

## Amy's Email Epistle – Thursday, August 17, 2017

Greetings,

I am attaching the letter I presented to the City Council this week at our vigil in solidarity with the people of Charlottesville, Virginia and in response to the wake of violence and disgusting acts of racism and xenophobia that have been awakened in our country.

Matthew 7:5 informs us to first remove the log from our own eyes before removing a speck from our sisters and brothers.

Too often the Church has remained silent in the face of evil, claiming separation of church and state. We get nervous about expressing thoughts that might be misinterpreted as political. Too often we have been the oppressors of our own voices.

My friends make no mistake about this....do not be led astray...do not allow your voices to quit. Anytime you speak up in the name of justice, anytime you proclaim equality for all, anytime you stand up to racism, homophobia-ism, anti-Semitism, xenophobia-ism, or any other ism that divides, dismisses and destroys another human beings right to exist you are taking action in the way that Jesus calls upon us to do. You are being a true Christian - a follower of Christ. Do not be fooled. Silence is not the way of our Lord. Justification for the mistreatment of any human being is not the way of Jesus. We can no longer afford to sit on the sidelines and shake our heads in disgust at the violence and the hate. We must as followers of Jesus, those who call ourselves Christian, rise up with a clear and undeniable voice and say "No, this is not ok, and we will not be silent"... Jesus calls us past our fears.

The work of dismantling racism is not the sole work of people of color. It should be, and is the work of white people. For too long we have left the burden to those who have lived, for centuries under the weight of discrimination. We have been willing to allow them to carry the load of repairing and rectifying the schisms of race. All the while subtly and perhaps unknowingly undermining their efforts. Let's not allow one more minute to pass in this way. Let's wake from our slumber and let our voices rise. Let's come along beside our sisters and brothers of color, as well as, our sisters and brothers from differing faith traditions, sexual orientation, disabilities, homelessness, and any other person or group who have been disenfranchised. Let's stand with, let's listen to, let's seek true understanding and let's work together to reveal the kingdom of God here and now. You know that kingdom....right? The kingdom where justice prevails....where all are welcome....where the lion lays down with the lamb....where everyone has enough and no one has too much....the peaceable kingdom...A beloved community.

Use your voice to call your senators, your city council members, your representatives, and yes even your president. Tell them as a person of faith you cannot and will not abide hate speech. Tell them that it is not okay for the President of our great country to use the language of white supremacy. Insist that something be done.

When someone makes a racist remark in your presence - challenge it - with love - with a true desire to understand the hidden fear that drives it, but challenge it.

When someone tells an off colored joke that demonizes, others, makes a caricature of a group of people, is demeaning toward others, say something. Challenge it!

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When someone tells you that the homeless person fighting for life out on the streets "should just quit using meth and get a job" don't politely laugh, or squirm...speak out! It's okay not to have answers, it's even ok to struggle with the issue, it is not okay to be silent as a fellow child of God is marginalized and de-humanized. Say something as simple as, "it's a little more complicated than that." but Challenge it!

When we participate in the subtle forms of racism, xenophobia-ism, homophobia and other destructive isms we are as guilty as those who carry torches, chant horrible slogans and wield weapons.

The first action toward dismantling racism in our country is to pay attention to the ways in which we ourselves contribute - no matter how subtle, no matter how unintended. These are the logs we must first remove.

Peace,

Amy

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"And one of the great liabilities of life is that all too many people find themselves living amid a great period of social change, and yet they fail to develop the new attitudes, the new mental responses, that the new situation demands. They end up sleeping through a revolution."

Martin Luther King Jr. (from his sermon "Remaining Awake Through a Great Revolution")