



## **FAITH & JUSTICE AS ONE**

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## Abstract

*This presentation will show how both Faith and Justice are relevant and needed in today's society. We live in a country where the earliest laws were based off of Christian values and faith. With society moving away more and more each day from the faith belief, this presentation will show how both is needed, and how faith can help people to not give up on the justice system. Bringing faith/spiritual beliefs back into the justice system is a huge, and necessary step that will aid in making the justice system better for all.*

**Keywords:** Faith, Justice, Beliefs

## Faith & Justice as One

The killings of African American men, women and children are just a few of the heart wrenching examples that prove that we do not live in a post racial society. People of color are constantly being hindered due to institutionalized, and systemic racism throughout this society. Within these last few years we have had clear examples of this with the murders from government officials of Trayvon Martin, Sandra Bland, Michael Brown, Eric Garner, and Tamir Rice who are just a few of the millions that have been failed by the United States justice system. Police officers are indicted in less than 1% of the killings that they have caused. Every 8 hours, a cop has killed an American citizen. The estimated annual cost of police misconduct to taxpayers is \$1,800,000,000. Not only do African Americans face injustices due to an unfair justice system, African Americans are also more likely to live in poverty due to an unfair economic system.

The levels of poverty are far greater for people of color compared to Caucasians. Over 14 million children lived in poverty in 2013. Although this percentage went down by 2%, the poverty rate only declined for Hispanics, Asians and Caucasians. The levels of poverty for African Americans stayed at a steady rate at around 38%.

According to Spiritual Workshop, Paris, "Slavery was an important issue facing Churches, as slaves were allowed to meet for Christian services. Some Christian ministers, such as J. D. Long, wrote against slavery. Rural slaves used to stay after the regular worship services, in churches or in plantation "praise houses", for singing and dancing. But, slaveholders did not allow dancing and playing drums, as usual in Africa. They also had meetings at secret places ("camp meetings", "bush meetings"), because they needed to meet one another and share their joys, pains and hopes. In rural meetings, thousands of slaves were gathered and listened to itinerant preachers, and sang spirituals, for hours." This a testament of how strong faith of

African Americans was during their times of hardship and slavery. Faith is a many part of African American culture, and as history explained, it was used to help them get through slavery. This very same faith is used when facing police brutality, poverty and many other hardships. Having faith in the justice system can give people the security they need to keep pushing toward justice.

Spiritual Workshop, Paris also explained that “African-American spirituals emerged from a mix of the brutal institution of slavery, Christian influences and African culture. The songs expressed a yearning for a better life, claimed identification with the children of Israel, named the slave owner's deceit and hypocrisy, underscored the need for a closer walk with God, identified the reality of Satan and emphasized the slave's hope for freedom and the future. Love, grace, mercy, judgment, death and eternal life are among the themes enfolded in these songs. The spirituals offer a historical record revealing the slave's struggle for freedom and survival, and yet reflect the exciting worship experiences that expressed their hope for life's possibilities.” Faith helped to lead African Americans to freedom and to a better future. African Americans are still fighting for equality and fighting against police brutality, so having faith coincide with justice will be a positive light for those fighting for justice.

Lastly, Spiritual Workshop, Paris also highlighted, “The slave's acceptance of Christianity, while experiencing the conflicting behavior of slave owners, is a testament to the power of the gospel. Often slaves believed that the salvation and new life of which they learned when "worshipping" with their owners would happen not on earth, but, rather, when they went to heaven. While many slaves understood God's promises were meant for all people while on earth, they also knew they could not openly pray for deliverance and equality.” The power of the gospel was used to help the slaves cope with the adversities that they were facing, which is still relevant

in today's society due to poverty, police brutality and systematic and institutionalized racism, just to name a few. Faith and Justice should go hand in hand, because those that seek justice always have faith that justice will be served.

The definition of Faith is the complete trust or confidence in someone or something; strong belief in God or in the doctrines of a religion, based on spiritual apprehension rather than proof. As Christians, we are taught to obey the laws of the land and, as a people we are taught to have faith in the justice system. Not only do we need to have faith in the justice system, we also need to have faith in God or a higher power. If you lack faith, then you lack trust in God and what it is that you are asking God to do for you. James chapter 1 verse 6 states "But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering. For he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed." What this is saying is that you are to have faith in God whenever you are asking him of something and do not doubt him. When doubting God, our faith is like a wave out in the sea that is being tossed by the wind. We also see faith in the bible when it comes to healing. In the book of Mark chapter 10 verse 52 states "And Jesus said unto him, Go thy way; thy faith hath made thee whole. And immediately he received his sight, and followed Jesus in the way." Faith is important when it deals with healing because there are many families who have had losses and have suffered from injustices, and are still wanting justice to be served.

The Bible also speaks of justice and of kings who were able to maintain their faith in God as well as serve the people. 1 Chronicles chapter 18 verse 14 states "So David reigned over all Israel, and executed judgment and justice among all his people. David was a man after God's heart and wanted to please God in everything that he did. David was able to not only seek after God's heart, he was able to serve the people by providing justice for the people as well. We know that he was able to receive wisdom from God in order to provide justice to the people and we

learn this in the book of Proverbs in the first chapter. For those who have faith in God or a higher power and are victims to injustice they are able to move forward and have some form of peace. For those who have faith in God or a higher power and are victims to injustice they are able to move forward and have some form of peace. As a social worker that is advocating for justice on behalf of their clients, the social worker should have faith in their selves and in the justice system that they are leaning on to help their clients. If a social worker doesn't have faith in their selves to complete the task that has been given to them, then how can the clients trust them to help in seeking justice? If a social worker doesn't have faith in the justice system that they are leaning on to help their clients, then why would the clients trust in the justice system? Having faith gives the clients hope that they will overcome their obstacles. Christians are taught to love everyone regardless of differences. Christians may dislike the act or disagree with values, statements or beliefs of other people but they do not treat them different because of this, and love the person all the same. Christians also do not impose their beliefs on others.

This very act of Christians diffuses the argument of offending those clients that choose to not be religious or may have different religious beliefs. Which is why keeping your faith as a social worker should not cause any issues when working with clients because social workers must provide services to clients regardless of cultural background, values, race, ethnicity, sex, etc. A Christian social worker should still be able to advocate for clients regardless of anything because their beliefs are to love everyone regardless of differences.

As Christians, we are taught to obey the laws of the land and, as a people we are taught to have faith in the justice system. Not only do we need to have faith in the justice system, we also need to have faith in God or a higher power. As a Christian faith is needed in order to help us believe in God, and giving people the option to bring in their spirituality into the justice system

will give them a peace of mind and will make it easier for them to trust in the justice system and to work with the justice system.



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