"BLACK POWER" STATEMENT BY NATIONAL COMMITTEE OF NEGRO CHURCHMEN

We, an informed group of Negro churchmen in America are deeply concerned about civil disorder and its great impact on the quality of life and the wellbeing of all Americans. We deplore the use of violence, but at the same time we must deal with the problems of power and race which have faced our beloved country over the centuries.

We recognize that the terms "power" and "the civil rights movement" are used interchangeably by some, but we believe that the two concepts are distinct. Power is the capacity to act and to implement one's will, whereas the civil rights movement is a struggle for the full realization of the potentialities of all citizens.

The use of power is often subverted in this land. In the absence of community, and not the anguished conviction-overload of the church, in Negro and in other poor nations of the world, we have seen the emergence of an evil power.

We believe that only God can do everything. America and the other nations of the world can be abetted inside the ghetto, but their basic nature is to be fought over. It is a thing which, in some measure, already belongs to Negroes which must be fought over, and which must be fought for, with the great resources of this nation.

The statement we are making today is not to be construed as a rejection of the importance of non-violence. In the struggle for justice and freedom, it is always necessary to seek peaceful solutions. We are grateful for the leadership and courage of those who have worked for peace in the past and who continue to do so today.

We believe that the future of America will belong to neither white nor black unless we can work together for the common good. We must fight for a world in which all people have equal opportunities and where the American Dream is not an illusion.

We urge all Americans to join together in the task of building a better world. Only God can do this. America and the white nation must work together to achieve this goal.

III. TO NEGRO CITIZENS: POWER AND JUSTICE

It is the anguish of "black power" and the excruciating emotional appeal of the Negro which has brought us together. We believe that the time has come for a new approach to the problems of power and race.

We must work for a world in which all people have equal opportunities and where the American Dream is not an illusion.