



JUSTICE NOT JAILS

Conscience Compels Us to Speak, Faith Calls Us to Act

We Who Believe In **FREEDOM**

Resource Guide on Mass Incarceration

Session #1

Introduction & Overview: *The U.S. Criminal Justice System*

Hard Facts About Incarceration in the U.S.



The United States is the world leader, *by far*, in many aspects of punishment by incarceration.

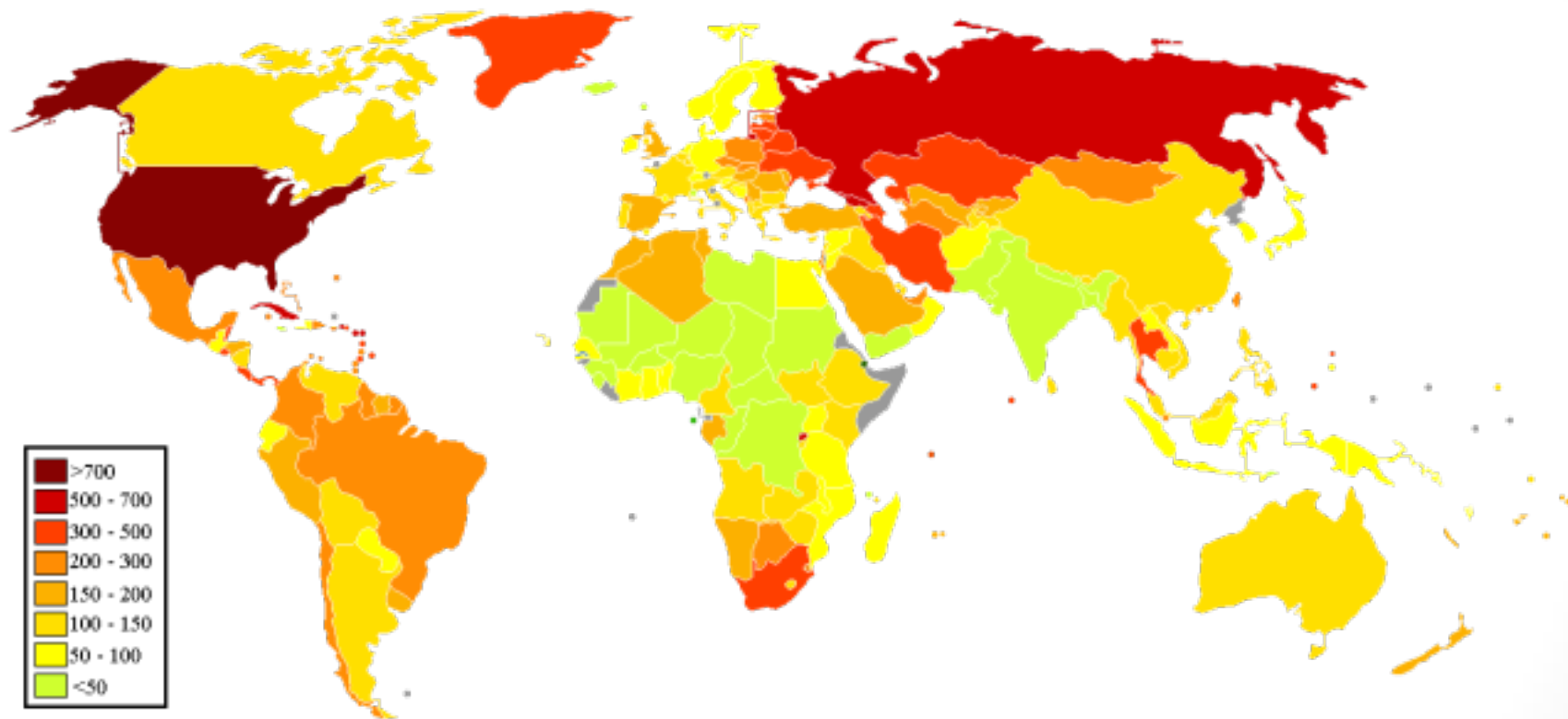


We're Number One Worldwide...

- In the ***percentage*** of people we incarcerate.
- In ***sheer numbers*** of people we incarcerate.
- In the ***length & severity of the sentences*** we impose.



We're Number One Worldwide...



Incarceration rates per 100,000



We're Number One Worldwide...

- The U.S. incarcerates ***the most children*** – including some who get life without parole.
- We incarcerate ***the most mothers of young children.***



Incarceration Rates in the USA...

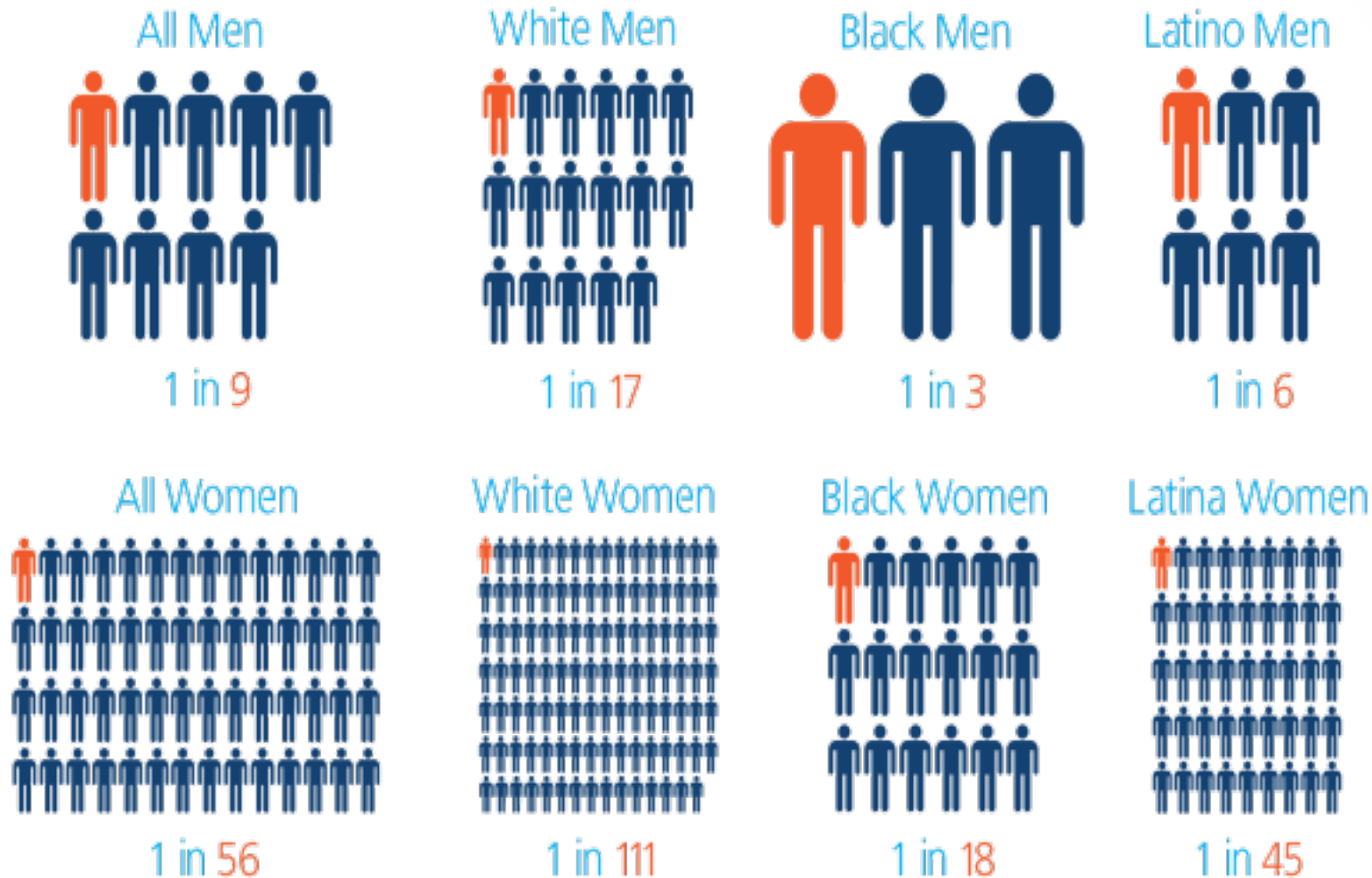
- Highest among *African-Americans*.
- Particularly African-American *men*.
- More are incarcerated today than were enslaved during the Civil War.



Incarceration Rates in the USA...

- ***Latinos*** are also locked up in prisons & jails in higher proportions than the percentage of Latinos in the total U.S. population.

Lifetime Likelihood of Imprisonment



Source: Bonczar, T. (2003). *Prevalence of Imprisonment in the U.S. Population, 1974-2001*. Washington, D.C.: Bureau of Justice Statistics



Incarceration Rates in the USA...

- ***Two-Thirds of the total*** number of people behind bars in the USA today (at all levels) are ***persons of color***.



Incarceration Rates in the USA...

- ***Black & Latino youth*** make up ***about 70% of all school-age youth*** arrested and/or referred to law enforcement for school discipline issues.

Why So Many People in Jail?

- ***Nonviolent drug offenses*** make up ***almost HALF*** of all the persons who are currently incarcerated.
- Non-violent drug use has a very real racial dimension
- ***Almost half*** of all persons incarcerated for non-violent drug use ***are people of color.***

Non-violent Drug Use has Racial Dimension

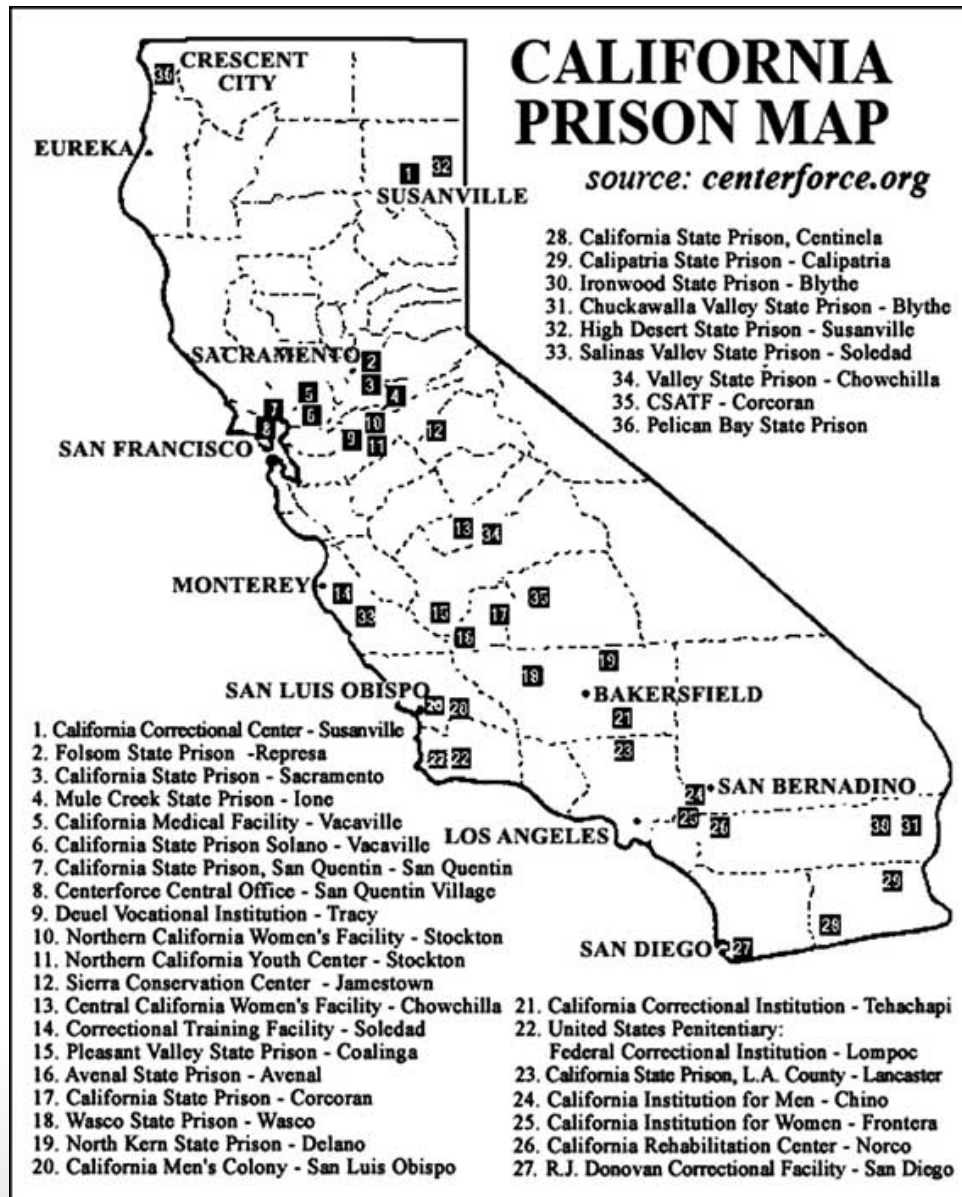
- Data tells us actual drug use among ***whites*** has been ***equal to*** or ***higher than*** actual drug use among ***people of color***.
- From 1980 onward, about 1 in 3 adults arrested for drug possession has been African American.

In CA, The Impact has been Enormous



- California built 22 new state prisons since 1980...
- But only one new state university. Budget support for public higher education was cut sharply.

California Spending: 1981-2011 (30 yrs)



+436%

State prison &
correctional programs

-13%

Higher education

SOURCE: California Common Sense (2012)

Break for Discussion

Incarceration Rates: The United States is #1

- How do you feel, learning that the United States is so focused on incarceration as punishment – particularly on incarcerating persons of color?

WHY?

- WHY have so many been convicted of crimes & sent to prison in recent decades?
- ESPECIALLY persons of color?





U.S. History: Jim Crow Laws

- Created ***separate & unequal*** conditions for African Americans.
- Started in the 1880s, after the Civil War. Spread rapidly through former “slave” states as well as northern & western states.



Jim Crow: What does THAT mean?

- Came from a post-Civil War comedy tradition among whites.
- White entertainers performed silly, often insulting, song-and-dance acts in “blackface.”



Jim Crow Began as Racist, Insulting Humor...





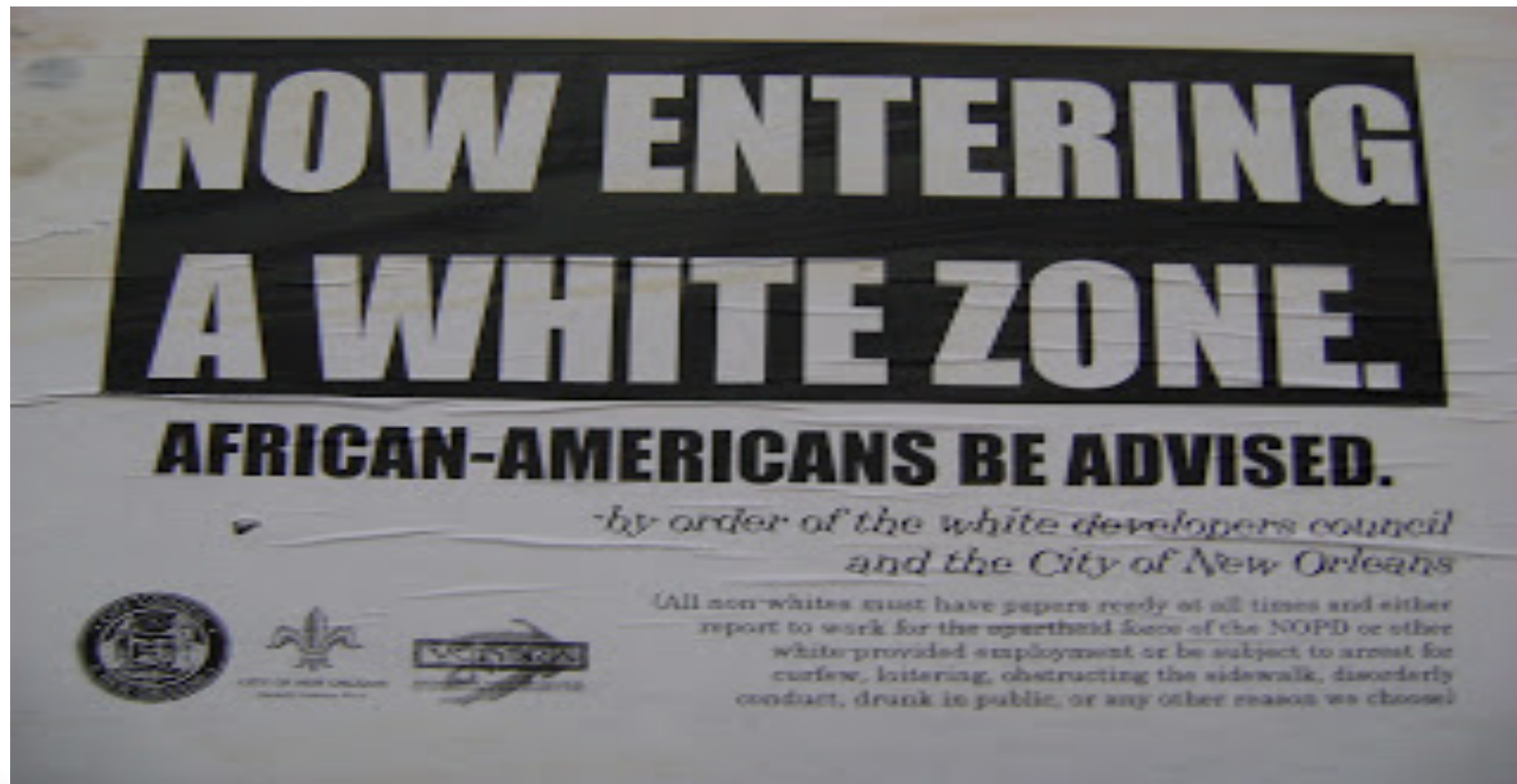
...And then the laws came

“Jim Crow” Laws: Separate and Unequal

- Specified when and how Black people could ***travel***.
- Often barred Black people from certain ***hotels & restaurants***.
- Prevented Black people from ***property ownership***.



“Jim Crow” Laws: Separate and Unequal





"Jim Crow" Laws: Separate and Unequal





“Jim Crow” Laws: Separate and Unequal

- Mandated ***separate education*** for Black children.
- ***Took away the vote*** completely, or else imposed extra burdens for Blacks to vote.



"Jim Crow" Laws: Separate and Unequal





“Jim Crow” Laws: Separate and Unequal

- Remained in effect throughout the Great Depression and WW II.
- ***Were finally overturned -- thanks to the civil rights movement of the 1950s and 1960s.***



Thanks to the Civil Rights Movement





Thanks to the Civil Rights Movement



Final Discussion and Q & A

Separate, unequal, invisible

Why is the racial dimension of incarceration so hard to see? Why do many take for granted that huge numbers of persons of color will be behind bars at any given time?



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