

Dear CNH Brothers and Sisters,

Like so many of you, I have been watching, listening, praying, sheltering in place, and now during these past 12 days, praying some more, and lamenting. I have badly wanted to give an explanation, but the prescription is not mine to make. I have striven to speak words of healing, but I am not the healer for the moment.



However, as I speak to my CNH brothers and sisters who live in a very diverse world yet find it tempting to simply retreat to their place of comfort, I'd like to share a few words that I have found helpful. There is a lot to take in as you read the links below, even though this letter to you is short. Read one or two at a time and then return to them again. My encouragement and prayer for you is this:

- Strive to remain humble and in a listening posture with those who have a different cultural narrative than you. (Listen, ask, and then listen again.)
- Rather than move too quickly through the cycle of *remorse, repentance, forgiveness, forget*, might I suggest you linger in the **repentance/forgiveness** portion of this cycle. While you are there, consider your own contribution to the world, specifically the United States' ongoing challenge with racism. Maybe you feel that you have not behaved in a racist manner (I tend to believe I am largely innocent), but ... *"oh Lord, from my position of privilege, how often have I failed to act or speak or write? Oh Lord, have mercy upon me, upon our churches, upon our nation and world."*
- I pray that God would not allow you to dismiss the cries of our Black brothers' and sisters' unique history of pain, struggle, and yes, even anger.
- Listen carefully to the narrative, seek to understand.
- Pray for God's justice, his changing of hearts and minds, and for his healing of hearts.
- Act as a citizen of the Kingdom of heaven and a child of God.

By the way, before you read on, remember these three things about our Lord Jesus.

1. He is the one who ultimately grants justice and begets mercy.
2. He is the one who walked humbly to the cross.
3. He sends his Spirit to live and work powerfully within his people.

Now some words and links that may be helpful and powerful for you to read.

1. From Byrene Keith Haney, Iowa West Executive and an LCMS African American Pastor: [*Racial Healing Begins with Recognizing Our Neighbor.*](#)
2. From the LCMS Black Caucus (penned by Pastor Warren Lattimore): [*Black Clergy Caucus Statement on George Floyd.*](#)
3. And this one, which will challenge you, but if you listen and read with Jesus' heart may be particularly helpful: [*My White Friend Asked Me on Facebook to Explain White Privilege. I Decided to Be Honest.*](#)
4. From President Matthew Harrison, LCMS Synodical President: [*Statement on the death of George Floyd and the ensuing riots.*](#)

Serving humbly, choosing joy! Praying fervently!

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "M. Lange", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Michael R. Lange
CNH District President

He must become greater; I must become less! John 3:30