

## What the Black Lives Matter Movement Means to Me:

The BLM movement is, to me, a political agenda aimed at making real the expectation that white Americans will view Black Americans as equally valuable. It represents the pursuit of civic equality for and human respect of Black Americans. This lack of respect for and civic equality toward Black Americans is reflected in:

job discrimination

unequal pay

access to housing

mortgage rates

school segregation

criminal system

The current and historical evidence of these areas of inequality is

incontrovertible, consistent and ongoing. A particularly knotty aspect of the criminal system has been and continues to be the issue of the treatment of black men by some policemen in various areas of the country. This is a particularly acute tension that is deepening and surely rises above the simplistic notion of anti-police hostility by Black Americans.

This focus on equality and respect is not new. It has its origins in the post slavery period, most notably in the writings and speeches of Frederick Douglas right on up to the recent Civil Rights Movement led by the reverend Dr. Martin Luther King.

Thus, "Black Lives Matter" is a unifying theme and organizing strategy to focus on the inequality and disrespect directed toward Black Americans and to strategize for change. I fully support this mission

The Banner and Follen:

I see the banner as a symbol of the concerns of the movement. Identifying with it says that you agree with and support the commitment to eradicate the inequalities and areas of disrespect. And that support is to be reflected in the programs, resources and endorsements made in furtherance of the goals of the movement. In the absence of this kind of support the hanging of the banner is meaningless. A good example of a programmatic opportunity that currently exists at Follen is the Anti-Racist Books project. And as I read the draft of the proposed resolution to be considered I found much that it is consistent with the BLM movement. I similarly found in the Unitarian Principles language addressing the concerns of the BLM movement. In that spirit I support our hanging a BLM banner. In doing so we publicly align ourselves with the commitment to insure respect toward and

equality for all Americans. And in doing so we reaffirm our commitment to nonviolent protest in pursuit of these goals.

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