



January 25, 2017

Hello Anti Racism Team,

I wanted to address the observations that Alice and Anita have shared, and thought that I could include all of you in my response. This is not a soft reply, but an expanded reply that draws from my personal experience and from my personal perspective.

I've done a great deal of thinking since coming on to the CCT, first as a REMAL (African American Racial Ethnic Member At Large) in 2012, and then as Vice Moderator for Justice and Peace in 2015. I've found that the work of all of our committees overlaps, and that there is no simplicity in the jobs that we are trying to do. There also doesn't seem to be a way to separate those jobs in mission from the systemic political structures that surround us. Nonetheless, I am going to single out a few concepts here and try to clarify examples about the focus of our committee's discussion regarding racism.

While the Presbyterian Church USA and Presbyterian Women Inc are not political organizations, the work that we do, is by its nature, very political. The issues of social injustice that we address in our mission work exist because of the political structure of the country we live in. The United States is not globally the worst nation for human rights, but we must be purposeful in making some significant improvements. We Presbyterians know our history, and we know that our formation as a denomination came about because our founders decided to escape a tyrannical system that was held in the hands of individuals who had a singular slanted view of the world that they wanted to live in. Those individuals gained financial dominance and the control that comes with it. Their positions of privilege and of power made them socially deaf, immune and uncaring about the needs and the wants of people outside of their realm.

Some of us in Presbyterian Women are on the outside in our society, and we find ourselves in positions where we cannot just let the results stand as they are and move on with our day. Injustice doesn't end just because the results are in. Our existence is fluid and that means that there is the possibility of repeating a bad decision, or of causing the consequences of a bad decision to become worse. Some of us, because of our age whether young or old, find that we are ignored or stereotyped. Some of us

because of our gender or our combination of gender identifications find that we are judged and maligned. Some of us because of our racial ethnic heritage find that we are feared, hated, brutalized and murdered. And of course this list can be extended to countless other combinations of human circumstances. So really, none of us should be able to just say it's done and let's move on; because the results still leave many women as well as children and men, on the outside.

For my particular idiosyncrasy, this election season was devastating. Although it was a public phenomenon it hit me personally in my heart, and in my mind. I am still trying to sort out how this new administration's ideas, beliefs and actions are going to affect my safety, my quality of life, and my perspective about living here in the United States. Racism has a direct, negative impact on life itself. I am physically blown back by how this election has resulted in change that has been so sudden, so powerful, so unexpected and so unpredictable. After seven decades I do know that change is guaranteed to impact each one of us and change can support our highest hopes, or shatter our deepest dreams.

An "answering change" is needed to challenge the recent developments in our government. A different kind of change is needed here and now to transform current injustices and to alter the course of the promised future injustices supported by the new administration. I have never had the privilege of just accepting the results; because generally those results haven't improved conditions for those of us who are on the receiving end of racism. So I've been holding on to PW because as an organization, it may provide a possible avenue for us to take action and not just accept the resulting outcomes. Finding the ethnic hair product aisle and wondering why it is separate is making a positive change. Attending Ecumenical Advocacy Days and sharing information is making a positive change. Conducting Antiracism trainings at the fall CCT meeting and at the Churchwide Gathering are examples of making positive changes to eliminate racism.

Looking forward to our next conference call.

Yours In Service,

Wanda Beauman PhD

Vice Moderator, Justice and Peace Concerns,

Churchwide Coordinating Team, Presbyterian Women Inc.

wbcclerk5@gmail.com (303) 377-7506