

FROM THE GREENSBORO FAITH LEADERS' COUNCIL
A STATEMENT OF UNITY
August 2017

Greensboro is known for acts of heroic proportion taken to advance civil rights in our country. As the religious leadership of communities throughout our area, we express, with a unified voice, our sorrow over the tragic events in Charlottesville, VA earlier this month. These events underscore the broken state of our state, our country, and our world.

Having said this, we know that this was not the first time that Nazis and/or the Klan and their ilk have marched in our country. It happened here in Greensboro in the late 1970s.

What made this time different? In the years and decades that many of us have served as religious leaders, we have never seen nor heard the highest echelons of our leadership, and especially the US President, respond as has been on display over and over again since Charlottesville. No matter whether we are in the part of a majority group or one of America's many minorities, we have needed an unequivocal statement of support which has just not come.

Therefore, we issue this statement of unity, declaring, with a unified voice, that our respective religious traditions speak clearly and relevantly in this particular moment.

WE AFFIRM that every human being is created in the image of God, and therefore carries the inherent value and dignity of God's design. We further affirm that the variety of human cultures on earth is a beautiful expression of God's love for diversity. These ideas are evident from the first verses of the Biblical book of Genesis and continues on every page of every book we call holy.

WE REJECT ideologies of hatred. The Nazis, KKK, and other hate groups marching in Charlottesville filled the streets with anti-Semitic chants reminiscent of central Europe of the 1930s and 1940s; their racist views reflected the vilest elements of white supremacy and racism which no person of conscious in our day could ever accept. Such views are an unqualified evil, a denunciation of all that is holy, and a heresy which wars against God's design for human culture and creation. While we are teachers and leaders of different religious communities, we reject the triumphalist notion that any one group, or any collection of humans of any culture, is superior to any other.

WE ACCEPT that we have work to do in our own communities to combat bigotry, bias, prejudice, and racism, both conscious and unconscious. We repent the times that we have failed to be agents of healing and reconciliation in our respective congregations, in our city, and in our nation.

WE RESOLVE to preach, teach, and advocate against anti-Semitism, racism, and bigotry in all of its forms. We resolve to model cooperation, kindness, and love, and to seek ways to heal the divisions that separate races, religions, and cultures in our city. We resolve to listen to those who have been wounded and dehumanized by hatred. We resolve to continue our fervent work for healing and reconciliation. We resolve to help our religious communities become more hospitable and welcoming communities to diverse people.