



June 3, 2020

### LBC | Capital Students, Employees and Friends:

Dear ones, as President of LBC | Capital, I owe it to you to address the unrest in our country surrounding the killing of George Floyd. While I speak to our entire family of LBC | Capital, I feel a particularly acute burden for our students, employees and friends of color.

Three years ago after the tragedy in Charlottesville, Virginia, LBC | Capital shared a [statement](#) condemning racism in all forms and embracing the ministry of racial reconciliation. We stand by that, but that was then. Today, a dear brother reminded me of another charge given: *Shepherd the flock of God* (1 Peter 5:1). While Peter was exhorting his elders to care for their churches and I no longer serve in the pastoral role, God has entrusted to me a "flock" of sorts. He has assigned me a delightful duty and tremendous task, a privileged position and solemn stewardship.

Stewards are not owners; they are temporary custodians responsible to others. We know they are ultimately responsible to God, and our God is unequivocal when it comes to troubling times:

- 10 "If you faint in the day of adversity, your strength is small.  
 11 Rescue those who are being taken away to death;  
 hold back those who are stumbling to the slaughter.  
 12 If you say, "Behold, we did not know this,"  
 does not he who weighs the heart perceive it?  
 Does not he who keeps watch over your soul know it,  
 and will he not repay man according to his work?"

What appears an observation in Proverbs 24:10-12 is actually exhortation. God is saying to me, "Tommy, do not pander to passivity. Take action: Rescue. Hold back."

For me, that is the rub. How to take action! Today we are a country awash in words. We are drowning in rhetoric, stumbling over ourselves to post, Tweet, Instagram and sound off how we really feel. This is understandable. When we witness an officer sworn to serve and protect supervise the very suffocation of another human being, it is beyond comprehension.

Sadly, this is not the first of such atrocities. Police brutality is lynching's noose and the slave owner's whip. Injustice has a long history in our country. Washington, Jefferson, Madison, Monroe — names synonymous with freedom — all enslaved African American people. The 15<sup>th</sup> Amendment gave African American men voting rights — rights which Jim Crow quickly snatched away and held tightly in his grasp for 87 years.

Promises made. Promises broken.

How long must an African American person travel to hear freedom ring? It was almost 60 years ago when Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. sounded out the words to the Negro spiritual: "Free at last, Free at last. Thank God almighty we are free at last!" Yet today, many people of color still long for that feeling of freedom.

Recently, the wife of a (African American) friend of mine in South Florida told him, "You've got to stop your daily exercise run!" She fears for his life. I cannot relate to his experience. I have lived as a free man. I was never forced to labor for another. I never booked passage on the underground railroad. I was never denied voting rights. I have never been stopped or questioned because of the color of my skin. I have never been refused service, pointed to the

back of the bus, told to use the “Colored” water fountain, or been sprayed with a fire hose. No one has ever called me “boy.” And, I have never had an officer put his knee to my throat.

Some have encouraged me to “make a statement.” Statements soothe the heart, and that is good. Statements can lock our arms in brotherhood, and that is good. Statements give us a vision of what can be, and that is good. But statements must be followed by steps. LBC | Capital has identified four steps we will pursue in the calendar year 2020-2021:

1. Convene a group of African American advisors from our faculty and staff to help me see what I am not seeing and to give guidance and counsel as we move forward.
2. Create a place of psychological safety for undergraduate students of color to share their experience at LBC | Capital and how we can improve moving forward.
3. Engage an Advisor on Diversity for the President’s Cabinet.
4. Incorporate “Diversity Awareness and Engagement” as part of our student orientation, employee orientation, and ongoing leadership development.

We want to assure our academic community across all locations that we are committed to continuous learning and the growth of our organizational culture in ways that honor God and his multi-ethnic humanity.

As I reflect on the chorus of concern in our institution and our broader communities, I believe what we are witnessing is really the cry of a heart made for God’s grander vision, a vision John gives us in Revelation 7:9-10:

“After this I looked, and behold, a great multitude that no one could number, from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed in white robes, with palm branches in their hands, and crying out with a loud voice, “Salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb!”

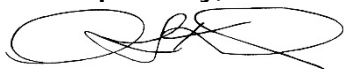
There it is . . . the great multitude . . . that colorful mass of humanity . . . in unity! They are not protesting, they are praising! They are not in conflict, they are in community; they are not clashing in a raucous exchange of barbs, but coming together in a glorious song of praise!

Look back over history, only God can do that. When you are made by God, you are made for what only God can give — true love, true community. And that love is found in Jesus, the One who said, “Greater love has no one than this, that someone lay down his life for his friends.” He said it, then he did it; the sinless Savior dying to pay the price for my freedom. A freedom that is not to be spent in self-service, but in service for others.

These days are a fresh reminder of the words of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.’s *Letter From A Birmingham Jail*, “We will have to repent in this generation not merely for the hateful words and actions of the bad people but for the appalling silence of the good people. Human progress never rolls in on wheels of inevitability; it comes through the tireless efforts of men willing to be co-workers with God...”

I have my own repenting to do and a lot to learn when it comes to serving my African American brothers and sisters. I suspect we all do. I want to be a contender, not a spectator, in those tireless efforts to be co-workers with God. That is why I love this school and our mission: To educate Christian students to think and live a biblical worldview and to proclaim Christ by serving him in the Church and in society. It is the Word and our Savior that bring change.

Respectfully,



**Thomas L. Kiedis, Ph.D., D.Min.**  
**President**