

My name is Edgar Bazan, and I am an elder of the United Methodist Church.

Yesterday I was asked, “why are going to speak there?” Meaning this press conference. And I thought, yes, “why?” Because it is important to us that the world hears that it is not the will of God for people to suffer, be abused, oppressed, and marginalized.

So, I am not speaking as a Politician or an activist, or on behalf of any political side or social movement, but as someone that believes that God cares for all people and that no one is of lesser value regardless of race, skin color, nationality, gender, faith or political inclinations. I am not here to vilify anyone nor to make a judgement of an ongoing investigation; but I am speaking acknowledging the pain and fear of people involved in this social crisis. This is a critical understanding if we are to find unity and move forward to bring healing into our communities and nation.

Therefore, we need to reflect on the existential reality that we can't afford to be against each other and treat each other as enemies for we will find ourselves empty and alone, resembling little to none humanity, passing along hate to our children condemning them to repeat our fears.

For this, it is critical to acknowledge that tragedies like the unexplainable killing of Mr. Jean are wrong and only serve to further divide our communities and magnify the distrust we have of each other. The Black community is afraid; the good policemen and policewomen that do serve and protect all people are also afraid. This is unsustainable. If we are to overcome our divisions and fears, we need to recognize the brokenness on each side –primarily in those that are being treated unjustly.

Therefore, my prayer today is not about promoting justice as a punishment or payback, but justice as an act of holistic healing to trust each other and care for each other in our communities so our children may only be concerned about pursuing happiness in this great nation and not about being killed or abused just because of who they are or how they look.

May justice be served for Mr. Botham Jean and his family. May God guide the good people that took an oath to serve and protect us. And, may God remove from power those that don't share these values.