

## FOOTBALL AND THE POLICE

Ernie Stratis retired last year from being a deputy sheriff for 20 years. He is also one of my best friends. God gave me the privilege of leading him to know Jesus after a competitive tennis match 35 years ago! Until the virus, we were still playing tennis every week. We have had hours of insightful discussions related to the recent police incidents and racism.

We had a lot of conversations a few years ago about football players kneeling during the national anthem. Here is one email I got from him recently.

*"I did not agree with Colin Kaepernick when he was in the NFL kneeling during the national anthem. I did not like it. And I was not going to listen to him or his reason for doing it. I heard what he said, It's not about the military, it's not about the flag, it's about police brutality. I still did not like it.*

*Now I believe he was peacefully protesting something he felt was very important. And I think he was right. And I think I was wrong. I did not want to hear what he was saying."*

(Back to your regularly scheduled writer . . . Larry.) JFK said, *"Those who make peaceful revolution impossible will make violent revolution inevitable."* Many did not listen to or want to heed the peaceful protests on the football field a few years ago, and now we are seeing the inevitable result of racism not being addressed. Kaepernick's knee was largely ignored, which helped enable the knee to George Floyd's neck.

Having taught the worship class at SDCC more than any other class, I know that biblically speaking, the Hebrew and Greek words for worship include the idea of bowing down and/or kneeling and kissing the hand of a king. Truthfully, kneeling is potentially MORE respectful than standing. God alone knows our hearts. I wonder if we would have objected to Jesus healing a man on the Sabbath if we had been there? Standing and kneeling are arbitrary man-made social constructs, which in this case are used to minimize the voice of those peacefully crying out for justice and equality.

There is a Biblical principle that we will reap what we have sown (Gal. 6:7). In terms of this "pandemic" of racial injustice, I believe our nation is reaping what we have sown from centuries of racial injustice.

Then Ernie wrote this profound example . . . (keep in mind that the following does not refer to the official organization called "Black Lives Matter" but rather the human beings created by God who happen to have a skin color referred to as black.

*"BLACK LIVES MATTER. How many times have we seen or heard this recently? And some people's response is, ALL LIVES MATTER. Which I have said at times, yes I agree with that too.*

*So I heard this interesting analogy. If you see a house on fire, you want to put water on the house to put out the fire. But let's put water on the house across the street. It's not on fire but ALL HOUSES MATTER.*

*Well yes, all houses do matter. But this is ignoring the big problem of the house that is on fire now."*