



A Pastoral Letter from RGC's Elders on the Death of George Floyd

We Cannot Remain Silent

6 June 2020

*Of the increase of his government and of peace there will be no end,
on the throne of David and over his kingdom,
to establish it and to uphold it with justice and with righteousness
from this time forth and forevermore.
The zeal of the LORD of hosts will do this. ([Isaiah 9:7](#))*

As June unfolds before us, most of us thought we'd be focused on getting back to normal and reopening for business and church and life. Instead, we look on our screens and find our nation in the grip of fear and anger, grief, and growing division. Widespread protests after the cruel killing of George Floyd have given voice to pent up indignation and frustration. Violence and looting have marred our cities.

What's happening to our country? What can we do? As disciples of Jesus Christ, how should we respond? To take a line from the statement below, we cannot remain silent. We must not assume that what is happening in our country is someone else's problem, or ignore it in the hopes it will just blow over soon.

Racism has deep roots in our country, indeed its roots run deeper even than the founding of our great land. Four hundred years ago, the institution of slavery degraded African people to the category of property. After the Civil War, racism toward African-American people continued in the form of Jim Crow laws and the establishment of segregation. More than 4,400 African-American men, women, and children were hanged, burned alive, shot, drowned, and beaten to death by white mobs [between 1877 and 1950](#). The civil rights movement achieved important gains and much progress has been made, but we continue to see countless instances of dehumanizing treatment of African-American people and in a myriad of ways life is more difficult for someone born black than born white.

As we listen to different black brothers and sisters, including members of our church, we are learning that they often experience life today as connected to the long history of racial injustice. Therefore, when they see a black man cruelly killed by police or hunted down and murdered by vigilantes in a pickup truck, they do not experience these as isolated incidents. Rather, we are learning that for our brothers and sisters, these incidents are connected with decades and centuries of racism and the dehumanizing mistreatment of people based upon the color of their skin. Does this mean that every crime against an African-American person is racially motivated?

No. But it does mean that crimes such as the killing of George Floyd and Ahmaud Arbery fit a long-standing pattern that needs to change. We agree.

The elders of Redeeming Grace Church see this present moment as an opportunity for us as a congregation to:

1. Call racism what it is: sin, and acknowledge the uncomfortable yet ever-present reality that, despite much progress having been made, America still has a race problem. (Exodus 20:13, Genesis 1:27-28)

2. Love one another compassionately and stick together tenaciously, while pressing in intentionally to listen to and share in the broken heartedness of those among us who have experienced the ill-effects of racism. (1 John 4:7-11; Galatians 6:2, Romans 12:15) Let us work together to make our church a welcoming place for people of all nations, ethnic groups, and races, to worship God for the glory of God.

3. Proclaim that Jesus Christ is the Lord who is building a kingdom of reconciled people from every language and ethnicity and skin color and inviting sinners of all kinds, including those guilty of racism, to repent and be reconciled to God through him. (Galatians 3:28, Ephesians 2:14-16)

4. Pray for:

- Those in our church and community and society who have had the experience of being treated as less important and valuable because of the color of their skin. (1 Corinthians 12:12-26, Psalm 13)
- Our local, state, national, and church leaders; that they would help our society overcome all racial inequity in order to promote justice for all. (1 Timothy 2:1-4)
- The many honorable law enforcement officers who are working hard to promote peace and justice and to deescalate tensions during these times. (Romans 13:3-4)
- Those who protest and advocate for justice to honor the Lord in their efforts, and for the preservation of life and health. (1 Corinthians 10:31, Isaiah 9:7, Matthew 6:10)

5. Speak up with others who are calling for change. With that in mind, we affirm and commend to you the following [statement](#) from leaders of the Southern Baptist Convention, with whom we have recently voted to affiliate. We urge you to live out your love for our brothers and sisters in a way that is active, prayerfully seeking how the Lord might lead and use you at this time and in the days ahead.

As elders of Redeeming Grace Church, we affirm that to follow King Jesus means to embrace the dignity and equality of all people and to pursue justice and righteousness in our personal lives, our congregation, and our community. We hope you can join us in this affirmation and welcome your collaboration, comments, and questions.

The Elders of Redeeming Grace Church