

Floyd Murder by Police Officer Is an Outrage, Says National Council of Churches USA

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*The Lord is a stronghold for the oppressed,
A stronghold in times of trouble.
And those who know your name
Put their trust in you,
For you, O Lord, have not
forsaken those who seek you.*

~Psalm 9:9-10

Washington, D.C., May 29, 2020—The National Council of Churches USA is outraged by the murder of George Floyd by a Minneapolis police officer who mercilessly pinned him down with his knee on his neck until Floyd died. Floyd, who is Black, could be heard repeatedly saying, “I can’t breathe,” to the officer, who is white. Onlookers also begged the four officers on the scene to let Floyd up from the ground, video footage showed. Floyd was handcuffed at the time.

This incident adds to a string of occurrences in the last few weeks and too many incidents to count in the U.S. over hundreds of years, where racism and bias coupled with policing are a lethal combination for Black people. Deplorably, while the coronavirus has infected the U.S. and been the cause of death for more than 101,000 people in less than three months, racism has infected this country since its beginnings and this virus has seeped into every aspect of American life. There is still no vaccine for the racism and white supremacy that is so pervasive in our society. There is still no cure. As people of faith, our fight and struggle against this evil that has all of us bound continues.

As the investigation into what happened continues, NCC urges swift and decisive action to bring justice to George Floyd and his family,

including prosecuting officers for their egregious disregard for human life.

We are aware that riots have now broken out in Minneapolis and protesters in Louisville were shot by unknown assailants while rallying against the death of Breonna Taylor, who was killed in her bed after officers entered the wrong home. The words of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. ring loudly: “Riots are the language of the unheard.” Our nation needs healing but there can be no healing without justice.

NCC also calls on member congregations to be beacons of light in their own communities by addressing racism where they are, acknowledging the trauma experienced by those in the Black community and working tirelessly to end racism and white supremacy once and for all.

“In a moment like this, as Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. once said, ‘silence is betrayal,’” said Rev. Dr. John Dorhauer, NCC Chair and president and general minister of the United Church of Christ. “We must not sit in our privilege or comfort zones but do everything in our power to end this evil that infiltrates our nation.”

In addition to the A.C.T. Now! to End Racism initiative, predominantly white churches within the NCC have also been working together to do their part to end racism and white supremacy, including agreeing on a definition of what white supremacy is.

“We are all responsible for doing the hard work to end racism and white supremacy, especially white people. The burden cannot always be on our African American brothers and sisters. These are not just ideologies or individual opinions. These are the systemic issues at the core of American society and it is deadly, said Jim Winkler, NCC President and General Secretary.

According to Rev. Aundrea Alexander, NCC’s Associate General Secretary for Action and Advocacy and the staff person to the Racial Justice Task Force, “The stain of racism that pervades our systems and

structures continues to be most horrifically expressed in state sanctioned murder and abuse. It is long overdue for us to put an end to police brutality targeted at Black people. We've had enough and all of us have a responsibility to speak, to act, and to work for justice for the people who've lost their lives brutally and unnecessarily."