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| **A Lament: Racism and a Call to Action**  A public statement by Mel Williams--- May 30, 2020  **Ahmaud Arbery, Breona Taylor, George Floyd.**  These are African American brothers and sisters whose lives were sacred and who were brutally killed because of the color of their skin. We say their names because they are children of God, made in the image of God.  We rise now to express outrage and condemnation of the killings and the racism that clogs the arteries of our national heart.  We are living now in a time of great suffering--- and great love. These are the only two realities that can crack us open to newness—to God’s compassion and justice. The current crisis is the catalyst for real change.  Our anguish, our current suffering, demands that we who live with white privilege take a long, hard look in the mirror. We need to honestly acknowledge that the privileges afforded us are based on the color of our skin. Our privilege must lead to increased responsibility toward people of color who suffer from dreadful disparities.  The hardest thing to see is right before our eyes--- centuries of systematic oppression that keeps our African American sisters and brothers literally pinned to the ground, with a knee on their necks. It’s another version of lynching. And it must STOP.  We must confess our complacency; it dulls our sense of injustice. We must say, over and over: Stop the killing, stop the racism that endangers the lives of our black sisters and brothers. It doesn’t have to be this way! We must seize this moment to be God’s people—to overcome the pandemic of rampant racism, poverty, and corona virus.  We are called now to act at some sacrifice to ourselves, to work together for the Beloved Community where all God’s children have dignity, respect, and every opportunity for maximum health--- spiritual, physical, emotional, and economic health.  It’s time now to turn the world upside down to make it happen.  *Mel Williams, coordinator, End Poverty Durham; pastor emeritus, Watts Street Baptist Church, Durham tracymelvinwilliams@gmail.com* |