

DISMANTLING RACISM & WHITE PRIVILEGE

Relate. Educate. Advocate

August 11, 2021

Dear Editor,

The Presbytery of Giddings-Lovejoy's Dismantling Racism and White Privilege Team (DRAWP) affirms God is the author of life and the source of every good gift. Two of the greatest blessings humanity receives are the gifts of memory and storytelling. According to the Hebrew Scriptures, whenever the LORD did a marvelous work, God instructed the people to commemorate the event by building a monument, hosting a special meal, or having a festival day. God also commanded the people to remember the difficult times in their history, the mistakes they would rather forget. "Tell your children of it, and let your children tell their children, and their children to another generation" (Joel 1:3, NRSV.)

The Christian New Testament reaffirms the need to remember and pass along these stories to future generations. We confirm this in our houses of worship whenever we celebrate Holy Communion together. Before the congregation partakes in the broken bread and poured out cup, we hear Jesus' words from the Last Supper. "This is my body, which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me" (Luke 22:19b, NRSV.) Christians worship the God of history who is also, through Jesus' incarnation and the power of the Holy Spirit, directly involved with history and the present.

DRAWP is deeply concerned with any effort by elected officials to whitewash our country's painful history of slavery, segregation, and structural racism. The suggestion we should teach only the positive parts of our shared history is an affront to our hearts, minds, and souls. We can never move faithfully into the future until we remember rightly our past. To suggest otherwise is to victimize our African American brothers and sisters further by denying the gift of their memory and subjugate them to additional pain. Yale Divinity School's Dr. Miroslav Volf provides these prophetic words for our time, "To remember a wrongdoing is to struggle against it."¹

We strongly encourage our elected leaders not to put any impediments in the teaching of our country, state, and region's history. If we are ever to move forward into the God promised future, we must first remember rightly our past and share these stories with our children and our children's children.

In Hope and Confidence,


Rev. Dr. Dave Burgess and Rev. Travis Winckler
The Presbytery of Giddings-Lovejoy Dismantling Racism and White Privilege Team

¹ Miroslav Volf. *The End of Memory: Remembering Rightly in a Violent World* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2006), 11.