

The Beech Haven Baptist Church Statement on the Gospel, Racism, and Justice

In light of the unjust killing of George Floyd in Minneapolis, Minnesota, the pastor, staff, and deacons of Beech Haven Baptist Church consider it wise to rearticulate for our church family our faith as it relates to current issues. Our faith statement, "The Baptist Faith and Message," addresses many items, among which are Scripture, human life, and racism.¹

Scripture: Scripture is "the supreme standard by which all human conduct, creeds, and religious opinions should be tried."

Human Life: "The sacredness of human personality is evident in that God created humanity in His own image, and in that Christ died for humanity; therefore, every person of every race possesses full dignity and is worthy of respect and Christian love."

Racism: "In the spirit of Christ, Christians should oppose racism."

From the Scripture and our faith statement we summarize below biblical positions, and Beech Haven's, relevant to the gospel, racism, and justice.

1. All people from conception to grave are created in the image of God. Race, then, is a gift of God. He expects all people to be treated as His image bearers.

"Then God said, 'Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.' So, God created man in His own image; in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them" (Gen 1:26—27).

2. Repentance towards God and faith in Jesus Christ, followed by obedience to His Lordship, are the solutions to all personal and social issues.

"Then He who sat on the throne said, 'Behold, I make all things new.' And He said to me, "Write, for these words are true and faithful" (Rev 21:5).

3. With our brothers and sisters of color, we are broken and horrified that racism and injustice still trouble our world and nation.

"Weep with those who weep" (Rom 12:15).

4. We invite Christians and all people everywhere to mourn over and repent of the sins for which they are guilty, including racism and injustice, and trust God's grace for cleansing and transformation.

"Jesus came preaching the gospel in Galilee, saying, 'The time is fulfilled; the kingdom of God is at hand. Repent and believe in the gospel'" (Mark 1:15).

5. Christians should condemn racism and injustice, even if they find these in themselves.

“Is He the God of the Jews only? Is He not also the God of the Gentiles? Yes, of the Gentiles also” (Rom 3:29).

6. Churches should declare that union and identification with Jesus Christ produces love for all races and socio-economic groups, contempt for racism and injustice, and forgiveness for the repentant.

“He who says he is in the light, and hates his brother, is in darkness until now. He who loves his brother abides in the light, and there is no cause for stumbling in him. But he who hates his brother is in darkness and walks in darkness, and does not know where he is going, because the darkness has blinded his eyes” (1 John 2:9—11).

7. Peaceful protests are constitutional and should be protected as such.

“Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted. . . . Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be filled Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God” (Matt 5:4, 6, 9).

8. We affirm law enforcement officers who act ethically and justly, and we support their efforts to eliminate any racism and injustice from their ranks.

“Let every soul be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and the authorities that exist are appointed by God. Therefore, whoever resists the authority resists the ordinance of God, and those who resist will bring judgment on themselves. For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to evil. Do you want to be unafraid of the authority? Do what is good, and you will have praise from the same. For he is God's minister to you for good. But if you do evil, be afraid; for he does not bear the sword in vain; for he is God's minister, an avenger to execute wrath on him who practices evil” (Rom 13:1—4).

9. Beech Haven’s doors and hearts are open to all races and socio-economic groups, and we invite all races and socio-economic groups to join us and to help us exalt and serve Jesus Christ who alone is the hope of the world.

“Go out into the highways and hedges, and compel them to come in, that my house may be filled” (Luke 14:23).

Besides confessing our faith on these matters, we will apply our faith to race relationships. The pastor of Beech Haven will soon deliver a message on race urging those present to make a true friend with a person from another race to listen and learn from them on these matters. Additionally, this document will be included in Beech Haven’s new member training. Beech Haven will also provide a discipleship group this fall to study a curriculum relevant to issues of race. Finally, we will persevere in faithfulness to God’s word on these matters until Christ returns and makes all things new.

¹“The Baptist Faith and Message,” About Us: What we Believe; [online]; <https://www.beechhaven.org/about-us/what-we-believe/>; accessed 4 June 2020; Internet. See articles I. The Scriptures, III. Man, and XV. The Christian and the Social Order.