

“For Such a Time as This”

By Rev. Elizabeth D. McLean, Prince of Peace Presbyterian Church

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Based upon Exodus 20:1-17; Acts 5:25-42

Once upon a time there lived a king who was much beloved by his subjects. He ruled a little kingdom, which was frequently threatened by the larger kingdoms of the world which surrounded it. One day an army came and overran the castle, making off with half of the treasury. The king decided that he had to increase taxes to make up for his losses and asked one of his wise advisors how best to tell the people without inciting a revolt. The wise courtier suggested that the king explain that the theft was really a tragedy for the whole kingdom, and appeal to their spirit of sacrifice and love of the kingdom. The king did this, and the people responded generously and graciously. Not long thereafter, the castle was again attacked and more of the treasury taken. Again, the king reached out to his people. They grumbled a bit this time, but responded in heroic fashion nonetheless. A third time a neighboring army came and attacked the kingdom. This time it took almost everything, all the king’s food as well as valuables. “What can I do this time?” the king cried. The wise advisor hesitated, and then said, “I think, your highness, that it’s time to put the water back in the moat.”¹

Shortly before my weekend off last week, an event of historic significance took place. A group of some of the greatest biblical scholars, preachers, and religious leaders in our nation representing multiple Christian denominations decided that the kingdom of God, and the reign of Christ our King, have been attacked enough, and took steps to put some water back in the moat of the Church. Alarmed not only by the state of our nation and many of the policies and practices of the current government, but also by what they perceived to be partisan politics co-opting and corrupting the Gospel, faithful servants of God such as Walter Brueggemann, James Forbes, Will Willamon, Richard Rohr, Tony Campolo, Jim Wallis, Michael Curry (the pastor who just preached at the royal wedding), Sharon Watkins, from the National Council of Churches, and others, (basically the big wigs of the faith I frequently quote in my sermons), published a statement called “*Reclaiming Jesus.*” You can get copies of the summary of the statement on the table in the narthex after worship and find the full statement at the website by the same name.²

Born out of conversation at a Lenten retreat and published near Pentecost to make it clear that its authors see this as primarily a theological document inspired by Jesus Christ through the Spirit not a political one, the statement begins, “We are living through perilous and polarizing times as a nation, with a dangerous crisis of moral and political leadership at the highest levels of our government and in our churches. We believe the soul of the nation and the integrity of faith are now at stake. It is time to be followers of Jesus before anything else—nationality, political party, race, ethnicity, gender, geography—our identity in Christ precedes every other identity. We pray that our nation will see Jesus’ words in us.”³ Then after proclaiming “Jesus is Lord,” the statement affirms six additional beliefs that flow from that initial proclamation:

¹ Adapted from a story in *Animating Illustrations*, “*Intention Deficit Disorder.*” HOMILETICS ONLINE, posted April 19, 1998, retrieved May 30, 2018 from https://www.homileticonline.com/subscriber/btl_display.asp?installment_id=2427

² See www.ReclaimingJesus.org.

³ *Ibid.*

- 1) Each human being is made in God's image and likeness.
- 2) We are one body in Christ, and therefore no oppression based upon race, gender, identity, or class is acceptable.
- 3) How we treat the hungry, thirsty, naked, foreign, sick, and imprisoned is how we treat Christ himself.
- 4) Truth is morally central to our personal and public lives and truth-telling central to the prophetic biblical tradition.
- 5) Christ's way of leadership is servanthood, not domination.
- 6) When Jesus told us to go into all nations making disciples, he effectively made Christians a part of an international community whose interests surpass national boundaries. We were called therefore by him to love and serve the world and all its inhabitants, rather than seeking narrow national prerogatives first.⁴

Using a format similar to the one used in *The Theological Declaration of Barmen*, one of the confessions which appears in our Presbyterian *Book of Confession*,⁵ the authors of the new statement matched each of the six beliefs with corresponding statements rejecting or condemning the political, social, and economic trends and practices in our nation which threaten God's kingdom by violating the theological truth just affirmed. These statements reject and condemn racism and bigotry, misogyny, sexual harassment, and violence against women, attacks on and neglect of immigrants, authoritarian and oppressive government, the normalization of lying and false witness, and ethnic nationalism.⁶ On May 24th, after the Statement was published, its authors held a vigil in D.C., and led a procession to the White House to draw attention to the Statement and rally additional people to affirm it. Since then, the authors have also published two curricula to enable churches to study the biblical rationale for the Statement's affirmations in depth.

Although the *Reclaiming Jesus* statement was not written by people in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), there is nothing in it which is inconsistent with our own Affirmations of Faith, or our Reformed understanding of the Gospel. In fact, as Jimmie Hawkins, who is the director of our denomination's Office of Public Witness in D.C., and who participated in the vigil told me this week, all of the six points are really pretty basic Christian beliefs grounded in our loving Jesus first and foremost, and in loving our neighbors as ourselves. That's why, notwithstanding our many denominational and theological differences on specific issues, Methodists and Catholics, Anglicans and Baptists, Congregationalists and Presbyterians, Christian Reformed leaders and African-Methodist Episcopalians, Evangelicals and Mainliners were all able and eager to sign it. Christians from all of these communities recognize that if these basic core Christian beliefs are being cast aside or corrupted for personal gain by religious and political leaders, if policies and practices which are contrary to these beliefs are being normalized in our country, then we are facing a crisis which demands action. Those of us with an abiding love of Jesus Christ and the Gospel must stand our ground against corruption, distortion, and immoral

⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵ The Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Part I: The Book of Confessions (Louisville: The Office of the General Assembly, 2004).

⁶ *Reclaiming Jesus Statement*, www.ReclaimingJesus.org.

practices, and in so doing witness to God's love for all people in Christ, and God's command that we love and care for our neighbors as ourselves. In obedience to God in Christ, we must not remain silent.

Presbyterians may not be known for being very evangelical in the sense of seeking to convert others. But we have been doing the kind of witnessing the Statement's authors did pretty much since the beginning of our denomination's history. During the Reformation, when believers felt the Church was headed in the wrong direction and had been corrupted by those seeking personal and political gain, the Reformers wrote statements of faith to clarify for themselves and others where they stood theologically and why that position was in opposition to the powers of the time. Several of those statements are in our *Book of Confessions*.⁷ When Hitler's appropriation of the Church for his insidious plans threatened the integrity of the Gospel in Germany during World War II, people like Dietrich Bonhoeffer and Karl Barth wrote statements rejecting the distortions of so called "German Christianity." The Declaration that I mentioned a few moments ago, which was written not in a bar, but in Barmen, Germany, is one of those statements. In the 1960s, when the Civil Rights movement and the Women's Rights movements challenged the implicit prejudices within the status quo of our country, our denomination wrote and adopted the *Confession of 1967*, to make it clear that we stood for economic, social, political, and theological equality for men and women of all colors. These Confessions serve both as lifelines and plumb lines (see *Amos 7:1-17*) for us when the world around us seems to have gone mad. They remind us that two plus two is four, when the powers-that-be are doing everything they can to convince us that two plus two is five. They remind us of the truth we are called to serve and defend, and the love we are called to share.

In today's Scripture lessons, we see why we have always felt compelled to witness to the faith this way. We do so because God through the Ninth Commandment prohibits us from false witnessing and because having been saved by the love of God in Christ and inspired by the Spirit, we cannot help but witness to that love. We are called to live and speak the truth in an active way because to do anything less is to participate in the lie.

The Ninth Commandment states specifically, "You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor." Many people believe that this command effectively says, "You must not lie under any circumstances." That's not actually true. Rabbinic commentaries include examples of situations when offering a white lie would be a more gracious and faithful thing to do in order to preserve relationships than telling the truth, and nothing but the truth. For example, telling your loved one that he or she "looks fat in those shorts" is not going to earn you any points in either your loved one's or God's book. It's hurtful. But although the commandment does not prohibit all lying, neither does it define false witness so narrowly as to limit the prohibition solely to the narrow context of committing perjury in court either, as some people believe. Perjury is certainly a sin in God's eyes as well as the Law's. But the Ninth Commandment is broader than that.

⁷ See *The Scots Confession, The Heidelberg Catechism, and The Second Helvetic Confession* in [The Book of Confessions](#).

“False witness” is any deception used to benefit oneself over and above one’s neighbor, any deception used to harm a neighbor or deprive him of what belongs to him, and according to *Leviticus* 5:1, also the failure to come forward and speak and offer relevant testimony when a neighbor is being publicly charged and you can speak to those charges.⁸ In other words, it’s false witness to say, for example, that you were first in line if you really weren’t, false witness to say that your neighbor did something bad which he didn’t do, so that you can get his stuff, and false witness to remain silent when someone else is slandering your neighbor by calling them, for example, “criminals or rapists, infidels or terrorists, animals or apes,” and you know that it’s slander. *Proverbs* says that false witness is among the top six human behaviors God hates.⁹ Jesus said that false witness defiles us from the inside out. (*Matt.* 15:20).

When we understand how the people of Jesus’ day understood this Commandment, it is easier to understand how and why Peter and the other disciples’ actions in today’s lesson from *Acts*. No sooner did Pentecost happen than the disciples began to be arrested by the Jewish authorities for sharing the Gospel. As we heard in today’s lesson, which records the second and third times Peter was arrested, the authorities were not really arresting the disciples because they wanted to challenge their theology. They arrested them because they wanted to challenge their power. They didn’t want Jesus’ name on everyone’s lips, let alone his way being adopted by lots of people because then they would no longer be able to control them. So, the authorities kept arresting Peter and his friends to silence them.

Now you might think that after their first arrest, Peter and the others would have realized it would be much safer for them to tell people about Jesus privately in their homes. It was clearly in their best interest socially and politically to lay low. But they didn’t; they refused to hide. Instead they kept going back to preach in the Temple because they felt compelled by the Spirit to witness publicly. “We must obey God rather than human authority,” they explained to the council. To do nothing, to be silent about the Resurrection, or to turn the Gospel into a secret whispered in private rooms was not to witness to the truth revealed in Christ. They were called by Christ to proclaim the good news to the end of the world. If they did not do this, it would be false witness; they would be condoning the lies perpetrated by the very authorities who killed Jesus. So, they continued to speak out notwithstanding the risk to themselves, and God gave them the strength and security to do so.

In a time such as this, when it is no longer a given that our leaders’ opinions and decisions will be grounded in truth, when the evils of racism, sexism, ethnocentrism, and oppression are being defended in the name of patriotism, when the poor and disadvantaged are being judged and ignored rather than empowered and assisted, and when public figures who call themselves Christian are defending it all, it is easy to despair. The treasury of moral and spiritual values we thought everyone cherished—kindness, generosity, civility, decency, love, grace, and

⁸ See e.g. ENCYCLOPEDIA JUDAICA: WITNESS, Jewish Virtual Library, <http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/witness>; Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia, s.v. "Thou Shalt Not Bear False Witness Against Thy Neighbour," (accessed June 4th, 2018), https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Thou_shalt_not_bear_false_witness_against_thy_neighbour&oldid=836466162

⁹ See *Proverbs* 6:16-19 which says the six things God hates including “haughty eyes, a lying tongue, hands that shed innocent blood, a heart who devises wicked plants, feet that make haste to run to evil, a false witness who breathes out lies, and one who sows discord among brothers.”

neighborliness—has been attacked so much it feels all but empty. But we cannot simply withdraw from the crisis with a pint of Ben and Jerry’s because the situation is alarming, nor can we hold onto our beliefs silently while others co-opt and corrupt the Gospel for personal and political gain. Our king and his kingdom are under attack. God calls us; God commands us to speak the truth of the Gospel. The time has come to put the water back in the moat. We must affirm with our words and actions to friends, strangers, and national leaders that God loves *all* people regardless of color, gender, nationality, orientation, and economic status. We must affirm that God opposes all false witness and oppression and calls us to care for our neighbors as ourselves. For as much or as little as we do for our neighbors, we do for Christ our King. May the Spirit give us courage, faith, and persistence to fulfill our calling as well as our ancestors in the faith who have witnessed before us did, and may the world rediscover Jesus’ words in us. Amen.

Reclaiming Jesus

A Confession of Faith in a Time of Crisis

We are living through perilous and polarizing times as a nation, with a dangerous crisis of moral and political leadership at the highest levels of our government and in our churches. We believe the soul of the nation and the integrity of faith are now at stake.

It is time to be followers of Jesus before anything else—nationality, political party, race, ethnicity, gender, geography—our identity in Christ precedes every other identity. We pray that our nation will see Jesus’ words in us. “By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another” (John 13:35).

When politics undermines our theology, we must examine that politics. The church’s role is to change the world through the life and love of Jesus Christ. The government’s role is to serve the common good by protecting justice and peace, rewarding good behavior while restraining bad behavior (Romans 13). When that role is undermined by political leadership, faith leaders must stand up and speak out. Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. said, “The church must be reminded that it is not the master or the servant of the state, but rather the conscience of the state.”

It is often the duty of Christian leaders, especially elders, to speak the truth in love to our churches and to name and warn against temptations, racial and cultural captivities, false doctrines, and political idolatries—and even our complicity in them. We do so here with humility, prayer, and a deep dependency on the grace and Holy Spirit of God.

This letter comes from a retreat on Ash Wednesday, 2018. In this season of Lent, we feel deep lamentations for the state of our nation, and our own hearts are filled with confession for the sins we feel called to address. The true meaning of the word

repentance is to turn around. It is time to lament, confess, repent, and turn. In times of crisis, the church has historically learned to return to Jesus Christ.

Jesus is Lord. That is our foundational confession. It was central for the early church and needs to again become central to us. If Jesus is Lord, then Caesar was not—nor any other political ruler since. If Jesus is Lord, no other authority is absolute. Jesus Christ, and the kingdom of God he announced, is the Christian’s first loyalty, above all others. We pray, “Thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven” (Matthew 6:10). Our faith is personal but never private, meant not only for heaven but for this earth.

The question we face is this: Who is Jesus Christ for us today? What does our loyalty to Christ, as disciples, require at this moment in our history? We believe it is time to renew our theology of public discipleship and witness. Applying what “Jesus is Lord” means today is the message we commend as elders to our churches.

What we believe leads us to what we must reject. Our “Yes” is the foundation for our “No.” What we confess as our faith leads to what we confront. Therefore, we offer the following six affirmations of what we believe, and the resulting rejections of practices and policies by political leaders which dangerously corrode the soul of the nation and deeply threaten the public integrity of our faith. We pray that we, as followers of Jesus, will find the depth of faith to match the danger of our political crisis.

I. WE BELIEVE each human being is made in God's image and likeness (Genesis 1:26). That image and likeness confers a divinely decreed dignity, worth, and God-given equality to all of us as children of the one God who is the Creator of all things. Racial bigotry is a brutal denial of the image of God (the *imago dei*) in some of the children of God. Our participation in the global community of Christ absolutely prevents any toleration of racial bigotry. Racial justice and healing are biblical and theological issues for us, and are central to the mission of the body of Christ in the world. We give thanks for the prophetic role of the historic black churches in America when they have called for a more faithful gospel.

THEREFORE, WE REJECT the resurgence of white nationalism and racism in our nation on many fronts, including the highest levels of political leadership. We, as followers of Jesus, must clearly reject the use of racial bigotry for political gain that we have seen. In the face of such bigotry, silence is complicity. In particular, we reject white supremacy and commit ourselves to help dismantle the systems and structures that perpetuate white preference and advantage. Further, any doctrines or political strategies that use racist resentments, fears, or language must be named as public sin—one that goes back to the foundation of our nation and lingers on. Racial bigotry must be antithetical for those belonging to the body of Christ, because it denies the truth of the gospel we profess.

II. WE BELIEVE we are one body. In Christ, there is to be no oppression based on race, gender, identity, or class (Galatians 3:28). The body of Christ, where those great human divisions are to be overcome, is meant to be an example for the rest of society. When we fail to overcome these oppressive obstacles, and even perpetuate them, we have failed in our vocation to the world—to proclaim and live the reconciling gospel of Christ.

THEREFORE, WE REJECT misogyny, the mistreatment, violent abuse, sexual harass-

ment, and assault of women that has been further revealed in our culture and politics, including our churches, and the oppression of any other child of God. We lament when such practices seem publicly ignored, and thus privately condoned, by those in high positions of leadership. We stand for the respect, protection, and affirmation of women in our families, communities, workplaces, politics, and churches. We support the courageous truth-telling voices of women, who have helped the nation recognize these abuses. We confess sexism as a sin, requiring our repentance and resistance.

III. WE BELIEVE how we treat the hungry, the thirsty, the naked, the stranger, the sick, and the prisoner is how we treat Christ himself. (Matthew 25: 31-46) "Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me." God calls us to protect and seek justice for those who are poor and vulnerable, and our treatment of people who are "oppressed," "strangers," "outsiders," or otherwise considered "marginal" is a test of our relationship to God, who made us all equal in divine dignity and love. Our proclamation of the lordship of Jesus Christ is at stake in our solidarity with the most vulnerable. If our gospel is not "good news to the poor," it is not the gospel of Jesus Christ (Luke 4:18).

THEREFORE, WE REJECT the language and policies of political leaders who would debase and abandon the most vulnerable children of God. We strongly deplore the growing attacks on immigrants and refugees, who are being made into cultural and political targets, and we need to remind our churches that God makes the treatment of the "strangers" among us a test of faith (Leviticus 19:33-34). We won't accept the neglect of the well-being of low-income families and children, and we will resist repeated attempts to deny health care to those who most need it. We confess our growing national sin of putting the rich over the poor. We reject the immoral logic of cutting services and programs for the poor while cutting taxes for the rich. Budgets are

moral documents. We commit ourselves to opposing and reversing those policies and finding solutions that reflect the wisdom of people from different political parties and philosophies to seek the common good. Protecting the poor is a central commitment of Christian discipleship, to which 2,000 verses in the Bible attest.

IV. WE BELIEVE that truth is morally central to our personal and public lives. Truth-telling is central to the prophetic biblical tradition, whose vocation includes speaking the Word of God into their societies and speaking the truth to power. A commitment to speaking truth, the ninth commandment of the Decalogue, "You shall not bear false witness" (Exodus 20:16), is foundational to shared trust in society. Falsehood can enslave us, but Jesus promises, "You will know the truth, and the truth will set you free." (John 8:32). The search and respect for truth is crucial to anyone who follows Christ.

THEREFORE, WE REJECT the practice and pattern of lying that is invading our political and civil life. Politicians, like the rest of us, are human, fallible, sinful, and mortal. But when public lying becomes so persistent that it deliberately tries to change facts for ideological, political, or personal gain, the public accountability to truth is undermined. The regular purveying of falsehoods and consistent lying by the nation's highest leaders can change the moral expectations within a culture, the accountability for a civil society, and even the behavior of families and children. The normalization of lying presents a profound moral danger to the fabric of society. In the face of lies that bring darkness, Jesus is our truth and our light.

V. WE BELIEVE that Christ's way of leadership is servanthood, not domination. Jesus said, "You know that the rulers of the Gentiles (the world) lord it over them, and their great ones are tyrants over them. It will not be so among you; but whoever wishes to be great among you must be your servant" (Matthew 20:25-26). We believe our elect-

ed officials are called to public service, not public tyranny, so we must protect the limits, checks, and balances of democracy and encourage humility and civility on the part of elected officials. We support democracy, not because we believe in human perfection, but because we do not. The authority of government is instituted by God to order an unredeemed society for the sake of justice and peace, but ultimate authority belongs only to God.

THEREFORE, WE REJECT any moves toward autocratic political leadership and authoritarian rule. We believe authoritarian political leadership is a theological danger that threatens democracy and the common good—and we will resist it. Disrespect for the rule of law, not recognizing the equal importance of our three branches

of government, and replacing civility with dehumanizing hostility toward opponents are of great concern to us. Neglecting the ethic of public service and accountability, in favor of personal recognition and gain often characterized by offensive arrogance, are not just political issues for us. They raise deeper concerns about political idolatry, accompanied by false and unconstitutional notions of authority.

VI. WE BELIEVE Jesus when he tells us to go into all nations making disciples (Matthew 28:18). Our churches and our nations are part of an international community whose interests always surpass national boundaries. The most well-known verse in the New Testament starts with “For God so loved the world” (John 3:16). We, in turn, should love and serve the world and all its

inhabitants, rather than seek first narrow, nationalistic prerogatives.

THEREFORE, WE REJECT “America first” as a theological heresy for followers of Christ. While we share a patriotic love for our country, we reject xenophobic or ethnic nationalism that places one nation over others as a political goal. We reject domination rather than stewardship of the earth’s resources, toward genuine global development that brings human flourishing for all of God’s children. Serving our own communities is essential, but the global connections between us are undeniable. Global poverty, environmental damage, violent conflict, weapons of mass destruction, and deadly diseases in some places ultimately affect all places, and we need wise political leadership to deal with each of these.

WE ARE DEEPLY CONCERNED for the soul of our nation, but also for our churches and the integrity of our faith. The present crisis calls us to go deeper—deeper into our relationship to God; deeper into our relationships with each other, especially across racial, ethnic, and national lines; deeper into our relationships with the most vulnerable, who are at greatest risk.

The church is always subject to temptations to power, to cultural conformity, and to racial, class, and gender divides, as Galatians 3:28 teaches us. But our answer is to be “in Christ,” and to “not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your minds, so that you may discern what is the will of God—what is good and acceptable, and perfect.” (Romans 12:1-2)

The best response to our political, material, cultural, racial, or national idolatries is the First Commandment: “You shall have no other gods before me” (Exodus 20:3). Jesus summarizes the Greatest Commandment:

“You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, your soul, and your mind. This is the first commandment. And the second is like unto it. You shall love your neighbor as yourself. On these commandments hang all the law and the prophets” (Matthew 22:38). As to loving our neighbors, we would add “no exceptions.”

We commend this letter to pastors, local churches, and young people who are watching and waiting to see what the churches will say and do at such a time as this.

Our urgent need, in a time of moral and political crisis, is to recover the power of confessing our faith. Lament, repent, and then repair. If Jesus is Lord, there is always space for grace. We believe it is time to speak and to act in faith and conscience, not because of politics, but because we are disciples of Jesus Christ—to whom be all authority, honor, and glory. It is time for a fresh confession of faith. Jesus is Lord. He is the light in our darkness. “I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life” (John 8:12). ■

Signers: Bishop Carroll A. Baltimore, *President and CEO, Global Alliance Interfaith Network*; Rev. Dr. Peter Borgdorff, *Executive Director Emeritus, Christian Reformed Church in North America*; Dr. Amos Brown, *Chair, Social Justice Commission, National Baptist Convention USA, Inc.*; Rev. Dr. Walter Brueggemann, *Professor Emeritus, Columbia Theological Seminary*; Dr. Tony Campolo, *Co-Founder, Red Letter Christians*; Dr. Iva Carruthers, *General Secretary, Samuel DeWitt Proctor Conference*; The Most Rev. Michael B. Curry, *Presiding Bishop and Primate, The Episcopal Church*; Rev. Dr. James Forbes, *President and Founder, Healing the Nations Foundation and Preaching Professor at Union Theological Seminary*; Rev. Wesley Granberg-Michaelson, *General Secretary Emeritus, Reformed Church in America*; Rev. Dr. Cynthia Hale, *Senior Pastor, Ray of Hope Christian Church, Decatur, GA*; Rev. Dr. Richard Hamm, *former General Minister and President of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)*; Rev. Dr. Joel C. Hunter, *Faith Community Organizer and Chairman, Community Resource Network*; Rev. Dr. Jo Anne Lyon, *General Superintendent Emerita, The Wesleyan Church*; Bishop Vashti McKenzie, *117th Elected and Consecrated Bishop, AME Church*; Rev. Dr. Otis Moss, Jr., *Co-Convener National African American Clergy Network*; Dr. John Perkins, *Chair Emeritus and Founding Member, Christian Community Development Association*; Bishop Lawrence Reddick, *CEO, Christian Methodist Episcopal Church*; Fr. Richard Rohr, *Founder, Center for Action and Contemplation*; Dr. Ron Sider, *President Emeritus, Evangelicals for Social Action*; Rev. Jim Wallis, *President and Founder, Sojourners*; Rev. Dr. Sharon Watkins, *Director, NCC Truth and Racial Justice Initiative*; Dr. Barbara Williams-Skinner, *Co-Convener, National African American Clergy Network; President, Skinner Leadership Institute*; Bishop Will Willimon, *Bishop, The United Methodist Church, retired, Professor of the Practice of Ministry, Duke Divinity School*

ReclaimingJesus.org