

STL Disciples Summit on Racial Justice
Saturday, September 19, 2015
Agenda

8:30am – Continental Breakfast

9am-3pm – Summit

9am...Opening Worship

9:30am...What happened in Ferguson: stories & reflections

10:45am...BREAK

11am-12pm...Mini-Conversations on Race

12-12:45pm...Working LUNCH: Mini-Conversations continue

12:45-1:30pm...What can we do as local congregations?

: 1:30pm...BREAK

1:45-2:45pm...Developing Protocols Together: Panel

2:45pm...Closing Worship

3pm...Prayer Walk to Myers' Memorial

Community Work on Policing to Protect and Serve All Citizens

As those who seek to be the “beloved community” that the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. called us to be, we find our grounding in scripture: In Luke 4:18-19a, Jesus says:

“The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to bring good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free, to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor.” (NRSV)

From the Prophet Jeremiah we hear:

“This is what the Lord says: Go down to the palace of the king of Judah and proclaim this message there: Hear the word of the Lord to you, king of Judah, you who sit on David’s throne – you, your officials and your people who come through these gates. This is what the Lord says: Do what is just and right. Rescue from the hand of the oppressor the one who has been robbed. Do no wrong or violence to the foreigner, the fatherless or the widow, and do not shed innocent blood in this place. (Jeremiah 22:1-3 NIV)

Several congregations have chosen to focus on the assurance of “equal protection under the law.” One aspect of this attention to the criminal justice system is policing. We feel a responsibility to help our communities build and support police departments that provide fair and just policing in every community, to create police departments who “serve and protect” all of our citizens. In light of events in the St. Louis area and across the country in which a high number young black men and women have died in police involved shootings or in police custody, and in light of our communities’ experiences of increasing militarization of police, and use of excessive force, many citizens have expressed apprehension of law enforcement.

As a community, we value and need good policing. We want every citizen to be able to have faith in their police departments. And we want our police departments to have the support of all of our citizens.

Congregations have chosen to work toward this end in a variety of ways:

1. Educate ourselves about policing in the U.S. – its history and ethical perspectives. An excellent resource is Dr. Tobias Winwright, professor at St. Louis University with a family background in policing and study of ethics in law enforcement. (see resources below)
2. Gather information on current policing and the criminal justice system in the U.S. in relation to black persons, and regarding use of force. Bring this information into our work to help our municipal governments improve policing in our communities.
3. Gather information regarding the racial/ethnic makeup of the city council, police department, and other governing and implementing bodies in your community. Help these to become reflective of the community they serve.

4. Building relationship with our local police through conversations, attending district police/community meetings, helping to facilitate community and neighborhood conversations with police leadership.
5. Work together with other congregations and faith organizations (ecumenically and interfaith) to call for Civilian Oversight Boards for police departments in every municipality.
6. Work with municipalities to create true community policing in which police officers are a part of our communities and know the people they are called to serve and protect.
7. Help to implement thorough and effective anti-racism/ anti-bias training and anti-racist systemic support for police.
8. Host forums in which local government leaders and police are engaged in listening and sharing with members of the community. Work together with police to determine how we as a community can build trust and effective policing.

This list is, of course, not exhaustive; rather it is a place to begin engaging in productive change.

Resources:

- 1) Bring in a speaker and create an opportunity for Q&A and discussion: Dr. Tobias Winright, Hubert Mäder Endowed Chair in Health Care Ethics at St. Louis University. Studied Theological Ethics at University of Notre Dame. Both family background in policing and study of history and ethics in policing. Excellent resource as a speaker.
- 2) Gather a group in your congregation and/or community to read The New Jim Crow by Michelle Alexander. A study/discussion guide and an action guide are also available.
- 3) Research principles and guidelines that have been set for policing. One such resource is the U.S. Department of Justice Community Relations Service Principles of Good Policing: Avoiding Violence Between Police and Citizens <http://www.justice.gov/archive/crs/pubs/principlesofgoodpolicingfinal092003.pdf>
- 4) Some police districts hold regular meetings open to the community. Members of congregations and community members attending these meetings on a regular basis are able to build relationships through which trust may build and community input makes a difference.
- 5) Go to Forward Through Ferguson (the Ferguson Commission Report, released in September 2015) at www.forwardthroughferguson.org. The entire report provides essential context. Pages 24 -29 address Police Reform specifically.
- 6) Join Campaign Zero. **We can live in a world where the police don't kill people** by limiting police **interventions**, improving community **interactions**, and ensuring **accountability**. <http://www.joincampaignzero.org/>

Sacred Conversations On Race

*How long, LORD? Will you hide yourself forever?
How long will your wrath burn like fire?
Remember how fleeting is my life.
For what futility you have created all humanity! (Psalm 89:46-47)*

They have healed the wound of my people lightly, crying "Peace, Peace" when there is no peace. (Jeremiah 6:14)

Living in the aftermath of Ferguson has changed us all. Protests, buildings were burned, and other lives were devastated as they lost their businesses or jobs, the racial inequality of this region made bare for the whole nation to watch. The devastation opens a window to the shared humanity of this moment and invites each of us to acknowledge the pain around us – not just in the autumn of 2014, but throughout the history of America. In the wake of so much disappointment, many quickly called for **healing**. None of us wants to endure pain longer than necessary. If we pay attention to that medical metaphor, we surface some wisdom. Healing starts with first assessing the reality, as well as possibilities. Sacred conversations call us to assess reality.

Congregations have chosen to work toward this end in a variety of ways:

1. Join a Sacred Conversation on Race in your area. Recommend this is done with trained facilitators, and with diverse congregations. The process one organization followed:
 - a. Session One: Conversation within the local church
 - b. Session Two: Conversation with at least one congregation of a different ethnic group than your congregation
 - c. Session Three: A planning meeting to act together after you've learned together
2. Schedule Anti-Racism Training for your church and community
3. Visit another congregation for worship or attend programs like bible study
4. Attend a White Privilege Conference
5. Read and discuss the Ferguson commission final report

Resources:

<http://www.reconciliationministry.org>

http://www.ucc.org/justice_racism

www.mcustl.org

<http://www.stlpositivechange.org>

Books:

Ferguson and Faith, Leah Gunning Francis

New Jim Crow, Michelle Alexander

Pre-Post- Racial America, Sandhya Rani Jha

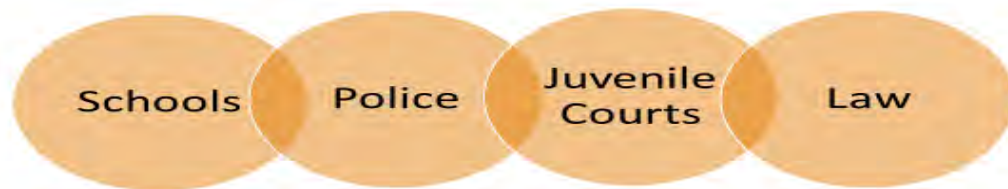
School to Prison Pipeline

“If anyone causes one of these little ones--those who believe in me--to stumble, it would be better for them to have a large millstone hung around their neck and to be drowned in the depths of the sea.” Matthew 18:6

“I was naked, and you gave me clothing. I was sick, and you cared for me. I was in prison, and you visited me.” Matthew 25:36

An epidemic that is plaguing schools and family court systems across the nation. Children, students are suspended, expelled or even arrested providing them entry into the juvenile justice system and some to the adult prison system. Statistics reflect that these policies disproportionately target students of color and those with a history of abuse, neglect, poverty or learning disabilities. The pipeline interconnects several systems:

Feeds to the Pipeline



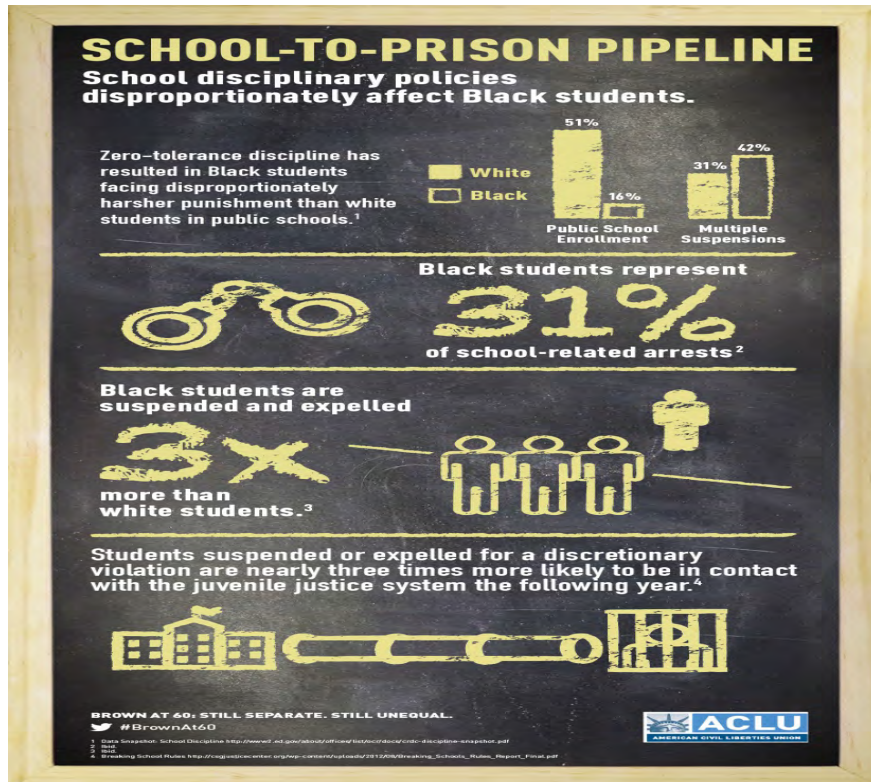
Resources:

Office Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (www.ojjdp.gov)

Clayton County System of Care (claytoncountysystemofcare.org)

Disrupting the School-to-Prison Pipeline, edited by Sofia Bahena

The School-to-Prison Pipeline: Structuring Legal Reform, by Catherine Kim and Daniel Losen



How Congregations Can Respond

- 1) Connect with your local school and advocate for implementation of school-wide restorative justice practices
- 2) Decrease school suspensions, replace with parent conferencing, counseling, incentives
- 3) Grassroots organizing to create pressure at the local, state and federal
- 4) Introduce another model like “Community Schools” with wrap-around services like healthcare, for low-income communities of color
- 5) Reducing school referrals to Juvenile Justice System
- 6) Address juveniles in discussion about racial profiling and policing practices
- 7) Reform standards for confinement, replace with community-based services
- 8) Reform juvenile representation policies and practices/gender specific needs
- 9) Create reentry programs for juveniles returning from juvenile detention facilities, including church mentoring
- 10) Address the unconscious racial and other biases that influence decisions in these systems by asking for data from these systems and holding official accountable to public score cards.
- 11) Visit and/or build relationships with local juvenile or family court.

PROTOCOL FOR FUTURE EMERGENCY JUSTICE RESPONSES:

Incidents for prayerful consideration: any high-impact (lives endangered, basic DoC principles compromised...) justice crisis where Disciple communities exist

- *First 24-48 hours:*
 - Affected Regional Office contacts local congregations to assess situation and needs
 - The Reconciliation Office contacts Regional Office and local Anti-Racism, Pro-Reconciling Teams for information and guidance
 - DJAN contacts any DJAN members in the affected area
 - General Ministries contact board members and staff in affected area
 - Congregations and other Disciple communities (i.e. DoC schools, social service ministries, etc.) contact Regional Office and use any shared regional communication tools to share information and offers of assistance in the immediate area. Regional Moderator monitors these conversations as well.
- *First 72 hours:*
 - OGMP has joint conversation with affected Region (regional ministers/moderator), Reconciliation, DJAN, and General Ministries. Immediate needs are determined. Names of those who might be immediately dispatched to the area are shared. Wider church resources and support are pledged.
 - OGMP issues public response in form of letter or public online post. Reconciliation posts initial resources for Disciple communities to show solidarity.
 - Region hosts local gathering with all concerned Disciples to share collected information, assessing crisis and its justice-related realities/needs. If possible, GMP and/or Director of Reconciliation attends.
 - Connections are made with congregations/Disciple leaders nationally who have experienced similar crises. Ways that other Disciples can support the affected Disciple community are gathered and shared with wider church.
- *First 7 days:* OGMP/Reconciliation coordinates (with any willing parties) who will be dispatched to the area and when. This person/team should have gifts, knowledge, and skills appropriate to the crisis at hand. DJAN has already expressed interest (via Jack Sullivan) in being one of these dispatched parties. Examples of needed gifts/skills are: community organizing, trauma response/care, disaster response, DoC history and networks, etc.

(continued)

- *Days 3-14:*
 - Dispatched individual, along with GMP and/or Director of Reconciliation when appropriate, arrives in affected area.
 - Gathering of congregations/communities is planned, led by regional leaders and dispatched individual(s).
- *Days 14-30:* Local strategic gathering of Disciples takes place, addressing critical questions:
 - What is the issue at hand? What does our faith call us to do?
 - What relevant assets do we already have? What help do we need?
 - Who is already working on this?
 - What can we contribute?
 - How can we show solidarity?
 - How can other Disciples show their solidarity with us?
 - How will we continue to share information?

A Proposal to the College of Regional Ministers from the Heartland and ROSES Clusters

*...BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the General Assembly calls upon **the College of Regional Ministers** to be especially attentive to the ongoing pastoral care needs of Disciples ethnic minority congregations within their regions, endeavoring to provide pertinent training and support for pastors and leaders who are trying to help their congregations cope with acts of racial violence such as the recent tragedies; and...*
(excerpt from GA-1539 Charleston and Beyond: Terror, Intimidation and the Burning of Black Churches)

On August 24-25, 2015, Regional Ministers from the Heartland and ROSES Clusters gathered in St. Louis. Those in attendance were: Rick Spleth (Indiana), Katrina Palan (Nebraska), Paxton Jones (Kansas), Donna Rose-Heim (Kansas City), Penny Ross-Corona (Mid-America), Coretha Loughridge (Southwest), and Pam Holt (Oklahoma). During part of our time together, we had a substantial conversation with three St. Louis pastors (Jacque Foster – Compton Heights Christian Church, Jeff Moore – Webster Groves Christian Church, and Margie Pride – Memorial Blvd. Christian Church) about racial issues in the wake of Ferguson, the Shaw Neighborhood, and other national crises. The three pastors each gave a presentation that included their personal experiences during these events in St. Louis, with particular focus on the different ways our congregations and pastors responded initially and are continuing to respond. They also reflected with us on the kinds of involvement and support pastors and congregations need and what the responsibility/call of Regional Ministers could be.

During our time with Rev. Foster, Rev. Moore, and Rev. Pride (and also later in our meeting), the Regional Ministers brainstormed/shared ways in which our Regions are now and/or hope to address racial reconciliation issues, including ways in which we are/or could be administering Reconciliation Funds.

From the time with the St. Louis pastors and from our reflections afterward, three recommendations emerged:

1. The St. Louis pastors have suggested that during a crisis (such as Ferguson) a person trained in community organizing be made available (if requested) to be on sight, walking alongside of local pastors and congregations, providing presence and expertise. There was strong support for partnering with the UCCs in this effort, as the UCCs did send such a person following the shooting of Michael Brown. It was suggested that compensation for such a person could come from

the pooling of some of the Regions' Reconciliation offering funds. If this were to become a permanent staff position, this person could spend the time in between crises assisting Regions with Pro-reconciling/Anti-racism Training.

2. Another suggestion from the St. Louis pastors centered on the tremendous need for grief and trauma counseling following such a crisis. A system would need to be set up in advance as to how to provide such counseling if requested. This could be another possible use of Reconciliation funds.
3. Upon further reflection, the Heartland and ROSES Regional Ministers also recommended that we initiate a denomination wide recruitment and training of volunteer teams who could be available during a crisis for the work described in #1 and #2. These teams could function in the place of #1 and #2, or they could function as a long-term plan to ensure that the ministries outlined in #1 and #2 remain in place. (It is important to note that the current PR/AR training is mostly an awareness training, which we should absolutely continue to promote in all of our Regions. This second kind of training would focus on specific skills needed in a crisis situation). When a crisis occurs, upon request from local congregations, a team could be deployed. The training for such teams could take place in various locations across the U.S. and Canada. Costs for the training, as well as the expenses for a deployed team, could come from some of the Regions' Reconciliation offering funds.

In order to accomplish these recommendations, there was much support for developing partnerships with the UCCs, the AMEs, our Reconciliation office, the African-American Convocation, and other General Church ministries.

If the College of Regional Ministers embraces this proposal, the next step would include the appointment of a task force to develop a plan and budget.

Disciples Summit Action Planning Sheet

Congregation or Connection: _____

Point Person: _____ E-mail: _____

Phone: _____

What have you heard today that you want to take action on?

When will you talk to your clergy and key lay leaders for their support? Date:

Do you want us to follow-up with you about this? YES or NO

Potential Team Members:

What are the main questions you'll need to research?

What obstacles can you anticipate?

Partner organizations (neighborhood associations, other congregations, other community groups, etc.)

Create a timeline (due dates for each area):

First team meeting	Issue decision	Meeting with officials	Action

St. Louis-Area Disciples Summit on Racial Justice Evaluation Form

Your comments will help improve this summit model for other Disciples working for racial justice.

Please take a couple of minutes to complete this evaluation form.

Name: (optional) _____

Please rate	1 = poor		3 = average		5 = excellent	
Location: Compton Heights (City Location)	1	2	3	4	5	5
Hospitality: Food and Snacks	1	2	3	4	5	5
Worship Experiences: Morning/Closing	1	2	3	4	5	5
Session One: What Happened in Ferguson?	1	2	3	4	5	5
Session Two: A Mini-Conversation on Race	1	2	3	4	5	5
Session Three: Mission First & STL Congregations' Current Work	1	2	3	4	5	5
Session Four: What Next?	1	2	3	4	5	5
Do you feel equipped to begin work on racial justice work in your local church and community?	1	2	3	4	5	5
Do you feel more comfortable having conversations about race and white privilege?	1	2	3	4	5	5
If you are doing racial justice work already, did this summit bolster your current work?	1	2	3	4	5	5
Overall evaluation for the summit	1	2	3	4	5	5

1. How will the information gained at the summit aid your work?

2. What was missing from the summit for you, if anything?

St. Louis-Area Disciples Summit on Racial Justice Evaluation Form

3. Please list any speakers you would recommend for future summit work:

4. Why did you come to the summit?

5. What session was most helpful? Why?

6. What session was least helpful? Why?

7. How did hear about this summit? Email Word-of-Mouth Internet
Other: _____

8. Please rate the RSVP process: Excellent Good Fair

9. Additional comments:

Thank you!