

OUR RESPONSE TO RACISM



RESPONSE 4
A SEASON
OF JUBILEE

Response 4 – A Season of Jubilee

A Biblical Mandate

“The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me...”

– Luke 4:18

Scriptural References

- [Leviticus 25:8-12](#)
- [Isaiah 61:1-4](#)
- [Luke 4:16-21](#)

The Jubilee provisions as cited in Leviticus 25, Isaiah 61 and Luke 4 had huge economic, social and family implications for the Israelites. Jubilee also has huge implications for our Church and society today.

During the Jubilee, slaves were to be set free, the land was to be restored to its original owner, and families were to be reunited. The purpose of this year was to break the oppression over the people and reconcile members of the community one to another.

Later in the Jubilee guidelines, the Leviticus text gives the injunction “you shall not therefore oppress one another” ([Leviticus 25:17](#)). One of the Biblical rules about slavery found in [Deuteronomy 15:13-14](#) includes the concept of and guidelines for the emancipation of slaves:

“Furthermore, when you set them free from your service, you must not let them go empty-handed. Instead, provide for them fully from your flock, food, and wine you must give to them from that which the Lord your God has blessed you.”

For post-Civil War America, this was attempted through Special Field Order No. 15, which would provide 40 acres to emancipated enslaved Africans. This was quickly and violently rescinded during the post-Reconstruction era, therefore permanently relegating African Americans to a position of lower-class people, having nothing from which to grow a prosperous future.

Jubilee is a biblical concept, which speaks to justice, freedom, restoration and reparation. Much of this concept is mirrored by our Lord, as recorded in Luke 4:16-30. There, Jesus reads the well-known Scripture that begins with, “The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me...” In essence, at the end of his inaugural sermon, Jesus endorses Jubilee. As followers of Jesus Christ, we must endorse and live out the will of Christ.

Since the United States of America – and, in fact, The United Methodist Church – did not adhere to the laws and principles of Jubilee, our nation and our church find ourselves divided, with great social and economic inequities and brokenness. The church must observe a season of Jubilee and lead our nation to a place of unity and harmony.

Practicing Jubilee

Implicit in the effort to practice Jubilee exists:

- The unfulfilled call for economic justice
- Equal access to capital
- Expanding economic opportunities for those excluded from the economic mainstream.

The South Carolina Annual Conference of The United Methodist Church is called to engage in a three-to-five-year season of Jubilee, during which we examine ourselves and enact policies and practices that will ensure equity and equality for African-American and other marginalized congregations.

Likewise, the South Carolina Annual Conference will engage community leaders – along with corporate executives and directors of financial institutions – to challenge them to foster the creation of equitable local financial policies so that African-American communities are strengthened for the benefit of all people.

Such a challenge is grounded in Scripture and teaches the value of everyone's becoming a wise steward of all of God's resources.

We must join hands, work together to fulfill the command given to us by God, modeled by our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, and gifted to us by the Holy Spirit. We must:

- **Proclaim Jubilee!**
- **Practice Jubilee!**
- **Celebrate Jubilee!**



“Our Response To Racism:
Forming Authentic Connections Across Racial Lines”
was developed by a team from the [South Carolina Conference of
The United Methodist Church](#). It is intended for use by local
churches and other groups that desire to take steps to eliminate
racism and the separation it has fostered among God’s people.

We extend our appreciation to all involved for their work.

This resource can be downloaded at

umcsc.org/endoracism

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