



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## OFFICIAL PRESS STATEMENT

### LET'S REUNITE THE CHILDREN WITH THEIR FAMILIES NOW!

**DETROIT (June 27, 2018)** – Today we have come to Grand Rapids, not to separate people, highlight political divisions, or exacerbate family values. We are here because as people of God we believe in the teachings as expressed by the Psalmist in 127:3, *“Children are a gift from the Lord. They are a reward from him.”* Recognizing that God in his infinite wisdom has blessed us with a special gift, when one goes about the business of tearing a child from its parents, you are in fact ripping the gift that has been provided by God.

We are here today because we want to restore the gift. We want not to separate, but to unify. We want as a people not to have conflict, but to have compliment in the ability to recognize the dignity of all people. We cannot as Christians, Muslims, Jews, or whatever our faith orientation may be stand idly by and watch infants, toddlers, and teenagers, who have done nothing other than seek a better life, be torn asunder. For those who believe these actions may not impact you, there was a prominent protestant pastor by the name of Martin Niemoller who during WWII spent the last seven years of Nazi rule in a concentration camp. He is best remembered for these words: *“First they came for the socialists, and I did not speak out because I was not a socialist. Then they came for the trade unionists and I did not speak out because I was not a trade unionist. Then they came for the Jews and I did not speak out because I was not a Jew. Then they came for me and there was no one left to speak for me.”*

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., who 50 years ago was struct down by an assassin’s bullet said, *“The hottest place in hell is reserved for those who remain neutral in times of conflict.”* People of good will must not remain neutral when babies are being ripped from their families by our government. We believe that these children should be re-united with their parents, immediate relatives, or those whom they know. In 17 states around the nation, in over 100 cities, children have been separated and parents are in agony. Confusion is rampart within a system that was not designed to facilitate this level of separation. No, it is not biblical nor is it a divine intervention of God to separate babies from their families. Romans 13:1 is often used by some to suggest God’s support of governmental injustice. However, Romans 13:9 says, *“Love your neighbor as yourself. Love does no harm to a neighbor; therefore, love is a fulfilment of the law.”*

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Today we are calling upon the President and Vice President to immediately move to re-unite these children with their families. We are calling upon our elected officials to write letters, issue statements, and communicate with the White House, Department of Homeland Security, and Department of Health and Human Services. This policy and practice must end now. We are also calling upon religious leaders and people of good will, of every race and station, to join with us and declare that this policy is unacceptable. This is not what our nation should be about. This action is a stench in the nostril of God.

As people of African descent, we are aware of the pain associated with children being separated from mothers and fathers. It goes back to the time when we were ripped from Mother Africa, put in chains and stored in slave forts until the boats came. Men in one area, women in another, and babies still in another location. This process of separation even found its way through the middle-passage, on southern plantations, and in northern cities. We are aware of the effects of separation because they still are visibly apparent in the stress and trauma existing in our community today. This is precisely why we can relate to and support the efforts of our Central American brothers and sisters who are now victims of this unnecessary and inhumane governmental policy.

We ask that you join us in the effort to make our government remember the words of Emma Lazarus who said clearly, *"Give me your tired, your poor, your huddled masses yearning to breathe free, the wretched refuse of your teeming shore. Send these, the homeless, tempest-tossed, to me: I lift my lamp beside the golden door!"*

We call upon President Trump to remember his family, his children, his wife, who is an immigrant, her parents, who are immigrants, and his grandfather, who was an immigrant from Germany. Now that you are in the country, and in fact the leader of the country, do not shut the door so that others will not have the same opportunity as your family to enter into the sanctuary of our country.

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