

CRIBB<S>NOTE – January 25th, 2009

No matter what happens, life will never be the same. Events this week in Washington, DC, changed everything we have known, and propelled us into a new era. New history is etched out of the long years of suffering and sacrifice. Weary souls have been renewed and revived. Lost hope has been transformed into an unquenchable thirst for new possibilities. More than a symbolic shift has swept the nation. We are witnesses to a seismic re-ordering of the world.

Anyone who thinks the political winds are blowing in a new direction is only partially correct. Something far grander than expedience and temporal convenience has occurred with the ushering in of a new administration.

Indeed, Church and State have converged to form an alliance that broadens our understanding of nation and community. The display of human diversity and talent broadcast publicly this past week is merely the beginning of what is happening across America and around the world. This is a *kairos* moment.

Admittedly, I am overjoyed by the election and inauguration of President Barack Obama, a 20 year member of the United Church of Christ. He defied the odds and opposition that sought to eliminate him as a candidate. He overcame manufactured scandals and hurtful attacks on his name, faith, and relationships with his pastor, church, and family.

Resident deep within his political campaign, divine grace prevailed. Today, people around the world stand taller, speak louder, and have an elevated sense of purpose because he dared to articulate their needs and gave voice to their deepest desire for hope.

I am happy today to be a small part of the transition and transformation taking place to correct the damage done in the name of the people of the United States of America. We are crafting new ties with nations and peoples who were criminalized and wrongly labeled in the past. There is something new in the air.

We in the United Church of Christ do not have to apologize for our determination to interpret the Gospel of Jesus Christ as a mandate to forge justice, peace, and social goodwill. We do not have to feel ashamed of our alliances with other faith traditions in solidarity with peoples who have been discarded and harmed.

This is a new day! We do not place full responsibility for change on the shoulders of the new president. Instead, we honor our blessings by doing our part to improve living conditions for people, neighborhoods, and areas that surround us. We take another assessment of what is meant by ‘neighbor,’ and we commit ourselves to be the best neighbor possible by loving and caring for those around us.

When Jesus called those first four men to come and follow him, he knew their potential and recognized the need for even more people to join his movement. We are in this sanctuary today because we are part of Jesus’ mission. The new President of the United States is a self-proclaimed follower of Jesus who is steeped in the understanding and perspective of the United Church of Christ.

I am excited today because we can go forward together to make a new start at the dawn of a new era. Let us heed Christ’s call: “Come. Follow me.”