

Statement from Black Methodists for Church Renewal, Inc. During 50th Anniversary Celebration

As Black Methodists for Church Renewal, Inc. (BMCR) gathers during our 50th annual meeting in Cincinnati, we come together with a renewed sense of urgency and commitment to fight for justice, equality, and inclusion for all people in the life of our United Methodist Church, and our global community beyond the walls of the church.

When BMCR was founded in 1967, Black laity and clergy were very involved in the liberation movements in the church, and beyond the walls of the church. This included marches against the United States involvement in the Vietnam War, supporting the Black Panther Party for Self-Defense, the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee, and other liberation movements.

As we gather in Cincinnati to commemorate 50 years of advocacy and achievement, we gather with a sense of renewed energy and purpose articulating a common vision and agenda in response to the sustained systemic and increasingly visible violence against Black communities in this country and around the world.

In 2017, we are outraged and lifting our voices of concern on several issues continuing to affect and plague our communities: violence, immigration, LGBTQ injustice, mass incarceration, poverty, lack of access to healthcare, illiteracy, and our failing public school systems.

BMCR affirms and commits to an amplified and shared agenda that continues to move toward a world and church in which the full humanity and dignity of Black and Brown people is recognized.

Today, along with Black Lives Matter, we make our collective voices heard. We understand the movement for Black Lives demands the following:

- An end to the war against Black people, including an end to the criminalization, incarceration, and killing of our people;
- Reparations for past and continuing harms;
- Investments in the education, health and safety of Black people, and
- Independent Black political power and Black self-determination in all areas of society in which a remaking of the current U.S. political system occurs in order to create a real democracy where Black people and all marginalized people can effectively exercise full political power.

BMCR stands in solidarity with the Black Lives Matter movement and we too make these demands.

There can be no liberation for Black, Brown, and other marginalized peoples if we do not center, and fight for those who have been marginalized. BMCR demands our denomination, The United Methodist Church, commits at all levels to educate, to advocate, and organize to bring about justice and stop the sudden and slow genocide of Black and Brown people.

Deborah L. Dangerfield, Chairperson
Board of Directors, BMCR