

Dismantling The New Jim Crow

1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24

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,¹ in the institution of slavery,² and in the brutal enforcement of Jim Crow laws;³

WHEREAS, the will of the American people on this issue has been enunciated through the sacrifice of the Civil War, the abolition of slavery,⁴ the amending of The Constitution,⁵ and the overthrow of Jim Crow;⁶

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;⁷

R-1

25 WHEREAS, millions of African American men are currently under
26 control of the criminal justice system,⁸ unable to vote or to serve on
27 juries but able to be discriminated against legally in employment,
28 housing, and federal assistance;⁹

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

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

35 WHEREAS, young African American men comprise fourteen percent of
36 young men in The United States, yet comprise forty percent of young
37 men in prison;¹²

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

42 WHEREAS, General Synods of The United Church Of Christ have passed
43 resolutions and pronouncements calling the Church to action to help
44 find solutions to the resurgence of racism, the seemingly endless War
45 on Drugs, the problem of mass incarceration and the growth of the
46 prison-industrial complex, and the reality of racial and class bias in
47 arrests and sentencing, as well as resolutions and pronouncements
48 calling the Church to seek justice in policing, housing, and employment
49 for people who have served felony sentences, to address inadequate
50 legal representation for the indigent, to provide training and

R-1

51 rehabilitation for prison inmates, and to restore voting rights for people
52 who have served their sentences;¹⁵

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

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

62 WHEREAS, more African American men are disenfranchised today than
63 in 1870, the year the Fifteenth Amendment to the Constitution was
64 ratified;¹⁹

65 THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Central Atlantic Conference of
66 The United Church Of Christ supports and reaffirms General Synod
67 Resolutions and Pronouncements calling the Church to action to focus
68 attention on, and to help find solutions for, eliminating racism in all its
69 guises, ending the War on Drugs, stopping mass incarceration and the
70 growth of the prison-industrial complex, ending racial and class bias in
71 arrests and sentencing, implementing justice in policing, housing, and
72 employment for people who have served felony sentences, addressing
73 inadequate legal representation for the indigent, providing training and
74 rehabilitation for prison inmates, and restoring voting rights for people
75 who have served their sentences;²⁰

76 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that each association and congregation of
77 the Central Atlantic Conference be encouraged to:

- 78 1. Educate its members how, under the New Jim Crow, African
79 American men are being marginalized by being forced into a caste
80 of second class citizens who have no right to vote or to serve on a
81 jury and who are barred from receiving federal assistance or public
82 housing;²¹
- 83 2. Take action to dismantle the institutional support and insidious
84 effects of the New Jim Crow;

85 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that new emphasis be placed on the
86 implementation of the Prudential Resolution, Sacred Conversations on
87 Race, approved by General Synod 27;²² and

88 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that this resolution, if approved, be put in
89 the proper form by the Board of Directors of The Central Atlantic
90 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*.

³ Douglas Blackmon, *Slavery by Another Name: The Re-enslavement of Black People in America from the Civil War to World War II*. (New York: Doubleday, 2008); John Hope Franklin and Alfred Moss, *From Slavery to Freedom: A History of African Americans*, 8th edition. (New York: Knopf, 2008); and Gilbert King, *Devil in the Grove: Thurgood Marshall, the Groveland Boys, and the Dawn of a New America*. (New York: Harper, 2012).

⁴ U.S. Const. amend. XIII.

⁵ U.S. Const. amend. XIV, XV.

⁶ *Brown v. Board of Education*, 347 U.S. 483 (1954) and The Civil Rights Act of 1964, Pub. L. 83-352, 78 Stat. 241 (1964).

⁷ Michelle Alexander, *The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness*. (New York: The New Press, 2010), 59.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 57.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 59.

¹⁰ Human Rights Watch, "Punishment and Prejudice: Racial Disparities in the War on Drugs." HRW Reports, Vol. 12, No. 2 (May, 2000).

-
- ¹¹ The Sentencing Project – sentencingproject.org/template/page.cfar?id=122.
- ¹² The Henry J. Kaiser Family Foundation, “Race, Ethnicity & Health Care.” July, 2006.
- ¹³ McClesky v. Kemp, 481 U.S. 279 (1989).
- ¹⁴ Human Rights Watch.
- ¹⁵ “Prophetic Actions and Social Policy Statements, 1957-2011.” Report to the Board of Justice and Witness Ministries of the United Church of Christ, (March, 2012), 6,7
- ¹⁶ Michael Gerson, “The Overlooked Plight of Black Males.” *The Washington Post*, December 13, 2012.
- ¹⁷ US Department of Education’s National Assessment of Educational Progress.
- ¹⁸ Michelle Alexander, 6.
- ¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 175.
- ²⁰ “Prophetic Actions and Social Policy Statements, 1957-2011,” 6.
- ²¹ Michelle Alexander, 17.
- ²² “Sacred Conversations on Race.” General Synod 27, 2009.

RESOURCES

1. Alexander, Michelle. *The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness*. New York: The New Press. 2010.
2. Blackmon, Douglas A. *Slavery By Another Name: The Re-Enslavement of Black Americans from the Civil War to World War II*. Doubleday.
3. Gerson, Michael. “The Overlooked Plight of Black Males.” *The Washington Post*, December 13, 2012.
4. “Incarceration in The United States”, Wikipedia
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/incarceration_in_the_United_States.
5. The Henry J. Kaiser Family Foundation. “Race, Ethnicity And Health Care.” July, 2000.
6. Nagel, William G. *The New Red Barn: A Critical look at the Modern American Prison*. Walker & Co.
7. Rothman, David J. *The Discovery of the Asylum*. Google e-Book.
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.