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OPINION

We should be outraged by the Unjust Deaths

I weep with the parents who have lost sons and daughters

BY THE REV.
M. LINDA
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Like thousands of others I was speechless, but not surprised, by the grand jury decision to not charge Officer Darren Wilson in the shooting and killing of Michael Brown.

Watching this dreadful incident unfold prompts more hazard than it does security in our lives. I can only imagine the fear

felt by the young people who experience such violence all around them every day. It brought to mind a quote by one of our founding fathers, Benjamin Franklin, who reminded us that "Justice will not be served until those who are unaffected are as outraged as those who are."

For those of us who do not live in Missouri, we may feel as though Ferguson is miles away. But if we think that we are unaffected, we need only wait a while because each of us will be in one way or the other. A similar tragedy is but one minute away in our own backyard.

For example, I live just five minutes away from the Cudell Recreation Center in Cleveland, Ohio, where police converged

on 12-year-old Tamir Rice. Surveillance video accounts show that shots rang out from a police weapon within two seconds of their arrival. In an instant, another young African-American life was lost and his name added to the hundreds who are injured or killed every day. We are all affected by these tragedies.

Like all parents I worry about my kids, but I do not have to live in extreme fear for their safety because of the color of their skin. I am deeply saddened to hear the stories of parents who must coach their children daily on what to do if they are confronted by a person with the power to end their life, or how to appear nonthreatening in order to stay safe. In this unjust reality, parents must think beyond pro-

viding for their family's basic needs like food, housing, and health care. Instead they struggle to provide basic safety and security.

This is about life and death. I weep with the parents of Michael Brown, Tamir Rice, and others who have lost their sons and daughters in senseless acts that could have been avoided. We are all affected because when one child suffers, we all suffer.

As Christians, we have just entered into the season of Advent, a time of prayerful anticipation of the coming of the Christ child. We observe this holy time by lighting candles of hope, love, joy, and peace as we remember that we are human beings in need of renewal. In this time of hopeful anticipation, listen to

Jesus' words in the Gospel of Matthew, "Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these."

Our children are creative, they are truthful, they are joyful, they are hopeful, and they are resilient. But we cannot allow them to endure such injustices. We must demand a change in the systemic conditions that harm their lives and their spirits.

Whether we are directly affected or not, we should be outraged by the violent loss of even one young life to whom the kingdom of heaven and earth belong.

The Rev. M. Linda Jaramillo is executive minister of Justice and Witness Ministries in the United Church of Christ.

Dying Words: 'I Can't Breathe, I Can't Breathe'

Standing together for justice

BY MARIAN
WRIGHT
EDELMAN



Democracy cannot breathe, indeed will die, if those enjoined to protect it and uphold the laws snuff it out — with no conse-

quences.

When the grand jury decision in the Eric Garner Case in New York was announced last week, thousands of New Yorkers spontaneously poured onto the streets of the city chanting, "I can't breathe, I can't breathe," the dying words of Garner, an unarmed black man killed by a Staten Island police officer using a deadly chokehold that had been banned by the New York City

police department.

The evidence was clear, captured on a cell phone for all to see, except for the grand jury which refused to indict.

The protestors spoke for all of us around the country. No men, women or children can breathe in America right now when black men and boys are routinely killed with impunity by police officers.

All Americans want justice, and in the wake of the killings in Ferguson and Cleveland and

New York, we all need to demand justice for all Americans by continuing to stand together in strategic nonviolent protest.

Attorney General Eric Holder's action to open a civil rights investigation into Garner's case is a step in the right direction. The call by Michael Brown's parents, and now President Obama, to equip police officers across the country with cameras is also a step in the right direction. Retrain-

ing the police will help a lot, but will not solve our deep systemic racial problems that we continue to ignore at our peril.

In every town and every city we need sustained nonviolent action. We need to work together to fix our broken system of justice and to make America live up to her creed and respect for all under the law.

Marian Wright Edelman is president of the Children's Defense Fund.

Immigration Action Step in the Right Direction

Our nation needs to do better

BY KAYSE JAMA

For many years, the immigrant and refugee movement has worked tirelessly to ensure our families stay together.



President Obama's recent executive action on immigration will provide some administrative relief from deportation starting in early 2015 for undocumented immigrants who have been living in the United States for at least five years, have no criminal record, and who have a child who is a

United States citizen.

In addition, the President's action will expand the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals program, which has provided temporary status for some DREAMers.

Our ask has always been simple: We want humane comprehensive immigration reform that includes a pathway to citizenship for all 11.2 million aspiring citizens. Despite our broken immigration system, Congress has chosen not to act, leaving millions of families in legal limbo.

While we recognize the im-

portance of the relief that the President's decision will provide for some, his actions fall short of what is needed. Temporary relief helps hard working families to stay together

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and legally work here, but there are many others left behind, and this is only a temporary

measure that can be revoked.

The majority of undocumented immigrants will not benefit from the President's Deferred Action criteria set, including the parents of

continue to be torn apart, and our border will continue to be militarized.

Our nation needs to do better for these aspiring citizens, and we need to hold our lawmakers accountable on what they do, and what they fail to do.

We as a community believe that we have shared fate, and we will continue to work together across cultural lines to demand comprehensive immigration reform. Justice can be deferred, but not denied.

Kayse Jama is executive director of the Center for Intercultural Organizing in north Portland.