

Disciples Men of North Carolina

(Christian Men's Fellowship)



Dear North Carolina Disciples,

May the Words of my Mouth and the Meditations of my Heart be Pleasing to You, O God...

Today is hard. There are no adequate words to convey my emotional and spiritual turmoil. As hard as this is, I cannot imagine what it is like for my brothers and sisters of color. Over a week ago, we watched in horror as we saw a video which has stopped all of our worlds. The collective stop is necessary. For far too long people of color have faced unimaginable injury and struggle. As I write this to you, I do so in full awareness of who I am and what my experience has been. I am a white male who has had so many privileges that my sisters and brothers of color have not. When I taught in the public-school systems, I always tried to highlight the cyclical history of violence that continues to befall those who are not white and male. Segregation is not that far away. Women's voting rights were ratified just a century ago. Our collective histories show how quickly we have created systems of oppression. This world does not allow for fairness, equality, and most especially equity. The words of the Psalmist echo in my head, *How long, O Lord?* Perhaps we have our answer. Perhaps the flames of Pentecost are upon us and changes are brewing. Maybe we can finally talk about the horrific atrocities that people of color have continued to face. But it is not enough for me to say I am just an ally. It is time to act! We must seek ways to change the systematic racism in the structure's humanity has created. The risk is far too high for us to sit and return to a status quo.

On Monday of this week, I stood at the Pitt County Courthouse for a prayer service. In attendance, fellow NC Disciples clergy Pastor Andrew Rogers of Cedar Point Disciples of Christ Church stated it was expected that he, as a man of color, would be in prison or dead by the age of 23. I immediately thought about the names of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, Trayvon Martin, Eric Garner, and countless others. My heart and soul weeps. If we do not seek change, how long before it is someone we know? And I think of those people of color in the Region of North Carolina who have had such impact on my life. We cannot risk their lives; we must call for change. Our Regional Minister, my Bishop is at risk. Our incoming moderator, my friend is at risk. One of my mentors, the mentor for so many clergy in Rev. J.O. Williams is at risk. And countless others.

So, what can we do? First, we can sit down and really listen to what people of color are facing. Then we can find ways to change the nation's policies and laws. We can expose the history for what it is, and we can seek to make this world a better place than what we have found it to be. Seek justice, seek hospitality, and most especially seek community. May we all continue to seek and advocate change. This is my pledge and my promise. Your life matters and I love each of you deeply.

Grace and peace,

Rev. Andrew Shue

Rev. Andrew Shue
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