

Why?

by Janice Legg

It's September 25, it's October 2, I heard that “Moment for Mission” two weeks ago. I heard Kim saying “my 'generous' giving to Reconciliation Ministries would help transform lives and strengthen Christ's witness in the world, showing that we love one another even as Christ continues to love us.” And, of course, I know our giving not only addresses the racism of our society but the racism within our own church. But—we don't have a problem in OUR church—we don't have any people of color! Why should I give?

Thankfully, that is NOT my stance; however, how many of you have heard those very words. Let me share with you MY story of WHY I not only *want* to give but why I *must* give.

I'd never REALLY given nearly enough thought to Racism. I'd grown up in a town of 152 people; we did have people of color. There didn't seem to me to be any “problem.” It was a peaceful little community. Okay, perhaps my life had been somewhat sheltered. I attended public school in a neighboring town of 2400. I believe it was the 1954-55 school year when schools were integrated; however, there were no students of color in my class. College days “came and went” and my 30-year teaching career “came and went,” (the first six of those years teaching in the St. Louis City Public School System!). I retired from teaching when I was 50 years old and was called to the staff at Kirksville First Christian Church. Those years “came and went.” NOTHING had yet nudged me to REALLY be involved in this ministry of Reconciliation—until--in the spring of 2007 I received an invitation from our Regional Minister, Danny Stewart, inviting me to attend an *Anti-Racism/Pro-Reconciliation Training Event* in April at Rickman Center. I was nudged!! It took me no time at all to accept that invitation and, as the saying goes, the rest is history. I knew at that Training Event that I had to do what I could to make a difference.

A couple of us who had attended the Training Event immediately talked with our Area Minister, Dr. Kris—she heard us! We organized, and at our August 2007 Department of Pro-Reconciliation/Anti-Racism meeting, the following was presented: “. . . that this Northeast Area should *own* PR/AR as a Department. At the July 14, 2007, meeting of the Northeast Area Board, following a presentation by Jerry Holloway, Maureen Dickmann and Phil Smith, the Board voted to initiate a new Area Department, the Department of Pro-Reconciliation/Anti-Racism

Ministries. (Again, the rest is history!)

Since that spring 2007 invitation, the passion I realized I'd long had was uncovered. NEVER have I been more aware of God's calling and the importance of working with our brothers and sisters of color to do our part in the eradication of this sin of racism! In these recent past years, in these past months, in these past days, how could our hearts—and heads—not be touched with the importance of each of us doing what we can to help in the eradication of this sin of racism. In that August 2007 meeting, Joe Miller lifted up this passage from Romans 8:18, “I am sure that what we are suffering now cannot compare with the glory that will be shown to us. . . .”

In the third chapter of Galatians, Paul says “In Christ’s family there can be no division into Jew and non-Jew, slave and free, male and female. Among us you are *all* equal. That is, we are *all* in a common relationship with Jesus Christ.” There's no “part-way” in our walk with Christ. It's our *ALL*; it's our EVERYTHING. In the words of the old hymn, “is your ALL on the altar of sacrifice laid?” Think about it! Can YOU do less than to “generously support” our Reconciliation Ministries? Can YOU do less than to “help transform lives and strengthen Christ's witness in the world, showing that we love one another even as Christ continues to love us”?

Will YOU make a difference? Will YOU give? I MUST GIVE!