



SAMUEL DEWITT PROCTOR CONFERENCE, INC.

*With Vision...By Faith...Through Action
Strengthening Churches...Empowering Leaders... Transforming Communities*

NATIONAL HEARINGS CONCEPT PAPER SDPC TRUTH TELLING COMMISSIONS

“THE SINGLE MOST IMPORTANT SOLUTION TO ECONOMIC INEQUALITY ISN’T AN ECONOMIC POLICY, IT’S TACKLING RACISM.”
Heather McGhee, President Demos Foundation

Background: Analyzing Economic Differences in the U.S.

Unfortunately, 50 years after the sanitation workers’ strike the fundamental pillars of systemic racialized economic and worker injustices still prevail. As the U.S. is becoming much more racially and ethnically diverse, it is also becoming more racially unequal in its economic divide. Brookings Pew Research, Forbes and the U.S Census all have reported on the stark racial differences illustrated in the growing wealth gaps:

- **Median Household Income:** White families report on average \$105,00.00 more in median household wealth than Black families.
- **Home Ownership:** A robust 73% White families and only 45% Black families report to own their home. This gap represents a disparity value of \$85,800.00 for White families, \$48,000.00 for Latino families and \$50,000.00 for Black families.
- **College Degree:** White students average \$55,869.00 return on their investment for higher education, while Black students average \$4,846.00 and Hispanic students average \$4,191.00.
- **Debt:** Black students graduate with higher debt load. Therefore, for Black people, education has not proven to be the way to harness financial security.
- **Unemployment:** The Black unemployment rate has consistently remained twice as higher than White unemployment rate. Stagnate intergenerational joblessness leads to breakdown of the Black family structure, and cultural determinism.

Root Causes: Ideology, Economic Stratification & the Racial Wealth Gap

The basic intractability of these disparities for over a half of a century, suggests that economic factors are not merely the problem. Rather, racialized beliefs and transactional systems are embedded in the will of the people, the public policy and institutional structures, resulting in differential outcomes--unintentionally and by design.

Moreover, the ideas, attitudes, laws and policies which perpetuate and sustain these racialized disparities in economic wellbeing in the U.S. are grounded in a belief system of a ***hierarchy of human value***. As a belief system, this hierarchy of human value undergirds the implicit and explicit biases inherent in America’s institutions and public policies. This hierarchy of human value is national and global in its tentacles. To that end, intentional and thoughtful efforts to uncover the data and tell the truth about the consequences of racialized legacy systems is required. This effort must also include an interrogation of policies of extermination concerning Native Americans and the trading and utilization

of enslaved African slave labor, which undergirds today's structural economic and labor force outcomes.

Goals & Objectives:

In response to the compelling need to tell the truth and create sustainable change for healing and racial justice in the U.S., the Samuel DeWitt Proctor Conference (SDPC) is initiating a series of truth telling commissions to further amplify and mobilize around factors of the hierarchy of human value that are correlated and tethered to racialized policies in specific areas of American life. These commissions will be uniquely designed to listen and distribute points of view on critical topics from the lens of the African American experience and related experiences of other people of color *and* to situate those findings in the framework of moral, principled and ethical arguments against the hierarchy of human value. We assert that such arguments from the field and the faith community must be integral to public discourse and public policy recommendations on dismantling America's racialized belief systems and their related consequences upon communities of color.

Being called by interdenominational and interfaith representatives from faith communities and joined by experts from other professions, these urgently needed commissions are distinctive and special. We believe that the faith community, in partnership with others, must send an unequivocal and distinctive message that the American democracy must move forward in realizing its pronouncements and principles of a democratic society.

Our goals of these commissions are to:

- 1) Document the evidences and experiential narratives appropriate to explicating the hierarchy of human value related to the specific issue of the Commission;
- 2) Identify other stakeholders, advocacy groups and their positions related to the jettison and dismantling of the hierarchy of human value related to the specific issue of the Commission;
- 3) Facilitate and encourage more public awareness and civic engagement on the issues of the Commission; and
- 4) Impact the content, nature and recommendations [outcomes] of public policies in a manner that is constructive, transformative and upholds the highest values of citizenship and human rights for all those in America.

Truth-Telling Commissions: Strategy

Commissions will be coordinated by the SDPC staff team along with representative stakeholders and consultants. Those asked to serve to hear various testimonies and those asked to present testimony will be invited by the implementation team. Commissions will be documented by video and written transcription. Selected persons invited to present or testify will be requested and given equal opportunity to submit written statements. They will also be given time to present elements of their point of view and respond to questions from Commissioners. The transcriptions and synthesis of the testimonies will be distributed with a goal to further discourse, contribute to more general public knowledge about these issues and inform policy makers, local, state, national and international, of the findings and recommendations.