

We Are Called To Make a Difference



In these days when a killer disease has caused many of us to long for the 'normal' good old days, a disgraceful national tragedy has reminded us that the normal of the past was far from good for many Americans. The ugly face of injustice and racism, a centuries old stain on our society, continues. This was demonstrated in the death

of George Floyd. People around the country and the world have been awakened to raise their voices and call for an end to such discriminatory mistreatment and violence. There is hope that this time, perhaps there will be change.

Church of the Brethren General Secretary David Steele, reminds us that "Brethren have long recognized the inherent worth of all human beings while also recognizing that our church, and we ourselves, are not free from racism." Many of us benefit from racist practices even if we are not direct participants in those practices or aware of the benefits, we get from them. He also reminds us of the 1991 Annual Conference report "Brethren and Black Americans". That statement says in part:

Jesus spoke strongly to those who choose willful ignorance for their own benefit, saying in Matthew 23:23: *'Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you tithe mint, dill, and cumin, and have neglected the weightier matters of the law: justice and mercy and faith.'* And we find this in James 4:17: *'If anyone, then, knows the good they ought to do and doesn't do it, it is sin for them.'*

As a denomination we must reaffirm that racism is sin, and that there is good we ought to be doing to combat it. Racism is indeed our concern as we strive to truly love both God and neighbor. When we are not concerned and do nothing, we sin. (see Steele's statement in the June 4, 2020 *Newsline*, the 1919 statement is at:

www.brethren.org/ac/statements/1991blackamericans.html)

We are called to prayerfully listen and learn about the pain and damage injustice and racism brings to our black and brown brothers and sisters, and to our Native American and Asian brothers and sisters as well. We are called to repent for our role in this injustice, to pray for all our brothers and sisters, and work for change.

This week, in your prayer time remember:

- **The other needs in the world.** Violence, hunger, natural disasters (including deadly tropical storm Amanda that hit El Salvador), & other needs have not gone away!
- **The people of Brazil.** Brazil is now 2nd only to the US as a COVID-19 hot spot. Brazilian Brethren (Igreja da Irmandade) live near & many work in one of the hardest hit cities.
- **Refugees & other displaced people** especially those facing COVID-19 in refugee camps.

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