



July 2nd, 2020

A MESSAGE FROM THE BROOKLAWN SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST CHURCH:

Greetings,

It has come to our attention that one of our church members made racially charged statements regarding the celebration of Juneteenth on social media over a week ago. This church member served as a volunteer Sabbath School teacher but no longer holds this position following this incident. Our goal is to ensure that our children are taught to show the love of Christ in all that we do, and we expect our church leaders and volunteers to exemplify this standard. While we are firm in our belief in extending love, grace, reconciliation, and restoration to this member, we felt it necessary to apologize for her comments and distinguish her views from those of our local church and the global Seventh-day Adventist Church. We also found it necessary to clearly state our views on the current racial tensions in the U.S.

We sincerely apologize for the hurt that her comments have caused to the children and youth she worked with, the church members she fellowshiped with, and all others who have seen her social media posts. Her comments do not reflect our church's views, but this does not remove us from this situation or excuse us from taking any responsibility. While we also disagree with the rhetoric used by many in their responses to her posts, we recognize the hurt that was behind them. We will continue to prayerfully work with this church member and our congregation to ensure that we are all aware of and accountable for the potentially negative impact and perception that our words can have on the church and, more importantly, our God. We will also be working to educate our congregation on how to educate others of their ignorance on issues involving race and the history of racial injustices in the United States in a Christ-like manner. These conversations may be difficult and uncomfortable, but they are necessary to ensure that we as a church body recognize the weight that our words hold and to use them carefully.

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As a multicultural congregation, we recognize the importance of embracing our unique cultures and backgrounds. We affirm the position of North American Division President Daniel Jackson in his statement addressing the racial tensions in the United States dated June 5, 2020. We believe that to call ourselves Christians, we must do everything in our God-given abilities to love everyone and this must be extended to everyone regardless of their race. We also believe that the church has a role to play in the work of combatting the injustices of this world, making sure that we exemplify Jesus Christ as we do “[w]hatever will bring dignity, and reform, and blessing to others — whatever will demonstrate true love to a broken and battered world — [and] whatever will bring others to look to God.”

Given the current state of our world, we implore everyone to take time and continue educating yourselves not only on the history of racial injustice in the United States, but also in any other area that the Holy Spirit has placed on your hearts. As stated so eloquently by President Jackson, “[i]t is time for us all to do some soul searching. If David could appeal to God to search him in order to see if there was ‘any wicked way in him,’ it is our time to do the same. In this regard, our family needs a radical change. Our church needs transformation: If change is to take place in the church then it needs to take place first in me.” The church is not immune to the need for forgiveness and transformation. Rather, the church should be the ideal place to do the inward work needed to start healing from the hurt that has been caused by the sin of racism. Our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ came to call sinners to repentance, and we must do the same.

We solicit your prayers as we continue to work as a church community to heal from this incident and to become better examples of Christ.

Thank you for your time and attention.