

NEW WORK FELLOWSHIP | STATEMENT ON RACE

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I want to take a moment today to address a pervasive and systemic sin that is wrecking our world—but even more importantly—it is destroying lives, literally taking lives—and stealing the opportunity of life for so many.

I'm talking about Racism. As a church we proclaim that—*We Exist so that EVERY man, woman and child—would have the opportunity to know Christ, Grow in Christ, and Go as the Body of Christ.*

Let me ask you, to let that first phrase really sink in: *We exist so that EVERY Man, Woman, And child—would have the opportunity...*

Racism destroys opportunity—on so many levels. And as we've seen in recent months—it leaves in its wake a tragic rollcall of death. Make no mistake about it, the names of Ahmaud Arbery, Breonna Taylor, and George Floyd, are ONLY the latest names added to a long list of Black lives lost through injustice.

Our hearts ache.
Our world aches.
Our Brothers and Sister ache.
Our church aches.

Scripture clearly declares that all of humanity—every race, every tongue, every nation are all created in the very Image of God. All are endowed by God as people of worth and dignity. And from the earliest times—God's prophets of old declared that God's people—are to champion justice, mercy, goodness. Amos declared, ***“But let justice roll on like a river, righteousness like a never-failing stream!”***

It is a travesty that justice, for some—is more like a trickle than a mighty rushing river.

God's vision for the church herself—ends in a climatic gathering around the throne of God. And once again, we see the totality of humanity represented in that Holy space; all together, all worshipping, all speaking with one voice. Revelation 7 describes it this way:

After this I saw a vast crowd, too great to count, from every nation and tribe and people and language, standing in front of the throne and before the Lamb. They were clothed in white robes and held palm branches in their hands. And they were shouting with a great roar,

“Salvation comes from our God who sits on the throne and from the Lamb!”

I love that—“*shouting with a great roar*”—That is a picture of the church. We declare that God is the creator of all. God is the Savior for all. God calls His church to continue the roar of justice—down through the ages, until we gather together on that final day, in that final place.

May it be so. May it be so.

When Jesus taught us to pray, he said we ought to pray:

“*May your Kingdom come soon. May your will be done on earth, as it is in heaven.*”

Church, this is our work of redemption and reconciliation. We are to lean in, and strive forward, toward the goal of seeing a little more heaven on earth.

May we pray for it. May we work for it.

But it is not simply the work of the church. It is the work of each one of us. Building relationship by relationship. Listening, learning, hearing, empathizing—and working to eradicate injustice for the glory of God—and the good of our brothers and sisters.

May it be so. May it be so.

But seeing is only the beginning. What more shall we do?

What do we do now?

Reach out to those around you who are hurting and listen. Ask them how they feel. Enter into that pain with them. Empathize. This is not a time for advice or criticism. This is a time to grieve with our brothers and sister in Christ. This is a time to grieve with our community. Ask the Lord who he's laid on your heart and follow that nudge. Show care.

What will we continue to do?

I assure you that this is an area where we as a church will continue to seek the Lord's wisdom. This will not be a flash in the pan. We will listen and learn from those in our church and community who are hurting and oppressed. We will continue to seek to hold up the biblical picture of a diverse, God-honoring community. We will teach, to the best of our ability, what we learn. This is something close to our heart as a church because we believe it to be something that is close to God's heart. We are reminded of Psalm 34:14, *'The Lord is close to the brokenhearted; he rescues those whose spirits are crushed.'* *Our desire is to be an instrument of peace and a light that shines in a world that is hurt and dying.*"

Indeed, may it be so in us collectively. May it be so, in us, individually.