

To members of Mansfield City Council,
regarding a proposed resolution regarding racism as a public health issue.

From Pastor Paul Lintern

I was not aware that I was listed among those supporting the proposal, and while I am a member of MIMA, and the organization is privileged to lend its support as an organization, I do not think it authorized to presume unanimous support of each of its members and the congregations they represent.

I am not in favor of this proposal and the idea of it being a health issue. Racism is an illness, yes, but a result of sin, the brokenness of the hearts of people who cannot see past a category of skin color. It is a God issue, not a political issue. Our laws have legally systematically eliminated racism. That which still exists comes from the hearts and minds of people who do not live in the grace of God so they do not see others as the God of all Creation sees us.

I am not colorblind -- I see every skin color for what it is, as I do every eye color, hair color, even fingernail color. I recognize gender, size, voice inflections, shapes, language, facial gestures and attitude. I am happy to identify people by their characteristics, but constantly resist categorizing them until they do it for me, by their own description. I fail, and I try again. I acknowledge that God created three races -- plant, animal and human -- and those are the only distinctions I am willing to make in race.

The "Ism" attached to race is the illness that says I have power over you because of skin color. It is time to face that racism has been brushed aside and to stop seeing it where it is not. Concentrate on loving the hearts that are broken and hard and pray for the spirit of love and hope to soften and heal. The racism we abhor will be eradicated one heart at the time.

And once racism is no longer politically profitable, it will be seen no more.

Yes, let's talk. Yes, let's use our enthusiasm to do something good. Yes, let's open our church doors and visit each other and worship side by side. Yes, let's walk each other's neighborhoods as friends. Yes, let's get behind good things that will benefit our community. Yes, let's seek God to show us a new Ocie Hill Community Center, gleaming and modern and amazing to all who enter. Yes, let's see each other as we are and build each other up as we can be. Yes, let the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with us all.

Mansfield is Godsfield, Richland is God's land. Let your eyes be awakened to the oneness we already have as children of our Creator.