

June 9, 2020

To Ignore or Look Up?

Brace yourselves - I'm a writer...

Back in October 2019 when a group of us went to Alabama to visit the Equal Justice Initiative, we had no idea that our visit, experiences and the pact we made on the bus to “change things” would be as challenging and timely. I know many have felt “uncomfortable” and “angry” about our (DRAP Committee’s) decision to push the race issue and to go full steam ahead with the Apology for Slavery which was not easily passed through the presbytery. I even know that some were resistant to wearing the Presbyterian’s Care tee shirts with the slogan “Equal Justice for All God’s Children,” deemed too radical/undesirable. Yet, we've made progress and we did it before the events last month.



Well, here we are today. We can no longer ignore the choices any of our forefathers made nor those they suffered/endured. However, we can choose to be on the right side of right. Regardless of your political affiliation, your investments in Wall street or how non-diverse your neighborhood, school district, company or church, today is the day to choose not to be silent, no matter how comfortable it has been in the past.

After God, family is supposed to be “everything” but to some people it’s not; it’s after money and power; well, I’m asking you, my Presbyterian family to come together, using collective passion, purpose and respect/love of the Lord to look up and take action.

We can act as if people are not being murdered, victimized, marginalized or ignored, like we have been doing for hundreds of years, or we can put our Christ-centered thinking caps on and do something tangible to change the system. And if not the system at large, then at least the systems that each of us belong to - at home, at church, at work and in life. (What we think, how we speak, how open we are to change, adapting equitable policies and procedures, inclusiveness.)

Drafting and approving ‘the Apology’ was a good start, but what else are we prepared to do? DRAP, the committee is working toward the stated goals in the apology, and while the committee is at it, there are nearly 12,000 of us in our Presbytery who can live out fairness, justice and compassion in easy, day to day decisions.

The link below is a wonderful article written by a young lady born in Des Moines, Iowa, my hometown. She makes excellent points (ones you can use in your church, among neighbors and in your workplace), and she provides a link to resources to support the cause of justice.

<https://prsaciowa.org/blog/114?fbclid=IwAR1U6mjPLpXK9Ote-6VEGRW7NgNMu2S2H41Y9Sr4Ua1PIvW0VLe3bgfphs>

May the Spirit of the Lord be between me and thee.

Thank you for your time.

*Elder Jo Lena Johnson
Dismantling Racism and Privilege
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