

Black Lives Matter

Statement from The Methodist Church: Racism in our communities

A personal message from the President of the Methodist Conference, the Revd Dr Barbara Glasson

It is with outrage and deep sorrow that we have witnessed the recent brutal killing of George Floyd in the United States.

But outrage and sorrow are not a sufficient response to racism and inequality in society. How to begin a process of change? It starts with self-examination and listening to the people whose lives are affected by discrimination and hate.

This week I received these words from a Methodist living in south London:

“The young people whom I have worked with for over the last 15 years have felt the impact of racism in every institution they have been part of from schools, to university, to various work places, and other than local support and informal church networks they have not found the Methodist Church as a place that speaks up for them.”

As your President, I start by saying I am sorry. Sorry for being silent when we should have spoken out against the everyday injustices that affect BAME communities. I am sorry that, despite our efforts, we have not done enough for those who feel excluded and we need to do better. We know this includes people of all ages from the Windrush generation to the very young. I am sorry when we have not listened carefully enough and not challenged the assumptions of white privilege and bias.

Repentance can lead us to change, to embody a gracious, loving spirit of inclusion and understanding. There is no excuse for racism. All people are made in God’s image. We are one body in Christ Jesus.

I hope we can listen more carefully to the voices of BAME members, especially younger people, who face racism, discrimination and violence on a daily basis. Then our Church must be brave, speak out, speak up and challenge racism wherever we find it, especially when we find it in ourselves.

I have been in contact with the Vice-President who joins me in supporting this statement.

The Revd Dr Barbara Glasson, President of the Methodist Conference

Notes

The Methodist Church ‘believes that racism is a denial of the Gospel’ - standing orders, SO 013B.

The Methodist Council is undertaking a substantial piece of work to shape the Methodist Church to be an inclusive church. More details of the background and measurable proposals to bring about attitudinal, cultural and systemic change are available on the Methodist Church website.

Prayers

From the Joint Public Issues Team:

Loving God,

As the sins of systemic racism and police brutality rear their heads once more,
meet us in our anger, sorrow, and frustration.
Guard us from indifference, ignorance and silence.

As Black lives continue to be taken too soon,
and because all were named and loved,
we lift names to you, in remembrance and resolve:
George Floyd, Ahmaud Arbery, Belly Mujinga, Darren Cumberbatch, Olaseni Lewis, Sean
Rigg, Mike Brown, Breonna Taylor,
and so many more.

As righteous anger overflows onto the streets,
we join in with the holy cry of "how long O Lord?"
While we pray for peace, may civility not become the enemy of justice.
We lament that past protest has fallen on deaf ears,
and pray for a world transformed by your love.

We plead, for Black communities: justice, safety, equality.
For those who could choose to look away: repentance, education, solidarity.
Help us to declare in word and deed:
Black Lives Matter.

Amen

Prayer taken from Churches Together in Britain & Ireland website www.ctbi.org.uk - resources for Racial Justice Sunday 2017:

God of all peoples, we pray for all victims and targets of racial hatred, discrimination and
injustice. We pray for your protection especially for those affected in our churches, our
institutions and in our communities.

Lord in your mercy, Hear our prayer

We pray for reconciliation through the work of God's Spirit. Wherever there is division and
divisiveness between us and others, because of our culture or ethnicity we pray that we may
all be led to reconciliation, understanding and acceptance.

Lord in your mercy, Hear our prayer

Amen

Resources:

Many useful resources including books, essays, podcasts and talks from their archives can
be found on the Greenbelt Festival website www.greenbelt.org.uk