



ADVOCACY COMMITTEE FOR RACIAL ETHNIC CONCERNS

SEPTEMBER 30, 2016

Dear partner in ministry,

In light of the all-too-familiar situations of racial injustice that have been in the news lately, the Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns (ACREC) has felt compelled to make the attached statement. Ours is a nation entrenched in systems of privilege and power that perpetuate racial injustice, and as people of faith, we have no choice but to take a stand against this and in favor of the inclusive and equitable love of Jesus Christ. This statement is but one step in taking that stand, and we would ask you as our partners in the mission and ministry of Jesus Christ to spread this statement far and wide to your constituencies.

Grace and Peace,

*Buddy Monahan (Chair, ACREC)
Thomas Priest Jr. (Vice Chair, ACREC)*

The Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns (ACREC) calls the Presbyterian Church (USA) to embody what it has confessed, “*that the church as the possession of God must stand where the Lord stands, namely against injustice and with the wronged; that in following Christ the church must witness against all the powerful and privileged who selfishly seek their own interests and thus control and harm others. Therefore, we reject any ideology which would legitimate forms of injustice and any doctrine which is unwilling to resist such an ideology in the name of the gospel.*”¹

People of color in the US are being killed by police in disproportionate numbers because of the color of their skin, their race, and ethnicity. We condemn and lament the continued and routine killing of unarmed people of color particularly African American men and call for full investigations in the police killings of Keith Lamont Scott in Charlotte, NC, Terence Crutcher in Tulsa, OK, and Tyre King in Columbus, OH.

People of color in the US live under surveillance, the threat of deportation, and constant systemic violence. We are alarmed by the Obama administration’s continuing pattern of deportation and family separation. We are alarmed by the ways in which police and ordinary citizens are deputized, formally and informally, to perpetuate this culture of surveillance and violence. We are alarmed by the persistence of anti-Muslim and Islamophobic rhetoric and policy proposals abounding in the current presidential campaign.

¹ Belhar Confession, https://www.pcusa.org/site_media/media/uploads/theologyandworship/pdfs/belhar.pdf



People of color in the US are being attacked and criminalized for their courageous stands against police violence, greed, environmental injustice, and treaty violations. We condemn the use of militarized private contractors to remove the Native Americans encamped at the confluence of the Missouri and Cannonball rivers seeking to stop the development of the Dakota Access Pipeline that threatens water, earth, and indigenous sacred spaces.

People of color in the US are reminded daily in explicit and implicit ways of the hold white supremacy has over the soul of this nation. White supremacy; as a church we must say it. It is white supremacy that lies at the root of the systemic violence that kills, suffocates the life, limits the mobility, and creates the logic for the policing and detention of people of color in the United States.

Given this reality, ACREC calls the members of the Presbyterian Church (USA) to leave the comfort of their buildings to put their bodies on the line as co-conspirators in a movement for transformation, to stand for reparative justice instead of cheap reconciliation, to join communities of resistance, declaring that all people are created by God which means uttering without equivocation that Black Lives Matter!

We call the members of the Presbyterian Church (USA) to support the efforts of those gathered at Standing Rock to protect the water, the land, and the generations of people whose lives are threatened by the Dakota Access Pipeline expansion.

We call the teaching elders of the Presbyterian Church (USA) to not just lament and pray for change but to challenge the members of their congregation to acknowledge and confess our participation in systems of oppression and to lead them to work for justice in and outside of the church.

We call the ruling elders of the Presbyterian Church (USA) to exercise their spiritual and ecclesiastical leadership by creating and formulating ways for their congregation to engage in actions – economic and programmatic - that interrupt white supremacy.

ACREC strongly encourages the Presbyterian Church (USA) and all of its members to join the mobilization of 5000 prayers and/or actions around the world calling for water rights, clean air, and the restoration of the earth and its peoples by participating in the [International Days of Prayer and Action with Standing Rock](#) (October 8-11, 2016).

ACREC also strongly encourages the congregations and mid-councils of the Presbyterian Church (USA) to support the newly established [Freedom Rising Fund](#) created as a result of an action taken by the 222nd General Assembly (2016). This fund will support specific actions, “not just in word, but also in deed, to address

and improve the worsening plight of the African American male.” Congregations and mid-councils are asked to direct a portion of the Peace and Global Witness Offering to this fund.



Finally, we urge our church and all of its members but especially those who are white to join us in breaking silence. Commit with us to raise our collective voice not just to proclaim the good news of God's grace but to call out injustice, to call out the forces that threaten to tear us apart with xenophobic, racist, and islamophobic rhetoric. May we have the courage.