

 **INTERVARSITY**  
Asian American Ministries



Beginner's Guide to Justice



**Brennan Takayama**  
**Hawai'i**  
**Joined staff in 2007**

**How do you express racial justice in your lifestyle choices (i.e. prayer, finances, where you live, etc.)?**

- Finances: I give to different ministries that I feel reflect my Kingdom values (international poverty, local poverty, POC's in campus ministry, indigenous ministries, anti-human trafficking, sponsor a child, etc).
- Simple living: I live in community and seek to limit my lifestyle so that I can give more.
- Prayer: I pray through news articles and social media posts.

- Activism and advocacy: I act on issues locally (ie, sign-waving to protest the building of a 30-meter telescope on Mauna Kea that negatively affects Native Hawaiian cultural practices and land stewardship).

**How do you stand for racial justice in what you say and do?**

I choose when to speak and when to remain silent. I can't fight every battle, so I need to exercise wisdom in which issues I choose to take up and when. I am learning to speak with strength, truth, and grace.

**For “beginner” staff who want to express themselves or take a stand in a similar way, what first steps would you advise?**

Take risks on social media, but don't limit action on justice issues to that. Live justice through how you give, pray, spend time, etc. My primary area of concern is indigenous issues. As Asian/Asian-Americans are settlers on someone else's land. It's important for us to get educated on the issues affecting other communities, while not silencing our own voices and struggles.



**Christian Chin**  
**Seattle, WA**  
**Joined staff in 2006**

**How do you express racial justice in your lifestyle choices (i.e. prayer, finances, where you live, etc.)?**

I have moved to a neighborhood that is true to my values to live out racial justice. The neighborhood I live in is the historic black neighborhood of Seattle and is at the center of issues of police brutality, gentrification, and racial disparities in education, housing, and medical care.

I have been trying to get to know the issues in my neighborhood: There was a hate crime at a local church. There is a local marijuana dispensary near a school. There is construction on a main street that is negatively affecting local black businesses. I do my best to spend money at local businesses that serve our neighborhood including black-owned businesses who have been in the area for many years.

I also go to a that has pastors of various

racess and backgrounds. The church speaks on racial justice and changes its Sunday services due to current including issues surrounding Black Lives Matter. The church has an annual class on faith and race. This past year, I helped to lead a breakout session in which we discussed what it mean to be Asian American in our church, in our city, and in our nation.

**How do you stand for racial justice in what you say and do?**

I also mentor younger Asian Americans to live out racial justice. We talk about the theological and practical basis for racial justice and talk about how we as Asian Americans can act as allies. Also, I speak up through social media as a way to set an example to others about speaking out especially to my Asian American friends and colleagues.

**For “beginner” staff who want to express themselves or take a stand in a similar way, what first steps would you advise?**

We have so much information at our fingerprints. So become knowledgeable and learn as much as you can. Also, listen at the feet of other oppressed groups. However, it is not their responsibilities to give you solutions. You must be willing to listen and then figure the rest out on your own.

Moreover, speak to your Asian American families, friends, colleagues, and students about these issues. Even if you don't have many friends that are other people of color, you can still talk with people within your ethnic circles.



**Brenda Wong**  
**Hawai'i**  
**Joined staff in 1978**

**How do you express racial justice in your lifestyle choices (i.e. prayer, finances, where you live, etc.)?**

- \*I choose to live in Waimanalo, a predominantly Hawaiian community so that I could be a support and light in this community (volunteering, rallies, prayer, relationships including the houseless)
- \* I support a compassion child monthly and went to visit my first compassion child in Africa
- \* I was part of an indigenous Hawaiian church for 14 years supporting justice for Hawaiians; I am currently part of a church that seeks to live out God's heart for justice and seek to influence my church in issues of racial justice
- \*I try to pray for issues of justice and also get prayer requests from IJM
- \* I support staff of color in IVCF and share finances from my account
- \*I intentionally disciple and empower marginalized students and staff
- \*I work to help students that struggle with

poverty get to conferences by providing scholarships

**How do you stand for racial justice in what you say and do?**

- \*For the past 5 years I've been part of a ministry that does outreach to victims of sex trafficking
- \*Annually I march in the MLK parade for justice and march with the Hawaiian community
- \*I partner with Moani Nanod-Sitch's leadership by being the admin for Ho`olohe Pono for the last 12 years (encouraging Christians to listen and serve alongside the native Hawaiian community)
- \*I stand with Black Lives Matter, using social media to influence
- \* I have gone to rallies and protests on various justice issues in the Hawaiians community

**For "beginner" staff who want to express themselves or take a stand in a similar way, what first steps would you advise?**

- \*listen and learn: when I first arrived in Hawaii, I took some Hawaiian studies classes and listened and learned in the context of relationships with Hawaiians
- \*be uncomfortable: I remember visiting our gospel choir ministry and when it was times to do solos, I choose to enter in though it was very uncomfortable;
- \*pray
- \*don't be afraid of being wrong, but take every opportunity to learn
- \*develop "real" relationships with others who are in different ethnicities and learn and serve in those communitie



**Linson Daniel**  
**Dallas, TX**  
**Joined staff in 2009**

**How do you express racial justice in your lifestyle choices (i.e. prayer, finances, where you live, etc.)?**

I express racial justice through financial giving and in my regular prayer times. Also, my wife and I decided to pick a school for our children that is more racially diverse in order to promote cross-cultural learning and friendships. Also, albeit a small gesture, I ensure that I look every African-American male in the eye and nod in order to let him know that I "see" him -- to show respect. More often than not, that gesture is quietly returned. Also, I do my best to be aware of micro-aggressions and bring awareness to its presence and impact, although I have never been to a rally.

**How do you stand for racial justice in what you say and do?**

I will occasionally use my platform as a speaker/preacher to address the topic of racial justice (especially in South Asian churches). I want South Asian Immigrants to know that we need to stand for racial justice -- as you might infer, this is a difficult conversation. Also, I engage in rigorous dialogue with people in my immediate circle of influence (e.g. family, friends, church members, etc.) by adding thoughts, unearthing assumptions, sharing resources, and correcting misconceptions. I tend not to use social media for these kinds of conversations.

**For "beginner" staff who want to express themselves or take a stand in a similar way, what first steps would you advise?**

Start with your friends and family. Reference current events and solicit feedback and thoughts. This should kickstart important and transformative conversations. Don't judge. Don't put down your family and friends. Remember that they are on their own racial justice journey. Also, don't try to get it all done in one day. Trust God that He will give you another chance to deepen the conversation.



**Jennifer Hollingsworth**  
**Dublin, CA**  
**Joined staff in 1997**

**How do you express racial justice in your lifestyle choices (i.e. prayer, finances, where you live, etc.)?**

Prayer life and leadership of prayer for racial justice in non-IV ministry leaders contexts. Our giving prioritizes racial justice. We live in the suburbs, so it's a struggle to find the spaces where the conversation is live. I've taught a class in my church, started small group discussions, served on a church diversity committee. I'm hosting a "Ballot and Brew" night to help people make thoughtful / prayerful choices in voting. I've recommended Community Mapping for our church to help understand the needs that are going unmet and how our church might begin to engage. I am also a part of a Bay Area Clergy Cohort to continue learning and acting. I read and ask questions. My annual accountability group is a diverse group of

women who choose talk about how we are living our lives for Jesus in this arena as well. I try to take every stretch assignment I can.

**How do you stand for racial justice in what you say and do?**

I think some of this is answered in the above question. I learn, I make mistakes, I ask forgiveness, I choose into these space, I learn, I make mistakes, I ask forgiveness, I choose...

**For "beginner" staff who want to express themselves or take a stand in a similar way, what first steps would you advise?**

Posture: A good friend reminded me once that everyone has their own journey to find our identity in Christ. He didn't mean this individualistically but to remind me that in community, we won't all be in the same place but that we are to walk together. There are times where I feel like I'm dragging people along with me. I also know that there are times when I've been carried by the faithfulness of others. I've tripped people along the way and have struggled to accept their grace rather than get off the path all together for fear of being lost. But it's that grace in pursuit of unity that I know informs the powers in the heavenly realms.

Position: But for new staff who are just beginning; what got you here, won't get you there. You have to put yourself in spaces to learn and listen.



**Carol Lee**  
**Oakland, CA**  
**Joined staff in 2003**

**How do you express racial justice in your lifestyle choices (i.e. prayer, finances, where you live, etc.)?**

I budget meticulously so that we can give more money away. As someone who grew up in a low-income family, it has been difficult for my parents to understand why we give so much money away. But this has been an ongoing part of their growth as parents to trust that they raised me well. We look at divesting from corporations and organizations that support unjust systems like prison labor, and look for ways to reinvest in small businesses owned by people of color. We try to diversify our giving both local and global, and in different areas of leadership in justice work.

Some of what we do is small in impact, but they are part of a commitment to submit every area of our life to Creator God. Things like paying attention to where our food comes from, and eating less meat. We hope it encourages more people around us to do the same.

I try to start our orientations off vegan or vegetarian. It's actually amazing how much more attentive students are once they are \*ahem\* regular. Then when students start to cook for residential programs, we teach them how to make delicious, local, vegetarian meals.

We do an advent calendar each year that centers justice.

I try to read and watch all that I can to recommend books, podcasts, shows, and movies as resources to others. I think what we consume is incredibly important and shapes how we look at the world.

I build relationships with people outside my organization who are doing justice work, and I find opportunities for shared learning and partnership.

**How do you stand for racial justice in what you say and do?**

I think of ways to influence the people around me in ways that are easy for them. Things like watching a tv show or talking about food as entryways to talking about racial justice.

I develop learning experiences for students and staff that engage our personal and collective histories and current realities to cultivate curiosity and compassion. These can be a Bible study, a seminar, a conference, or a program like the SF Chinatown Program. These programs seek to be less up-front teaching and expert-centered, and more story-telling and participant-centered. Some find my style of leadership frustrating because it means I don't give them answers. Some things need clear answers. But most of the time, we

need to be given the opportunity to practice saying what we believe about racial justice in our own voice.

I teach financial stewardship so that more people can gain control of their finances and give what rightly belongs to the poor.

As an introverted person who lives with depression and anxiety, and one who doesn't use social media as a personal platform, much of what I say happens in the context of relationship. And while I am a high introvert, I take the time to make conversation and create communities that learn together, even if it's not part of my job description. Recently I've been working on initiating cohorts of staff who will walk together and support one another in the work for racial justice.

I have never had high positional power. Most of the influence I have cultivated over the years have come through relational influence. This means years of consistently investing in relationships with staff, students, alumni, local community members, and living in public with integrity. So what I say in public doesn't have much sway, but the life-giving words I speak to my community carries into their lives, their work, their platforms. I find as many ways as I can to support the work of others, and raising up young voices and creative thinkers whose work will impact even more.

**For “beginner” staff who want to express themselves or take a stand in a similar way, what first steps would you advise?**

Read! Watch! Listen! Talk to me! I promise I won't bite. If you want a working list of resources, ask me.

Initiate with people who are already doing this kind of work. Get to know them and find ways to support their work. Please note

that there is often an intersection of activist work and queer-identifying folks. If this is challenging for you, I think there is a helpful starting place in learning to respect folks in all that they are, seeing their Imago Dei and the spiritual authority God has placed in them when God created them.

Read and find your heroes of justice work.

Find your own proximity to the issues of racial injustice. Start from there. Read scripture through the lens of the oppressed.

Study or lead the Justice D-Cycles we developed.