Justice and Unity Team of Celebration Church Statement on Current Events

Considering questions and discussions about biblical justice that arise from various events, we want to remind the Celebration Church family of the vision and goals of our Justice and Unity Team. The Justice and Unity Team of Celebration Church (JUTCC) works to empower our church to strategically address systemic issues that encourage societal injustices and inequities, such that the church family embraces and acts upon God's Kingdom values of righteousness, justice and love (Psalm 89:14), thus glorifying God, unifying His people, and strengthening His church.

With members from the various campuses, this ministry has the goals of:

- Acting as an educational beacon of social, racial and cultural awareness that leads the Church to understand why there has been so much racial division in our nation and world
- Guiding improved relations among God's people
- Directing Celebration Church toward a continual NOLA presence as a partner with communities in advocating for quality of life for all
- Bringing clarity to the Church's responsibility in leading God's people toward mending broken relationships and systems for the development of universal justice and equity
- Supporting Celebration Church in being a model for other churches to follow in addressing systemic issues of racism and injustice and forging unity as God ordained

With this vision and these goals as a foundation, we are compelled to provide some perspective on what believers can do during times of communal mourning and consternation. It's important to note that while we are all unique and different, and come from different backgrounds, we are first one body (Romans 12:4-5), unified in our belief in Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior.

That unity does not negate nor ignore our differences. We should celebrate what unifies, acknowledge our differences, and seek to understand each other. We should do so while withholding judgment and being open to the idea that we might be wrong or not have fully considered all factors.

Our nation is extremely divided not only by race, social and economic standing, but we are divided because of our deep-seated perspectives which may be formed from experience, but may be more influenced by cult personalities, media and algorithms than by the Word of God.

Instead of feeding on the Word of God, these distractions feed us ideas that keep us angry and divided, black against white, rich against poor, native born against immigrant, documented against undocumented, Republican against Democrat. Distractions feed us ideas that lead to walls of arrogance built around us, reinforced with rebar of superiority that convince us that only "our" way is the right and Christian way, forgetting God's work in others in the process. Forgetting that we are called to live in community with each other as believers.

Therefore, we find it prudent to share a resource that will help you in forming a biblical foundation for addressing issues of justice and unity. We encourage you to watch the very impactful messages from Pastor Jonathan Tremaine Thomas from our UNIFY Conference in 2023. Our challenge to our church family is to love as God loved, recognize that each person's experience and perspective have validity and value, and seek to understand each other and serve with grace and patience. "Blessed are those who work for peace, for they will be called the children of God. Matt 5:9."