Dismantling The New Jim Crow

WHEREAS, Paul in Galatians 3:26 writes, “You are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus,” and in verse 28, he continues, “There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus”;

WHEREAS, Paul in Galatians 5:1 declares to us that “It is for freedom that Christ has set us free” and exhorts us to “Stand firm, then, and do not let yourself be burdened again by a yoke of slavery”;

WHEREAS, the prophet Isaiah admonishes “those who make unjust laws, . . . who issue oppressive decrees, to deprive the poor of their rights and withhold justice from the oppressed . . .” (Isaiah 10:1-2);

WHEREAS, the acceptance of Black people of African descent, as children of God entitled to “Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness,” has been a problem for our country as manifested in the three-fifths clause of The Constitution Of The United States, in the institution of slavery, and in the brutal enforcement of Jim Crow laws;

WHEREAS, the will of the American people on this issue has been enunciated through the sacrifice of the Civil War, the abolition of slavery, the amending of The Constitution, and the overthrow of Jim Crow;

WHEREAS, notwithstanding the manifestation of the will of the American people, the enforcement of the so-called War On Drugs has stripped and continues to deprive millions of African American men of basic rights guaranteed to other citizens of The United States;
WHEREAS, millions of African American men are currently under control of the criminal justice system,\(^8\) unable to vote or to serve on juries but able to be discriminated against legally in employment, housing, and federal assistance;\(^9\)

WHEREAS, African Americans are prosecuted more often, receive longer sentences, and serve longer terms than White Americans for violations of laws prohibiting the use or distribution of drugs;\(^10\)

WHEREAS, even though the rate of drug use among White and Black Americans is the same, men of color comprise sixty-six percent of people in prison for using drugs;\(^11\)

WHEREAS, young African American men comprise fourteen percent of young men in The United States, yet comprise forty percent of young men in prison;\(^12\)

WHEREAS, the Supreme Court of The United States has held that such glaring disparities are inadmissible as reasons to bring action to remedy such injustices,\(^13\) even in states in which ninety percent of people imprisoned for violations of drug laws are African Americans;\(^14\)

WHEREAS, General Synods of The United Church Of Christ have passed resolutions and pronouncements calling the Church to action to help find solutions to the resurgence of racism, the seemingly endless War on Drugs, the problem of mass incarceration and the growth of the prison-industrial complex, and the reality of racial and class bias in arrests and sentencing, as well as resolutions and pronouncements calling the Church to seek justice in policing, housing, and employment for people who have served felony sentences, to address inadequate legal representation for the indigent, to provide training and
rehabilitation for prison inmates, and to restore voting rights for people who have served their sentences.\(^{15}\)

WHEREAS, the War on Drugs continues, with the result that The United States, with only five percent of the world’s population, incarcerates twenty-five percent of the world’s prisoners, the highest percentage of incarceration in the world;

WHEREAS, in some of our largest cities, the high school dropout rate is over fifty percent;\(^{16}\) in public schools across America, only ten percent of eighth grade Black males read at or above a proficient level;\(^{17}\) and, in our national capital, it is predicted that three of every four young African American males can expect to serve time in prison;\(^{18}\) and

WHEREAS, more African American men are disenfranchised today than in 1870, the year the Fifteenth Amendment to the Constitution was ratified;\(^{19}\)

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Central Atlantic Conference of The United Church Of Christ supports and reaffirms General Synod Resolutions and Pronouncements calling the Church to action to focus attention on, and to help find solutions for, eliminating racism in all its guises, ending the War on Drugs, stopping mass incarceration and the growth of the prison-industrial complex, ending racial and class bias in arrests and sentencing, implementing justice in policing, housing, and employment for people who have served felony sentences, addressing inadequate legal representation for the indigent, providing training and rehabilitation for prison inmates, and restoring voting rights for people who have served their sentences.\(^{20}\)
BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that each association and congregation of
the Central Atlantic Conference be encouraged to:

1. Educate its members how, under the New Jim Crow, African
American men are being marginalized by being forced into a caste
of second class citizens who have no right to vote or to serve on a
jury and who are barred from receiving federal assistance or public
housing;\(^2\)

2. Take action to dismantle the institutional support and insidious
effects of the New Jim Crow;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that new emphasis be placed on the
implementation of the Prudential Resolution, Sacred Conversations on
Race, approved by General Synod 27;\(^2\) and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that this resolution, if approved, be put in
the proper form by the Board of Directors of The Central Atlantic
Conference for submission to General Synod 30.

\(^1\) U.S. Const. art. 1, sec. 2.
\(^2\) Lerone Bennett, Jr., *Before the Mayflower: A History of Black America*.
\(^4\) U.S. Const. amend. XIII.
\(^5\) U.S. Const. amend. XIV, XV.
\(^8\) Ibid., 57.
\(^9\) Ibid., 59.
RESOURCES


8. The Sentencing Project.org.

9. United Church Of Christ General Resolutions. (There are about 20)

10. United States Department of Education. “National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP).”

This resolution has been endorsed by the Central Atlantic Conference Board of Directors.