
Joint Statement of Heads of Historic African American Church Denominations, Independent Churches, the National African American Clergy Network, and Faith Partnerships, Inc.

Regarding The Brutal Killing of Michael Brown in Ferguson, Missouri

August 16, 2014

In light of the long and bloody trail of lynchings, deaths, and killings of African American youth from Emmett Till, to Trayvon Martin, to Michael Brown, and scores of others throughout our nation, we call for action, justice, and transformation. Michael Brown is dead. Justice must not be buried with his young body.

The following is a statement regarding the untimely and unjust death of Michael Brown in Ferguson, Missouri, who is spiritually "our child;" and a child of the African American and concerned American community. We speak in the spirit of redeeming love, nonviolence, and reconciliation, in solidarity with the suffering community of Ferguson, Missouri.

In light of the injustice perpetrated by the Police Department of Ferguson, Missouri, the cover up, and late release of the "shooting" policeman's name (now hiding elsewhere in America, due to fear of reprisals), we recommend the following actions as a **Joint Statement of heads of historic African American Church Denominations and Independent Churches, the National African American Clergy Network and Faith Partnerships Inc.**, concerned clergypersons of color, minorities everywhere in America, and clergy of goodwill.

Our moral outrage is expressed for the lack of justice, and an immediate call for true justice is issued in the death of Michael Brown. Mr. Brown was a promising African American male in Ferguson, Missouri, who will be buried at the time he would have entered college.

We share an appreciation for the work done by Congressman Emanuel Cleaver, a member of the Congressional Black Caucus, local churches, legal experts, and all people of goodwill, who are working to resolve the inequities of this senseless murder. We lift our voices as well against the senseless murders of so many young black youth and men, from Emmett Till to Trayvon Martin, now Michael Brown and

nameless unarmed others who have been cut down in their prime for being “young, gifted, and black”.

We are family-oriented in our values in the African American community and believe that every child is our child. Michael Brown has been and is our child, now in death as he was in life in Ferguson, Missouri. We, therefore, pledge to **help the Brown family - Michael's biological family of origin - with burial costs.** We also support the establishment of an Educational Memorial Fund in Michael's name...so that he, and young men like him, will not be forgotten.

We will remember prayerfully all the young men who have lost their lives in senseless killings by insensitive police, who are untrained in community relations, lacking in cultural competency, or have chosen to pull a trigger prematurely, rather than exercise good judgment.

We request a meeting with United States Attorney General Eric Holder in support of his efforts to bring an end to this brutal pattern of injustice.

We call on all churches in the faith community, especially those representing the African American Diaspora, to hold Memorial Services this Sunday or next Sunday in honor of the memory of Michael Brown, in accordance with church calendars. We call for an end to the cutting down of precious God-created lives like his and so many others.

All active denominations and non-denominations in the Faith Community must "push" for robust voter education, voter registration, and voter participation beginning in 2014. This will ensure that those who are in office and choose to do wrong can be replaced by those who will represent the preservation of life in ethnic communities where a disproportionate amount of killings, unsubstantiated sentencing and jail time are unwarranted means for perpetuating racism and bias against ethnic minorities.

As a move toward community reconciliation, we urge the dropping of all charges against those who protested and were arrested for exercising their First Amendment Rights to lawful assembly.

In order that all of these actions are promptly accomplished, we pray to God that "justice roll down like water and righteousness as an ever-flowing stream" - Amos 5:24.

This document is signed by....

Conveners,

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Dr. T. DeWitt Smith, Jr., Co-Chair, National African American Clergy Network
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