

■ by Gregg Hunter

# Understanding Others

When we consider all that 2020 has brought, it seems the volume has been turned up on everything. For good reason in many cases.

Often, the loudness of the issues is reflective of pain and how deep the consequences are for many. The sound can be deafening. It seems to me that the two most helpful responses in such situations are listening and empathy.

When society seems to be screaming and its individual members shout to be heard, the best antidote is to listen. But the listening needs to go deep, seeking to honestly understand the nuances that can be lost under the decibels of emotion.

Most of us haven't been trained well to listen — to *really* listen. Every business publication in the past few years has touted the value of emotional intelligence, and E.I. is often measured by how well someone listens to and understands others.

That level of understanding is at the core of empathy. Empathy is the ability to feel and understand someone else's emotions. It requires us to put ourselves into their circumstances and imagine how we would respond intellectually, emotionally; to "walk a mile in their shoes." It's

diversity

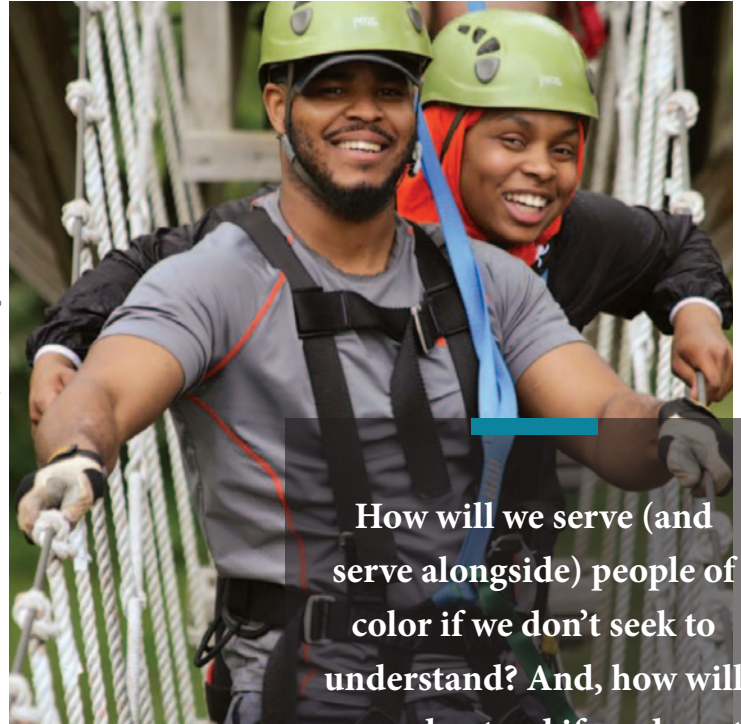
easier to move forward in our own shell and not consider how it would feel if we had to trade

places. But the hard work of listening and empathy can change our minds, our hearts, our lives.

In this issue of *InSite*, we are challenged to listen to the issue of race, and particularly, race as it relates to predominantly-white ministries that would like to serve a more racially-diverse community, including broader representation in leadership. Clearly, the issue of race has been thrust into the consciousness of every American in recent months. It is imminently important.

I'd like to ask that as you read these pages, you pause to listen to the situation others describe, that you seek to empathize with their circumstances. And then, will you ask God what your role is in bringing healing and understanding, and then

Photo courtesy of Refreshing Mountain Retreat & Adventure Center (2019)



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seek how you can be involved in celebrating the diversity He created? Will you remain open to a role you can play in the Christian camping community, serving a country that is increasingly racially diverse?

How will we serve (and serve alongside) people of color if we don't seek to understand? And, how will we understand if we do not listen and empathize?

CCCA will host discussions around this topic and will be doing our part to communicate that Christian camps want to be a safe place for people of color to lead, be ministered to and bring their kids and families to in order to experience God at a deep and life-changing level. ■



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