

# Faith, Race, & Politics

**Monday, January 13, 2020**

*National Underground Railroad Freedom Center  
Cincinnati, Ohio*



JOHNS HOPKINS  
STAVROS NIARCHOS FOUNDATION  
SNF AGORA INSTITUTE

UNDIVIDED



## CONFERENCE OVERVIEW

It's January 2020, and here in the United States, we're bracing ourselves for what is expected to be a rancorous election season. Impeachment hearings, a bitterly divided Congress, increasingly heated Democratic primaries, and widespread reports of paralyzing polarization. People are angry—or worse, feeling so overwhelmed and powerless to influence events that they may just be tuning out.

That's one story. It's real, and urgent. But there are other stories to be told—of people finding common cause, organizing, and working together to make real change. Around the country, often on a local level, people are discovering their collective power and using it to improve lives. Here in Cincinnati, Crossroads Church created Undivided, a program that brought diverse groups together for honest, often difficult discussions meant to help build bridges across racial divides. Those experiences in turn catalyzed participants into action, successfully advocating on behalf of Issue 44, a ballot initiative for a new tax that would support universal pre-K.

These are the kinds of stories we're going to talk about today. Faith, Race, and Politics brings together community leaders, elected officials, congregants, scholars, faith leaders, philanthropists, and others to explore how the intersection of faith, race, and politics can influence both personal civic engagement and local policy. We'll use the Undivided experience as a springboard to a broader discussion about what people of faith, civic leaders, and community organizations can learn about democratic participation and faith-based convening as we head into the upcoming election season.

As with all of SNF Agora's events, this conference is an opportunity to share research and experience, to model inclusive dialogue, and to engage with audience members, whom we invite to ask questions of our panelists throughout the day.

### During the conference:

Submit questions online at: [bit.ly/FaithRacePoliticsAsk](https://bit.ly/FaithRacePoliticsAsk)  
Follow the conversation on Twitter at: #SNFAgora #crdsundivided

Artwork and additional outreach provided by:

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## SCHEDULE

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**9:30–9:40**

**Opening Remarks**

**9:45–10:35**

**Panel 1 : Undivided and Racial Reconciliation**

Moderator: Doran Schrantz, ISAIAH Executive Director

Panelists: Carolyn Heck, Undivided Justice Team Founding Member  
Chuck Mingo, Crossroads Oakley Community Pastor  
Cameron Smedley, Undivided Justice Team Coach  
Lynn Watts, Crossroads Spiritual Growth Site Director

**10:40–11:45**

**Panel 2: Making the Radical Middle Possible**

Moderator: Hahrie Han, SNF Agora Institute Director

Panelists: Chuck Mingo, Crossroads Oakley Community Pastor  
Brian Tome, Crossroads Senior Pastor

**11:45–1:00**

**Lunch Break**

**1:00–1:50**

**Panel 3: Case Study in Organizing: Issue 44**

Moderator: Troy Jackson, Faith In Action State Strategies Director

Panelists: Stephanie Byrd, CEO of American Red Cross, Cincinnati-Dayton Region  
Elizabeth Hopkins, Issue 44 Advocate  
Gary Lindgren, Cincinnati Business Committee President

**1:55–2:45**

**Panel 4: Faith, Race, and the 2020 Election**

Moderator: Dave Campbell, Packey J. Dee Professor of American Democracy,  
University of Notre Dame

Panelists: Imam Mohamed Omar, Dar Al-Farooq Islamic Center,  
Bloomington, Minnesota  
Rabbi Miriam Terlinchamp, Temple Sholom, Cincinnati  
The Rev. Mark Tyler, Mother Bethel AME, Philadelphia

## PANELISTS

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**Stephanie Byrd** has been the regional CEO of the American Red Cross, Cincinnati–Dayton Region, since May 2018.

She has an extensive background in the nonprofit and health care communities. As senior vice president for early learning strategies and executive director of Success By 6 at United Way of Greater Cincinnati, Byrd led implementation of kindergarten readiness strategies in the 10-county UWGC region.

In her role as founding executive director of Cincinnati Preschool Promise, Byrd led planning and implementation of the start-up of this \$15 million school levy–funded preschool initiative. Working with community leaders and diverse partners, she spearheaded the three-year strategy to pass the November 2016 ballot issue and was responsible for implementing the program within nine months of passage. The program created a network of 80 preschool providers and enrolled 1,100 children in the first year of operation.

Byrd holds a bachelor's degree in public administration from Miami University and a master's degree in health and hospital administration from Xavier University.



**Dave Campbell** is the Packey J. Dee Professor of American Democracy at the University of Notre Dame and the chairperson of the Political Science Department. His research focuses on civic and political engagement, particularly how both religion and education affect Americans' civic life. His most recent research examines the causes and consequences of secularism within the United States. He spent 2017–18 as a Carnegie Fellow, writing a book on the politics of secularism. In 2014, he published *Seeking the Promised Land: Mormons and American Politics* (with John Green and Quin Monson). He is also the co-author (with Robert Putnam) of *American Grace: How Religion Divides and Unites Us* and *Why We Vote: How Schools and Communities Shape Our Civic Life*. As an expert on religion, politics, and civic engagement, he has often been featured in the national media.



**Hahrie Han**, the inaugural director of the Stavros Niarchos Foundation Agora Institute at Johns Hopkins University, specializes in the study of civic and political participation, collective action, and organizing. She focuses particularly on the role that civic associations play in mobilizing participation in politics and building power for social and political change. Prior to coming to SNF Agora, she taught political science at the University of California, Santa Barbara, and at Wellesley College, and was a Robert Wood Johnson Health Policy Scholar at Harvard University. She has published three books: *How Organizations Develop Activists: Civic Associations and Leadership in the 21st Century*, *Groundbreakers: How Obama's 2.2 Million Volunteers Transformed Campaigning in America*, and *Moved to Action: Motivation, Participation, and Inequality in American Politics*. She has also been involved in numerous efforts to bring research into practice, partnering with civic and political groups interested in organizing, movement building, and building power for social change in the United States, Australia, New Zealand, the United Kingdom, and elsewhere.



**Carolyn Heck** is passionate about creating environments for connection and healing in multiethnic communities, and she is committed to racial healing in small and big ways—from within her own multiethnic family and throughout her hometown of Cincinnati. Heck's entry into this work began with a desire to create a more just city for her family and friends by participating in Cincinnati's Preschool Promise campaign in 2015. Her passion for justice was further fueled by the relationships she made and the healing experienced in the first round of Undivided, which led to her role of co-founding the Undivided Justice Team at Crossroads Church in 2016. She is passionate about taking bold steps toward racial justice, and walking alongside others in their own journeys toward faith and justice.

Heck's passion for young people launched a 12-year career as an early childhood educator in Montessori schools throughout the Cincinnati area. Wife to her high school sweetheart, Stephen, and mother to their three young children, she enjoys finding ways to incorporate her drive for racial healing and justice into their family life.



**Elizabeth Hopkins** is a lifelong Cincinnati with a passion for connecting people to the movement for justice. Currently the regional field manager for Planned Parenthood Southwest Ohio, Hopkins has engaged in organizing and movement building for as long as she can remember, holding positions on the Women's Fund Leadership Council, building justice teams, and working on statewide strategy teams for reproductive justice and criminal justice reform. Advocating for important issues such as Preschool Promise, Ohio Issue 1, and Hamilton County bail reform, Hopkins has built power with hundreds of people. Guided by her personal motto, "until all people are free," she continues to engage with organizations that are on the frontlines of the justice movement to see this motto come to fruition.



**Troy Jackson** is the state strategies director for Faith in Action (formerly PICO National Network), where he works with states to build power organizations that can engage faith leaders and directly impact communities in successful campaigns for racial and economic justice.

From 2014 to 2018, Jackson served as the executive director of the AMOS Project, a faith-based organizing effort that engages more than 50 congregations in Greater Cincinnati to work for racial and economic justice, and he was field director for the Issue 44 campaign. In 2015, he joined a team at Crossroads Church to develop Undivided, a racial reconciliation program that has engaged over 5,000 people since 2016. Prior to that, he was on the staff of University Christian Church in Cincinnati for nearly 19 years and served as lead pastor from 1996 to 2013.

Jackson has been involved in community organizing over the past decade and continues to work for a pathway for citizenship for the undocumented, for an end to mass incarceration and the criminalization of people of color, and for universal preschool.

Jackson holds a Master of Divinity degree from Princeton Theological Seminary and a doctorate in U.S. history from the University of Kentucky. He is a co-author of *Forgive Us: Confessions of a Compromised Faith* and author of *Becoming King: Martin Luther King Jr. and the Making of a National Leader*. He lives in Cincinnati with his wife, Amanda, and their three children, Jacob, Emma, and Ellie.



**Gary Z. Lindgren** serves as the president of the Cincinnati Business Committee and the Cincinnati Regional Business Committee. The CBC is a private organization comprised of the region's top CEOs whose mission is to improve economic development and education. In late 2012, Lindgren helped launch the Cincinnati Regional Business Committee, which includes CEOs from nearly 100 midsize Cincinnati companies.

In his role, Lindgren is responsible for organizing business leadership to address critical issues facing the region. During his tenure, the CBC has spearheaded efforts to accelerate an innovation economy in the Cincinnati region and drive broader economic growth and job creation.

The CBC and CRBC have also led major school reform initiatives, including the regional launch of Teach for America and Accelerate Great Schools. After in-depth analyses of CPS's financial situation and the value of preschool, the organizations worked with community stakeholders to pass the Cincinnati Preschool Promise.

Lindgren formerly served as the chief of staff for U.S. Representative Steve Chabot (R-Ohio) and in a similar capacity for the House Small Business Committee (minority).



**Chuck Mingo** is campus pastor for the Oakley location of Crossroads Church, where 12,000 people worship together every weekend. A native of Philadelphia, he now calls Cincinnati home and even roots for the Bengals on occasion. Prior to working at Crossroads, he spent nine years in sales at Procter & Gamble. He has been married to his wife, Maria, for 15 years, and they have three children, Nathan, Samuel, and Isabel. Mingo is passionate about his relationship with Jesus, his family, running, and most important, about being part of what God is doing to transform Cincinnati through the "big C" church. A few years ago, during a spike of the racial tension in America, Mingo heard a calling to unite Cincinnati and beyond. The Undivided experience was born, and has since been reapplied across the nation, internationally (e.g. South Africa), and in prison ministries. The principles of Undivided also hold true in corporate settings, driving organization capability and speed of development.



**Imam Mohamed Omar** has been highly active in the Minnesota Muslim community alongside his wife and six children. He arrived in Minnesota in 2005 as a refugee from Somalia and served as media director for Abubakar as-Sadique Islamic Center until 2008. He held several leadership positions at the Minnesota International Middle School, Elmi Institute, and at Ahmad ibn Hanbal School. Omar holds a bachelor's degree in Islamic studies from the Islamic University of Minnesota. In 2013, he became the educational coordinator and community liaison at Al-Jazari Institute and currently serves as its executive director, as well as executive director of Dar Al-Farooq Islamic Center in Bloomington, Minnesota. Omar is also the co-founder of Muslim Coalition of ISIAAH, where he organized a membership of over 30 mosques in Minnesota. He was the quiet organizing energy behind the historic "Super Eid" at U.S. Bank Stadium in Minneapolis, which brought more than 45,000 Muslims together for their 2018 holiday celebration.



**Doran Schrantz** is the executive director of ISIAAH, a statewide, faith-based community organization of 130 member congregations, mosques, barbershops, and childcare centers across Minnesota. Schrantz is also the founder and director of Faith In Minnesota, a vehicle for people of faith and values to have a powerful voice in building a new politics of abundance and inclusion in Minnesota. ISIAAH is considered one of the most powerful voices in Minnesota around issues of racial and economic justice. With its state partners, ISIAAH has been at the center of defeating Voter ID, passing strong paid sick days policies in cities across Minnesota, legal defense funds for immigrants in two of the largest counties, strong foreclosure prevention policies, and expansion of health care access at the State Capitol.





**Cameron Smedley** was born and raised in the suburbs of Cincinnati. He describes himself as a child of privilege who hurts seeing others abused by privilege. He comes from a legacy of people who love to serve others.

He currently coaches the Undivided Justice Team at Crossroads Oakley. This team played roles in canvassing and educating the community about Preschool Promise, Ohio Issue 1, and many more group education, justice, and charity initiatives.

He graduated from Kent State University with a degree in economics, and has been married for over 15 years to Jasmine Smedley. They have three children, Jaden, Carson, and Reese. Smedley says he is currently being led by his 8-year-old daughter, who is building an organization called Reese's Heart to serve the homeless in the city. "This experience has grown me as a believer in Jesus and as a father about how being near pain matters more than talking about pain," he says.

The Reese family motto is "For even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve others and to give his life as a ransom for many." —Matthew 20:28 NLT



**Rabbi Miriam Terlinchamp** is the spiritual leader of Temple Sholom in Cincinnati. She is the director of JustLOVE, a multifaith initiative that seeks to empower individuals with the knowledge, inspiration, and spiritual strength to be their best selves and do justice in this world. She is a past president of the AMOS Project and writes a monthly op-ed as part of the Enquirer Board of Contributors.

Terlinchamp is a Rabbis Without Borders fellow and a member of the esteemed GLEAN Spiritual Entrepreneur 2017 cohort, a collaborative incubator formed in partnership between CLAL, a national Jewish leadership training institute, and the Columbia Business School. She is active in Ohio Organizing Collaborative and Economics of Compassion, and serves on several boards and committees within the Cincinnati Jewish community.

She received her master's degree in Hebrew letters in 2008, and was ordained as a rabbi in 2010 at Hebrew Union College—Jewish Institute of Religion, Los Angeles. She received her bachelor's degree in philosophy of religion and studio art from Scripps College in Claremont, California. Terlinchamp and her husband have two young daughters.



**Brian Tome** is the founding and senior pastor of Crossroads Church, 2017's fastest-growing church in America, with 50,000 people attending over 14 sites. He has authored four books, among them *The Five Marks of a Man* (2018) and *MOVE, The Man Devotional* (2019). He also hosts *The Aggressive Life* podcast. As an entrepreneur, Tome has opened several other nonprofits and started Man Camp, a primitive weekend camping experience that has helped tens of thousands of men reclaim the code of manhood. An avid adventure motorcyclist, Brian rides tens of thousands of miles and camps more than 30 nights a year. He is married with three children and lives in Cincinnati.



**The Rev. Mark Kelly Tyler** is a native of Oakland, California. In 1987, he accepted God's call to preach the liberating Gospel of Jesus Christ. He is an ordained itinerant elder in the African Methodist Episcopal Church. He received his bachelor's degree in religion from Clark Atlanta University, his Master of Divinity degree from Payne Theological Seminary, and his doctorate in educational leadership from the University of Dayton. Since 1994, Tyler has been in full-time ministry in the African Methodist Episcopal Church and currently serves as the 52nd pastor of Mother Bethel African Methodist Episcopal Church in Philadelphia.

He is an adjunct faculty member of Payne Theological Seminary and a fully affiliated faculty member at the Methodist Theological Seminary in Ohio. His ministry has also led him into the work of activism and organizing for social justice. Mother Bethel is one of the founding congregations of POWER (Philadelphians Organized to Witness, Empower, and Rebuild), which is part of Faith in Action, the region's largest faith-based organizing effort. He is one of the co-chairs of the LIVE FREE campaign, which centers on criminal justice reform, ending mass incarceration, and police accountability. Tyler and his wife, Leslie, live in the Philadelphia area and have four children.



**Lynn Watts** is a visionary, inspirational leader and a recognized expert in diversity leadership, equity inclusion, and transformational experiential facilitation. For four years, as one of the original architects of Undivided, she led this racial reconciliation program that mobilized over 5,000 people in 60 sessions across eight Crossroads sites, transformed thinking, and created cross-cultural relationships to address systemic racism and inequities.

Watts earned a bachelor's degree from Mount St. Joseph University and a Master of Education degree from Xavier University in Cincinnati. In addition to serving as a catalyst for racial reconciliation within Crossroads, Watts capitalizes on her 15-year career with IBM and Microsoft to address everyone from CEOs to consumers on diversity, equity, and inclusion to activate change and transformation in secular and nonsecular spaces. She has worked with Fortune 500 companies, foundations, educational institutions, and government agencies as a keynote speaker, strategist, educator, and social impact leader.

**Crossroads** is a multisite interdenominational church in Cincinnati. In 2017, it was named the fourth largest and fastest growing church in the country, with an average of 34,000 people attending each weekend. Undivided is Crossroad's racial reconciliation program, which began in 2016 as a way to confront the growing racial tensions that were pervading not only the church but our entire nation. More than 5,000 participants have since gone through the program, a six-week course that brings racially mixed groups together for conversation and experiences aimed at healing Cincinnati's racial divide.

**The SNF Agora Institute at Johns Hopkins University** was founded in 2017 with a \$150 million grant from the Stavros Niarchos Foundation. The institute is a multidisciplinary academic and public forum dedicated to strengthening global democracy by improving and expanding civic engagement and inclusive dialogue, and by supporting inquiry that leads to real-world change. By building integrated partnerships with scholars, practitioners, students, and the public, SNF Agora uses research to identify and sharpen strategic choices that people around the world can make to realize the promise of democracy.



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