

Letters to the editor

On creating a more civil society

An incident in Grand Junction this week has gone viral. A mean-spirited stranger in a parking lot chose to hurl racist (even profane) accusations at a brown-skinned woman.

The victim's daughter had the foresight to record this. Scenes like this aren't new, even here.

What is new, as the actor Will Smith recently told Jimmy Fallon, host of NBC's *The Tonight Show*, is that these sorts of encounters are now being recorded and shared online. Anyone appalled by this week's verbal violence must wonder what kind of country we are becoming. Privately condemning the hate-speaking woman is not enough.

Neither is siding with the victim.

For those who believe in the noble ideals upon which this nation was founded, for those who hold fast to the notion that "all people are created equal," the time has come (and will always come) to do what we can where we can to speak out and stand up for "... these truths we hold to be self-evident." In my work with the Interfaith Alliance of Colorado, I have been asking faith leaders and their communities to commit themselves to being an "Interfaith Force for Good," first

by affirming the dignity of all people and then by pledging to speak and act in ways that protect and advance equality, justice and religious freedom in a pluralistic society. (To view and affirm this commitment, go to interfaithallianceco.org/initiatives/interfaith-force-for-good/).

This is a pledge people of conscience can and should be willing to make. Edmund Burke, the Irish political philosopher and father of modern conservatism wisely remarked that "The only thing necessary for the triumph of evil is for good men to do nothing."

Let us count ourselves among those who make it clear in ways great and small that hate speech and hurled accusations have no place in our society.

Rev. Karen Winkel

Montrose