

The Virginia Baptist State Convention, Inc.

22 E Church St. Suite 208
Martinsville, Virginia 24112



Dr. Charles R. Whitfield President

276-403-4210

Website: www.thevbsc.org email: thevbsc1867@gmail.com

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

A STAND AGAINST INJUSTICE AND CALL FOR CHANGE

Being the oldest African-American Baptist Convention in Virginia, the leadership of *THE VIRGINIA BAPTIST STATE CONVENTION, INC.* stand with the great cloud of witnesses across these United States and abroad to unapologetically denounce the prevalent racial multifaceted manifestations of oppression. Mr. George Floyd's untimely murder was a catalyst for change in this country and it is high time to cease the moment. We vehemently condemn the continued institutional racism, systemic oppression, failed police protocols and unfair criminal justice proceedings.

Even after 400 years, we still see our brothers and sisters snuffed out by a system that oozes out racism which recently called out the lives of Ahmad Arbery, Breonna Taylor, Eric Garner, Rayshard Brooks and sadly our streets are becoming more bloodied every day.

We believe that silence makes us complicit, and our Christian witness and mission will not allow us to stand fast. These appalling acts continue to happen over and over again and law enforcement continues to get away with it. We need change in America so that everyone ethnicity can have liberty and justice for all. Peaceful demonstrations are now the order of the day, which should lead to a call to action within our local communities, which is why we write. We are calling for our faith-based leaders, churches and civic organizations to take the lead role in your respective communities to empower this current generation in social impact, social justice and strategic change.

Our watchword right now is equity. Society is not being fair and equitable toward people of color in their policing, school districting and student tracking, banking, job and employment allocations, the rise of gentrification, political re-districting, adequate healthcare, food deserts, and in so many other areas.

It is painful to continue to watch the land of the free become the land of bondage. Our ancestors through the church empowered and led with a loud and forward voice in the community and NOW is the time that we get back

"Transformational Discipleship"

***Rediscovering The Church - The Convention - The Community
Acts 2:41-42***

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to that. It's time for churches to take a stand. We can no longer afford to remain silent while our congregants, our communities and our nation are being bound every day.

Let's call upon our State and Federal elected officials to examine old laws and to enact new laws that will better protect citizens from police brutality and racially motivated mistreatment. Propose a ban on choke holds and other inhumane police maneuvers.

We call upon the Virginia Attorney General, to audit and monitor police policies and protocol throughout the state, to ensure uniform and transparent treatment for ALL citizens.

We also recommend a public compliance report/report card to be maintained on each Law enforcement agency that reflects founded complaints of racial discrimination and misconduct.

We also call to action, our brothers and sisters, to VOTE in November in order to hold our leadership accountable for JUSTICE. Again, silence makes us complicit, and so sitting on the sidelines watching this systemic racism kill us softly can no longer be! Let's start being the change we want to see. It will cost you time and sacrifice, but believe me, your grand children will look at the annals of history and declare that their forefathers worked to give them a better day!

Because of Him I am,

Charles R. Whitfield

Dr. Charles R. Whitfield, President
Virginia Baptist State Convention