



From the ACTS President



2 Cities, a Killer Book and Some Milk

I spent the last two weekends of July traveling—one weekend visiting longtime friends in Buffalo, the next weekend celebrating our son's wedding in San Francisco. Barb and I have lived longer in Syracuse than anywhere else, but we still think of Buffalo as home, largely because that's where we raised our children when they were young. At the time we left Buffalo, the city was in deep economic and social trouble with no remedy in sight. While I've been back to Buffalo for a meeting now and then, it's been 25 years since we spent any real time there. So our visit was a chance to take a close-up look at Buffalo's renaissance.

The familiar residential neighborhoods were largely unchanged, though property values have drastically improved throughout much of the city. However, the downtown and near downtown areas have all seen significant new construction and redesign. The influx of new buildings, new businesses and new money was impressive, to say the least. But it left me with some questions: How did all that happen? What led to the changes? How did the grand redevelopment projects affect the poorer neighborhoods and residents of the city? Did they share equally in the economic revival?

In San Francisco, our hotel was located adjacent to the main cable car line, close to both Union Square and Chinatown. Along with getting our exercise walking up and down hills for several miles a day, we also took a two hour sightseeing tour that wound through nearly all of the city's various neighborhoods—mostly to give our 13 year old granddaughter an overall introduction to the city, since it was her first time in 'Frisco. At several points along the way, the tour guide reminded us of (1) the 1906 earthquake that, coupled with the ensuing fires, destroyed much of San Francisco and (2) the enormous effort that went into rebuilding the city as quickly as possible. Again, it raised questions for me: How did that rebuilding effort happen? Who planned and organized it? Who funded it? Who benefited from it ... and who didn't?

As it happens, I've been reading the book, [How to Kill a City](#) (by P. E. Moskowitz), which explores the process and consequences of gentrification. Contrary to what may appear to be a random, organic, unplanned process whereby a historically depressed city neighborhood suddenly and inexplicably becomes attractive to new and more monied residents, Moskowitz points out that gentrification is actually a predictable, profit-driven process that is the result of great planning and coordination by a combination of real estate developers, financial developers and government officials. It's a process that's designed not to benefit the neighborhood per se and certainly not those who currently reside in that neighborhood (who are most likely to be uprooted and displaced by gentrification), as much as it is to benefit those who stand to make a "killing" by buying low and selling high. Any neighborhood improvements are simply ancillary or secondary to the anticipated economic gains ... which will fall, needless to say, not to longtime residents and stakeholders but to outside interests, developers, financiers, and newcomers.

A little Google sleuthing quickly led me to the pivotal role banking interests (like Wells Fargo and the forerunner of Bank of America) played in the reconstruction of San Francisco following the 1906 earthquake—a role centered on good business and investment strategy with a dash of civic-mindedness thrown in. Without attributing blame to the bankers, San Francisco's recovery also resembled modern day gentrification, in the sense that it deliberately sought to remove Chinatown from its prime, central location, and to build new residential communities that blatantly excluded persons of "African or Mongolian (i.e., Asian) descent."
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(President's message, continued)

Finally, flying home from San Francisco, I watched the movie "Milk"—the story of the life and death of Harvey Milk, San Francisco based gay rights activist, organizer and politician. From the time of his social and political awakening in the 1970's, Milk understood that nothing changes without people getting involved and organized. It was true for the Civil Rights movement in the 60's. It was true in the fight for gay rights. And it's true for the struggles we face and the changes we seek today.

Some tentative lessons: Things aren't always as simple or innocent as they appear. If you want to know what's going on and who benefits, follow the money. New development may have great curb appeal, but it rarely benefits people and neighborhoods that need it most. Romantic notions of spontaneous community or neighborhood redevelopment often conceal the real movers and shakers ... and beneficiaries. When economic or community development initiatives come along, look carefully to see who gets left out or left behind. (Don't be surprised if it's mainly black or brown communities.) Organize, organize, organize.

Craig French

P.S. I'd love to be proven wrong on any of these points.

ACTS Organizational Calendar - August/September 2019

ACTS Youth Council - Tuesday, August 20th, 6:00 PM at Temple Concord

ACTS Board Meeting - Thursday, August 22nd at 5:30 PM, Temple Concord

ACTS Race Matters Book Club - Monday, August 26th, 7:00 PM at Trinity Episcopal Church, 106 Chapel Street, just off E. Genesee in Fayetteville

ACTS Financial Sustainability Committee - Tuesday, August 27th, 8:30 AM, Location TBA

ACTS Youth Council - Saturday, September 7th, 5:00 PM at Temple Concord

ACTS Leadership Council - Tuesday, September 10th at 7:00 PM, Living Waters Church of God in Christ, 121 Huron St. Syracuse. Meeting will feature Patrick Johnson, Community Liaison and Consultant, discussing systemic racism. Please plan to attend!

Research in Action Committee - Thursday, September 12th at 5:30 PM, Temple Concord

ACTS Youth Council - Tuesday, September 17th, 6:00 PM at Temple Concord

ACTS Race Matters Book Club - Monday, September 23rd, 7:00 PM at All Saints Church, 1340 Lancaster Avenue.

October Newsletter Items Due - Tuesday, September 24th The next issue of the ACTS newsletter will be emailed by October 1st. Please email all submissions to lindamulvey@acts-syracuse.org

Board of Directors and Leadership Council Update



All members of ACTS, individual and organizational, are urged to attend our next **Leadership Council meeting on September 10th, 7:00 PM at Living Waters C.O.G.I.C.** located at 121 Huron St. in Syracuse. As ACTS works to identify social justice issues upon which to build new task force groups, individual and organizational involvement is critical.

Our agenda for September 10th includes an update on progress with identified issues (Housing, Community Violence, Criminal Justice/Policing, and Equity in Education) since our second training session on June 26th and a preview of things to come. We will also be joined by Patrick Johnson, a community liaison from Central New York who has been doing anti-racism work for the past 18 year. Mr. Johnson was invited by the ad hoc Anti-Racism committee that was established following the June Leadership Council meeting. He will discuss and facilitate conversation on systemic racism.

The last Board of Directors meeting was held on July 25th. Topics discussed included:

- POWER UP! 2019 (Action Plan)
- LifeCycles Assessment implementation plan
- Addressing Racial Equity in ACTS (preparation for Sept. Leadership Council)
- Training + planning activities: status report
- Strategic Planning and By-laws Task Force Updates
- Financial Matters
- Community Organizer Work Plan and Update

ACTS Youth Council

The ACTS Youth Council is pleased to announce that they have chosen Joshua King as a new co-advisor to the group, replacing Aneesah Evans who will be returning to school this year in addition to working full time. They would like to thank Aneesah for her support and dedication as the Advisor/Coordinator of ACTS Youth Council for the past four years. Mr. King will join Sandy Baker in co-facilitating the group.

This year ACTS Youth Council will be addressing issues in education equity as their main focus. They will also be beginning a new recruitment program through local organizations that serve the youth of Syracuse. This fall they plan to visit a number of groups, such as Boys and Girls Clubs, Hillside Work and Scholarship, Peace, Inc. and local community centers to engage additional youth in joining their efforts to work for equity in education for all students.

Upcoming meetings for the group include:

- Tuesday, August 20th, 6:00 PM at Temple Concord
- Saturday, September 7th, 5:00 PM at Temple Concord
- Tuesday, September 17th, 6:00 PM at Temple Concord

Community Organizer Update

On June 26th, ACTS held its second organizing training in partnership with Faith In Action. While our reach goal



was for a slightly larger crowd, we had 69 excited people participating by sharing what they learned from their 1:1 conversations with folks in their community. We are so grateful to Hopps

Memorial CME Church, especially Pastor Bruce Burns and Sister Willis, who helped make this happen. The session was held on a steamy summer evening, we were sustained by cold drinks and pizza. But most importantly, we were energized by the powerful leadership and training provided by Bishop Dwayne Royster, Tim Lilienthal and Stephanie Gut, all from Faith In Action (FIA). Thank you all for your unflagging support and your willingness to share your expertise and experience in social justice work!

At the initial May training, people who attended learned how to do 1:1 conversations with people to identify areas of concern and aspirations for our community. When they returned with information from the 1:1 conversations they held, they wrote these concerns on sticky notes that were then organized into main areas. With hundreds of sticky notes posted in the fellowship hall, the main four areas that emerged through that outreach and building of relationships were **Housing, Community Violence, Criminal Justice/Policing, and Equity in Education**. Now the research phase has begun.

Research groups have been formed around each of the four areas and two captains and a faith leader are leading the effort to research the topic and identify areas for action. Each group is receiving ongoing support from ACTS leadership and additional training in the process. If you are interested in joining a group, please contact me at (315) 416-6363 or acts.cny@gmail.com. We will gather again in the fall to hear the results from these passionate, committed and hard-working community members!

Housing:

Co-Captains - Andre Douglas Jr & Kisha Rogers
Faith Leader - Marcus Jackson, Hope Memorial Community Church

Education Equity

Co-Captains - Cheryl Graves-Wright, Ann Kornbluth & Kelly Ward
Faith Leader - TBA

Community Violence

Co-Captains - John Hohl-Shambo & Clifford Ryan
Faith Leader - Rev. Bruce Burns, Hopps Memorial CME Church

Criminal Justice/Policing

Co-Captains - Doug Anderson & Ben Robinson
Faith Leader - Bonnie Shoultz, Zen Center of Syracuse

Additionally, ACTS had five leaders trained by Faith in Action at the Northeast Regional Leadership and Organizing Training in Pendle Hill, PA from 7/31-8/31. We continue to strengthen and grow our engagement as we forge ahead in doing the essential social and racial justice work in our community.

Linda Malik, ACTS Organizer

Alliance of Communities Transforming Syracuse (ACTS)
910 Madison Street, Syracuse, NY 13210
315-416-6363

Support Urban Farming - Brady Farm Stand

The Brady Farm is in its 4th year and Wow! On 3 city of Syracuse acres they are growing a whole lot of vegetables! They need your help! One way you can help is by connecting them to restaurants, caterers, and customers who want to support their mission by purchasing our organic, Syracuse-Grown veggies. Could you please spread the word about their wonderful bountiful harvest of THE freshest produce and reach out to friends, family, and work associates who would be interested in purchasing vegetables?



The Brady Farm is located at 150 Ford Ave. **They operate a farm stand Saturdays from 9 am - 1pm, sell at the Farmer's Market on Saturdays in Shed E** and sell directly from the farm throughout the week by request. Their website is www.bradyfarm.org.

Thank you for your support in keeping a thriving urban farm in the Syracuse Community. For more information, call Jessi Lyons, Farm Coordinator 315-420-4521.

Research and Action Committee Highlights

ACTS Research and Action (R & A) Committee serves as ACTS' "think tank" and meets on a monthly basis. In that role it coordinates and assists the work of our various task forces, researches public policy concerns, and makes plans for ACTS' public meetings. Five topics were front and center at R & A's August meeting.

1. The group received updates on the status of the newly formed Research groups that were established at the June training session with *Faith in Action*. The groups are only now beginning to meet. As a result, R & A agreed that these groups will need time to evolve, and any "issues assembly" to set new policy priorities for ACTS will likely not happen till next spring. The four research groups are: **Housing; Education Equity; Criminal Justice / Policing; Community Violence.**

2. R & A affirmed a proposal from the team of leaders who attended *Faith in Action's* regional training event the first week in August. The proposal is for ACTS, in partnership with the IMA (Interdenominational Ministerial Alliance), to host a candidate's forum with the three persons running for District Attorney this fall. This proposal had previously been discussed and affirmed by the ad hoc Anti-Racism work group that was put in place following the June Leadership Council. Planning for an

October candidate's forum will move forward, with a goal of at least 200 persons in attendance and an emphasis on Southside residents.

3. The group discussed how to make sure every person is counted in the 2020 census. Inasmuch as this will be a focus of *Faith in Action's* statewide gathering in September, R & A decided to postpone discussion of this item till after that meeting.

4. Barry Lentz brought the "*Build Local, Hire Local*" legislative proposal to the group's attention. This proposal, sponsored by Sen. Gillibrand, was supported and signed onto by R & A on behalf of ACTS. Barry also informed the group of the key ballot initiative this fall for an independent election district commission.

5. Finally, the group acknowledged the continuing dilemma for ACTS to be able to respond in a quick and timely fashion to public events and issues. Who speaks officially for ACTS? Who determines when and what to say? We will ask the new *Strategic Planning and Bylaws Committee* to address this, when they begin reviewing the bylaws in the fall.

IMPORTANT EVENT: Stay Tuned for Details – District Attorney Candidates Forum

In partnership with the Interdenominational Ministerial Alliance (IMA), a long-standing African-American clergy group, ACTS is developing plans to hold a District Attorney candidates forum in October. Across the nation, DA races are increasingly being recognized as opportunities to explore different approaches to local criminal justice. DA's have great discretion, and influence, when it comes to matters such as what crimes to prosecute, bail and sentencing recommendations, plea deals, etc. This year's Onondaga County DA's race features three candidates. More details about this opportunity to raise your concerns about how the criminal justice system can best serve the interests of all city and county residents will be provided soon.

ACTS Community Calendar of Local Events - August/September 2019**ArtRage Exhibition: The New York Civil Liberties Union and Shane Lavalette present – A Shadow**

Cast: Interstate 81, August 18th – August 24th for more information <http://artragegallery.org/exhibitions/upcoming-exhibitions/>

Song of the Soul: Listening to Your Life's Lyrics with Meg Castellini – Saturday, September 19th, 10:00 AM – 3:00 PM at The Spiritual Renewal Center (Bishop Harrison Center) 1342 Lancaster Ave. For more information and registration: <https://www.spiritualrenewalcenter.com/events>

Embodiment: Embracing Our Earthiness with Amy Aubrecht – Thursday, September 26th, 7:00 - 9:00 PM at The Spiritual Renewal Center (Bishop Harrison Center) 1342 Lancaster Ave. For more information and registration: <https://www.spiritualrenewalcenter.com/events>

ArtRage Exhibition - Recreating Home: The Refugee Experience, September 14th – October 26th at 505 Hawley Ave. Details at <http://artragegallery.org/exhibitions/upcoming-exhibitions/>

Rethink Poverty Simulation – Saturday, September 21st at Bishop Harrison Center, 9:30 AM – 12:30 PM 1342 Lancaster Ave. Limited enrollment, for tickets, <https://allsaintssyracuse.ticketleap.com/poverty-simulation>
For more information, Email: daleavers@gmail.com or call All Saints Parish (315) 472-9934



Faith in Action Regional Training



Pictured above (first row) Peter Sarver, Executive Director; Cheryl Graves-Wright, Education Co-Captain; (second row) Linda Malik, ACTS Lead Organizer; Linda Mulvey, Vice President. Not pictured: Kelly Ward, Equity in Education

Faith in Action Regional Leadership Training was held at the Pendle Hill Conference Center in Wallingford PA July 31 – August 3rd. The 3-day training session focused on leadership development and social justice work through the Theology of Resistance. ACTS sent an enthusiastic group of leaders (pictured left) to participate in the training. The Syracuse team were joined by leaders from Faith in Action (FIA) affiliates: POWER in Philadelphia, Rochester ACTS (RocACTS), VOICE Buffalo, United Valley Interfaith Project, Faith in New Jersey, Buffalo Immigrant Leadership Team, Moral Movement Maine and Vermont Interfaith Action. The entire ACTS team was inspired by the training program and the opportunity to network with like-minded individuals and Faith in Action national staff including Bishop Dwayne Royster, Tim Lilienthal and Stephanie Gut.

Cheryl Graves-Wright - The conference was very interesting and informational. I learned a lot and I'm ready to position myself to work with others so we can empower each other through team work. Thank you for inviting me to the training.

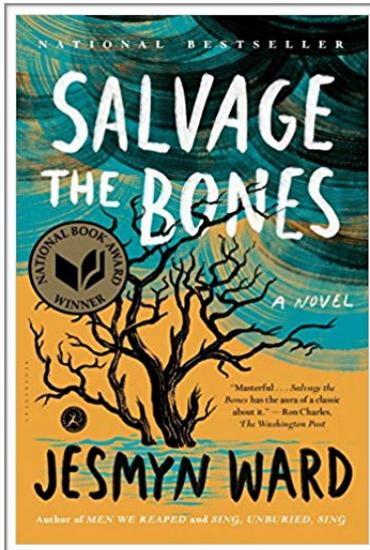
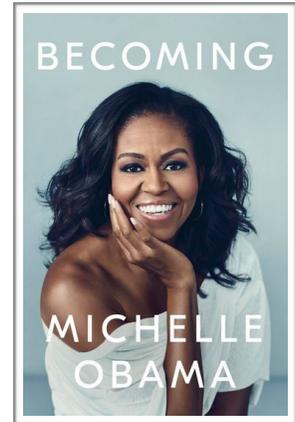
Peter Sarver - Faith in Action (FIA) regional training was inspirational and provided the tools for leaders and affiliates to move their organization forward in equity and social justice work. One important point that resonated with me, was a reminder that ACTS, and other FIA affiliates, should not see their role as advocates for people impacted by racism and inequity. Instead we must stand with people and engage and empower them to advocate and take action for their community.

Linda Malik - Dr. Howard Thurman wrote *"If you cannot hear the sound of the genuine in you, you will all of your life spend your days on the ends of strings that somebody else pulls."* We examined the idea of leadership, and how to invite those in our community to lead us in the most essential work of racial and social justice. It became clear that too many of us are afraid to own our power, as many of us see power as bad or destructive. But together, as we stood for the truth of one another, we bore witness to the strength of our shared leadership. When we hear that still, small voice we may call Spirit, God or what Dr. Thurman calls "the sound of the genuine," then we have no choice but to stand in our shared truth and power...and act. Together we can change the "profit supremacy" narrative forged over the centuries that continues to dehumanize and divide us. I left inspired, moved and empowered to reimagine a NEW Syracuse!

Linda Mulvey - I was most inspired by the experience of doing a mock "Research Action". The scenario involved meeting with a public official that had been elected with a promise to implement a program. The meeting was scheduled to discuss a lack of progress on the initiative and commitment for specific action to move it forward. The exercise, with each of us taking a clearly defined role, demonstrated how a relatively small group of people, with connections to many others through organizing, has the ability to influence officials to get things done that can improve our community!

End of Summer & Fall Reading for “Race Matters” Book Club

“**Becoming**” by Michelle Obama will be discussed at Monday, August 26th gathering of the ACTS-sponsored “Race Matters” Book Club. The 7:00 PM session will be hosted by Trinity Episcopal Church in Fayetteville, 106 Chapel Street, just off E. Genesee St. Come, listen & learn from a diverse set of viewpoints. The discussion will be co-facilitated by Ednita Wright PhD, professor of Human Services at OCC and Peter Sarver, Executive Director of ACTS.



On September 23rd, Race Matters Book Club will be examining another novel by the highly regarded author, Jesmyn Ward. Last November, we dissected “Sing, Unburied, Sing.” Our fall reading session opens with “Salvage the Bones,” a story of family struggles in Mississippi. With a hurricane coming, we’re reading from the inside out on the lives of folks in the south as they weather the storms of nature and rural poverty. Our location for the 7:00 PM gathering is All Saints Church at 1340 Lancaster Ave, Syracuse.

The choice of Jesmyn Ward coincides with her appearance the next evening, Tuesday September 24th, at the Rosamond Gifford Lecture Series held in the Civic Center. Join a 1000+ person audience by ordering your tickets now at <https://www.onlib.org/events/rosamond-gifford-lecture-series>

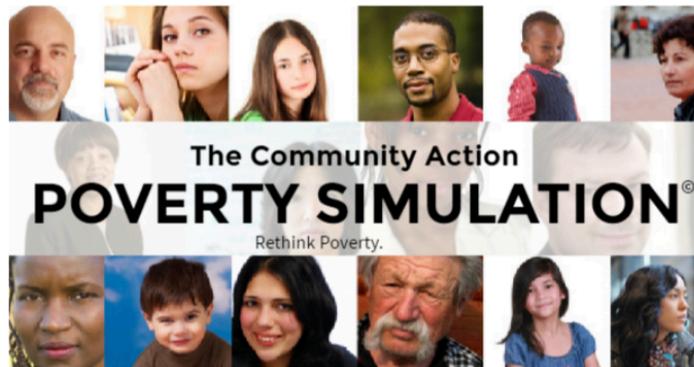
“Ward tells the story with a tense patience, marking day after day; when the storm comes, overturning everything, it feels like a fatal relief. At least the waiting’s over. *Salvage the Bones* expands our understanding of Katrina’s devastation, beyond the pictures of choked rooftops in New Orleans and toward the washed-out, feral landscapes elsewhere along the coast.” - *New Yorker*

For more information, contact petersarverACTS@gmail.com

ACTS Membership Drive

ACTS is working hard to build its membership base. Currently there are two opportunities for membership. One is a Congregational or Organizational membership. In this case all members of the congregation or organization have membership in ACTS. In addition, Individual memberships are available. Individual memberships provide the opportunity for any interested people, even if they are not connected to a member organization. Become an individual member today or encourage others to get involved! **Click on this link** to access the Individual Membership form and additional information on our website. An annual individual membership is only \$25.

Individual membership offer any interested person an opportunity to become more directly involved with the work of ACTS. Individual members are considered to be delegates at our Leadership Council meeting.

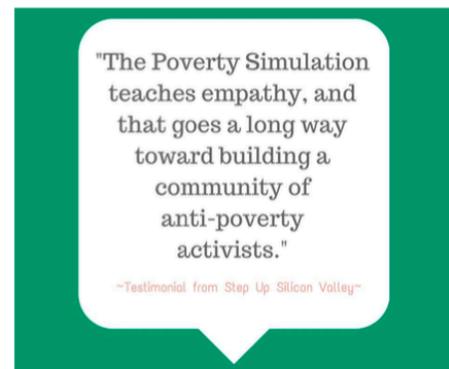


RETHINK POVERTY

Do you think you could survive a month living in poverty? Spend a simulated month in the poverty experienced by our community's individuals and families. This interactive event promotes awareness, increases understanding, and inspires local change. The simulation is based on real families in real situations. For ages 10+ ***This is not a game.***

EVENT DETAILS

WHERE	Bishop Harrison Center 1342 Lancaster Ave, Syracuse
WHEN	Saturday, September 21 9:30 am – 12:30 pm
REGISTER	Limited enrollment https://allsaintssyracuse.ticketleap.com/poverty-simulation Email: daleavers@gmail.com OR call All Saints Parish: 315 472-9934



**Sponsored by: All Saints Church
Brady Faith Center
St. Lucy's Church
Alliance of Communities to Transform
Syracuse (ACTS)**

<http://www.communityaction.org/3-ways-poverty-simulations-make-rethink-poverty/>

3 Ways this Poverty Simulation can Make you Rethink Poverty

Poverty is a reality for many individuals and families. But unless you've experienced poverty, it's difficult to truly understand. The Community Action Poverty Simulation (CAPS) bridges that gap from misconception to understanding. CAPS, copyrighted by Missouri Community Action Network, is an interactive immersion experience that sensitizes community participants to the realities of poverty. Read on to learn how this Poverty Simulation can make you Rethink Poverty:

1. Rethink who struggles with poverty.

During this Poverty Simulation, you are placed in a "family" unit that you will work together with to live a month in poverty. These families are not unlike yours and mine, however they experience a daily struggle to provide basic needs. As you go through the simulation, you will begin to understand how safety nets, and lack of safety nets, can impact a life.

"This Simulation gave me a whole new perspective, a greater appreciation for the choices she has made AND an increased respect for my little sister – and for those just like her" – Poverty Simulation participant with a sister in poverty.

2. Rethink your beliefs about those in poverty.

This Poverty Simulation will expose you to the realities of poverty you may not have realized. During the simulation, you will confront the myths you may hold of those living in poverty. As a Poverty Simulation participant said:

"The Poverty Simulation can get a room full of people very anxious, frustrated and stressed in a very short time. It helps participants understand the challenges of living in poverty in a way no book or workshop can."

3. Rethink your impact on poverty.

Communities must come together to ensure the wellbeing of all residents, not just the privileged. After you participate in the 90 minute simulation, you will have the chance to debrief with fellow participants and brainstorm how you make a difference in your community.

"The Poverty Simulation has motivated and inspired many of our participants to take action in our state. Some have met with their elected officials, some have written letters about what they learned and how they felt after participating, and some have met to brainstorm potential legislation to help poor families in our state. This has been one of the best tools we have found to begin the conversation and take action." – MaryLou Beaver, Every Child Matters.

Listen to the Here & Now segment on Poverty Simulations:

<http://hereandnow.wbur.org/2015/12/01/poverty-simulations>

<http://www.communityaction.org/3-ways-poverty-simulations-make-rethink-poverty/>