

June 3, 2020



To Young Life Friends Everywhere:

We write with heavy hearts that are burdened with the trials of this ministry season and how they have impacted the work we do to reach and teach kids about Jesus. We ask that you pray with us as we cry loud to the Lord for His wisdom and His justice.

Tragedies like the death of George Floyd and others who have lost their lives due to racial hostility — Latino children imprisoned in cages on the Mexican border, Asian Americans targeted and bullied due to the coronavirus and an increasing number of mass shootings in public spaces have shown a spotlight on cultural/social divisions that persist within U.S. society. Globally, terrorism, the challenges of refugees escaping war-torn communities, genocides, the crisis of human trafficking and more intersect with and infringe upon the work of Young Life in countless countries.

As individuals, as leaders, as an organization, we cry out against suffering that comes because of injustice and sin. We cry out against problems in our society that persist and seem impossible to solve. We cry out in solidarity with those in pain. We cry out, "How long, oh Lord," (Psalm 13) trusting and believing by faith that our God hears us, is moved and will continue the healing, redemptive and restorative work that began at the cross.

Indeed, the past few weeks have been hard. While we all carried the burden of enduring and leading through a global pandemic, circumstances have regrettably asked some in our community to hold the added trauma of loss, grief, exhaustion and pain that others have had the privilege to escape.

Let us be clear. To our African American and African Diaspora brothers and sisters ... **We see you. We care for you. And we stand with you.**

We also lament that the hate at the root of these sins extends far beyond race/ethnicity and perpetuates suffering in every space of our society. The words of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., written while imprisoned in a Birmingham jail cell, ring true today:

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“Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere. We are caught in an inescapable network of mutuality, tied in a single garment of destiny. Whatever affects one directly, affects all indirectly.”

As Christians, God calls us to lean into these moments, to be the hands and feet of Jesus that help a broken world to experience the ongoing, not-yet-finished, reconciling work that Christ made possible through His death and resurrection on the cross. And yet, the loudest voice is the silence of many — especially the hush heard in parts of the Christian community. But that is not us. Not now. We will not be silent.

We will be the peacemakers in the lives of kids and for each other.

Moving forward, you can expect several things. First and foremost, we will remain true to who we are as Young Life — keeping our focus on introducing kids to Jesus and helping them grow in their faith. However, in pursuing this mission, we must both acknowledge and work to equip our teams to overcome systemic barriers (e.g., racism, sexism, ableism, etc.) that prevent us from helping **EVERY** kid experience Christ’s love.

Secondly, we will confront hatred in all its forms as it impacts our community. As a body of believers, we will engage in intentional, constructive and healing discipleship and fellowship. More precisely, as a first step, we are working in the near-term to create a forum (e.g., virtual town hall, solemn assembly, etc.) where our staff can process the persistent evils our community faces **TOGETHER** in healthy and constructive ways.

As Young Life’s senior leadership team, we will model what this looks like while simultaneously working to provide staff with the tools to lead in the communities we serve compassionately.

This step will not be the last thing we do, and we will continue to engage where members of our community suffer. Because this is what God calls us to do as Christians:

*“But he’s already made it plain how to live, what to do, what God is looking for in men and women. It’s quite simple: Do what is fair and just to your neighbor, be compassionate and loyal in your love, and don’t take yourself too seriously— take God seriously.” (Micah 6:8, *The Message*)*

In closing, please join us in praying Psalm 139.

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Lord, truly, we invite you to search us and know our hearts. Help us to see and appreciate the marvelous ways in which You created each of us. Burden us to move toward those who are vulnerable and often go unseen around us. And, Jesus, give us the courage we will need in the days ahead to be the salt and light our world needs. In your name, we pray. Amen.

In Christ,

The Young Life [Mission Lead Team](#)



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