

CMBA Endorses Racial Justice Statement

The Columbia Metro Baptist Association (CMBA) endorses the “Deep South Joint Statement on the Gospel, Racial Reconciliation and Justice” as reported by Baptist Press on Oct. 27. The statement was crafted by a diverse group of Christian pastors from South Carolina and Alabama, states historically linked to slavery and racially exclusive assertions from early Southern Baptist leaders. CMBA’s Visionary Leadership Community and messengers to the association’s virtual Annual Meeting unanimously voted to affirm the statement.

“It’s a positive thing for our convention and local association to get behind such a well-written statement. Every word is intentional. CMBA has large ethnic diversity and it’s prudent to have something like this as a leading document to shed light on how we feel about racial injustice,” says Andre Rogers, pastor of Concord Fellowship, member of the VLC and an informal CMBA racial reconciliation panel.

Jamie Rogers, Baptist Collegiate Ministry director, VLC member and participant in the CMBA racial reconciliation discussions, also spoke to the value of the statement saying he’s “burdened that there have been brothers and sisters different from me who have been fighting this fight their whole lives. In the white church we may ask ‘why do we keep doing this?’ It’s because we should be doing this, it’s what’s right. It’s time to stop fighting this fight from one side, we should join together.”

During the Annual Meeting outgoing VLC Leader Ant Frederick, pastor of Midtown Fellowship Two Notch, also affirmed the statement adding that he hopes it will help rally CMBA pastors and church leaders to new progress. “I’m excited the statement is coming from an association that is willing to respond to this in biblically faithful ways,” he says.

The official [statement](#):

Deep South Joint Statement on the Gospel, Racial Reconciliation, and Justice

As a group of racially, ethnically, and politically diverse church leaders in the Deep South areas of Charleston, SC, Montgomery, AL, and Mobile, AL, we recognize and lament how the historic nature of our cities and region contributed to racial oppression and division in our country. Each of our cities were centers of the slave trade in the Antebellum South as well as racial oppression and division through Jim Crow segregation. However, we now see growing networks of Christian pastors and churches from diverse racial and ethnic backgrounds loving, praying, and serving together in their communities as they work together to follow Jesus in the midst of continuing challenges. It is from these historic cities that we speak.

When the very public killings of Ahmaud Arbery, Breonna Taylor and George Floyd in 2020 brought the nation to a crisis, our cities were affected too. The pain, the fear, and the trauma in our communities revealed a division that many hoped had been relegated to the past. We realize that the problems we face are broad, the division caused by sin goes deep, and the hearts and souls of our neighbors remain profoundly and justly hurt by this sin. To ignore this, or hope it will go away, is to become the indifferent priest in the Parable of the Good Samaritan.

We believe that every person no matter what their color, culture, or creed is made in the image of God and because of that they have infinite worth, value, and dignity. As followers of Jesus, we believe every life is irreplaceable, unique, and valuable and that the pursuit of justice is absolutely essential as commanded by God throughout the Bible. Because of this, we believe that all followers of Jesus are called to love our neighbors as ourselves (Mark 12:31), value others above ourselves, and look not to our own interests, but to the interest of others (Philippians 2:3-4), and be peacemakers in the midst of personal and societal conflict (Matthew 5:9). Therefore,

We Confess that, too often, our churches and our leaders have focused more on keeping things comfortable than on making things right. We confess that, too often, people of color in our cities have

borne alone the burden of contending for racial unity and of educating people in the community regarding issues of race and justice.

We Believe that the good news of Jesus mandates Christians to pursue a reconciliation that is centered on his redemptive work for humanity. Furthermore, we believe that in this specific moment, God is calling the church to respond in a way that acknowledges past and current sin, proclaims the good news of Jesus as the only source for true reconciliation and peace, and commits to strengthening our discipleship structures in order to bring about generational change.

We Commit to act locally in our own cities and region to sacrificially love our neighbors of all backgrounds, to lay down our lives for one another, to work for justice to right past wrongs, and to rebuild our ancient cultural and relational ruins and raise up the age-old foundations (Isaiah 58:12) of trust, peace, and integrity so that the church would be unified in love and concern for each member and for our communities regardless of race, ethnicity, cultural background, economic status, or zip code and so the church can give a witness to the watching world of the justice, love, right actions, and humility that should accompany followers of Jesus (Micah 6:8). We Invite Christians across the South and across America to join us in this endeavor to “let justice roll down like waters, and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream” (Amos 5:24) and to bring healing and unity to our long-standing divisions.

Individuals wishing to affirm the statement may participate by signing an electronic petition found at [Change.org](https://www.change.org).