



Open Letter to the People of the United States of America

July 20, 2015

Dear Family, Friends, Colleagues:

If you pick any moment in our recent or ancient history, you can find a series of events that reflect turbulent times; a period where individuals or communities were misunderstood, victimized, or over-powered. On one hand, today is no different than any other period of history, and on the other hand, it is extremely different. In the United States, we have never before experienced the unprecedented use of technology to broadcast images and video of violence against Black women, men, and children, with actual footage of fatal shootings, as we have in the past few years, and in particular this past year. And though there was no viral video associated, the images of the grieving families, the funerals, and of the murderer responsible for the massacre at Emmanuel AME Church in Charleston, SC continue to tell a story of a nation in crisis. The constant consumption of viral videos, and more importantly, what the content is affirming for some, revealing to others, is leaving many of us with feelings of hopelessness, anger, fear, numbness, and futility. Many of us are trying to deal with or escape from deep-rooted stress, guilt, and blunt trauma to our psyches.

Though we are surrounded by chaos and injustice and though the subject of race continues to be complicated and seemingly indecipherable for many Americans, we at World Trust are committed to expanding the conversation. We hold firmly that a more racially just society is within our grasp if we are willing to go deep, beyond individualized snap judgements, clichés, assumptions, unexamined feelings, and actions. We must look systemically and understand the structural relationships that consistently churn out inequities.

This is why we have created the **Summer of #JusticeAndRacialHealing** public awareness and social media campaign. The purpose is to flip the regular conversation about race on its head so that we can access a meaningful and more nuanced conversation that leads to a deeper understanding and analysis about the impact of racism on our society. Racism is killing us and preventing us as a society from reaching our maximum potential. The campaign will offer the potential to



define and explain, affirm and confront, as well as comfort and soothe a society that is deeply damaged by racism.

How will we create this awareness about justice and racial healing— and what is the point?

Over the next eight weeks and via our social media platforms, we will release a series of short but thought-provoking film clips about race. All of the clips are from our library, including a clip viewed more than 1.3 million times on our [YouTube Channel](#). Others will be newly released. This joint word-of-mouth and social media campaign will be co-lead by some of our friends who believe in the value of this work too, including Dr. Joy DeGruy, John Powell, Fania Davis, Van Jones, Asha Bandele and many others.

The purpose of the campaign is very simple: We intend to play a part in interrupting the narrow and superficial chatter about race that has kept us stuck in ignorance, fear, anger, and despair. At World Trust, for nearly 30 years, film has been our means to impact relationships and policies, prompting new narratives that ignite love, justice and structural change.

Please join the campaign by watching the film clips on social media, discussing them with your community members in person and online, commenting on our threads, sharing the clips, and using the hashtags [#JusticeAndRacialHealing](#) [#WorldTrust](#) and [#YesJusticeYesPeace](#).

Here are our social media links: [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), and [YouTube](#) and on [LinkedIn](#).

Towards Love and Justice,

Shakti Butler, Ph.D.
Founder and President