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Ontario Conference Response to Racially Influenced Deaths in the United States

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

We at Ontario Conference cannot remain silent in the face of such injustices as the recent, senseless killings of George Floyd, Ahmaud Arbury and Breonna Taylor in the United States. In a time of crisis, the May 25 death of George Floyd was the latest example of a man's inhumanity to a fellowman, resulting in a strong emotional response worldwide, including Ontario. In the aftermath of these devastating losses, we grieve with the Floyd, Arbury and Taylor families. We grieve with people around the world. We grieve with you.

We join with the NAD in condemning these acts against people of colour and are saddened by the loss of life wherever it occurs. As Christians, we understand that all life is a sacred gift from God. Whatever the hue of our skin, we were all created in God's image, saved from sin and adopted into Christ's family. Thus, when any of our brothers and sisters suffer, it affects all of us.

The Bible calls us to act against oppression. As Luke 4:18 reminds us, "The Spirit of the Lord is upon [us] . . . to heal the brokenhearted, to set free those who are oppressed" (NKJV). However, while we condemn the action, let us be responsible with our reactions. At Ontario Conference, we support peaceful protests but strongly discourage rioting and violence. Everything we do—even protesting injustice—must be done in love.

We must never answer God's question of Cain, "where is your brother?" with, "am I my brother's keeper?" At Ontario Conference, diversity is our strength. With members representing the different corners of the globe, we must strive continually toward being united in mission. Just as we are united in spreading "the Christ-centred message of hope and wholeness," we must be united in addressing injustice.

As we tarry on this earth, our eyes focused on the Promised Land, let us break down the walls caused by our differences and build bridges of love and understanding. Let us speak out against the discrimination of our brothers and sisters based on race, ethnicity or language. Let us demonstrate the love of Christ to all. And let us use whatever tools are in our hand to provide a voice for the voiceless and hope for the hopeless.

In these turbulent times, know that we are praying continually for you and your families, and for God's children worldwide. We are assured daily that despite the chaos around us, God's love never fails.

Finally, as we mourn together, let us all be comforted with these healing words from Christ in Matthew 11:28, 29 (KJV) –

“Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls.”

God bless you and yours,

Mansfield Edwards
President

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Executive Secretary

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Treasurer