

TRUTH IN PROGRESS INFORMATION SHEET

Truth in Progress is a multi-media project dealing with issues of race, sexual orientation, and religion. It takes a special look at the similar yet different experiences and histories of the Black Civil Rights and Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) Rights Movements. The project's purpose is to bridge understanding through frank conversation between and within diverse communities, examination of historic moments in civil and human rights struggles, and presentation of personal stories. The project explores the notion that diverse communities may have different struggles of and victories over oppression and discrimination, but they share the same fight for justice and equality.

The project began with the ongoing dialogue between the Rev. Gil Caldwell; an older black male heterosexual retired pastor, and Marilyn Bennett, a younger white lesbian author and activist. They have been in correspondence about issues of race, sexual orientation, faith, and justice for over ten years, having been arrested together in an act of civil disobedience in Cleveland, Ohio, in 2000, at the United Methodist General Conference. In the years following they began a frank, personal and often humorous exchange about their life experiences and how those experiences have shaped their individual perceptions on race and sexual orientation. As they relayed their stories with one another, layers of history and beliefs were pulled back, revealing a process of give and take that continues to inform and form one another. This exchange became a "truth in progress," a shaping and reshaping of perspectives.

In order to bring these issues to a larger audience and involve more voices in an ongoing way, the Truth in Progress Multi-media Project was formed. The project coalesces around an interactive website, TruthInProgress.com, which allows readers and viewers to share their stories and thoughts to foster a broader truth in progress. In addition Gil and Marilyn will be traveling to various cities significant to both civil rights movements to interview leaders and activists as well as recount historic moments in a personally visual way. That footage will be shared on the website to further the conversation. Down the line, it will be the basis for a documentary.

The website features three ongoing blogs: Different Struggle, Same Fight by Marilyn and Gil; From Behind the Lens by our Film Production Manager Tonya Easbey; and a Guest Column by various writers and filmmakers from around the country. Video clips are incorporated into each of these blogs. Comments and insights from readers/viewers are a key ingredient to Truth in Progress. They will help shape Gil and Marilyn's dialogue and the larger project.

The Big Three of race, sexual orientation, and religion may seem like a lot to explore in one project, but these threads more often than not intertwine, at times becoming entangled. Examining these knots and crossovers allows us to recognize the different patterns the individual and joined stitches make.