

An Emergency Resolution to the 2020 Annual Gathering of the Southern California Nevada Conference of the United Church of Christ.

Resolution to End Police Brutality and Systemic Racism Against Black People in America

Background:

When our “Founding Fathers” etched into our Declaration of Independence the self-evident truth that “all men are created equal,” slavery—enslavement of Black lives—was widely accepted and had been a reality here for hundreds of years. Black lives were bought and sold, treated as property, beaten, and killed. Did all lives matter then? Did Black lives matter?

Our United States Constitution—which aspires to form a “more perfect union” and to “secure the Blessings of Liberty”—treated Black slaves not as “free Persons” but as “others,” with each slave equal to three-fifths of a person. Did all lives matter then? Did Black lives matter?

Slavery and an economy built on slavery continued in our Nation for nearly 100 years more. Did all lives matter then? Did Black lives matter?

Even after our ancestors fought a Civil War and slaves were declared free persons, Jim Crow laws maintained a great imbalance. Ingrained societal and systemic prejudices impaired the life, liberty, and pursuit of happiness for persons based on color. In the last 60 years alone, lynchings, church bombings, and too many atrocities occurred in order to prevent Black lives from enjoying equal rights. Our government agents/officers were slow to protect them and at times were their persecutors. Did all lives matter then? Did Black lives matter?

In very recent years, months, and weeks, we have seen time-and-again a representative of government—a police officer charged with a duty to protect lives—kill an unarmed Black person. We have seen at times a careless, and at times a malicious, disregard for the value of Black lives. We have seen a system that allows such deaths to occur and that resists change. Can we truly say that our Nation, our government, has overcome all of its past failings and is now guided by the principle that “all lives matter”?

Since Black lives have not mattered to too many for too long, I echo a message that needs repeating: Black Lives Matter.

The body of resolution:

Whereas, the vestiges of this country’s harmful and racist legacy of slavery lives on in the police violence inflicted on members of our Black community.

Whereas, our faith teaches us that each person is created in the “Imago Dei” (image of God) in Genesis 1:27. Because humanity has been made in the image of the Holy Parent we are therefore full of intrinsic worth, value and deserving of dignity. What is true is that God did not create race, racism, or superior groups of humans. God does not sanction human suffering, but looks upon those who are suffering and intervenes directly to bring about liberation and justice.

Whereas as a Church, we boldly proclaim Black Lives Matter because we are called to witness against white supremacy to support the struggle and build a society that is anti-racist and reimagine a world where the public safety of the most vulnerable is centered and prioritized.

Whereas the Southern California Nevada Conference of the United Church of Christ is committed to not only be allies in the fight for justice but will use our privilege in spaces to amplify calls for justice and take actions where we have power and authority to do so, and call on others to use their power to further liberation and justice.

Black Lives Matter.

THEREFORE, let it be resolved:

That the Southern California Nevada Conference of the United Church of Christ stands in solidarity with the Black community.

Be it further resolved that Southern California Nevada Conference of the United Church of Christ commits to following the lead and listening to not only our God, as well as our Black siblings and activists in this movement to guide our actions.

Be it further resolved, that to turn this tide of systemic racism and economic injustice by racism, we call upon our elected leaders to address police brutality and mass incarceration by taking actions to reduce the role of police in our communities by divesting from the police budget into services in the Black community and non-law enforcement interventions.

Be it finally resolved that we, the Southern Nevada Conference affirm and declare that Black Lives Matter.

Funding

The funding for implementation of the Resolution will be made in accordance with the overall mandates of the affected agencies and funds available.

Implementation

The Officers of the Church, in consultation with appropriate ministries and other entities of the UCC, will determine the implementing body.

Introduced by:

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