



RESOURCES ON SYSTEMIC RACISM & JUSTICE

APOSTLES CHURCH BROOKLYN

Apostles Church,

The Father has brought us to this significant moment of grief, honesty, and conviction in light of systemic racism and injustice in our nation, city, church, and even ourselves. Instead of avoiding the discomfort of conviction, the gospel of Jesus compels us to lean in and face the full weight of our sin so that we can experience the full glory of redemption. To pursue this, we present these recommended resources from one of our deacons, CJ Quartlbaum, and from other leaders that we respect. We know that to truly weep with those who weep, repent, and grow as a church, we must seek to understand. As Jemar Tisby writes, “History and experiences teach us that there can be no reconciliation without repentance. There can be no repentance without confession. And there can be no confession without truth.”

This summer, Apostles Church Brooklyn will walk together through Dr. John Perkins’ book, “One Blood,” to process, pray, confess, and grow together but we recognize that one book is never enough. The following resources will provide further information to better understand the biblical calling to justice, the reality of systemic racism and injustice, white privilege, the plight of Black Americans, the failures of the Church, and the incredible opportunities to pursue justice and reconciliation going forward. As always, we urge you to begin with the Word as your foundation. Having done so, watch, listen, and read with gospel humility that does not need to self-justify, standing firm on the truth of the Bible. Undoubtedly, there will be items here that you disagree with or cannot align with but we ask that whatever aligns with the Scriptures be embraced.

As the Apostle Paul writes, Philippians 2:1–5 “So if there is any encouragement in Christ, any comfort from love, any participation in the Spirit, any affection and sympathy, complete my joy by being of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind. Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves. Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others. Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus.”

May we lean into Jesus and live according to his mind, renouncing our selfish ambition and conceit towards others while humbly seeking the good of those around us. And may we be one in his love, in full accord together.

In Brooklyn as it is in heaven,
Pastor Derek and Pastor Claudio



THE BIBLE

[Genesis 1:26-27](#) – God made all human beings, women and men alike, in his image. There are no varying degrees of dignity among image bearers, all humans share equally in God's likeness. All of humanity has the same Father ([Malachi 2:10](#)) and no nation, ethnicity, culture, or tribe contains any inherent superiority ([Acts 17:26](#)). God shows no favoritism toward any people group ([Romans 2:11](#)). Therefore, all human beings are to be treated with dignity and honored with justice ([Job 34:19-21](#)), as every single human being – rich and poor, privileged and marginalized, young and old, able-bodied and disabled – is intentionally made by God ([Psalm 139:13-16](#); [Proverbs 22:2](#)) and will be equally judged by God ([Job 36:5-6](#); [Psalm 75:6-8](#); [Ecclesiastes 3:16-17](#)).

[Genesis 9:5-6](#) – God opposes the killing of his image bearers and holds all murderers (both voluntary and involuntary) to account ([Exodus 20:13](#); [21:12-32](#)). This applies to unborn image bearers ([Psalm 139:13](#)); the elderly ([Leviticus 19:32](#)); or even the fatally injured ([1 Samuel 31:3-5](#); [2 Samuel 1:1-16](#)) alike. Even more, Jesus holds his people accountable for not only not murder but any hate or disdain any image bearers ([Matthew 5:21-22](#)).

[Deuteronomy 10:17-19](#) – The Almighty God calls himself the Justice-bringer for the orphan, widow, and immigrant. Poor, marginalized, at-risk, and oppressed image bearers are a priority to him ([Psalm 146:7-9](#); [Luke 4:16-21](#)). And God calls his people to protect those at-risk ([Leviticus 19:14, 32](#); [Deuteronomy 15:9-10](#)) and identify with the poor and marginalized, meeting their needs as God has met our needs with grace ([Matthew 5:3](#)).

[Proverbs 31:8-9](#) – The entire book of Proverbs makes clear that God expects his people, especially those of privilege, to advocate and fight for all image bearers in need ([Proverbs 14:31](#); [17:5](#); [22:22-23](#)). We are our brother's keeper ([Genesis 4:9](#)).

[Isaiah 1:10-20](#); [58:6-12](#) – God cares nothing about our religious acts and lawful obedience if we fail to "do good; seek justice; oppress oppression; bring justice to the fatherless, plead the widow's cause." Seeking justice is about giving human beings the dignity, flourishing, and rights that God intends his image bearers to have. It is for the injustice of oppressing image bearers that God punishes the nation of Judah and it is in the restoration of justice that God promises their renewal.

[Micah 6:8](#) – In summarizing the good and righteous life that God requires of humans, the Prophet Micah defines it as doing justice, loving kindness, and walking humbly with God.

[Matthew 7:12](#) – Jesus summarizes his Sermon on the Mount's calling to exceeding righteousness with the proactive, empathizing, sacrificial, neighbor love of the Golden Rule. Consistently throughout the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus calls his people to the public pursuit of mercy and holistic peace ([Matthew 5:7, 9](#)); to be society's salt, stemming the tide of decay ([Matthew 5:13](#)); to be the world's light, radiating his truth and grace ([Matthew 5:14-16](#)); to not hate or scorn anyone ([Matthew 5:21-22](#)); to seek reconciliation ([Matthew 5:23-26](#)); to not retaliate in self-advancement ([Matthew 5:38-41](#)); to give to all who ask ([Matthew 5:42](#)); to love your enemies ([Matthew 5:43-48](#)); to give to the needy ([Matthew 6:2-4](#)); to not judge others ([Matthew 7:1](#)); and far more. The ethics of the Sermon on the Mount undergird a call to publicly engage society with justice, mercy, generosity, and reconciliation.



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[Matthew 25:31-46](#) – In Jesus' parable of the Sheep & the Goats, we see the undeniable expectation of Christians to love and serve those in need as though loving and serving Jesus himself. Jesus says here that it is on the basis of this justice and mercy that the authenticity of our faith is revealed and we will be judged.

[Luke 4:17-21](#) – Jesus begins his ministry by reading from the Prophet Isaiah and declaring himself the One who brings good news to the poor, sets prisoners free, heals the blind, and rescues the oppressed. He has come to bring the Jubilee. Throughout the Gospel of Luke, Jesus identifies closely with the poor and marginalized, promising their redemption. In Luke's Beatitudes, Jesus boldly declares, "Blessed are the poor, for yours is the kingdom of God." ([Luke 6:20](#))

[Luke 10:25-37](#) – After affirming the second greatest command to "love your neighbor as yourself," Jesus is asked by a self-justifying lawyer, "But who is my neighbor?" To answer, Jesus gives the parable of the Good Samaritan, calling all Christians to a pursuing, self-sacrificial love for those that we are most culturally and ethnically at-odds with.

[Acts 2:1-13](#) – At Pentecost, the Holy Spirit empowers the gospel to be heard by a diverse crowd in their own individual languages. God does not force the conforming to one culture but intends the gospel to go out to all cultures ([Acts 15:1-21](#)). In the same sense, God intends his gospel to go out to all ethnicities without any partiality ([Acts 10:34-43](#)).

[Ephesians 2](#) – The Apostle Paul lays out the gospel's implications not only to save we who were dead in our sin by grace but to reconcile humanity together in the atoning blood of Jesus. In the gospel, divided, hostile humanity becomes fellow citizens and family members to one another.

[Galatians 2:11-14](#) – When the Apostle Peter treats cultural and ethnic outsiders with prejudice, the Apostle Paul confronts him directly saying that his actions are "not in step with the truth of the gospel." The gospel demands a denouncement of prejudice and superiority.

[James 2:1-17](#) – Our faith in the gospel ought to result in works that meet needs and honor the poor. That's what it means to keep the "royal law" of loving your neighbor as yourself. We are to do justice and show no partiality towards those who our world considers superior.

[Revelation 7:9-10](#) – The image presented of God's people includes all nations, tribes, ethnicities, cultures, and languages. God has intentionally created humanity to image his glory through our diversity.

VIDEOS & FILMS

[How We Respond: Critical Conversations About Race for Your Family, Church & Community](#)

Curated variety of talks on systemic racism, injustice and reconciliation, featuring trusted leaders like John Perkins, Lecrae, Latasha Morrison and so many others from Q.

[Race, Culture & Christ](#)

A sermon by Tony Evens on a Biblical response to race.

[A History of Race and the Church in the American Tradition](#)

A presentation by Professor Albert Thompson.



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[Just Mercy](#)

A powerful true story that follows young lawyer Bryan Stevenson and his battle for justice as he defends a man sentenced to death despite evidence proving his innocence. Film is currently free to rent.

[13th](#)

In this thought-provoking documentary, scholars, activists and politicians analyze the criminalization of African Americans and the U.S. prison boom.

[Vox: How Southern Socialites Rewrote Civil War History](#)

The United Daughters of the Confederacy altered the South's memory of the Civil War.

[Vox: Why White People Shouldn't Use the N-word](#)

Ta-Nehisi Coates has an incredibly clear explanation for why white people shouldn't use the n-word.

[Adam Ruins Everything: The Disturbing History of the Suburbs](#)

Redlining: the racist housing policy from the Jim Crow era that still affects us today.

[MTV Decoded: Racism](#)

Does talking about Racism mean you hate White People? No. But a lot of people feel that way.

[The Double Consciousness of Black Folks](#)

From singer, poet and speaker Joseph Solomon.

[Systemic Racism for Dummies](#)

The facts of systemic racism.

PODCASTS

[TGC: Is Black Lives Matter the New Civil Rights Movement](#)

Is Black Lives Matter the new Civil Rights Movement? This is a well-formed question because it reveals that some of us are ready to talk about how racialized injustices affect the church, not just from the safe distance of 60 years ago but also today.

[TGC: Race, Political Partisanship, and the Unity of the Church](#)

Panelists from The Gospel Coalition 2017 National Conference speak on race, politics and the Church.

[The Liturgists: Black and White Racism in America](#)

Michael Gungor and Science Mike talk with Propaganda and William Matthews about race, racism, white supremacy in America.

[Revisionist History: Miss Buchanans Period of Adjustment](#)

A landmark Supreme Court case. A civil rights revolution. Why has everyone forgotten what happened next?

[Truths Table: Strange Fruit](#)

A discussion of the haunting realities of being Black in America in the past and present. With a recommendation to remember and re-learn the fruits of God's Holy Spirit, the midwives at Truth's Table invite their listeners to take a hard look at the seeds we are planting, and the evidence we bear.



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[Uncivil: The Spin & Uncivil: The Sentence](#)

America is divided, and it always has been. We're going back to the moment when that split turned into war. We ransack the official version of the Civil War, and take on the history you grew up with.

[WTD Ep 99: White Fragility](#)

Ashley, Elijah, and Ryan talk with Dr. Robin DiAngelo. Dr. DiAngelo is an academic, a lecturer and author working in the fields of whiteness studies and critical discourse analysis.

[WTD Ep 97: The Effects of Racism on White People](#)

Ashley, Elijah, and Ryan explore the effects of racism on white people.

[Are Public Schools Immoral?](#)

A conversation with Nikole Hannah-Jones about race, education, and hypocrisy.

ARTICLES

[Jemar Tisby: Tolerance for Racism Paved the Way for the Moral Bankruptcy of this Moment](#)

From *The Witness*

[Thabiti Anyabwile: Three Reasons Why I Stand with the Protestors](#)

From *The Gospel Coalition*

[Jamaal Williams, Timothy Paul Jones, and Jarvis I. Williams: The Gospel and the Pursuit of Justice in Your City](#)

From *The Gospel Coalition*

[Phillip Holmes: We Need to be Uncomfortable](#)

From *The Gospel Coalition*

[Shai Linne: George Floyd and Me](#)

From *The Gospel Coalition*

[Racial Reconciliation](#)

From *New City Fellowship Church*

[Ta-Nehisi Coates: The First White President](#)

From *The Atlantic*

[Phil Lee: I'm the Descendant of a Founding Father and I Have Two Black Daughters - and I Am Racist](#)

From *The Washington Post*

[Brandi Miller: The Chasm Between White Theology and Black Liberation](#)

From *The Salt Collective*

[Bill Quigley: 14 Examples of Systemic Racism in the US Criminal Justice System](#)

From *Common Dreams*



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[Clint Smith: An Intimate History of America](#)

From *The Paris Review*

[Tracy Jan: Redlining was banned 50 years ago. It's still hurting minorities today](#)

From *The Washington Post*

BOOKS

THEOLOGICAL FOUNDATIONS

[*One Blood*](#)

We are living in historic times. Not since the civil rights movement of the '60s has our country been this vigorously engaged in the reconciliation conversation. There is a great opportunity right now for culture to change—for us to become a more perfect union. However, it cannot be done without the church, because the faith of the people is more powerful than any law the government can enact.

This will be our church-wide Summer Study that we will read and process together.

[*Oneness Embraced*](#)

Oneness Embraced begins by building a biblical foundation for understanding ethnicity and conflict, recounts the history of the black church, and casts a vision for unity that is possible through Christ and in His Kingdom.

[*Woke Church*](#)

Dr. Eric Mason gives a call to action and gives a practical look at what the church can do in four parts: “Be Aware,” “Be Willing to Acknowledge,” “Be Accountable,” “Be Active.”

[*The Color of Compromise*](#)

The Color of Compromise by Jemar Tisby is a powerful starting point that calls the church to reflect the beauty of the Christ-centered unity of the New Testament, with a clear-eyed look at the history of how the church has contributed to division in our history.

[*On the Block*](#)

If you are a pastor trying to mobilize your church, or a Christian trying to live with purpose, this theology of missions from pastor Doug Logan will help. It will inspire you to do what matters, take steps of faith, and watch God work.

[*Divided by Faith*](#)

What keeps us so divided in the blood-bought Church of Jesus Christ? Emerson and Smith researched just that. This book has become the standard for understanding the racial divides in the American church.

[*Free at Last?: The Gospel in the African American Experience*](#)

Has Dr. King's dream been realized? Carl Ellis offers an in-depth assessment of the state of African American freedom and dignity within American culture today.

[*Doctrine and Race*](#)

Mary Beth Swetnam Mathews wrote a history of doctrinal and racial divides that illuminates the multifaceted reality of the development of the black church. This is compelling and illuminating, a tough but needed perspective.



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[*United: Captured by God's Vision for Diversity*](#)

We all could benefit by Trillia Newbell's joy and passion. This is a great look at God's heart for ALL people.

[*Dream with Me*](#)

Dr. John Perkins is a civil rights leader. This one is an inspiring call to look to the vision of unity and reconciliation, to dream of a future reality that can feel all too distant.

[*One New Man*](#)

Dr. Jarvis Williams helps reset our categories from being overtly culturally shaped to thinking more biblically. All people, the human race from every ethnicity, are distinguished biblically as "in Adam" or "in Christ."

[*The Faithful Preacher*](#)

An introduction to African American preaching by Thabiti Anyabwile. This book is as educational as it is devotional and introduces the ministries of Lemuel Haynes, Daniel A. Payne, and Francis J. Grimke.

[*Meditations on Preaching*](#)

Francis Grimke was the son of a slave and a slave owner. He graduated from Princeton Seminary and pastored 15th St Presbyterian Church right in the heart of Washington, D.C. His brilliant reflections and writing continue to have an impact.

[*Plain Theology for Plain People*](#)

Charles Octavius Boothe was a church planter who started Dexter Avenue Baptist in Montgomery—later Martin Luther King, Jr.'s church. This is a go-to resource for simple, clear theological truth.

[*Rediscipling the White Church*](#)

Many white Christians are waking up to the fact that something is wrong, but that's where they get stuck. David Swanson makes the case that discipleship, not merely diversity, is the core problem that must be addressed.

[*Bloodlines: Race, Cross, and the Christian*](#)

Piper reveals the definitive source of hope—teaching how the good news about Jesus Christ actively undermines the sins that feed racial strife, and leads to a many-colored and many-cultured kingdom of God.

HISTORY & CULTURE

[*Letter From a Birmingham Jail*](#)

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s Letter From a Birmingham Jail is a must-read. This edition includes reflections from other pastors in our theological stream. "I hope the church as a whole will meet the challenge of this decisive hour. But even if the church does not come to the aid of justice, I have no despair about the future... the eternal will of God is embodied in our echoing demands."

[*Martin Luther King, Jr. and the Image of God*](#)

The civil rights movement was a theologically driven movement. A helpful look at how Dr. King's theology led him to the pursuit of justice.

[*How Africa Shaped the Christian Mind*](#)



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Historical Christian belief was shaped by African Christians. From doctrine, to exegesis of the text, to universities, Christianity has deep roots in Africa.

[The Warmth of Other Suns](#)

A scholarly and accessible book looking at the Great Migration of Black Americans from the South to cities of the North and West throughout the twentieth century. Isabel Wilkerson writes of the reality of systemic racism confronting Black Americans on both sides of the Mason-Dixon Line. An incredible resource to understand the suffering of Black Americans well after slavery was abolished.

[The Souls of Black Folk](#)

W.E.B. DuBois was the first African American to achieve a doctorate at Harvard. His seminal work in sociology exposes the painful duality that so many experience, and the systems that have shaped the realities we still see now.

[The Mis-Education of the Negro](#)

"If you can control a man's thinking you do not have to worry about his action. When you determine what a man shall think you do not have to concern yourself about what he will do." Carter Woodson's classic gives insight into how thinking has been shaped over generations.

[Sketches of a Slave Life](#)

Rev. Peter Randolph's autobiographical works give powerful portraits of slave religion. He was freed and relocated from Virginia to Boston, where he was a pastor and abolitionist.

[Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass](#)

Frederick Douglass is a brilliant communicator with a pointed and prophetic voice. His powerful experience exposes our shared history.

[Exclusion and Embrace](#)

In his powerful book, Miroslav Volf is brilliant at exposing the condition and propensity within each of us to "otherize" people. Because this is not based on research in the American context, reading it can help to cast deeper human issues, that are reflected in our history, while cutting through language that may have baggage for individual readers.

[Stamped from the Beginning](#)

Ibram X. Kendi delivers a history of how racist ideas were created, spread, and became deeply rooted in American history.

CURRENT ISSUES

[Root Shock](#)

Gentrification is a complicated issue that gets too quickly polarized and politicized. This book is a helpful look at the consequences of displacement.

[The New Jim Crow](#)

"Mass incarceration is, metaphorically, the New Jim Crow;" and "...all those who care about social justice should fully commit themselves to dismantling this new racial caste system."



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[When Work Disappears](#)

Place matters. Systemic issues are real. Dr. William Julius Wilson's research is helpful in showing the devastating impact of inequality for all people.

[With Justice for All: A Strategy for Community Development](#)

A challenge from Dr. John Perkins that, "Either justice will come through us [the church], or it will not come at all."

[White Guilt](#)

Through his articulate analysis and engrossing recollections of the last half-century of American race relations, Steele calls for a new culture of personal responsibility, a commitment to principles that can fill the moral void created by white guilt.

[Insider Outsider](#)

"It is impossible to do theology devoid of cultural lenses and expressions. Like an American unaware of their own accent, most whites are unaware of the ethnic theological accent they carry." Insider Outsider bears witness to the true stories that often go untold—stories that will startle, enlighten, and herald a brighter way forward for all seeking belonging in the family of God.

[White Awake: An Honest Look at What it Means to be White](#)

It's crucial to understand both personal and social realities in the areas of race, culture, and identity. This book will give you a new perspective on being white and also empower you to be an agent of reconciliation in our increasingly diverse and divided world.

[Pushout: The Criminalization of Black Girls in Schools](#)

Pushout exposes a world of confined potential and supports the rising movement to challenge the policies, practices, and cultural illiteracy that push countless students out of school and into unhealthy, unstable, and often unsafe futures.

[Black Stats: African Americans by the Numbers in the Twenty-First Century](#)

With fascinating and often surprising information on everything from incarceration rates, lending practices, and the arts to marriage, voting habits, and green jobs, the contextualized material in this book will better attune readers to telling trends while challenging commonly held, yet often misguided, perceptions.

[Black Picket Fences: Privilege and Peril Among the Black Middle Class](#)

Black Picket Fences explored both the advantages the black middle class has and the boundaries they still face. Despite arguments that race no longer matters, Pattillo showed a different reality, one where black and white middle classes remain separate and unequal.

[Heal Us, Emmanuel](#)

The thirty church leaders who contributed to Heal Us, Emmanuel desire racial reconciliation, representation, and supernatural unity in all the churches of Christ.

[White Fragility: Why It's so Hard for White People to Talk About Racism](#)

In this in-depth exploration, DiAngelo examines how white fragility develops, how it protects racial inequality, and what we can do to engage more constructively.



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[How to Be Antiracist](#)

Kendi weaves an electrifying combination of ethics, history, law, and science with his own personal story of awakening to antiracism. This is an essential work for anyone who wants to go beyond the awareness of racism to the next step: contributing to the formation of a just and equitable society.