

Racial and Ethnic Harmony

In recent days, hateful and murderous actions against African Americans have dominated the news cycle and our national conversation. This has served to heighten the tensions and divisions in our culture with respect to racial relations and issues of justice.

The Holy Scriptures are not silent concerning these issues. We affirm that the Bible is authoritative, inerrant, and sufficient to provide a truthful understanding of hateful and prejudiced attitudes, and to provide the roadmap for ultimate redemption and reconciliation through the gospel of Jesus Christ. In light of this, we affirm the following:

- All human beings of all ethnicities belong to the same family tree and share a common ancestry. We come from one blood (Adam's blood) and belong to one race (the human race). We all have intrinsic value and dignity as image bearers of our Creator (Gen. 1:26–27).
- Murder is a heinous sin. It is the illegitimate taking of a human life and is always incompatible with God's revealed will (Gen. 9:5–6; 1 Tim. 1:9; Exod. 20:13). Scripture also teaches that a hateful attitude is in the same ethical category as murderous actions. One need not actually commit murder to be a murderer at heart (Matt. 5:21–22; 1 John 3:11–15).
- Despising and deriding our fellow men and women for any reason (including for differences arising from age, ethnicity, wealth, education level, and background) is inherently prideful and wrong (Jer. 9:23–24; James 2:1–4).
- The Bible teaches us to value justice for the marginalized, including the weak, fatherless, afflicted, destitute, and needy (Ps. 82:3–4; Prov. 24:11–12; 31:8–9; Matt. 7:12).
- Disrespecting civil authorities (including the police and elected officials) is unbecoming for a Christian. However imperfect they may be, they are God-ordained authorities¹ (Rom. 13:1–7; 1 Pet. 2:11–17).
- Judging others' motives and assuming the worst about them is counterproductive to fruitful relationships. We should be diligent to examine our own hearts before passing judgment on others (Prov. 19:11; Matt. 7:1–5).
- Disrespecting other people's property or personal dignity is an affront to God (Matt. 7:12; 22:39; Phil. 2:3–4).
- Christians are called to hate what is evil and lovingly expose it in light of what Scripture teaches (Rom. 12:9; Eph. 5:11).
- We must empathize with hurting people and demonstrate sincere care for them, just as Jesus "sympathizes" with us in our struggles (Rom. 12:15; Heb. 4:15–16).
- The ultimate issue underlying conflicts of all kinds (including cultural, racial, and relational conflict) is the sinfulness of the human heart, which can only be redeemed and transformed by the gospel of Jesus Christ. Our aim must therefore be heart transformation that is rooted in the gospel message (Prov. 4:23; James 4:1–3).

¹ This is not meant to imply that the decisions made by civil authorities are infallible or above criticism and debate; only that Christians should cultivate a respectful posture toward those whom God has placed over us.

As a fellowship of local churches, we are committed to enthusiastically and wholeheartedly welcoming one another as Christ has welcomed us, despite any ethnic, racial, socioeconomic, linguistic, or educational differences that may exist (Rom. 15:7; Gal. 3:28).

We also commit ourselves to be quick to confess and repent of racist, prideful, or hateful attitudes in our own hearts, trusting in the power of the gospel for forgiveness and cleansing.

We pledge our unwavering commitment to the Great Commission mandate of making disciples of all people from all ethnicities, as we together grow and change into the image of Christ (Matt. 28:19; Col. 1:28–29). Therefore, we exalt the great work of God in calling together one people from every tribe and nation (Rev. 5:9). We proclaim the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ (not secular theories or godless philosophies) as the only basis by which estranged men and women can find ultimate and lasting reconciliation one to another, and on which redeemed people will stand together in restored family union as joint-heirs with Jesus Christ (Rom. 8:17).

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