

2015 Charter for Racial Justice Program Wisconsin Conference United Methodist Women

- Who: For all units/local organizations/circles in Wisconsin Conference.
- What: A program geared to Wisconsin about issues of race. Duration 30-45 minutes.
- Where: At any place that United Methodist Women meet.
- When: Any time in 2015 and after.
- Why:
 - *To become aware of what is happening in our own communities.
 - *To become more aware of people hurting around us.
 - *To be able to live peacefully in our neighborhoods, both local and extended.
 - *To get credit for Mission Today activities list.
- How: By using this prepared program in your local unit/organization/circle.

“Prison, Policing and Profiling: Criminalization of Communities of Color”

Focus statement from the Charter for Racial Justice: (read together as directed)

Left side: BECAUSE WE BELIEVE (#4) racism robs all human beings of their wholeness and is used as a justification for social, economic and political exploitation.

Right side: WE WILL (#6) Work for the development and implementation of [local and/or State] policies to protect the civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights of all people...

Worship

OPENING HYMN #405 Seek Ye First the Kingdom of God

SCRIPTURE P. 757 (in red hymnal) Psalm 25:1-5

Prayer (**Unison**): We come to this day with concerns for our fellow citizens in Wisconsin ... those of varied colored skin, varied spiritual backgrounds, those with no church affiliations, those who are privileged by race, color or creed! So where do we stand, sit, walk, talk to make it just for everyone? We pray for good listening ears, open hearts and thoughts to bring us together to help make a difference in this state of Wisconsin. Many needs prevail for many of our citizens and non citizens of our state. God, continue to nudge United Methodist Women and members of the United Methodist Church to be your hands, heart and helpers for and with one another. Amen

Looking at our 3 Ps: Prison, Policing and Profiling

Instructions: Enter a time of learning and discussion.

Prison

According to the 2010 US Decennial Census, Wisconsin has the highest incarceration rate of African American individuals at 12.8 %. The Native American incarceration rate in Wisconsin is 7.6%, more than twice the national average. Wisconsin and Minnesota have about the same population but Wisconsin incarcerates more than twice the number of individuals incarcerated in Minnesota. Hispanics are incarcerated at 1.5 times the rate of non-Hispanics whites in Wisconsin.

	Wisconsin	Minnesota
2010 Population	5,686,986	5,303,925
2010 Prison Population	22,019	9,429
Imprisonment rate (2010, per 100,000)	387.2	177.8

From 11x15 WISDOM 12/10/14 PowerPoint – 11x15 Blueprint for Ending Mass Incarceration in Wisconsin

Wisconsin has a higher arrest rate for juveniles and adults than the US average.

Juvenile arrests rate/1,000 juveniles

WI	2005	2010	US	2005	2010
Black	430	329		84	71
White	145	98		41	33

Madison Poverty Summit 9/30/2014

Adult arrest rate/1000 adults

WI	2005	2010	US	2005	2010
Black	252	230		86	82
White	64	53		33	33

Madison Poverty Summit 9/30/14

Fundamental issues of injustice frame and feed the scandal of mass incarceration in Wisconsin. Injustice is reflected in our school, transportation, health policies and more. Basic racial and economic justice issues are intertwined with mass incarceration. (11x15 Blueprint for ending mass incarceration in Wisconsin)

Discussion Questions:

Why do you think Wisconsin incarcerates twice as many people as Minnesota? What might account for Wisconsin's incarceration rate for Native Americans being twice the National average incarceration rate? How do racial and economic injustices affect the incarceration rates in Wisconsin?

Policing

(From the Wisconsin United Methodist Women's website, Racial Justice Program page <http://www.wisconsinumw.org>, download and print out editorials discussing the shooting in Milwaukee of Dontre Hamilton and/or in Madison of Tony Robinson). If your group is large enough, break into groups and give each group one editorial to discuss. Otherwise choose one editorial for the whole group to discuss together.

Discussion Questions:

How do such incidents harm both police and racial minority communities? What might need to change in order to avoid such incidents or gain better outcomes? What might the role of the church be?

Profiling

Choose one of the following topics to read and discuss:

Black experience: In reflecting on the shooting of Trayvon Martin, President Obama listed some of the ways in which young black (African, African-American and mixed race) men are viewed. He talked about how young black men are followed when they walk into a store. He said he was. He talked about how people lock their car doors when young black men come into view. He said it happened to him before he became a U.S. senator. He talked about how women in elevators clutch their purses when a young black man enters. He has experience this reaction himself.

Hmong experience: (From the Wisconsin United Methodist Women's website, Racial Justice Program page <http://www.wisconsinumw.org>, download and print out information on Hmong hunter and shooting in Wisconsin).

Discussion questions:

Do you have these reactions or similar reactions to certain groups of people? What assumptions might motivate such reactions? Are these reactions Christian? If not, what might we change?

Experiences in Wisconsin

Instructions: If you have someone present who is comfortable sharing their own experience with prison, policing or profiling as a non-White racial/ethnic person in Wisconsin, feel free to share that story in place of or in addition to these below. Otherwise, choose 1 or more of these stories as time allows to be read to the group. Use the discussion questions or other questions which arise to guide you in spiritual discussion.

Native American:

Did you know Wisconsin has more Native Americans in prison than any other state; about 13% of Native American men? Professor John Pawasarat of the University of Wisconsin Milwaukee has studied the numbers of incarcerated. The explosion occurred since 2000 when the "three strikes" program was initiated.

Issues that may contribute to high recidivism include: few jobs available on release from prison, lack of adequate representation in court, few Indians on the Board of Pardon, Indians' cultural tendency to not speak up, and lack of knowledge of the legal system.

Facts: There are 565 federally recognized tribal nations and 310 reservations. Most Native Americans live off the reservation. The reservation remains the cultural center and teaches native languages, crafts, dances and ceremonies.

Some tribes have a court system and judges to deal with lesser crimes. Felonies are dealt with in the Federal Court System.

The judge at Red Cliff reservation in Northern Wisconsin is Dr. Joe Corbine, the lay pastor of the Odanah United Methodist Church.

African-American (written by young man at Northcott Neighborhood House):

I am a 23-year-old black male who lives in Milwaukee. I was born in Chicago, but we moved to Milwaukee hoping to find a better, safer place to live. My siblings and I were

raised by a loving mother and we are still all very family oriented. We grew up in a comfortable environment but still had to struggle as many families do. I consider myself to be a confident, loveable, laidback individual. I like to laugh. I love my family and friends. I was involved in softball, football and basketball in school, but I was small for my age and at times was picked on which most times resulted in a fight. Although I have finally reached out to my father, he was not involved in my early life. Instead of learning how to be a man from my father, I learned how to be a man from the streets. When asked about my experiences with local police, I wanted to share my story so that others could understand what it's like living as a black man in Milwaukee. In general, most of the police officers are good, easy to interact with, cool. However a lot of them abuse their power; they do stuff because they can and know that if we react in a negative way, we are the ones in trouble. I've had experiences where I could tell by one of the officer's expressions or how they reacted to their partner's treatment of me and/or my friends that they didn't agree with the way we were being treated. However, there's that "blue line" they don't cross, so nothing changes. Young, black men are labeled because of the way we walk, dress, talk what we look like. We are treated differently and get harder sentences if we break the law. Some are jailed for being drug dealers when instead they are just smoking weed, not dealing weed, but someone needs to be blamed so they're handy targets, labeled as dealers and jailed. Often their jail time is longer than even those accused of mistreating children - pedophiles get lesser sentences. If the police see white boys in the neighborhood, they mess with them, telling them to go home, get out of the neighborhood, they don't belong there, they're a disgrace to the white race. Well, some of them do - they live here too. Is it that they're living in black neighborhoods hanging around with blacks that the police don't like?

I was sentenced to prison in 2010 after getting into a fight with a gas station attendant. He called the police and accused me of robbing him. The police didn't investigate, didn't ask me for my story. I was charged and sentenced. I felt out of place, I hadn't robbed that store, hadn't done anything wrong. In prisons, the CO's take sides, have their favorites and give them more opportunities and the one's they help are usually not black. I'm now on probation. If my girlfriend and I have an argument and she walks away and calls the police and say's [sic] I hit her, because I am on probation I'm going to jail no matter if I hit her or not. My probation officer doesn't really help me. They'd rather I go back to jail so they don't have to deal with me. We're not harming anyone, we're hanging around with our friends some of whom may be smoking weed. That doesn't result in violence. And what happens to that weed that's confiscated by police? We see police officers smoking it, it doesn't get put into evidence, nothing is logged in. Another time, I was in a car with friends and we were stopped by police. They told us to get out of the car, checked our ID's, patted us down, looked through the car. Didn't have a reason for stopping us, didn't find anything, told us to get back in the car. But before we could get back into the car, they decided to search the car; they said they found a gun. Since I was on probation, I was the one who was charged - again. It wasn't my gun, it didn't belong to any of us. Turns out it had been left in the police car by someone else at another time.

We are black - and young. Adults say why don't those kids straighten up; it's those kids that are causing trouble. We say, where were you adults when we were kids growing up. We learned from you, you set the example. We hear you saying one thing, and doing another. We need someone to look up to, to support us, to help us get off the streets and get jobs. We need positive role models. We need our fathers. Before I was sent to prison in 2014 I had registered for the Art Institute and was a month away from starting school. I want the same thing any other young people want. I want a good job, want to be independent, want to be a role model for others. I don't have children, but when I do I want to be a good father, be involved my kids' lives. I'm into music now, I want to write inspirational music and talk through my music. I want to tell what it's like to grow up in Milwaukee, to survive. Music is my love, but I do have back-up plans. I'm involved in the jobs program at Northcott Neighborhood House. I went to Northcott when I was younger, used the gym. Now I'm taking advantage of their other programs. I want to maybe own a restaurant some day; I like to experiment with different foods. I know now there are better ways to do things, to change my image. School is key.

We are all human beings and shouldn't be judged by our color, how we dress, how we talk, how we walk. A person's first impression is too often their last impression and we aren't given a chance or opportunities that others may have to leave good and/or lasting impressions.

In this world all we are known by is our name. That's the first thing you receive when you enter the world and the last thing you leave behind. It's the first and last thing people will know or remember you by. I feel there is no such thing as a racist because we are all of the same race and that's the human race. We are all brothers and sisters and if we act like it the world would be a much better place for us as a whole.

Young Women (LEGACY) perspective (written by Rachel Dorf):

There has been a lot of news about Ferguson lately, it seems where ever I go, or whatever I do, I'm hearing something new. Especially on my Facebook and twitter news feeds, my social networks want me to make a stance on the issue. Ferguson is either a clear cut case of institutionalized racism, or Ferguson is an example of the race card being played without regard for the "facts." There is a lot of rage and fighting between these two sides. But as Christians, Christ calls us act with grace. That means praying for a corrupted system and tensions between both sides of the debate. It means instead of cursing those we disagree with, we bless them. It means doing exactly what Christ did for us — extending love even and especially to those who we do not believe have not earned it.

Discussion Questions:

What do you hear in these stories? Do you see a connection between our three Ps (prison, policing and profiling)? Does it surprise you that Wisconsin is so heavily impacted?

What do we do now?

Leader (read for the group or allow time for everyone to read):

In our country in the last year, we have had numerous Black men killed at the hands of police officers. Some of these deaths included 18-year old Michael Brown in August

2014 in Ferguson, MO. On March 5, 2015 two Ferguson police officers resigned following a justice report involving racist email exchanges. Eric Garner died in July after New York City officers put him in a chokehold. A video showed him numerous times saying, “I can’t breathe” which has become a statement repeated by many. 12-year old Tamir Rice in Cleveland was fatally shot when pointing a pellet gun at a playground. Dontre Hamilton was fatally shot by a Milwaukee police officer in April 2014. The officer was fired for ignoring department policy regarding mental illness. The latest killing was Tony Robinson, an unarmed 19-year old in Madison on Friday, March 6. We just read the story of the 23- year old Black male who says, “young, Black men are labeled because of the way we walk, dress, talk... what we look like. We are treated differently and get harder sentences if we break the law.”

You have heard that Wisconsin leads the nation in the incarceration of African-American males 20-24 years old. This is terrible! Rev. Alex Gee, a Pastor of Fountain of Life Covenant Church in Madison says, “My anger is with systems, ignorance, insensitivity, prejudiced views and not with individuals.” He says, “anger is probably what keeps me connected to the dismal realities and staying the course as an activist.” Are you angry about what is in the news lately at the injustices taking place against unarmed Black men? We should be! Do you consider yourself an activist to fight against the statistics above? What is our role as Christians in this mess?

Paul Kivel talks about how being allies to people of color is one of the most important things that can be done to end racism. He says the following is what people of color want from white allies:

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|------------------------------------|--|
| “respect” | “listen” |
| “find out about us” | “don’t make assumptions” |
| “don’t take over” | “stand by my side” |
| “provide information” | “don’t assume you know what’s best for me” |
| “resources” | “your body on the line” |
| “money” | “make mistakes” |
| “take risks” | “honesty” |
| “don’t take it personally” | “talk to other white people” |
| “understanding” | “interrupt [challenge] jokes and comments” |
| “teach your children about racism” | “don’t ask me to speak for my people” |
| “speak up” | |
| “don’t be scared by my anger” | |
| “support” | |

Reflection Question:

What can you do on this list to be an ally to people of color?

Action:

(You may break into small groups to discuss action ideas if your group is large enough). Come up with several (3 or more) things you and/or your unit might do to show “love in action” around our three Ps. You can use the following section as a starting point or address local concerns/resources:

One educator, Connie Titone says that we need to challenge ourselves in order to change and understand ourselves differently from how we might have been taught. She says “we need information, a safe holding environment for open, sometimes confrontational, dialogue, time for reflection and feedback, and strategies and action plans for immediate implementation. Moreover, we need to learn to practice new responses in real settings. This should be required work.”

The fact that you are discussing this right now in your UMW group is wonderful. Possibly you could plan another meeting to continue this conversation. Perhaps you could do some role playing or read a book together addressing some of these issues.

You may want to invite someone to speak to your group from the group WISDOM based out of Milwaukee. They are educating people on the topic of prison inequities in our state. Perhaps you may want to read a good book. You may want to research some of the websites addressing this topic.

Some helpful verses that address the need to end racism are:

God does not show partiality or favoritism and neither should we ([Deuteronomy 10:17](#), [Acts 10:34](#), [Romans 2:11](#)).

We are to love our neighbors as ourselves ([James 2:8](#)).

Jesus teaches in [Matthew 25](#) that whatever we do to the least of His brothers, we do to Him. If we treat a person with contempt, we are mistreating a person created in God’s image; we are hurting someone whom God loves and for whom Jesus died.

As Paul said in [Ephesians 2:14](#), “For he himself is our peace, who has made the two one and has destroyed the barrier, the dividing wall of hostility.”

Christians can help fight prejudice and discrimination by putting their beliefs into action:

- Avoid making judgments about people.
- Make sure equal opportunity policies at work are implemented.
- Make it clear to friends and colleagues that racist jokes are not funny.
- Raise children to share their beliefs that all humans are equally valuable.
- Pray about the problems caused by racism, sexism, etc.
- Join organizations that campaign for equality.
- Help people of color feel welcome, included and respected.
- Vote for policies that are anti-racist and anti-sexist.
- Take part in peaceful demonstrations against racism, sexism, etc.
- Address your personal biases (we all have them; try to be aware of them so that it isn’t a barrier).

Adapted from <http://www.rsrevision.com/GCSE/shortcourse/equality/racism.htm>

Joseph Barndt in Dismantling Racism

Paul Kivel Uprooting Racism

Connie Titone White Reign: Deploying Whiteness in America

Teaching Tolerance - www.tolerance.org

Closing:

CLOSING HYMN #437 This Is My Song

Prayer (**unison**): Hymnal #456 AMEN.

Resources: From the United Methodist Women's reading list:

2015

The Round House (a novel) – Louise Erdrich

Americanah (a novel) – Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie

Kind of Kin (a novel) – Rilla Askew

Deep in the Sahara (Children's book) – Kelly Cunnane

The Chickens Build a Wall (Children's book) – Jean-François Dumont

The Promise (Children's book) – Nicola Davies

Return to Sender (a novel/Youth book) – Julia Alvarez

2014

Dear White America: Letter to a New Minority – Tim Wise

An Invisible Thread: The True Story of an 11-Year Old Panhandler, a Busy Sales Executive and an Unlikely Meeting With Destiny – Laura Schroff and Alex Tresniowski

Yours For Justice, Ida B. Wells: The Daring Life of a Crusading Journalist (Children's book) – Philip Dray

2013

Becoming a Justice Seeking Congregation: Responding to God's Justice Initiative – William K. McElvaney

Outcasts United: An American Town, a Refugee Team, and One Woman's Quest to Make a Difference – Warren St. John

A Country for All: An Immigrant Manifesto – Jorge Ramos

Violet (Children's book) – Tania Duprey Stehlik

Do Hard Things: A Teenage Rebellion Against Low Expectations (Youth book) – Alex and Brett Harris

Free? Stories About Human Rights (Youth book) – David Almond, et. al.

2012

Cesar Chavez: A Photographic Essay – Ilan Stavans

Asylum Denied – David Ngaruri Kenney and Philip G. Schrag

Color-blind: The Rise of Post-racial Politics and the Retreat from Racial Equity – Tim Wise

The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness – Michelle Alexander

The Beatitudes: From Slavery to Civil Rights (Children's book) – Carole Boston Weatherford

Lacey and the African Grandmothers (Youth book) – Sue Farrell Holler

Thanks to all of the contributors and Charter for Racial Justice Members: Beverly Maser, Conference Nominations Chair for worship section, Deborah Pattee section on "What do we do now?" and Hmong shooting story, Ruby Dow, Conference Social Action coordinator for statistics, Billie LaBumbard, Conference Native American Language Coordinator for Native American experience, Cheryl Malko Metro North District President for African-American experience, Rachel Dorf, District LEGACY Women's rep for Young women's perspective, Laura Pfeffer, Conference President for resources section and layout and final edit.