



July 15, 2013

The Connectional Lay Organization Online
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AME CHURCH URGES CONSTRUCTIVE ACTION IN WAKE OF TRAYON MARTIN VERDICT

Please find below the Statement of the African Methodist Episcopal Church. We invite you to disseminate it broadly. Bishop Jackson is available for comment and clarification, if desired. Feel free to contact me for any follow-up. Thank you and be well!

Jacquelyn Dupont-Walker

SOCIAL ACTION COMMISSION African Methodist Episcopal Church

Bishop Reginald T. Jackson, Chair
Jacquelyn Dupont-Walker, Director

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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AME CHURCH URGES CONSTRUCTIVE ACTION IN WAKE OF TRAYON MARTIN VERDICT (Washington, DC) The African Methodist Episcopal Church, like millions of citizens across the country and around the world, is disappointed with the verdict of “not guilty” in the case of State of Florida vs. George Zimmerman. The verdict in this case again says that a young black who has done nothing wrong, walking down a street in any neighborhood can be shot and there is no consequence. While this case is not solely about race, race cannot be excluded. There can be no doubt that Trayvon Martin was “suspicious” to George Zimmerman because he was a young black man in a hoodie. Attorneys for George Zimmerman stated after the verdict was announced that all George Zimmerman did was defend himself. He ignores the fact that Trayvon Martin would be alive today, if George Zimmerman did not follow him and did not ignore the 911 directive to him to stop following him. To them Trayvon Martin and his life didn’t matter. The verdict in this case again says what George Zimmerman did to Trayvon Martin was proper. It is our concern that other George Zimmermans will be emboldened by this verdict. What happened today was the American legal system worked, but it did not produce justice. In the eyes of many of us, particularly African Americans it was not just “criminal profiling”; it was “racial profiling.” If roles had been reversed, George Zimmerman would not have been profiled and no shooting would have occurred.

In the wake of this tragedy and this case, we call upon the State of Florida to rescind it’s “stand your ground” law which has done nothing more than allow people with guns to become their own lawmen and to take the law into their own hands. Lost in all the

attention focused on Trayvon Martin, is the fact that other people have been shot under the pretense of “standing their ground” or self-defense. To fail to at least review this law does a great dis-service to the citizens of Florida and the nation.

People of good will across this nation and around the globe, must take a stand against injustice. To insure an unbiased investigation, we join the NAACP in urging the Dept of Justice to explore the possibility of a violation of Trayvon Martin’s civil rights. In the interim we call for dialogue in the halls of government, churches, community centers and places where people go to solve problems to continue constructive efforts until justice has been served. It is imperative to avoid any temptation or instigation of civil unrest as a result of the verdict tonight. We encourage the Martin Family to pursue all legal action to have their rights protected. We also call upon as many citizens as will to contribute to the Martin Family to be able to wage a strong legal action. It is imperative that the death of Trayvon Martin simply not be added to the long list of young Black males unarmed, shot and killed.

Finally, the AME Church will work in partnership with other religious, civil and human rights groups to continue mitigating the damage resulting from hundreds of years of injustice against humanity, especially people of color. Our commitment to justice will continue with greater urgency and vibrancy.

Bishop Reginald T. Jackson, Chair - Social Action Commission
Bishop Sarah F. Davis, President - Council of Bishops
Bishop Adam J. Richardson, Sr., President - General Board
Bishop John R. Bryant, Senior Bishop