



Inter-Religious Council of Linn County

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Resolution Concerning Racial Tension and Police-Involved Violence

Inter-Religious Council of Linn County

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In the wake of the deaths of Michael Brown, Eric Garner, Tamir Rice, Sandra Bland, Samuel DuBose, Rafael Ramos, Wenjian Liu, and so many others, the board of the Inter-Religious Council of Linn County calls for local religious communities to promote genuine peace through respectful dialogue with law enforcement agencies and communities of color.

We lament the pervasive fear and anxiety that exist between people of color and law enforcement officers. Parents of nonwhite children know that their loved ones are disproportionately likely to be the victims of police violence.¹ This awareness contributes to real and justified mistrust of police on the part of people of color.

At the same time, we deeply sympathize with police officers' legitimate concerns for their own safety. The assassination of New York officers, Rafael Ramos and Wenjian Liu, only highlights the dangers that peace officers face every day. We applaud their courage and earnestly seek their safety. Both law enforcement officers and the communities they serve deserve respect and understanding.

As religious leaders, we confess our general complicity in the present state of distrust between law enforcement and communities of color. Aside from occasional sermon references and limited protests, we have often been silent about this violence in our communities. When we have spoken, we have too often simply taken sides in a complicated conversation. We have too seldom initiated constructive efforts to promote reconciliation.

¹ <http://www.propublica.org/article/deadly-force-in-black-and-white>

Therefore, we issue this call to action to all religious groups, to work together to change the systemic problems which impact specific communities in disproportionate ways:

1. We must create opportunities for dialogue amongst religious groups to facilitate healthy outrage and promote social change for the betterment of all humanity.
2. We must invest in support systems that minimize the use of law enforcement agencies as tools of last resort, but instead recognize them as humans who have taken an oath to serve and protect us all, including local communities of color.
3. We must demonstrate how to listen to each other, and respect one another, especially when someone else's experiences are difficult to understand.
4. Finally, we must act to address the root causes of racism and the violence it creates in our communities and our world.

Unanimously Approved by the IRCLC Board of Directors.

Signed:



Rabbi Todd Thalblum

President of the Inter-Religious Council of Linn County