



# West Hyattsville Baptist Church

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My beloved West Hyattsville Family,

The recent events in Charlottesville and President Donald J. Trump's response has prompted me to write this Pastoral Letter.

Let me state from the outset, that, like the majority of people, I denounce any and all forms of racial hatred, prejudice, and sexism. It is hard to imagine that in 2017, we would be experiencing such display of intolerance and the rejection of the peaceful coexistence of the human race.

As your pastor, I have intentionally resisted the temptation of sharing my political views either directly or indirectly. Primarily because it would be unwise for me to assume that just because we are all people of African descent, we share the same political persuasion. However, these recent events threaten the very principle on which this great nation claims to have been founded, that all men are created equal. We are now faced with the choice of doing nothing or stand together and speak truth to power. We are at the cross road of fighting for what the constitution guarantees us or allowing our rights to be taken away. We are now above politics.

As people of faith and followers of the Lord Jesus Christ, we are taught to love one another with unconditional love. The love of Christ compels us to see others as God sees us. In Galatians 3:28, The Apostle Paul lets us know that *"There is no longer Jew or Gentile, slave or free, male or female. For we are all one in Christ Jesus."* The creation story confirms that we are all created in God's image and likeness. While it is true that we share different ethnicities, we are one because we belong to Christ.

The easiest thing to do, is simply to do nothing. This, my sisters and brothers, is not an option. We must rise up and confront evil in all of its forms. We serve a God who has given us power to do the unthinkable, a God who holds the world in His hands and has promised never to leave us alone. We have a Savior at whose name *every knee shall bow and every tongue will confess that He is Lord to the Glory of God the Father.* Being silent, as the Leader of the free world, referred to Neo Nazis and White Supremacists as good people is not an option. Removing monuments of Robert E. Lee and his fellow segregationists only changes the landscape. While those images and symbols of the confederacy must be removed, it is not the answer and will never be enough. We must fight to change not just the landscape, but we must fight to change the hearts of those that harbor hatred and bigotry. It is only by changing the heart will we experience true brotherhood and sisterhood. Being angry and resulting to violent behavior will only reduce us to the level of those who seek to divide and destroy us. *Let us not conform to the ways of the world but let us be transformed by the renewing of our minds. By so doing, God will prove that He is in control. (Romans 12:2).*

I therefore invite you to consider doing the following:

1. Commit to praying for the healing of our country daily
2. Read Romans 12 for the next four days. (Sunday-Wednesday)
3. Join me in a one day fast on this Wednesday, August 23, 2017. From 7:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m. or 7:00 a.m. - 6:00 p.m.
4. Join the special call-in prayer service on this Wednesday beginning at 7:00 p.m.
5. Call or write your local, state, and federal congress leaders, demanding that they vote against any policy that does not protect the rights of every citizen.

Finally, As the great parliamentarian Edmund Burke said, "*The only thing necessary for the triumph of evil is for good men to do nothing.*" Let us not be found guilty of doing nothing but, with faith in God, let our little light shine.

Let me close with excerpts from Maya Angelo's Poem: I Rise.

*You may write me down in history  
With your bitter, twisted lies,  
You may trod me in the very dirt  
But still, like dust, I'll rise.*

*Did you want to see me broken?  
Bowed head and lowered eyes?  
Shoulders falling down like teardrops,  
Weakened by my soulful cries?*

*You may shoot me with your words,  
You may cut me with your eyes,  
You may kill me with your hatefulness,  
But still, like air, I'll rise.*

*Out of the huts of history's shame  
I rise  
Up from a past that's rooted in pain  
I rise  
I'm a black ocean, leaping and wide,  
Welling and swelling I bear in the tide.*

*Leaving behind nights of terror and fear  
I rise  
Into a daybreak that's wondrously clear  
I rise  
Bringing the gifts that my ancestors gave,  
I am the dream and the hope of the slave.  
I rise  
I rise  
I rise.*

Because of Cavalry, I am,



Pastor Emmett Lafayette Dunn