

George Floyd: a reflection

Maybe you were thinking that we might have moved on from George Floyd.

Well, we haven't and we won't move on from the issues highlighted by George Floyd's murder until we have got justice.

I don't *just* mean justice in respect of the particular case of George Floyd.

I am talking about racial justice in every other area of our life together.

I am talking about racial justice here (in the UK, in Erdington, in our church) and the need to tackle racial injustice *now*.

There are dangers that we move on from these issues.

There are dangers that we all felt we have had a "moment" together and now the news moves on and the focus is shifted by those of us who hold power.

But, we keep with this. We keep going.

Justice, equality, freedom, love are woven into what the good news, the truth of the Gospel really is.

It is a Gospel imperative for us to keep these issues high on our agenda.

It is a Gospel imperative for us to keep speaking about it, speaking out,.

It is a Gospel imperative for us to keep listening as well.

It is a Gospel imperative for us to keep taking action.

If you are a White person reading this: we have work to do. We have listening to do and changes to make. We need to own up to things we regret from our past and our present. We need to really work at trying to understand the lived experiences of Black people. For instance, lots of my Black friends and colleagues are talking at the moment about how it feels again and again to be the only Black person in a meeting, in a

workplace, in a church group...anywhere. I have been the only White person in various situations but have always carried with me my White privilege: the security and power that I hold simply by virtue of being White. I will never fully understand how it feels to know that your voice is the least likely to be heard; that your manner is the most likely to be judged negatively; your abilities valued least...and more besides. I will never fully get it, but it is no excuse for me, or any of us in our church who are White, for not trying to understand. There is no excuse.

We need to listen and take note.

We need to understand as best we can and apologise for "not realizing" how bad it was and how bad it is.

We need to look at our own privilege, White Privilege: all those things that we take for granted and don't think about and now start thinking about them – we can do this by putting ourselves in the shoes of Black people we know.

And then we need to do something about it: change how we behave; think before we act; reflect before we judge.

And more than that we need to be allies to the people we call Sister and Brother who happen to be Black. We need to speak up against racism. There are no more excuses and no more hiding places. .

With love.

Gerard.

A Bible Reading: Philippians 2:1-15

A Prayer:

Lord Jesus, help us to have the grace to listen, the wisdom to understand the experience of others and the courage to act with love in our hearts. Amen.