

In Juneteenth letter, Greenway asserts ‘Black lives matter’

June 19, 2020

FORT WORTH—In a Juneteenth letter to the Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary “family,” President Adam Greenway asserted “Black lives matter” and bear God’s image.

“To our Black brothers and sisters, we affirm that Black lives do indeed matter. But this statement is simply the bare minimum affirmation, for Black lives do not just matter— Black lives are made in the image of God, black lives are loved, and Black lives are worthy of being treated with the inherent dignity bestowed by God himself,” Greenway wrote.

In an online speech 10 days earlier, Southern Baptist Convention President [J.D. Greear](#), pastor of The Summit Church in Durham, N.C., called on Southern Baptists to declare that “Black lives matter.”

Juneteenth a reminder of ‘delayed justice’

Greenway issued his letter June 19, the anniversary of the day Maj. Gen. Gordon Granger announced in Galveston that the Civil War had ended and those who had been slaves were free.

The two-and-a half year gap between the time President Abraham Lincoln issued the Emancipation Proclamation and when it went into effect in the South “is a reminder of the delayed justice still disproportionately felt too often by the Black community to this day,” he wrote.



(Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary Photo)

Greenway pledged his commitment that Southwestern Seminary and Scarborough College—the seminary’s undergraduate liberal arts college—would be “a place where our Black brothers and sisters in Christ are empowered to pursue training for the ministry” to which God called them.

“Our community must be a model for those seeking to know what it looks like for followers of Christ to live and learn alongside each other in a spirit of unity. This effort will require each of us to walk in charity as well as in humility,” Greenway wrote.

Protests across the United States in response to the killing of George Floyd in Minneapolis have been mostly peaceful, he noted. But where they have turned violent, they have damaged communities, he added.

“As believers, it is incumbent upon us to commit ourselves to the conversations that must happen in order to see substantive change in our churches and communities,” Greenway wrote.

“At the same time, we must reject violence that leads to disorder and chaos rather than justice and peace. We also must affirm the God-ordained work of law enforcement, which is part of his design for just societies to restrain evil and lawlessness.”

As “a community focused on training God-called men and women for more faithful service in the local church,” Southwestern Seminary and Scarborough College must be a part of the “national conversation [that] has intensified around the issues of racism and justice,” Greenway wrote.

He concluded with his personal pledge to “stand alongside all by Black brothers and sisters in calling for justice and righteousness to flow like a mighty flood, and as we move forward together as a seminary and college community, I pray you will join me in this stand.”