

MCC Ontario response to racial injustice

June 26, 2020

“Dear friends, let us love one another.” (1 John 4:7, NIV)

Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) Ontario is deeply saddened by ongoing occurrences of racially based violence, both in Canada and the U.S. MCC Ontario acknowledges that racial injustices continue to plague Canadian society. These injustices impact Black Canadians, Indigenous peoples and other persons of colour and limits their abilities and opportunities to thrive within Canada. We are complicit in a society that has overlooked multiple forms of racism.

MCC Ontario denounces racism and white supremacy in all its forms. The recent police killings and brutality against Indigenous and Black people in Canada is one current manifestation of a long-standing, historical tradition of oppression and racialized violence in our country. As an organization started by white settlers, we benefit from global structures of resource distribution that favour some and discriminate against others based on race. We have failed to adequately address and understand systemic racism and fully value the contributions and knowledge of Black, Indigenous and people of colour (BIPOC).

As a Christian organization, it is our mandate to share Christ’s love. It is impossible to love God if we do not love our neighbours (1 John 4:20). Racism denies God’s plan for all human beings and God’s image within all human beings (Genesis 1:27). These truths are embedded in MCC’s operating principles, which direct our work in dismantling barriers of racial, economic and gender-based oppression so that all may participate in our program design, decision-making and implementation.

Through our programming and social enterprise initiatives, we strive to advocate for those on the margins, educate our constituents about racial injustice and build relationships across diversity. We confess that we have not done this as effectively as we should.

While MCC continues to take actions that address racial injustice, we acknowledge we must do more. Moving forward, we will build on current activities and commit to:

- examining our values, biases and aspirations as individuals and as an organization to make clear any barriers or biases that would keep racialized persons from full participation in the work of MCC;
- making MCC a workplace that welcomes and retains more Black, Indigenous and people of colour, where all staff are comfortable and able to contribute their unique talents and gifts;
- engaging in training for staff and volunteers around white supremacy culture;
- continuing to advocate against structural societal and economic injustices that contribute to ongoing marginalization

We recognize that this statement is insufficient and does not address all the experiences and concerns of our staff, volunteers, program participants, constituents and partners around the world. We are committed to this being the first in a series of reflections about MCC’s work, internally and externally, as we continue to address issues related to systemic racial injustice. We aspire to actively work toward a better way forward as we listen and learn from individuals from BIPOC communities in the hope of achieving equity for all.

We recognize that we cannot do this alone and call on partner organizations to work with us to stand and advocate for justice in Canada.

Please direct any questions regarding this document to John Head, Executive Director of MCC Ontario (johnhead@mcco.ca)