

A Community Responds to What Happened in Ferguson

#COMMUNITYSPEAKSATL

THE COMMUNITY SPEAKS ATL

A SERVICE . A FORUM . A PLACE TO BE HEARD

MONDAY, DECEMBER 1, 2014

6:00-6:30 PM

Sanctuary Open for Individual Prayer/Meditation

6:30-7:00 PM

Music and the Arts

7:00 - 9:30 PM

Worship Service/Community Forum

9:30 PM

Connect with Organizations & Resources

A CHANCE FOR THE COMMUNITY TO COME TOGETHER AND BE HEARD

Ebenezer Baptist Church | Horizon Sanctuary
400 Auburn Ave., Atlanta, GA 30312

*THIS IS OPEN TO THE PUBLIC (YOUTH, ADULTS, FAMILIES ARE INVITED TO ATTEND)



Report from the Meeting submitted by Barbara Christian Campbell

Meeting in Atlanta , Georgia and speakers included: Representatives from Young Adults, Youth, a child, Rev. Berneice King, C.T. Vivian, Janice Mathis, Mayor Kasim Reed, and Dr. Raphael G. Warnock. An open mic was available for the community to speak at large!



U.S. Attorney General Eric Holder gestures as he speaks to members of the community during an interfaith service at Ebenezer Baptist Church, the church where The Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. preached, Monday, Dec. 1, 2014, in Atlanta. Holder traveled to Atlanta to meet with law enforcement and community leaders for the first in a series of regional meetings around the country. The president asked Holder to set up the meetings in the wake of clashes between protesters and police in Ferguson, Missouri. (AP Photo/David Goldman)

While Holder's comments were mostly well-received by the audience, a group of people interrupted his speech at one point with chants of and were escorted out.

Chants from the young people:

“It is our duty to fight for our freedom! ... No justice, no peace!” the protesters chanted, a message heard routinely during Ferguson protests.

But Holder applauded their “genuine expression of concern and involvement” and actually got a standing ovation from the crowd. “There will be a tendency on the part of some to condemn what we just saw, but we should not. What we saw there was a genuine expression of concern and involvement,” he said. “And it is through that level of involvement, that level of concern and I hope a level of perseverance and commitment, that change ultimately will come. And so let me be clear, let me be clear, I ain’t mad atcha, all right?”

This statement following the protest is key in that he too understands the frustration the young are experiencing and so rather than criticize, he empathized. I was just so proud to be in the audience and to hear his words of encouragement and hope, that we must get involved if we want to see change. Dialogue is the beginning not the end of a movement. So now, the question continues, “What will we do?”

“In the coming days, I will announce updated Justice Department guidance regarding profiling by federal law enforcement. This will institute rigorous new standards – and robust safeguards – to help end racial profiling, once and for all,” Holder said. “This new guidance will codify our commitment to the very highest standards of fair and effective policing.”

Holder, who plans to leave the position once a successor is confirmed, has identified civil rights as a cornerstone priority for the Justice Department and speaks frequently about what he calls inequities in the treatment of minorities in the criminal justice system. He has targeted sentences for nonviolent drug crimes that he says are overly harsh and disproportionately affect black defendants and has promoted alternatives to prison for non-violent offenders.

Last year, as part of the Justice Department’s “Smart on Crime” initiative, he instructed federal prosecutors to stop charging many nonviolent drug defendants with offenses that carry mandatory minimum sentences – punishments that he said were contributing to overcrowded prisons. The Justice Department has also broadened the criteria for inmates seeking clemency in hopes of encouraging potentially thousands more inmates to apply, and Holder backed changes in federal sentencing guideline ranges that could result in tens of thousands of drug prisoners becoming eligible for early release.

Holder also has publicly discussed the need to ease tensions between police departments and minority communities. The Justice Department has also targeted flawed police departments, initiating roughly 20 investigations of local police agencies – including Ferguson – in the past five years. A new pilot program announced weeks after the Ferguson shooting will study racial bias in American cities and recommend ways to reduce the problems.

Let us as denomination look at this speech to write letters, send emails, and make phone calls to support the initiatives that he has shared. I have sent a letter to my Congressman, to the Attorney General for this region and I even wrote a passionate letter to President Obama. In my letter to the President, I shared:” I have become conditioned to these kinds of outcomes for Black people, but I will never be content!”

I am sharing some pro-active things that we can do and we need to report how effective we were by keeping accurate records to report at our church, district, regional and connectional meetings.

Bishop Carter has given permission to conduct a drive for membership in the NAACP at our winter council. My goal is to sign up 500 new or renewals for this organization that fights for social justice. The good news is that we are supposed to be doing this anyway, but now is the time to focus on the objectives we have outlined for our church. I believe all regions can do this and share the success at the Summit if not before.....

Other activities that merit our attention, focus, and membership:

Voter Registration (ongoing, have a table at each meeting and keep forms in the church)

CME Day at the Capitol during your legislative session.

Announce this date in advance to build the attendance from your region and contact your representatives so that you can meet on the legislative priorities for this session.

The tentative date for the Sixth Episcopal District CME Day at the Capitol (contingent upon approval) is February 11, 2015.

Membership in the Party of your choice at the county or state level (Democratic or Republican Party or Independent) Google the organization and you will get the contact information. We have to do more than Vote! We must decide who the candidates are and what legislation we will have a voice in promoting!

Rainbow Push- National Website for membership enrollment.

One Church One School Involvement: Partner with a School and build relationships to help in the development of our young people and assist with school needs. Shy Temple CME just purchased school uniforms and on the day we delivered the uniforms, a homeless family enrolled and the principal was able to give the child a school uniform.

Let's keep sharing our involvement, but please let's get involved for that is our mission: "The Investment Factor: A Changed People Changing the World"