

A STATEMENT OF PURPOSE AND A PLAN OF ACTION FOR ATLANTANS
CONCERNED ABOUT RIOTS, THEIR CAUSES
AND THEIR CONSEQUENCES

We, the undersigned Atlantans, are deeply concerned about the riots which have occurred in our nation with increasing frequency and with mounting violence!

We are concerned about the consequences of continued rioting and believe that the deterioration of human relations could do greater damage than the loss of material things if we fail to bring an end to the riots and the conditions which spawn them.

We commend to every thoughtful citizen who believes in law and order and in human progress the recently released Report of the National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders. Whether one would agree absolutely with its methodology or the conclusions of the commission, we believe the report contains food for thought and suggestions for action which merit consideration. The report is a good point of reference and basis for discussion and action.

We are convinced that neither studies nor resolutions nor good intentions alone will suffice. We believe that all of the religious leaders of metropolitan Atlanta should act now to bring an end to conditions in our midst which create despair, contribute to human degradation and fuel violence.

We, therefore, commit ourselves to assist in the task of transforming our urban area that, insofar as our abilities and resources permit, we shall endeavor to respond to this urban crisis and help create a city where there is personal safety for all persons and property and where there is reason for hope and opportunity for individual growth and dignity for every citizen.

To do this, there are many things which we believe must be done.

There must be a pooling of all resources - a coordinated effort by rich and poor, by affluent and depressed citizens, by leaders in religion and education, in business and the professions, in industry and labor, in government, and in all walks of life - to meet our citizens needs in the following areas:

Police Protection Every citizen is entitled to be secure in his person and property and to fair treatment by law enforcement officials; and, in turn, each citizen has a duty to obey the law and support and cooperate with police officials.

Education

Every citizen must have the opportunity for equal educational opportunity - knowledge of one's rights and duties, education for employment, and for living - the essentials to a society of law and order and human progress.

Housing

Every citizen must have access to decent housing. This goal adopted long ago has not been achieved, and there is yet to be obtained a climate in which every person will have equal opportunity for housing that he can afford.

Employment

There must be training for new jobs and retaining for other jobs in our changing technology, and there must be an end to discrimination against qualified persons based on sex, race, age or handicap.

As we see it, we must create new attitudes even more than we need to create new programs, but both are needed! To establish new attitudes we must begin with ourselves, our families, our churches and synagogues.

Therefore, we commit ourselves to an effort to:

1. Carry on mutual interchanges in our churches with ministers and layman of all races discussing these critical areas of concern.
2. Preach and give courses within our own churches dealing with these areas.
3. Adopt and carry out special projects which contribute to the betterment of conditions in each of the foregoing areas, and encourage such things as positive support for day care centers, low cost housing corporations, health clinics, and training employment programs.

In order to develop wide acceptance of our stated purpose and our plan of action, we respectfully urge Mayor Ivan Allen, Jr. to issue invitations to Atlanta's political, economic and religious leaders, and to citizens representative of all areas of our urban community to attend a meeting sponsored by the undersigned with the Mayor serving as host. The purpose of the meeting will be to achieve in the Atlanta urban

area an agreement on our stated purpose, and to arrange for a coordinated use of all possible resources. We seek a true and new commitment and to develop a simple connectional structure to carry out this commitment.

We, by signing this resolution, do declare ourselves to be an inter-faith committee, and authorize our designated representatives to visit the Mayor of the City of Atlanta and other local leaders of this area for the following purposes:

1. To offer the full support of ourselves as representatives of the religious community of the urban area for coordinated effort in meeting the needs of every individual.
2. To fund a luncheon for leaders and representatives of both races at which time we could hear from Mayor Allen his suggestions as to how all available resources might be coordinated to achieve our objectives.
3. To support a call for broader ministerial and lay leadership in subsequent meetings and projects.
4. And to offer ourselves for service on any Council or Committee dealing with these critical areas.

Finally, we invite all citizens to join with us in a commitment to our statement of purpose and our plan of action, and we ask the help of Almighty God in this endeavor to transform and redeem our entire urban area.

Signed on This Day, Tuesday 2nd of April, 1968