

History is full of watershed moments — those moments when we remember things as being either before that specific moment or after it. In the wake of the unrest following the tragic killing of George Floyd, America is at such a watershed moment.

George Floyd has joined a long, unbroken line of African American people who have died at the hands of police officers who failed to uphold their oath to protect and serve. Others have been murdered by self-appointed keepers of the status quo. Former President Barack Obama says of this moment, "The waves of protest across the country represent a genuine and legitimate frustration over a decades-long failure to reform police practices and the broader criminal justice system in the United States." We, The Board of Pensions of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), have become keenly aware of these frustrations, and we share them; they should be the frustrations of every American.

The Stated Clerk of the PC(USA), the Reverend Dr. J. Herbert Nelson II, has challenged the Church by stating, "No longer can we hide behind not being controversial." The President of the Board of Pensions, the Reverend Frank Clark Spencer, echoes the admonitions of Rev. Nelson and President Obama, stating, "Deep pain and suffering among Black Americans is in plain view. As an agency of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), the Board of Pensions is committed to the goal of dismantling structural racism."

By taking tangible, intentional steps and working together within our spheres of influence and beyond, we will be an active ally for change, and we will see the realization of this goal. From lament to hope, from hope to real change. The change begins now.

The Board stands in support of racial equality, and against deeply ingrained prejudices against Black Americans and other people of color simply because of the color of their skin.

We continue to keep our country and the families and loved ones of all those suffering, directly or indirectly, from the events arising from this watershed moment in our thoughts and prayers. Please join the Board and the whole PC(USA) in the pursuit to be an ally for change.

*The foregoing statement was drafted by 15 of our Black colleagues. In February of 2020, the Board of Pensions formed a Diversity, Equality, and Inclusion Leadership Council (DEILC), which is developing a strategy and a plan of action, to live into the call of the Church to dismantle structural racism. That Council unanimously endorsed this statement and presented it to the agency's Executive Team and Board of Directors. With full support of all at the Board, we share this statement with you.*