

October 7, 2021

A CALL TO UNITY

We live in a time that requires perseverance and patience. The Apostle Paul encourages us to “not grow weary in doing good, for in due season we will reap, if we do not give up” (Galatians 6:9). Throughout the past nineteen months we have appealed to our pastors and congregations to follow the COVID-19 guidelines provided by provincial health authorities. As additional guidelines have been introduced, confusion and disagreements within churches have been increasing. One area of significant tension is regarding COVID vaccines.

The District Executive is appealing to each credential holder and congregation to walk in the unity of Christ. We urge you according to scripture to not allow differences in opinion on the COVID vaccine (or other disputable issues) to fracture relationships within the church.

In Romans 14 Paul wrote to instruct the church on how to deal with controversial issues they were facing. They were not to get caught up in disagreements over disputable matters (v.1). He admonished them to abandon criticism towards those with opposing opinions saying, “...let us not pass judgment on one another any longer...” (v.13).

Paul’s counsel is even more striking when we consider that he was strongly convinced of his own opinion on the issue (v.14). However, he reminded them that they were to walk in love towards one another, especially with those of different convictions (v.15). The Apostle’s reasons for addressing their behaviour was clear, “For the kingdom of God is...a matter...of righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit...So then let us pursue what makes for peace and for mutual upbuilding” (v. 17-18).

In light of scripture, we encourage you to prayerfully seek the Lord for wisdom and direction as you deal with the COVID vaccine viewpoints. As self-governing assemblies, pastors, boards, and congregations are able to make the decisions you believe are best for your context. In doing so we encourage you to pursue love, patience, and grace to all who may not align with your decision and seek for ways to embrace unity. We believe that there is a place within our District family for those who agree with getting the COVID vaccine and those that disagree with getting it. We contend for love and mutual respect towards one another on the vaccine and other COVID related matters.

If you would like further assistance with this issue, we are here to support you.

Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for he who promised is faithful. And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works” Hebrews 10:23-24

On Behalf of The Maritime District Executive,



Kevin Johnson
District Superintendent