

Minutes—SAPC Committee for Social Justice Meeting 4/8/2021

Committee Attendees:

Mike Schley, Leader	Elaine Mueller	Mark LaMantia
John Fisher	Judy Ice	Elizabeth Lusk
Shelley Kane	JD Ice	Julie Cazin
Corrie Cadwallader	Lori Edwards	Katie Hirscher
Tom Cadwallader	Juan Ayala-Carmona	Karen Schley

Guests:

Rev. Suzanne Miller, Pastors for NC Children Rev. Antonio Blow William Edwards

Mike opened the meeting with prayer at 7:02 p.m.

Judy Ice introduced our guest speaker for the evening, Suzanne Miller, Pastors for NC Children.

Speaker Presentation Summary** (See Minute Taker's note below)

- Rev. Miller thanked the group for inviting her, and then more generally for our interest in these social justice issues (and particular interest in educational justice and equality), and our willingness to engage in these discussions.
- She then gave a very informative and thought provoking presentation regarding the development of the Pastors for Children programs, first in Texas and now in 8 states including North Carolina and how those programs are working together to drive an agenda that is focused on improving equality in education, keeping money in public education and more specifically in public schools, and in building a greater sense of community between urban and rural areas to bridge that particular part of the educational gap. Like our group Pastors for NC Children is heavily focused on the realization and implementation of Leandro.
- Her presentation then took particular aim at the fact that participating to some degree in the political process is a necessity for realistically achieving progress toward the above-described agenda. The presentation (including and her use of an interactive question and answer teaching style as well as 5 different scripture verses) focused on the definitions of “politics” and “power” and the proper role of the “Church” in the political arena. While recognizing that churches (like certain other charitable organizations) cannot and should not engage in partisan politics insofar as endorsing particular candidates or political parties or telling their congregations how to vote, one of the main features of her presentation was her very strong feeling and premise that churches and communities of faith occupy a position from which they can uniquely help reframe society’s understanding and use of power away from the framework of having “Power Over” others to having “Power With” others – in essence away from dominion, control, and selective inclusion or exclusion toward the greater community of humankind as envisioned and created by God. This reframing, consistent with even the few Scripture examples she used (noting that

there are many others), is essentially the underlying foundation of all movements seeking greater social justice and equality. She explained how it is not just about occasionally feeding the hungry or clothing the poor, but that it is about changing the system and “Building the Beloved Community” from the foundation up.

- For more details related to Rev. Miller’s presentation her handouts and a link to the PowerPoint she used are being posted to the Committee website.

Committee Business

- Our next meeting will be May 11th via Zoom at 7:00 pm and our speaker for the evening will be Dr. June Atkinson, the former North Carolina Superintendent for Public Instruction
- Education Subgroup update provided by Judy
 - Judy reported on the status of the previously approved campaign that is underway relating to the Leandro decision and the recognition and budgetary support needed from the Governor and the legislature to see that North Carolina meets its requirements in order to reach its long stated and long awaited goals. Information has been posted on the website and can also be found at everychildnc.org.
- Housing Subgroup updated provided by Lori
 - Lori reported that unfortunately still today there are some 8.8 million people nationwide facing possible eviction. Although recent moratoriums have been extended have been extended here in NC (until the end of June) and nationally, and additional funds have been approved in the latest stimulus package, everyone is still waiting to see how all of this will impact HOPE funds and how and when the funds will be dispersed pertaining to the legislation county goals previously reported upon. Additionally, Lori mentioned that some federal agencies have begun to focus more critically on the actions of multi-state landlords and their conduct and compliance (or possible lack thereof).
- Criminal Justice Subgroup provided by Mark
 - The Subgroup had a Zoom meeting this past Tuesday evening and once again discussed some of the provisions of the prior Governor’s Task Force recommendation and how things are beginning to appear in new bills that are being proposed in the NC Legislature. Most notably the group discussed S. 486 which is a Bill providing for a fairly comprehensive number of potential criminal justice reforms, and specifically including reforms related to cash bail and other pretrial release, juvenile justice, and other issues that we have been discussing in the Subgroup and overall Committee since early on. Senator Sydney Batch, who is also an attorney that Mark knows to a limited degree through some common Zoom meetings, is the primary sponsor of that Bill and the Subgroup agreed that Mark would reach out to Senator Batch to discuss how we might be best able to assist any effort related to keeping the dialogue moving forward regarding these types of reforms.
- Update from Communications Subgroup - There was no update provided due to the absence of a few folks – although hopefully everyone is reading all that they have been receiving

- NEW Update from the Gun Violence Subgroup from John

Mike introduced John who along with Harry Hurd will be leading this Subgroup in the future. John advised that the Subgroup (which is intended as an outgrowth and/or revitalization of the former gun violence prevention group that Diane had shepherded previously) is still in its organizational stages and will be looking for additional Subgroup members and providing an update in the month ahead.

JD Ice closed the meeting with prayer. The meeting ended at approximately 8:25 p.m.

--Minutes Prepared by Mark La Mantia (who apologizes for any mistaken, inaccurate or inarticulate paraphrasing related to the Summary of Rev. Miller's presentation)

Appendix/Attachments - Speaker Presentation – as referenced above materials provided by Rev. Miller are being posted to the Social Justice Committee website.