

Thu, Apr 27, 2023

CALIFORNIA



This week began with a celebration of 10 years of Moral Monday and a recommitment to the fight for equality. Read on for extensive reports on that gathering and a "Housing Is Sacred" rally in Sacramento. We also have meeting invites and a sobering—and, we hope, galvanizing—look at the lethality of poverty.



“It’s time for thunder!” A report from Moral Monday’s 10th anniversary rally

More than 300 people came together in Raleigh, North Carolina this past Monday to recommit to the fight against the interlocking injustices—and to motivate poor and lowwealth people to vote in 2024.

The afternoon began with a rally on the lawn of the state Capitol, where Bishop Barber offered a brief history of the Moral Monday movement. He reminded the gathering that “Moral Mondays have never stopped—but I must tell you, my sisters and brothers, our work has just begun. And if you thought we fought hard in 2013, you ain’t seen nothing yet.”

Bishop Barber asserted that voting power is on our side, as long as we rededicate ourselves to organizing and motivating our communities. He then asked if he could preach: “In the Book of Samuel, whenever the people got together and God joined them and they stood for justice, when they marched, it sounded like thunder. I just came by to tell you, it’s time for the thunder—thunder at the voting booth, in the streets!” Amid cheers, Bishop Barber called for a Third Reconstruction movement.

As the sun set, the crowd marched, singing and chanting, to the State Legislative Building to deliver their demands. When they found the gates locked, Bishop Barber

used it as an opportunity to give a civics lesson. He called all the children forward and reminded them that this was their house, and that they should never be afraid to speak up. The action closed as people came up two-by-two to leave their demands at the gate, promising to return.

Earlier in the day Bishop Barber appeared on MSNBC's [Morning Joe](#), where he focused on the necessity of protecting and expanding voting rights across the country. He noted that particularly in southern states like Florida, Georgia and North Carolina, mobilizing small percentages of poor and low-wealth voters [can shift an election](#).

New study: Poverty kills 10 times more Americans than gun homicides

According to new research published in *JAMA Internal Medicine*, poverty was linked to 183,000 deaths in the US in 2019—a conservative estimate, given that it was concluded just prior to the COVID-19 pandemic. That makes poverty the nation's fourth-leading cause of death, behind heart disease, cancer and smoking.

“Poverty kills as much as dementia, accidents, stroke, and diabetes,” said David Brady, the study's lead author, adding that “poverty silently killed 10 times as many people as all homicides, and yet homicide, firearms and suicide get vastly more attention.”

Bishop Barber responded in a [tweet](#). “We must take action to address gun violence,” he wrote. “And we must connect extremists' inaction on this issue to other forms of policy murder. Because as insane as the level of gun violence is in this nation, 10 TIMES as many people die from poverty here.”

This research reminds us why PPC has long featured poverty at the top of its [Third Reconstruction Agenda](#), with the corresponding demand that our politics, policies, laws and legislation center and prioritize the poor: “We demand that poverty is measured in terms of the ability to meet basic needs, regardless of where we live. We demand that our government pass policies that raise wages, expand healthcare, provide housing, secure water and utilities, cancel debt and otherwise ensure that everybody in this country can thrive.”

Upcoming meetings

Third Reconstruction Agenda/Close the Wealth Gap, CA! planning Wednesdays, 6:30pm | [RSVP](#)

Join our Close the Wealth Gap, California! initiative and help build momentum for the Third Reconstruction Agenda to Heal the Nation. [Drop by online any Wednesday](#) to find out how you can be involved.

Los Angeles regional meeting Sunday May 7, 3pm | [RSVP](#)

L.A. activists: Join us as we share news on upcoming national PPC events and local activities to Close the Wealth Gap, California! Invite your friends, neighbors, community members—all are welcome. We hope to see you there.

Recap



PPC activists join the Home is Sacred Action Day in Sacramento

Last Thursday, California PPC members from across the state and of all ages joined faith-based community network [PICO CA](#) at the state Capitol to support legislation focused on a resounding theme: Housing is Sacred. Some 600 people, including Richmond and Oakland supporters, gathered on the lawn of the Capitol, where faith leaders urged everyone to “put our faith values into action *today* and at the ballot box!”

Participants met with legislators in person and via Zoom, highlighting the results of PICO’s recent housing survey. Legislators also heard personal testimonies of impacted individuals who spoke emotionally of losing their homes due to rent increases, illness resulting in lost jobs and income, and property sales. Michelle Hayes, who’s active with California PPC and Faith in Action East Bay, is pictured above on a Zoom call with State Assemblywoman Buffy Wicks, urging her to support the demand for housing justice. “I am pleased that [Assemblywoman] Wicks met with us herself and that she expressed strong support for the idea that housing is a human right,” Michelle said. “Home is Sacred.”

PICO is asking supporters to contact legislators and urge them to support housing bills that protect, preserve and produce affordable housing for all, starting with [SB567: The Homelessness Prevention Act](#).

“Home is Sacred” ties directly to PPC’s [Third Reconstruction Agenda](#)—specifically article 5, which demands “an end to homelessness, evictions and foreclosures...[and] relief for household and rental debt, water debt and utilities debt that cannot be paid.”

Support the California PPC!

When over 140 million Americans are poor or living with low-wages, it's time for systemic change. We are building a movement led by poor and impacted folks, building across all lines of division, in order to topple the interlocking pillars of racism, poverty, militarism, environmental destruction and this country's distorted moral narrative. Please help us achieve this goal by clicking below and chipping in whatever you can.

DONATE

PPC in the media

“My hope is built’: A father-son talk with Rev. William Barber II”

Last week, [Facing South](#) published an interview in which Bishop Barber and his son, Benjamin Barber, discuss the Moral Monday anniversary, the importance of being close to communities, the historical lessons that carry through to the Third Reconstruction and more. Here’s an excerpt:

Benjamin Barber: With so many crises unfolding all at once, what keeps you hopeful and focused on building a sustained progressive movement across the South and the country?

Bishop Barber: “The injustices that are out here are many, and the opponents of love are many. ...I really believe something that South Africans said. When apartheid looked like it was most powerful and could never be stopped, they said, “A dying mule kicks the hardest.” They had this notion that sometimes when you see the most egregious thing happening it is because the forces of injustice see that their time is limited, that the demographics are against them because of the way the electorate is shifting. That their false claims are now being proven to be false claims... I'm hopeful every time I see a new generation willing to stand for what's right and push for what's right and put their bodies on the line in civil disobedience. That's what gives me hope.”

Thanks for reading. If you have any questions, you are welcome to reply to this newsletter or email california@poorpeoplescampaign.org.