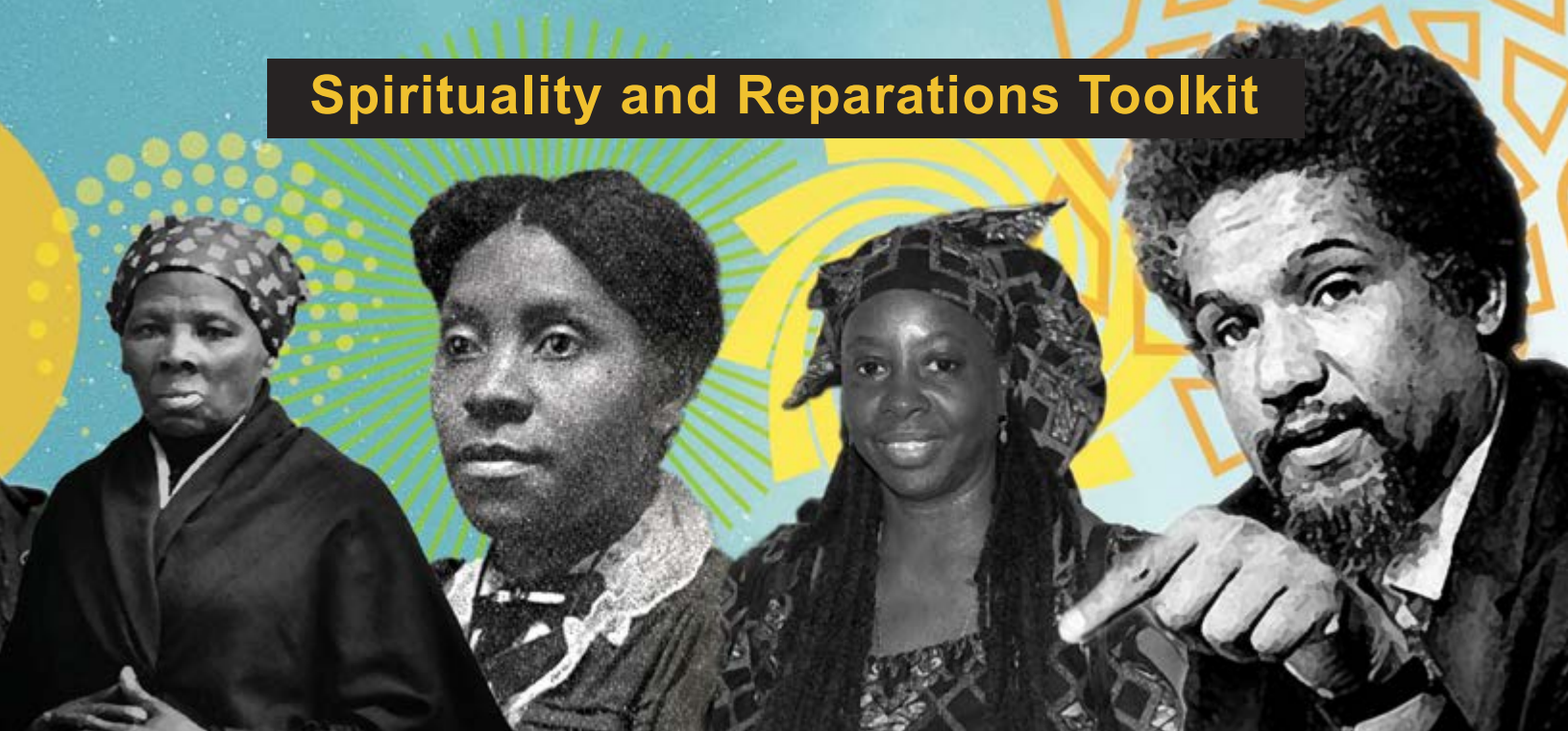


Spirituality and Reparations Toolkit



**GRASSROOTS REPARATIONS
CAMPAIGN**

***Building a Culture
of Repair***





Table of Contents

3	Overview
4	Who We Are
5	Our History
6	What We Believe
7	Reparations History
8	What We Do
9	Interpersonal Reparations
10	Spiritual and Ethical Dimensions of Reparations
11	Resources for Planning for Reparations Sabbath/Sunday



Overview

A Culture of Reparations necessitates telling the truth about past harms inflicted upon Black individuals and holding citizens accountable to a transforming society. As the Grassroots Reparations Campaign, our approach to reparations to draws upon the ten injury areas described by the National Association of Blacks for Reparations in America (N'COBRA) and framing from the United Nations Development Program that describes reparations as compensation, healing, education, restitution, and guarantees of non-repeat. We support the passing of The Commission to Study and Develop Reparation Proposals for African-Americans Act (H.R. 40) yet know that reparations must also be sought from the grassroots if we are to progress beyond commissions that exist to study.

The Co-founders of our parent organization The Truth Telling Project wrote that "Reparations is a spiritual practice. Reparations is the midpoint between truth and reconciliation." We see faith-based communities and ethically-centered organizations as being grassroots-level institutions well situated to focus on reparations as a spiritual, ethical practice. Inspired by our partner organizations, Reparations Sabbath and Sunday were born from this foundation of our work. The enclosed toolkit provides our history, principles, and strategies for hosting a Reparations Sabbath or Sunday event.



Who We Are



The Grassroots Reparations Campaign is a program of The Truth Telling Project.¹ We publicly launched in 2019, an important year that commemorated 400 years since Africans were brought to this continent in chains; 50 years since James Forman introduced the Black Manifesto, demanding reparations for the role of religious institutions in the slave trade and discrimination against Black people; 40 years since the Greensboro Massacre that sparked the first Truth and Reconciliation Commission in America; and 5 years since the murder of Michael Brown Jr. and the ensuing protests in Ferguson, Missouri.

Acknowledging our history, we have set out to build a new reality for present and future generations by inviting a broad coalition of faith-based and ethically-centered communities to be part of this awakening. From the outset, our campaign has worked collaboratively and respectfully with those who started doing reparations work long before us. We are partnered with the Fellowship of Reconciliation Atlanta, Psychoanalysis for Social Responsibility, Interfaith Movement for Human Integrity, Community of Living Traditions, N’COBRA, Jubilee Justice, Reparations4Slavery, Restorative Justice for Oakland Youth, Coming to the Table (national), and Coming to the Table RVA.

1) TTP began in Ferguson, Missouri in response to the murder of Michael Brown Jr. Initially interested in Truth and Reconciliation, the project using a restorative justice framework initiated a series of hearings to share the untold stories of families, friends and those who experienced police violence. Since the movement in Ferguson, TTP has worked to educate U.S. society about these stories through an online learning portal entitled “It’s Time to Listen”. It includes testimony, lesson plans and ways to think about the deeper implications of police violence within the U.S. political landscape. TTP, working with the Navajo Nation in Gallup, New Mexico, developed voices of Indigenous People, as part of the movement solidarity work. In addition the Truth Telling Project supports developing organizing infrastructure as members work with the Movement for Black Lives and provides technical assistance to other Ferguson and Black Lives Matter organizers through fundraising and its “Support an Activist” crowdsourcing platform. TTP is leading the Journey to Reparations: Grassroots Reparations Campaign and is currently planning a National Teachers Convening in 2019 to encourage teachers to support the utilization of stories of Police Violence and Indigenous Voices in classrooms and for the forthcoming Volume 2 of “the Pedagogy of Ferguson”.

Our History

In 2017, the Fellowship of Reconciliation (FOR-USA) launched a reparations campaign led by Senior Bayard Rustin Fellow Dr. David Ragland, the International Fellowship of Reconciliation's (IFOR) International Coordinator Reverend Lucas Johnson, Jodie Geddes from Coming to the Table and Restorative Justice for Oakland Youth, and Chrissi Jackson, Co-Founder and former Co-Director of the Truth Telling Project.

They called the initiative "FOR National Grassroots Truth and Reparations Campaign" and, with The Truth Telling Project, emphasized the need to speak and hear **the truth about the original sins of genocide, slavery, and post-slavery forms of systemic racism.**



The team argued that reparations is the midpoint between truth and reconciliation and, reaching out to leaders of faith, healing, and social justice organizations, engaged in consciousness raising about the need for spiritual, ethical, and civic reparations. The end goal of the work, in addition to critical reflection, is for white-dominated organizations to form reparative relationships with Black-led grassroots organizations that define what reparations looks like for them.



What We Believe

› We understand that reparations is a spiritual practice involving inner and interpersonal accountability, justice, atonement, healing, repair, and transformation.

Our campaign uplifts faith-based, healing and ethically-centered frameworks that

› demand accountability for our country's history and current world conditions.

We in turn envision a world that is accountable for past harms including slavery, colonialism, genocide, and other material and moral abuses.

Our campaign has set out to create a culture of repair that emerges from spiritual practice, transformative education, and action.



The Five Dimensions of Reparations

- 1 Restitution
- 2 Compensation
- 3 Rehabilitation
- 4 Satisfaction
- 5 Guarantees of Non-Repeat

A guide to our work is the **Five Dimensions of Reparations** as identified by the United Nations in "[The Right to a Remedy and Reparation for Gross Human Rights Violations](#)."

Reparations History

The experience of Black people in the U.S. is the epitome of moral injury. After each wrong, the added injustice of silencing has itself deeply impacted people's perception of themselves and their life possibilities over generations. Such trauma is systematic and intergenerational. According to Nkechi Taifa, Advocacy Director at the Open Society Foundations, reparations is



The repair of the cultural, spiritual, psychological and physical damage done to a subjugated or oppressed people.²



The harm began with the theft of people from their homelands in Africa and with enslavement, forced labor, rape, abuse, forced reproduction, experiments on Black bodies, and the theft of ideas, innovation, and inventions. After slavery was officially abolished, enslavement continued in the form of forced work, convict leasing, continued rape, race-based assaults, and lynching under the Jim Crow system. Likewise, after the formal end of segregation, we see the continuation of Jim Crow-like practices and policies in police killings of Black people with no accountability, unequal education, murder, and imprisonment of Black activists and leaders. The War on Drugs has, in

addition, translated into a war on Black and Brown people and their communities. All things considered, the inferiority complex faced by Black Americans is understandable and expected in such cases.

The call for Reparations is growing louder. In 2016, a U.N. study emerging from the United Nations Decade on the People of African Descent recommended that reparations are owed to African Americans. In 2019, to commemorate Juneteenth, the U.S. House of Representatives held hearings in support of HR 40, with a focus of the "legacy of the trans-Atlantic slave trade, its continuing impact on the community, and the path to restorative justice."

As a society, we must acknowledge the full meaning of reparations at the local, state, federal, and global levels. The UN offers a holistic view of reparations, which includes compensation, healing, re-education, restitution, and guarantees of non-repeat. We believe that a broad view of reparations from this perspective is transformational, offering the possibility of a moral and political intervention in our current thinking and behavior.

2) Gonsalves, Camillo. "African American Reparations Commission Proposed at CBC Annual Summit." October 7, 2014 <http://www.blackstarnews.com/us-politics/justice/african-american-reparations-commission-proposedat-cbc-annual-summit.html>

What We Do

The Grassroots Reparations Campaign is committed to building a culture of reparations and of accountability for the enslavement of African people, colonialism, genocide, and other material and moral abuses. We fully support H.R. 40 and simultaneously advocate for grassroots solutions that encourage inner and interpersonal healing and transformation. Our campaign elevates faith-based and ethically-centered frameworks that demand accountability for the history and current world conditions that slavery initiated. Our work is foundational, as we have set out to introduce connections between spiritual and faith-based work to reparations and people-centered human rights frameworks.

EDUCATION

Our campaign's very first seven educative webinars honored dedicated reparationists who began their work long before our inception and whose activities and influence continue. Other webinars have examined (also celebrated) such topics as Juneteenth, Spirituality and Reparations, and the Guarantee of Non-Repetition of Systemic Racism. We have hosted teach-ins on land reclamation and the inherent right of Black and Brown communities to agency in the food system; on how to counter centuries of exploitation, marginalization, violence, cultural domination, and powerlessness with reparations projects; and on how to plan and host a Reparations Sabbath or Reparations Sunday event with one's congregations or ethically-centered organization. In addition, our course offerings include a 3-day intensive version and a 5-week version of "Building a Culture of Reparations: The Historical, Spiritual, Conceptual and Practical Ways of Redressing Moral and Spiritual Harm."

CELEBRATIONS

The Grassroots Reparations Campaign, together with N'COBRA Southeast and other partners, has commemorated the annual anniversary of James Forman's delivery of the Black Manifesto in May of 1969. We also faithfully join the GA and SC Low Country's Center for Jubilee, Reconciliation, & Healing in celebrating Jubilee Freedom Day. This day pays tribute to perhaps the largest one-time liberation from bondage in human history, when Union forces arrived in Low County on December 21, 1864 to enforce the Emancipation Proclamation. Jubilee Freedom Day sadly and ironically also recalls for us the original post-War promise of Field Order No. 15 (dated January 1865), which set aside a large swath of land along the GA and SC coasts for the exclusive settlement of Black families. President Johnson, in the summer of 1865, ordered this land to be returned to its former owners, cutting the dream of "40 acres and a mule"—and the country's sole effort toward material reparations—to a quick end.

WHAT IS REPARATIONS SUNDAY?

Queen Mother Avouche Dorothy Benton Lewis, a prominent reparationist of N'COBRA, first proposed "Reparations Sunday" in a pamphlet entitled "Black Reparations, Religion, and Faith." She describes the purpose of Reparations Sunday as being to **"reach a broader segment of the Black community; inform the community of the reparations bill and work; and encourage financial support for reparations organizations."** Queen Mother Benton encourages **"Ministers and Sunday school teachers to develop sermons and lessons around the righteousness of reparations for blacks."**³



See Queen Mother Avouche on [CSPAN](#)

3) Dorothy Benton Lewis "Black Reparations, Religion and Faith" p. 47.

› REPARATIONS SUNDAY

Every year, we celebrate two Reparations Sabbath/Sunday weekends and invite a range of congregations and ethically-centered organizations to do the same. Proceeding each is a Season of Remembrance & Reflection, which entails internal investigation, education, reflection and planning in one's community leading up to Reparations Sabbath and/or Sunday. In the summer, this season begins on Juneteenth (June 19) and runs through the third weekend of August. The season resumes on December 2nd, which commemorates the UN International Day for the Abolition of Slavery, and runs through the third weekend of December.

Our very first celebration, from August 10-11, 2019, took place in Ferguson, Missouri to commemorate the 5th anniversary of the murder of Michael Brown Jr. Panels featured family members of Black teens slain by police and people who had been part of front-line protests. Leaders of a broad range of reparations projects throughout the nation presented their work over that weekend. They included Ed Whitfield of the Fund4Democratic Communities and the Southern Reparations Loan Fund, Ron Daniels of the National African American Reparations Commission, and Konda Mason of Jubilee Partners. The celebration culminated in an interfaith Reparations Sunday service.

› WEBSITE

Our campaign developed a rich website, at www.grassrootsreparations.org, that includes a history of reparations work, links to articles on reparations, resources to help people recognize the need for reparations, and support for the psychological, emotional and economic obstacles to achieving such recognition. We provide guides for facilitating conversations on reparations, FAQ sheets, and a reparations pledge.

› POLICY

All of this has been accomplished since 2019, initially against the backdrop of a presidential administration bent on inciting racism and xenophobia. Thanks to the work of so many, reparations is now on the public radar screen in the U.S. While we work alongside others who campaign for reparations, our organization is unique. We are not solely about cutting a check to African-Americans; we are also about healing through reparative relationships that support the kind of grassroots activism that, once and for all, can dismantle racist systems.

Spirituality and Reparations Timeline

1807 Parts of the Holy Bible, selected for the use of the Negro Slaves in the British West-India Islands, was published by the Anglican Church.

1829 In his "Appeal to the Colored Citizens of the World," David Walker asserts that "the White Christian Americans" were the most cruel and barbarous people who have ever lived.

1898 Callie House and Isiah Dickerson organized the National Ex-Slave Mutual Relief, Bounty and Pension Association (MRB&PA) with the goal of providing compensation to formerly enslaved Africans, mutual aid, and burial costs.

1968- As part of her 38-year history of championing reparations, Ms. Dorothy Benton Lewis co-founded and -led 4 national reparations organizations.

1969 The Black National Economic Conference issued the Black Manifesto with a demand for reparations from churches.

4) Molefi Kete Asante, The African American Warrant for Reparations: The Crime of European Enslavement of Africans and Its Consequences, in Should America Pay?: Slavery and the Raging Debate on Reparations (ed. Raymond A. Winbush, PhD 2003) p. 14.

5) See Woullard Lett (2019-2020) [Reparations Timeline](#)

Interpersonal Reparations

Interpersonal reparations (IR) address the moral and material debt of slavery and the world created by slavery. IR may take the form of monetary and material repayments like direct compensation for tuition, rent, or healthcare. They may also take the form of providing access to forums by waiving fees, gifting airline miles, or providing housing.

Whichever the form, it is essential for white-identified people to be responsive to what African-descended people discern as constituting meaningful reparations that meet their needs.

› [Click here](#) to see a paper by Lynne Layton and Christine Schmidt on Forging Reparative Relationships.

› [Click here](#) to see an article by Seth Cohen on why white people must join the call for Reparations.

Spiritual and Ethical Dimensions of Reparations

Historically, faith-based institutions were at the core of the slave trade. Many received financial support from members who profited from slavery. A “Slave Bible” left out of the text all references or allusions to freedom as a form of social control. In contemporary times, faith-based, social justice, and religious communities serve as social forces conducive to upholding humanity’s moral victories, peace-inducing attitudes, and unifying social structures. In the past and in the name of faith and religion, the slave trade and other abominations were used to justify capital gain and the inhumane treatment of Indigenous and African American peoples.



The Grassroots Reparations Campaign views reparations as a peace treaty and a vehicle for healing this nation of the evils of racism. We call upon communities of peace, justice, and faith to take a leadership role in local-to-countrywide educational initiatives that teach youth about the true history of this nation, to educate for peace rather than war, and to frame reparations as a spiritual intervention that opens the possibility for reconciliation amid the pursuit of justice and true peace.



RESOURCES FOR PLANNING YOUR REPARATIONS SABBATH OR SUNDAY

1 The Grassroots Reparations Campaign has facilitated numerous DIY (or “Do It Yourself”) **Reparations Teach-ins** to introduce members of faith-based and ethically-centered communities to the Reparations Sabbath/Sunday program.

› [This DIY Reparations Facilitator’s Guide shows how to hold a teach-in of your own.](#)

2 The Grassroots Reparations Campaign provides additional resources for faith-based and ethically-centered organizations.

› [This document contains a compilation of interfaith writings and resources to support your reparations gathering and services.](#)

3 Supporting Reparations Legislation

These resources provides information on the most current legislative and community-based initiatives that support reparations.

- [N’COBRA’s HR-40 Interactive Map](#)
- [Senate Reparations Bill 1083](#)
- [Institute of the Black World 21st Century-Ongoing Reparations Projects](#)
- [NAARC 10 Point Reparations Plan](#)
- [Movement 4 Black Lives Reparations Now Toolkit](#)
- [Fund for Reparations Now](#)
- [Reparations Summer Black Land and Power Project](#)
- [Soul Fire Farm](#)
- [Coming to the Table](#)
- [Reparations4Slavery](#)
- [Asheville, NC approves reparations for Black residents](#)
- [Providence, RI commits to truth and reparations process](#)
- [California Assembly Passes Reparations Bill](#)
- [Burlington City Council Votes for Reparations Commission](#)