

**Press Release  
on behalf of the  
Council of Bishops of the African Methodist Episcopal Church**

July 1, 2015

The leadership of the African Methodist Episcopal Church met this week in New Orleans to take care of the business of the church. Part of that business was to reaffirm our commitment to move the nation to face, confront, and act on the issue of race. Almost two weeks ago, nine faithful members of the A.M.E. Church were killed because of racism and hate.

President Obama in his stirring and eloquent eulogy correctly said we don't need to talk about race—we have talked about it a lot. The African Methodist Episcopal Church believes we must move beyond talk, we must act.

So the question is what's next? The Emmanuel Nine and so many others who have died or been discriminated against and suffered because of race cannot have their lives taken, simply to be a footnote in history.

The African Methodist Episcopal Church prepares to celebrate next year its Bicentennial. Two hundred years ago the A.M.E. Church was founded because of racism and injustice. We intend and are committed as part of our Bicentennial Celebration to again lead the nation on this issue.

There are several things we intend to do. We do not intend or try to do it by ourselves.

First, on September 2<sup>nd</sup>, the A.M.E. Church will join with our sister denominations, the A.M.E. Zion and Christian Methodist Episcopal Churches, at a press event at the National Press Club in Washington, D.C., where we will outline specific areas where the nation can act on race. These will include education, mass incarceration, reform of gun laws, poverty, and a number of other areas. In addition we will present a list of actions entitled, "And Justice for All," to the bipartisan congressional leadership. Racism plays a major role in why unemployment for blacks is always double the national average, and why blacks make up less than 20% of the population, but such a large portion of the prison population. Racism plays a role in drug laws. Laws that are different for those in the cities, primarily black, and those in the suburbs, primarily white. Racism plays a role in why so many, in fact 20% of the population, and one of every five black children live in poverty. Racism plays a role in why 10% of the population controls 75% of the wealth. Our call will not require talk, but action.

Second, Sunday, September 6<sup>th</sup>, we will join with many of our faith partners and declare Sunday, September 6<sup>th</sup> as a "Day of Confession, Repentance, Prayer, and Commitment to end Racism". We will ask every church, temple, synagogue, mosque and place of worship to focus on race and ask every pastor, Rabbi, Imam, and others to preach on race and be reminded and that out of one blood, God created all of us to dwell together in unity.

Third, next year the A.M.E. Church will celebrate its Bicentennial. We will invite both the presumptive Democratic and Republican presidential nominees to address the General Conference where thousands will be in attendance. We will insist, in fact demand, the nominees to present their specific plans for the cities and urban areas of the country, including education, and employment. We have not had a plan for the cities since the Great Society of the 1960s.

It's past time to act on race. We would not continually have Fergusons and Baltimores if it were not for racism.

It may be that God has brought the African Methodist Episcopal Church to this time to lead this nation to live up to it's words "one nation under God with liberty and justice for all".

Many over the last two weeks have spoken about how extraordinary the Emmanuel Nine were and their families who in their loss and pain proclaimed forgiveness, but they represent the majority of African Methodists, and in fact Black Christians. We seek to live God's Word. We will go forward from here with forgiving, but also leading and demanding that the nation act on race.