

Black Lives Matter

As Leaders of Walsworth Road Baptist Church, Hitchin, we have been shocked by the merciless brutality demonstrated in the killing of George Floyd in Minneapolis and the reminder of the ugly reality of systemic racism. We hold that all human beings are created in the image of God and through the reconciling love of Jesus can become children of God. We have a dream of a world free of racism, injustice and violence sustained by God's word in the Bible and the prophetic voices of Christians such as Dr Martin Luther King.

It would be convenient to pretend that racism is only 'over there' and not here in our own country. Sadly this is not true. We call for justice in our own land where life chances are still dependent on ethnicity. Thirty percent of black children grow up in poverty and are less likely to be predicted good outcomes at school and three times more likely to be excluded than white children. When they get to university they are much less likely to obtain a first class degree than white students who enter with the same 'A' level grades. Black people are more than three times as likely to be arrested than white people and five times more likely to have force used against them by police. Young black people are more than nine times more likely to be stopped and searched by police on our streets. This is not justice but oppression and must end.

As a church we have been blessed with a diverse fellowship in recent years. Our Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic brothers and sisters have brought new gifts and giftings in our church for which we praise God. As we seek God's coming Kingdom together, any injustice to them is an injustice to all and we commit ourselves in repentance to renew our search for justice in our land. We will engage in a conversation in which we will listen and learn from what our brothers and sisters say to us. We will work to eliminate aspects of our speech and language, actions and customs, attitudes and assumptions that might offend, through Biblical study, teaching, listening and learning from those with the lived experience. We will speak out against such injustices near and far. We will continue, prayerfully, to seek greater BAME representation in our leadership. We promise in word and action to affirm that Black Lives Matter.