



March 8, 2013

**Local Unit of Church Women United Honors Terry Haven**  
***Voices for Utah Children Deputy Director receives Human Rights Award for 2013***

Church Women United (CWU) is a national volunteer Christian ecumenical women's movement initiated and carried out by women in the United States and Puerto Rico. It is a movement that brings together women of diverse races, cultures and traditions in closer Christian fellowship, prayer, advocacy, and action for peace with justice in the world. CWU engages millions of women representing twenty-six supporting denominations and participating Christian women.

The Church Women United Human Rights Celebration was started in 2006 in the hopes of bringing to light those who have and are working towards equality for all. Awards have honored amazing women and men whose work has made an impact on their community or on the world at large.

On March 8, 2013 the Salt Lake/Bountiful unit of CWU honored Terry Haven, Deputy Director of Voices for Utah Children, during their annual Human Rights Celebration. Below is her acceptance speech.

**Remarks by Terry Haven**

First I want to say how sorry I am that I cannot be with you today. I am giving a presentation at a National KIDS COUNT Conference on using infographics and social media to affect policy change for kids. While it is important work, I would have liked to have been here to most humbly accept this award.

I say humbly because I know the caliber of the women in this room, and the good work that ya'll do year after year. So this award means a great deal to me as it comes from a group of powerful women, many of whom I look up to and admire.

I thought long and hard about what I would say to you in 5 minutes. I finally decided I would share with you a few of my thoughts on justice and mercy and end up asking you to join in this justice work that I am so passionate about.

To me, human rights and justice go hand in hand. My favorite bible verse is Micah 6 verse 8. It answers that age old question, "just what is it that God expects of the ordinary Christian? The answer in Micah, "To do justice, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with your God". Our churches today do a great job of the last two. Our churches abound with mercy or charity ministries that are so important and make such a difference in the lives of the marginalized in our communities.

The Rev. William Sloane Coffin, a civil rights leader and chaplain of Yale University once said that “Charity is a matter of personal attribute, justice a matter of public policy. Never can the first be a substitute for the second.” I think he means that we need the charity work, the mercy ministries, but they are not enough. We must step outside our comfort zone and march into the justice arena!

A lot can be accomplished by caring people who offer a helping hand. When low-income families need help, it’s great to volunteer at a shelter, or donate toys to the local hospital. But that won’t always be enough. Donating toys are no substitute for a way to pay the rent, you must advocate for affordable housing and fair wages. Clothing drives and food drives are necessary and a godsend for those in need, but you must advocate against cuts to safety net programs such as Food Stamps and CHIP (the Children’s Health Insurance Program). In other words, volunteers can’t answer all the needs unless they are also working for public policies which lift up and support our struggling families.

All of the legislative victories of recent years – civil rights for people with disabilities, child care for working parents, health care for low-income families, community based programs for the mentally ill, and many, many, more – are the direct result of advocacy, of human rights activities, of justice ministries. And I am so proud to be a part of that work in my church and of the willingness of church members to rise to this challenging work.

Coffin says, “Christians have no business thinking that the good life consists mainly in not doing bad things. We have no business thinking that to do evil in this world you have to be a Bengal tiger, when, in fact, it is enough to be a tame tabby—a nice person but not a good one. In short, Pentecost makes it clear that nothing is so fatal to Christianity as indifference.”

I know that church women around the globe are not indifferent, I know that they too are passionate about the work that needs to be done. It can be intimidating and uncomfortable to speak up and get involved. But in a democracy where every voice and vote count, doing nothing is a political act. It’s a vote for the status quo. Staying out of the process doesn’t mean that laws won’t get passed, it just means they will get passed without reflecting your priorities and wishes.

Nancy Amidei, long time advocate and one of my heroes, once said: “If you went to a restaurant just to read the menu you would be informed.... But you would be missing the point. At some point you have to decide what you want, what you’re willing to pay for it and engage with other people to get it.” In other words, you must decide what you want from your government, what you are willing to pay for it, and engage with your elected representatives so they can help you get it

I am one of the lucky ones. I get paid to do this justice work that I love. I get to go to work every day and work to make a difference in the lives of Utah’s children and families. It’s rewarding work, it’s frustrating work, it’s an incredible organization and I work with dedicated and amazing people. Few have the luxury of being a full-time advocate. But if at this point in your life, all you can give is 5 minutes a week, then that is your obligation. You can do justice by sending an email to your legislator asking him or her to support quality preschool for at-risk kids in just 5 minutes. If at some point in your life you can give 5 hours a week, that is your obligation. You can attend a press conference or help organize a letter writing campaign during coffee hour at your church.

I have what William Sloane Coffin calls a “passion for the possible.” I know that you do to and ask that you join me in being an advocate for justice. Because as Ms. Amidei would say, “no matter what the available time, so long as even one child needs your voice, the obligation is LIFETIME not FULLtime.”

Thank you once again for this incredible honor and for all the good work you do!