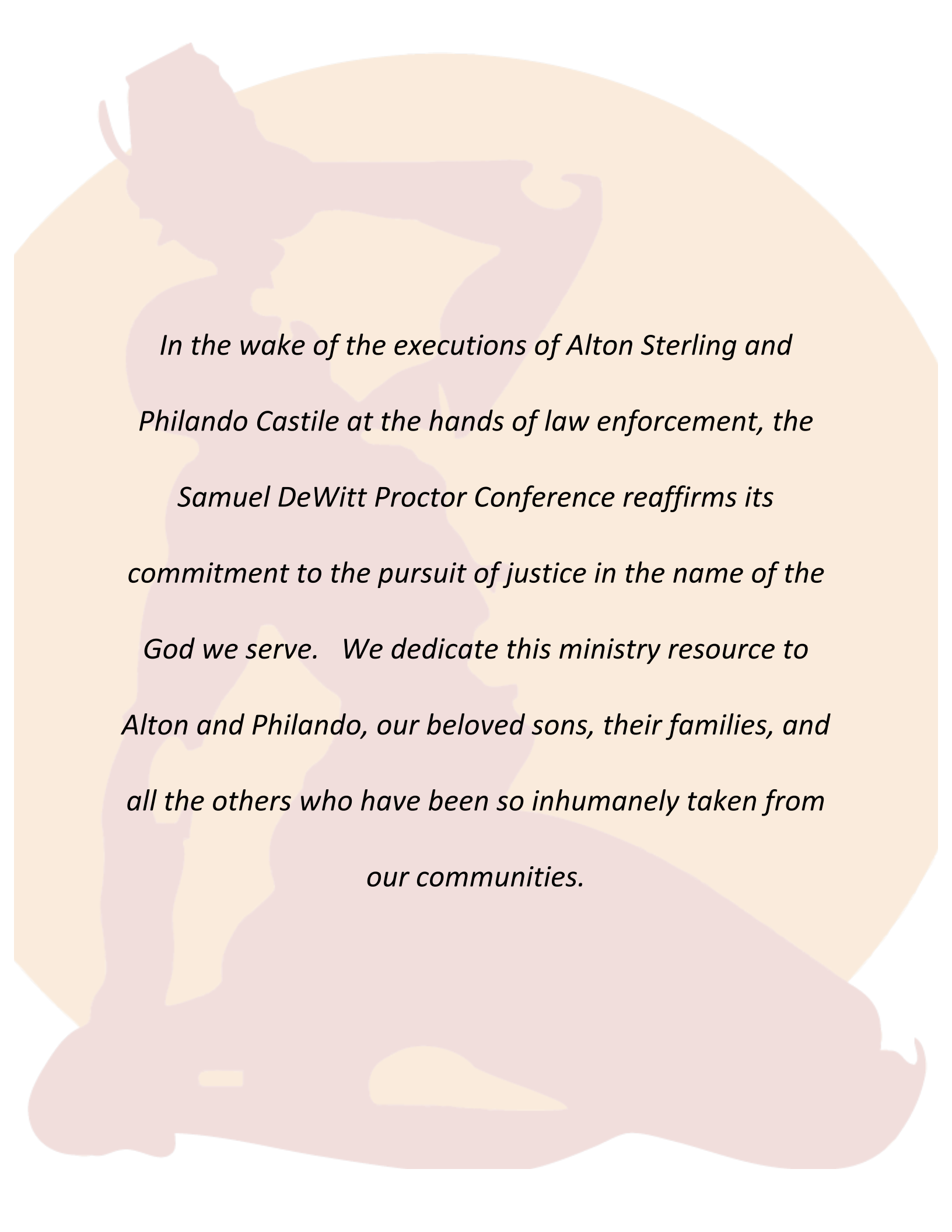




WE WILL NEVER GIVE UP!

RIGHTEOUS DEFIANCE IN THE MIDST OF TERROR AND LAMENTATION

*They dress the wound of my people as though
it were not serious. "Peace, peace," they say,
when there is no peace.
Jeremiah 8:11*



In the wake of the executions of Alton Sterling and Philando Castile at the hands of law enforcement, the Samuel DeWitt Proctor Conference reaffirms its commitment to the pursuit of justice in the name of the God we serve. We dedicate this ministry resource to Alton and Philando, our beloved sons, their families, and all the others who have been so inhumanely taken from our communities.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRO BY DR. IVA CARRUTHERS	4
SCRIPTURES FOR SUCH A TIME AS THIS	5
VISION OF OUR ELDERS	6
TUESDAY MEDIATION BY REV. DR. SUSAN K. SMITH	10
LITANY FOR HOPE	12
LITANY FOR THOSE NOT READY FOR HEALING	14
NEW YORK TIMES : VIDEOS THAT SPARKED OUTRAGE	15
BLACK THEOLOGY: NATIONAL COMMITTEE OF BLACK CHURCHMEN	16



SAMUEL DEWITT PROCTOR CONFERENCE, INC.

With Vision...By Faith...Through Action

Strengthening Churches...Empowering Leaders... Transforming Communities

July 7, 2016

Beloved,

Becoming Evil is a process.

James Waller, scholar expert on the Nazi holocaust and author of the book, *Becoming Evil: How Ordinary People Commit Genocide and Mass Killing*, notes:

“...rank and file killers, the soldiers, police, militia (paramilitary) and civilians at the bottom of the hierarchy... personally carried out the millions of executions. These people were so ordinary that, with few exceptions, they were readily absorbed into civil society after the killings and peacefully lived out their otherwise unremarkable lives – attesting to the unsettling reality that genocide overwhelms justice.”

The inhumane and uncivil acts of murder and terror upon African Americans in the United States by representatives of law enforcement are the markings of a state being swallowed up by Evil.

The denial and *dumbfoundedness* or astonishment of a nation, being overcome by fear of the other and the obsession with naming the other as evil, does not see that it incubates and unleashes terror and Evil from within.

The silence and hollow words coming from centers of Judeo Christian theologies and moral authority only harbor and sanctify the Evil.

They dress the wound of my people as though it were not serious. “Peace, peace,” they say, when there is no peace.
(Jer. 8:11)

May this resource guide be a Balm in Gilead for you, the wounded warriors who must stand as wounded healers to speak a Word of Hope to a people assaulted by an axis of Evil.

Iva E. Carruthers and the Samuel DeWitt Proctor Conference Family

Scriptures for Such a Time as This

Psalm 11:5

The Lord tests the righteous and the wicked, and his soul hates the lover of violence.

Psalm 82: 3-4

Give justice to the weak and to the orphan; maintain the right of the lowly and the destitute. Rescue the weak and the needy; deliver them from the hand of the wicked.

Psalm 63:1; 3

O God, you are my God. I seek you, my soul thirsts for you; my flesh faints for you as in a dry and weary land where there is no water...Because your steadfast love is better than life, my lips will praise you. So I will bless you as long as I live; I will lift up my hands and call on your name.

Jeremiah 8:11

They dress the wound of my people as though it were not serious. "Peace, peace," they say, when there is no peace.

Jeremiah 31: 15

Thus says the Lord: A voice is heard in Ramah, lamentation and bitter weeping. Rachel is weeping for her children; she refuses to be comforted for her children, because they are no more.

Amos 5:24

But let justice roll down like waters, and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream.

Habakkuk 1:2-4

Oh Lord, how long shall I cry for help, and you will not listen? Or cry to you "Violence!" and you will not save? Why do you make me see wrongdoing and look at trouble? Destruction and violence are before me; strife and contention arise. So the law becomes slack and justice never prevails. The wicked surround the righteous – therefore judgement comes forth perverted.

Luke 4:18

The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to bring good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free,

Voices of our Elders: Those Who Have Been in the Storm Words from Wounded Warriors and Wounded Healers

“...we will never give up the right to be what we are. We are a spiritual people. We are an African people. And we are determined, by the power of God or of Satan, to be free.” Gayraud Wilmore, from *“Black Power, Black People, Theological Renewal.”*

Early on July 7, the Samuel DeWitt Proctor Conference got an email from Rev. Gil Caldwell, the former pastor of Asbury United Methodist Church in Asbury, New Jersey. He was appalled in light of the two shootings of black men by white police officers within 48 hours, and wanted us to reach out to some of the elder clergy who have lived through racial turbulence, all the while trying to keep the people close to God. We took his suggestion to heart, and have included statements from some elders, words of wisdom and strength for this journey, at this time.

Rev. Yvonne Delk, Retired UCC Minister

As an elder in the movement, my heart continues to break as I realize that the blood of my grandsons and granddaughters continue to flow in the streets as a result of what I have come to define as our modern day form of lynchings. However with each death, I am reminded that the struggle for freedom is on-going. What we struggled for, sat in for, went to jail for in the days of my youth must be secured today. Freedom and justice cannot be turned back by white supremacy, police brutality or color blindness.

So with a heart that breaks and a faith that believes that out of every tragedy, every death, new life and new commitment must rise, I am committed to the struggle for the long haul.

Receiving hope and courage from all the ancestors who preceded me on the battlefield for justice and with my resolve to stay the course I am determined as an elder to tell the story of our spiritual based resistance movement and at the same time to join the modern day Black Lives Matter Movement demanding accountability for every life that has been lynched in the past or present.

Sr. Jaime Phelps, O.P., Ph.D., Adrian Dominican Sisters, Former Director of the Institute for Black Catholic Studies

The big white police officers are killing little kids; they are trying to kill something in themselves. What is wrong with these folks that they think they can kill black folks with

impunity? What is the fear? What is it that a 14-year old can do to you? We are trying to make reason out of unreasonable behavior ... We do need to speak to it

J. Alfred Smith, Pastor Emeritus, Allen Temple Baptist Church

I am an 85 year old black retired pastor, very afraid of the future for my sons, grandsons, great grandsons, nephews, and sons-in-law who could be killed at any time by a police officer afraid of black men! A black man with a gun and a permit to carry a gun is not safer than a black man without a gun. At my age I do not deserve to live if I do not speak out now. I can live with the accusation that I am "playing the race card" because when Mr. Roof was arrested for killing unarmed blacks in a church, the officers were kind enough to take him to get something to eat. Put yourself in my place. Are we black males sub-human because we are black? Is the God of America anti-black? How do I explain all of this to the fruit of my loins? How do white fathers explain to their sons what is not happening to their sons and what is happening to the sons of black men?

Is the American Christ the same Christ of the gospels who lived in the Rome that was great according to the standards of power, domination, and oppression? Why are people afraid of my black skin? Four decades of Black theology have not thawed the ice of racism!

Thank you for allowing me to share my pain and fear with you! J. Alfred. Smith. Sr.

Jeremiah Wright. Pastor Emeritus, Trinity United Church of Christ

Over a year ago, Dr. Yolanda Pierce wrote a ***Litany For Those Who Aren't Ready For Healing***. Her words say it all for me. 49 years ago, Dr. Martin Luther King said in his April 4th, 1967 sermon "**A Time To Break Silence**" preached at the Riverside Church that we are fighting a three headed demon: racism, militarism and casino capitalism (consumerism). His words said it all for me a half a century ago.

Very few listened 50 years ago. Fewer still are listening to prophetic voices like Dr. Pierce and Dr. Traci Blackmon now.

Prayer vigils are not enough. Protests and street demonstrations are not enough. Worship services and powerful sermons are not enough. **Words** are not enough. Actions speak louder than words, but our government is stuck on non-action, "business-as-usual" stupid.

Corporate dollars, neoliberalism, Trumpism, Racism and the NRA still have a stranglehold on this sick society. Like Eric Garner, "WE CAN'T BREATHE!" When will the suffering masses wake up, turn off "Scandal," "Empire," "Law and Order SVU," "NCIS," "The Voice," "American Idol," housewives, preachers and pimps of L.A., Detroit, Atlanta and wherever, reality t.v. shows, FACE OUR EVERY DAY UGLY REALITY and stop what Donald Macedo calls "the stupidification of America?"

Rev Gaylord Thomas, retired, Evangelical Lutheran Church

The use of "I" versus "we" changes how you think and how you respond in every situation. In this season of assault against African Americans, a "we" concept is required for us to be whole, self-determinant and healed. We must bridge every divide and find our defense in understanding that all the children are "us." We must preach a sense of connectedness as foundational to our survival. We cannot let our youth live into a mindset of hate and fear that robs them of hope and vision. We must continue to confront the injustices and also teach our youth the spiritual principles that build an understanding and commitment to building family and the circle of community.

**Rev. Gilbert "Gil" Caldwell, retired clergyman of the United Methodist Church
One of the founders of Black Methodists for Church Renewal
(The Black Caucus in the UMC) and NCBC.
Asbury Park, NJ**

Howard Thurman writes this under the title; "On Viewing the Coast of Africa";

"From my cabin window I look out on the full moon, and the ghosts of my forefathers rise and fall with the undulating waves. Across these same waters how many years ago they came! What were the inchoate mutterings locked deep within the circle of their hearts?....How does the human spirit accommodate itself to the desolation? How did they? What tools of the human spirit were in their hands with which to cut a path through the wilderness of their despair?"

I first went to Africa/Tanzania, in 1971 for a Consultation of African and African American Church leaders and Governmental leaders sponsored by the National Committee of Black Churchmen/NCBC (A name later changed to become gender inclusive). I too with Dean Thurman, wondered what "tools of the human spirit" did my African fore parents possess that enabled them to withstand capture, The Middle Passage and slavery in the Americas?

But today I/We, must ask after the recent killings by the police of Black men, what are the "tools of the human spirit" that we who are African Americans, and our allies should possess to counter and confront what has become "The same old same old" of the police killings of black men, and the deaths of black women and men while held in police custody?

I suggest the following; A growing and deepening affirmation of the significance of our creation as described in Psalm 139...An embrace of the totality of all of those who represent the rich diversity of Black persons and community...Black Lives Matter means ALL Black Lives....and a belief in the truth of the African American

Spiritual; "I Know the Lord has Laid Hands on Me (and us)".

I call out my Senior sisters and brother who have "retired" from the struggle against anti-black bigotry that is still rooted deeply in the soil of the nation and in the DNA of many who claim allegiance to the principles of the USA. "The Struggle Continues"; join it!

Tuesday Meditation

It is actually Wednesday. Somehow, Tuesday got swallowed up in the sands left by jubilant waves of celebration as the United States commemorated Independence Day.

On Monday there were fireworks and bar-be-que. Today, there is a horrible, bitter taste in the mouths of African Americans as yet another black man was shot and killed by police. Alton Sterling was selling CDs outside of a convenience store, and then, something happened – we don't yet know what – and moments later, he lay dead, having been straddled and shot at point blank range by a police officer.

After celebration, there is mourning.

Organizers and activists, pastors and priests, are now responsible for trying to keep the black community from frazzling even more than it already is. The work of organizers will be hard, but the work of pastors, priests, and religious teachers will be far more difficult.

They will have to somehow bring a resounding message to a people whose hurts and sores will not, cannot, heal, because the abuse on their spirits continues.

What to say? How about not, “How great thou art!” Or how about not “God is good all the time.” Say that, but maybe not on Sunday. There is no moral outrage, there is no national, community support like there was after the massacre at the Pulse Bar. Black lives lost is not all that important to the masses of good Americans who also say they love God.

Perhaps the best thing to say is that we know the people are panting “for streams of water,” for a spiritual hydration of souls long dried out, yet trying to hold on. Dehydrated people are trying desperately to hold on, in spite of the dryness around them, dryness created by white supremacy and its child, racism. The souls of people who will come to church or meetings are cramping and are painful because they are dry. They have been in the arid deserts of hopelessness when it comes to expecting justice in this country. They have cried so much because of their despair that they almost have to squeeze their eyes hard to make the smallest drop of water come out. The tiny tear is a sign of a little life, holding on ...

The people will come to church this Sunday, not talking about their “fun” Fourth of July, the food they ate, the amusement parks they visited, but with questions, like, “Why?” or “How long?” or with resounding statements of frustration and pain.

What will we do? How will we minister? We, like them, are deer panting as well. Our souls are just as dry as are theirs. We squeeze our tears out, too, and some wrestle not to give into the anger.

And yet, we must direct, first ourselves and then those to whom we minister, back to God. We may not be able to proclaim – not this week – how wonderful God is. We may be so wracked with our own questions that a sermon might be nearly impossible to preach, and

yet...we must. That is the call. The call is so about deer ...panting for streams of water
...showing others to the source of spiritual hydration as well.

Maybe it's best to talk this week about the *presence* of God. God, present, in the time of great pain, in the time of great loss and great confusion, holding us up, giving us the very breaths we next take. And in the conversation about God's presence, God will show up, as God does, giving us the strength to give others ...yet one more time.

Amen and amen.

Rev. Dr. Susan K. Smith

A Litany for Hope in the Midst of Moral Degradation

- L:** God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in time of trouble; We are no longer able to bear hearing the words, “the officers are on paid administrative leave.”
- P:** We have had enough!
- L:** We are in a war and it appears we are losing; those assigned to serve and protect too often harass and kill, and they get away with it.
- P:** There is a voice, crying in the wilderness, Rachel weeping for her children because they are no more.
- L:** Today we say just some of their names. Alton Sterling. Philando Castile. Henry Green. Say their names.
- P:** Sandra Bland. John Crawford. Jordan Davis. Tinisha Anderson. Say their names.
- L:** Rekia Boyd. Trayvon Martin. LaQuan McDonald. Yvette Smith. Say their names.
- P:** Michael Brown. Jamar Clark. Cornelius Brown. Miriam Carey. Say their names.
- L:** Malissa Williams. James Carney. Samuel Dubose. Freddie Gray. Say their names.
- P:** There are so many gone, too many to name. We call on You, Lord, to help us.
- L:** There is not just one voice crying. There are hundreds of thousands of voices, crying, looking for mercy, needing justice. We have had enough!
- P:** It is hard to believe in a justice that is swallowed up by evil draped in red, white and blue.
- L:** We have had enough!
- P:** The prophet Jeremiah said “They dress the wound of my people as though it were not serious. “Peace, peace,” they say, when there is no peace.” (Jer. 6:14)
- L:** The prophet Habakkuk asked the question: How long, Lord, must I cry for help, but you do not listen? Or cry out to you, “violence!” but you do not save? Why do you make me look at injustice? Why do you tolerate wrongdoing? Destruction and violence are before me; there is strife and conflict abounds. Therefore the law is paralyzed and justice never prevails. The wicked hem in the righteous so that justice is perverted. (Hab, 1: 2-4)
- P:** How long, O Lord? How long do *we* wait for justice? How long must our tears fall on fallow ground?

L: We who have ears to hear and eyes to see are listening and looking for you. We know that you know all, dear God.

P: Precious Lord, hear us! America is in trouble because she cannot and will not see her sin. In the time of trouble, You say you will hide us in Your tabernacle.

L: We have had enough! God, we need Your strength to fight the axis of evil in our midst.

P: Precious Lord, hear us! We ARE TIRED. WE ARE WEAK. WE ARE WORN! Without You, we cannot handle this.

A: Lord, in Your mercy, hear our prayer and come to us! Come to us and give us the strength to love, the strength to fight, and the strength to hope.

A Litany For Those Who Aren't Ready For Healing

By [Yolanda Pierce, Ph.D.](#),

Let us not rush to the language of healing, before understanding the fullness of the injury and the depth of the wound.

Let us not rush to offer a band-aid, when the gaping wound requires surgery and complete reconstruction.

Let us not offer false equivalencies, thereby diminishing the particular pain being felt in a particular circumstance in a particular historical moment.

Let us not speak of reconciliation without speaking of reparations and restoration, or how we can repair the breach and how we can restore the loss.

Let us not rush past the loss of this mother's child, this father's child...someone's beloved son.

Let us not value property over people; let us not protect material objects while human lives hang in the balance.

Let us not value a false peace over a righteous justice.

Let us not be afraid to sit with the ugliness, the messiness, and the pain that is life in community together.

Let us not offer clichés to the grieving, those whose hearts are being torn asunder.

Instead...

Let us mourn black and brown men and women, those killed extrajudicially every 28 hours.

Let us lament the loss of a teenager, dead at the hands of a police officer who described him as a demon.

Let us weep at a criminal justice system, which is neither blind nor just.

Let us call for the mourning men and the wailing women, those willing to rend their garments of privilege and ease, and sit in the ashes of this nation's original sin.

Let us be silent when we don't know what to say.

Let us be humble and listen to the pain, rage, and grief pouring from the lips of our neighbors and friends.

Let us decrease, so that our brothers and sisters who live on the underside of history may increase.

Let us pray with our eyes open and our feet firmly planted on the ground

Let us listen to the shattering glass and let us smell the purifying fires, for it is the language of the unheard.

God, in your mercy...

Show me my own complicity in injustice.

Convict me for my indifference.

Forgive me when I have remained silent.

Equip me with a zeal for righteousness.

Never let me grow accustomed or acclimated to unrighteousness.

The New York Times

The Raw Videos That Have Sparked Outrage Over Police Treatment of Blacks

By DANMEER CAWIE and RUCHELLE OLIVER | UPDATED JULY 7, 2016

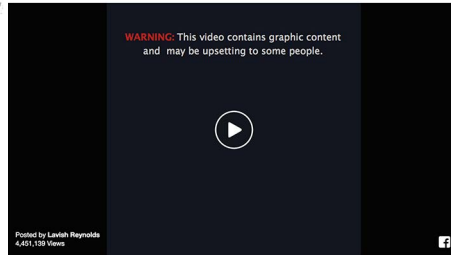
Raw video has thoroughly shaken American policing. Grainy images of questionable police behavior, spread through social media, have led to nationwide protests, federal investigations and changes in policy and attitudes on race.

"A lot of white people are truly shocked by what these videos depict. I know very few African-Americans who are surprised," said Paul D. Butler, a law professor at Georgetown University and a former prosecutor. "The videos are smoking-gun evidence," he added, "both literally because they are very graphic, which generates outrage, and figuratively, because people believe their own eyes."

These videos include graphic scenes of violence.

July 6, 2016 **Philando Castile**

Falcon Heights, Minn. Philando Castile, 32, was fatally shot during a traffic stop in a St. Paul suburb, the aftermath of which was captured in a grisly video recorded by the car's front-seat passenger and streamed live as the man slumped against her. Her young daughter sat in the backseat.



July 5, 2016 **Alton Sterling**

Baton Rouge, La.

[RELATED ARTICLE »](#)

A cellphone video shows a black man, Alton Sterling, 37, being tackled and then held to the ground by two white officers. Someone shouts, "He's got a gun!" and one officer appears to hold a gun above Mr. Sterling's chest. Multiple gunshots are heard while Mr. Sterling is pinned down. Mr. Sterling died at the scene.



Oct. 20, 2014 **Laquan McDonald**

Chicago

[RELATED ARTICLE »](#)

A dashcam video shows Laquan McDonald, 17, running, then walking past police officers when he is struck by bullets. One of the officers, Jason Van Dyke, who is white, was charged with murder on Nov. 24, 2015. Mr. McDonald, who is black, was shot 16 times.



Oct. 26, 2015 **South Carolina High School Student**

Columbia, S.C.

[RELATED ARTICLE »](#)

Videos, apparently shot by students in a high school classroom, show a white school police officer grabbing an African-American student by the neck, flipping her backward as she sat at her desk, then dragging and throwing her across the floor.



To view additional Times reporting and videos [click here.](#)

BLACK THEOLOGY

Statement by the National Committee of Black Churchmen, June 13, 1969

Why Black Theology?

Black people affirm their being. This affirmation is made in the whole experience of being black in the hostile American society. Black Theology is not a gift of the Christian gospel dispensed to slaves; rather it is an *appropriation* which black slaves made of the gospel given by their white oppressors. Black Theology has been nurtured, sustained and passed on in the black churches in their various ways of expression. Black Theology has dealt with all the ultimate and violent issues of life and death for a people despised and degraded.

The black church has not only nurtured black people but enabled them to survive brutalities that ought not to have been inflicted on any community of men. Black Theology is the product of black Christian experience and reflection. It comes out of the past. It is strong in the present. And we believe it is redemptive for the future.

This indigenous theological formation of faith emerged from the stark need of the fragmented black community to affirm itself as a part of the kingdom of God. White theology sustained the American slave system and negated the humanity of blacks. This indigenous Black Theology, based on the imaginative black experience, was the best hope for the survival of black people. This is a way of saying that Black Theology was already present in the spirituals and slave songs and exhortations of slave preachers and their descendants.

All theologies arise out of communal experience with God. At this moment in time, the black community seeks to express its theology in language that speaks to the contemporary mood of black people.

This statement, produced by the Committee on Theological Prospectus, NCBC, was issued at the Interdenominational Theological Center, Atlanta, Georgia. It was adopted at the NCBC 1969 annual convocation in Oakland, California.

What Is Black Theology?

Black Theology is a theology of black liberation. It seeks to plumb the black condition in the light of God's revelation in Jesus Christ, so that the black community can see that the gospel is commensurate with the achievement of black humanity. Black Theology is a theology of "blackness." It is the affirmation of black humanity that emancipates black people from white racism, thus providing authentic freedom for both white and black people. It affirms the humanity of white people in that it says No to the encroachment of white oppression.

The message of liberation is the revelation of God as revealed in the incarnation of Jesus Christ. Freedom IS the gospel. Jesus is the Liberator! "He . . . hath sent me to preach deliverance to the captives" (Luke 4:18). Thus the black patriarchs and we ourselves know this reality despite all attempts of the white church to obscure it and to utilize Christianity as a means of enslaving blacks. The demand that Christ the Liberator imposes on all men *requires* all blacks to affirm their full dignity as persons and all whites to surrender their presumptions of superiority and abuses of power.

What Does This Mean?

It means that Black Theology must confront the issues which are a part of the reality of black oppression. We cannot ignore the powerlessness of the black community. Despite the *repeated requests* for significant programs of social change, the American people have refused to appropriate adequate sums of money for social reconstruction. White church bodies have often made promises only to follow with default. We must, therefore, once again call the attention of the nation and the church to the need for providing adequate resources of power (reparation).

Reparation is a part of the Gospel message. Zacchaeus knew well the necessity for repayment as an essential ingredient in repentance. "If I have taken anything from any man by false accusation, I restore him fourfold" (Luke 19:8). The church which calls itself the servant church must, like its Lord, be willing to strip itself of possessions in order to build and restore that which has been destroyed by the compromising bureaucrats and conscienceless rich. While reparation cannot remove the guilt created by the despicable deed of slavery, it is, nonetheless, a positive response to the need for power in the black community. This nation, and, a people who have always related the value of the person to his possession of property, must recognize the necessity of restoring property in order to reconstitute personhood.

What Is the Cost?

Living is risk. We take it in confidence. The black community has been brutalized and victimized over the centuries. The recognition that comes from

seeing .
risk the
a hostil
in all p
In sp
priated
instrum
black c
inhuma
As h
it is inc
from it
Black p
of affir
Christi
Cleave

W
W

seeing Jesus as Liberator and the Gospel as freedom empowers black men to risk themselves for freedom and for faith. This faith we affirm in the midst of a hostile, disbelieving society. We intend to exist by this faith at all times and in all places.

In spite of brutal deprivation and denial the black community has appropriated the spurious form of Christianity imposed upon it and made it into an instrument for resisting the extreme demands of oppression. It has enabled the black community to live through unfulfilled promises, unnecessary risks, and inhuman relationships.

As black theologians address themselves to the issues of the black revolution, it is incumbent upon them to say that the black community will not be turned from its course, but will seek complete fulfillment of the promises of the Gospel. Black people have survived the terror. We now commit ourselves to the risks of affirming the dignity of black personhood. We do this as men and as black Christians. This is the message of Black Theology. In the words of Eldridge Cleaver:

We shall have our manhood.

We shall have it or the earth will be leveled by our efforts to gain it.