

Social Justice Commission
Tyree A. Anderson, D.Min., Chairperson
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Response to Racism in America

Alabama State Missionary Baptist Convention

America is in a state of emergency. We are literally at a major intersection where we are fighting COVID-19 and racism/white supremacy simultaneously. As a nation, the Coronavirus and racism/white supremacy has taken center stage from the White House to the church house and both are becoming normalized. African Americans are dying at greater rate than any other ethnicity in the nation to COVID-19. Not only are we dying from COVID-19, we are also dying because of racism/white supremacy. We now watch in disgust, dread, and even distress black bodies being assassinated or attempted character assassinations in broad daylight. The murders of Mr. George Floyd in Minneapolis, Minnesota; Ms. Breonna Taylor in Louisville, Kentucky; Mr. Ahmaud Arbery in Brunswick, Georgia; and Mr. Sean Reed in Indianapolis, Indiana; coupled with the audacity of Ms. Amy Cooper who used her white female privilege to inflict bodily harm towards a black man in Central Park because he asked her to put a leash on her dog all reflect the realities African Americans endure on a daily basis. These are the stories that capture national attention. What's not on the national news are the daily encounters African American men, women, and children have with local racist police, district attorneys and judges who support white supremacy, and politicians who refuse to create and pass legislation for equity purposes. The trauma and level of oppression experienced by African Americans in a nation that is purportedly law abiding is sinister. In a democratic-republic where those who break the law are held accountable does not apply equally here in America. Something must be done and something must be said so that justice, righteousness, and equity are experienced by all.

The Alabama State Missionary Baptist Convention stands with the oppressed, tyrannized, and disadvantaged. We stand with those who are victims of those who engage in actions that are rooted in racism/white supremacy. Moreover, we believe in the sanctity of all life, especially Black life. Therefore, we condemn those who use unscrupulous and unprincipled methods that create the conditions, lead to, and fossilize the tenants of racism/white supremacy in an effort to discount, disregard, and demean any African American in this nation. Since 1619, Africans and African Americans have been victimized by the colonist and their descendants who have used the rule of law to punish the African American while simultaneously ingratiating themselves. In addition to creating oppressive laws, they use select passages from the Bible as their theological foundation for a society that gives the appearance of justice, righteousness, and equity but in reality this is not so for African Americans. African Americans are considered and treated as second class citizens whose only role is to be subservient, submissive, and remain in a subordinate position. As a state convention, we believe in the rule of law and that it should be applied to all and not just one group in society.

We strongly urge the United States Department of Justice, state justice agencies, and local law enforcement agencies to do justice in each of these cases. There are clear indications that racism/white supremacy played a major role in the death and character assassination of these African American citizens mentioned earlier. While we support the important role that law enforcement officers have in making our communities safe, we do not support law enforcement officers nor agencies that terrorize citizens based on their skin color, religious preference, gender identity, or ethnicity. Any law enforcement officer who breaks the law, terrorizes the community, or murders citizens must be held accountable, arrested and prosecuted to the full extent of the law. We believe that God is the final judge in all matters of life and that no one has a right to take the life of someone else.

It is the position of the Alabama State Missionary Baptist Convention that we address injustices with deliberate attention and that we follow the dictates that we receive from God and through our Lord, Jesus the Christ to do justice as found in Micah 6:8. Jesus himself was a victim of police brutality and government oppression. Our Lord was arrested under the cover of night, falsely accused, sentenced to be executed, and lynched by religious and government leaders who looked to silence the voice of God. As Jesus was not silent, so we shall be like him. Like the eighth century prophets who spoke truth to power in times of injustice, our convention will do the same. Our faith and conviction calls us to speak on behalf of those who cannot and are afraid to say something. God is with us and with those who are oppressed.