

The Mid-Atlantic Cooperative Baptist Fellowship

The Mid-Atlantic Cooperative Baptist Fellowship joins others as we lament the senseless loss of life due to acts of racism and power. In this unprecedented time of COVID-19 sheltering in place, we mourn the deaths of over 100,000 Americans and thousands of others across the globe. In recent days, acts of racism and protest have opened the scab of injustice in our land. There is an outpouring of pain and hurt that has led to senseless death that most in our generation have never witnessed before. There are names of victims from North and South, East, and West. We, the churches of MACBF are called to respond in love as seekers of justice for everyone, not just some. The sin of racism and all that follows its evil course must be addressed and we, the people of faith in Jesus Christ, must respond.

In October 2013 Rev. Dr. Neville Callam, Baptist World Alliance General Secretary (now Emeritus) gave the Sam Sharpe Lecture titled “The Deconstruction of Race” in the UK. The press release states:

Christ is the example par excellence for rejecting racism, Callam declared. Christ, he said, broke “down the walls that separate people from one another.” A faith centered on Christ “will not accommodate the racism that trades in negative images of others.”

Instead, that faith asserts not only the common humanity of all persons, but also the “shared identity in Jesus Christ” that Christians enjoy. It can be scary to step out of one’s comfort zone and engage a topic which, at times, causes people to become afraid, defensive, abusive, or even dismissive. However, as we look to the Scriptures, we experience Jesus calling his followers to do scary, challenging, sometimes even risky things. When Peter saw Jesus walking on the water, as recorded in Matthew 14:22-33, he asked Jesus to command him to come out. Jesus commanded him and Peter stepped out of the boat. The water wasn’t calm, there were not rocks for him to place one foot in front of the other, but there was Jesus! As he began to sink, Jesus rescued him. We believe God is commanding us in these devastating days to step out of the boat and be image bearers of Jesus as we affirm the image of Jesus in others, no matter the hue of their skin.

As we share our identity in Jesus Christ, we invite our sisters and brothers, churches, and associates from D.C., Maryland, Virginia, Delaware, West Virginia, Pennsylvania and beyond, to consider these three calls to action:

1. Invite your congregation to “hold holy space” and enter into a time of Scriptural Reflection and Contemplation. Sit with your pain and discomfort. Consider your retorts

2. Explore the Equal Justice Initiative <https://justmercy.eji.org/> Watch the film *Just Mercy*. Use the discussion guide. Consider making a financial contribution

3. Join a People’s Supper

In the next few weeks, we will be offering resources to accommodate these three calls to action. We hope you will join us as we act and pray for peace, healing and justice in our land.

May we listen deeply

May we act justly

May we be neither complicit nor complacent

May we get out of the boat and walk to Jesus

May we allow the Holy Spirit to breathe on us like a gushing wind which transforms inside and out

May we truly believe God created EVERYONE -- while there is no question “all lives matter,” today and

in the days to come, we must declare, “black lives matter” until we fully let justice roll down like waters,

and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream (Amos 5:24)

With Hope,

Rev. Dr. Trisha Miller Manarin, Executive Coordinator