



Systemic Injustice and the Gospel of Hope

This article is from the [Lausanne Movement](#).



It is with deep concern that Christians globally witness the events leading to and following the tragic death of George Floyd in police custody in May 2020. Spontaneous protests that have erupted throughout the United States, alongside the large scale demonstrations in numerous cities around the world, bear evidence of humanity's deep longing for love, justice, reconciliation, and peace. This series of events also exposes our flawed humanity that abuses power, exploits the vulnerable, disregards victims, unleashes violence, and exacts revenge. The imbalance of power that continues to divide the church and the world calls us to continuing repentance and the responsible use of power. We are called to live as members of one body, in full awareness that God resists the proud, Christ welcomes the poor and afflicted, and the Spirit's power is manifested in our humility and vulnerability.

At the heart of the gospel that unites Christians of all nations, races, and languages is God's demonstrated affirmation of justice and reconciliation. On the one hand, by the fact that His death occurred at the behest of cruel and unjust authorities, Jesus Christ is able today to identify with every victim of systemic injustice in our world. On the other hand, by the fact that His sufferings and death were self-sacrificial, in obedience to the Father's will, and for the sake of removing the offense of human sin that stood in the way of our relationship with both God and each other, Jesus Christ is uniquely able to open the door to forgiveness, reconciliation, and peace, and He has entrusted us with the message of reconciliation in and through Jesus Christ. We are called to be the salt of the earth and the light of the world, arresting the decadence of our time and overcoming the darkness that threatens to engulf us.





This gospel of hope and peace has been entrusted to the church, the people of God. It is to be embodied in our lifestyles, demonstrated by our actions, and explained by our speaking out. Our Lord Jesus Christ calls His church today to be faithful stewards who advance these values by our empathetic presence, courageous and caring deeds, and prophetic and pastoral words. We must stand in solidarity with those who suffer discrimination and violence, and we should cooperate readily with those who aspire to fulfill their mandate to safeguard society's well-being.

We are in the world but not of it, and yet do readily acknowledge our inherent weaknesses and prejudices that threaten to compromise our witness to the gospel of the kingdom. Through our earnest prayers and with dependence on the Holy Spirit, the global Christian community stands alongside her American brothers and sisters to shine a beacon of truth, hope, and peace in a world threatened by sinister waves of renewed darkness. *"For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places"* (Ephesians 6:12).

Ethnic diversity is the gift and plan of God in creation. It has been spoiled by human sin and pride, resulting in confusion, strife, violence, and war among nations. However, ethnic diversity will be preserved in the new creation when people from every nation, tribe, people, and language will gather as the redeemed people of God. We confess that we often fail to take ethnic identity seriously and to value it as the Bible does, in creation and redemption. We fail to respect the ethnic identity of others and ignore the deep wounds that such long-term disrespect causes.

For the sake of the gospel, we lament and call for repentance where Christians have participated in ethnic violence, injustice, or oppression. We also call for repentance for the many times Christians have been complicit in such evils by silence, apathy, or presumed neutrality or by providing defective theological justification for these.

We long for the day when the Church will be the world's most visibly shining model of ethnic reconciliation and its most active advocate for conflict resolution.

—Excerpts from The Cape Town Commitment, II-B-2

