

Women Prison Rate Soars

The Bureau of Justice Statistics' (www.ojp.usdoj.gov/bjs) report on the prison population in the United States disclosed findings that the number of women imprisoned in state and federal institutions has reached an all-time high and is increasing fast, the incarceration rate for females twice the rate for men. Reaching a total of 101,179 women in prison for 2003—a 3.6 percent increase from the previous year—marked the first time the women's prison population went over 100,000. However, men are still more likely than women to be incarcerated, Black men the most likely than any other group to go to jail. Towards the close of 2003, U.S. prisons held 1,368,866 men, which, when shown in terms of the whole U.S. population, one in every 109 men and one in every 1,613 women were in jail. The increases are blamed on longer sentences, particularly for drug crimes, and fewer paroles or probations being granted.

Supreme Court Won't Review Inmate Voting Rights Cases

Just after the presidential elections, the U.S. Supreme Court justices rejected the appeal of two cases from Washington and New York State, which involved the extent to which the Voting Rights Act of 1965, the law which prohibits voter disqualification based on race, can determine the ability for convicted felons to vote. Both states' lawsuits, brought on by Black, Latino and Native American felons, resulted in federal judges and appeals courts dismissing them. The appeals courts are being accused of issuing conflicting rulings on whether the voting rights law applied to state laws. When appealed to the Supreme Court, the justices refused to hear the cases and made no comment or recorded statement regarding them. Maine and Vermont are the only states in the U.S. that allow convicted felons in prison the right to vote and the majority of the laws regarding voting rights also deny those felons on parole or probation the right to vote. With nearly five million felons who have been released from prison considered legally disenfranchised, 1.4 million are Black men, which make up 13 percent of the total.

BISHOP GEORGE W. C. WALKER MOVES TO CHARLOTTE



Bishop George W. C. Walker, Sr.

On Sunday, December 12, 2004 at 5:30pm, the state of North Carolina will become the recipient of a national and international leader who has made North Carolina his new home and intends to add his voice to social justice issues such as over population of state/federal prisons with black prisoners. The welcome reception will take place in Varick Auditorium on the campus of Livingstone College in Salisbury, N.C.

Bishop George W. C. Walker, Sr. is the Presiding Bishop of the Piedmont Episcopal District and the Senior Bishop of the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church. His immediate sphere of administrative influence covers the Blue Ridge, West Central North Carolina, Western North Carolina, and Jamaica (all divisions) Annual Conferences.

On the international front, the impact of Bishop Walker extends to Africa, Europe, South America, Asia, the USA and Virgin Islands, and the West Indies.

Prior to his assignment to the Piedmont Episcopal District, Bishop Walker presided over the North Eastern Episcopal District (ie. New York, New England, Western New York and the Bahamas).

One of his landmark achievements was the restoration of the Harriet Tubman Historic Home where the foundation was laid to transform the home into a twenty first century Cultural Research and Retreat Center.

In his new assignment, Bishop George W.C. Walker's agenda will include the following:

- The development of a Scholarship Fund in each Annual Conference for college bound students.
- Programs to address the need for troubled teens to stay in school and to learn vocational skills
- Programs to encourage the enrollment of clergy persons in the Hood Theological Seminary
- Programs to increase the enrollment of students into Livingstone College
- The construction of an Episcopal Residence in the Piedmont Episcopal District
- The development of Camp Dorothy Walls in Black Mountain, NC for youth and children



- A plan to address the justice issue of persons on death row.

Bishop George W.C. Walker, Sr. and Mrs. Geraldine J. Walker, Missionary Supervisor, are anticipating an exciting and rewarding journey in the Piedmont Episcopal District.

For more information call Rev. Dr. Seth O. Lartey, Chair of the Media Committee, at (336) 724-9411 or (336) 924-0759.

The Piedmont Episcopal District of the A.M.E. Zion Church will officially welcome Bishop and Mrs. George W.C. Walker, Sr. to North Carolina on Sunday, December 12, 2004 at 5:30pm at Varick Auditorium on the campus of Livingstone College in Salisbury, NC. Bishop Walker is the new Presiding Bishop of the Piedmont Episcopal District and Senior Bishop of the A.M.E. Zion Church. Bishop George E. Battle, Jr. of the North Eastern Episcopal District will be the keynote speaker. The event is free and open to the public. For more information, contact Dr. Seth Lartey at (336) 724-9411 or (336) 924-0759.

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For more information, contact
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