

**MFSA Iowa Fall Gathering
Saturday, October 30**

Keynote:

**Rev. Dr. Jaqueline Thompson
Stand Up and Speak Out:
Moving from Silent Non-racist
to Brave Anti-racist**

The late Elie Wiesel swore “never to be silent whenever or wherever human beings endure suffering or humiliation” because what “hurts the victim the most is not the cruelty of the oppressor, but the silence of the bystander.”

Silence allows systemic racism and our neighbors to be ignored. Silence allows untruths to remain unchallenged. The faithful are empowered through the Spirit to stand up and speak out—even in the midst of fear.



**Eloise Cranke Announces
Retirement at Year End**

Our long-time Executive Coordinator, Eloise Cranke informed the Executive Committee that she will retire at the end of 2021. We accepted her resignation with regret, but we are overjoyed for Eloise as she anticipates a much-deserved retirement.

The search for the next Iowa MFSA Executive Coordinator takes place this summer. The job description and application form is linked below:

<https://forms.gle/f7aKFNrTebXPoVXP6>



Apartheid Then and Now

by Eloise Cranke and Kathleen McQuillen

A recent webinar, sponsored by UMKR and MFSA compared apartheid in South Africa with ongoing events in Palestine. Similarities are striking.

One of the speakers was Kelvin Sauls of Los Angeles, originally from South Africa. He clearly remembers the discrimination his family of nine experienced through displacement, shaping his life. In 2008 he became involved with Palestinians working for justice, easily relating his own experience of displacement to their restrictions to certain areas while not being permitted in others.



He recalls an evening in a Palestinian village surrounded by Jewish Settlements, complete with noise and raw sewage dumped into it from the Settlements. He defines apartheid as ideologies/theologies of white systems of colonization—political, economic, and cultural, targeted to establish a white religious ruling class. His parting message: people must mobilize to resist this discrimination. *Continued on page 2*

Illegal Israeli Settlement





Apartheid Then and Now
continued

Sandra Tamari, originally from Palestine, now effectively exiled due to her activism also spoke. Now living in St. Louis, she recognized a powerful analogy between South African apartheid and what’s happening in Palestine today, making a comparison to the Native American genocide in the US. She pointed out that privileged Jewish people are vaccinated and returning to normal while Palestinians are denied vaccines.

She went on to compare South African pass laws/books with how Israel categorizes Palestinians, relegating where they can live and work. Her statistics are telling (*M = million*):

- 5.7M Palestinians live in exile and cannot return
- 1.6 M in Gaza cannot leave that “open air prison”
- 2.3M in the West Bank with restrictions/check points
- 2.3M in East Jerusalem, also with some restrictions
- 1.3M are Israeli citizens, but without some freedoms
- 5.9M Jewish Israelis who are like white supremacists with no restrictions

Ms. Tamari classifies Israel as an apartheid, colonial regime which needs to be resisted through divestment, a tool to combat discrimination.

As chronicled in daily news, the situation erupted into eleven days of virtual war. We hope the fragile cease fire holds but recognize that the underlying issues still exist. Israel’s apartheid system is a key factor in the ongoing violence taking place as this goes to press. Apartheid as implemented by Israel in Palestine is a classic example of divide and conquer. With Palestinians forcibly separated it is difficult to mount unified resistance or to establish a legitimate government. Embargos on goods moving in/out of Gaza makes Gazan attempts to protect themselves from Israeli attacks or to rebuild after them, difficult if not impossible.

https://mccollum.house.gov/sites/mccollum.house.gov/files/documents/Final_MCCOLL_005_xml.pdf

House of Representatives switchboard: 202-224-3121 or email through their office website.

Examples of apartheid fueling flames of violence raging in Palestine-Israel today include:

- Forced expulsion of Palestinians from their E. Jerusalem homes and the replacement w/Israeli Jews.
- Roadblocks/checkpoints preventing Palestinians outside Jerusalem from participating in worship at the Al Aqsa Mosque in the closing days of Ramadan
- Attacks by the occupying power against unarmed civilian worshippers at the mosque where hundreds have been injured.
- Brutal air assaults on trapped Gazans, wounding hundreds and killing 240, including 65 children, as of 5-21-21. Israel’s air raids/bombing runs came in response to rockets fired into Israel killing 12 people. The rockets were a response to the expulsion of Palestinians from their homes coupled with attacks at Al Aqsa.

Violence could be reduced if the US cut off the \$3.8 billion annual military assistance to Israel.

Rep. Betty McCollum has introduced a bill to prohibit US funding from being used to demolish homes, force displacement of Palestinians or the arrest, detention, and abuse of Palestinian children.

Be a voice on Rep. McCollum’s important legislation.

Contact your representative and urge co-sponsorship of HR 2590 “To promote and protect the human rights of Palestinians living under Israeli military occupation...” (details left)



Unity through Truth and Reconciliation

By Dr. Willy L. Mafuta

After the 1/6/21 insurrection at the Capitol, the word 'unity' became an often-articulated goal, even among those claiming a stolen election. Democrats hope for unity to advance the Biden agenda. Many Republicans lobby for treasonous right-wing Trump radicals to be given a pass even as they give credence to the big lie of a stolen election. Can we be united as nation by forgoing constitutional law, ignoring insurrection and dodging Senate impeachment trial?

Charles Blow, in his NYT opinion [“What Unity?”](#) (1/13/21) contends that unity has never existed in American fabric. We do not fully unite even when attacked or declaring war. Unity is thus confused with silence from those who disagree, allowing the loudest voice, the dominant view/action to prevail. “I don’t want to be unified with anyone who could openly cheer my oppression or sit silently while I endure it,” he mused.

A “united” nation requires a reservoir of shared values, symbols and rituals holding it together and this center must hold. An overarching shared identity making us American as opposed to anyone else at this moment of history requires a process of truth telling and reconciliation.

I have witnessed the power of truth and reconciliation. Soon after the 1995 election in South Africa, Nelson Mandela’s Government of National Unity addressed the injustice, inequity and social unrest apartheid had generated over the previous 50 years. A Truth and Reconciliation Commission was formed where both perpetrators of odious crimes and their victims could face each other freely, tell truth, vent anger and seek reconciliation for the sake of the nation. This commission was led by prominent clergy such as Desmond Tutu and others.

Critics thought the Truth and Reconciliation Commission sometimes failed to provide adequate counsel and reparation to victims as some perpetrators were given easy passes, but the Truth and Reconciliation Commission powerfully rallied South Africans around common shared values.



tjrc.org

The Capitol insurrection took us to a low not seen since the Civil War, breaking the false narrative of American exceptionalism, revealing our naked political tribalism and racial division. Many are demanding the perpetrators be held accountable. While the DOJ and Congress hopefully follow law, legal remedy alone cannot satisfy the inward desire of the soul to reconcile with a fellow citizen who has inflicted harm.

If Americans learn to be truthful with one another as we struggle to reconcile over past/present wrongs, we will discover a new and better way to live together in unity and harmony despite our political, racial and personal differences.

On Wednesday, January 20, 2021, President-elect Biden and Vice President Harris were inaugurated, powerfully calling us to national unity. We all must listen, speak with truth and compassion to help create opportunities at church, school and work for this platform to gain traction and spread so all can speak clearly, listen fully, feel deeply and foster reconciliation, living together and working for the common good in spite of our many deeply held differences.

If we do, if we succeed, the words of Abraham Lincoln will finally be fulfilled, “We are not enemies, but friends. We must not be enemies. Though passion may have strained it must not break our bonds of affection.”

MFSA Intersectional Organizing Principle

by Rev. Josh Steward

What Methodist denomination will you be a part of in 2022, 2023, 2024?

If we continue with delays, possibly the United Methodist Church as it currently exists?

The Global Methodist Church?: They are clear on their stance that homosexuality should remain “incompatible with Christian teaching.”

A United Methodist Church that drops “incompatibility” language and seeks to welcome everyone.

The new Liberation Methodist Connexion (LMX)? They seek “a new way of being followers of Christ that refute the imbalance of powers, principalities, and privileges that has plagued Methodism: colonialism, white supremacy, economic injustices, patriarchy, sexism, clericalism, ableism, ageism, transphobia, and heteronormativity. We trust God’s presence and our collaborative labors will guide us toward a new, more liberative way of answering our calling and being in connexion together.” (thelmx.org)

Moreover, “LMX theology is not written in stone...our human understanding continues to evolve as we deepen our...understandings of God. We have been expanding our Methodist theological heritage with various expressions of Liberation theologies, theories, and praxis. God remains infinitely gracious, creative, merciful, and engaged with creation, healing and redeeming the world.”

Something else?

Wherever you go, The Methodist Federation for Social Action (MFSA) is a place for you. Since the first Social Creed was passed in 1908, MFSA has been advocating for Wesleyan Social Holiness:

Continuing the work of Moses, the Prophets, Jesus, and Methodist revivalists of old, we work nonviolently to repent of personal and social sins (including but not limited to institutional racism, sexism, homophobia, classism, militarism, ableism, ageism, environmental degradation). We refuse to pit persons and groups against one another. We understand all experiences of marginalization and injustice are interconnected because sin/injustice /oppression works on multiple, simultaneous levels, as do concepts of privilege and power.

Therefore, MFSA has an Intersectional Organizing Principle:

All experiences of marginalization and injustice are interconnected because the struggle for justice is tied to concepts of power and privilege. Intersectional organizing recognizes that injustice works on multiple and simultaneous levels. Practical intersectional organizing always focuses on collaboration and relationship building. Experiences of injustice do not happen in a vacuum; therefore, it is imperative to:

- Develop the most effective strategies to create space for understanding privilege
- Organize in an intersectional framework led by marginalized communities
- Build effective systems of resistance and cooperation to take action for justice.

If this sounds like you, then no matter what Methodist denomination you join, and even if you aren’t Methodist, MFSA is a place for you.

Welcome!



MFSA Iowa Membership and Support:

Membership includes membership with National MFSA & SQB newsletter subscription.

To join, contact membership secretary Mike Biklen. Please support MFSA Iowa through any or all of these three funds:

- **Organizer Fund:**
Support our coordinator Eloise Cranke
- **General Fund:** operating budget expenses
- **Memorial Fund:** Gifts given /designated
Donate by mailing a check to
MFSA Iowa
c/o Mike Biklen 515 E. 11th St.
Muscatine, IA 52761-3920
- or via Paypal at mfsaiowa.org.

Lies Versus Greater Asks

by Dave Shogren, Editor

Thank you Dr. Mufuta (page 3) for laying out the mostly successful new beginning achieved by South Africa and Eloise Cranke & Kathleen McQuillen for their piece on escalating injustices suffered by Palestinians. Apartheid is a common theme. While we hope that Truth & Reconciliation Commissions modeled in South Africa can be duplicated, there are significant challenges. Verifiable truth is bedrock, a commitment which too often goes wanting.

While recounts, court challenges, and accusations of fraud fail to find significant irregularities, millions continue to believe what mainstream media dubs, “the big lie” of a stolen election espoused by former President Trump. Those who refuse to tout his line are purged, even as right-wing media denies insurrection. Lacking fact checks both sides accept makes truth elusive and reconciliation a dream as voting rights are threatened in numerous states.

President Biden sees Israel as justified in “defending” herself from rocket attacks, a long-standing policy of the United States, a main supplier of Israeli arms. As the above article points out, that policy is misguided, yet widely supported by media and most Americans. Scripture asserts that “the truth will set you free” but when truth is attacked, freedom suffers.

Among many destructive lies, the claim that Covid-19 is a hoax is tragic as thousands, if not millions of lives are lost. As a wealthy nation of privilege with an aggressive vaccination effort, the CDC is relaxing the need for the vaccinated to mask in most situations. We are blessed but many are wrestling with this “truth.” Even so, it is undisputed that the pandemic rages unabated among the poorest peoples of India, Brazil, and Africa. It behooves America to provide billions of vaccinations as soon as possible lest variants return with a vengeance.

I add my downbeat of pessimism/realism/doubt while noting that God is a God of Easter miracle. This is what people of faith pray, work and march for; peace with justice in the Middle East, here and everywhere people suffer discrimination potentially leading to genocide.

Christians, all persons of good will, must discern lies and affirm the greater ask of truth, trust, courage, hope, faith, and the miracle of love in action!

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- **MFSA Iowa Chapter Coordinator:**
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