

What is the Community Engagement Initiative, and how does it relate to the police? Can you count from 1-10?

The Bethlehem Gadfly Community Engagement Initiative, Police August 27, 2020

 *Latest in a series of posts on the Community Engagement Initiative* 

The police are in the cross-hairs, nationally and locally.

Why?

Many of our residents cannot understand what seems to be a negative focus on the police, and even in some a desire to eliminate the police altogether.

At the final session of BAPL's wonderful 4-part "Dialogues on Racial Justice" workshop series, Guillermo Lopez said that when the oppressed, the suppressed, the downtrodden finally get the energy to look up from the figurative boot on their neck and seek change, what they see first is the police. (I am paraphrasing and probably elaborating unconsciously.)



Dialogues on Racial Justice
Linda Wiggins-Chavis

Welcome

Workshop 1: Race & Racism
The Construct of Race and How Racism is Maintained

Dialogues on Racial Justice
An Introductory Workshop Series on Issues of Systemic Racism in the United States

2ND AND 4TH TUESDAYS
6:30-8:00 PM

TOPICS INCLUDE:

- RACE AND RACISM:**
THE CONSTRUCT OF RACE AND HOW RACISM IS MAINTAINED
July 14th
- 400 YEARS OF OPPRESSION:**
SYSTEMIC OPPRESSIONS IN AMERICA FROM SLAVERY IN 1619 TO POLICE BRUTALITY IN 2020
July 28th
- POLICE BRUTALITY: A HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE**
THE RACIST HISTORY OF POLICING AND THE GRADUAL MILITARIZATION OF THE POLICE
August 11th
- FIGHTING FOR JUSTICE:**
EQUITABLE REFORM RESULTING IN RESTORATIVE JUSTICE
August 25th

Linda Wiggins-Chavis has diverse backgrounds in theology & social justice. She is a theologian, author, activist, biochemist and teacher.

Download Zoom and register now!
Registration opens the day before the session.
To register, go to:
<https://www.bapl.org/events/categories/virtual-events/>
Zoom meeting information will be sent to your email the day of the event.

This workshop series is sponsored by Friends of the Library.

The police are seen as the visible, tangible, memorable proximate manifestation of their poor condition, which has manifold sources.

Councilman Reynolds uses the easily grasped analogy of counting from 1-10. The police are 10, but there is a laundry list of social injustices before that, a 1-9, that need to be addressed first and as well if the condition between the police and the community can be improved.

There are problems with the police, but in these analogies, Reynolds and Lopez helped me see the bigger picture and understand that change in 10 demands change elsewhere.

Short clip. Listen up. Provides clarity. Good stuff. Exciting prospect.

Audio files not available in this archive

One's opportunities are often determined by your race.

- Correcting those inequities on a structural level is one of the basic tenets of the idea of social justice
- Social justice is not just about policing.
- It's like counting to 10; the police get involved when you get to 10.
- But social justice is working, caring, dedicating your life to 1 through 9.
- . . . education . . . mental health . . . transportation . . . housing . . . employment . . . the list goes on and on . . .
- We as a city cannot have a conversation about number 10 without going through 1-9.
- That's what the Community Engagement Initiative is about.
- This does not mean not having a police department.
- It means understanding that systemic racism exists in 1 through 10.
- It means spending our time and allocating our resources . . . in a way that recognizes the responsibility of people in positions of authority to fix 1 through 10.

If you want to refresh yourself on Councilman Reynolds' July 7 full comments from which the above clip is excerpted, go here:

[Councilman Reynolds on the Community Engagement Initiative](#)