

Notes from Diocesan Convention, Nov. 18, 2022

Reactions, responses to Bishop Sutton's video sermon on reparations

QUESTIONS

1. Bishop Sutton talks about “walls” as physical structures and as social fabrications. What walls do you see in your church, our diocese, our community?
2. What power/agency do we have as individuals, parish, convocation or diocese?
3. What does “reparations” mean to you? How has Bishop Sutton’s narrative around this subject affected your perspective?
4. What is the church's responsibility? Why?

A. WALLS: Privilege, fear, language, tradition, stubbornness (versus heart-to-heart)

Our church has a certain power to imitate, but can't rest on our laurels. Our ministry has motivated our young people. Trinity is mother church to All Saints (story has been lost)
Early movers (?) → getting away from city

B. WALLS: Delmar Divide, white flight, Missouri River, cultural divide (whites to white churches, Blacks to Black churches), employment opportunity.

Joint services; people still sit with “their own”

Recognize diversity in community

We need to learn our history.

C. Communication is a wall that is not easily overcome, within the church and the diocese and because of a lack of communication we may not even know the walls up in our community.

Power is a social construct. It makes people feel lesser than when they don't have. If you get an entire diocese working on the same thing you could move the needle much more effectively. Pick three things and all work toward it. That will give us the power of numbers.

Firing back/repair/nothing changed the perspective.

Participants noted that it's not that is not their responsibility alone but they can advocate for it happening.

D. What does reparation mean? He was terrific!

E. What walls — business versus church. Will parishioners “walk” because of focus on reparations? Interior unawareness of what it feels like to be the “other.” Refusal to acknowledge our corporate responsibility.

F. What is church’s responsibility ... accountability — we are responsible — our responsibility is to act.

G. What power or agency do we have. As a large group — use our bargaining power to invest. Mortgages, Black-owned businesses.

H. Love is love. What walls? Lack of connection. What power? Voting, input, education, empowering youth. What are reparations to you? Correcting system racism. Righting our wrongs.

I. What walls? Not dealing with homelessness. Easier mission, cooking, taking food and clothes. “A fish doesn’t know it’s wet.” Reparations — fear of.

J. Community —> geographic walls exist for sure. Walls = accessibility; emotional (too uncomfortable); silence; invisible; don’t see walls as a problem.

Our voice is power but it needs to be collective rather than individual. We must take responsibility.

White people need to listen, learn and take action.

Reparations = “back pay” economic justice. Break down barrier within the system.

Always a reason to exclude. Attitudes must be changed. Unlearn what we have adopted.

K. Why aren’t there any captions on the presentations for people with hearing issues?

Walls —> food insecurity/deserts. Shortage of deaf interpreters in Missouri

Wall on highway 50 —> separated a community from a playground. Highway 70 is a dividing wall. North County is more “destitute.”

Have people save jobs; child care/transportation. People don’t want to. Health care.

Crime is high/car thefts

Show up!

L1. What walls? Walls in north county (near St. Stephen’s) have kept African Americans in hunger, poor neighborhoods, etc. Redlining in STL (Ferguson), north of

Delmar/Wellston/Jennings

St. James, MO, population 4,200 people, big wall *politically* (red vs. blue)! 90% white

Ellisville, MO = St. Martin's. Higher income, not much diversity (white & Asian only). Shug=now their associate. Heard at St. Martin's: "I've never talked with an African American before." (**L1b**: Back side of this sheet: History of St. James Episcopal: Mr. James was a slave owner).

L2. Mandated desegregation in STL school district.

Bishop Sutteton's idea of reparations was large enough to encompass a new way of making reparations (not checks to individual people).

Idea: provide people with post-secondary education so they'll have a trade, a way to fix their homes, a way to buy a car, etc.

Affordable housing is a way to lift people out of poverty.

"New Bosnia" fixed housing already there and improved the community.

L3. Changing the term "reparations" to "repair" helps us to be able to embrace the idea. The church's responsibility is to Idea of community policing came up in the discussion.

M. Walls in church, diocese, community: Delmar Divide, taking down walls is new to us. Rich and poor, education level within congregation. Liturgy creates wall between "sophisticated" use of word "Lord."

Power/agency: Watch our language. Education ourselves/tell the truth. Look at past within open eyes. Talk about slavery issues re: Shaw/flower past. Walk the talk. Don't be afraid of becoming political.

Reparations. Express in terms of debt. Transfer community resources to create level playing field. Get out of selfish mindset. Listen to those who have been harmed.

Responsibility. To lament, recognize not OK. Action, what we can do to help fix it.

Resources transferred.

N. Walls. There are not enough resources to do the work. Speaking of ECM — parents are working two jobs, are tired. St. Louis public schools do what they can but don't have the resources to do a lot.

Start with truth telling.

O. We need to always be telling the truth — at all times and to all people.

We need to recognize how connected all forms of oppression are in our history and in our present.

The church has a responsibility to acknowledge our own role in our history of benefitting from the enslavement of others.

Reparations is not about money — it means treating people of color and all marginalized people like we treat white men.

Black voices/oppressed voices need to be elevated beyond proportion.

P1. Reactions to Bishop Sutton: Powerful, eye-opening.

Church is predominantly older, white people and it is noticeable.

There is a wall between the Episcopal Church and other Christian communities in how we interpret scripture.

In Rolla:

International students are more welcome than LGBTQIA+ students

The term “international students” is more helpful than “foreign students”

Words and language matter

We can call each other out kindly.

The walls of church buildings

Trepidation of encountering our own neighbors

Making stained glass windows clear

P2. Classism is a major wall in the Episcopal Church.

We aren't good at crossing and relating across class boundaries.

We have the power of inclusion.

Examples of white women making quilts, art that tells stories of Black community.

Power to educate ourselves.

Power of telling stories. “The truth will set you free, but first it will piss you off.”

Portrait of Confederate general's chaplain at Holy Communion

In church sacristies, “flesh colored” microphones only blend with white skin.

Microaggression toward Bishop Deon, Bs. Jennifer

Investment of reparations in Old North.

Q1. Reparations “meaning.” What “we've” done to people of the church. The reaction of systemic racism.

Walls — between us and the unhoused. Mental health services, issues. Physical health, addiction, economics. Trust (a wall). Acceptance, judgment, empowerment, respect, voice. “Isms”. White privilege, education (access to). Gated communities. Walls of partnerships in the community.

Q2. Waiting for others to break walls. Welcome versus inclusivity.

What is our agency of wealth? How do we use our resources to affect change in our communities?

We have the will and lack of vision. Afraid of failure in our responses.

Fear of “enough-ness.”

Question of our “bandwidth”

Fear to take the leap of faith.

R1. Fear of offending, polite conversation, approve behavior. “We want to be movers and shakers in our town.”

“If he has insurance, we’ll do this; if not, we’ll do that.”

Walls: economic lines, age, race, education, income level, ability, bureaucracy, literacy

We have agency. We have our voices and/or votes. We have the power to build relationships, build bridges, not walls.

R2. Reparations —> repair. This generation being willing to step up to reconcile.

S1. Notes from Calvary Columbia.

One of the biggest slave owning families in Boone County largely funded our current building (name on the wall).

Columbia a town full of slave owners historically.

City is still segregated. Homelessness, disproportionately impacts people of color.

Housing and employment, health security do as well (instances of racism witnessed recalled in a workplace).

Our congregation is primarily white now and historically

Overwhelming, huge problem, we can’t fix it. What can we do? But we can do something!

Put it in our budget is a start.

S2. Starting point for building loving, trusting relationships across lines of difference and put our money where our mouth is!

\$1,000,000 is only 5% of \$20,000,000 in Maryland. We could do 5% here. That’s a start.

T1. How do we create a seed fund?

Can funds that can be used come from the standing committee, diocesan council, the bishop or ?

Is it too easy to take money from bygone era?

Should there be more sacrifice from us in the here and now?

Check writing might be the easy part. The harder part is doing the work.

What walls? Racial makeup of our congregations — are they reflective of the neighborhood, affiliations? Jobs, schools, systemic issues, identity.

What power/agency? Conventions and diocese give us connectivity. Bigger “pot” for ideas. Make this a clear intentional.

T2. Encourage/engage — get more people to be a part of the church and this work.

What does it mean to you. (see general convention). Not just what people think. Not white people writing checks. What is it? Very different definitions of reparations.

To have the conversation. To turn the words into action.

U. Talked about walls in our contexts. White privilege vs. white supremacy.

Intersectionality.

Online. I'm on board for this. But I haven't seen this in the parish I was most recently involved in.

Powerful words: The evil done on behalf. From the “enriching our worship” confession.

Perhaps we need a spiritual retreat on this topic and go deeply into what creates disagreement on this topic. If the bishop came along as passionately as Bishop Sutton. It's about compensation. Using personal resources. Designating them toward reparations in some manner.

Not everyone has a lot of money. How can we give in other ways.

We're the home of the Dred Scott case. We can't be very righteous about this as a church.

We have a responsibility. We wouldn't have to dig very deeply. Our church started in Lafayette Square and there were certainly slave holders.