

## IICN Director's Message 2021

As the pandemic of Covid-19 continues to take lives and have a negative impact on global humanity, the conflict, pain, fear, and grief of racism has risen to the heights of our attention. While the virus gave opportunity for nurses and the profession of nursing to be highly honored in this international Year of the Nurse and Midwife, the fight against racism should also be of critical importance to nurses everywhere. We are globally, the largest body of healthcare providers. We are on every continent, in every nation, in widely diverse practice environments and roles, and we ourselves and our patients represent every race, ethnic group, language, culture, faith, age and gender.

When you look at my photo and see that I am the color White, assumptions can be made and the context from which I write is indicated. I grew up in a Christian home where the relationship with God through Jesus Christ was lived out in home, church, community, and globe. My parents raised us to love and respect all persons and there was diversity at our dining room table. My community and friends were/are racially and culturally diverse. In the region where I live, over 200 languages are spoken. I learned more from the many missionaries who stayed in our home and I have been able to meet, serve, and fellowship with nurses on six continents.

Therefore, I want to celebrate the diversity of nurses as well as the commonality we share. Influenced by schooling, cultural norms, and regulations for nursing training and education, nurses may care differently but they care. Every nurse I have worked with across the globe has brought the wellness of the patient to the forefront of their daily lives. Now add a personal relationship with God through Jesus Christ and empowered by the Holy Spirit. Christian nurses should bring their hope and faith in God into their patient care. I pray they do. (For those who want to learn more about how to do so, IICN offers [courses](#) for you).

When we become children of God, we are to do two things: "*Love the Lord our God with all of our heart, and with all of our soul, and with all of our mind, and with all of our strength, and to love our neighbor as ourselves*" (Mark 12:30-31).

Scripture also teaches us that "*There is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave or free, nor is there male or female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus*" (Galatians 3:28). So if we love God with our total being, and there is no particular designation or category better than another, how can we not love the diversity of our world?

It must be clarified that love does not always mean we like each individual. There is no person in the world that likes, or is liked by, every other person in the world. It is okay not to like everything about everybody. None of us like exactly the same food, style of hair, church, etc., so why do we think we would "like" every personality or decision made by others. However, the not liking can never be based on the color of the skin, the language spoken, or where someone calls home. Love your neighbor as yourself means to understand we can have different perspectives but still see each other as humans made in the image of God (Genesis 9:6). This gives every person value. It makes providing the highest quality and compassionate care for every person a special ministry for the Christian nurse. It means that because of our relationship with the creator of all, every Christian nurse is to care without prejudice.

Dr Susan Elliott

