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Winds of change are blowing, time for action has arrived.

Profound Gentlemen [profoundgentlemen@gmail.com]

Sent: Thursday, June 11, 2020 11:14 AM

 To: [Steve Johnston](#)
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This past Saturday, as millions fled into the planet's streets to protest, I woke with a heavy heart to get breakfast for the family. Though we are related, they're not my family. However, in the South, we express our condolences by assisting in the best way we know-how. In difficult times it seems that food acts as one of the best agents to bring folks together. Yet, it is also in difficult times that we find it hardest to eat. By hospitably setting the table, we believe that we encourage the downtrodden. Our Southern hospitality is meant to ensure that everything is or will soon be alright. Though, in fact, everything is not alright. This much can be seen on any news station across the world. The reason why depends on whom you are listening to. We are in the midst of a pandemic and the streets are flooded with people. A good amount of those people are out with masks on, protesting racism and police brutality.

This was certainly the case at the Cape Fear Conference Center in Raeford, Saturday morning. Traffic was backed up for miles, hundreds of people were lined up in the parking lot, and so for those of us who were on time well, we should have been early. Reverend David Camps arrived an hour and a half before the door was set to open. "My expectation was that thirty to forty thousand would come, I wanted to be a part of history", he said. Many said that it would be the largest event the area had ever seen. "This particular death is affecting everyone", Camps said. "History will show that change will be initiated because of" it. A woman from Seattle said, "I don't care that the media is here, I'm here for my people".

The double doors opened to the organist playing and a humid haze undoubtedly caused by heavy tears and hours of unsettling anticipation. The bereaved family proceeded in behind the casket that carried their fallen loved one. Though the atmosphere seems that it should feel foreign, it is regrettably all too familiar. Death frequently comes as an intruder, both unwelcomed and unpleasant. However, for the few that have actually watched their loved ones take their last breath by the will of another, the final moment of one life gives way to a traumatic birthing of another. This holds true for the family of North Carolina born, George Floyd. On May 25th,

along with the rest of the world, the Floyd family watched as the unarmed black man was pinned like an animal by Minneapolis Police Officer Derek Chauvin. George was already handcuffed and didn't appear to be a threat, Officer Chauvin and two other officers knelt firmly on his body. For a fatal 8 minutes and 46 seconds, four officers ignored his cries for his mother and his repetition of three otherwise important words, "I can't breathe".

Congressman Richard Hudson stood and proclaimed, "We are unified in our outrage." Secretary of State, Elaine Marshall sat on the pew directly behind me. We spoke about many things but in reference to the state of everything the secretary said to me, "This is a very important time in our history. With all of the yelling going on, I just hope there has been an equal amount of listening." The eulogist began by saying that the rage in the nation is "401 years in the making". For everyone in attendance, the service was quite intense.

Still, for all the men of color it held gut-wrenching significance. Regardless of our titles, we are reminded that we are the same as black men in America. We are plagued with the harsh reality that it could be us. It is us. The songs that were sung and the movements that were made were all entirely too familiar. The Floyd family is just like any other black American family. In pain, grasping hope, and determined to meet a better tomorrow. How we might attain this, is yet to be determined. One thing is for sure, the civil unrest will likely remain until the words of Dr. King reign true. "Let justice roll down like waters and righteousness like a mighty stream." Then, and only then, might we all rest in peace and harmony in these yet to be united states. The winds of change are blowing and the time for action has indeed arrived. May God grant us wisdom, guidance, and fill our hearts with His love.

This story was written by Gavin Gabriel and originally printed on the front page of [The Hickory Daily Record](#) on June 10th, 2020. Gavin is a Pastor at Jerusalem Missionary Baptist Church in Mooresville, NC, as well as a Community Builder at [Profound Gentlemen](#). Follow his work on Instagram at [@gabrielsreport](#).

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