



Rev. Dr. Kenneth R. Kemp, M.D.
Senior Pastor

Pastoral Statement on Protests and Violence

To the Members and Supporters of Antioch:

We have recently experienced an outpouring of indignation, disbelief, grief, and anger in the aftermath of another brutal killing of an African American man at the hands of police. Mr. George Floyd was killed after a police officer put his knee to his neck for over eight minutes, while Mr. Floyd was handcuffed on the ground, crying out for his mother and exclaiming, "I can't breathe!" The video images of this ignoble act have been seared into our minds and burned into our hearts. As a result, pent up anger has overflowed in our nation and protests have erupted in many major cities in the country.

Along with the legitimate protests, looters have taken advantage of the situation, threatening police, defacing public property, destroying businesses, and stealing. While I certainly do not condone acts of violence and destruction of property, I understand the deep pain that many of us have experienced at the very public display of police brutality against a defenseless African American people. We have seen it too often—from the recent deaths Trayvon Martin, Michael Brown, Tamir Rice, Eric Garner, Philando Castile, Sandra Bland, Jean Botham, Atatiana Jefferson, Ahmaud Arbery, and now Breona Taylor and George Floyd—just to name a few. An oppressed people can only take so much. If something is not done to address this pain adequately, a boiling cauldron of discontent will overflow in every street and every city in this nation, from coast to coast.

For over 400 years, the legacy of slavery in America has manifested itself as inhumanity to the most vulnerable people in our society. This institutionalized racism and systemic oppression has resulted in loss of opportunity, educational disadvantage, economic disenfranchisement, healthcare disparity, and mass incarceration of the American descendants of slavery. This awful situation is even worse when the powerful puts its knee to the necks of the powerless.

Despite all of this, we are a people of faith. We trust God to make a difference and to bring about deliverance, even in these tragic and tumultuous times. With that in mind, I encourage you to find creative and substantive ways to make your voices heard, while avoiding violence and destruction of property. I encourage you to hold governmental authorities and police officers accountable, without perpetrating violence...for violence begets violence. I encourage you to prioritize personal preparation and public service. I encourage you to vote, as you have never voted before. Finally, and most importantly, I encourage you to pray. Pray with power and expectancy because we know that, "The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much."

In His Service,

Kenneth R. Kemp, MD
Senior Pastor



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