
**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 the transformation of our society. While Michael Brown is physically dead, justice must not be buried with his young body.

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

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, 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.

We express our moral outrage at the lack of justice, and issue an immediate call for true justice in the untimely death of Michael Brown. Mr. Brown was a promising African American male in Ferguson, Missouri, who will be buried at the time he was scheduled to enter college.

We share an appreciation for the work done by Congressman Emanuel Cleaver, a member of the Congressional Black Caucus, clergy, 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. We embody the famous African proverb, "it takes a village to raise a

child.” As such, 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 and unenlightened police, who fail to properly protect and serve, and 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 ensures that elected officials who 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 that all charges be dropped 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,

Dr. Barbara Williams-Skinner, Co-Chair, National African American Clergy Network

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

Dr. Otis Moss, Jr., Chairman, Faith Partnerships, Inc.

African Methodist Episcopal (A.M.E.)

Bishop Jeffrey Nathaniel Leath

President, Council of Bishops

Bishop Reginald T. Jackson, Presiding Bishop

Office of Ecumenical and Urban Affairs

Bishop Cornal Garnett Henning, Sr. (Retired, A.M.E.)

African Methodist Episcopal Zion (A.M.E. ZION)

Bishop George E. Battle, Jr., Senior Bishop

Christian Methodist Episcopal (C.M.E.)

Bishop Lawrence L. Reddick, III, Senior Bishop

Church of God in Christ (C.O.G.I.C.)

Bishop Charles E. Blake, Sr.

Presiding Bishop

Bishop Edwin Bass, President

COGIC Urban Initiative

Bishop Designate Talbert W. Swan, II

Advisor on Social Justice/Public Policy

Full Gospel Baptist Church Fellowship, International

Bishop Paul S. Morton, Sr.

Presiding Bishop and Founder

Bishop Joseph W. Walker, III

Presiding Bishop-Elect

National Baptist Convention, USA, Inc.

Dr. Julius R. Scruggs, President

Progressive National Baptist Convention, Inc. (P.N.B.C.)

Dr. James C. Perkins, President

Independent Church Leaders

Dr. Cynthia D. Hale, Pastor

Ray of Hope Christian Church, Decatur, GA

Dr. Frederick Haynes, Pastor

Friendship-West Baptist Church, Dallas, TX

Dr. Otis Moss, III, Pastor

Trinity United Church of Christ, Chicago, IL

Dr. Raphael G. Warnock, Pastor

Ebenezer Baptist Church, Atlanta, GA

Dr. Carroll A. Baltimore, Sr.,

President, CAB Outreach Ministries, Inc.

Senior Pastor, International Communities Baptist Churches, Inc.

Gainesville, VA