



From the President about Race and Justice

“Deeply Saddened by their Hard Hearts”

By President Randall A. Bach

Many of us grieved as we watched the video footage of the Minneapolis policeman with his knee on the neck of a black man he had taken down. For a reported nine minutes the police officer kept applying his weight through his knee to George Floyd’s neck, even when Mr. Floyd gasped that he could not breathe. George Floyd finally passed out -- and died. It was appalling and grievous. How tragic and painful for the victim and his family. We have been here before.

No matter the reason for Floyd’s arrest he did not deserve that fate. I am so sorry. The reality of the pain and fear it elicits is driven home when one hears women of color share their fear that their husbands, sons, and brothers could be the next victims. This is wrong. Justice must be served. And then we learn of Dave Patrick Underwood, a federal law enforcement officer who was killed by a mob while he tried to protect a U.S. Courthouse. Another family grieves. Even justice is not enough. *Hearts and minds must change. We must become new creatures in Christ! (2 Corinthians 5:17).*

For those of us who have not experienced biased treatment or abuse because of our race, we do not fully understand. We can be distant with our emotions and even dismissive in our analysis of what occurred or, even if sorrowful -- silent in response. All of which translates into insensitivity, a base, white-to-black, human-to-human offense. May the Lord search our hearts and show us where we are indifferent or insensitive. May our hearts ache because of what happened as we also declare wrong as wrong. Let justice be served. We can no longer be silent when racism or abuse of power afflict citizens of this nation.

On behalf of the ministers and churches of Open Bible Churches, I express deep sorrow and compassion for people *who have suffered because of who they are, not because of what they have done*. It was said of Jesus concerning the Pharisees, “He looked around at them angrily and was deeply saddened by their hard hearts” Mark 3:5 (NLT). I believe Jesus is also angry and deeply saddened by hard hearts today that cause enmity, suffering, and death. We grieve over suffering and call for justice. We resolve to stand with men and women, young people, and children of all colors and ethnicities and language groups, children of God who are worthy of love, respect, and the freedoms extolled by this nation.