

A Response to Racism and Racial Injustice

June 12, 2020



The recent deaths of Ahmaud Arbery in Georgia, Breonna Taylor and David McAtee in Kentucky, and George Floyd in Minnesota have again brought to light racism and racial injustice in the United States. As Brethren in Christ, we value all human life and thus our hearts break for the many individuals, families, and communities who live with recurring racism and racial injustice.

As a body of believers, we remain firmly committed to our *Articles of Faith and Doctrine* which state, "Made in God's image, each human being is of infinite value and is to be cared for and nurtured. We should relate to others in love and justice — opposing that which destroys, oppresses, demeans, or manipulates, and fostering that which restores, upbuilds, and affirms. God's plan for the human family calls for wholesome, growing relationships among all persons; it forbids abusive and destructive behavior" (Article II, Relationships in Creation).

Racism urges us to forget that all persons are created equal in God's image. It is a denial of our God-given personhood. It is contrary to the intent of God in creation and is contrary to the Kingdom of God that has come in the person of Jesus. We denounce individual, communal, corporate, and systemic beliefs or practices that foster, promote, or facilitate racial injustice and benefit some while burdening others simply due to the color of their skin or their race.

As Brethren in Christ, we seek to follow Jesus in all things. We are called to be people of peace and reconciliation and we willingly embrace the call of the gospel to promote forgiveness, understanding, reconciliation, and non-violent resolution of conflict. In our congregations and

communities, we want to be known as Jesus-followers who listen, learn, and love those who are most impacted by racism and often feel unheard, uncared for, and unloved.

In his life, Jesus demonstrated sacrifice and service that pleased God. In his death, Jesus reconciled us to God and one another. In his resurrection, Jesus demonstrated the power of God over sin and death. In sending the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost, Jesus birthed his Church as a multi-racial, multi-lingual, and multi-cultural family.

The book of Acts describes the growth of the early followers of Jesus as they began to understand and to live the reality of the good news of Jesus, that “There is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, nor is there male or female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus” (Galatians 3:28). The good news of Jesus destroys barriers and removes hostility in order to create one new—equal, loving, caring, supporting—humanity (Ephesians 2:14-18).

Racism and racial injustice should not only be addressed after tragic events, such as those our country has recently experienced, instead, we are called to be about our Father’s business all of the time. Again, in the words of our *Articles of Faith and Doctrine*, “Jesus Christ commissions the church to make disciples of all the world’s peoples. The church is called to share the gospel in every culture and stratum of society. Evangelism includes bringing people to a saving faith in Christ and to responsible membership in the church. The people of God are also called to be a redemptive influence in the world, confronting corporate sin and seeking to overcome evil with good. They are to be a voice for righteousness, peace, and justice” ([Article V](#), Mission of the Church: In Relation to the World).

The Leadership Council of the Brethren in Christ U.S.

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