

WITNESS for JUSTICE

A weekly commentary from
the United Church of Christ

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March Forth for Justice

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One of the privileges of living in the United States is the freedom to speak out and step forth on any variety of issues. The public square in the United States provides the platform for our voices to be heard, whether we agree or disagree on the topic at hand. There is power in public witness as we gather in nonviolent public demonstrations on the streets; visit or write letters to public officials; or engage in acts of service to help someone in need. The Witness for Justice, first known as the Civil Rights Journal has a long and rich history that has inspired and provoked dialogue through the years. It has been and will continue to be one way that we **March Forth** for justice.

There are so many issues of injustice that arise every day. We need only turn on the radio or television, pick up a newspaper, or go online to learn about another court decision or another policy that is being enacted. Tragically, it's hard to keep up with it all. But there has never been a time that the voices of the masses need to be heard.

One such headline that just hit the news is an action taken by the Arizona Legislature. Arizona Senate Bill #1062's "exercise of religion" reads "the practice or observance of religion including the ability to act or refusal to act in a manner substantially motivated by a religious belief whether or not the exercise is compulsory or central to a larger system of religious belief." What it really means is that discrimination against lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender persons would be legal.

Sadly, using religious conviction as the basis for discrimination is not new in this country. History tells us that the Scriptures were used to justify the enslavement of African Americans. Furthermore, women continue to be excluded from leadership in our churches based on that same scriptural story. The Bible is intended to be a guide for good and reasonable living; using it to exclude and discriminate goes against everything we have read and heard from the Prophets through the ages, including Jesus himself.

God is still speaking,
**UNITED CHURCH
OF CHRIST**



Let it be known that we absolutely and resolutely disagree that our Christian conviction gives us the right to exclude and discriminate against anyone at any time. We will add our Christian voice to the opposition of Arizona Senate Bill #1062 that allows for such a law to become part of the social fabric of that state or any state in this nation.

March Forth on March 4 for justice in this country and around the world, <http://www.ucc.org/marchforth>. Join the United Church of Christ, the Unitarian Universalist Association and the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) as we call attention to the testimonies of many who have boldly expressed their religious conviction for justice and the common good.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR



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The United Church of Christ has more than 5,000 churches throughout the United States. Rooted in the Christian traditions of congregational governance and covenantal relationships, each UCC setting speaks only for itself and not on behalf of every UCC congregation. UCC members and churches are free to differ on important social issues, even as the UCC remains principally committed to unity in the midst of our diversity.