms that are experiencing the effects of ideological shifts.

It is imperative that people of faith recapture the principle element that moves the message and purpose of God for the Church and the many beyond of the walls of the Church who he has also called. The “body of Christ” is rendered anemic when we fail to sufficiently equip all of its members for the work of ministry. (Ephesians 4:12-16)

During the night of January 23 this year, I was inspired to consider whether we have drifted into the practice of enforcing new laws. It was a considerable reflection upon the application of divine purpose and instruction. The underlying issue was one of religious practice over and against spiritual relationship. It is an issue of external adherence vs internal

submission to eternal or spiritual guidance. “*And when he, the Spirit of Truth comes He will lead you and guide you...what he hears he will speak...*”

We are a people formed out of a Spiritual movement! We are the products of Divine movement. We are responsive to the movement of the Spirit. We are the New creation of God not of the flesh but of the Spirit. To be in Christ is to be a reconstituted being... a spiritual being dressed in flesh! We live not according to the unctions of the flesh but of the Spirit.

The Apostles taught The why and the how of the reconciliation process. We were restored to righteous status through the obedience and sacrifice of Jesus, who reconstituted our faith. He resuscitated the spiritually dead back to life. He restored us back to relationship with God.

Our theme: “***The You in Christ and the Christ in You...Discovering Spiritual Identity and Purpose,***” hopefully will guide us to uncovering the next level of ministry that is required in this 21st century environment. There are many issues that need our attention and none greater than effectively preparing our members for the work of ministry within and beyond the walls!

Our ministry is centered in Christ; not just his name, but his nature. Through Christ we become “***a new creation.***” The very essence of who we are is ***shifted away from physical identity to spiritual identity.*** We are the embodiment of Christ...a reincarnated presence diversified but unified and ***empowered through his Spirit.*** We are the “***body of***

Christ.” We are *in the world* but not *of the world* because we are “*of Christ*,” positioned in him. And, to be in Christ establishes *a new relational context* that is neither male nor female. In the first creation God “created them *male and female*” ...physiologically compatible beings. In the new creation he makes us *spiritually compatible beings*.

In Christ, gender is not the “Law.” We struggle with the letters of Law, whether they be Old Testament based, or those formulated mis-applied New Testament scripture. “*The letter*” still extinguishes life, and “*the Spirit*” still brings life!

Living through spiritual principles is a fluid experience. There is always an evolving of ones’ understanding of the principle. It is engagement with the known and the unknown at the same time. It is most certainly a transformative experience, one in which we are ever seeing truth emerge.

Our assignment is to engage the members in an **inward journey** with an **outward manifestation** of the renewed and inspired purpose of revealing Christ through words, actions and love. We are to affirm the “in Christ” reality and the power of it redemptively and the continuous manifestation of the Christ *in us* who is enabling his continuous work *through us*!

The “*In-Christ*” *purview expands the understanding of the new forming creature that we are becoming through Christ*. We all *were*, we all *are*, and we all *are becoming*!