

To the Bishops, Suffragan Bishops, District Elders, Elders, Ministers, Missionaries and Willing Workers of the Northern District Council:

**SUBJECT: P.A.W. Minute Book Reaffirmation of Position on Civil Rights and Human Dignity**

*"Our humanity is at risk. It's too powerful a thing to just lie down and give up the ghost. But we have to face the fact it is in danger. It is at risk because the feeling that life is sacred has died away in this century."* (Saul Bellow [1915-]. "Matters Have Gotten Out of Hand," in a Violent Society," U.S. News & World Report, 28 June 1982)

*"The planetary civilization to which we all belong confronts us with global challenges. We stand helpless before them because our civilization has essentially globalized only the surface of our lives. But our inner self continues to have a life of its own. And the fewer answers the era of rational knowledge provides to the basic questions of human being, the more deeply it would seem that people, behind its back as it were, cling to the ancient certainties of their tribe."* (Vaclav Havel [1936-]. Czech president. "The New Measure of Men," New York Times, 8 July 1994)

*"The problem is the spirit of our age: denial of transcendence, the vapidness of values, emptiness in the heart, the decreased sensitivity to the imponderable quality of the spirit, the collapse of communication between the realm of tradition and the inner world of the individual."* (Abraham Joshua Heschel [1907-1972]. The Insecurity of Freedom: Essays on Human Existence, 3, 1967)

*"We live in an age which is so possessed by demons, that soon we shall only be able to do goodness and justice in the deepest secrecy, as if it were a crime."* (Franz Kafka [1883--1924]. In Gustav Janouch, "Conversations with Kafka," tr. Goronwy Rees, Encounter, August 1971)

*"Never before has man had such capacity to control his own environment, to end thirst and hunger, to conquer poverty and disease, to banish illiteracy and massive human misery. We have the power to make this the best generation of mankind in the history of the world--or to make it the last."* (John F. Kennedy [1917-1963]. United Nations address, New York City, 20 September 1963)

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Each of these quotations are a reflection of the philosophical bent of leaders who in their disposition uttered prophetic words that now have become the world's present distress. Though their views reveal that each envisioned the world through their own unique prism, yet they all arrive at a cosmopolitan conclusion: "The world is in trouble!"

This article on the position of the Pentecostal Assemblies of the World (P.A.W.) since 1919 is written in a comprehensive, intellectual, spiritual, and scholarly way. It reiterates the sound Christian Apostolic view we hold as believers on the subject of race, civil rights, and equality. The genius of the Holy Spirit working through the sage and extraordinary insight of the writers (P.A.W. Board of Bishops), has left for us a record which addresses *our past, present, and future*

*position* on the aforementioned *issues* that have once again arisen in our country as a national social crisis.

Let us reflect on the wisdom our fathers have left us, and confront with the *Gospel of Jesus Christ* the most pressing issues of our times.

***"So, as much as in me is, I am ready to preach the gospel to you that are at Rome also. For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek." (Romans 1:15, 16)***

God Bless You,

Bishop Ira Combs, Jr., D.D.