



Resolution

Expressions of Lament and Hope

Passed by the Mennonite Church USA Delegate Assembly at Kansas City, Missouri, July 4, 2015

Introduction

The African American Mennonite Association (AAMA) would like to express its regret and grief over the horrific fatal shooting of nine parishioners attending Bible study at Emanuel AME (African Methodist Episcopal) Church in Charleston, South Carolina, on June 17, 2015. We are deeply saddened by the tragic circumstances and loss of life, liberty and decency suffered by the families so deeply and irreversibly affected.

AAMA is calling on Mennonite Church USA to identify the oppression, both the subtle and overt acts of violence, and hatred committed toward all people of color.

We call Mennonite Church USA to acknowledge the persistent and pernicious prejudice that stereotypes a people of distinct ethnicity, ability, culture and expression.

We lament the meaningless menace of violence and malevolent spirit endured in the recent massacre of worshipers and now the resurgence of burning down houses of worship.

What happened to one church directly affects all of us indirectly, for we are all tied together as worshipers. It is grievous that a person can see a cross and think of it as an "X" that marks a spot to strike. It is troubling that it can happen anywhere and there is no warning of where it could happen next.

To confess our complicity in this through our silence, when commentary and media reports become our image of people of color, is unconscionable.

"God calls us to be followers of Jesus Christ and, by the power of the Holy Spirit, to grow as communities of grace, joy and peace, so that God's healing and hope flow through us to the world." Let us be true to our published vision statement. Let us model for our neighbors, communities and the greater global community more than just commitment to non-resistance and peace but also a call to nonviolence.

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Therefore, Mennonite Church USA covenants together to pray for the victims' families, the local ministries in the communities where these atrocities occur, and the lives of our brothers and sisters living under the threat of violent, malevolent and menacing spirits of hatred and oppression.

Mennonite Church USA and all its parts will continue to build awareness and direct resources and energy to continued anti-racism education among our constituencies and to stand in solidarity with the African-American community as destroyed properties are rebuilt and ministry occurs to broken bodies and souls.