



Office of the President

PRESS RELEASE

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South Central Conference of Seventh-day Adventists Statement Expressing Support for Immigrants, and Deep Concern for the Loss of Life and Suppression of Voices in Minneapolis

As members of the Seventh-Day Adventist Church, a movement with an abolitionist founder and a prophet who called for the violation of the Fugitive Slave Act, and as children of the African Diaspora, who have personally experienced the indignity and brutality of racism, South Central Conference, consistent with our Adventist pioneers and African-American civil rights leaders, advocates for those experiencing injustice, and opposes those who seek to oppress.

God has said: *"You shall not wrong a sojourner or oppress him, for you were sojourners in the land of Egypt"* (Exodus 22:21). And we also know that *"We must obey God rather than men"* (Acts 5:29). So we stand in solidarity with our immigrant brothers and sisters—the modern-day sojourners—believing that, regardless of country of origin or legal status, all persons are created in the image of God and deserve to be treated with dignity and respect; and we stand ready to provide them with prayer and protection, Scripture and sanctuary.

Furthermore, we are to *"Speak up for those who cannot speak for themselves, for the rights of all who are destitute. Speak up and judge fairly; defend the rights of the poor and needy"* (Proverbs 31:8–9). Therefore, we decry the blatant attempts to silence the voices of peaceful protestors, and we cry out with them for justice to *"roll down like waters, and righteousness like a mighty stream"* (Amos 5:24). We are deeply grieved by the deaths of Renée Nicole Good and Alex Pretti, the most recent casualties in this conflict, who were tragically gunned down in Minneapolis by federal immigration enforcement agents; and we express both our sympathy for the loss of life, and our continued concerns regarding the repeated use of lethal and unwarranted force by those commissioned *"To Protect and to Serve."*

The tactics of Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) have turned our communities into places where our neighbors are afraid to leave their homes, go to school, or attend church—so unlike the call to neighborliness that Jesus gave in his parable of the Good Samaritan (see Luke 10:25–37). In response, we call upon our civic servants to ensure transparent investigations into the deaths of individuals at the hands of law enforcement; cease tactics that produce terror in immigrant communities, especially near churches and schools; and protect the right to peaceful protest and suspend any efforts to silence those advocating for justice. And to our Adventist brothers and sisters, we challenge you to intentionally engage in the work of justice through prayer, peaceful advocacy, and personally providing support and safety for those who are the most vulnerable in our society.

As followers of Jesus Christ, we seek to serve those who are in need among us, hopeful that one day Jesus may say: *"For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in"* (Matthew 25:35)—and we encourage our nation to do the same.

In Christian Hope,

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