



## **Time for Revolutionary Change**

Bishop Jung

*Listen, you that are deaf;  
and you that are blind, look up and see!  
Who is blind but my servant,  
or deaf like my messenger whom I send?  
Who is blind like my dedicated one,  
or blind like the servant of the Lord?  
He sees many things, but does\* not observe them;  
his ears are open, but he does not hear. (Isaiah 42:18-20)*

Good people of Jesus Christ, it is time for us to acknowledge and confront our racism and the systems and structures we have created that continue to perpetuate injustice, inequality, and violence. It is not enough for each individual to say, “my heart breaks for the families of victims of violence against black, brown, and Asian people.” This is a starting point, but it does nothing to bring about change. When we do this, we become God’s dedicated ones who are deaf and blind.

I could say that recent events have raised our awareness, but the recent incidents with Ahmaud Arbery, George Floyd, and Breonna Taylor are just the most recent in decades and centuries in this country. The pandemic has taken an inordinate toll on black and brown communities, because our systems foster continued poverty and marginalization of racial ethnic minorities. We cannot simply voice regret and concern; the time has come for The United Methodist Church to work together for justice for our black family members – all children of God.

Black Lives Matter became a slogan that “those people” used to voice their anger, hurt, and displeasure. No, the truth of black lives matter emerged because story after story, incident after incident showed that it is not safe to be a black person in our twenty-first century reality. No one should have to worry that they will be stopped due to the color of his or her skin. No one should worry that they will be beaten,

attacked, or killed because they “fit a profile.” Young black people should not have to be told “not to run, not to make eye contact, not to approach white people,” and their parents should not have to live in fear whenever their children leave home.

This is not the will of God! This is not acceptable to people who have been baptized into the spiritual community committed to building God’s Holy realm on the earth. We need to work for justice. We need to crusade for peace. We need to speak up, speak out, and stand with our black brothers and sisters. We need to embrace our brown brothers and sisters as members of our family. We need to reassure our Asian siblings that they belong. We need to welcome those of every hue and color as acceptable, beloved, gifted and blessed. This cannot simply be a nice concept and a good intention. The day has come to commit our mission work to the peace and justice work of our General Board of Church and Society. It is now time to communicate to our state and federal leaders that racial justice is our highest need, our highest priority.

We must divorce racial justice from a misguided sense that this is a “political” issue, and that we should not be involved. This is a human rights issue. Moreover, it is a Christian witness for the world. We must open ourselves to be the prophetic voice of God, to allow God’s message of mercy, justice, humility, peace, and unity to be heard loud and clear. In this time of pandemic anxiety, we should do nothing to contribute to people’s pain and suffering, but should do all in our power to offer healing and hope.

If you cannot walk in peaceful protest, you can still write letters, make phone calls, send emails, and vote. When possible, we should rally around our ethnic communities and work to clean up, restore, and rebuild in solidarity and partnership. It is time to make our heartfelt passion concrete. We are not called to sit by and watch God’s children be abused and killed. The time has come for revolutionary change. Our core values as Christians include the affirmation of all life, the glory and goodness of God’s creation, and the very real truth that God is love. As we live into our future, we will transcend our vision to confront “institutional racism,” so that together we might eliminate not only the outward and visible signs, but might allow the healing Spirit of God to transform the inward and spiritual sickness.

Grace and Peace,  
Bishop Hee-Soo Jung