

**REVIEW OF
THE STATEMENT ON SOCIAL JUSTICE AND THE GOSPEL
The Council on Dispensational Hermeneutics
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INTRODUCTION

For many years traditional dispensationalists (Ryrie, Pentecost, Walvoord) wrote books and journal articles explaining and defending dispensational, premillennial eschatology which emphasized that in the last days apostasy would come into the church and there would be a decline in morality (1 Tim.4:1-4; 2 Tim. 3:1-8).

Timothy Weber observed, “Critics charged that dispensationalism inoculated its advocates with a kind of do-nothing passivity, mainly because of its pessimistic and fatalistic worldview. Human civilization is doomed to decline, the forces of evil will inevitably overwhelm the forces of good, and there is nothing that anyone can do about it.”¹

Russell Moore writes, “Evangelical theology faces the often valid criticisms of both liberation theologians on the left and theonomic theologians on the right that evangelical theology has been hijacked by an eschatology that ignores sociopolitical issues in an apocalyptic flight from the world.”²

Traditional dispensationalists have largely ignored the social issues of our day.³ This is one reason many have turned to progressive dispensationalism (Bock, Blaising). So this conference on Dispensationalism, Social Justice and Race is important for us as traditional dispensationalists to meet and discuss these important social issues of our day. We do not want to be irrelevant.

America is divided today over many social justice issues: racism, abortion, euthanasia, poverty, animal rights, freedom of religion, physician assisted suicide, hate speech, cloning, pornography, feminism, gay rights, same sex marriage, gun rights, racial profiling, capital punishment, prostitution, legalization of marijuana, immigration policies, environmentalism – just to name a few. We need to be studying and writing papers on all of these issues from the biblical worldview which comes from a literal grammatical historical hermeneutic.

¹ Timothy Weber, *On the Road to Armageddon: How Evangelicals Became Israel's Best Friend* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2004), 45.

² Russell Moore, *The Kingdom of Christ: The New Evangelical Perspective* (Wheaton: Crossway, 2004), 69.

³ One major exception is the book by Dr. Charles Ryrie, *What You Should Know About Social Responsibility* (Chicago: Moody, 1982). Every traditional dispensationalist should read this book.

The focus of this paper will be a review of the Statement on Social Justice and the Gospel. On September 4, 2018 the Statement on Social Justice and the Gospel (called the Dallas Statement) was published after being written during the summer of 2018. The Statement on Social Justice and the Gospel was drafted by a group of evangelicals led by Dr. John MacArthur.

DR. JOHN MACARTHUR ON SOCIAL JUSTICE, RACE AND THE GOSPEL

What is social justice? Dr. John MacArthur defines what he means by social justice in his Grace to You blog on “The Injustice of Social Justice”: “Today, critical race theory, feminism, intersectional theory, LGBT advocacy, progressive immigration policies, animal rights, and other left wing political causes are all actively vying for evangelical acceptance under the rubric of social justice. Not every evangelical leader currently talking about social justice supports the full spectrum of radical causes, of course. Most (for the moment at least) do not. But they are using the same rhetoric and rationale of victimhood and oppression that is relentlessly employed by secularists who are aggressively advocating for all kinds of deviant lifestyles and ideologies. Anyone who claims victim status can easily and effectively harness the emotional appeal of a plea for ‘social justice’ both to gain support and to silence opposition...For many decades social justice has been employed as political shorthand by radical leftists as a way of calling for equal distribution of wealth, advantages, privileges, and benefits – up to and including pure Marxist socialism.”⁴

MacArthur condemns racism and argues that the gospel is the solution to this problem: “I deplore racism and all the cruelty and strife it breeds. I am convinced the only long term solution to every brand of ethnic animus is the gospel of Jesus Christ...”⁵

MacArthur recognizes that slavery and the Civil War led to a division in this country which is still unresolved. He writes “Racism is a stain on American history that has left shame, injustice, and horrible violence in its wake. The institution of slavery and a costly civil war left a deep racial divide and bred bitter resentment on every side. No sensible person would suggest that all the vestiges of those evils were totally erased by the civil rights movement of the mid-twentieth century. Civil rights legislation now guards the legal principle of equal rights for all Americans, but no law can change the heart of someone who is filled with prejudice or bitterness.”⁶

IMPORTANT HISTORICAL EVENTS IN THE STRUGGLE FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE IN AMERICA

It is important for us to survey the historical context for The Statement on Social Justice and the Gospel. For us to better understand why this statement was made now let us take a look back at American history. Here is a quick history lesson that shows the struggle for social justice in America especially as it involves African Americans.

⁴ Dr. John MacArthur, “The Injustice of Social Justice” (<https://www.gty.org/library/print/blog/B180907>).

⁵ Dr. John MacArthur, “Social Injustice and the Gospel” (Jan.25, 2019) (<https://www.gty.org/library/print/blog/B180813>).

⁶ Dr. John MacArthur, “Is the Controversy over ‘Social Justice’ Really Necessary?” (August 27, 2018) (<https://www.gty.org/library/blog/B180827>)

1619 – Four hundred years ago slavery in America started when a Dutch ship brought 20 African slaves to the British colony at Jamestown, Virginia.⁷ Estimates of 6 to 7 million black slaves were brought to America in the 18th century (1700s). Black slaves worked on the tobacco, rice and cotton plantations in the southern states.

1770 – Boston Massacre - One of the first patriots killed by the British soldiers in Boston was Crispus Attucks (a former slave).

1775 – 1783 - The Revolutionary War. The American Revolution was fought between the 13 American colonies and Great Britain. Some 5000 black soldiers and sailors fought for liberty in this war. But even during this fight for freedom many blacks were enslaved in the South.

1776 – Thomas Jefferson wrote in The Declaration of Independence that “all men are created equal.” There is no mention of slavery in the Declaration of Independence. But Thomas Jefferson and many of the founding fathers in America owned slaves.

1787 - The Preamble to the United States Constitution says: “We the people of the United States, in order to form a more perfect Union, establish Justice, insure domestic Tranquility, provide for the common defense, promote the general welfare, and secure the blessings of Liberty to ourselves and our posterity, do ordain and establish this Constitution for the United States of America.” The Constitution was the law of the land but the blessings of liberty did not extend to all people (as it excluded black slaves).

Article 1, Section 2 of the original Constitution is known as the three-fifths compromise. It stated that a slave counted as three-fifths of a person for the purposes of taxation and representation in Congress. Northern states argued that slaves should not be counted at all while the southern states argued that all slaves should be counted. Slaves did not have the right to vote. The compromise enabled southern states to count slaves among their population totals to increase the number of their representatives in Congress.

Article 1, Section 9, Clause 1 of the original Constitution prohibited Congress from passing laws that banned slavery until the year 1808 (21 years after the signing of the original Constitution).

Article IV, Section 2 of the Constitution prohibited free states from protecting slaves under state law. In other words, if a slave escaped to a free state, that state was not allowed to protect the slave from his owner who came to retrieve him or her. The Constitution did not use the word “slave” but a “person held to service or labour.”

1793 – Eli Whitney invented the cotton gin (a machine that separated cotton seeds from its fiber). This invention led to more cotton being harvested by slaves in the South. Most slaves lived on plantations. They were prohibited from learning to read and write. Many slaves were severely beaten for failures to meet quotas in picking cotton.

⁷ The *New York Times* published the print edition of the 1619 Project. The purpose of the 1619 Project is to reframe the history of America, understanding 1619 as the true founding of America and placing the consequences of slavery and the contributions of black Americans at the very center of the story of America.

1800 – Gabriel Prosser led a slave rebellion in Richmond, Virginia.

1820 – Missouri Compromise - A bitter debate in Congress led to the Missouri Compromise. Missouri was admitted to the United States as a slave state. Maine was admitted as a free state. All western territories north of Missouri's southern border were to be free soil.

1822 – Denmark Vesey led a slave rebellion in Charleston, South Carolina

August 1831 – Nat Turner led a slave revolt in Southampton County, Virginia. Turner and 75 black slaves murdered some 60 whites in two days before the rebellion was stopped.

1830-1860 – The Abolitionist movement in America promoted freedom for black slaves. Some leaders in the Abolitionist movement were freed black Frederick Douglass, William Lloyd Garrison (founder of the newspaper *The Liberator*) and Harriet Beecher Stowe who wrote the novel *Uncle Tom's Cabin*.

1854 – Kansas-Nebraska Act opened all new territories in the West to slavery by asserting the rule of popular sovereignty over congressional edict. Pro and anti-slavery forces battled it out. Kansas became known as “Bleeding Kansas” as a result of fighting between abolitionists and pro-slavery men.

1857 – Dred Scott Decision made by the Supreme Court. Dred Scott was a slave who had lived with his owner in a free state before returning to the slave state of Missouri. Scott argued that time spent in a free state entitled him to his freedom. But the Supreme Court ruled that no black (free or slave) could claim U.S. citizenship and as a result blacks were unable to petition the court for their freedom. The decision ruled Dred Scott as a non-person. The decision outraged abolitionists and led to more tensions between North and South.

September 18, 1858 – In a debate with Stephen Douglas, Lincoln made his position clear on slavery. “I will say then that I am not, nor ever have been, in favor of bringing about in any way the social and political equality of the white and black races.” Lincoln said that he opposed blacks having the right to vote, to serve on juries, to hold office and to intermarry with whites. Lincoln argued that slavery was unjust and that blacks should have the right to improve their condition in society and to enjoy the rewards of their labor.⁸

1859 – John Brown's Raid on Harper's Ferry. Abolitionist John Brown and 22 men including 5 black men and three of Brown's sons raided and occupied a federal arsenal at Harper's Ferry (in what is now West Virginia). John Brown was captured and hung. Brown was viewed as a martyr by the North and was condemned as a murderer by the South.

1860- Republican nominee Abraham Lincoln was elected as the 16th president of the United States. The election of Lincoln led the southern states to secede from the Union.

⁸ “5 Things You May Not Know About Lincoln, Slavery and Emancipation” in History (August 19, 2019 blogpost).

1860-1865 - The Civil War was fought over slavery and states rights. About 620,000 soldiers died in various battles, from unattended wounds, from disease, and imprisonment.

August of 1862 – Lincoln hosted a delegation of freed slaves at the White House in the hopes of getting them to agree to a plan to colonize Central America. Lincoln’s support of colonization provoked anger from white abolitionists in the North and black leaders.

September 22, 1862 – President Lincoln signed The Emancipation Proclamation after the Union victory at Antietam declaring that “slaves within any state, or designated part of a state..in rebellion..shall be then, thenceforward, and forever free.” Lincoln never again suggested colonization as a policy for African Americans. The proclamation led 186,000 black soldiers to join the Union army to fight for their freedom.

November, 1863 - The Gettysburg Address – Abraham Lincoln dedicated a national cemetery at Gettysburg (the bloodiest battle in the Civil War to that date) and gave his famous Gettysburg Address giving a vision for America of a “government of the people, by the people and for the people shall not perish from the earth.”

April 10, 1865 – Lincoln gave his second inaugural address in Washington D.C.⁹ Lincoln believed that the Civil War was a just judgment of God upon a nation that had accepted slavery.

April 11, 1865 – Lincoln gave the last speech of his life. He said that the black man who had served the Union during the Civil War should have the right to vote.

April 15, 1865- President Lincoln was assassinated by John Wilkes Booth at Ford’s Theater in Washington D.C. Booth and others in the conspiracy wanted to revive the lost cause of the Confederacy.

December 18, 1865 – The 13th Amendment to the Constitution abolished slavery in America. “Neither slavery nor involuntary servitude, except as a punishment for crime whereof the party shall have been duly convicted, shall exist within the United States, or any place subject to their jurisdiction.”

July 28, 1868 – The 14th Amendment to the United States Constitution was ratified. The amendment granted former slaves the rights of citizenship and equal protection under the law. But many African Americans struggled in the Reconstruction period following the Civil War.

February 26, 1869 – The 15th Amendment passed by Congress and ratified on February 3, 1870 gave African American men the right to vote.

1896 – The Supreme Court declared in Plessy vs. Ferguson that facilities for blacks and whites could be “separate but equal.” Segregation in the South was designed to keep blacks separate

⁹ See Appendix for Lincoln’s Second Inaugural Address.

from whites. “Jim Crow”¹⁰ laws were established in the South. Blacks could not use the same facilities as whites or go to the same schools. Interracial marriage was illegal and most blacks were unable to vote because they were unable to pass voter literacy tests.

1948 – President Harry Truman initiated a civil rights agenda and issued Executive Order 9981 to end discrimination in the military. This led to the civil rights movement.

1950s through late 1960s – The Civil Rights Movement was an organized effort by black Americans to end racial discrimination and gain equal rights under the law.

December 1, 1955 – In Montgomery, Alabama, a 42 year old black woman named Rosa Parks refused to give up her seat on a bus to a white man who could not find a seat. Rosa Parks’ courage led to a boycott of the Montgomery bus system for 381 days by the black community led by a minister Martin Luther King Jr..

November 14, 1956 – The Supreme Court ruled that segregated seating was unconstitutional.

1957 – The Supreme Court made segregation illegal in public schools in the case of *Brown vs. Board of Education*. On September 3, 1957 nine black students (known as the Little Rock Nine) arrived at Central High School in Little Rock, Arkansas but were met by the Arkansas National Guard and a screaming, threatening mob. Federal troops later escorted them to and from classes at Central High but the black students courageously faced harassment and prejudice.

September 9, 1957 – President Eisenhower signed the Civil Rights Act of 1957 into law. It allowed federal prosecution of anyone who tried to prevent someone from voting. It also created a commission to investigate voter fraud.

August 28, 1963 – The March on Washington – More than 200,000 people (black and white) came to Washington D.C. to promote civil rights legislation. Martin Luther King Jr. gave his famous “I Have a Dream” speech on the steps of the Lincoln Memorial in Washington D.C.¹¹ He hoped that people of all races would come together in unity in America. He called for an end to segregation in America as well as civil and economic rights for African Americans.¹²

July 2, 1964 – President Johnson signed the Civil Rights Act of 1964. President John F. Kennedy initiated the legislation before his assassination in Dallas, Texas. Martin Luther King Jr. witnessed the signing of the law. The law guaranteed equal employment for all, limited the use of voter literacy tests and allowed federal authorities to ensure public facilities were integrated.

¹⁰ Who was Jim Crow? Jim Crow was a racist theater character by Thomas Rice who made fun of African Americans and their culture by blackening his face and impersonating a black slave.

¹¹ See Appendix II for the text of the “I Have a Dream” speech by Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

¹² Protected civil rights in the United States include: the right to vote, equality in public places, freedom from slavery, freedom of the press, freedom of assembly, and freedom of speech. When a person’s civil rights are denied because they belong to a specific class or group it is considered “discrimination.”

February 18, 1965 – Jimmie Lee Jackson (an African American veteran, Baptist deacon, and a civil rights activist in Marion, Alabama) was beaten and shot by police as he participated in a voting rights march in his city.

March 7, 1965 – Bloody Sunday. Over 600 peaceful demonstrators participated in the Selma to Montgomery march to protest the killing of Jimmie Lee Jackson. As they came to the Edmund Pettus Bridge, they were blocked by Alabama state and local police. The protesters were beaten and tear gassed by the police and many were hurt and hospitalized.

April 4, 1968 – Civil rights leader and Nobel Peace Prize recipient Martin Luther King Jr. was assassinated. Looting and riots followed in many cities in America as a result.

April 11, 1968 – The Fair Housing Act became law. This law prevents housing discrimination based on race, sex, national origin and religion. It was the last legislation enacted during the civil rights era.

February 13-15, 1996 – The Promise Keepers’ National Clergy Conference in Atlanta, Georgia. Over 39,000 pastors from every state in America gathered together to pray and hear sermons about racial reconciliation. The theme of the conference was “Fan into Flame” (2 Tim.1:6-7). At the end of this conference pastors confessed the sins of various ethnic groups to one another in a racial reconciliation service. The Atlanta Covenant encouraged pastors to reach out to pastors and churches of different ethnicities to show the unity of the Church of Jesus Christ (John 17).¹³

June 7, 1998 – The Murder of African American James Byrd Jr by three white supremacists (Shawn Berry, Lawrence Brewer, and John King).

August 9, 2014 – Ferguson - The shooting of Michael Brown (an 18 year old African American man) by a white police officer Darren Wilson ignited civil unrest in the city of Ferguson, Missouri (a suburb of St. Louis, MO).¹⁴

June 17, 2015 – Charleston Church Shooting – Dylann Roof (a 21 year old white supremacist) murdered 9 African Americans (including the senior pastor and state senator Clementa Pinckney) during a prayer service at Emanuel African Methodist Episcopal Church in downtown Charleston, South Carolina. Roof posed with emblems associated with white supremacy and with photos of the Confederate battle flag.

August 11-12 2017 – White supremacists held a Unite the Right rally in Charlottesville, Virginia. The marchers chanted racist and anti-Semitic slogans, carried semi-automatic rifles and wore Nazi symbols (i.e. swastika). They were protesting the removal of the statue of Robert E. Lee from Charlottesville’s Lee Park. The rally happened as a result of the removal of many Confederate monuments throughout the country after the Charleston church shooting.

¹³ Dr. Gary Gromacki, “An Evaluation of the Impact of Promise Keepers in the Local Church” (D.Min. diss., Dallas Theological Seminary, 1997), 53-72.

¹⁴ See Ken Davis and Charles Ware, “Ferguson: How Should the Church Respond?” in *The Journal of Ministry and Theology* 19.1 (Spring 2015), 5-58.

September 4, 2018 – The Statement on Social Justice and the Gospel (or the Dallas Statement) was drafted in the summer of 2018 in Dallas, Texas. The Statement on Social Justice and the Gospel was drafted by a group of evangelicals led by Dr. John MacArthur.¹⁵ Those who signed the statement claimed that the social justice movement endangers Christians with an onslaught of dangerous and false teachings that threaten the gospel, misrepresent Scripture, and lead people away from the grace of God in Jesus Christ. The statement addresses the issues of race and ethnicity, manhood and womanhood, and human sexuality and argues that a secular threat is infiltrating the church. By July 2, 2019 over 7000 Christians had signed the statement.

MY REVIEW OF THE AFFIRMATIONS AND DENIALS OF THE STATEMENT ON SOCIAL JUSTICE AND THE GOSPEL

ARTICLE 1 - SCRIPTURE

We affirm that the Bible is God’s Word, breathed out by him. It is inerrant, infallible, and the final authority for determining what is true (what we must believe) and what is right (how we must live). All truth claims and ethical standards must be tested by God’s final Word, which is Scripture alone.

We deny that Christian belief, character, or conduct can be dictated by any other authority, and we deny that the postmodern ideologies derived from intersectionality, radical feminism, and critical race theory are consistent with biblical teaching. We further deny that competency to teach on any biblical issue comes from any qualification for spiritual people other than clear understanding and simple communication of what is revealed in scripture.

Scripture: Genesis 2:18-25; Psalm 19:7-10; 1 Corinthians 2:14-15; Ephesians 5:22-33; 2 Timothy 3:16-4:5; Hebrews 4:12; 13:4; 1 Peter 1:25; 2 Peter 1:19-21

Review: The Statement on Social Justice and the Gospel affirms that the Bible is God’s inspired, inerrant, infallible and authoritative word. The 66 books of the Bible are the standard for faith and practice. *Sola Scriptura* – the Scripture alone is the final authority for determining what is truth. Jesus said “Sanctify them by your truth. Your word is truth” (John 17:17).

Many evangelicals have struggled with the denial part of this statement. What is intersectionality? What is critical race theory? What are the postmodern ideologies that have come from these views? The statement does not define these important concepts.

¹⁵John MacArthur’s ‘Statement on Social Justice’ is Aggravating Evangelicals” (<https://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/channel/utilities/print.html?hype=article&od=143280>)

ARTICLE 2 – IMAGO DEI

We affirm that God created every person equally in his own image. As divine image bearers all people have inestimable value and dignity before God and deserve honor, respect and protection. Everyone has been created by God and for God.

We deny that God-given roles, socioeconomic status, ethnicity, religion, sex, or physical condition or any other property of a person either negates or contributes to that individual's worth as an image-bearer of God.

Scripture: Genesis 1:26-30; 2:18-22; 9:6; 2 Corinthians 5:17; Colossians 1:21-22

Review: The Statement on Social Justice and the Gospel recognizes that each person regardless of ethnicity is made in the image of God (imago Dei). Genesis 1:27 says "So God created man in his image; in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them." One of the reasons that God sent the global flood as a judgment was because of the increase of violence (Gen.6:11). After the global flood God made a covenant (the Noahic covenant) which instituted capital punishment. No one has the right to commit murder because man is made in the image of God (Gen.9:6).

ARTICLE 3 - JUSTICE

We affirm that since he is holy, righteous and just, God requires those who bear his image to live justly in the world. This including showing appropriate respect to every person and giving to each one what he or she is due. We affirm that societies must establish laws to correct injustices that have been imposed through cultural prejudice.

We deny that true justice can be culturally defined or that standards of justice that are merely socially constructed can be imposed with the same authority as those that are derived from Scripture. We further deny that Christians can live justly in the world under any principles other than the biblical standard of righteousness. Relativism, socially-constructed standards of truth or morality, and notions of virtue and vice that are constantly in flux cannot result in authentic justice.

Scripture: Genesis 18:19; Isaiah 61:8; Micah 6:8; Matthew 5:17-19; Romans 3:31

Review: God is a just God and He expects people to respect people and to keep his ways. God praised Abraham "For I have known him, in order that he may command his children and his household after him, that they keep the way of the LORD, to do righteousness and justice." (Gen.18:19). God loves justice (Isaiah 61:8) and He expects his followers to do justly, to love mercy and to walk humbly with their God (Micah 6:8). Jesus did not come to destroy the Law, but to fulfill it (Matthew 5:17-19).

ARTICLE 4 - GOD'S LAW

We affirm that God's law, as summarized in the ten commandments, more succinctly summarized in the two great commandments, and manifested in Jesus Christ, is the only standard of unchanging righteousness. Violation of that law is what constitutes sin.

We deny that any obligation that does not arise from God's commandments can be legitimately imposed on Christians as a prescription for righteous living. We further deny the legitimacy of any charge of sin or call to repentance that does not arise from a violation of God's commandments.

Scripture: Deuteronomy 10:4; Romans 6:14; 10:5; Galatians 2:16; 3:10, 12; Colossians 2:14-17; Hebrews 10:1

Review: God gave the Mosaic Law to Israel at Mt. Sinai (Exodus 20). The ten commandments summarize God's moral law. When asked about the two great commandments Jesus said that they were to love God and to love your neighbor as yourself. Sin is transgression of the law.

What was the purpose of the Law? J. Dwight Pentecost lists these purposes for the Mosaic Law: (1) to reveal the holiness of God, (2) to reveal or expose the sinfulness of man (Gal.3:19), (3) to reveal the standard of holiness required of those in fellowship with a holy God (Psalm 24:3-5), (4) the law was a tutor to lead us to Christ (Gal.3:24), (5) to be a unifying principle in the establishment of the nation of Israel (Exodus 19:5-8), (6) to separate Israel from the nations in order that Israel might become a kingdom of priests (Exodus 19:5, 6), (7) to make provision for forgiveness of sins and restoration to fellowship (Leviticus 1-7), (8) to make provision for a redeemed people to worship especially in the feasts (Lev.23).¹⁶

Traditional dispensationalists believe that Christians today are not under the Mosaic Law but under grace. Romans 6:14 says "For sin shall not have dominion over you, for you are not under law but under grace." Christians have become dead to the law through Christ's death (Romans 7:4-6). The law written on stones was done away with (2 Cor.3:7-11). The Mosaic law was a temporary tutor to lead us to Christ (Galatians 3:23-24). Dispensationalists have been accused of antinomianism. But traditional dispensationalists believe that Christians are under the law of Christ. Nine out of the ten commandments are repeated in the New Testament and Christians are expected to obey these moral laws and teach them to other Christians (Matthew 28:16-20).

ARTICLE 5 – SIN

We affirm that all people are connected to Adam both naturally and federally. Therefore, because of original sin everyone is born under the curse of God's law and all break his commandments through sin. There is no difference in the condition of sinners due to age, ethnicity, or sex. All are depraved in all their faculties and all stand condemned before God's law. All human relationships, systems, and institutions have been effected by sin.

¹⁶ J. Dwight Pentecost, "The Purpose of the Law" in *Bibliotheca Sacra* 128: 511 (July 1971), p. 227-233.

We deny that, other than the previously stated connection to Adam, any person is morally culpable for another person's sin. Although families, groups, and nations can sin collectively, and cultures can be predisposed to particular sins, subsequent generations share the collective guilt of their ancestors only if they approve and embrace (or attempt to justify) those sins. Before God each person must repent and confess his or her own sins in order to receive forgiveness. We further deny that one's ethnicity establishes any necessary connection to any particular sin.

Scripture: Genesis 2:16, 17; 3:12, 13-15; Proverbs 29:18; Isaiah 25:7, 60:2-3; Jeremiah 31:37-34; Ezekiel 18:1-9, 14-18; Matthew 28:29-36; Romans 1:16-17; 3:23, 5:12; 10:14-17; 1 Corinthians 15:3-11; 2 Corinthians 11:3; Galatians 1:6-9; Titus 1:12-13; Revelation 13:8

ARTICLE 6 – GOSPEL

We affirm that this gospel is the divinely-revealed message concerning the person and work of Jesus Christ—especially his virgin birth, righteous life, substitutionary sacrifice, atoning death and bodily resurrection—revealing who he is and what he has done with the promise that he will save anyone and everyone who turns from sin by trusting him as Lord.

We deny that anything else, whether works to be performed or opinions to be held, can be added to the gospel without perverting it into another gospel. This also means that implications and applications of the gospel, such as the obligation to live justly in the world, though legitimate and important in their own right, are not definitional components of the gospel.

Scripture: Genesis 3:15; Proverbs 29:18; Isaiah 25:7; 60:2-3; Romans 1:16-17; 10:14, 15, 17; 1 Corinthians 15:1-11; Galatians 1:6-9; Revelation 13:8

Review: What is the gospel? The gospel is the good news that Jesus Christ died on the cross in our place taking the punishment for our sins, was buried and rose again (1 Corinthians 15:1-11). Paul warned the Galatians about abandoning the gospel of grace for the gospel of circumcision (Galatians 1:6-9). The gospel message refers to Christ's substitutionary death on the cross and his bodily resurrection. The gospel does not include social justice. A Christian may or may not be involved in social justice causes. An unbeliever may be a social justice warrior and not a Christian. Social justice is not part of the gospel that a person must believe in order to be saved.

ARTICLE 7 – SALVATION

We affirm that salvation is granted by God's grace alone received through faith alone in Jesus Christ alone. Every believer is united to Christ, justified before God, and adopted into his family. Thus, in God's eyes there is no difference in spiritual value or worth among those who are in Christ. Further, all who are united to Christ are also united to one another regardless of age, ethnicity or sex. All believers are being conformed to the image of Christ. By God's regenerating and sanctifying grace all believers will be brought to a final glorified, sinless state of perfection in the day of Jesus Christ.

We deny that salvation can be received in any other way. We also deny that salvation renders any Christian free from all remaining sin or immune from even grievous sin in this life. We further deny that ethnicity excludes anyone from understanding the gospel, nor does anyone's ethnic or cultural heritage mitigate or remove the duty to repent and believe.

Scripture: Genesis 3:15; Acts 20:32; Romans 3-4; Ephesians 2:8-9; Galatians 3:28-29; 1 John 2:1-2

Review: Salvation is by grace alone through faith alone in Jesus Christ alone. Ephesians 2:8-9 says "For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest any man should boast." Christians are united to Christ. Paul emphasizes our position in Christ in Ephesians.

Christians have been justified (declared righteous) by God – a holy righteous Judge. Justification is a courtroom term. Justification is an act of God by which He declares righteous the sinner who has been made righteous through faith in Jesus Christ alone. Logically imputation (being made righteous) precedes justification (to be declared righteous). God provided the righteousness of Christ to us as a gift of God's grace because Jesus died on the cross in our place (Romans 3:21-26). The price of justification is the shed blood of Jesus on the cross (Romans 3:24-25; 5:9). Justification comes through faith alone in Christ (Romans 3:22; 5:1). From our perspective now justification for us as Christians is in the past (Romans 3:26; 8:29-30). There is now no condemnation for those in Christ Jesus (Romans 8:1). Justification is the legal standing of Christians before God the righteous Judge.

The Bible does not teach Christian perfectionism. John wrote that if we say we have no sin we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us (1 John 1:8) Christians still sin and must confess their sins to a faithful and just God who forgives and cleanses us of sins (1 John 1:9). John also wrote that if we say we have not sinned (committed acts of sin) we make God out to be a liar and his word is not in us (1 John 1:10). Grace is not a license to sin. John wrote his epistle so that Christians would not sin (1 John 2:1). Then he states that if any Christian sins, the righteous Jesus Christ is our Advocate (Defense Attorney) with the Father (the holy Judge). He is the propitiation for our sins because his death satisfied the holy wrath of God against sin (1 John 2:2)

ARTICLE 8 – THE CHURCH

We affirm that the primary role of the church is to worship God through the preaching of his word, teaching sound doctrine, observing baptism and the Lord's Supper, refuting those who contradict, equipping the saints, and evangelizing the lost. We affirm that when the primacy of the gospel is maintained that this often has a positive effect on the culture in which various societal ills are nullified. We affirm that, under the lordship of Christ, we are to obey the governing authorities established by God and pray for civil leaders.

We deny that political or social activism should be viewed as integral components of the gospel or primary to the mission of the church. Though believers can and should utilize all lawful means that God has providentially established to have some effect on the laws of a society, we deny that

these activities are either evidence of saving faith or constitute a central part of the church's mission given to her by Jesus Christ, her head. We deny that laws or regulations possess any inherent power to change sinful hearts.

Scripture: Matthew 28:16-20; Romans 13:1-7; 1 Timothy 2:1-3; 2 Timothy 4:2; Titus 1:9; 1 Peter 2:13-17

Review: What is the mission of the Church? The Great Commission is the mission of the church (Matthew 28:16-20). Jesus told his followers to make disciples of all the nations (all ethnic groups) by baptizing them in the name of the Father, of the Son and of the Holy Spirit and teaching them to obey his commands. Evangelism of the lost, baptism of new converts, and teaching of Christians make up the Great Commission.

Church leaders need to remind Christians of their duties to obey the laws of the law. Christians are to obey their government leaders (Romans 13:1-7). The Statement affirms that believers "can and should utilize all lawful means that God has providentially established to have some effect on the laws of a society." Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. used non-violent means to change our country's views on segregation. As Christians living in America today we can vote for government officials that hold to our values and encourage our elected officials to vote for laws that bring freedom and justice to all people. Changing laws will not change sinful hearts. . Christians in America can make an impact in our society by being salt and light in their work places and neighborhoods. We can do acts of kindness and service that will cause unbelievers to recognize that we are different because we are followers of Christ.

ARTICLE 9 HERESY

We affirm that heresy is a denial of or departure from a doctrine that is essential to the Christian faith. We further affirm that heresy often involves the replacement of key, essential truths with variant concepts, or the elevation of non-essentials to the status of essentials. To embrace heresy is to depart from the faith once delivered to the saints and thus to be on a path toward spiritual destruction. We affirm that the accusation of heresy should be reserved for those departures from Christian truth that destroy the weight bearing doctrines of the redemptive core of Scripture. We affirm that accusations of heresy should be accompanied with clear evidence of such destructive beliefs.

We deny that the charge of heresy can be legitimately brought against every failure to achieve perfect conformity to all that is implied in sincere faith in the gospel.

Scripture: John 14:6; Acts 4:12; Galatians 1:6-9; 1 John 4:1-3, 10, 14, 15; 5:1, 6-12

ARTICLE 10 - SEXUALITY AND MARRIAGE

We affirm that God created mankind male and female and that this divinely determined distinction is good, proper and to be celebrated. Maleness and femaleness are biologically determined at conception and are not subject to change. The curse of sin results in sinful, disordered affections that manifest in some people as same sex attraction. Salvation grants sanctifying power to renounce such dishonorable affections as sinful and to mortify them by the Spirit. We further affirm that God’s design for marriage is that one woman and one man live in a one-flesh, covenantal, sexual relationship until separated by death. Those who lack the desire or opportunity for marriage are called to serve God in singleness and chastity. This is as noble a calling as marriage.

We deny that human sexuality is a socially constructed concept. We also deny that one’s sex can be fluid. We reject “gay Christian” as a legitimate biblical category. We further deny that any kind of partnership or union can be properly called marriage other than one man and one woman in lifelong covenant together. We further deny that people should be identified as “sexual minorities”---which serves as a cultural classification rather than one that honors the image-bearing character of human sexuality as created by God.

Scripture: Genesis 1:26-27; 2:24; 4:1; 19:24-28; Matthew 19:3-6; Romans 8:13; 1 Corinthians 6:9-11; 1 Timothy 1:10; Jude 7

Review: The Statement on Social Justice and the Gospel affirms God as the Creator of human sexuality and marriage. God created man (generic) male and female (two genders) (Genesis 1:26-27). God did not create a transgender. Genesis 2:24 gives God’s definition of marriage. “Therefore, a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and they shall become one flesh.”

Article 1 of the Nashville Statement says “God has designed marriage to be a covenantal, sexual, procreative, lifelong union of one man and one woman, as husband and wife, and is meant to signify the covenant love between Christ and his bride the Church.”

For a recent article addressing LGBTQ see Dr. Christopher Cone’s article on “Three Views on Same Sex Relationships” (www.drcone.com).

ARTICLE 11 – COMPLEMENTARIANISM

We affirm that God created mankind both male and female with inherent biological and personal distinctions between them and that these created differences are good, proper, and beautiful. Though there is no difference between men and women before God’s law or as recipients of his saving grace, we affirm that God has designed men and women with distinct traits and to fulfill distinct roles. These differences are most clearly defined in marriage and the church, but are not irrelevant in other spheres of life. In marriage the husband is to lead, love and safeguard his wife and the wife is to respect and be submissive to her husband in all things lawful. In the church, qualified men are to lead as pastors/elders/bishops and preach to and teach

the whole congregation. We further affirm that the image of God is expressed most fully and beautifully in human society when men and women walk in obedience to their God ordained roles and serve according to their God given gifts.

We deny that the God ordained differences in men's and women's roles disparage the inherent spiritual worth or value of one over the other, nor do those differences in any way inhibit either men or women from flourishing for the glory of God.

Scripture: Genesis 1:26-28; 2:15-25; 3:1-24; Ephesians 5:22-33; 1 Corinthians 11:7-9 1 Timothy 2:12-14; Titus 2

Review: The Statement on Social Justice and the Gospel stands on the side of complementarianism as opposed to egalitarianism.¹⁷ The Danvers Statement on Biblical Manhood and Womanhood summarizes the views of complementarianism. The book *Recovering Biblical Manhood and Womanhood: A Response to Evangelical Feminism* edited by Wayne Grudem presents a detailed exposition of complementarianism. Complementarians believe that God created both Adam and Eve in God's image. They are equal before God as persons but distinct in their roles. God created Adam to be the head (leader) of his wife.

ARTICLE 12 – RACE/ETHNICITY

We affirm God made all people from one man. Though people often can be distinguished by different ethnicities and nationalities, they are ontological equals before God in both creation and redemption. "Race" is not a biblical category, but rather a social construct that often has been used to classify groups of people in terms of inferiority and superiority. All that is good, honest, just and beautiful in various ethnic backgrounds and experiences can be celebrated as the fruit of God's grace. All sinful actions and their results (including evils perpetrated between and upon ethnic groups by others) are to be confessed as sinful, repented of, and repudiated.

We deny that Christians should segregate themselves into racial groups or regard racial identity above, or even equal to, their identity in Christ. We deny that any divisions between people groups (from an unstated attitude of superiority to an overt spirit of resentment) have any legitimate place in the fellowship of the redeemed. We reject any teaching that encourages racial groups to view themselves as privileged oppressors or entitled victims of oppression. While we are to weep with those who weep, we deny that a person's feelings of offense or oppression necessarily prove that someone else is guilty of sinful behaviors, oppression, or prejudice.

Scripture: Genesis 1:26-28; Acts 17:24-26; 1 Corinthians 13:4-7; 2 Corinthians 12:16-18

¹⁷ Egalitarianism has been described as the view of gender equality, evangelical feminism, biblical equality and even complementarity without hierarchy. The book *Discovering Biblical Equality* gives a detailed exposition of egalitarianism. For a critique of egalitarianism see my article: Dr. Gary Gromacki, "Egalitarianism and the Meaning of Submission" in *The Journal of Ministry and Theology* (Spring 2007), 66-91.

Review: God created all people from one man (the historical Adam) (Acts 17:24-26). After the global flood, people spoke one language but came together in rebellion in building the city and tower of Babel (Gen.11). God judged them by confusing their language and scattering them across the earth. The different people groups spoke different languages and developed different customs and cultures. The Church is made up of all saved people from all different ethnicities. In the future saved people from every tribe and tongue and people and nation will worship the Lamb around the throne in heaven (Revelation 5:9-10).

ARTICLE 13 – CULTURE

We affirm that some cultures operate on assumptions that are inherently better than those of other cultures because of the biblical truths that inform those worldviews that have produced these distinct assumptions. Those elements of a given culture that reflect divine revelation should be celebrated and promoted. But the various cultures out of which we have been called all have features that are worldly and sinful—and therefore those sinful features should be repudiated for the honor of Christ. We affirm that whatever evil influences to which we have been subjected via our culture can be—and must be—overcome through conversion and the training of both mind and heart through biblical truth.

We deny that individuals and sub-groups in any culture are unable, by God’s grace, to rise above whatever moral defects or spiritual deficiencies have been engendered or encouraged by their respective cultures.

Scripture: Romans 1:18-32; Ephesians 4:17-24; Colossians 3:5-11

Review: What is culture? Culture is the “characteristics and knowledge of a particular group of people encompassing language, religion, cuisine, social habits, music and arts. The Center for Advance Research on Language Acquisition goes a step further, defining culture as shared patterns of behaviors and interactions, cognitive constructs and understanding that are learned by socialization...Culture encompasses religion, food, what we wear, how we wear it, our language, marriage, music, what we believe is right or wrong, how we sit at a table, how we greet visitors, how we behave with loved ones, and a million other things.”¹⁸

The Bible teaches that we live in a post-Fall world. That means we have sinful cultures or cultures dominated by sinful lifestyles. Paul wrote the book of Romans from Corinth (the sin city of the Roman empire). In Romans 1:18-32 Paul listed the sins of the Roman culture in Corinth.

Paul wrote in 1 Corinthians 6 that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God. Paul lists different groups of people dominated by sinful habits and addictions: fornicators, idolaters, adulterers, homosexuals, sodomites, thieves, covetous, drunkards, revilers and extortioners. The Bible gives hope for sinners to be saved from their sinful lifestyles (1 Cor.6:9-11). Paul wrote “And such were some of you” (1 Cor.6:11). Paul knew of sinful people who were saved and had stopped living their sinful lifestyles. They were washed clean, sanctified and justified (declared righteous) in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of God.

¹⁸ Kim Ann Zimmermann, “What is Culture?” (livescience.com/21478-what-is-culture-definition-of-culture.html)

Christians can be salt and light in sinful cultures as they follow Christ and testify to the grace of God in their lives (Matthew 5:13-16). God expects Christians to live holy lives in an unholy world (1 Peter 1:13-17).

ARTICLE 14 - RACISM

We affirm that racism is a sin rooted in pride and malice which must be condemned and renounced by all who would honor the image of God in all people. Such racial sin can subtly or overtly manifest itself as racial animosity or racial vainglory. Such sinful prejudice or partiality falls short of God's revealed will and violates the royal law of love. We affirm that virtually all cultures, including our own, at times contain laws and systems that foster racist attitudes and policies.

We deny that treating people with sinful partiality or prejudice is consistent with biblical Christianity. We deny that only those in positions of power are capable of racism, or that individuals of any particular ethnic groups are incapable of racism. We deny that systemic racism is in any way compatible with the core principles of historic evangelical convictions. We deny that the Bible can be legitimately used to foster or justify partiality, prejudice, or contempt toward other ethnicities. We deny that the contemporary evangelical movement has any deliberate agenda to elevate one ethnic group and subjugate another. And we emphatically deny that lectures on social issues (or activism aimed at reshaping the wider culture) are as vital to the life and health of the church as the preaching of the gospel and the exposition of Scripture. Historically, such things tend to become distractions that inevitably lead to departures from the gospel.

Scripture: Genesis 1:26-27; Deuteronomy 10:17; Acts 10:34; Romans 2:11; Ephesians 6:9; Galatians 3:28; James 2:4

Review: The Statement on Social Justice and the Gospel recognizes that even our culture in America contains racist laws and systems. As Christians, we condemn racism, racial discrimination and race related crimes. We condemn statements made by government officials that are racist. Racism is a sin rooted in pride that must be confessed (1 John 1:9). Repentance from racism means that we see all people as made in the image of God and as people for whom Christ died.¹⁹

INITIAL SIGNERS

John MacArthur – Pastor of Grace Community Church

Tom Ascol – Executive Director, Founders Ministries, Pastor of Grace Baptist Church

Jeremy Vuolo – Pastor of Grace Community Church of Laredo, Texas

Craig Mitchell – President of Ethics and Political Economy Center

Voddie Baucham- VBM

Josh Buice – Pastor of Pray's Mill Baptist Church; Director of G3 Conference

Darrell Harrison – Rockdale Community Church

¹⁹ See Ken Ham and Charles Ware, *One Race, One Blood: A Biblical Answer to Racism* (Master Books, 2010).

Phil Johnson – Executive Director of Grace to You
 Justin Peters – Justin Peters Ministries/Kootenai Community Church
 Michael O’Fallon- Founder and President of Sovereign Nations
 James White – Director of Alpha and Omega Ministries
 Tom Buck – Sr. Pastor of First Baptist Church Lindale
 Anthony Mathenia – Pastor of Christ Church

NEGATIVE REACTIONS BY THOSE WHO DID NOT SIGN THE STATEMENT

Thabiti Anyabwile was critical of the statement: “They land in the midst of an evangelical movement that is already fraying and fracturing under the weight of the last five years, if I’m dating this back to the Mike Brown shooting and the fallout... They’re so imprecise in the terms that are used and defining these terms. What exactly is meant by social justice? What are we talking about when we talk about reconciliation or intersectionality or critical race theory? These are things that are thrown out there that are red meat for one quarter of evangelicalism and might be acceptable parlance, depending on how you define it, in other quarters.”²⁰

Russell Moore (president of the Southern Baptist Convention’s Ethics and Religious Liberty Commission) thinks it is wrong to separate the Bible and social justice. “So if you were in the Southern Baptist or Southern Presbyterian context in 1845 and the question of slavery comes up, the response is going to be, ‘You are distracting us from the Gospel. We need to be the people who are sharing the Gospel and evangelizing the world and not to get involved in these social issues like slavery. Well, if you stand up and call people to repentance for drunkenness and adultery but don’t call them to repentance for participating in or applauding the kidnapping, rape, forced servitude of image bearing human beings, then you have spoken to it. You have said, ‘This is an issue to which you will give no account at judgment.’ This is not what the Bible teaches.”

Al Moehler said, “There are victims right now of social forces of oppression. Just because those on the radical left point to everything as oppression doesn’t mean that nothing is oppression. As believers, we have an obligation to speak on behalf of the victims and not on behalf of the oppressors. Mohler implores his listeners to consider the present child abuse crisis our culture is currently dealing with. There were structures of lies and oppression and cover up that denied the victims’ injury and perpetrated the protection of the abusers.”²¹

James Emery White writes, “social ministry should not be paired against evangelism. We should extend the Bread of Life as well as bread for the stomach. But we must never begin, and end, with the stomach alone.”²²

²⁰ “John MacArthur’s ‘Statement on Social Justice’ is Aggravating Evangelicals”

(<https://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/channel/utilities/print.html?hype=article&od=143280>)

²¹ Megan Briggs, “This is Why Al Mohler Didn’t Sign the Statement on Social Justice.” (October 1, 2018).

²² James Emery White, “Whatever Happened to Evangelism?” (crosswalk.com/blogs/dr-james-emery-white/whatever-happened-to-evangelism.html).

Tim Keller argues “Justice is the sign that you have been justified by faith. It’s not the basis, you aren’t justified because you’re helping the poor, but a heart poured out in deeds of mercy and justice for the poor is a sign that you have been saved by grace...How do you know you’re really saved by faith? You care about the poor. When you see people without resources, your heart goes out to them. If it doesn’t maybe you’re saved, but you’re lacking the evidence of salvation. Justification leads to justice. Justice is the sign of justification. It’s all through the Bible”²³

Greg Stier writes, “If you are totally into feeding the poor (a good thing) don’t forget to share the good news of the gospel in the process (the most important thing). And if you are totally into evangelism, don’t forget the very thing we should be eager to do, feeding the poor. We aren’t here just to preach the gospel, and we aren’t here to just feed the poor. We are here to do both. As a matter of fact, I think that one feeds the other.”²⁴

Dr. Joel McDurmon says he will not sign the document for these reasons: “1. The document leaves crucial terms undefined. 2. The document nevertheless makes spiritual judgments and condemnations based upon undefined terms. 3. The document combines disparate social issues (race, marriage, sexuality) under one overgeneralized label. 4. The document marginalizes Christian social responsibility...The body of the document –its affirmations and denials never once mentions social justice. It’s bad enough that the document never defines the term, but that it never even mentions the term makes the whole endeavor and its title somewhat laughable... You would expect a statement on social justice to state what Social Justice is.”²⁵

WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE?

The Statement on Social Justice has divided evangelicals in the Church over a subject that has divided Americans. Where do we go from here? Let me give some challenges for us as pastors and educators.

Preach the gospel to all people (Mark 16:15). The gospel is the good news that Jesus Christ died on the cross in our place taking the punishment for our sins, was buried and was raised bodily from the dead and was seen by eyewitnesses (the apostles) (1 Corinthians 15:1-11). The gospel message itself does not include social justice.

Make disciples of all ethnic groups (Matthew 28:16-20). We need to do evangelize the lost, baptize new converts and teach all Christians to obey the commands of Christ. The Great Commission is the mission of the church. This is the final order for us to follow: to make disciples of all the nations (all ethnic groups).

²³ Bob Ditmer, “Tim Keller: This Needs to Inform Your View of Social Justice” (April 6, 2018) (churchleaders.com)

²⁴ Greg Stier, “Social Justice or the Great Commission?” (gregstier.dare2share.org/rants/social-justice-or-the-great-commission)

²⁵ Dr. Joel McDurmon, “Response to ‘The Statement on Social Justice and the Gospel’” (September 7, 2018)

Preach reconciliation in Christ and in the Church (Ephesians 2:11-22). The early church wrestled with tensions between Jews and Gentiles. In Ephesians 2:11-22 Paul emphasizes that Jesus broke down the middle wall (the Law) that divided Jews and Gentiles when he died on the cross and as a result He formed one new man (the Church) out of the two. There is no place for racism or racial tension in the church of Jesus Christ. Christians should work to preserve the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace (Ephesians 4:3).

Do good to all our brothers and sisters in Christ (Galatians 6:10). The church at Antioch took up a famine relief offering for the poor Jewish Christians in Jerusalem (Acts 11:27-30). Peter, James and John (the pillars of the church) shook Paul's hand and told him to take the gospel to the Gentiles (Galatians 2:9). They also told Paul to remember the poor (Galatians 2:10). Paul collected an offering from the Gentile Christians on his third missionary journey and brought it to James and the elders of the church in Jerusalem before he was arrested in the temple (Acts 21:19; 2 Corinthians 8-9).

Provide for widows and orphans. James writes, "Pure and undefiled religion before God and the Father is this: to visit orphans and widows in their trouble, and to keep oneself unspotted from the world" (James 1:27). Children and grandchildren are to care for widows in their families. Paul wrote "Honor widows who are really widows. But if any widow has children or grandchildren, let them first learn to show piety at home and to repay their parents, for this is good and acceptable before God" (1 Timothy 5:3-4). The church is to care for godly widows that are not provided for by their families (1 Timothy 5:5-10). The early church ministered to the needs of the widows in Jerusalem by selecting the first "deacons" to care for them (Acts 6:1-7).

Meet the basic needs of clothing and food for poor Christians. James challenges believers to show their faith by doing good works of service for those in need. "What does it profit, my brethren, if someone says he has faith but does not have works? Can faith save him? If a brother or sister is naked and destitute of food, and one of you says, 'Depart in peace, be warmed and filled, but you do not give them the things which are needed for the body, what does it profit?" (James 2:14-16). The apostle John writes, "By this we know love because He laid down his life for us. And we also ought to lay down our lives for the brethren. But whoever has this world's goods, and sees his brother in need, and shuts up his heart from him, how does the love of God abide in him? My little children, let us not love in word or tongue, but in deed and in truth" (1 John 3:16-17).

Don't be prejudiced and show favoritism (James 2). James wrote "My brethren, do not hold the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory with partiality" (James 2:1). James rebuked the Jewish Christians for showing favoritism to the rich even though they were dragging the Christians into the courts and blaspheming the name of Christ (James 2:1-7). James encouraged them to fulfill the royal law and love their neighbors as themselves (James 2:8). The person who shows partiality (racial prejudice) commits sin and is convicted by the law as a transgressor of the law (James 2:9).

Hire staff of people of different ethnic groups (Acts 13:1). Does your church staff reflect the growing diversity of your community? The church at Antioch had a multiracial staff. “Now in the church that was at Antioch there were certain prophets and teachers: Barnabas, Simeon who was called Niger (means Black), Lucius of Cyrene, Manaeon who had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch, and Saul”

Love Christians of all ethnic groups. Meet with a friend of another ethnicity for Bible study and prayer. Share what God is teaching you in the word of God and pray for one another. Jesus said, “A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another, as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this all will know that you are my disciples if you have love for one another.”

APPENDIX I – LINCOLN’S SECOND INAUGURAL ADDRESS (April 10, 1865)

Fellow Countrymen

At this second appearing to take the oath of the presidential office, there is less occasion for an extended address than there was at the first. Then a statement, somewhat in detail, of a course to be pursued, seemed fitting and proper. Now, at the expiration of four years, during which public declarations have been constantly called forth on every point and phase of the great contest which still absorbs the attention, and engrosses the energies of the nation, little that is new could be presented. The progress of our arms, upon which all else chiefly depends, is as well known to the public as to myself; and it is, I trust, reasonably satisfactory and encouraging to all. With high hope for the future, no prediction in regard to it is ventured.

On the occasion corresponding to this four years ago, all thoughts were anxiously directed to an impending civil-war. All dreaded it -- all sought to avert it. While the inaugural address was being delivered from this place, devoted altogether to saving the Union without war, insurgent agents were in the city seeking to destroy it without war -- seeking to dissolve the Union, and divide effects, by negotiation. Both parties deprecated war; but one of them would make war rather than let the nation survive; and the other would accept war rather than let it perish. And the war came.

One eighth of the whole population were colored slaves, not distributed generally over the Union, but localized in the Southern part of it. These slaves constituted a peculiar and powerful interest. All knew that this interest was, somehow, the cause of the war. To strengthen, perpetuate, and extend this interest was the object for which the insurgents would rend the Union, even by war; while the government claimed no right to do more than to restrict the territorial enlargement of it. Neither party expected for the war, the magnitude, or the duration, which it has already attained. Neither anticipated that the cause of the conflict might cease with, or even before, the conflict itself should cease. Each looked for an easier triumph, and a result less fundamental and astounding. Both read the same Bible, and pray to the same God; and each invokes His aid against the other. It may seem strange that any men should dare to ask a just God's assistance in wringing their bread from the sweat of other men's faces; but let us judge not that we be not judged. The prayers of both could not be answered; that of neither has been

answered fully. The Almighty has His own purposes. "Woe unto the world because of offences! for it must needs be that offences come; but woe to that man by whom the offence cometh!" If we shall suppose that American Slavery is one of those offences which, in the providence of God, must needs come, but which, having continued through His appointed time, He now wills to remove, and that He gives to both North and South, this terrible war, as the woe due to those by whom the offence came, shall we discern therein any departure from those divine attributes which the believers in a Living God always ascribe to Him? Fondly do we hope -- fervently do we pray -- that this mighty scourge of war may speedily pass away. Yet, if God wills that it continue, until all the wealth piled by the bond-man's two hundred and fifty years of unrequited toil shall be sunk, and until every drop of blood drawn with the lash, shall be paid by another drawn with the sword, as was said three thousand years ago, so still it must be said "the judgments of the Lord, are true and righteous altogether"

With malice toward none; with charity for all; with firmness in the right, as God gives us to see the right, let us strive on to finish the work we are in; to bind up the nation's wounds; to care for him who shall have borne the battle, and for his widow, and his orphan -- ~~to achieve and cherish a lasting peace among ourselves and with the world.~~ to do all which may achieve and cherish a just, and a lasting peace, among ourselves, and with ~~the world.~~ all nations.

A. Lincoln

April 10, 1865

APPENDIX II – “I HAVE A DREAM...” – BY MARTIN LUTHER KING JR.

I am happy to join with you today in what will go down in history as the greatest demonstration for freedom in the history of our nation.

Five score years ago, a great American, in whose symbolic shadow we stand today, signed the Emancipation Proclamation. This momentous decree came as a great beacon light of hope to millions of Negro slaves who had been seared in the flames of withering injustice. It came as a joyous daybreak to end the long night of their captivity.

But one hundred years later, the Negro still is not free. One hundred years later, the life of the Negro is still sadly crippled by the manacles of segregation and the chains of discrimination. One hundred years later, the Negro lives on a lonely island of poverty in the midst of a vast ocean of material prosperity. One hundred years later, the Negro is still languished in the corners of American society and finds himself in exile in his own land. And so we've come here today to dramatize a shameful condition.

In a sense we've come to our nation's capital to cash a check. When the architects of our republic wrote the magnificent words of the Constitution and the Declaration of Independence, they were signing a promissory note to which every American was to fall heir. This note was a promise that all men, yes, black men as well as white men, would be guaranteed the unalienable rights of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. It is obvious today that America

has defaulted on this promissory note insofar as her citizens of color are concerned. Instead of honoring this sacred obligation, America has given the Negro people a bad check, a check which has come back marked insufficient funds.

But we refuse to believe that the bank of justice is bankrupt. We refuse to believe that there are insufficient funds in the great vaults of opportunity of this nation. And so we've come to cash this check, a check that will give us upon demand the riches of freedom and the security of justice.

We have also come to this hallowed spot to remind America of the fierce urgency of now. This is no time to engage in the luxury of cooling off or to take the tranquilizing drug of gradualism. Now is the time to make real the promises of democracy. Now is the time to rise from the dark and desolate valley of segregation to the sunlit path of racial justice. Now is the time to lift our nation from the quick sands of racial injustice to the solid rock of brotherhood. Now is the time to make justice a reality for all of God's children.

It would be fatal for the nation to overlook the urgency of the moment. This sweltering summer of the Negro's legitimate discontent will not pass until there is an invigorating autumn of freedom and equality. 1963 is not an end, but a beginning. And those who hope that the Negro needed to blow off steam and will now be content will have a rude awakening if the nation returns to business as usual. There will be neither rest nor tranquility in America until the Negro is granted his citizenship rights. The whirlwinds of revolt will continue to shake the foundations of our nation until the bright day of justice emerges.

But there is something that I must say to my people, who stand on the warm threshold which leads into the palace of justice: in the process of gaining our rightful place, we must not be guilty of wrongful deeds. Let us not seek to satisfy our thirst for freedom by drinking from the cup of bitterness and hatred. We must forever conduct our struggle on the high plane of dignity and discipline. We must not allow our creative protest to degenerate into physical violence. Again and again, we must rise to the majestic heights of meeting physical force with soul force. The marvelous new militancy which has engulfed the Negro community must not lead us to a distrust of all white people, for many of our white brothers, as evidenced by their presence here today, have come to realize that their destiny is tied up with our destiny, and they have come to realize that their freedom is inextricably bound to our freedom. We cannot walk alone.

And as we walk, we must make the pledge that we shall always march ahead. We cannot turn back. There are those who are asking the devotees of civil rights, "When will you be satisfied?" We can never be satisfied as long as the Negro is the victim of the unspeakable horrors of police brutality. We can never be satisfied as long as our bodies, heavy with the fatigue of travel, cannot gain lodging in the motels of the highways and the hotels of the cities. We cannot be satisfied as long as the Negro's basic mobility is from a smaller ghetto to a larger one. We can never be satisfied as long as our children are stripped of their selfhood and robbed of their dignity by signs stating for whites only. We cannot be satisfied as long as a Negro in Mississippi cannot vote and a Negro in New York believes he has nothing for which

to vote. No, no, we are not satisfied and we will not be satisfied until justice rolls down like waters and righteousness like a mighty stream.

I am not unmindful that some of you have come here out of great trials and tribulations. Some of you have come fresh from narrow jail cells. Some of you have come from areas where your quest for freedom left you battered by the storms of persecution and staggered by the winds of police brutality. You have been the veterans of creative suffering. Continue to work with the faith that unearned suffering is redemptive. Go back to Mississippi, go back to Alabama, go back to South Carolina, go back to Georgia, go back to Louisiana, go back to the slums and ghettos of our northern cities, knowing that somehow this situation can and will be changed. Let us not wallow in the valley of despair.

I say to you today, my friends, so even though we face the difficulties of today and tomorrow, I still have a dream. It is a dream deeply rooted in the American dream.

I have a dream that one day this nation will rise up and live out the true meaning of its creed: "We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal."

I have a dream that one day on the red hills of Georgia, the sons of former slaves and the sons of former slave owners will be able to sit down together at the table of brotherhood.

I have a dream that one day even the state of Mississippi, a state sweltering with the heat of injustice, sweltering with the heat of oppression, will be transformed into an oasis of freedom and justice.

I have a dream that my four little children will one day live in a nation where they will not be judged by the color of their skin but by the content of their character. I have a dream today.

I have a dream that one day down in Alabama, with its vicious racists, with its governor having his lips dripping with the words of "interposition" and "nullification", one day right there in Alabama little black boys and black girls will be able to join hands with little white boys and white girls as sisters and brothers. I have a dream today.

I have a dream that one day every valley shall be exalted, every hill and mountain shall be made low, the rough places will be made plain, and the crooked places will be made straight, and the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together.

This is our hope. This is the faith that I go back to the South with. With this faith we will be able to hew out of the mountain of despair a stone of hope. With this faith we will be able to transform the jangling discords of our nation into a beautiful symphony of brotherhood. With this faith we will be able to work together, to pray together, to struggle together, to go to jail together, to stand up for freedom together, knowing that we will be free one day.

This will be the day, this will be the day when all of God's children will be able to sing with new meaning: "My country, 'tis of thee, sweet land of liberty, of thee I sing. Land where my fathers died, land of the pilgrim's pride, from every mountainside, let freedom ring!"

And if America is to be a great nation, this must become true. So let freedom ring from the prodigious hilltops of New Hampshire. Let freedom ring from the mighty mountains of New York. Let freedom ring from the heightening Alleghenies of Pennsylvania. Let freedom ring from the snow-capped Rockies of Colorado. Let freedom ring from the curvaceous slopes of California. But not only that: Let freedom ring from Stone Mountain of Georgia. Let freedom ring from Lookout Mountain of Tennessee. Let freedom ring from every hill and molehill of Mississippi. From *every* mountainside, let freedom ring.

And when this happens, and when we allow freedom ring, when we let it ring from every village and every hamlet, from every state and every city, we will be able to speed up that day when all of God's children, black men and white men, Jews and Gentiles, Protestants and Catholics, will be able to join hands and sing in the words of the old Negro spiritual: "Free at last! Free at last! Thank God Almighty, we are free at last!" [*enthusiastic applause*]

APPENDIX III – BARNA STUDY ON THE IMPACT OF PAST SLAVERY ON AFRICAN AMERICANS TODAY

Barna took a survey of Christians on the impact of past slavery on African Americans today. Half of Christians surveyed by Barna (50%) agreed with the statement that the effects of slavery continue to be felt today. 28% of Christians surveyed disagree and say that the United States has moved past this shameful part of its history. 16% percent of Christians are not sure and 7% have not considered the impact of slavery on African Americans today.

While some Christians perceive the history of mistreatment of black Americans to be just that (history), the majority of black Christians have a different view on the issue. 79% of black Christians agree that the effects of slavery continue to be felt today. Only 42% of white Christians agree. 9% of black Christians say that our society has moved past slavery. While 34% of white Christians disagree and say our society has moved past slavery. 9% of black Christians are not sure while 18% of white Christians are not sure. 5% of black Christians and 7% of white Christians had not considered the impact of slavery on African Americans today.

Millennial Christians appear to be the most sensitive to these conversations even though they are farthest removed from the civil rights era (the 1960s). Among Christians they are the generation most likely to report being aware of effects of slavery on our present day society. 65% of Millennials, 55% of Generation X, 40% of Boomers and 41% of Elders agree that the effects of slavery continue to be felt today. 21% of Millennials, 23% of Generation X, 33% of Boomers, and 36% of Elders disagree and say that our society has moved past slavery.²⁶

²⁶ Millennials were born 1984 to 1998, Gen X were born 1965 to 1983, Boomers were born 1946 to 1964, and Elders were born before 1946 according to Barna (www.barna.com/research/slavery)