

**Stand in Solidarity With Us:
Wear Black on Sunday, December 14, 2014
“BLACK LIVES MATTER” SUNDAY**

Dear Members of The Christian Solidarity:

Greetings in the name of our Lord Jesus!

We are at a moment of critical crisis in our nation. It is not a moment to be underestimated.

The ways we have witnessed and endured the losses of Trayvon Martin in Florida at the hands of a vigilante, of Michael Brown in Missouri at the hands of a police officer, of 12-year-old Tamir Rice in Ohio at the hands of a police officer, and of Eric Garner in New York who could not breathe through his “choke hold” – and the harboring subsequent questions of justice (or *injustice*) in the facts surrounding their deaths and in the aftermaths of indictments and/or trials (or lack thereof) – all testify to the mounting crises of unanswered injustices toward Black persons in America. We have witnessed these things; they are in our collective consciousness; and we dare not think that they pass through our consciousness without traumatizing us.

This is not a time for the Church to be silent.

In joint conversation with denominational leaders, we have agreed to ask the members of our respective denominations to wear black on Sunday, December 14, 2014, in solidarity with the message that “Black Life Matters.” Moreover, we are asking pastors on that Sunday to have special prayer at our altars, asking God’s presence and protection over the lives of our Black men.

This action is symbolic. More is being done and more needs to be done.

More than 100 years ago, first to the Pan-African Conference in London and then in THE SOULS OF BLACK FOLK, W. E. B. DuBois said, “... the problem of the Twentieth Century is the problem of [the] color line.” How prophetic that statement was for the 20th century, and yet, how tragic it is in 2014 that the statement *remains true* in this second decade of the 21st century! Racism is still very much alive, very much entrenched, and is indeed *systemic* in America’s machinations.

As leaders in the Christian church, we publicly applaud the participation by many of our clergy and laity who have stood in solidarity with and ministered to the overwhelmed community of Ferguson, Missouri, and who have joined the march to the State Capitol in Jefferson City. Their actions in solidarity with Ferguson's community are in line with the salvation history that is *liberation* history, evident in the instances of God's prophetic calls when God's people were in distress. Moses heard God say, "I have surely seen the affliction of my people which are in Egypt, and have heard their cry by reason of their taskmasters; for I know their sorrows; and I am come down to deliver them ..." (Exodus 3:7-8a, KJV). The prophet Isaiah heard a voice saying, "In the desert prepare the way for the LORD; make straight in the wilderness a highway for our God" (Isaiah 40:3, NIV). Even so, in the wilderness of 21st Century America, God still calls and uses prophets (with credentials and without credentials) to stand on the lines of injustice – even in controversial times and places – and to say, amidst the injustices and oppressions of our desert places, that God is not pleased and we as God's people will not be silent.

Join us, please, in this immediate step of symbolizing our solidarity by wearing black on Sunday, December 14, 2014 – saying to this nation and the world, "Black Life Matters." Symbols have power.

Sincerely,

Executive Director, Scott D. Anderson, Wisconsin Council of Churches
Senior Bishop George E. Battle, Jr., African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church
Presiding Bishop Charles Blake, Church of God In Christ
Dr. Byron T. Brazier, Apostolic Church of God
Dr. Teresa Fry Brown, Historiographer and Homiletics Professor
Senior Bishop John R. Bryant, African Methodist Episcopal Church
Presiding Bishop Charles H. Ellis, Pentecostal Assemblies of the World
Archbishop J. Delano Ellis, Joint College of African American Pentecostal Bishops
Bishop Neil Ellis, Global United Fellowship
Dr. Cynthia Hale and Dr. Otis Moss, III, United Church of Christ
Bishop T. D. Jakes, Potter's House
Executive Director Carlos Malave, Christian Churches Together
Presiding Bishop Paul Morton and Presiding Bishop-Elect Joseph Walker, Full Gospel Baptist Church
President James C. Perkins, Progressive National Baptist Convention
Senior Bishop Lawrence Reddick, Christian Methodist Episcopal Church
Dr. Barbara Williams Skinner, Skinner Leadership Institute
President Samuel E. Tolbert, Jr., National Baptist Convention of America