

The Rationale for a Request by Greensboro Clergy for an Apology from the City of Greensboro for the City's Role in the November 3, 1979 Greensboro Massacre

October 22, 2019

After consideration of facts revealed during the 1985 Federal Civil Right Suit that was filed in response to the Greensboro Massacre on November 3, 1979 and after consideration of the jury's verdict that found two Greensboro Police Officers, two Klansmen, and four Nazis liable for the wrongful death of Dr. Michael Nathan, and,

After consideration of the facts revealed in the May 2006 *Final Report* of the Greensboro Truth and Reconciliation Commission, which investigated the Greensboro Massacre over a two year period and concluded, among other things, that: "*Despite the obvious and important roles of the above participants, the majority of commissioners find the single most important element that contributed to the violent outcome of the confrontation was the absence of police.*"

We, therefore, call on the City of Greensboro to apologize for the Greensboro Massacre of November 3rd, 1979 because of:

- (1) The failure of police and other city officials to warn the marchers of the extensive foreknowledge they had of the racist, violent attack planned against the marchers by the Klan and Nazis with the assistance of a paid Greensboro police informant.
- (2) The failure of police and city officials to be present to protect the marchers, who had a legal parade permit, from the planned attack that the police were well aware of in advance.
- (3) The failure of the Greensboro police to divert, stop, or arrest the Klan and Nazi members, whom police knew were carrying a cache of concealed weapons, as they approached Morningside Homes where the marchers were gathered. The Greensboro Police actually photographed Klan and Nazi gunmen loading weaponry into their cars but merely followed them several miles to Morningside Homes where the attack occurred.
- (4) The attempts to cover up the wrongdoing of Greensboro Police and city officials and the attempts to discredit the Survivors and those who sought justice following the 1979 Massacre.
- (5) The city's participation in an atmosphere of blaming the victims of the Greensboro Massacre rather than encouraging an objective investigation and comprehensive trial process. This created an environment which allowed the District Attorney to avoid calling Klan-informant Eddie Dawson and other witnesses who could have testified about the plans of the white supremacists to carry out the November 3rd, 1979 Massacre. As a result, Klan and Nazis were all acquitted at two criminal trials by all-white juries.

(6) The City Council's vote to oppose the Truth and Reconciliation Process, strictly along racial lines. Six white members of the City Council voted to oppose the process, while three African American members voted to support the Truth and Reconciliation Process.

(7) The City Council's disregard for the 2017 letter sent to each City Council Member by Survivors of the 1979 attack, requesting an apology of substance for the Greensboro Massacre. As of today, the City has ignored that letter and has failed to take any actions.

Furthermore, the City Council should pledge to take all steps available to ensure that no such injustices occur in our city in the future. Finally, we, clergy members of Greensboro, are prepared to meet with the City Council or a designated sub-entity thereof for further discussion of this crucial matter of embracing the truth and pursuing justice and dignity for all in our city.