



GEORGIA FELLOWSHIP CHURCH OF GOD
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Georgia Fellowship of the Church of God
Reconciliation Taskforce

Statement on Racial Reconciliation and Justice During This Time

Our roots in the Church of God are imbedded deep in the soil of unity and racial reconciliation. But these strong roots have not insulated our history as a movement from the disease of racism and division. For years the Church of God in Georgia has worked toward addressing this history with uneven progress and sometimes backward steps. More recently we have begun to structurally and practically make strides toward unity, and more concretely, toward understanding, friendship and collaboration across our divisions fueled by suspicion and pain. Still there are a great many miles before us. But recent events in our State, throughout the United States and around the world have reinvigorated and reminded us of the “fierce urgency of now.”

The church exists in its fullness only when it acts, in unity, for the sake of reconciliation and justice. It is to our shame when it takes the world standing up against injustice to ignite us. We must ask ourselves in this time if every movement toward reconciliation and justice propelled by divine timing and world events will blaze its trail without the church; if the church will sit back, refuse to speak, withhold its service and only with the passage of time realize they missed the moment.

We assert that the oppressive exclusion of any persons or people from free and full belonging, participation and flourishing in society by intentional or unintentional acts and/or by historical structural design and legacy is of grave concern for the church that worships, witnesses and testifies about the God who has made us one in Christ. It is of every Christians grave concern who proclaims that our unity causes us to suffer with those who suffer; to bear one another’s burdens. Reconciliation was bought with a price and if the church is to be the church, it must witness to this unity, work out this unity and with God create ways for this unity to be concretely fostered and displayed before the world.

Even before the start of this national experiment, Black and Brown people have been the intentional target of dehumanizing abuse: slavery, Jim Crow, terrorism, de jure segregation, housing policy and practices, criminal justice, etc. etc. etc. From the beginning “People of Color” in America have demanded only what the majority of White Americans

take for granted: to be treated with dignity and fairness in both word and deed, and afforded equal opportunities to participate and thrive. These demands are simply expecting the government and its citizenry to be true to their word that [“all men are created equal.”](#)

As the Church of God in Georgia, we call on the government to listen to the voices of the oppressed, to those that are the victims of state violence and exclusion, whose lives and legacies are disproportionately marginalized in the exercise of their liberty and pursuit of happiness. We call on you to repent and to exercise your authority in service to all your citizenry, especially those exposed to persistent injustice, particularly our poor, our Black and our Brown fellow citizens, which is in keeping with your highest calling. We call on you to do justice that provides for a worldly peace by setting right that which has stood against love, equity, community, and flourishing. To resist peace, by action or inaction, is a defiant act against a reconciling God.

We call on the church to listen to our Black and Brown members who have been silenced, mistreated, abused, and excluded; whose wisdom and experiences have been discounted and disregarded. We call on our White members to listen, learn, confess, repent, stand in solidarity, and resist the desire to “fix this” on your own terms. We call on the church to participate in the continuing movement of the Spirit toward holiness and unity.

We call on the church to witness to the possibility of reconciliation and justice by the way we join our lives together to reflect the coming Kingdom – even by how we fall short, but continue to show up, listen, repent, forgive and move forward. We call on the church to be aware of falling prey to any power that obscures the churches proclamation of love, unity, reconciliation and justice; that diverts our minds from that which is praiseworthy in our pursuit of unity (Phil 4:8), thus turning that power into an idol. We call on the church to open its mouth for the rights of the forgotten and to defend the rights of the afflicted (Proverbs 31:8-9). We call on the church to serve those mistreated by an unjust society. We call upon the church to serve as a catalyst to effect needed change to the culture versus adapting to a culture or practices which are in conflict with God’s insistence on justice, unity and love.

In response to this moment in our nation’s history and in continuance of the work of reconciliation the Georgia Fellowship of the Church of God pledges to:

1. Provide opportunities to listen, wrestle, repent and forgive as we learn to enter into each other’s suffering, work for justice, and live the life of a reconciler.
2. Stand with any pastor or leader in our movement who, through preaching the Gospel or living out Biblical principles, their livelihood is threatened.
3. Provide anti-racist education to pastors and leaders in the movement.
4. Review our own structures, policies and practices to determine if we are inhibiting reconciliation or promoting the joining of lives across divisions.
5. Consult with churches to help create mindsets, structures and practices that promote reconciliation and justice in their churches and communities.