

## WHAT'S NEXT? WHAT CAN YOU DO UPON YOUR RETURN TO OHIO?

**\$** To cover the numerous costs with hosting such a large event, we ask for your financial support. Any gift is welcome, but here are some ways you can give or encourage others to give:

Challenge individuals to give (in increments of \$50 – an amount for each of the 50 years we've been without Dr. King).

Challenge congregations to give, perhaps even taking up a special offering to support this historic event. We are looking for 500 congregations that can give \$500 from mission or justice funds.

Encourage an individual, congregation or organization to be a Justice Bearer and give a gift of \$50,000 or more.

<http://www.rally2endracism.org/donate/>

From the National Council of the Churches in Christ USA STRATEGY-



**Racism ravages our national life.** Fifty years after Dr. King's assassination, the legacy of slavery and Jim Crow shows up in Ferguson, Charleston, Charlottesville, and in more subtle but still dehumanizing ways across our nation. Beginning on April 3, we will launch our most ambitious work in our history: to utilize our vast network of over 100,000 churches to bring about an end to racism.

We believe the Christian churches, present in every town and community, are both part of the problem and a key point in the solution.

The churches have a specific responsibility for eliminating racism, but also unique gifts that enable them to do so. We intend to utilize the social connections that make up our churches and institutions, along with our particular kind of community life, to address both the racism in our own houses of worship and the institutions we connect with.

### **How:**

Our commitment is to awaken to the trauma of racism and the legacy of white privilege in the United States through self-evaluation and institutional assessment of embedded racism; to confront racism and white privilege through disciplined truth-telling coupled with strategies in the areas of church life and practices, criminal justice, economic justice, social justice, media, civil and human rights, environmental justice, immigration, and education; and thus transform the hearts, minds and behaviors of people and institutions.

Over the course of a multi-year campaign, we will:

- Construct and carry out a method of self-assessment by which our NCC member churches and their connected institutions will measure how racism internally manifests itself
- Manage and mobilize churches to make changes in their relationships and behaviors
- Address changes in behaviors, policies and representation in the churches and the communities they serve
- Carry out policy and legislation advocacy that addresses the manifestation of racism in policing and the criminal justice system
- Track and advocate for changes in institutional behaviors as it relates to criminalization based on race



**Our work, beginning with truth-telling and truth-learning, will focus on alleviating racism and injustice in the areas of:**

- Criminal justice/mass incarceration
- Economic justice (jobs)
- Media
- Health Care
- Voting
- Civil and Human Rights
- Environmental Justice
- Education
- Immigration

**COMPONENTS:**



**An anti-racism audit in our churches is a key component of this campaign.**

An anti-racism audit is a tool used in an organization to identify and analyze, in a comprehensive and structured manner, the barriers to inclusion and the ways in which the organization is accessible and engaged with all people. The results of the audit can then be used to guide the organization’s short and long-term processes of changing the structures so that they support social inclusion.

### **Action Steps:**

- Develop the capacity of church members to accept that their structures include institutional racism.
- Develop and/or identify leadership to guide the church in engaging in an audit. Ensure that the leadership team is itself diverse in terms of race, position of authority and whatever other diversity is relevant in your community.
- Engage in an audit. Each church community will need to decide the scope of the audit. It may include every congregation, the church governance and/or the church staff.
- Communicate findings, positive and negative, widely within each church community and with those in other churches.
- Create a plan for immediate and long-term steps to transform each church community by addressing its learnings.

### **Ending the mass incarceration crisis:**

The United States is number one globally in the incarceration of its citizens. This has not always



been the case. Between 1989 and 2015 the number of people incarcerated in the US increased from roughly 500,000 to over 2.2 million. African Americans are disproportionately incarcerated are 13% of the US population, but in 2014 African Americans constituted 2.3 million, or 34% of the total 6.8 million in the correctional population.

**African Americans are incarcerated at more than 5 times the rate of whites**

In twelve states, more than 50% of the prison populations is black: Alabama, Delaware, Georgia, Illinois, Louisiana, Maryland, Michigan, Mississippi, New Jersey, North Carolina, South Carolina, and Virginia. Maryland, whose prison population is 72% African American, tops the nation.

### **The imprisonment rate for African American women is twice that of white women**

Nationwide, African American children represent 32% of children who are arrested, 42% of children who are detained, and 52% of children whose cases are judicially waived to criminal court.

The faith communities must demand the overhaul of the justice system such that the end goal is not primarily punishment, but rather reconciliation, restoration and rehabilitation.

### **Action Steps:**

- Advocate for national legislation to end racial profiling
- Advocate for laws that bar employers from asking job applicants about their criminal history (“Ban the Box” legislation)
- Advocate for Federal legislation to require all municipal, county, state and federal law enforcement officials to have body cameras to record all stops and interactions between law enforcement and residents/citizens
- Requiring all law enforcement; municipal, county, state and federal to undergo diversity and sensitivity training
- Advocate for effective community policing
- Advocate for comprehensive sentencing reform in the federal government and the states. The ballooning numbers of people in prison is mostly due to over-sentencing and “three strikes” sentencing guidelines for drug related offenses.

## Media and Race:

News media often perpetuate racial stereotypes and reflect cultural norms in negative ways. A cursory look at news stories can show that crimes committed by white people are covered in very different ways than those by African Americans; likewise, those that portray the victims of crimes betray racial disparities as well.



Any work that is to end racism in the US must have a strategy of changing the way race is portrayed in the media. We will work with partners, both existing and new, to address racism in the media.

### Action steps:

- Work with press organizations to develop guidelines and standards for broadcast and cable news, online media, and social media on issues of racism.
- Work with the Screen Actors Guild, the Writers Guild of America, and similar organizations to advocate for guidelines that go beyond current diversity and inclusion practices.
- Support the launch of an online database in which films are reviewed and graded for how they perpetuate racist stereotypes or eliminate them.
- Utilize celebrities who will align with the campaign and promote the film review platform message as they see fit.

Check the National Council of Churches’ website for other information. [www.ncccusa.org](http://www.ncccusa.org)

## What can we do in Ohio?

