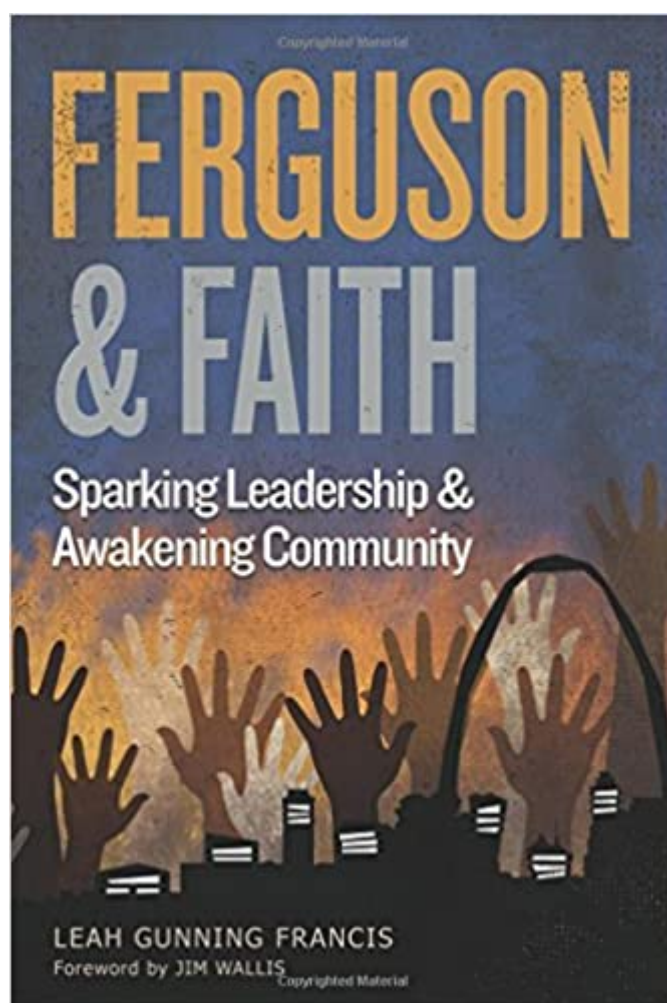


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# Ferguson And Faith: Sparking Leadership And Awakening Community



## Synopsis

The shooting death of Michael Brown in Ferguson, Missouri, reignited a long-smoldering movement for justice, with many St. Louis-area clergy stepping up to support the emerging young leaders of today's Civil Rights Movement. Seminary professor Leah Gunning Francis was among the activists, and her interviews with more than two dozen faith leaders and with the new movement's organizers take us behind the scenes of the continuing protests. *Ferguson and Faith* demonstrates that being called to lead a faithful life can take us to places we never expected to go, with people who never expected us to join hands with them. *Ferguson and Faith* is the first book from the partnership of the Forum for Theological Exploration (FTE) and Chalice Press.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

"Leah Gunning Francis's conversations with both the clergy and the young activists show how important it is for communities of faith to reach out to a new generation of young leaders and help elevate and nurture their gifts. What many of the clergy interviewed in this book realized in the course of the Ferguson protests was that rather than sitting back in their sanctuaries and waiting for the young people to seek out the church for guidance or leadership, it was the church that needed to go out and meet the young people where they were, joining them shoulder to shoulder, on the streets, in the struggle for justice." --From the foreword by Jim Wallis, *Sojourners*"This is a very important book. Leah Gunning Francis has penned a theological memoir of a movement. It is an invitation to see the spirituality at the heart of this movement. And it is an invitation to get into the

streets ... since we don't just change the world with our heads, but with our hands and feet and sweat and tears. One of the most important things this book does is celebrate a new generation of activists and faith-rooted organizers, without forgetting the freedom-fighters of old. This is not your granny's revolution. A fresh, new, holy uprising is happening if we will only have eyes to see and ears to hear and the courage to join them in the streets." --Shane Claiborne, author, activist, speaker

"Their work was a work of justice. This volume is a work of justice too, as it allows us to hear the voices of both the young activists and the clergy who were on the streets of Ferguson during those stressful weeks and months. The ecclesiology that emerges from these testimonies is compelling. This is a must-read for all leaders of faith communities. In addition, this is a model for the power of qualitative research to change the narrative. Because Leah Gunning Francis has allowed the voices of these leaders to speak through her pages, we have a completely different picture of what was happening in Ferguson, Missouri, in 2014. Her work allows us to hear and see the vocation of the church, of the clergy, and of all children on God." --Margaret Ann Crain, Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary

Dr. Leah Gunning Francis is the Vice President for Academic Affairs and Dean of the Faculty at Christian Theological Seminary in Indianapolis, Indiana. She is also the author of book *Ferguson and Faith: Sparking Leadership and Awakening Community* (Chalice Press, 2015). She interviewed more than two dozen clergy and young activists who were actively involved in the movement for racial justice in Ferguson and beyond. Dr. Gunning Francis researched and wrote *Ferguson and Faith* while serving as the Associate Dean for Contextual Education and Assistant Professor of Christian Education at Eden Theological Seminary in St. Louis, Missouri. In 2012, Dr. Gunning Francis was awarded the prestigious Engaged Scholars Fellowship to study issues of risk among middle-class African American young men. She argues that the meta-narrative about young black men puts all of them "at risk," regardless of socioeconomic class, and utilizes the narrated experiences of black mothers to construct a new narrative about young black men that honors their humanity and is concerned for their well-being. Dr. Gunning Francis' additional research interests focus on transformative education as reflected in her doctoral dissertation, *Beyond "Band-Aids" and Bootstraps: Toward a Womanist Vision of Christian Education as Social Transformation*. Her writing reflects her commitment to the spiritual, emotional and physical well-being of women, men and children; and highlights her particular interest in underserved and minority communities. Dr. Gunning Francis has served as an adjunct professor for the Methodist Theological School in Ohio, and has provided pastoral leadership for congregations in Georgia, Illinois and Ohio. She has

received numerous awards to include the Candler School of Theology's G. Ray Jordan award for excellence in integrating academic study with constructive leadership and service, and the Fund for Theological Education's Doctoral Fellow Award. Dr. Gunning Francis earned a Bachelor of Science degree in Marketing from Hampton University; a Master of Divinity degree from the Candler School of Theology at Emory University; and a Doctor of Philosophy degree from Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary in Evanston, Illinois. A native of Willingboro, New Jersey, Dr. Gunning Francis is married to Rev. Rodney Francis. They live in Indianapolis with their elementary school aged children.

This book does a great job of describing how the BLM movement started and was sustained by the communities in greater St. Louis. The focus is on the relationships between clergy and the young protesters but it provides a good overall view. The technique used in the book is individual recollections with connective background and information. This has produced a powerful and informative story.

There shouldn't be, but just in case there is any doubt about the Black Church and its role in the 21st century, let this book by Leah Gunning Francis clear up any doubt. The recent string of police shootings--- especially since 2013---placed the Black Church in the very precarious position of mitigating an increasingly angry Black community with, what appeared to many, as the militarized hard-line stance of the various police departments throughout the United States. Leah Gunning Francis' book, *FERGUSON AND FAITH*, is both a day by day account of community protests and personal interviews with the myriad of Clergy that came to Ferguson, Missouri---all of this following the police shooting of Michael Brown. So where is the Black Church, now? In Ferguson, Missouri: they're right in the middle of things---literally. Black and white clergy have consistently placed themselves between Ferguson protestors and local and regional law-enforcing personnel. The Fredrick Douglass quote that she opens Chapter Two, with, pretty much summarizes the spirit and intent of her book: "I prayed for 20 years but received no answer until I prayed with my legs." This book is uplifting. This book is important. It reminds me of King's, "Strength to Love," that was published 52 years ago.

Great Product and Great Seller

Interesting perspective of local clergy involvement with events during protests in Ferguson, MO.

Contains many interviews and some analysis of how leadership sprang up and evolved among protesters and clergy. Useful description of how clergy became buffer and negotiators between protesters and police.

An amazing book about our community and the incredible, brave young leaders and clergy that taught us so much. This book will help you understand "Ferguson" and what a those who are the conscience of this movement.

This publication speaks truth!

My book group found this to be a compelling retelling of many Ferguson stories and a good springboard for discussion.

Solid read for an understanding the expression of faith in times of resistance.

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