Joint statement on Racism in the U.S.

June 9, 2020

We have seen with dismay, pain and horror the destructive mark of racism on the soul of the U.S. Throughout our history, racism being the backbone of this nation’s development and unjust enrichment of many has become the choking source of black communities and people of color affecting every aspect of our collective life. The coronavirus pandemic has exposed these racial inequities that hurt black and brown communities by hindering their access to health but also their development, freedom, and pursuit of happiness. George Floyd’s words became prophetic for as a nation, we can’t breathe anymore.

The brutal and disturbing deaths of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, Ahmaud Arbery, and Tony McDade have shaken our nation to its soul and painfully demonstrated the daily danger of being black in this nation. The resistance and slow response of the judicial system and the Law enforcement agencies to bring justice in these murders demonstrate that racism is deeply ingrained in our socio-political system and governmental policies. The recurring assaults on black people and people of color (POC) prove again and again that these lives are not worthy.

The undersigned organizations publicly denounce the murder of George Floyd, its race-related violence, including the police brutality shown, and demand that each one of the four police officers involved in his death face justice for all engaged in disdaining the worth of this man as a human being and as a citizen. As peacemakers, we painfully recognize the sinful prejudice ingrained in our hearts, the violent actions deflecting the affirmation of justice, and the biased attitudes justifying hurting other human beings just because of the color of their skin and commit ourselves to dismantle racial oppression however we can.

As religious-based institutions serving communities with all diversities;

- We call the state and national governments to acknowledge the right of the people to protest peacefully and without fear, and to recognize that the peaceful protests all over our nation are a demand for justice in face of murder of black lives.
- We call the state and the federal government to avoid the use of the military as a response to quell peaceful protestors. The use of the military will exacerbate the divisions within our society and send our nation in a spiral of violence like no other in our history.
- We call our leadership from all sectors of our society – political, economic, education, health, media related, etc., – to acknowledge the rage, grief, and pain within our communities.
❖ We call the leadership from all sectors of our society and the state and federal highest leadership, to create a national table that starts meaningful dialogues with representatives from the grieving black communities to engage, united, in a deep, authentic and sustainable social change to combat and dismantle racism and discrimination in all its forms.

❖ We call on the state and the federal government to stop using the forces, symbols, and themes of white nationalism to counter peaceful protestors. We stand against the forces of white nationalism, enforcing “law and order” amid peaceful protests organized and carried out primarily by Black, Indigenous, and People of Color for their rights.

We acknowledge our present time is difficult. We have become overwhelmed with a pandemic death toll surpassing 100,000 deaths, the desperation of millions unemployed, and the continuous disregard of black human lives. While these successive “pangs of birth,” can madden us, as peacemakers, it is essential to remember that grace and forgiveness heal our hearts, that we belong to each other (Rom 12:4-5) and that justice will be done for we seek it (Matt. 6:33). Under this yoke of darkness our actions today will define the future we want to build. We ask the Spirit to break us free and help us breathe.

Organizations:

American Baptist Home Mission Society
Alliance of Baptists
Baptist Peace Fellowship of North America - Bautistas por la Paz