"Journey To Justice"

SAMUEL DEWITT
PROCTOR CONFERENCE, INC.
2020-2021
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INTRODUCTION
A Note From Our General Secretary

The Samuel DeWitt Proctor Conference (SDPC) celebrates its 19th year as an organization which garners resources and amplifies the voices of marginalized communities at home and abroad. As a 501c3 and non-governmental organization of the United Nations, SDPC continues to galvanize its network as a collective force for justice and humanitarian causes. With intentional strategies to build bridges between community activists, faith leaders and thought and public policy advocates, SDPC embodies what it means to penetrate the silos of operations so often evident in those committed to transformative change. SDPC’s model of transgenerational servant leadership and interdisciplinary analysis and resourcing to solve problems has had a measurable impact upon those it has served.

This year, we again demonstrate how much our ministry contributes to the organizing, education, and mobilization of faith leaders to be policy advocates and program activists for “just communities.” For the past twelve months, nearly all have been touched by the global impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Throughout many communities across this nation, COVID-19 has revealed and exposed the inequities and injustice that those most marginalized and impacted by racism and generational wealth disparities have endured for decades. African American communities are disproportionately impacted across nearly every measure of the quality of life. But in the midst of despair, degradation and despondency, there are bearers of promise and hope to bring life, love, and peace to the community. The action and voices of faith leaders matter and will not be silenced. The impact of SDPC is seen, felt, and appreciated across the nation and indeed the globe.

The annual conference of SDPC, February 21-27, 2021, was a totally virtually signature event. Over 20,000 participants from 32 nations were engaged in the conversations, planning, and visioning sessions hosted by SDPC. As this report focuses on the impact of SDPC during this unprecedented year of challenges posed by COVID-19, SDPC did a pivot that expanded its reach and impact. We look forward to 2021 as a year of growth and further transformation in our capacity to make a difference. You matter to us; we see you; we care about you. "Sawubona!"

-Dr. Iva E. Carruthers
General Secretary
WE ARE...

The Samuel DeWitt Proctor Conference, Inc. (SDPC), a 501(c)3, 501(c)4 and United Nations Non-Governmental Organization, was founded in 2003.

The mission of SDPC is to nurture, sustain, and mobilize the African American faith community in collaboration with civic, corporate, and philanthropic leaders to address critical needs of human rights and social justice within local, national, and global communities.

SDPC seeks to strengthen the individual and collective capacity of thought leaders and activists in the church, academy, and community through education, advocacy, and activism.
20,000+
Servant leaders, pastors, seminarians, & activists impacted through our 2021 Clergy and Lay Leadership Conference

5,000+
People attended our daily national prayerdemic calls

16
Programs and initiatives

75
Scholarships awarded to HBCU students
Our work impacts people in

20+ U.S. Cities
Including Atlanta, GA; Bridgeport, CT; Chicago, IL; Dallas, TX; Detroit, MI; Dover, DE; Grand Rapids, MI; Little Rock, AR; Memphis, TN; Milwaukee, WI; New Orleans, LA; Philadelphia, PA; Powhatan, VA; University Park, IL; Pleasantville, NJ; Toledo, OH; Washington, D.C;

8+ Countries
Including S. Africa, Palestine, Haiti, and Ghana
Attorney Stacey Abrams
Founder
Fair Fight and Fair Count
Atlanta, GA

IMPACT
Juneteenth, an African American holiday since 1865 honoring the emancipation of the formerly enslaved, has now been declared a national U.S. holiday. SDPC was a proud co-sponsor of Juneteenth 2021 at the Carnegie in collaboration with The Healing of the Nations Foundation.

Converging with Father’s Day weekend, we also hosted events affirming Black familyhood and Black fathers in collaboration with Real Men Cook.

The celebrations nourished our minds, bodies, and spirits for the journey ahead. In two words: Auspicious and Amazing!!
In partnership with national organizations like the American Federation of Teachers (AFT), American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME), the Poor Peoples Campaign, Faith in Public Life, Fight Back Table Faith Network, Forefront, and the Black Church PAC, SDPC has been working to empower Black voters and to encourage civic engagement through its 2020 Census and Get Out The Vote (GOTV) initiative.

94,674 calls
46,988 texts
4,565 hours
by 78 organizers

THERE IS A SHORTAGE OF ELECTION JUDGES AND POLL WORKERS!

YOU CAN BE THE SOLUTION!!

Sign up to be an election judge/poll worker and encourage your friends to follow your lead.

Visit www.ProctorPowerThePolls.com to connect with poll worker opportunities.

Visit www.ProctorPowerThePolls.com
We formed 21 local Justice Keepers teams to provide legal, transportation, and general on-the-ground support at local polling stations in 12 states.

We developed a 2020 Census & Voting Civic Engagement Toolkit and Voting Sunday Resource Guide.

We partnered with the National Poor Peoples Campaign to initiate “12 Days of Action” - we ran live streams, rang bells, & conducted social media sound-offs for 12 days prior to elections and every hour on election day, resulting in over 185,000 views over the course of the days.
Pivoting in 2020, and Winning through 2021:

Promoting policy change with the Drug Policy Alliance (DPA)

We developed and refined an Opioid Crisis Curriculum that emphasizes the intersectionality of racial disparity, mass criminalization, sentencing, and the need for prison reform.

Working for clean energy

We conducted "Listen, Lead, Share" clean energy conversations with Black congregational members and neighborhood residents from 10 houses of worships located in 7 Black environmental justice communities in Chicago.

2021 Conference, Holy Rage, Holy Hope: Radical Reimagination for Transforming Communities

February 21-27, 2021 brought our first ever fully-virtual Clergy and Lay Leadership Conference, connecting with 20,000+ people in 32 countries!
February 21-27, 2021 brought our first ever fully-virtual Clergy and Lay Leadership Conference AND Inaugural HBCU Conference

HOLY RAGE, HOLY HOPE:
Radical Reimagination for Transforming Communities

Reimagining what community transformation looks like, this conference focused on moving forward together.
We bring our community together. At a time when we are physically isolated and craving community, SDPC works hard to bring our community together through digital platforms where we can encourage one another and share resources.

**Sawubona**

—an ancient isiZulu greeting:
"We see you, we respect you, we value you, you are important to us."

We launched our **Sawubona Tele-Resource Center** to assist the national Black community in its response to COVID-19. We host a daily nationwide prayer/song reaching **2000-5000 people each day** and have a **24-hour hotline** for spiritual/mental health support.

**Mbongi**

—a Kikongo word for "learning place"

We also launched our **Mbongi Network**, a web-based, collaborative engagement portal that provides an opportunity for the greater SDPC community to sustain communication through the year, share knowledge and resources with each other, and potentially access over a decade worth of educational and historical assets provided by SDPC.
The COVID-19 pandemic brought new challenges as well as new opportunities to do the work of justice, by expanding the resources in how SDPC gets the message out.

As the COVID-19 pandemic escalated, we partnered with The National Center of Bioethics at Tuskegee University to convene some of the most esteemed African American health professionals, ethicists, educators and justice-minded clergy and lay leaders to serve as an African American pluridisciplinary body to identify, assess, and make recommendations concerning dynamic trends related to COVID-19 and its particular impact on African American communities. The Bioethics Commission is a trusted voice in public health.

And, in partnership with McCormick Theological Seminary, we launched The Center for Reparative Justice, Transformation, and Remediation to advance the reparations movement for people of African descent within local, national and global communities.
We partnered with North Park University's The Academy of Church Leadership to present the 3rd Annual Pastoral Leadership Virtual Conference, October 28-29, 2020.

We developed online modules for our Imani Wisdom Center.
For our work supporting Black and Palestinian transnational solidarity, we took a group of ministers/activists to the UN in 2019 during the UN International Day of Solidarity with Palestinian People.

Our Pan African Institute connects Africans in the Diaspora to African foreign policy, renaissance ideas, and fellow collaborators across the globe.

global footprint

We are a part of the UN Working Group of Experts of People of African Descent as well as the US Human Rights network. As members of both those organizations we have contributed papers and memos this year that have been submitted to the UN Human Rights Council.

We have had NGO consultative status to the United Nations since 2014! We regularly attend the Commission on the Status of Women, an international, multi-faith gathering that examines the gaps, progress, and challenges facing women and girls in public and private spheres.
AFFIRMATION
There was a need for the kind of conference that would speak to the social, political, and economic realities that the churches and the Black community were facing. There were conferences out there that would talk about church growth, preaching, and all that stuff – but in terms of bringing it all together in a way that would edify the church and equip pastors and leaders to make a difference and unify the community with a justice orientation, it just wasn’t really out there. So through the inspiration and revelation of many small conversations, I felt compelled by the necessity to start this conference.

The original vision was just to have an annual conference. But Dr. Carruthers was like, you want to do something once a year when the problems of our people are not limited to once a year? This can’t be a meeting, it has to be a movement. This can’t be a conference, it has to be a cause.

Samuel Dewitt Proctor Conference is needed now more than ever in this time of reckoning. SDPC connects personal faith with public action so that we can call not for charity but for this nation to be reconstituted. That’s what justice looks like, and that’s what Samuel Dewitt Proctor Conference does."

-Rev. Dr. Frederick D. Haynes III, Founding Trustee
...I am not sure how I came to your daily prayer service, but I am clear that it has helped to sustain me over these difficult times. I have experienced some pretty rough times but I was always able to return to center with your help.

These days it is hard to find the word delivered with a familiarity that resounds with my soul. How you deliver the message and songs (that old-time religion) connects me to my ancestors and lets me know that everything is going to be all right.

**As it was before, it is now and forevermore. I see God’s handiwork. Sawubona!**

I thank you from the bottom of my feet to the top of my head for making your conference available and accessible to me. Surely, if it were delivered in person I would not have been able to attend. But look at God! Shaking my head for His goodness.

You keep doing what you’re doing, know that I pray for and with you and send you a virtual hug and look forward to continued fellowship with you.

– Karen D., National Daily Prayer Call Viewer
My mentors and peer colleagues in SDPC have challenged me never to forget my unique worldview as a person of African descent as I do the work of justice.

SDPC is a wellsprings of theological, cultural, spiritual, revolutionary wisdom that I have been privileged to drink deep from as the Addie Wyatt-Bill Lucy Fellow.

As the inaugural Director of the William Monroe Trotter Collaborative for Social Justice at Harvard Kennedy School’s Center for Public Leadership, the experience at SDPC has prepared me to lead courageously as a moral agent of conscience and love."

– Rev. Devon Jerome Crawford, 2018-2019 Wyatt-Lucy Fellow
Proctor is air, it is breath, it is our prophetic imagination and that which could send us into spiritual ecstasy. It is the honoring of our traditions and that which moves us forward.

“We need these spaces because [this work] is weary, and lonely, and confining. This movement is necessary, this prayer is necessary.”

--Melva Sampson, theologian, minister, and assistant professor at Wake Forest School of Divinity
This past year was my first time attending the Samuel DeWitt Proctor Conference... It was something akin to Pentecost for me. I had the honor and privilege to sit and glean among the nation’s top seminarians, theologians, pastors, and preachers as we grapple with the intersections of faith, politics, and our respective lived experiences in this fight for justice and peace for all.

It was a new beginning for my spiritual formation, and I am eternally grateful for my SDPC family."

-Brandon Cox, 3rd year M. Div. candidate at Howard University
I'm so grateful for the Samuel Dewitt Proctor Conference. You represent the best of our faith. You represent the faith of the black church, the conscience of the American churches.

Our folk weren't simply converted to Christianity, they converted the faith. It intended to make them docile and obedient, they transformed it in the American context into a liberating faith.

I'm so grateful that there is in this world something like the Samuel DeWitt Proctor Conference. You've been on the wall doing the work. Thank you for the work that you do. Thank you for your prayers. Now let's move our feet, keep the faith, and keep looking up."

-Rev. Raphael Warnock, US Senator (Georgia)
In 2021 – as we celebrate the 100th birthday of our namesake Rev. Dr. Samuel DeWitt Proctor – we embrace the opportunity to make our shared experiences like no other.
THANK YOU...
We thank our 2021 major funders and educational partners for their support of our programs and initiatives.

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American Federation of Teachers (AFT)
American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU)
Black Church PAC
Bread for the World
Center For African American History and Culture at Virginia Union University
Center For the Study of Historically Black Colleges and Universities at Virginia Union University
Center For Community Change
Center for Responsible Lending
Church Center for the United Nations, United Methodist Women
Coalition of Black Trade Unionists
Coalition To Transform Advanced Care (C-TAC)
Collegeville Institute
Compassion and Choices
Drug Policy Alliance
Elaine Legacy Center
Energy Foundation
Faith in Public Life
Fight Back Table Faith Network
Forefront: Illinois Count Me In
GodBox Foundation
Hasib Sabbagh Foundation
Healing of the Nations Foundation
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Institute of The Black World 21st Century
Leadership Education at Duke Divinity School
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