

Can One-sided Injustice Produce Peace in America?



American ideals are put the test in the criminal justice system.

No more studies needed. We all know the system is broken. Now what?

One of America's respected news journals recently published a serious challenge to American justice with the following statement and proceeded to prove that the statement is true.

"The biggest crime in the U.S. criminal justice system is that it is a race-based institution where African-Americans are directly targeted and punished in a much more aggressive way than white people." (See the *Huffington Post*, page 1, dated November 23, 2014)

Before November 24, 2014, Michael Brown's parents of Ferguson, Missouri, may have wondered if this could be true in the world's greatest democracy. Would the President of the United States of America, an African American, arguably the most powerful person on earth, accept such on his watch, under his presidency, in direct violation of the United States Constitution and the United Nations Universal Declaration on Human Rights? It appears as though the Congress of the United States and the Supreme Court of same, provide all the cover, protection, and religious saturation needed for such injustices to be justified, praised and to escape general condemnation.

The assertion by *The Huffington Post* of a system of injustice followed by points of confirming evidence cannot be ignored regarding the issue of the police killing of Michael Brown on August 9, 2014.

- Brown was an unarmed, eighteen year old African American youth in Ferguson, Missouri.
- His offense was observed by himself, the shooting policeman Darren Wilson, and a friend—walking in the street instead of on the sidewalk or at an intersection.
- A grand jury was convened by the St. Louis County prosecutor, Robert McCullouch. Said grand jury took one hundred days to investigate and evaluate the evidence and determined the officer was justified in the shooting.
- Demonstrations against the shooting led to a heavily armed police presence, confrontations between police and demonstrators, and violence on the part of both groups.

As a backdrop to these events is the evidence of injustices on the part of the criminal justice system in the United States. While *The Huffington Post* detailed some of this, it has all surfaced numerous times and has been stated before Congress and many other groups repeatedly. This evidence includes these facts:

- African Americans comprise 13% of the US population and 14% of drug users but they are 37% of the people arrested for drug offenses.
- Where people of color make up about half of the population, about 80% of the police stops are of Blacks and Latinos and when Whites are stopped, only 8% are frisked. When Blacks and Latinos are stopped 85% are frisked.
- African Americans are arrested for drug offenses at rates up to 11 times higher than the rate for Whites though drug usage is about the same for each race on a per capita basis.
- Blacks are 33% more likely to be detained awaiting felony trials than Whites.
- All too often, poor defendants are poorly defended and persuaded to plead guilty, even if they are innocent, because three years in prison for a crime one did not commit, for example, may be better than risking thirty years for that same innocent crime.
- African Americans are frequently illegally excluded from criminal jury service, which denies them a trial by a system of peers. They are largely excluded from law schools and from judgeships.
- In the federal system Black offenders receive sentences that are 10% longer than White offenders for the same crimes.
- Two-thirds of the people in the United States with life sentences are non-White.
- A Black male born in 2001 has a 32% chance of spending some time in jail. Latino males have a 17% chance and White males have a 6% chance. Minorities with prison records find it much more difficult to secure employment upon release.
- While African American juveniles comprise but 16% of the population, they are 28% of juvenile arrests, 37% of the youth in juvenile jails and 58% of the youth sent to adult prisons.

These facts have been reported to many organizations including at United States Congressional hearings by The U.S. Sentencing Commission, The Sentencing Project, the American Bar Association, New York City Police Department, and the U.S. Bureau of Justice.

“So, what conclusions do these facts lead to? The criminal justice system, from start to finish, is seriously racist.” So reported *The Huffington Post* and other respectable entities quoted above.

At the time of the announcement of the grand jury’s finding or conclusion, the President of the United States, who is also a victim of racial hatred, spoke of the need for criminal justice reform, spoke of the progress during recent decades, and spoke of the need for more progress. However, as we judge the future by the past, another fifty years of progress will not bring equal justice under law. At the post grand jury report press conference held by St. Louis County Prosecutor Robert McCullouch, it was so easy for the prosecutor to answer every question from the press as he placed all the blame for the community’s grief on the victim. And he was *very sad* for the victim and his family. This has been done so many times before that a tenth grader could have done the same.

We must not give up but our faith must not end in the good will of a few good people. No more studies are needed. The facts are known. The nation knows about the Innocent Projects. They have unveiled the plight of too many people on death row serving life sentences for crimes they did not commit while thousands of young college rape victims have been ignored as their assailants escape. Millions of wives and children are battered, abused, and neglected yearly. Yet, some groups are over-policed, over-imprisoned, and over-killed while too many criminals go free.

That can no longer be called criminal justice. It is just criminal.

Parents and family members of Michael, we must continue to pray. It offers some relief, but we must remember our Lord was killed by hatred and He reminded us that we would be hated and victimized also (Matt. 24:9). It may be due to our race, the color of our skin, our economic status, the way we worship, or our beliefs. Injustices we see now may be preparing the way for worse injustices to be brought against us in the not-too-distant future. But a brighter day is coming. Judgment shall one day run down as waters and righteousness shall roll like a mighty river and will overcome evil (See Amos 5:24). Hold on. Pray, plan, prepare, prioritize, and Persevere.