

# THE GRAPEVINE – Issue 12:4th June 2020

Dear Friends,

I hope that you are well. You are regularly in my prayers.

I am very grateful for having such a privileged upbringing. I don't mean 'privileged' in terms of lots of money and beautiful things, we had something far more fundamental than that. We had two parents that loved each other dearly and wanted to share their love with children who'd had a difficult start in life. I am one of seven. I have one real sister and all the others were fostered or adopted, of which four of them are mixed-race. Although they are mixed race, in our society they are labelled 'black', and very proud of the label they are too. And rightly so!

But if I am honest, even growing up with black brothers and sisters I still have little or no idea of what it's like to be black in a dominantly white society. However, when I see a black man dying at the hands of US police I feel anger and pain: I feel *their* anger and pain. And although I condemn the violence and destruction that followed the death of George Floyd a small part of me understands why they do it. It is not just about the death of one man, it's a deep-seated symptom of inequality where a section of the community are seen as second class citizens and treated differently just because of the colour of their skin.

Tears rolled down my cheeks the other night as I watched a video of Rev Ingrid Rasmussen, pastor of Holy Trinity Lutheran Church, Minneapolis. As she wept over George Floyd's death and the cities destruction she referred to a poem by Langston Hughes about 'deferred dreams' that explode. Here is the poem titled - **Harlem**

What happens to a dream deferred?

Does it dry up like a raisin in the sun?

Or fester like a sore— and then run?

Does it stink like rotten meat?

Or crust and sugar over— like a syrupy sweet?

Maybe it just sags like a heavy load.

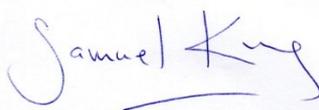
*Or does it explode?*

I understand why deferred dreams explode, and to see a president have the streets cleared with teargas and rubber bullets to hold up a Bible and use the situation for a photo opportunity makes me want to explode too. Mark Woods from Bible Society puts it well:

*'Enlisting the Bible in our cause is a dangerous thing to do. It is fundamentally untamed; it judges all of us – presidents and people. Yes, it judges the looters and destroyers – but it judges murder, racism, oppression and injustice too.'*

If we think that racism is just endemic in USA we deceive ourselves. It is a systemic problem in our nation too. But it's no good just being outraged by it, all of us need to bow on bended knee before our God to recognise and confess the part we play in this injustice. We need to listen to the stories of those who have faced racism so that we understand their pain, and when we see racism in all its forms, we should name and challenge it in Jesus' name.

*God bless you all*



**BLACK  
LIVES  
MATTER**

**N.B. Our Worship broadcast this Sunday will include communion, so do have your bread and wine ready before watching.**