

Last week we talked about our founding of America—treatment of Natives, slaves, and war

How this violence is in our very DNA

I suggested we need a "stem cell transplant" to change our DNA—to be transformed

A **stem cell transplant** (sometimes called a **bone marrow transplant**) is a medical procedure in which diseased **bone marrow** is replaced by highly specialized **stem cells** that develop into healthy **bone marrow**.

For our purposes—it is allowing God to transform us or transplant healthy DNA in us

To infuse us with new basic ways of thinking that are lived out naturally

As Jesus followers, we can choose this new way—receive the gift of transformation

But I think God wants something bigger—to transform our country, our world

We are to live out this new order of transformation—this new way of being

...as if the new order is already fully in place

It is Jesus way... it is the Kingdom of God lived out

As we live it out—God enacts transformation in our wake

If I'm right that North Seattle Friends Church is called to reconciliation—we need to be about it

This world is broken and recently there has been a new wave of violence

We need the "stem cell transplant" now

I'm going to take some weeks to help us think through what is involved in that

Our immediate thought is that changing the world is a daunting task and what can I do?

Yet together we can do something significant and it will make a difference



Last week I said it begins with telling the truth—where I always say to start

But it is important to admit that we are telling a shared truth

And thereby creating common memory that honors my truth and the truth of others

Also that it needs to be honest truth—we must let go of the fabricated half-truths

We have to let go of the need to be right and have "my version of history" stand

Core to this is the need to respect other

I ended last week with an invitation to celebrate a Declaration of Interdependence

Truth is that we all need each other and to see ourselves as connected to others

With the 4th of July we celebrate our Independence from England

Again, that ideal of independence has become our goal as individuals

Independence is crafted into our DNA—we mature to independence

We are often critical of those who cannot make it alone and need help

We laud as heroes those self starters and entrepreneurs who make it big

We encourage young people to establish their independence

In the end—it is all up to me!

Independence fosters a sense of individualism

But reality is that we can't do life alone—we need each other
Yet we are apologetic about needing help—we hesitate to ask others
This independence leads to a false promise of self-sufficiency—that I can do it alone

Even as a nation, we aren't—and never were—truly independent
Even in the early days of America as a nation—we were connected to other countries
Whites came from other places and brought their culture with them
There was a growing trans-Atlantic imperial economy
Today we live in a global society and what happens here affects the whole world
As do the crisis in other places affect us—we see that with Greece
Global economies are connected
Many of us drive cars made in other countries, etc.

Our progress is often made on the backs of others
I wanted to go through the Panama Canal until I learned of its history
Relying on cheap immigrant labor, thousands died because of US demands
We've abused our connectedness by demanding it serve us
The US becoming a supreme empire that takes power over others

When we look at how/where we live—we've clustered into monocultures
Like live with like—rarely interacting with those who are different than us
The false sense of security actually increases partisanship and instability
—we're fragmented as a society and wonder why things don't change
The church is no better—11 am Sunday morning is the most segregated hour in America

I read an article this week by a black man, John Metta who said...

Black people think in terms of Black people. We don't see a shooting of an innocent Black child in another state as something separate from us because we know viscerally that it could be our child, our parent, or us, that is shot... Black people think in terms of we because we live in a society where the social and political structures interact with us as Black people.¹

On the other hand, white people in our country don't readily think in terms of "we"
White privilege gives us the ability to function as individuals

Rather than celebrate our independence... let's celebrate our interdependence

When I looked on the internet I found many declarations of interdependence
The truth is that we are connected and we do need each other
We need to be able to rely on each other without apology or regret
I don't find this goal of independence and individualism in Scripture
Rather I see the connectedness of a people gathered to follow Christ
Even Jesus called 12 disciples to join him in ministry
There were other women and people that followed him as well
Together we are the "body of Christ"
1 Corinthians 12:12-31 talks about us as one body with many members

¹ <https://thspl.com/i-racist-538512462265>

The church is called to demonstrate what God intends for all peoples
In Christ enemies and strangers are transformed into friends and family
Diverse persons come together in unity
Those who are unlike are not made alike—but transformed into the likeness of Christ

Yet the songs we sing are often about "my Lord" rather than "our Lord"
"Be Thou **MY** Vision" – "It Is Well with **MY** Soul" – "You Are **MY** All in All"
Whereas in Scripture—the emphasis is on **our God, our Lord and Savior**
We've been gathered into a community—connected persons together
We're a people of God interconnected to other peoples of God—>change our language

Not only do we need each other—we need others who are different from us
A supervisor once told me to be sure I hired people with a variety of strengths
That a common mistake was hiring everyone that is too similar
I need to be challenged in my thinking and way of being by others
Other cultures, other beliefs, other traditions, other philosophies, other...
The church is not to be a place of homogeneity but of reconciled diversity
Christianity is not a solitary religion, but a new creation of community

The early church emphasized community—Acts 2:43-47 and Acts 4:32-37
Quakers have emphasized community—see it in how we do business and in worship
The strong sense that all have voice in this journey
But more than that—we are incomplete without every voice
When I withhold what God gives me, the community is diminished
Only as we put the whole puzzle together can we see the full message emerge

Unity and diversity—in Christ they are held together
Diversity—root word means "to turn aside" (where we get the word divert)
Unity—root word means "join together"
In the body of Christ, those who would have been turned away from each other
Are joined together in Christ
For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ. For in the one Spirit we were all baptized into one body—Jews or Greeks, slaves or free—and we were all made to drink of one Spirit. 1 Corinthians 12:12-13 NRSV
Jesus is changing what it means to be the people of God
The people of God are no longer defined by race, ethnicity, temple worship, etc.
The people of God is this diverse, motley group of Jesus followers
Jesus upended social status—not just Jews and Greeks, but slaves and free!

1 Corinthians 12:14-31

The foot can't say I don't belong because I'm not a hand
Feet were considered unclean and unworthy—Jesus says feet are in
The ear can't say I don't belong because I'm not an eye
If the whole body is a eye or an ear—it is not a body and it is not functional
This is self sufficient individualism

God arranged the body!

But as it is, God arranged the members in the body, each one of them, as he chose. 1 Corinthians 12:18 NRSV

You cannot say to the hand or the feet—we don't need you

The weaker members of the body are indispensable and must be honored

God arranged the body!

But God has so arranged the body, giving the greater honor to the inferior member, that there may be no dissension within the body, but the members may have the same care for one another. 1 Corinthians 12:24-25 NRSV

There can be no dissension in the body!

Together we are the body of Christ! We don't choose who is in and who is out!

Dependent—comes from the root word meaning "to hang from"

Like fruit hanging from a tree

We all hang together and we are all dependent on Jesus

Our differences do not separate us because we all are together in Christ

Jesus said, "*I am the vine, you are the branches.*" John 15:5