

Lord, Let Our Eyes Be Opened: Breaking the Chains of Mass Incarceration (PCC Annual Conference)—October 23-26, Harrisburg

by [Sandy Strauss](#) (Pennsylvania Council of Churches Director of Advocacy and Ecumenical Outreach)

The Pennsylvania Council of Churches is excited to announce the re-launch of its annual conference (formerly the Pennsylvania Pastors' Conference)!

So...**SAVE THE DATE!** The Council will present **Lord, Let Our Eyes Be Opened: Breaking the Chains of Mass Incarceration** at the Red Lion Hotel and Conference Center in Harrisburg beginning the evening of Friday, October 23 and running through Sunday, October 25. The event will be followed on Monday, October 26 with a day of action at the Capitol. The event is in the planning stages, but will be aimed at educating people of faith (clergy and laity) about America's system of mass incarceration.

We'll look at:

- the religious, sociological, and economic foundations that support why the faith community must be involved in criminal justice reform efforts;
- how race, inconsistent sentencing guidelines for drug offenses and mandatory minimum requirements have placed a disproportionate number of poor persons and persons of color behind bars;
- treatment of incarcerated persons, and how (if at all) they are prepared for reentry into the community;
- barriers for returning citizens, issues for communities as they welcome them, and resources to support them; and
- what congregations can do on all of these fronts.

We are thrilled that we will be joined by **Dr. Harold Dean Trulear**, nationally acclaimed founder and director of Healing Communities USA, **Glenn E. Martin**, Founder and President of JustLeadershipUSA, and **Dr. Geert Dhondt**, Assistant Professor at the John Jay College of Criminal Justice for our foundational sessions. See biographies below.

We will provide further information about the program as it comes together. Watch our [Facebook](#) page for updates, or call or write to Sandy Strauss at (717) 545-4761 or s.strauss@pachurches.org for more information. We will also post the full program here once it is closer to final.

TO REGISTER, go to the [Registration Page](#), or download and complete the [2015 MI Registration form](#). Note also that there is a very good special rate available for lodging at the Red Lion Hotel Harrisburg East (4751 Lindle Road, Harrisburg, PA 17111) as well—\$105/night plus 6% Occupancy and 5% County tax—same rate for single or double occupancy. We encourage participants to stay on site to take advantage of evening events, including films focusing on this issue and fellowship with other participants. **Reserve your room by calling the Red Lion at (717) 939 7841.**

If you'd like to be on a mailing list for updates, send an e-mail to Linda Shenck at l.shenck@pachurches.org.

Please mark your calendar for what promises to be a stimulating and informative event!

NOTE: We will be offering CEUs for participation through Lancaster Theological Seminary (number and cost to be determined soon).

BIOGRAPHIES

Harold Dean Trulear, Ph.D., is director of the Healing Communities Prison Ministry and Prisoner Reentry Project of the Philadelphia Leadership Foundation. Designed by the Annie E. Casey Foundation, Healing Communities has been implemented in over 20 sites nationally (including in Pennsylvania), in partnership with such organizations as the Progressive National Baptist Convention, the Christian Association for Prisoner Aftercare, and the national Women's Prison Project.

Dr. Trulear is an ordained American Baptist minister and serves as Associate Professor of Applied Theology and Director of the Doctor of Ministry Program at Howard University. He also serves as a Fellow at the Center for Public Justice. He is founding president of GLOBE (God Leading Our Best Efforts) Ministries, a youth services agency in Philadelphia, and has taught religion, public policy, and community studies in several institutions, including Yale University, Drew University, Hartford Seminary, Eastern University, and Vanderbilt University.

A graduate of Morehouse College (B.A.) and Drew University (Ph.D.), Dr. Trulear has published more than 70 monographs, articles, essays, sermons, and reviews, including *The African-American Church and Welfare Reform* (Center for Public Justice; <http://www.cpjustice.org/content/african-american-church-and-welfare-reform-toward-new->

[prophetic-perspective](#)) and Faith-Based Institutions and High-Risk Youth (Public/Private Ventures; <https://www.ncjrs.gov/App/abstractdb/AbstractDBDetails.aspx?id=183682>). He also writes a bi-monthly column for PRISM magazine.

Glenn E. Martin is the Founder and President of JustLeadershipUSA (JLUSA), a national advocacy organization dedicated to cutting the US correctional population in half by 2030. JLUSA empowers people most affected by incarceration to drive policy reform. Martin is a national leader and criminal justice reform advocate who spent six years in New York State prisons. Prior to founding JLUSA, Martin served for seven years as Vice President of Development and Public Affairs at The Fortune Society and six years as Co-Director of the National HIRE Network at the Legal Action Center.

Martin is Co-Founder of the Education from the Inside Out Coalition, a 2014 Echoing Green Black Male Achievement Fellow, a 2012 America's Leaders of Change National Urban Fellow, and a member of the governing boards of the College and Community Fellowship, the Reset Foundation and the California Partnership for Safe Communities. Martin also serves on the advisory board of the Vera Institute's National Public Health and Mass Incarceration Initiative, the National Network for Safe Communities and the Executive Session on Community Corrections at Harvard Kennedy School. Martin regularly contributes his expertise to national news outlets such as MSNBC, Fox News, CNN, Al Jazeera and CSPAN on topics such as policing, decarceration, alternatives to incarceration, and reentry issues.

Geert Dhondt, Assistant Professor at John Jay College of Criminal Justice, teaches courses on the Economic Analysis of Crime, Intermediate Microeconomics and, introductory economics. His main fields of interests are the Economics of Crime and Incarceration, Political Economy, Race, Class and Gender, Economic History, and History of Economic Thought. His research currently focuses on the empirical relationship between incarceration rates and crime rates for which he received a grant from the National Institute of Justice.