

CRIMINAL JUSTICE & RACE

In Genesis 12:1, Adonai said to Avram, "Go forth from your native land and from your father's house to the land that I will show you." And Avram goes. In a midrash on this verse, the sages ask - what on earth could motivate Avram to leave all of these places? And the sages respond: Rabbi Isaac taught: The story of Abraham can be compared to a man who was travelling from place to place when he saw a palace going up in flames. The traveler screamed out "where is the owner of the palace? [Who is going to extinguish the flames]?... Similarly, Abraham, our father, wondered, "Is it conceivable that the world is without an owner?" This text is a metaphor in which the traveler = Abraham, the palace = Our World, the palace owner = God, and the flames = the flames of injustice.

"I Adonai have called you in righteousness, and have taken hold of your hand, and kept you, and made you to be a covenant people, to be a light unto the nations; to open the eyes of the blind, to bring out prisoners from confinement, from their prisons those who sit in darkness." - Isaiah 42:6-7

From Listening Circles:

- "There is a CMPD officer assigned to my neighborhood that comes to community meetings and interacts with community. My hope for Charlotte is that everyone can live in the kind of neighborhood that I live in, where everyone has the ability to build relationships with police, city officials, and within their neighborhoods."
- "I have interracial grandchildren who are Hispanic and Jewish. Things have been said to them and they know they are other. My son-in-law has been stopped by the police and when they don't know he's Hispanic, they think he's Arab. Either way, he is seen as an other."
- "The thing that struck me in September 2016 - the way we and the police reacted to those riots, made me very sad, and very concerned."
- "What concerns me most is the criminalization - I hate the idea that people might be at risk simply walking into a store."

Did you know:

"People of color are disproportionately arrested, convicted, and sentenced to incarceration, meaning the objective criteria these tools are based on are, to some degree, skewed by racial bias - even if they aren't intended to be..."

As of October 2, there were 1,707 people detained at the Mecklenburg County jail, according to Harper and Ireland. Sixty-eight percent of them were African Americans, who only make up almost 33 percent of the county population. Caucasian defendants accounted for 20 percent of the jail population, but make up 58 percent of the county population. Sixty-two percent of detainees were held pretrial. The average length of stay for pretrial misdemeanor and felony defendants is 128 days and 43 days, respectively."

- Article: "A county in North Carolina wants to give its bail system a serious makeover"
In Justice Today, 10/13/2017