



Faith Connections

United in Faith Helping
People In Need

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Our Mission: Serve this community † Revitalize the Church † Celebrate Christian Unity

The Dangers of Church Silence and Complicity Around Racism

“I have wept over the laxity of the church. But my tears have been tears of love. There can be no deep disappointment where there is not deep love...Yes, I see the church as the body of Christ, but oh! how we have blemished and scarred that body through social neglect and fear of being nonconformists.” -Martin Luther King Jr, Letter from a Birmingham Jail

Our nation and world have been grieving and hurting. The COVID-19 pandemic has drastically shifted what was viewed as normal in society from employment to basic social interaction. For a few months, news of COVID-19, including the stay at home orders and the realities of the new normal of society, dominated news coverage. Yet, recent news of unjust killings of African Americans, most notably, George Floyd at the hands of a Minneapolis police officer, coupled with massive social unrest across the country, has shifted the focus of much of the news coverage and has reignited a discussion around racism in America. Though some of the protests around the country have been violent, resulting in looting, many of the protests come from people peacefully, yet persistently, demanding justice and expressing their deep felt hurt and pain.

As followers of Christ, we are called to do justice (Micah 6:8) and mourn with those who mourn (Romans 12:15). We serve a God who is radically inclusive and proclaims a gospel that at its core, breaks down the racial and social barriers that have long plagued our country. Jesus and the early Christians preached to a social context that was too, plagued by histories of injustices and ethnic divisions. Yet too often in American history, the church has been complicit in the racial injustices in America. Some condoned slavery and upheld segregation in its churches and Christian universities. Others simply ignored the suffering and persecution that their African American brothers and sisters faced in their pulpits, streets, and homes. This complicity was a result of conformity with culture, comfort with racism, and fear of facing persecution. There is no doubt that American society has achieved much racial progress due in large part to the courageous and biblical prophetic work done among many Christians and churches in America who used Scripture and deep spiritual conviction to fight injustice. Despite much progress, recent events remind us that much work is still needed to bridge racial barriers and it is essential that we as Christians individually and as churches corporately serve as a critical voice for racial reconciliation and justice.

Like any effort to follow and live like Christ, pursuing racial reconciliation and breaking down barriers is costly. It may cost our popularity and comforts that we cherish, even from others within our church traditions. It cost the lives of many spiritual trailblazers within American history. Yet, we cannot afford to be complicit for the sake of preserving our own security when black and brown brothers and sisters are hurting and demanding justice, when our churches remain deeply segregated, and when our country remains plagued and impacted by the sin of racism.

As protests erupted across America, many Christians, particularly white Christians, asked the question as to how they should respond. Below are three ways that Christians individually and the church corporately should respond, moving from complicity to courage around race:

Continued on page 2...

Inside this issue:

Rev. Mel's Column Continued	2
Winnie's Wishes Resale Shop - Donna Reynolds	2
Jaycees Thank You	2
Thanksgiving in July	3
Women in Clergy Luncheon	3
Delegate Assembly	3
Thanksgiving in July Sponsors	4



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1. Discern: In Psalm 139:23 ESV, the Psalmist writes “Search me, O God, and know my heart. Try me and know my thoughts. And see if there be any grievous way in me and lead me in the way of the everlasting.” It is essential that we seek discernment from God to reveal to us the wickedness and evil thoughts within our own hearts that all of us possess in some way or another. In a politically-correct society, it is unpopular to believe and admit personal struggle with racial prejudice. Yet, ignoring this keeps us complicit in our own sin and inhibits us from truly valuing and serving brothers and sisters across racial lines authentically. In a society with significant racial barriers and divisions, possessing racial prejudice is more prevalent than commonly perceived. Ask God to reveal the racial hatred, fear, defensiveness, or discomfort over talking about racism and injustice or feelings of superiority/inferiority within your own heart as uncomfortable as it may be.

2. Listen and Learn: Listen to black and brown brothers and sisters about their pain without an intention to pass judgment, provide solutions, or defend your current thoughts on the situations at hand. As the New Testament author James writes “Be quick to hear and slow to speak” (James 1:19 ESV). Along with listening, we need to learn about the realities of race. In that learning, we must not place the burden on black and brown brothers and sisters to educate us about their experience. We must study and learn about race and reconciliation through books, podcasts, and other resources, taking this subject matter as seriously as we would other spiritual-related matters.

3. Condemn and Challenge Racism: The church must remain a strong and visible voice for racial justice and reconciliation and against racial injustice. The recent turmoil in our country reminded us of this necessity, but we must not wait for a major event to condemn injustice or cease to challenge racism once that story becomes old news. Our condemnation and challenge of racism must be consistent, acknowledging it as a persistent evil in our culture. For many American Christians, it is easy to fall into the trap of limiting our justice and compassion work to the atrocities that exist in other countries where corruption and injustice is blatant and overt. However, along with challenging global oppression, we must stretch ourselves to speak and act boldly and loudly on behalf of people experiencing injustices within our country and within our own communities and churches. Our silence makes us complicit and speaks volumes about our indifference at best and our tolerance and participation in injustice at worst.

We must not neglect the opportunity and responsibility that we as Christians and churches have to speak for justice and care for those who are hurting and vulnerable in our society. Let us remedy the sins of many of our church forefathers who were complicit and silent and follow the example of brothers and sisters who spoke and fought courageously against injustice and for reconciliation. Ultimately, let us grow deeper in serving and living like Christ. May God bless us and strengthen us during these difficult times.

Mel

Inside Winnie’s Wishes Resale Shop



Why do you volunteer here?

“I enjoy it. It’s a lot of fun helping. It’s a wonderful cause to help the ladies in the domestic violence shelter start a better life for themselves. I feel like I have a little bit of an input in that because they come here after they go through the program. They can come to Winnie’s and pick out some things for their apartment that they need so we can supply them with things to get started with a new life.”

What should potential volunteers know about volunteering here?

“It’s like a second family. You get acquainted with your crew. We have shifts that are just three hours a day – from 10am – 1pm and 1pm – 4pm. A lot of ladies volunteer one time a week so it’s just three hours and you can volunteer more than that.”

What is something that people should know about Winnie’s Wishes Resale Shop?

“One thing – Winnie’s is an acronym for – Women in Need Nurtured into Excellence. A lot of people don’t know that.”

What keeps you going?

“I’m retired and it gives me something that I enjoy...to look forward to every week...to get out and work with the girls.”

If you’d like to volunteer at Winnie’s Wishes Resale Shop, call Donna at 563-340-8264.



Donna Reynolds
Shop Coordinator

Donna has been with Winnie’s Wishes Resale Shop since it began nine years ago.

“I had a friend and we saw in the Churches United Bulletin that they were wanting people for a committee to open a resale shop to fund the domestic violence shelter. My friend and I attended the meeting and we were the only ones there. We turned out to be the committee.”

Thank you, Davenport Jaycees Foundation. Your gift will help us to continue assisting those in need in the Quad Cities.





Thank you, Thanksgiving in July sponsors.

Items that may be dropped off in collection boxes and at our office are non-perishable, non-expired food items, like cereal, canned fruit, vegetables, meat (tuna, chicken, Spam), peanut butter, rice, pasta/pasta sauce, macaroni & cheese, juice boxes, boxed meals, and soups. We also accept essential, non-food items such as, disinfecting spray, cleaning wipes, laundry detergent, aluminum foil, batteries, postage stamps, and bus passes.

For more information, contact Betsy Vanausdeln at bvanausdeln@cuqca.org.



Women in Clergy
Fellowship Luncheon

August 25, 2020
11:30am – 1:30pm

Sacred Heart Catholic Church
Culeman's Hall
1400 16th Ave
Moline, IL 61265

Parking areas are east and west of
the building with entrances on
16th Avenue and on the west/front of
Culeman's Hall.

Speaker
Rev. Dr. Melvin L. Grimes

RSVP by August 14

Kimberly Reese
kreese@cuqca.org or
563.332.5002

Delegate Assembly

Thursday, August 27th
Tabernacle Missionary
Baptist Church

2601 15th St
Moline, IL 61265

7pm – 9pm

Our Annual Delegate Assembly
will include music, words of
witness from our clients, and
special reports. Registration be-
gins at 6:30pm and the meeting
will commence at 7:00pm.

RSVP by Friday, August 14th.
You may RSVP by calling our
office at 563-332-5002 or send an
email to Kimberly Reese at
kreese@cuqca.org



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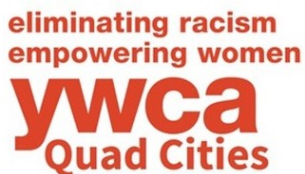
Winnie's Wishes Resale Shop at:

<https://www.facebook.com/WinniesWishesResaleShop/>

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