

AN OPEN LETTER TO STUDENTS FROM PRESIDENT TURNER

Dear SBU Family,

I am so terribly heartbroken over recent and historic acts of racial injustice. These acts remind us so painfully of the prevalence of racism, hatred, and fear in our society. Romans 12:15 tells us to “weep with those who weep.” Southwest Baptist University joins with other Southern Baptists in being committed to the equality and dignity of all races of people. We grieve the senseless misuse of force toward George Floyd and many others before him.

At SBU, we believe all humankind – regardless of race – is created in the image of God. I pray for a campus climate where students of all ethnic backgrounds thrive at SBU. I pray you feel accepted and included on our campuses and in our communities. While I hope we have achieved this for all students, I know we have fallen short and we must do better. As a society, as a church, as a University, and as individuals, we must do better. We must create a sense of belonging for everyone.

SBU will move forward with love and open and honest conversation. We will be facilitating campus dialogue this fall for a better understanding of an appropriate Biblical response to recent events. As a Christian higher education institution, we must be a caring community where students of all ethnic backgrounds feel welcomed, loved, and challenged to be true examples of Christ.

While the national media reports only on violent protests happening in some cities around the country, we have had peaceful demonstrations here in Bolivar. Police officers escorted the groups as they made their way through Bolivar, visiting with them and offering them water on a hot day. Participants have included SBU students, employees and alumni. Their message was one of love. I’ve heard of similar peaceful demonstrations taking place all over our great country. This gives me hope.

We must continue to pray. We must pray for the Lord to have mercy on us and heal the pain dividing us. As big as the racial divide feels in our society right now, nothing is bigger than the power of the Gospel. Go forth, Bearcats, and “act justly, reflect mercy, and walk humbly with our Lord” (Micah 6:8).

Shaping our story together,

Dr. Eric A. Turner
SBU President

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