

Bishop Sally Dyck

A Statement from the NIC Cabinet: We Must Resist Racism

Posted: June 25 2020 at 08:18 AM

The following statement was penned June 4, 2020, by the NIC Cabinet: Bishop Sally Dyck; the six District Superintendents: Jeffry Bross (Aurora), Jacques Conway (Chicago Southern), Brian Gilbert (DeKalb), Fabiola Grandon-Mayer (Rockford), Brittany Isaac (Chicago Northwestern), and Darneather Murph-Heath (Elgin); Assistant to the Bishop and Director of Connectional Ministries Arlene Christopherson; and Director of Congregational Development and Redevelopment Martin Lee.

In June 2019, the NIC adopted [three strategic goals](#) to help us deepen our commitment to becoming God's Beloved Community. We want to reflect on the second goal: TO LIVE OUT THE CONVICTION THAT RACISM IS INCOMPATIBLE WITH CHRISTIAN TEACHING. This goal is not part of a political or social agenda; rather, it is part of the Gospel Agenda and an affirmation of the divine image of God in each person. Anti-racism work is reflected in our baptismal/membership vows where we affirm and promise to God that we accept the freedom and power that God gives us to "resist evil, injustice, and oppression." Racism is evil. Racism is an injustice. Racism is oppressive. To remain faithful to our vows to God, we must resist racism. As a conference we named three actions to help live out this agenda:

- By encouraging individuals to engage in ongoing self-reflection, cross-cultural sharing, and growth. We must resist evil within ourselves—watching the words we use and the actions we take, caring about the thoughts we think about our fellow human beings.
- By challenging the structures, practices and policies of the NIC and instituting necessary changes to ensure equity. We must resist evil in our local churches and conference— speaking out of love and naming places where we see intentional and unintentional omission or silencing of voices.
- By educating and equipping congregations, districts, and the NIC to be prophetic leaders in pursuing equity in society. We must resist it in our culture—condemning institutional racism that shortens life and causes physical, spiritual, mental, and economic violence to our brothers and sisters of color.

As a Cabinet, we confess our own failures to lead the church towards equality. We have been complicit in systems that oppress. We have failed to love others as God has loved us. We have often let our own desires guide us. Forgive us, O God.

Our resistance to the evils of racism must be as life-changing as the radical love of Jesus that has changed and transformed us all. Resisting evil—resisting racism is a way in which we can experience the grace of God and live out that grace in our world.

The pandemic has highlighted the inequities of our society once again for Black and Brown people. Then, the recent murder of Mr. George Floyd (SAY HIS NAME) at the knee of a police officer while three other police officers looked on showing no regard for this Black life. George Floyd represents countless others who have been murdered, harassed, challenged, cajoled, jailed, underpaid, under-protected, under-represented, profiled (the list can go on) —just for being Black in America.

The time to do the work is now. Racism is incompatible with Christian teaching. This goal must not be mere words that will float into the historical documents of our Conference. This goal cannot be mere words that came out of the many hours that the Annual Conference Shepherding Team spent together. This goal must be our reality, our working blueprint of being part of the Beloved community of Jesus. We can no longer sit back and be silent: we must act on our convictions as people of faith. People are tired of waiting...

As a Cabinet, we call ourselves, our conference and our churches to engage in real prayer, take real action, and live in the real hope that justice, love and reconciliation is possible.