

Liberty University School of Divinity

**An Aggressive, Arrogant, and Argumentative Society: A Biblical Perspective from African
American Pastors of Carolina Low Country**

A Thesis Project Submitted to The Faculty of Liberty University School of Divinity in
Candidacy for the Degree of Doctor of Ministry

By

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February 2020

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Liberty University School of Divinity, 2019

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In a nation mired in racial violence, how can African American churches reach the divided communities with the love of Jesus Christ? What methods can African American pastors use to enlighten their communities and seek racial unity within the greater community? How can African American pastors share this single truth with their communities: As long as America is divided by racial bigotry, economic disparity, and cultural indifference, every citizen is injured, and our nation is bound to fail. Although similar questions are asked nationwide, this thesis focuses on the perspectives of African American pastors and their churches from the Gullah culture in the lower Carolinas.

As descendants of enslaved Africans, Low Country Christians are the standard-bearers of a culture that has preserved much of the African linguistic and cultural heritage of various peoples and absorbed new influences from other regions. Coming from this unique culture—one born in violence and diversity—Low Country African American pastors are ideally suited to address America’s racial divide and help the country realize the Founders’ promise that “all men are created equal.” Through their unique pastoral style of preaching and teaching their congregations with love, honesty, and good temperament, Low Country pastors are both culturally and biblically equipped to share the good news of Christ and help unify our nation.

Supported by quantitative and qualitative analysis, this thesis provides a unique model of “brotherly love” in Jesus Christ, grounded in biblical exegesis and Low Country Gullah culture.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

This thesis answers questions about why our society has become so aggressive, arrogant, and argumentative in the face of particular challenges and adversities. The answer presents itself through a series of interviews on and references to love, obedience, faith, commitment, trustworthiness, and determination that fit the model created by Jesus Christ. The questions and answers included in the research are for the benefit of the reader who wishes to follow its directives. This thesis will show how to face the challenge of disappointments by wrapping those disappointments in the model of who is Jesus Christ. Although society's anger is replete, God provides the solution through Jesus Christ.

This thesis begins with the following questions: What is societal aggression? What is societal arrogance? And what are societal arguments? The Bible answers these questions. When confronted with these challenges and adversities, what you need to do? How can we overcome such high odds? And what will stop us from joining those arguments of aggression and arrogance when they are music to our ears?

There is no technical terminology for explaining why our society is migrating toward such destructive forces, and neither is there any terminology according to humanity that would explain why hate has risen so sharply and openly again in our society. The answers to those and other questions depend on whether the answers revolve around the Holy Bible, which produces one's true self.

When people have given up because of disparity, our Lord and Savior Jesus the Christ appears, and through His interventions, He activates the method to conquer differences. Pray earnestly for peace while working vigorously for the disarmament and suspension of racial divisiveness within our societies. We must use our minds powerfully to plan for peace and

eradicate division. Let us pray with unceasing passion for the ratification of racial injustice by developing our minds to program for peace, organizing ourselves into mass action against violence, and employing every resource our bodies and souls can bring to conquer racial injustice. We must pray unrelentingly for economic justice and work diligently to bring about social changes that create a better distribution of wealth in our country.

Problems and Limitations

Resolving the racial divide within American society demands the pursuit of six goals:

1. Identify the issues related to racism that are continually at the forefront of African Americans' minds.
2. Use these issues as a guiding point to understand the topic.
3. Use African American pastors as the catalyst to resolve the issues that surround them.
4. Develop answers from the Bible to address contemporary issues related to the topic.
5. Create a model that is limited to specific questions on racial activities.
6. Ensure that the model is user-friendly within any church setting.

Where do we go from here and what vehicle do we use to arrive? The answer is simple: humans, without divine intervention, cannot cast evil from the world. Humanistic hope is an illusion based on unreasonable optimism about the goodness of human nature. The problem that has always hampered humanity is the inability to conquer evil by its own accord. This failure to resolve racism is indirectly proportionate to humanity's impotence when confronting evil.

Instead of providing spiritual guidance to the many people outside the church who have labored in various humanitarian movements to cure society's racism, Christian leaders have compromised their faith and surmised that committed humanists were better than uncommitted Christians. Under the guise of prayer, some pastoral leaders expected God to eradicate racism

without “human intervention.”¹ When pastoral leaders expect God to do everything for them, they inevitably misuse the power of prayer. The biblical truth is that God is not a cosmic bellhop, who can be summoned at human convenience.

This proposal provides insights into self-temperament and how it must be taught, absorbed, and practiced continually to produce a godly or ungodly effect. Self-temperament must be clear and well defined such that even the uneducated will understand its meaning. True self-temperament can be obtained only through the Bible.

Limitations to Generality

Detailing every evil within the lives of the African American community in Carolina Low Country is not within the purview of this project; instead, the research reveals specific advantages and disadvantages of being an African American living in the United States, in general, and in Carolina Low Country, in particular.

Writing about the distraction of the Black family from its moral responsibilities to its community, rather than to the welfare system, is not a part of this thesis. It is neither about the proliferation of drug kingpins or crack addicts and their effects on lives and families nor the movement of gang violence between inner cities and rural areas, such as James Island, Johns Island, and Wadmalaw Island. This thesis project does not address unemployment within the inner city, the devastating effect of single-parent families, or the criminal element within the ghetto that influences African American youth.

African American lives, such as those of all other races in the United States, are connected under one banner. The practical research within this thesis concentrates exclusively on the thoughts, actions, and mindsets of African American pastors and laypeople within the

¹James 2:15-16.

Carolina Low Country and how those pastors and laypeople must use their knowledge and insights to guide and nurture the children, families, and lives within their respective congregations. Such pastoral guidance is a continual process that requires all Christian leaders to grow in biblical knowledge and faith in Jesus Christ.

Theoretical Basis

The biblical concept of love is not simple. “Love” must be inconveniently demonstrated, at the dinner table of life, to produce its real effect.² Jesus explained to the religious lawyer that the “greatest commandment” is to love God and one’s neighbor. Rooted in the *Shema*, Israel’s holiest prayer,³ the command to “love” is the very heart of God and His people. The apostle John, in his first epistle, further explains the breadth of “real love.”⁴ The event of True Love was not God’s display of pity for humanity because he could not break the bondage of sin; instead, it was His love that endures forever. Some might say that it was indeed that cause for which Jesus came to redeem humans of their sins; however, as children of our Lord and Savior Jesus the Christ we know precisely why God the Father did what He did.

In his last book, *Where Do We Go from Here: Chaos or Community*, Martin Luther King, Jr. wrote about the trusting spirit of Black Americans toward White Americans.⁵ African Americans believe and live to the best of their ability when it pertains to Matthew 22:39 stated by Jesus Christ. Matthew 22:39 helps African Americans to face the harsh reality of life and cling to the hope that the country and some of its White citizens will live by the documents they

²Matthew 22:34-40.

³Deuteronomy 6:4-9.

⁴1 John 4:7-12.

⁵Martin King, Coretta King, and Vincent Harding, *Where Do We Go from Here: Chaos or Community* (Boston, MA: Beacon Press, 1976, 2010), 12.

created.

King also emphasized that White Americans use the word “equality” differently than African Americans, and use the word not as an objection to racism but as a loose expression for improvement among the races. Only from that cultural perspective can some White Americans express themselves as not being racist while continuing to spread fear, destruction, and mayhem among African American communities by disrupting their way of life. The late Reverend Doctor Martin Luther King, Jr. was probably thinking that some White Americans were not psychologically inclined to close the gap but motivated only to make the racial divide less painful while retaining its value for the White community.

The demonstration of love is not a simple word that is constantly announced to please the individual or the masses. Love must be inconveniently demonstrated, at the dinner table of life, to produce the effects of true love. In Matthew, Jesus explains to his disciples that love triumphs over all things, and that this was one of the main reasons why He was here.⁶ Yet the book of John remains one of the living foundations upon which Matthew stands because it provides basic solutions to the concerns that Jesus had for mankind and the reason he died for them.⁷ The event of True Love was not God’s display of pity for mankind because he could not break the bondage of sin; rather, it was His love that endures forever. Some might say that it was truly that cause for which Jesus came to redeem humans of their sins; however, as children of our Lord and Savior Jesus the Christ, we know exactly why God the Father did what He did.

Influenced by King’s perspective on White America and its racial problems, author Eddie S. Glaude, Jr., in *Democracy in Black: How Race Still Enslaves the American Soul*, described the

⁶Matthew 22:36-40 (Bible citations are to King James Version).

⁷John 3:16.

do-good attitude of some White Americans as a charitable enterprise in the eyes of a racist. Glaude's definition of racism argued a disconnect between the Bible's description of love in 1 Corinthians 13:1-8 and some White Americans.⁸

Within scriptures such as 1 Corinthians 13, the pure heart of Christian America must evoke a culture of courage strong enough to stand against the hatred and evil that perpetuates America's racial divide. Children of the High King cannot afford to let personal emotions or ambitions lead them into the area of civil justice without first believing and practicing its merits.

The Declaration of Independence unequivocally states that all men are created equal, but within the hearts and minds of African Americans in Carolinian Low Country, those words function more as a reminder of what could be, rather than what is. Indeed, by almost any measure of well-being, the numbers tell a much grimmer story. Racial disparities have continued to persist long after the end of Jim Crow and legal segregation, and the gap between whites and non-whites shows little sign of disappearing. These faulty assumptions of racial equality have left many young whites and non-whites struggling with the ugly situations of racism in today's society.

How many times have African Americans watched as they buried their sons and daughters in anguish, or how many times have African Americans watched, not in disbelief, as law enforcement lives up to its negative reputation in their society? African American communities have experienced aggression far too often. Whether real or imagined, African Americans continue hearing "equal opportunity for all" but feel isolated from sustainable employment.

The economic and political disadvantage of people of color and their low accumulation

⁸Eddie S. Glaude Jr., *Democracy in Black: How Race Still Enslaves the American Soul* (Danvers, MA: Crown, 2016), 5.

of wealth started early in American history. Now, it has become a self-reinforcing narrative that applies accumulated rages against those who suffer these disadvantages. In a sense, the history of humanity is the history of the struggle between good and evil. Although Christians believe that heaven and glory have yet to come to those who walk by faith and not by sight, it is the ability of Good Friday that lays the path of redemption for all by the resurrection of Jesus Christ on Easter Morning. The power of sin, death, and evil is no longer in control of man. Based on this concept, those who believe in love can “fight the good fight” with vigor and agility.⁹ If we truly live up to the fight that we proclaim we have committed ourselves, then racism would not have been a problem in America. Will the churches of today produce the leaders who will not profess to be leaders in word only but lead the good fight?

Given that the steps of 1 Timothy 6:12 are not enough for the unbeliever to join the faith, the book of Matthew explains that the direct path to heaven is for the unbelievers and believers to see the church as the proclaimer of the good news of Jesus Christ.¹⁰ The Gospel of Jesus Christ projects the realization that all its citizens will need teaching on that matter. The church as a holy nation should have the ability to create a culture that specializes in the vocabulary that talks about life under the reign of God. The church should not expect new converts to accept the values of Jesus Christ without being taught. It should be able to continuously pronounce its non-acceptance of racism, hate, and the costs of evil, and it should also not accept its citizens’ behaviors and actions toward destroying and or harming others.

The Sermon on the Mount contains a summary of Jesus’ teaching for the reign of God; the new practices that differ from the accepted wisdom and its constitution of God’s reign or the

⁹1 Timothy 6:12.

¹⁰Matthew 5:3-12.

manifesto for life under God's government. Far from the platitudes, the Beatitudes bless behavior that differs significantly from that of the dominant culture. The dominant express their wisdom by saying you will be happy if everybody likes you at all times. True Christians know that the Beatitudes are not for the timid. Very few rejoice when falsely accused. To live the Beatitudes requires commitment and practice in the context of the Christian community, if racism is to be eliminated. The eradication of racism involves the help of the Holy Spirit. Such teaching is not only for those in the initial stages of entering the church but also for those who have been a more significant part of Gods' congregation. The dominant world community can lead you back into its arena of hate. Can a person be competent in the field of wisdom without knowledge from where real understanding comes? True wisdom from God the Father carries significant responsibilities that will change a person's way of living, thinking, and functionality within human society. Wisdom from God will make one reach toward the two greatest commandments by showing love for all people, including those who are culturally different.

Mel Lawrenz's thoughts on the "wisdom" in today's society are notable:

Wisdom-based influence and leadership should be the norm. But in a time when we look for quick and splashy accomplishments, wisdom is not a headline issue. Wisdom is not a sexy word; Passion is. Vision is. But passion without wisdom can burn people up rather than getting them to burn on. And vision without wisdom can lead to arbitrary or unrealistic goals, driving down a road that ends off a cliff.¹¹

By contrast, wisdom drives the boldest initiatives and the most potent convictions.

Wisdom is anything but tame. Lawrenz gives three roots of wisdom that could become a significant influence:

- A. We must crave wisdom. We need to ask ourselves if we genuinely value wisdom. Are we desperate for the spiritual skill to lead well? Do we admire wisdom wherever we find it? And when we meet really wise people, do we take the time to figure out how they got that way?

¹¹Mel Lawrenz, *Spiritual Influence: The Hidden Power Behind Leadership* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2012), 132.

- B. We must ask for wisdom. Wisdom cannot be the occasional bonus; it must be at the center of every leadership decision, small and large. No day should pass without asking God for wisdom. To look for wisdom only sometimes is to risk foolishness most times. Seeking wisdom helps shape our prayer life as leaders.
- C. We must pursue wisdom. Investing time in the study of Scripture is one of the most loving things we can do for the people we influence. The Holy Spirit pours out spiritual insight on all kinds of believers, and he calls us to learn from each other. Pursuing wisdom takes time. It takes energy to get connected with other believers. But there is no substitute, and there is no shortcut.¹²

Review of Literature: Books

Problem

1. Goodman, Rhonda Christina. *Denmark Vesey and the Slave Insurrection Trial Narratives: The African American Social Landscape of Antebellum Charleston, South Carolina*. Ann Arbor, MI: Bell and Howard Information and Learning Publisher, 2000.
2. Holt, Thomas C. *Children of Fire: A History of African Americans*. New York, NY: Hill and Wang: A division of Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 2010.
3. Estates, Steve. *Charleston in Black and White: Race and Power in the South after the Civil Rights Movement*. Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2015.
4. Egerton, Douglas R. *He Shall Go Out Free: The Lives of Denmark Vesey*. Latham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2004.

Ever since the first Africans were brought to America in chains, they have been looked upon by some individuals as less than human beings. When a person who was formerly enslaved was hung in front of the historic African Methodist Episcopal (AME) church as a means of Whites to establish the right to own another human being, a revolution was set off in the United States. Because of slavery, such racial problems continue to plague the country. The aforementioned four books discuss the issues stemming from our past that threaten our future. The authors provide insight into the initial causes of racism and contend that some in White America have continued this racial divide by recreating the past. Continuing to live in the past, many African

¹²Ibid., 132-34.

Americans do not see the nation as a melting pot but as a nation of the privileged few.

Findings

5. Womack, Ytasha L., foreword by Derek T. Dingle. *Post Black: How a New Generation Is Redefining African American Identity*. Chicago, IL: Lawrence Hill Books Publisher, 2010.
6. Shnidman, Ellen, Stotsky, Sandra and Ueda, Reed. *The African American Answer Book*. Philadelphia, PA: Chelsea House Publishers, 1999.
7. Glaude, Eddie S., Jr. *Democracy in Black: How Race Still Enslaves the American Soul*. Danvers, MA: Crown Publishers, 2016.
8. Griffin, John Howard. *Black Like Me*. New York, NY: New American Library, 2003.

African Americans must put away the things of the past and move toward the future.

These books provide insight into who African Americans are in America's society. The authors focus on new ways that African Americans can see themselves as part of this society and how to handle the changes that arise in a diverse community. They ask why African Americans are living with the mindsets of the enslaved in a free society. Eddie S. Glaude writes from a racial point of view, which is taken in context by his readers who are trying to fully understand the meaning of being watched when you have not done anything wrong. Reasons for why some African American males do not play a more decisive role within their church structure, their families, and their communities are very challenging and insightful. Some African Americans must stand up to the challenges and adversities that they encounter regardless of how difficult this task is.

Recurring Color Line

9. Roithmayer, Daria. *Reproducing Racism: How Everyday Choices Lock in White Advantage*. New York, NY: New York University Press, 2014.
10. Smiley, Tavis. *The Covenant with Black America*. New York, NY: Third World Press, 2006.
11. Berlin, Ira. *The Making of America: The Four Great Migrations*. New York, NY:

Penguin Putman, 2010.

12. Williams, Gregory Howard. *Life on the Color Line: The True Story of a White Boy Who Discovered He Was Black*. Dutton: Penguin Group, 1995.

As Americans continue to perpetrate and witness the violence of mass shootings, they must ask whether they started this battle generations ago, whether past generations were indeed that cruel, and what can be done to rectify this plague that is destroying the nation? Some Americans tend to think of events from the past as if they had never really happened. Racism, hate, and evil are not single issues but are products of all sides of the spectrum of life. The aforementioned books reveal the horrors of reviving America's destructive past.

Conclusion

13. Mitchell, Allen. *Wadmalaw Island: Leaving Traditional Roots Behind*. Roslyn, PA: Boar Hog Tree Press, 1996.
14. Chang, Jeff. *We Gon' Be Alright: Notes on Race and Resegregation*. New York, NY: Picador, 2016.
15. Dyson, Michael Eric. *The Black Presidency: Barack Obama and the Politics of Race in America*. Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt Publishing, 2016.
16. King, Martin Luther, Jr. *Strength to Love*. Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1981.
17. Frazier, Herb, Power, Bernard Edward, Jr. and Wentworth, Marjory. *We Are Charleston: Tragedy and Triumph at Mother Emanuel*. Nashville, TN: W Publishing Group, 2016.
18. Church, Forrest. *Freedom from Fear: Finding the Courage to Act, Love, and Be*. New York: St. Martin's Press, 2004.
19. Jones, Clarence B. and Engel, Joel. *What Would Martin Say?* New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 2008.

An old message that has returned to the minds of its readers is as follows: Believe in a message of hope and trust in God the Father and man our brother. You can never truly understand what you are dealing with until you realize the issue. From this realization, a method was created to help the helpless understand what is happening in society. Deeply rooted in the message are love, peace, patience, understanding, truth, justice, and, most of all, faith in God the

Father.

Review of Literature: Articles

1. Korte, Gregory. "Obama Speaks At U.N. For the Last Time." *USA Today*, September 21, 2016.

This article speaks of the insight of an African American man who sees the world as one. It says that we must all contribute to the well-being of everyone, not just some, to grow as children of God.

2. Bacon, John. "ACLU: Tulsa Police Officer Killed Crutcher 'in Cold Blood.'" *USA Today*, September 21, 2016.

This article shows the reader that there must be bias against African American males who respect law enforcement when some law enforcement officers view them as below animals; thus, it shows that race contributes significantly to some people's reactions when they are in the presence of an African American male.

3. Rolland, Cynthia and Monk, John. "Emanuel Aftermath: Forgiveness, Justice." *Sun News*, January 15, 2017.

This article is a representation of love. It shows that even amid tragedy and despair, African Americans are not violent and unforgiving people, as portrayed by some media outlets. This article also shows love and respect of the community and its leaders because they feel the pain and grief of their families (my family) and their responses to that emotion.

Review of Literature: Interviews

Three Major Interviewees

1. Darby, Elder. Interview by James Mack, Jr. Charleston, SC, 2016.

Elder Darby gave the history of Charleston and described how we got to this point in the Holy City. He also talked about the need for pastors and laypeople to be more active in the civic duties of their communities. Elder Darby said that until we fully bring God into the picture, we

cannot truly conquer racism. Racism is not a figment of the imagination but is alive and kicking in the modern-day South.

2. Snipe, Reverend. Interview by James Mack, Jr. Charleston, SC, 2015.

Reverend Snipe claimed that God is the only one who can turn the heart of man around. He also stated that the need for prayer is higher today than in the past. He said that it is God who sustains him through all the challenges and adversities he has faced and will face in the future. Love is his main point because, without it, we are merely empty vessels.

3. Major, Minister. Interview by James Mack, Jr. Wadmalaw Island, SC, 2016.

Minister Major talked about the need for more Christians to participate in society by catering to the needs of others. He said that his involvement in starting a center for young males gave him a greater appreciation of the struggles of young African American males. The interviewee talked about how he used the talent God gave him to keep young males out of the justice system. Minister Major is heavily involved in the center he opened. His ministry faces many challenges, but the rewards of keeping African American males out of trouble far outweigh the costs.

Review of Literature: Scriptures

Love

1. John 15:17. "These things I command you, that ye love one another."

Jesus is showing us that loving our brothers and sisters is the key to fight racism. This love will heal all wounds, and it is a love of strength.

2. 1 Peter 1:22. "Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently."

Peter is stating in this scripture that the commitment to obey the true spirit of God's Law neither overlooks the biased attitude toward others nor supports the position of racism, evil, or any part of Satan's causes.

3. Luke 6:32. "For if ye love them which love you, what thank have ye? for sinners also love those that love them."

Luke states that loving only White Americans while acting and projecting hate and discriminatory behaviors upon others is unacceptable.

4. Hebrews 13:1. "Let brotherly love continue."

Love all, whether enemy or friend. Love all, even if they do not love you. Such love was the practice of Jesus Christ that was forwarded into the civil rights movement by Martin Luther King.

5. 1 John 4:18. "There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear: because of fear hath torment. He that feareth is not made perfect in love."

What John is saying to those who see or perform their part in racism is that fear does not fit Jesus Christ's requirement of Love.

Love is the ultimate expression that carries with it the ability to respond physically and emotionally, and it can never be replaced by any other emotion. Love teaches us how to handle the daily activities of life and keeps us from making costly mistakes—mental, physical, or emotional. These five scriptures on love help the reader to identify a significant method for dealing with different attitudes in society. Love shows us that without it, we are empty vessels of despair and regret. Love shows us that when it does not play the lead role in our lives, we do things to others that we will regret and cannot rectify. To overcome the evils of the world, we must first learn to love those we have seen. Jesus showed us that loving our brothers and sisters is the key to fight racism. This love will heal all wounds, and it is a love of strength, not a lust for weakness. Jesus also said that to overcome the evils of society, we must bring God's love to the forefront of our mind, body, and soul and do so with strength.

Hate

6. Psalms 139:21. "Do not I hate them, O Lord, that hate thee? And am not I grieved with those that rise up against thee?"

David is saying to the present generation of African Americans that hating the racist may seem correct but is futile.

7. Proverbs 8:13. "The fear of the Lord is to hate evil: pride, and arrogance, and the evil way, and the forward mouth do I hate."

If someone understands the fear of God and all His ultimate power and glory, they will flee from the ways of the devil.

8. John 15:18. "If the world hates you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you."

John is saying to African Americans because White America hates you is not your fault; it is that these whites hate themselves because they are not living their lives according to the Holy Scriptures.

9. Job 8:22. "They that hate thee shall be clothed with shame, and the dwelling place of the wicked shall come to naught."

This scripture was proven when Americans fought Americans because of their opinions on the enslavement of human beings. The losers felt ashamed, and their way of living came to an abrupt end with the blood-stained soil of both Christians and unbelievers.

10. Matthew 5:43. "Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbor, and hate thine enemy."

Jesus is trying to stress to us the power and trickery of hate when challenges and adversities enter our lives, making some think that those who are Black are inferior and the enemy of the White race.

Hate damages the thought patterns and soul of its victim until the victim changes his or her life or passes away. Jesus bluntly states that the way to cure hate is with a large amount of love. Hate turns its victim into a person without conviction toward anything or anyone. The lesson is that hate is the primary motivator of selfish acts of violence, racism, and hatred. Hate never wins the battle of life with Jesus; it loses the war it started. Hate, defeated on the cross at Calvary, no longer needs to be the driving force in those who have given their lives to Jesus Christ. Hatred will lead a person down to a dark and deadly valley called Hell. Hatred is the cause of actions, messages, and plots of all of today's mass shootings.

Forgiveness

11. Ephesians 4:32. "And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you."

Kindness is at the heart of forgiveness that Jesus Christ taught His disciples. This scripture also shows that those who are unwilling to forgive have not become one with Jesus Christ. This scripture is especially relevant to the African American community. Until they learn to forgive White America for their destructive methods, they will not

inherit the kingdom of God.

12. Colossians 3:13. "Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man has a quarrel against any: even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye."

The aspect that African Americans should remember about forgiveness is how much God has forgiven them for their transgressions against Him. It is difficult to forgive someone who intentionally murdered another due to racism.

13. Matthew 6:14. "For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you."

In this scripture, Jesus gives a startling warning about forgiveness; Jesus states if we refuse to forgive others, God will not forgive us. Because when African Americans and White Americans do not forgive each other, they deny their common ground as sinners in need of God's forgiveness.

14. 1 John 1:9. "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."

Confession will free all parties who disagree to participate in fellowship with Jesus Christ and will ease all conscience and lighten cares. This concept is difficult for all members of a racist society to believe, which makes it even more difficult for the recipients of such hatred to forgive.

"Forgiveness" is not a word that is likely to please those who require its services. You cannot love someone truly until you can forgive them and yourself for the situation in which Satan has placed you. "Forgiveness" is one of those words that continually attracts the mind until reasoning sees the fault. It controls your actions, along with your emotions, helping you override the character of forgiveness.

Patience

15. Psalms 37:7. "Rest in the Lord, and wait patiently for him: fret not thyself because of him who prospereth in his way, because of the man who bringeth wicked devices to pass."

David is saying to African Americans to entrust everything to God because He will work out what is best for us.

16. 1 Peter 2:20. "For what glory is it, if, when ye be buffeted for your faults, ye shall take it patiently? But if, when ye do well and suffer for it, ye take it patiently, this is acceptable with God."

Loyalty to God is the only means for African Americans to win the war against racism.

African Americans must remain loyal and persevere even in the face of unjust treatment, such as that from an employer. God will step in!

The problem is not patience itself, but the amount of patience required to wait on God. You cannot serve God without patience. Patience keeps you from speaking wrongly to others, committing false actions or statements against your brother, and creating an environment of instability, despair, mistrust, or lack of accountability to yourself. Patience applies itself to the evil side of society when it patiently plots opportunities to inflict hurt, harm, or death. We see its actions in today's mass shootings.

Boldness

17. 2 Corinthians 7:4. "Great is my boldness of speech toward you, great is my glorying of you: I am filled with comfort, I am exceeding joyful in all our tribulation."

All Americans must move away from the paganism society within America. Americans must make a clean break from their past and give themselves to God alone to produce quality God-fearing citizens.

18. Philippians 1:20. "According to my earnest expectation and my hope, that in nothing I shall be ashamed, but that with all boldness, as always, so now also Christ shall be magnified in my body, whether it be by life, or by death."

This scripture tells all Americans that the whole purpose of life is to speak boldly about Christ by denying racism and becoming more like Him. All Americans in Christ should confidently say that dying in the battle against racism would be better than living in such a cruel and hostile environment.

Boldness is a part of love that helps us speak the words of God clearly concerning the issues of our time. In its pure form, courage helps its victims regain better directives for their lives. It places the responsibility for others on the right outlet valve for relief, by turning a person from the evil of the world to the savior of the world. It helps us to understand that reading this thesis will let us correct some of the faults that we call as non-faults.

Strength

19. Psalms 62:7. "In God is my salvation and my glory: the rock of my strength and my refuge is in God."

No longer must African Americans be held captive by resentment toward others when they hurt them. When African Americans are resting in God's strength, nothing can shake them.

20. Habakkuk 3:19. "The Lord God is my strength, and he will make my feet like hinds' feet, and he will make me walk upon mine high places. To the chief singer on my stringed instruments."

African Americans cannot see all that God is doing, and they cannot see all that God will do. But be assured that He is God and will do what is right; knowing this will give them confidence and hope in a confusing world.

21. Isaiah 25:4. "For thou hast been a strength to the poor, a strength to the needy in his distress, a refuge from the storm, a shadow from the heat, when the blast of the terrible ones is as a storm against the wall."

African Americans suffer from racism because of the ruthless people oppressing them. But God is concerned for African Americans and is a refuge for them. When they are disadvantaged or oppressed, they can turn to God for comfort and help.

Strength runs in conjunction with boldness and requires the quiet to stand courageously for a particular cause such as racism. Sincere faith leaves its victim helpless and confused about what is happening. Confidence in God gives you the courage to stand up against evil by requiring a cost for all negative actions, words, or deeds inflicted on others. In this lesson, evil power (cowardly strength) is the driver that gave the murderers of the Emanuel Nine the conviction to conduct their actions without remorse. Such cowardice has been used to enslave people. Conversely, righteousness (God's strength) guides all people, regardless of color, to give their lives such that others can live free. Godly power used correctly and positively, as Jesus Christ did in the Garden of Gethsemane, comes only from God the Father. It gives you the ability to stand for justice.

Faith

22. Romans 1:17. "For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith."

Here, Paul is saying in God's word that if all Americans (especially the Church) become rooted in the word of God, then all things they do will be considered just by God. And

from that, all people shall live by faith in God.

23. Matthew 21:21. “Jesus answered and said unto them, Verily I say unto you, If ye have faith, and doubt not, ye shall not only do this which is done to the fig tree, but also if ye shall say unto this mountain, Be thou removed, and be thou cast into the sea; it shall be done.”

In the racism field of today, Jesus is making a strong point to His Church about the lack of Faith. He is also stating that the Church needs to practice what it preaches.

24. Galatians 5:6. “For in Jesus Christ neither circumcision availeth anything nor uncircumcision; but faith which worketh by love.”

Jesus is stressing that those to whom much has been forgiven to love much. Because faith expresses itself through Love, your Love for others is a way to monitor your faith.

25. Romans 3:22. “Even the righteousness of God which is by faith in Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe: for there is no difference:”

This scripture implies that trusting means putting your confidence in Christ to forgive your sins, to make right with God, and to empower you to live the way He taught you. God’s solution is available to all of us, regardless of our background or past behavior.

Faith pleases God. As Hebrews exclaims, “Faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen” (Heb. 11:1, RSV). Faith in God keeps America from destroying itself. It keeps African Americans from partaking in evil, and it drives the wheels of justice and removes hatred from citizens’ hearts. Faith is the primary driver of all the aforementioned scriptures.

Wisdom

26. Proverbs 8:1-4 “Doth not wisdom cry? And understanding put forth her voice? She standeth in the top of high places. She crieth at the gates, at the entry of the city, at the coming in at the doors. Unto you, O men, I call; and my voice is to the sons of man.

Wisdom cries against the racist who sits in Church every Sunday proclaiming God’s Word.”

27. 1 Kings 3:9 “Give therefore thy servant an understanding heart to judge thy people, that I may discern between good and bad: for who can judge this thy so great a people?”

Regarding Christian leadership within America, asking God for wisdom should require not asking God to stand in the face of evil for them, but asking God to give them the

strength to fight racism, hatred, and forces of evil without wavering.

28. Proverbs 4:5-7 “Get wisdom, get understanding: forget it not; neither decline from the words of my mouth. Forsake her not, and she shall preserve thee: love her, and she shall keep thee. Wisdom is the principal thing; therefore get wisdom: and with all thy getting get understanding.”

If Americans want wisdom, they must decide to seek it and to resolve to be steadfast in their determination, irrespective of the difficulty. Such resolve is not a once-in-a-lifetime step but a daily process of choosing between two paths—the wicked and the righteous.

Knowledge

29. Jeremiah 9:24 “But let him that glorieth glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth me, that I am the Lord which exercise lovingkindness, judgment, and righteousness, in the earth: for in these things I delight, saith the Lord.”

God put a higher priority on knowing Him personally and living a life that reflects His justice and righteousness. What do Americans want people to admire most about America?

30. Proverb 18:15 “The heart of the prudent getteth knowledge; and the ear of the wise seeketh knowledge.”

A wise person never comes to the place where he or she ceases to learn. His or her mind is always open to instruction, and the ear is receptive to knowledge.

31. 1 Corinthians 8:1-3 “Now as touching things offered unto idols, we know that we all have knowledge. Knowledge puffeth up, but charity edifieth. And if any man thinks that he knoweth anything, he knoweth nothing yet as he ought to know. But if any man loves God, the same is known of him.”

Love is more important than knowledge. Knowledge can make one look good and feel important, but we can all too easily develop an arrogant, know-it-all attitude. Many people with strong opinions are unwilling to listen to and learn from God and others. We can obtain God’s knowledge only by loving Him.

Understanding

32. Isaiah 11:2-3 “And the spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and fear of the Lord. And shall make him of quick understanding in fear of the Lord: and he shall not judge after the sight of his eyes, neither reprove after the hearing of his ears.”

Only Christ can judge correctly. Insofar as Americans expect honesty, they must be authentic with each other too.

33. Proverbs 2:10-12 “When wisdom entereth into thine heart, and knowledge is pleasant unto thy soul; Discretion shall preserve thee, understanding shall keep thee: To deliver thee from the way of the evil man, from the man that speaketh forward things;”

Christian leaders gain wisdom through a constant process of growing by trusting and honoring God, realizing the Bible to reveal God’s wisdom, making correct choices while avoiding moral pitfalls, and learning from mistakes.

34. Proverbs 10:13-14 “In the lips of him that hath understanding wisdom is found: but a rod is for the back of him that is void of understanding. Wise men lay up knowledge: but the mouth of the foolish is near destruction.”

The conversation of an intelligent person is helpful to others. A fool helps no one, but only succeeds in bringing punishment on themselves.

Methodology for Curtailing Racism

In 2008, the United States of America elected Senator Barack Obama as its first Black president. One would think that choosing an African American to the highest office in the nation indicated that the country had turned the corner toward racial equality, but many political pundits disagreed on whether or not the election heralded a critical turning point in the country’s conversation on race. Scholars will debate for some time precisely what Obama’s presidency signals about voter attitudes toward race, but the short answer is no—at least, not if the numbers are any indication. Numerical indicators such as Mr. Scott in North Charleston, SC, Mr. Martin in Stanford, FL, Mr. Brown in Ferguson, IL, and the Emanuel Nine of Charleston, SC, are the

representation of knotty by nature. These indicators reflect a continued distrust of African Americans toward law enforcement and the American system of justice.

Chapter 2 discusses the predatory mindset that formed in South Carolina to help the most affluent classes form cartels that match those of the Jim Crow era to gain and monopolize access to any markets. Reading Chapter 2 will give you insight into how the Jim Crow mindset worked together with the most influential classes to keep minorities out of all economic, financial, and academic markets.

In the book *Strength to Love*, Dr. King discusses three challenges facing African Americans daily in a Jim Crow society. Working-class business owners collaborated with the elite to disfranchise blacks and eliminate their political power. Another problem that invaded African American society was the labeling of Black men as “Black Beast Rapists” and their women as “Negro Mammies,” according to author James Cone.¹³ The Confederate flag incident of South Carolina has projected the image of the continuance of White dominance through cruel measures. Author Diane explains the wrap mentality of the Jim Crow era, which assumes that sexual desires between the races would eventually be warranted and expected, and demand the destruction of American society. This racial attitude was the primary motivator for the Emanuel AME church shooting. Past inequality facilitates continuing inequality across generations. When all people genuinely turn to God the Father for guidance, they will see the disparity of life turn into self-reinforcing mechanisms that will sustain all individuals through their challenges and adversities.

Chapter 3 addresses the methodology that is significantly guided by pastors, officers, laypeople, and congregations from Carolina Low Country. The shedding of light on major trends

¹³James H. Cone, *Risk of Faith: The Emergence of a Black Theology of Liberation, 1968–1998* (Boston, MA: Beacon Press, 1999), 4.

and themes helps us to understand the negative paradigm of society. Following this paradigm will help African Americans to remove the divisive actions that have influenced the perspectives of the residents of Carolina Low Country on racial issues. As a result, questions on the legacy of Carolina Low Country and how it has affected everyday decisions, such as where to send their children to school, how to fight crime, whom to elect, where to work, and where to live, prompt them to quote the saying, “We must keep our hands in God’s hands.” A series of steps have been created not to eradicate the thoughts and deeds of others but to legislate and teach society how to respect and recognize equality in all people.

This thesis focuses on a small area of the United States to answer questions on the do’s and don’ts of Jesus the Christ and societal problems created by Satan. If the Satanic issues that continue to fuel racism in the United States are not corrected, then society will continue to rip itself apart. This thesis addresses the questions Martin Luther King, Jr. would ask if he were alive today: “Where have we gone since the civil rights movement, and where do we go as a country from here?” Listen to the spirit of the passage for the ages by Langston Hughes:

My old man’s a white, old man
And my old mother’s black
If ever I cursed my white man
I take my curses back.
If ever I cursed my black old mother
And wish she were in hell,
I’m sorry for that
And now I wish her well.
My old man died in a big fine house
My mother died in a shack.
I wonder where I’m gonna die,
Being neither white nor black!¹⁴

Chapter 4 discusses Proverbs, which states the one quality by which we can curtail the

¹⁴Steve Estates, *Charleston in Black and White: Race and Power in the South after the Civil Rights Movement* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2015), 6.

abuses of racism in all societies. That quality does not depend on what material things we have acquired but on we have followed regarding the directive Proverbs gives us. Why do people too often leave the examples of Christianity behind for the things of the world? Matthew says that one of the main principles for eliminating evil in society is to remember that hate scars the soul and distorts the personality. We must always be mindful that hate is an evil and dangerous force that never thinks of the person to which it is directed.

We must not overlook the fact that hate is just as dangerous to the person who hates as to the one who is despised. Hate destroys a person's sense of value and objectivity. It causes him or her to describe the beautiful as ugly and the ugly as beautiful and to confuse the truth with the false and the false with the truth.

An inspiring Bible verse on confession is as follows: "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to clean us from all unrighteousness."¹⁵ To conquer the evil of this world, we must connect to someone or something that has conquered it. What is paramount is that the children of Jesus Christ fully absorb the scripture of Galatians 5:22. The apostle Paul informs the Galatian churches that Jesus Christ is all one needs to conquer the evils of this world that engulf their families, friends, and enemies.

Authors David Wheeler and Vernon Whaley remind the Church that for one to connect to Jesus Christ, the Christian must remember that the connection is not a "one-way" relationship.¹⁶ We must never forget that God neither receives our worship as a gift nor as a bundle of requests stored in a storage unit in the sky. Religion cannot coerce God to help us.¹⁷ The Almighty does

¹⁵1 John 1:9.

¹⁶David Wheeler and Vernon M. Whaley, *The Great Commission to Worship: Biblical Principles for Worship-Based Evangelism* (Nashville, TN: B&H Publishing Group, 2011), 56-57.

¹⁷Lawrenz, *Spiritual Influence*, 69-107.

not make a list of the number of times we pray, exalt Him, or brag about His goodness and mercy in some way. Worship must be rooted in faith and accompanied by love, devotion, and self-service.

Author Mel Lawrenz insisted that talking about truth is a dead-end street; the alternative is to live the truth, which is what we should be doing anyway. Continuing his thought, Lawrenz also argued that facts must be assimilated, received, and tested in three ways: by dialogue, translators, and confidence.¹⁸ Children of God must always remember that trials produce character if persevered; therefore, the only way to make godly changes within one's behavior is to first understand the need for change.

In Chapter 5, a series of steps are developed to produce positive outcomes from the negative cause of evil. These steps will help people handle the consequence of racism such that they achieve positive results and improve their lives.

When listening to the call of racism, one certainly can choose when he or she wants to respond or not respond to its calling. Although certain situations are scary, one must listen to what God is saying through His Word and put those words into action. If one remains focused on what God is saying and does not concentrate on the fear of what others will say and do, bigotry will slowly decline. When those that are part of the racial agenda calm down and hear what real Christians are saying, then specific conservations are warranted. Americans use relevance to the culture to form relationships that affect others or cultivate a counterculture in which people become holy. Therein lies the tension. Some churches only practice cultural relevance, while others address a counterculture. This tension reinforces the following cliché, "Sunday morning in America is the most divisive time in America."

¹⁸Ibid.

Combatting racism takes a lifetime for individuals with or against Jesus Christ. These steps will not change the behavior or attitudes of the country, but they will help others to look differently at people who are all children of the King.

Chapter 2: Challenges and Adversities

In the city of Charleston, SC, Civil War monuments, artifacts, and historic buildings are always a present reminder to the African American communities of the insensitive nature of Carolina Low Country Caucasians. Those structures, parks, and monuments are a constant reminder to Carolina Low Country African Americans of America's dark past and the attempt to defend its history through the courts, law enforcement, and other government agencies.

A constant reminder of Americans' era of enslavement will never produce a thriving society where justice rolls down like a mighty stream. It will assimilate an inferior complex about those formerly enslaved that will create an indefatigable mindset to prove one's authority negatively. The mentality of racism had forgotten the time when the word revolution was seeping into every crack of American society. Racists have forgotten how their attitude has devoured American culture, creating a divided country. The evils of bigotry thrive not only in secular America but in the nation's Christian churches.

The Problem

Frasier, Powers, and Wentworth describe Charleston as follows:

Charleston is a city where the past is on prominent display in the public square. Along the streets or in the parks of the historic district, the past takes on an immediacy through historical buildings, markers, and monuments. Only a relative few of these are reflective of the African American past, but the number is growing. As might be expected, the attempt to memorialize Denmark Vesey has been contentious and protracted in 1976, when the Gaillard Municipal Auditorium was being outfitted.¹⁹

The authors cringe at the irony of the situation in which they are now significant participants. Charleston never recognized its arrogant ways of treating its citizens. The city neither held up to its creed of being the Holy City of the South nor connected the present crime with the crime of hanging an African American man in front of the same church just because he

¹⁹Herbert Frasier, Bernard Edward Powers, Jr., and Marjory Wentworth, *We Are Charleston: Tragedy and Triumph at Mother Emanuel* (Nashville, TN: W Publishing Group, 2016), 73.

wanted to be free from the chains of hate and bitterness. Will the city of Charleston ever learn that its lesson of the past will return to haunt it if the town embraces the faults of the past? Ironically, the old Citadel building, which was used to harbor the racial history of the city that enslaved African Americans, was considered haunted. The stories of ghosts walking the corridors continued until the building was transformed into a hotel, recently welcoming 250 family members of the Emanuel Nine as they nervously waited for the status of their family members on June 17, 2015.²⁰ Not more than a few blocks from Mother Emanuel AME church stands the old Citadel building, which was the main focus for supplying forces during the Civil War and the civil rights movement. As the members of the Emanuel Nine families waited for answers about their loved ones, the question of racial inequality and hatred continues.

As Carolina Low Country continues its search for justice, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. described these forces of evil as a guilt-ridden White minority community that wants to control and enslave those who are not White. The civil rights leader, Dr. King, argued that a minority of White citizens were fearful of the African Americans' demands for justice and equal rights.²¹

King also stated that the White minority community remembers when the African Americans from Carolina Low Country were fearful of the White population because of their power to punish them according to traditions, will, and their need to secure their rights as a dominant race. King stated that African Americans must show the White community that they have nothing to fear because of the evil and hate they perpetrated upon them. Although this is a noble gesture, Dr. King is quoting Jesus in Matthew 5:44, "Love your enemies and pray for those

²⁰An article published on June 15, 2016, in the Charleston City Paper, Mat Catastrophe discusses the progression of racial advancement in Charleston, SC, 4-14.

²¹King, King, and Harding, *Where Do We Go from Here*. Dr. King was relating to how slave masters were intimidated of their slaves like the Egyptians were of the Jews.

who persecute you.” King concluded that this way would be the only solution to reduce racism.²²

Ask the African Americans who live in Carolina Low Country if of racism has diminished, and their response will be negative: racism has not diminished. The following chart shows these residents’ responses to racism.

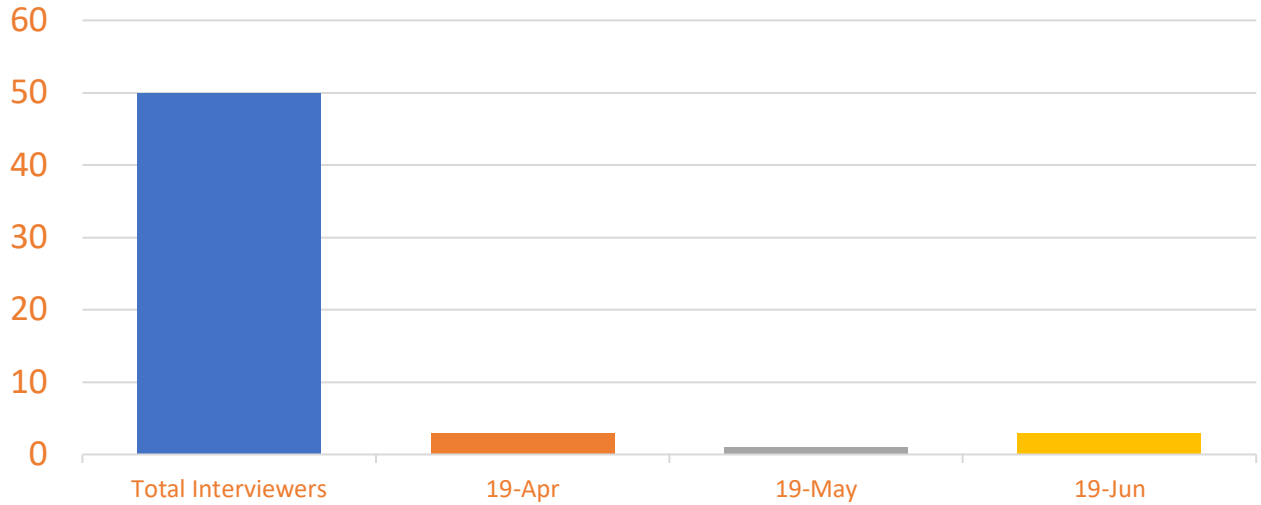
Fifty Carolina Low Country African American church leaders were questioned about racism as part of this research. Some questions were directed to pastors only, and other questions were written specifically for laypeople.

1. What are some of the significant challenges for Christian leadership?
2. Do any of these challenges involve racism, profiling, and negative attitudes directed toward you as an African American?
3. What are some of the characteristics of the Holy Bible that have helped you as an African American leader?
4. What methods have you developed to guide your congregation in times of challenges and adversities?
5. Are African American pastors promoting Jesus Christ in the context of extreme racism?
6. Do you believe that racism still exists in America?
7. What are some of your promising advancements to correct racism?
8. What are some of the limitations pastors must realize in ministry?
9. As an African American pastor, what are your methods for challenging racial division?

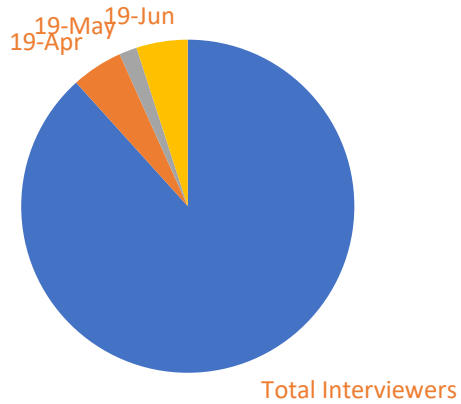
²²Ibid.

Racial Percentage Charts

Colors Equal Increase In Racial Improvement



Blue Equal No Racial Improvement



This chart indicates racial improvement among African American residents of Carolina Low Country from April 2019 to June 2019

Total 2019 Interviewers	# Person/Yes	Percentage	Column1	# Person / No	Total Response	Column4
Total Interviewers	50.00	100.00%		50	0	0.00
Apr-19	3	100.00%		47	0	0.00
May-19	1	100.00%		49	0	0.00
19-Jun	3	100.00%		47	0	0.00

Column2	Column3	Chart	Pie Chart	
	0.00	50.00	0	2,500
	0.00	3	0	141
	0.00	1	0	49
	0.00	3	0	141

Fifty people were interviewed on racism; 50 respondents was the highest, and zero was the lowest. The above chart indicates the thoughts of African American residents of Carolina Low Country on racial improvement over a three-month period from April 2019 to June 2019.

10. How do pastors prepare themselves to address hatred?

11. Is your pastor prepared to implement the immediate challenges and recommendations?

Inundated with the characteristics of racism, some of the African American residents of Carolina reported a taste of hatred in their hearts toward some White Americans. The following aspects are clear: having black or white skin makes a difference in America, and the concerns are much more significant than other concerns; if the racial division was or could be construed as less concerning, creating a higher degree of violence would perpetuate the problem; and the development of a broader aspect of racism and the role it played within the communities of America began in the early stages of slavery. The question that keeps arising is as follows: Is the innate nature of some White people to enslave Black people?

The pressures of patronage and the anxieties of racism commands about supremacy heterodoxy increasingly removed the debates and replaced them with the mechanics of hate;

additionally, it did not lack the patience of moral influence. Although time generally seems to change all things, even the passage of time cannot reconcile racial hatred with the conflicting requirements of persuading men to fight against religious dissent. This atmosphere of the relative restraint of racism is non-attributable to the real worshiping of Jesus the Christ and the rise of law enforcement, military discipline, and judicial persecution against its victims. The divide within the community perpetuates a war where both sides demand complete victory without any restraint from hurting their victims.

On the other side of racism are people who support intolerance (for the most part Anglicans) who had to swallow their dislike of bigotry by increasing the number of ceremonials in the church to cover their guilt. However wrong racism is, some believed nothing justified resistance to it because the duty of absolute obedience to the racial system was perhaps the most distinctive feature of the sermons of their clergy. Their action was a reference to the notorious lack of discipline for the Word of God. Some look at this lack of control in the context of two theories: justification for creating and maintaining wealth and a superiority complex mode. This type of thinking helps explain why Christian rituals of victory are so marred with the bloodshed of the battle against racism. Some believe that in time, a gradual change in racism will inevitably reflect a deepening return to the Word of God.

Progress in America does not usually begin at the top and among the few, but from the bottom and among the many. It appeared when the whispered hopes of those outside the mainstream rose in volume to reach the ears, hearts, and minds of the powerful. Words attributed long after being spoken have put the struggles of the day well into their position.

Another outlet of racism is religion and capitalism, because these are the tributaries that form the mighty American river of wealth that is so impressive to its benefactors. This view of

intrinsic equality contributes to the attitude of a separate and privileged society. America seems to forget its true meaning or cause, and that is replacing revelation and inherited authority with rationality and republicanism by realizing the idea that the divine rights of monarchs and prelates had to surrender to the primacy of individual conscience and equality. America seems to forget that under its system of justice and equality for all, no longer would certain men by an accident of birth, election, or any other means, be granted the right to have absolute power over the humblest of others. What counts is not just the character of the individual at the top, but the integrity of the country—its inclinations, aspirations, customs, thoughts, attachments to the familiar, and openness to the new.

Martin Luther King agreed with this assessment with these words:

The African-Americans must show all people that they are not an aggressive and evil society, but they are a society that believes in complete justice for all men. Religion endows us with the conviction that we are not alone in this vast, uncertain universe. Beneath and above the shifting sand of time, the uncertainties that darken our days, and the vicissitudes that cloud our nights is a wise and loving God. This universe is not a tragic expression of meaningless chaos but a marvelous display of orderly cosmos—"The Lord by wisdom hath founded the earth; by understanding hath He established the heavens." Man is not a wisp of smoke from a limitless smoldering, but a child created "a little lower than the angels." Above the meanness of time stands the one eternal God, with wisdom to guide us, strength to protect us, and love to keep us.²³

Kevin Roberts discussed cultural assimilation as,

Cultural assimilation, which is the idea that one specific culture consciously meshed with the larger national culture, involves more than just Ebonics. Recent controversies involving Kwanzaa, the African American holiday, and usage of the term African American also speak to this larger issue of black American assimilating with the broader culture of the United States.²⁴

Those opposed to cultural assimilation argue, first and foremost, that African Americans, like any other social and ethnic group, have the right to maintain a

²³Martin Luther King, Jr., *Strength to Love* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1981).

²⁴Kevin D. Roberts, *African American Issues* (Westport, CN: Greenwood Press), 39.

distinctive identity that does not mesh with the larger national culture.²⁵

If possible, freedom from fear would be harmful to both the body and the soul. If one brings their concerns to the forefront of their consciousness, however, they may find these concerns to be more imaginary than real. We should also remember that more than not, concern involves the misuse of imagination. White supremacy groups have operated based on fear and remain active in today's Carolina Low Country.

African Americans from Carolina Low Country must not let fear guide their path forward. The society in which they live has set up unique parameters that will protect, defend, and secure all citizens and their rights as human beings.

The more celebrated sect will always prey on the lesser faction, regardless of the victims' moral high ground. Problems will still arise when one of the two peoples believe their opponents are less than human. Fear always creates superior and inferior problematic sects within society.

Frasier, Powers, and Wentworth report the following:

Taking a stand on the issues that he felt deeply about was what it meant to be African Methodist. According to Senator Clementa Pinckney, former pastor of Mother Emanuel AME Church in Charleston, SC, this church stands for a "universal vision of all people being treated fairly under the law as God sees us in His sight." But doing so had its costs, and Pinckney was aware of this also. On one occasion, he informed a group of visitors to Emanuel's sanctuary that to promote God's vision for humanity, "sometimes you got to make noise to do that. Sometimes you may even have to die, like Denmark Vesey, to do that." Little did we know how soon he would pay such a price, and the kind of challenge his death and that of the others would pose for the church, its community, and the nation.²⁶

African Americans from Carolina Low Country must realize that fear requires one to bow down to its existence, but to conquer that fear and hate that racism projects, one must understand the problem. The problems that revolve around race still trouble the United States. Racism is an

²⁵Ibid., 41.

²⁶Frasier, Powers, and Wentworth, *We Are Charleston*.

evil and hate-filled attitude deeply rooted in certain cultures and has proven in the past and present that it will engulf its victims at any cost. The problem of changing some White Americans' attitude to see people of color as equal is not progressing at a pace at which people of color can see, feel, and incorporate into their everyday lives. The slow pace of integrating the races into mainstream society has produced a negative effect on society. This effect on society is tearing the United States apart, inch by inch, by promoting racism.

The negative effect of racism has led some White American men to see African American men as a threat to their sexuality. Even after the Civil War, some White southerners notoriously defined America as two societies: the White nation and the Black nation, of which the latter should be submissive to the former.

Author James Cone wrote,

In the white imagination, the image of black men was transformed from docile slaves and harmless "Sambos," to menacing "black beast rapists," the most serious threat to the virtue of white women and the sanctity of the white home. The image of black women was changed from nursing "Negro mammies" to salacious Jezebels, nearly as corrupting to white civilization as black men. It has always been problematic for the black man in America to be treated and consider as something less than a beast. The problem is not just hate, but it is a problem whose root stems from evil. America stems from the evilness of hate by creating its problems of racism. This was done in the fields of the Carolina Low Country when slave owners refuse to let the black man be a man but used every tactic in his command to break his spirit, humanity, and his dignity as a man.²⁷

In today's society, this is a reasonable argument for the White supremacy and other hate groups to make the case of what is supposedly better suited for the comic universe. This also includes now the harmony of forgiveness before the end of each racist's life; this attitude creates a hard persona in this modern age because the Black youth are less likely to forgive than to seek revenge. In any case, the problem with a man treating another man as a beast all his life and then

²⁷Cone, *Risk of Faith*, 7-8.

looking toward the end of his time on earth for harmony and tranquility is an allusion on the road to hell.

Perceived sexual ability is another problem for Black and White Americans. After the abolition of slavery, White Americans from the South realized that they had no longer had dominant control over the Black population; thus, in the Jim Crow era, black males were targeted as lustful, sexual beasts that they feared were preying on White women. At the beginning of the Jim Crow era, sexual laws were created to label African American men as criminals in White communities.

These laws and attitudes created fear that spurred the establishment of hate groups such as the Ku Klux Klan (KKK) and other White supremacist groups whose primary task was to reinstate slavery and domination by some White Americans. The continued hatred after the Civil War created more problems in America for African American societies, especially those African Americans residing in the South. All the aforementioned positive aspects of identifying as a racist and his or her approaches point to a more fundamental and challenging problem within society. What sort of understanding do individuals who live in the South develop? This bigotry has stoked hatred within some White Christian churches, who promote a complete misinterpretation of scripture to justify themselves and keep the White race “pure.”

Diane Roberts, in *Myth of Aunt Jemima*, made this observation in 1994:

Southern legislation was built upon the suppression of black sexuality. Josephus Daniels of North Carolina warned that black voting would jeopardize “the sanctity of [white] women,” and Charles Manigault of South Carolina predicted that “social equality” would encourage “Cuffy” to dance “with the Governor’s daughter” and presumably to have sexual access to her as well. Virginia Foster Durr recounts how another segregationist politician in the 1930s, “Cotton” Ed Smith of South Carolina, “would always go on about the sex thing. If anything happened to change the Southern system, the white women would rush to get a black man.” So it was not just black sexuality that had to be controlled; it was white women’s sexuality as well.

Durr's analysis of the situation is that it was repression and transference: Every black man wanted to rape a white woman, and every white woman apparently wanted to be raped. If you read those speeches today, you would really be shocked by them because they showed a kind of sickness, a Freudian illness. I really think those fears came from the fact that the white men of the South had had so many sexual affairs with black women. And they just turned it around.²⁸

The lynching that occurred in the past and today's shooting of innocent African American men by law enforcement officers are the origins of the attitudes of the Jim Crow era that were formed to secure some White Americans' continuous hatred of African Americans. Although some may look at this documented history as a myth in American society, the people who have seen and experienced the outcome of this myth know better. Some White Americans' have attempted to curtail race-mixing, but America must never forget the dark past and the bleak future created among some races. Although some White Americans do not want to hear, read, or talk about their continued struggle to maintain or create the supposedly perfect Anglo-Saxon society, they should understand how Diane Roberts evaluated this facet of American society. Her critique covers what James Cone stated by continuing his thoughts on sexual control at a more grotesque level of understanding. Understanding what the paradigm of hatred looks like when it is fully released by people who manipulate the political, law enforcement, and judicial system was a part of Diane Roberts' critique of sexual inferiority.²⁹

The idea of sexual inferiority was used as a narrative for human nature and a term of endearment in the African American communities. The African American residents of Carolina Low Country view this mentality as a pendulum that swings racism throughout the generations by cloaking itself behind Christian values.

²⁸Diane Roberts, *Myth of Aunt Jemima* (New York, NY: Taylor & Francis Books, 1994), 129.

²⁹Ibid.

The Holy Bible reveals an ethical God who gives humans the gift of sexuality, whereby they image God when they join together to complement each other “as one flesh.”³⁰ All non-marital sex is outside the boundaries of the will of God the Father. God’s people are expected to exercise self-control, not by asceticism, but by the power of the Holy Spirit to overcome sexual impulses.³¹

The perpetuating cycle of hatred toward people with darker skin has led to another gruesome African American church massacre. Murderer Dylann Roof stated that his only objective was to start a race war within the United States.

Given the peculiar character of racism against people of color and its asserted effort to use Christianity to sanction bigotry, the Bible provides scanty evidence regarding this issue. An indistinctness hangs over the biblical issue. The scriptures do not reveal the time or nature of end things but does provide a clear general impression on racism and that impression is final, irreversible, destructive, and produces closure with God. The language and imagery used in the scriptures are so powerful because of their directive description or paradigm that it makes you wonder why so many people have not picked up on it by now. The Bible uses the language of death and destruction, ruin, and perishing when it speaks directly to the impenitent of racism.

The problem is that God wants to save all the people on earth. However, what if some of those people do not choose salvation? Will God force someone to love Him and His ways? When one has a personal relationship with God, they know that predetermined love is not an option, because He has created us with the ability to make free choices. God will not coerce humanity to behave in a godly manner. God does not cease to work for the salvation of the world, but accepts

³⁰Genesis 2:24.

³¹Galatians 5:16-25.

the outcome in which hate drives the issue. Hell is representative of how seriously God takes the result of racism and its effect on those who behave in such an ungodly manner.

Racism produces so many problems that hinder the process of the Holy Spirit entering our lives and creating the moral goodness of God. Torturing people forever is the action associated with Satan and his demons more than any activities required by God that are associated with the ordinary ethical standards of this world and the standards supplied by the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

Based on these actions, the African American residents of Carolina Low Country defy their standards. They have observed for their entire lives the negative brutality of some of their southern White neighbors against them. These actions have created in their psyche the ability to not become overwhelmed by their hatred of the evil perpetrated by whites against them.

When confronted by the media reports of African Americans being assassinated in the streets of America, their reply is not surprising. They have been sold as if animals and have seen their men lynched, their women raped, and their children executed because of false claims of hatred. Even after the AME church Emanuel Shooting of 2015, African American residents from Carolina Low Country were not surprised. Broken promises from law enforcement, the judicial system, and the morality of the church contributed to the pain of the Black community. The hope of protecting all its citizens was not directed to them but was only talk around them for political reasons. Dr. Frank Anderson, Jr. states,

As this study has indicated, slavery was harsh in South Carolina and Georgia. Racial conservatism has been strong in that area as has been demonstrated by the Confederate flag incident in South Carolina. The circumstances related to the development of the Gullah culture, particularly where Gullah religion is concerned, somewhat imply that the largest Protestant denomination in the world—the Southern Baptist Convention—may want to rid itself of everything that presents the impression of attempting to hold on to its Southern heritage if the denomination

intends to reach all people. Such a sacrifice might involve a change in name.³²

Faith in Jesus Christ and a better way of living became increasingly important for determining victory and defeat in the post-civil rights era. Christianity was the catalyst that raised Carolina Low Country communities from the valleys of destruction to the height of hope, by weaving together a diverse collection of stories into a narrative illuminating the last 50 years of history. Topics and methods offered by pastors, officers, non-specialists, and congregants from Carolina Low Country history have national significance. Their relevance is based on their provision of insights on major trends and themes that can help all people to understand the present paradigm in their society and provides the need to remove the divisive practices of modern America from Carolina Low Country perspectives.

Martin Luther King, Jr. asked the following two questions at the end of his life: Where have we gone since the civil rights movement began? And where do we go from here?³³ This narrative demonstrates the hostility between blacks and whites that simmers beneath the illusion of a friendly culture, and this situation must be addressed and corrected before it boils over again.

How did we get here? And, given the current trend, can we change direction? Since the Emanuel Nine, some cities in South Carolina have adopted antiracial profiling policies and now require local law enforcement to collect data on traffic stops. Communities have established citizen complaint procedures. Police departments are putting into place comprehensive, early warning systems, to identify and track high-risk officers to provide early intervention. Despite

³²Frank Anderson, Jr., *Gullah Christianity: An Analysis of the Ethical Dimensions of Gullah Culture and Their Implication for the Practical Theology of Contemporary African American Churches* (Ann Arbor, MI: Bell and Howell Information and Learning Company, 2001), 189.

³³King, King, and Harding, *Where Do We Go from Here*. Dr. King was relating to how slave masters were intimidated of their slaves like the Egyptians were of the Jews.

these challenges, communities across South Carolina are working to achieve and secure local improvements to police practices and are moving police departments closer to a vision of community-centered policing. Despite the great work of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and other civil rights leaders, and the election of the first African American to the presidency, Barak Obama, racial violence remains unchecked and rampant in America. However, as matters stand, racism is far from a resolved problem in America.

For better and worse, paternalism allowed Charleston to avoid much of the drama that provided reels of films for national news broadcasts in the 1950s and 1960s. Charleston was not similar to Little Rock, Arkansas, or Jackson because it did not have Bull Connor or George Wallace as its acting Secretary of State and did not have police dogs. However, the city's form of discrimination was just as real as those of other Southern states. Dramatic confrontations between police and protesters in other Southern cities called on the collective conscience of America, leading to an expansion of civil rights and voting rights. The Charleston movement, which saw demonstrations spike in the summer of 1963 and again in 1969, was much more controlled but just as brutal and racist as in the other parts of the United States. One could expect nothing less or more from a city that prized politeness and order above nearly all else.

Another issue that arises concerning racism is communication. Author Peterson stated that saying our thoughts out loud is almost magical in helping us to refine them. Something different happens in our brains when we actually take our thoughts in through our ears, even when we are the ones who think and say them. Para-thinking adds to the magic. When someone para-thinks back our fuzzy, silly, or unrealistic thoughts, it helps us see ourselves. When we hear someone else put our better thoughts into their words, we discover a new level of clarity,

objectivity, and validation that we cannot obtain by ourselves.³⁴ Such feedback helps separate the “wheat from the chaff.”³⁵ When you use para-thinking on yourself or with people you care about, it will clarify the thinking process. Such clarity opens the door to new thoughts, options, ideas, processes, and actions in those who participate in this process.³⁶

Another issue that arises from reconstruction that affects the African American community in Carolina Low Country is whites’ ability to control the political, educational, social, religious, and economic system through intimidation, manipulation, education, and segregation. Although these avenues exist to curtail the progress of people of color; the one road, sparsely used by local Black communities to address racism is communication. In-depth talks on racism rarely occur in south. When those talks do occur, they do not touch the surface of the real problem affecting the Carolina Low Country population and all other societies within the United States. The racial issue that is slowly dragging America into the gutter of life must be addressed immediately by having a serious discussion, dialogue, and absolute directives for feasible solutions. The solution prescribed by Jesus Christ that will challenge humans is to understand that all life matters and to see others as God sees them; then, humankind would truly reach racial harmony without any disparity.

Author James Petersen quoted one of the major reasons for the growth of racism: Beware, that while others are talking, we tend to decide whether they are right or wrong and what they should do about their situations. Sometimes we even make up our minds before our conversations start. Such prejudgment can prevent us from understanding what is going on and

³⁴James Petersen, *Why Don't We Listen Better: Communicating & Connecting in Relationships* (Petersen Publications, 2007), 133.

³⁵Matthews 3:12.

³⁶*Ibid.*, 133.

helping them discover new options.³⁷

African American residents of Carolina Low Country must provide accessible language analysis solutions and call for self-reliance, self-sufficiency, and self-determination regarding the vital issues they face. Self-reliance calls for investment into the well-being of the children of Jesus rather than into the materialistic trappings of the world. African Americans residents of Carolina Low Country must start believing in themselves as God believes in them. They must remind themselves that the ultimate strength of their people measures the development, use, and effectiveness of their indigenous institution, the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Over the years, a type of learned helplessness and learned dependency has been observed in large portions of the African American communities in Carolina Low Country, that is, a feeling that they cannot do what other people do to realize real, lasting, life-giving, and life-sustaining changes in their lives.

All Americans are absolutely and indelibly Americans even when they feel like strangers in a strange land, and those feelings make perfect sense as a reaction to their past. Some Black Americans have a rebellious spirit in their blood because they feel that America's power and hypocrisy are pressing down on them, which is why the reject-America-before-it-rejects-you ethos is the most practical answer for their future. Is this pessimism inherent in their character? It is essential to ask at what point in a bad marriage with no possibility of divorce can they start making the relationship better. African Americans have changed the country in the past with less political, economic, and institutional power than they have today, and they can change it further.

Many African Americans refuse to vote because they do not feel the system serves them reasonably, leading to the victory of politicians who do not champion their causes because they did not vote. However, when Barack Obama was a candidate for president, Black people voted

³⁷Petersen, *Why Don't We Listen Better*, 151.

for him in massive numbers and pushed him to the top in both of his presidential elections. This example is just one example of the new African American power to believe in what Jesus Christ taught: “Love God First.”³⁸ A long-term view of the Carolina Low Country civil rights movement will create the misconception that it started at the Promised Land School on John’s Island in the 1910s. Unfortunately, the Promised Land School failed in its charter. Esau Jenkins (A civil right leader) left it after fourth grade to get a job because he had to choose between helping his family make ends meet and furthering his education. He never went to college, and he never formally taught in school. But like Septima Clark (another Low Country civil rights leader), Jenkins dedicated much of his life to advancing education and civil rights of African Americans in the Sea Islands and the Charleston area. From this commitment, others have come forth as leaders of the people only to face the same hate and envy that plague America.

Historical complexities and contradictions are still present in Charleston, and they may be more easily visible there than anywhere else in America. Although ethnic concerns are central to the history of Carolina Low Country, questions of problems within the political, criminal justice, and educational systems and the separation of worship continue to influence its people. Although the multigenerational struggle of Blacks for freedom transformed the laws and the soul of the country by demanding equal rights and protections granted by the original US Constitution and its amendments and those protections gave everyone the right to vote; to attend public schools; to buy homes, meals, and other products almost anywhere; and to marry whomever they chose, it still did not filter out the extreme racism within the United States.

Carolina Low Country might seem like a place where time stops, but behind the faded promises of equality and the ultimate rejection of being human, God has transformed His people

³⁸Matthew 22:37-38.

into stalwart believers in Him. Those believers gave up their freedom to help all gain theirs, moreover, they reached across people of different age groups and created a nation where all people are its' citizens. According to Allen Mitchell, this is why Wadmalaw Island was part of the Underground Railroad, and from this union, decency took hold of a community in which the struggle for justice was real, and partnerships between classes were merely gratuitous. As the problems of racism, bigotry, and hatred shifted into the present age, this point of view was not shared by some Americans. However, God is changing the mindset of all toward Him by showing all that Love is always better than hate.

Let me make this statement again: "For better and worse," paternalism allowed Charleston to avoid much of the drama that provided reels of films for national news broadcasts in the 1950s and 1960s. Charleston was not like Little Rock, Arkansas, or Jackson, it did not have Bull Connor or George Wallace as its acting Secretary of State, and it did not have police dogs. But the city's form of discrimination was just as real as those of other Southern states. Dramatic confrontations between police and protesters in other Southern cities called on the collective conscience of America, leading to expansions of civil rights and voting rights. The Charleston movement, which saw demonstrations spike in the summer of 1963 and again in 1969, was much more controlled but just as brutal and racist as in the other parts of the United States.

African Americans from Carolina Low Country and beyond are among the prime architects of the United States. They built their infrastructure with their hands and backs in slavery. They populate its stages and sporting fields. Most importantly, they helped to shape America's laws by forcing the nation to become a democracy by demanding civil rights, forging a perfect union, and modeling the country into the nation its founders set out to create.

The African American civil rights movement became the template for other civil rights movements, such as those of women, the LGBTQ community, and Latinos, and has thus had a significant impact on the entire country. African Americans might be a battered wife, yet her belief in Jesus the Christ has kept her marriage alive. Racism makes one wonder if the convincing of the doctrine of eternal hell is to savage beyond belief. Racism ignores the contexts and historical setting of the New Testament. Webster and Leib wrote:

The connection between religion and the battle flag is vital given that the Southern states are generally regarded as being the most deeply religious, even “Christ-haunted” (Wood 2004) region of the United States, and that much of the American South is in the Bible Belt (Brunn, Webster and Archer 2011, Webster et al. 2015). Thus, the murders at the Emanuel AME Church were at a time when thousands of other South Carolinians, both black and white, were engaged in similar worship.³⁹

When the idea of worshiping Jesus amounts to reading about Him in scriptures, singing about Him in churches, and listening to preaching and teachings about Him, it leads some people to realize that not some but all of that is Jesus. Little by little, we should recognize that for many centuries, many people had a relationship with the idea of Jesus, but they never had a real connection with Jesus Christ as the person. When one is born again by the Spirit of God, then surrendering one’s life to Jesus the Christ, accepting Him as one’s personal Lord and Savior, and trusting in Him alone for salvation will develop a relationship with the living Christ. When those methods become a part of having a relationship with Jesus, then the evilness of sin will become a reality for you, and the practice of sinful ways will start to decrease. We should work hard in cultivating knowledge of scriptures at the expense of developing a deeper relationship with the author of the scriptures.

Testament. Webster and Leib wrote:

There is still considerable truth to the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.’s 1968

³⁹Gerald R. Webster, *Special Forum on the Charleston Massacre of 2015: Religion, Murder, and the Confederate Battle Flag in South Carolina* (Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press, 2016), 30-32.

observation that “We must face the sad fact that at eleven o’clock on Sunday morning when we stand to sing ‘In Christ there is no East or West,’ we stand in the most segregated hour of America” (King 1968). Thus, while Sunday morning may still be the most segregated time of the week in America, Wednesday night, at least in the American South, may not be too far behind.⁴⁰

Before moving on, one must recognize that there is a problem here. Why do some Christians who freely change old traditions in the name of the Holy Bible refuse so adamantly to consider changing the actions of racism? Why do they insist on holding on to the former position?

The Church explicitly teaches the eternity of the pains of hell and the joy and the truth of faith in heaven, which no one can deny or call into question without manifest heresy. Regardless of what one thinks, he or she must realize that there are factors other than scriptures or traditions that influence the issue of righteousness and sin, and those factors may show up when we review the remains of any elements of theological methodology.

Testament. Webster and Leib wrote:

Within the white South, Christianity has long been associated by some with the Confederacy and, by extension, the battle flag. As noted above, many white southerners viewed the Civil War as a war against the anti-biblical north with the South being a bastion of Christendom. The battle flag became a symbol of the white South in the postbellum period but took over an even more explicitly racist cast with the beginnings of the Civil Rights Movement. Starting in 1948, when the Dixiecrat party adopted the flag as their symbol when they walked out of that year’s Democratic Party National Convention to protest a proposed Civil Rights plank being considered for the party platform, and throughout the Civil Rights Movement in the 1950s and 1960s, the flag became the main symbol of white opposition and the “Massive Resistance.”⁴¹

Maybe this is the real reason why some people do not consider, racism and slavery and crimes against others or as any adverse actions against the Holy Bible teaching, that is, some

⁴⁰Ibid.

⁴¹Ibid.

believers are not ready to meet God or even believe in Him. Paul, in effect, acknowledges this concern when he said that we who die in Christ need not fear the judgment because Christ “is at the right hand of God interceding for us.”⁴² With Christ as our advocate with the Father, partitioning for our good with God and with Christ as our lawyer, the natural fear of inadequacy disappears. We are in “Christ” and therefore suffer “no condemnation.”⁴³ For those who practice racism (e.g., Dylann Roof), hatred against people of color, animosity toward another ethnicity, and profiling of ethnic groups or are the primary producers of Satanic ways, they should realize that the wage of sin is death.⁴⁴

The aforementioned positive aspects of identifying a racist and his or her approaches point to a more fundamental and challenging problem within society. What sort of understanding of the revelation of racism are we dealing with? The treatment of this question would move far beyond the scope of the racist argument. However, at some time in their life, the racist must understand that they will face the following questions: Is the text of the Holy Bible identical to the message of the divine revelation, and does that message pertain to you? Or does the biblical text give witness in minimal human ways to you? Do the scriptures in the Holy Bible produce divine communication that finds ways to express appropriate human words and images? I posit that the answer to this question is crucial to the larger racist argument.

Is there such a thing as discernible reality. Facts, as John Adams once said, “are stubborn things, and yet too many Americans are locked into their particular vision of the world, choosing

⁴²Romans 8:34.

⁴³Ibid., 1.

⁴⁴Romans 6:23.

this view or that perspective endorsed by the leaders one follow.”⁴⁵

Eulogizing one of the victims of the Emanuel Nine, the Reverend Clementa Pinckney, President Obama spoke about hope and hate into history when he said “According to the Christian tradition, grace is not earned. Grace is not merited. It’s not something we deserve. Rather, grace is the free and benevolent favor of God as manifested in the salvation of sinners and the bestowal of blessings. Grace—as a nation, out of this terrible tragedy, God has visited grace upon us for He has allowed us to see where we’ve been blind. He has given us the chance, where we’ve been lost, to find our best selves.”⁴⁶

“Our purpose as a nation is firm, President Bush stated in 2001; yet our wounds as a people are recent and unsealed and lead us to pray. This world He created is for moral design.”⁴⁷

“Grief , tragedy and hatred are only for a time. Goodness, remembrance, and love have no end. And the Lord of Life holds all who die and all who mourn.”⁴⁸

President Clinton told mourners in Oklahoma City, “When there is talk of hatred, let us stand up and talk against it. When there is talk of violence, let us stand up and talk against it. In the face of death, let us honor life, As St. Paul admonished us, let us not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.”⁴⁹

“The nation is worth fighting for, to secure such an inestimable jewel.”⁵⁰ “For all of our

⁴⁵Jon Meacham, *The Soul of America: The Battle for Our Better Angels* (New York, NY: Random House, 2018), 268.

⁴⁶*Ibid.*, 263.

⁴⁷*Ibid.*, 262.

⁴⁸*Ibid.*, 262-263.

⁴⁹*Ibid.*, 261.

⁵⁰*Ibid.*, 272.

darker impulses, for all of our shortcomings, and for all of the dreams denied and deferred, the experiment begun so long ago, carried out so imperfectly, is worth the fight. There is, in fact, no struggle more important, and none nobler, than the one we wage in the service of those better angels who, however besieged, are always ready for battle.”⁵¹

⁵¹Ibid.

Chapter 3: Challenges and Opportunities

The challenges of racism are significant. The critical question is “How can one eradicate racism and its spirit of evil from the world completely?” The answer might seem unbelievable to some, but the Holy Bible gives us instructions on how to solve racial problems from both sides of the spectrum. The fifth chapter of the book of Mathew in the Holy Bible gives us all the directive we need to solve many of the world’s hate and problems related to evil.⁵²

We must remember that we do not live in a perfect world, as it was created before sin entered. We live in a fallen, flawed, evil world. The world in which we live is unwilling to change its habits and any attempt to plug into some pantheism, worshiping the creation as if it were itself divine, always runs up against the problems of evil. Surely now is an excellent opportunity for Christians with an integrated worldview and with a longing to love God with their heart, mind, body, and soul to find the way forward—perhaps to lead the way forward—beyond this settle impasse. Paul wrote to the Romans in the eighth chapter that the whole creation is groaning in travail as it longs for its redemption.⁵³ God’s creation was perfect in the beginning, but with sin, came death and destruction (Rom. 5:12). It is in pain, but the pain is taken into the very heart of God and becomes part of the pain of new birth.

Sometime in 1865, Secretary of War Edwin M. Stanton and Union General William Tecumseh Sherman invited twenty African Americans to his temporary house in Savannah, Georgia. The building was a Gothic Revival mansion owned by an Englishman. They were surprised to realize the scope of the social dislocation of four million freed slaves and doubt set in regarding whether the freed slaves were intelligent enough to follow the laws imposed on the

⁵²Mathew 5:3-48.

⁵³Ibid.

South. From that meeting, the short-lived Union policy arose to provide economic and financial help to the freed men. Under Union oversight, the political, military, and economic “reconstruction” of the South began and continued until 1877, when the last Union troops left.⁵⁴

One of the strongest advocates of missions was Daniel Payne, the AME Bishop. His grandfather, a free African American, had fought the British in the American Revolution. Daniel Payne was an orphan who was supported by relatives. He went to school, found tutors, and adopted a self-education program advocated by a Scottish professor. Once, according to his memoirs, a Southern aristocrat tried to hire him as a traveling porter. Payne declined, but this man gave him a lesson he would never forget. “Daniel,” the man said, “Do you realize what makes one the master and the other the servant? Nothing but strong superior knowledge.”⁵⁵ As a result, Payne turned to his studies; he chained his mind to the study of science and philosophy to obtain that knowledge which makes a person the master instead of a slave. Praying at home in Charleston, he heard “a voice speaking within his soul saying: ‘I have set thee apart to educate thyself in order that thou mayest be an educator of thy people.’”⁵⁶ Payne opened a school for African Americans, but the state of South Carolina barred such secular instruction in 1865. However, while teaching in a Philadelphia school, Payne met Bishop Richard Allen, the founder of the AME church, who persuaded him to join its clergy.

In an explanation of Payne’s ideologies from a Southern point of view, one would see Daniel Payne’s reflections as someone pouring salt on an open wound. From the destruction of Charleston, SC, to the protection of people of color, to a free society, the sentiments and

⁵⁴Larry Witham, *A City Upon a Hill: How Sermons Changed the Course of American History* (New York, NY: HarperCollins, 2007), 151.

⁵⁵Ibid., 49.

⁵⁶Ibid., 87.

principles of New England's ideas would one day reach fruition.

In 1866, the AME held its fiftieth-anniversary celebration at Allen Temple AME Church in Philadelphia. Payne, now a historian of the church, gave the keynote "Semi-Centennial Sermon." He used the concept of a builder or workman from the New Testament Epistle of Timothy. The worker is only ashamed of his ignorance and vice, Payne preached.⁵⁷

Although the country seems to be turning from its religious and moral values, it is essential to examine the American values of racism and hatred thrust upon African American families since their importation to the country in chains. Consider, for instance, the police brutalities that are having a significant effect on the minds of younger African Americans. This ungodly system of hatred has produced some of the most hardcore young African Americans, namely men and women who are entirely opposed to the ethical-moral values of others. The harsh reality of hate and racism have created inferiority complexes among some African American residents of Carolina Low Country and has led them to give up on free expression and civil rights with liberty and justice for all.

The brutality of living in an argumentative, aggressive, and arrogant society leads some people away from Christian values and points them toward worldly values because part of the Christian community is one of the communities perpetrating the crime.

Jesus compares the strength of a house when it stands together with the weakness of division. Today, we are asking how we can continue to rise when racism remains unaddressed?

My discussions with non-Christians from Carolina Low Country about how to live according to God's words of love and forgiveness might lead to the conclusion that they are trying to manipulate God's approach to his words. The human attitude that one is in some way in

⁵⁷Witham, *A City Upon A Hill*, 151.

charge of everything that happens to oneself and others is impressive. The social plan to extract forgiveness from God is as futile as the plan to conquer sin without Jesus's help. Humanity's arrogance, ignorance, and aggressive behavior toward all ways and things of God will lead to their final destruction. Some people spend their lives trying to earn something that they discover years later was freely offered to them from the beginning. They spend years in turmoil and pain, wondering if God is listening to their pleas for forgiveness or whether they have finally pushed him away. They do all they can for forgiveness but do not want to be presumptuous as far as God is concerned, so they live their lives in doubt.

Kinnaman and Lyons exclaimed,

Something—a backlash against religion's worst sins, a political climate that wants to stamp out religion in public life, the popular rise of atheism, amplified access to polarizing points of view, something—is making it increasingly difficult to practice faith in our society. For many people of faith, it's becoming harder to live their convictions outside of their religious communities. It feels as though forces are pushing religion to the margins. In fact, to millions of people, faith is irrelevant or even bad news. "Religion poisons everything" declares the subtitle of one of the bestselling books of our century. Many Christians—and believers in other faith traditions as well—are feeling overwhelmed, sidelined, and misunderstood. They feel typecast as bigoted, judgmental, and hypocritical. The sense for many believers is that society is hostile to faith in general and Christianity in particular. This isn't just a feeling. When one-third of college Aged adults want nothing to do with religion, and 59 percent of Christian young adults drop out of the church at some point in their twenties, it's the new reality on the ground. Culturally, it seems like a landslide victory for the other side. Whether or not we like the cultural trends, we need to get a handle on reality and chart a way forward. People of every religious tradition—and secularists too—make claims about the nature of reality and how humans ought to live within it. Eight out of ten practicing Christians, for example, agree the Bible contains moral truths that are true for all people without exception. This bothers some people. They believe religion should be consigned to the realm of the private, to the family home and house of worship—no exceptions. They claim "real" life happens in laboratories and the marketplace and boardrooms and city halls. They are convinced that spirituality and other fluffy, intangible stuff matter only peripherally to "real" life. And their views are gaining currency in our culture. More than two out of five Americans believe that "people of faith" (42 percent) and "religion" (46 percent) are part of the problem in the country today, and reject the idea that religious

individuals could be part of the solution.⁵⁸

As a result of the hard-won gains of the civil rights movement, crucible events experienced by the Africans experience in the United States, such as slavery, the Jim Crow era, racism, affirmative action, welfare to work, media stereotypes, cultural assimilation, standardized testing, electoral reform, and crime and punishment, have become fading memories for many young African Americans. The diminishing racial acts in the last five decades has been very impressive, but the loss due to those tragic events now poses practical problems for those who seek further progress: How do they galvanize support for racial changes among African American lives?

Talking to African American pastors and laypeople from Carolina Low Country, I learned that their main concerns are the day-to-day activities of life. On the surface, these problems might seem to be completely individual interests, but they are related to the much larger national and institutional issues faced by African Americans. The imprisonment of friends and loved ones, high out-of-wedlock birth rates, poverty, and low graduation rates continue to affect African American residents from Carolina Low Country.

Have African Americans somehow forgotten their past? Have they forgotten the offensive and depressive aspects of their path and have they forgotten the close-knit families and communities in their society? Killing, cheating, and stealing from each other has become a significant epidemic in the African American communities. One minister stated that he was commissioned by God to help people of color to see the manifestation of God in their lives.

The African Americans in Carolina Low Country once occupied a unique position in modern society, and once the most significant ethnic minority in the United States, they are now

⁵⁸David Kinnaman and Gabe Lyons, *Good Faith: Being a Christian When Society Thinks You're Irrelevant and Extreme* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2016), 12–13.

outnumbered by Latinos. As the demographic shift begins to show its social, cultural, and political impact, concerns over relations between Black and White people, discrimination, and racism have seemingly become less significant, until now, than questions on immigration, bilingual education, and work visas. The minister also stated that African Americans and White Americans must now look at the United States as a nation that is much more diverse than their issues of societal integration would suggest.

The values of Americans from many areas and backgrounds have been changed or abstracted by practices, beliefs, and stereotypes in its cultures and communities. Some of these changes reflect perceptions of and treatment by outsiders, and some reflect variations due to internal forces within the groups, making African Americans unique because of the prejudicial attitudes and actions they have continually faced. Even those inhibiting forces that are internal to African Americans have evolved almost entirely under the influence of racially oppressive economic and political institutions indigenous to American society.

Another possible challenge was explained by author Jon Meacham: “The past and the present tell us, too, that demagogues can only thrive when a substantial portion of the demos—the people—want him to. In the American Commonwealth, James Bryce warned of the dangers of a renegade president. Bryce’s view was not that the individual himself, from the White House, could overthrow the US Constitution. Disaster would come, Bryce delivered, at the hands of a demagogic president with an enthusiastic public base. ‘A bold president who knew himself to be supported by a majority in the country, might be tempted to override the law, and deprive the minority of the protection which the law affords it.’ Bryce wrote. ‘He might be a tyrant, not against the masses, but with the masses.’ The cheering news is that hope is not lost. ‘The people have often made mistakes,’ Harry Truman said, ‘but given time and the facts, they will make the

correction.”⁵⁹

Author Meacham wrote: “Lincoln gave us the image of our better angels having the last word. He was a President who understand people, and when it came time to make decisions, he was willing to take the responsibility and make those decisions no matter how difficult they were.”⁶⁰

Scripture reveals the evil of racism and that God shows no “partiality” among men.⁶¹ The story of Jesus Christ, as recorded in the four Gospels, tells a story about the downward spiral of evil. One thing leads to another; the remedy offered against corruption has itself the germ of corruption within it so that its attempt to put things right merely produces continuous second-order evil. Another thing is that the Gospel tells the story of Jesus as a story in which the line between good and evil runs not between Jesus and His friends on the one hand and everyone else on the other hand—certainly not between Jews and Gentiles—but down the middle of Jesus’s followers themselves. The problem of evil in its present metaphysical form has been around since Adam and Eve disobeyed God in the Garden of Eden. In this day and age, certain things are to be expected; we envision a steady march toward freedom and justice often conceived in terms of the slow but sure triumph of Western-style liberal democracy and soft versions of socialism. We learn, usually by the tone of voice of the media and the politicians rather than by explicit argument, to bow down to racism and its contiguous components of evil when they chant, “I am not a racist.” Who wants to be left behind, to be behind the times, or to be the people of yesterday? The phrase “I am not a racist” has become the ultimate put-down: “racist”

⁵⁹Meacham, *The Soul of America*, 271.

⁶⁰Ibid.

⁶¹Ibid.

has become the single most important measuring rod in society and culture.

The phrase “I am not a racist” has survived at least three different challenges and flourished. This state of affairs has led to three things, which one can see as characterizing the new problem of evil.

1. Many people ignore racism when it does not hit them in the face.
2. Many people are surprised by racism when it raises its ugly head.
3. Many people react to racism in immature and dangerous ways.

The first explanation is where some philosophers and psychologists have tried to clarify that racism is simply the shadow side of a non-racist; this evil act is a part of the necessary balance in the world, and that we must avoid too much dualism and too much polarization between good and evil. This thought led to the formation of the KKK, skinheads, and the murdering of six million Jews. When you pass beyond racism and non-racism, you move into the realm where strength is right, and weakness is regarded as an old moral value that stands in the way and must be obliterated. Whatever people wanted to do or say was right; one should celebrate whatever instincts he finds in himself; and people should not be allowed to control what other people do or say. The nation’s politicians, media pundits, and economists speak as if humankind is morally upright and the world is all right, and there is no need for concern.

The second explanation is that the shock of racism occurs in an area where some sees it as safe and protected from the evil nature of racism: the Emanuel Nine in Charleston, SC is an example. There are no categories or classes to cope with the more massive renewed evil of racism. Some like to fool themselves into thinking that the country is racially secure because our finding is that so many countries are either democratic or moving toward it. Some also arrive at the conclusion that globalization has, in theory, enabled them to do so much good, to profit so

much materially, and to acquire so much knowledge. African Americans from Carolina Low Country are puzzled that some people think that living together as one nation in peace does not work and that they need to use more drastic methods to get their point across, such as the Walter Scott shooting in North Charleston, SC. Ultimately, African Americans are not shocked by the amount of racial prejudice they regularly experience. The thought of America being a racial time bomb is vanishing from our society because fewer and fewer people believe that it exists. The need to unite the nation's racial divide is also disappearing from America's psychic because the relentless quest for pleasure (sexual and otherwise) dulls America's moral sensitivities.

The third explanation is that it seems as though all the moral indignation that ought to be spread more evenly and thoughtfully across America communities has funneled into racial crimes. Unthinking racism, which is so eager to command our thoughts, is pure because some Americans hate the idea of it rather than properly thought-out grounds. Racism like that can be, and often is, manipulated. Lashing out at something or someone you know by intuition is wrong to think that this may be better than tolerating it, is some belief. However, it is an appropriate approach to create a stable ethnic society. Lashing out at a perceived racist, in the hope of dealing with the problem, is, in fact, not the practical counterpart of those philosophical theories that purport to solve the problem of racism. The immature reactions to racism can perhaps be closely examined if all people asked themselves how to react to racism in their lives or immediate circumstances. When asked this question, one generally responds with three questions. What are you angry about right now? Who has done something that you feel is unjust or unfair? How would you cope with it? Racists will project racial actions onto others, generating a culture of blame. The intolerant are narcissists. It is always everyone else's fault, it's society's fault, it's the government's fault, and I am an innocent victim. Claiming the status of the victim

has become a new multicultural sport, as people scramble for the moral high ground on which one can emerge as pure and clean, and everybody else is to blame. Furthermore, one would project the acts of racism onto oneself and imagine one is to blame for all racial actions against them. This is one of the typical causes of depression that does not address the broader issue than just beyond a psychological state. However, from a realistic stage, some oscillate between those who tell them that all their ills are faults of someone else. This current, new problem of racism is poisoning the United States. The country needs to rediscover that racism is still, after all, a six-letter word that is clueless to some about what to do with it or what it is all about. Let all ponder that ignoring racism is not an answer either.

African American theology challenges most other theologies to be more genuinely biblical. It asserts that all faiths should be engaged and should deal with pressing matters of the particular Christian community, whose experiences form an integral part of the data of that theology. Most of the theology in the Bible, especially in the New Testament, was forged in the heat of battle. It is occasional, in the technical sense of being occasioned by a particular set of circumstances, and it seeks to be relevant to those circumstances. It answers pressing questions arising from them and assuages the pain of living in them. It incorporates knowledge from people's attempts to understand other aspects of themselves and the universe and assimilates this into a coherent whole so that members of this community can live with a reasonable measure of integrity.

Political, historical, and sociological considerations about racism have led African Americans from Carolina Low Country to this conclusion: The severe and protracted disadvantages suffered by African Americans are a profound problem for American society. A severe ethical problem caused by a comparable disparity in the social position of other non-

White ethnic groups will undoubtedly affect the population someday; not that social disadvantages among nonblack racial minorities are of little scholarly or political interest, rather the political interests of today are creating and changing policies. Such analysis offers useful insights for the broader study of racial inequality in the United States. Indeed, these reflections are specific to the context of American society, but their focus is on the economic, political, social, and historical experiences of African Americans. Nevertheless, their theoretical development follows a deeper understanding of the problem of “race” and social marginality because it manifests in many communities around America.

This situation is one of great political irony and sadness because the manipulation is conducted with the permission, consent, and approval of African Americans. What compelling evidence is there to disprove the otherwise obvious inference that theirs is the most cynical type of manipulation: to enhance their checkbooks and prestige as power brokers capable of delivering their people and in a manner less for their people’s interest than their own.⁶²

African Americans must learn that cash, not flash, is the real wealth and power in their communities, their nation, and the world. To observe how African Americans dress, drive, drink, and decorate themselves, one might conclude that their income and per capital wealth far exceed those of other ethnicities. In some African American churches in Carolina Low Country, the parking lots on Sundays boast the latest models of luxury vehicles, including BMW, Jaguar, Lexus, Mercedes Benz, and many models of SUVs, sometimes with custom-ordered wheels. Very few automobiles are more than four years old; however, tellingly, most are still on monthly payment plans, making the African Americans owners slaves to the oppression of monthly bill payments and to the depression that comes from paying bills without having any enjoyment of

⁶²Interviewee from 2016 who explains why African Americans have such a hard time enjoying the fruits of America.

life.

Not to say that being blessed and having favor from God is wrong, but when your monthly bills exceed your paycheck, and your tithes are subject to compromise, then you have opened the gates to the world that is beyond your control. How can one love without forgiveness? How can one fight an arrogance, argument, and aggression society when it tries to force its ways upon one?

One Carolina Low Country African American elder claimed that we must first know who we are as children of God before we can function as his children. People, he argues, are too often confronted with the task of following God without knowing who they are following. Prayer changes things, and until we have a healthy prayer life, bigotry will continue. Charleston's culture is racist. It took the killing of nine people in an AME church during a prayer meeting before South Carolina removed the Confederate flag from its state capital. It took the federal government to convict a police officer for the vengeful shooting of an unarmed fifty-year-old man some 100 feet away. It took the Scott family's lawsuit and the termination of an African American officer, for conspiring to help set up the Scott shooting, to reach closure.⁶³

When will Charleston live up to the creed that so many people hold dear to their hearts: All men are created equal by the God we serve, and every person has the inalienable right to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. It took prayers and condemnation from the world before Charleston understood the undergirding evil perpetrated on the Emanuel Nine. The culture breeds this type of negative behavior. The highly modern and suffocating techniques that are being used to destroy young African Americans should always be morally, spiritually, and

⁶³Local church ministerial area supervisor Interviewee from 2016 quoted the problem of not knowing Jesus Christ and why the African and White Americans from the Carolina Low Country failed that test.

legally wrong in the eyes of all Americans, especially those of the house of God. Until we take responsibility for some of our failures, our lives will be just that: a failure.

Some pastors state that African Americans need to believe in God as they did before. They say that somewhere along the way, African Americans turned from God to man and expected God to help them, but they only needed him in times of distress and had forgotten their choice of man over God. They say that although racism and all its attributes still live, they do not have to live within you and your life. The struggle is real, and the path is hard, they claim, but those who have the right tools will not fail. The people and personalities of pray are the keys to the tree of life. We must not limit ourselves to the way of hatred by professing that our DNA is the cause of things the devil makes us do; instead, we must call a spade a spade, and nothing else is the truth. Pastors see the cause of racism as a misguided attempt by some to live in the past, not realizing that the *past* is just what the word says: history.⁶⁴

Efforts to help African Americans have had more damaging and lasting effects on their attitudes and habits than either slavery or segregation. Social welfare programs initiated or greatly expanded in the 1960s resulted in the government effectively displacing African American fathers as breadwinners and making employment less attractive. Ideally, welfare dependency should be temporary, and for most people, it is. But for many African American families, it has become the norm, and even those who escape will often return. The *Economist*, citing a 2011 Chicago Federal Reserve study, noted that “roughly 60% of African Americans whose parents had an above-average income fell below the average as adults. The figure for whites was 36%.” An earlier Pew study found that approximately 45% of African

⁶⁴Jason L. Riley, *Please Stop Helping Us: How Liberals Make It Harder for Black to Succeed* (New York, NY: Encounter Books, 2014), 55.

Americans (versus 15% of whites) who were born into the middle class in the 1960s had slid into poverty or near poverty. Because it is unlikely that the effects of slavery and Jim Crow era are hopscotching generations, perhaps something else is to blame.⁶⁵

An irony of the African American cultural obsession with avoiding White behavior is that the habits and attitudes associated with ghetto life today can be traced not to Africa but to Europeans who immigrated to the American South. From 1790 until the Civil War, approximately half the White population of the South “was of Irish, Scottish, or Welsh extraction, and about half of the remainder had originated in the western and northern English uplands,”⁶⁶ according to Grady McWhiney’s *Cracker Culture*. These immigrants brought their traditions and passed them along to the people who lived around them, which included most of the African American people in the United States.⁶⁷

Could one see freedom in any case, that misplaced concreteness had a result? If democracy was near, it had to be close at hand. If freedom validated God’s presence, then democracy must have been part of God’s design, and unquestionably, a person could reasonably imagine its imminent arrival. The imminence of liberty and the legitimacy of the movement for freedom are thus bound up with the possible perceptions. This mindset led some African American residents of Carolina Low Country to wonder if the aforementioned statement was true “God’s Albany” and not the police chief, then perhaps a victory was in the making.

The use of race-based instruments is typically the result, rather than the cause, of a broader awareness of racial identity in society. Ethnic blindness is a superficial moral ideal

⁶⁵Ibid.

⁶⁶Ibid., 55-56.

⁶⁷Ibid.

because some think that recognizing fear encourages one to believe in racial terms. One cannot grasp the workings of the social order in which one is embedded in the United States without making use of ethnic categories, because these categories are etched in the consciousness of the individual who must reckon with them. Because people use ethnicists to articulate their self-understanding, one must be mindful of ethnicity in conducting one's public affairs. Who can agree with the liberal individualist claim that race is irrelevant to an individual's moral worth? Who will also concur that individuality and not groups are the bearers of rights? Will anyone affirm that to deal effectively with autonomous individuals one must consider the categories of thought in which they understand themselves.

The production of examples in which failure takes ethnicity into account by serving to exacerbate racial awareness is easy. Consider the extent to which our public institutions are regarded as legitimate by all people. When a government executive recognizes the link between the perceived legitimacy of institutions and their degrees of ethnic representation and acts negatively to that recognition, then he or she is working to inhibit not heighten the quality of ethnicity in public life. When leaders of elite educational philanthropies attempt to bring a more significant number of African American young people into their ranks, to increase the number of graduates from these communities, they are acting without thought. To acknowledge that institutional legitimacy can turn on matters of ethnical representation is to recognize a basic historical fact that a community tends to make moral errors.

This information has led to today's discussions. Hate crimes against citizens of color in the United States have been increasing, and perpetrators are make public statements on the news and through media outlets about their desire to reclaim a past of hatred and restart a systematic paradigm of political criminal behavior.

Desmond Tutu wrote,

We are true witnesses if we are on the side of the weak, the powerless, the exploited if we have solidarity with them; if we care for the widow, the orphan, and the stranger; if we are the servants of God. But when we side with the poor and the weak and the unimportant ones as the world computes importance, then the powerful ones don't like it, then the privileged ones resent it, and you will suffer, and maybe you will die.⁶⁸

The Reality of Our Faith

Living in the rhythms of faith helps some navigate their relation to the world and restores the belief in others and the belief and work toward Jesus Christ, because busy schedules often lead to fragmented existences. Work identities are different from social identities, worship identities, and home identities, but a life of publicly worshiping Jesus and a determination to integrate those identities within the truth of the Gospel will help all to acknowledge a complete dependence upon God, His presence, and His leadership, so that the brokenness begins to give way to wholeness. Confession that is entirely dependent on God for everything will help all American citizens to see their lives, circumstances, relationships, experiences, and self-images as gifts from God. The worldview of the Gospel as experienced through brokenness begins to give way to wholeness. Confession that entirely depends on God for everything will help others to see change lives, hopeful circumstances, closer relationships, life learning experiences, and self-control images as gifts from God. The worldview of the Gospel as experience through acts of public worship toward God confirms that the main character of life is God as the center of reality—both the greater cosmic reality and the reality of daily life. In worship life, one should celebrate the fact that God spoke creation into existence, walked on water, has been holding the

⁶⁸Desmond Mpilo TuTu, *God Is Not a Christian: And Other Provocations* (New York, NY: HarperCollins, 2011), 60.

world in the palm of his hands, and knows the number of “hairs on our heads.”⁶⁹ Thus, the reality of His greatness should become the detailed story of our daily lives. This reality should encourage us to submit lovingly to God, respond to others spiritually, and let those realities shape how we function as children of God. When God is engaged or re-engaged in our daily lives, the truth of the Gospel will provide a beautiful gift to the world. The Gospel also provides the lens of the redemptive story that empowers all to see, inquire, and create so that we can navigate the difficulties, complexities, and realities of everyday life.

Public worship begins at home and requires a balance of creativity and catholicity that produces the thought of not seeing home and community rhythms as magic. Their goal is to create an environment for a continuing conversation with God and each other. All should incorporate public worship at home, resist structuralism and uniformity, embrace learning from each other about our faith, and adopt expressions that awaken creativity in our homes and communities. One should always be aware of the creative spirits of others because “recognizing and encouraging”⁷⁰ each other in creative responses is essential to the discovery and celebration of our life in God. The value of creativity cannot be overstated and celebrated as any old story that describes the beginning of time and God, but must be celebrated as the one who loved the world so much that he gave His only son. God has continued to reveal His love and plan throughout history and remains in the process of saving and restoring today’s world. It is a great story that includes the significant “branches of the family tree of the Christian faith.”⁷¹

Professing a profound faith in God is the catalyst to true unity among humanity. With

⁶⁹Matthew 10:30.

⁷⁰Matthew 18:20.

⁷¹Acts 11:26.

Jesus Christ, we can see through the dim vista of time and move forward to grasp the problems of life and keep a steady march for civilization, with one grand army of Christian Believers. Every Christian must listen for the still, small voice of God (1 Kings 19:12) and the words of the apostle Paul, “One Lord, one faith, one baptism.”⁷² Let’s listen for the footsteps in that grand procession as the march against the powers of darkness. If you look carefully, you can see the Galilean Jew sitting in the chariot with the Ethiopian eunuch singing a Carolina Low Country African American Negro Spiritual, “Oh I Know I Have Been Changed; The Angel in Heaven Done Sign My Name.”⁷³

A loss of faith in the country’s capacity for ethical justice has always led to the repudiation of the national dilemma because such a disposition necessarily implies radical opposition to the nation per se and includes the conviction that the nation cannot affect significant societal reform in race relations. The logic of that position has thus led to the advocacy of one of three policies: (1) revolution, (2) colonization outside the nation, and (3) racial separation within the nation’s borders.⁷⁴ Although there is no evidence that the churches ever officially took a revolutionary stance concerning the nation, considerable discourse has focused on the idea of colonization both within and outside the nation. However, any focus by churches on either the development of Africans or the self-development of the race apart from the whites has always been understood as a means to an end and never as an end. In other words, the churches presumed that a significant demonstration by African Americans of the capacity for self-development would convince White Americans that they should be granted full citizenship

⁷²Ephesians 4:5.

⁷³Peter J. Paris, *The Social Teaching of the Black Churches* (Philadelphia, PA: Fortress Press, 1985), 35.

⁷⁴*Ibid.*, 39-41.

rights. Thus, they have rejected neither the basic religious nor the basic political orientation of the nation, whereas those who have done so have tended to leave Christianity.⁷⁵

Although many interpretations have been given of the Carolina Low Country African American churches' role in American society, that society does not tell how it treats its African American population. African Americans from the Low Country have never thought of freedom, justice, civil rights, and ethnic equality in the abstract principles, but rather as necessary conditions for human experience. Conversely, they have viewed the lack of such goods as dehumanizing. Consequently, their resistance to racial proscription (among other things) was an affirmation of their humanity, because that activity alone gave them self-respect and human dignity. Put more clearly, African American residents of Carolina Low Country view the very existence of Black churches as evidence of their humanity in the most basic way, because in those places, they have experienced a public racial forum for addressing fundamental issues of racial freedom, independence, and justice.

Political order is easier to maintain in a homogeneous society than in a pluralistic society, and this fact has often conditioned the preferences of majority groups. Furthermore, empirical judgments on whether the United States is homogeneous or pluralistic have often been quickly translated into normative beliefs. Social scientists on either side of the debate have been enormously influential in shaping social policy for several decades, but African American denominations have not related themselves self-consciously to that debate.

Although their ideal society appears to be assimilationist, the strong commitment of these churches to the continuation of Black schools, colleges, and churches necessarily draws on the arguments of cultural pluralists. Hence, they would serve themselves well by increasing their

⁷⁵Ibid., 35.

knowledge of the theories, findings, and implications of social scientific analyses.

Some people look at God's standard—moral and ethical perfection—and throw their hands up in surrender. Why even try? They tell themselves, I could never live up to all that stuff. They live the way they please, not expecting anything from God when they die. Often, they decide there is no God. They acknowledge their inability to live up to His standards, which drives them to an insane conclusion. Instead of living under constant pressure and guilt, they abandon the standard God has set. What a shock it will be for them when they stand before God and understand for the first time what was available had they only asked!

Then, there are people, unwilling to receive God's gift of forgiveness, love, grace, peace, and mercy. Some think this, while others know that they can achieve the fruit of the spirit on their own. The continuous thoughts of gathering enough points with God to give them the right to look to their goodness as the means of pardon and forgiveness is ludicrous. They continuously work at making the score even with God through their good works, and that will never work. They generally quote the familiar phrase, "I have my faults, but God does not expect anyone to be perfect." Some never try to read or ask God for help to understand the epistle of Galatians 2:16-21.

To say that the African American residents of Carolina Low Country have been a religious and deeply spiritual people is a gross understatement. These folks have long understood the reality of God, His faithfulness to them, and their dependence on Him. How else are African American residents of Carolina Low Country going to overcome the cruel systems of racism that have tormented and traumatized them for centuries? This system remains in place today and is more prevalent and hostile than in years past. How else are they going to escape the institutional racism designed to restrict and prohibit their right to upward mobility in the United States?

African American residents of Carolina Low Country have always known it would take God with His mercy, might, and miracles to deliver them from the traumatic powers that are still being imposed and enforced upon them in an unequal system of ethnic justice.

Chapter 4: A Biblical Concept

The experiences of Christianity have led some to conclude that the urge to understand God as a specific being will only lead them astray if they wish to be perfect and without sin. People should not want to understand anything about God because God is beyond all understanding. If you know anything about Him, then He is not in it, and by understanding something of Him, you fall into ignorance.

Newberg, D'Aquili, and Rause argued,

God is by his nature, unknowable. He is not an objective fact or an actual being: He is, in fact, being itself, the absolute, undifferentiated oneness that is the ground of all existence. When we understand this truth, we are connected to deeper and divine power. If we fail to understand it and cling to comforting images of a personal, knowable God, then we are lost. But if we understand that God is one who exists entirely apart from the ultimate realness of Himself and is not reduce to the divinity and the stature of the small deaf idol, but as the creator of the universe, the maker of humanity, or the most knowledgeable of beings that we serve then we will never be lost.⁷⁶

In terms of His impact on human history, the concept of a personal God is not necessarily negative. That concept has made a profound positive impact on Western civilization. What makes Christians' believe in their God as more than a hollow dream is the fact that God himself stands behind their idea with verification through direct mystical encounters and literal absolute truth. Any challenge to the authenticity of that truth is an attack not only upon the ideal of God but also upon the more profound neurobiological assurance that makes God real. If God is not real, neither is the Christian's most powerful source of hope and redemption. Therefore, there can be only one absolute truth: it is a matter of survival.

Unsurprisingly, humans have various religious traditions with different ways of thinking, behaving, and pursuing the kingdom of God. Those varieties are ways in which everyone can be

⁷⁶Andrew Newberg, Eugene D'Aquili, and Vince Rause, *Why God Won't Go Away: Brain Science and the Biology of Belief* (New York, NY: Ballantine Books, 2001), 159.

happy in their search of Jesus Christ. Because all Christian religious values share the same essential purpose and traditions, we must maintain respect and harmony among them.

If the church is to remain faithful to the Lord, it must make a decisive break with the structure of society by launching an attack on the evil of racism in all its forms. It must become prophetic and demand a radical change in the interlocking structures of society. Of course, the church must also realize, given the Christian doctrine of humankind, that this is a dangerous task. But obedience to Christ is always costly. The time has come for the church to challenge the power structure with the power of the Gospel, knowing that nothing less than the immediate and total emancipation of all people is consistent with the message and style of Jesus Christ. The church cannot afford to lament the means that oppressed people use to break the chains of slavery, because such language not only clouds the issue but also gives comfort and assistance to the oppressor. One primary purpose of this thesis is, therefore, to show that embracing African Americans is not only possible but necessary if the church wants to remain faithful to the traditions of Christianity as disclosed in the person of Jesus Christ. Christianity begins and ends with Jesus of Nazareth: with his life, death, and resurrection. It is thus principally distinguished from other faiths because everything in it is related to the redemption attributed to Him.⁷⁷

Different from many other religions, Christianity revolves around a single person without whom it would cease to be. Christ and Christianity belong together, although there are historical disagreements on the nature of that connection. The relationship has been conceived as inward, external, and mechanical; however, it is impossible to separate Christ from Christianity without robbing it of its uniqueness.⁷⁸

⁷⁷Cone, *Risk of Faith*, 4.

⁷⁸Ibid., 4.

The centrality of Jesus to Christianity is plainest when we consider the New Testament picture of Jesus. According to the New Testament, Jesus is the man for others and views his existence as inextricably tied to other men to the point that his person is inexplicable apart from others. "Others," of course, refers to all men, especially those among the oppressed, the unwanted of society, and the sinners. Jesus, in this account, is God himself entering human existence to free those enslaved by evil powers that heretofore have prevented a relationship with God. Jesus characterized his ministry in these terms,

The Spirit of the Lord is upon me because he has anointed me to preach the good news to the poor, He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind, To set at liberty those who are oppressed, To proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord.⁷⁹

Jesus' work was mainly one of liberation. By becoming a servant of God the Father Himself, Jesus opened realities of human existence, formerly closed since man's disobedience in the Garden of Eden.

Humanity can know the full meaning of God's action in history and their place within it if they are willing to have a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. The Holy Spirit teaches us to love beyond who we are with pure love that does not follow the attributes of evil but clings freely to itself. This spirit will never leave or forsake people.⁸⁰ When we make it contemporaneous with our own lives, Jesus's message is clear enough for a child to understand: "Love your brothers and sisters as I have loved you by removing the hatred that divides, replace, repeal, and re-establish my gift of love."⁸¹ This spirit will help people rise above their problems and understand that the church can be a liberating agent in society by carrying out the work of

⁷⁹Luke 4:18-19.

⁸⁰Hebrews 13:5.

⁸¹John 13:34.

Jesus. The Holy Spirit of God the Father will never make the poor and needy feel like charity cases, but as one who is “his brother’s keeper.”⁸² The evil of racism should be confronted by the children of Jesus Christ, and that confrontation must be guided by the power and the presence of God from all sides.

Some of the African American churches and pastors in Carolina Low Country should ask the men, “Whose concept of ministry depends on divisiveness as the subtext for the white churches’ traditions?” If one’s definition of service has uncritically derived from people who have systematically oppressed and are still oppressing African Americans, then you should question your model of ministry. If your perception of women’s place in your ministry is derived from beliefs and doctrines of divisiveness, then the teachings of the church have been concocted as divisive tactics to keep African American males and females at bay because of who they are.

The book of Romans asks the following:

[As] an instructor of the foolish, a teacher of babes, which hast the form of knowledge and the truth in the law, thou, therefore, which teachest another, teachest thou, not thyself? Thou that preachest a man should not steal, dost thou steal? Thou that sayest a man should not commit adultery, dost thou commit adultery? Thou that abhorrest idols, dost thou, commit sacrilege? Thou that makest thy boast of the law, through breaking the law dishonourest thou God?⁸³

An embellishment of God’s word leads to an ungodly concept, and those who are not in touch with God will face punishment. If African American churches and pastors in Carolina Low Country are not practicing and teaching the actual words of Jesus, they should remember, you will serve time, everlasting time. The time has come for Christians to deal honestly with indifferences, hurts, and pains. The Christian community can no longer afford to systemically pretend that all is well within society, while crimes against God’s words go unnoticed. African

⁸²Genesis 4:2.

⁸³Romans 2:20-23.

Americans of Carolina Low-County cannot continue to perpetuate the sin of pride in God's eye by not saying what is right or wrong in society. Until we create a genuine relationship with God, all progress is futile. The African American church community of Carolina Low Country must continue the task of healing the wounds of separation they have inflicted on one another. When people build strong and healing relationships with each other, then the Holy Spirit will give them the strength and courage to face the evil of racism. Amos states, "But let judgment run down as waters, and righteousness as a mighty stream."⁸⁴

African American pastors, laypeople, and communities of Carolina Low Country should create a model program for handling the racism, evil, challenges, and adversities of this age. They must remember that whatever style they create must never be allowed to camouflage the true meaning of the Gospel. Only when all parties join the poor, the needy, the oppressed, the misunderstood, the distressed, the depressed, the saved, and the unsaved in their struggle, can they encounter the divine spirit of liberation in the fight for justice, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.

One does not need a seminary education to know that oppression in any form is a contradiction to God's law. The elaboration on the social and political context treats its victims as indispensable because racism is so deeply embedded in American history and culture that one can get rid of it by merely ignoring it. That is, there can be no justice without memory—in this case, without remembering the horrible crimes committed against humanity and the great human struggles for justice.

The rejection of Jesus the Christ by young African Americans is not merely a nationalist phenomenon or an event of the past, but presently thriving in many colleges, universities,

⁸⁴Amos 5:24.

churches, governments, organizations, and health settings. One can observe the behavior of our children, grandchildren, or other youths toward Christianity to witness this assertion.⁸⁵ Because forgiveness and reconciliation are at the heart of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, and only Christ can reconcile murderers with their victims' loved ones, for example, the Emanuel Nine, and bring about peaceful settlements to religious wars; what should we say about the division among true Christians.

The cure for the scandals of this world must be God's message of love and unity through Jesus Christ (John 17:20-21), not division. In a world where Christianity is assaulted from all sides, it's believers must stand together in collective defense of their faith. The church has the challenge to work toward this, imperfect though its efforts may be, as its members profess one lord, one faith, and one baptism. People worship God because they consider God to be worthy of their worship. The church must not cease its glorification of God on earth because this is the primary means by which its members participate in God's life. Jesus told Peter,

And I also say unto thee, that thou art Peter, and upon this rock, I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.⁸⁶

When Jesus said the gates of hell could not stand against His church, he was foreseeing the people of God being drawn into unity with God and each other. By worshiping the true God and taking their worship experiences out of the meeting places to spread the Gospel of Jesus and its righteousness, they would accomplish the Great Commission.

And Jesus came and spoke unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and on earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things

⁸⁵Mark 3:28.

⁸⁶Matthew 16:18-19.

whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world Amen.⁸⁷

Foremost among the characteristics of the Church is the preaching of the word of God.

The Church proclaims the Gospel, not only to bring in unsaved people but also to educate, strengthen, and deepen the knowledge of its members in the word of God and “Preach the Word; be prepared in season and out of season; correct, rebuke and encourage—with great patience and careful instructions.”⁸⁸ Of all the passages in the New Testament, perhaps the most instructive are these familiar words:

Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass or a tinkling cymbal. And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge; and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing. And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing. Charity suffereth long, and is kind; charity envieth not; charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, Doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil; Rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth; Beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things. Charity never faileth: but whether there be prophecies, they shall fail; whether there be tongues, they shall cease; whether there be knowledge, it shall vanish away. For we know in part, and we prophesy in part. But when that which is perfect has come, then that which is in part shall be done away. When I was a child, I spoke as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child: but when I became a man, I put away childish things. For now, we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known. And now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three; but the greatest of these is charity.⁸⁹

The love of Jesus Christ, if applied by all, would resolve the racial divide. Although many people do not choose God’s offer of grace through Jesus Christ, it is the only solution to the nation’s problem of racism. Many church leaders complicate the good news of Christ, centered in love, but truth be known, it is a straightforward message. Jesus Christ thoughts are as

⁸⁷Matthew 28:19-20.

⁸⁸2 Timothy 4:2.

⁸⁹1 Corinthians 13:1-13.

follows:

1. Keep it simple enough that a child can understand what you are saying.
2. Keep all foreign matter out of the business of God.
3. Love when things seem wrong and are difficult to accomplish.
4. Keep the prayer line open so that your journey will not be difficult.
5. Express the words of God convincingly and with surety.
6. All ministers, pastors, and leaders of the house of God should continue to fight the battle until victory is secured.
7. Do not let the trappings of this world create within you the lust for flesh, money, power, or unrighteousness for control.
8. All move forward!

If I asked male African American Christian residents from Carolina Low Country the meaning of an African American in US society, they could explain what Paul wrote to the church of Corinth in his second letter describing a new creature in Christ. They could also explain that redeemed and un-redeemed African American males take the “new person” in Christ’s teaching, literally.⁹⁰ When asked to elaborate, some might say that teaching African American males how to glorify themselves in Jesus the Christ is not egotistical, but merely having them recognize themselves as children of God. In doing this, they must realize that to love the White man, they must confront him as a child of God without any intention of creating an inferior complex within themselves. Although some White men are accustomed to participating in harmful activities within society to develop an inferior complex within societies comprising people of color, the African American male must rise above that. In the Jesus Christ “new creature” theology, African American males from Carolina Low Country must meet the challenges head-on and follow the directives prescribed in the Beatitudes of Matthew 5:3-12. If one does not lose sight of

⁹⁰2 Corinthians 5:17.

his new-found identity in Christ, African American males from Carolina Low Country must prepare themselves for conflicts and racial confrontations. They must be able to assume a godly, decisive role within the White American society without diluting but strengthening the word of Jesus Christ. All African Americans must not expect acceptance into another culture, as or with a slave mind mentally, for others see them as equal in the eyes of God. Therefore, when conflict arises, African Americans must not speak of love without speaking of justice and power. Love without the ability to guarantee fairness in human relations is futile. Throughout Christian theology, love is active. As John writes, “For God so loved the World, that He gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believe that in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.”⁹¹

I propose that African American residents from Carolina Low Country should strengthen their love for God because He laid down His life for all; additionally, they should be willing to lay down their lives for their brethren because love demands the whole of oneself. Thus, for African Americans to believe the word of God and His love revealed in Christ, they must be prepared to meet head-on a misunderstanding of Christian love.

Jesus taught so that the uneducated could understand Him. His parables, based on everyday experiences and tasks, provided familiar earthly stories with an easy-to-understand spiritual meaning. Jesus went on to say that to think that love, power, and justice are not one is to put a dangerous emphasis on powerlessness or weakness in the face of inhumanity.

Some Low Country African American pastors stated that true love, for some, seems to involve forgetting the necessary interrelatedness of love, justice, and power when encountering people of color. Love becomes emotional and sentimental with negative values when it accounts for the desire to relieve the physical suffering of one ethnic group so it can express its piety and

⁹¹John 3:16.

continue to keep the poor powerless. To be a new creature in Jesus Christ, one must refuse, help, and demand that African Americans of Carolina Low Country be confronted as people. African Americans must thus say to all ethnic groups that authentic love is not a helping love or a giving-of-Christmas-baskets love, but a love that works for political, social, and economic justice, which means an equal distribution of power. The pastors also explained that African Americans can use this new type of power to fight their battles and thus maintain their dignity.

Christian love should never become the principal actor of love, but it must become the motive or the rationale for action, not only as a measure of nonviolence but non-comprising the existence of African Americans' behavior as the essence of their life in Jesus Christ. Until African Americans genuinely learn the meaning of love and forgiveness, they will never understand that love comes with sacrifice and forgiveness and carries a cost. They must never confuse true love with its timid definition as worldly strength. Love must be nurtured and rocked in its cradle until it genuinely becomes what God describes in John 3:16. Love places a heavy burden upon those who accept it, but love will not fail, falter, or lose focus when positioned to carry out its true meaning:

What shall we then say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? He that spared not his own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things? Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth. Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us. Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter. Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us. For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.⁹²

⁹²Romans 8:31-39.

This love sustains us against evil. When different facets of life create situations that escalate out of our control, love is there. Love never acts selfishly or out of hatred, and it combines emotional abilities with physical needs to produce an outstanding and mentally capable person of faith. Sound characteristics are formed in love when its introduction is true, but the world wants to stain those characteristics with undocumented causes of appreciation. When African Americans from Carolina Low Country practice true love, that love will generate the ungrudging support they need to face the harsh realities of the world.

African Americans from Carolina Low Country were taught through slavery and the Jim Crow era that love is passive and never brash or bold. They were taught never to question their masters or other White Americans about the true meaning of love and to accept the manipulation of the word of God that required all involved parties to seek God, pray ceaselessly, and seek forgiveness from God. “Endurance”⁹³ is not a word African Americans use to describe their definition of love, but it was through endurance that they learned to rise above their circumstances when all seemed lost. It is the respect to love one another and the opportunity to portray that love in its correct form—the characteristics of Jesus—that true love should pass from generation to generation. 1 John describes how we should understand love: Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God,

because many false prophets are gone out into the world. Hereby know ye the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God: And every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God, and this is that spirit of antichrist, whereof ye have heard that it should come; and even now already is it in the world. Ye are of God, little children, and have overcome them: because greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world. They are of the world: therefore speak they of the world, and the world heareth them. We are of God: he that knoweth God heareth us; he that is not of God heareth not us. Hereby know we the spirit of truth, and the spirit of error. Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God, and every one that loveth is born of God and knoweth God.

⁹³James 1:12.

He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love. In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him. Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins. Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another. No man hath seen God at any time. If we love one another, God dwelleth in us, and his love is perfected in us. Hereby know we that we dwell in him, and he in us, because he hath given us of his Spirit. And we have seen and do testify that the Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world. Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwelleth in him, and he in God. And we have known and believed the love that God hath to us. God is love, and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him. Herein is our love made perfect, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment: because as he is, so are we in this world. There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear: because fear hath torment. He that feareth is not made perfect in love. We love him because he first loved us. If a man says, I love God, and hateth his brother; he is a liar: for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen? And this commandment has we from him, That he who loveth God love his brother also.⁹⁴

I can easily contrast how some White Americans treat African Americans, especially from Carolina Low Country, as less than human with how God views all people as his precious creation. Because of that type of treatment, some African Americans who have a weak relationship with Jesus think of God as a historical figure who has allowed the devil take control. This thought feeds into the narrative that God only looks out for the rich and the powerful while spreading misery, shame, and guilt on those in need. Because of this narrative, some young African Americans from Carolina Low Country believe that the devil has won and that there is no chance for salvation. However, is the goodness of God the only reason for salvation and the only thing underlying people's lives? Do they imagine that they do not deserve to live in American society?

Some of the African American youth from Carolina Low Country view the effect of slavery as a means through which ethnic group scan prey on one another. The prey does not

⁹⁴1 John 4:1-21.

believe the predator is stronger, because the predator is wrapped up in a psychological mindset where hatred (originating from Satan) is their god.

Some wonder why has the church not denounced curriculums of school systems that contain long-held stereotypes about African people and culture and willing glossed over one of the defining moments in Biblical history during the Mosaic era.

Some African American pastors of Carolina Low Country stated that the only ground upon which anyone has ever been saved is the belief that the Jews under the Old Covenant received salvation through the Law of Moses and those of the New Testament are saved by grace. But that is a distorted view that bases all conclusions on two realities, termed the first and second, and is based upon God's grace. The people of the Old Testament were not saved by keeping the Law, because if God had carried out their sentences, then all would have, received the punishment of Hell because they could not remain faithful to the law. Once again John 3:16 quotes why God did not destroy man because of the law but forgave them according to His Love. As children of God, one must remember that God is good toward everyone who accepts His goodness, and for those who reject His goodness, there is nothing He can do if He desires to allow people to pursue their free will. He gave this free will to us as a gift out of His absolute sovereignty.

The pastors claimed that if Americans do not respect God's goodness as their salvation and route to eternal life, they must receive God's severity, that is, everyone who continues their moral revolt against His throne and rebellion against His laws. They pastors explained that Jesus wants to please us, and He is pleased when all, as His children, surrender their will to Him. In that process, their will becomes His, and He becomes theirs. Jesus loves to please all with His blessings and favors when each individual gives up their intentions and becomes like Him, and in

that case, He will give them their heart's desires:

Trust in the Lord, and do good, so shalt thou dwell in the land, and verily thou shalt be fed. Delight thyself also in the Lord, and he shall give thee the desires of thine heart. Commit thy way unto the Lord; also trust in him, and he shall bring it to pass. And he shall bring forth thy righteousness as the light, and thy judgment as of the noonday. Rest in the Lord, and wait patiently for him: fret not thyself because of him who prospereth in his way, because of the man who bringeth wicked devices to pass. Cease from anger, and forsake wrath: fret not thyself in any wise to do evil. For evildoers shall be cut off: but those that wait upon the Lord, they shall inherit the earth.⁹⁵

Some pastors stated that every human being reflects “God’s image”⁹⁶ and that nothing else in His creation bears that mark. Many factors that can limit an individual’s agency, but the two most systematic, which limit individuals and entire communities, are poverty and oppression. When people do not have the resources to provide for themselves and their families, their capacity to act as God’s representatives is limited. And when people are unjustly burdened by other’s unchecked power, their agency is limited by social, legal, and cultural inequality. African Americans of Carolina Low Country must help others to listen and realize that the most significant divide in the United States is that between Black and White Christians.

When the African Americans of Carolina Low Country testify to critical ongoing problems with racial inequality in this country, too many people do not hear. Some pastors claimed that as citizens of God’s Kingdom, we must start listening to each other because God has handcrafted humans of every color in his image to act as stewards over his creation. “All Americans must, therefore, be concerned about society’s unholy habits of injustice and inequality, which degrade and disempower God’s image. All children of good faith must recognize and honor the image of God, especially in others, and repent of their contributions to

⁹⁵Psalms 33:3-9.

⁹⁶Genesis 9:6.

injustice and inequality, even if unintentional.”⁹⁷

One problem with some communities within America is that many or most Christian communities in the United States are not diverse. In addition to this problem of ethnic homogeneity as a popular idea that the right Christian thing to do is to practice colorblindness—some individuals ignore racial differences. The moral implications of a sociopolitical context that restricts actual human behavior toward potential human behavior are immense for the well-being of individuals and the integrity of the state. Because growth is the essence of life, and proscription is self-restricting, the most significant hurt is experienced by those excluded. Because their loss is not merely quantitative but profoundly existential, their humanity feels a pattern of rejection from society. This rejection results in a loss of place in the community, and if it continues from generation to generation, will leave its victims aggressive, argumentative, and arrogant toward society as a whole.

Policies such as slavery, American colonization, racial segregation, discrimination in the South, and the Jim Crow system were designed to thwart the progress of African Americans, including those of Carolina Low Country, in all aspects of their African American lives. Those policies also contributed to the low self-esteem African Americans frequently have—a problem that the churches have tirelessly attempted to correct.

Many people are confused about the Gospel of Jesus Christ. The most significant confusion occurs because many hear from others that they need to define what it means to be a Christian. They are told that Jesus loves them, has a beautiful plan for their lives, and wants to shower them with blessings and give them their heart’s desires. If they repent of their sins and believe that Jesus Christ is their Lord and Savior, they will be saved; however, one must be

⁹⁷Matthew 25:40.

careful about compromising God's word. When one does not compromise God's word, one must let the convert know that "No cost, No crown"⁹⁸ is the correct paradigm for entering Heaven.

Jesus gave one of the most basic commands for love that an Israelite or gentile could understand because He touches the root of the cure to stop, eliminate, and destroy the enemy call racism. His answer split the heart of the believer and unbeliever into many parts because it moves from that present position far into the future. Love those who persecute you for having different skin colors is a juvenile paradigm that conceals the real meaning of the words hate and fear in the eyes of Jesus Christ. After quoting the two love commands and just before the parable of the Good Samaritan, a lawyer asked Jesus this arrogant question: "Who is my neighbor?" (Luke 10:29) and foolishly realized that an ordinary carpenter is not sufficiently intelligent to answer a simple question.⁹⁹ Knowing this foolish arrogant hypocrite, Jesus gave the parable of the Samaritan who took care of the man who fell among robbers to illustrate the selfless love that is to be the standard-bearer of characteristics for all citizens of the Kingdom of God the Father.

Hosea used the image of married love to teach all to understand both the un-faithfulness of Israel and the faithfulness of God. Hosea's relationship with an adulterous wife allowed him the insight that God has not given up on Israel regardless of her non-faithfulness.

During times of great struggles, according to the evil of racism, love conquers all because it is unselfish, loyal, and benevolently raises concerns for the well-being of another. Paul's description of love combined with tongues, teaching, and preaching lift it beyond the spectrum of human content and land it squarely on an agape paradigm. Paul contrasts love to the Corinthians as the parent of preaching and knowledge, on the one hand, and faith and hope, on the other

⁹⁸1 Peter 4:13.

⁹⁹Luke 10:29-37.

hand. All these products of love are essential aspects of our lives here and now. Love compared with those aforementioned ingredients is not merely for the here and now but is forever. Love, therefore, is the greatest of the most significant realities we experience as Christians. This love that Paul wrote about in his epistles is somewhat different from the love we usually experience.¹⁰⁰ Christian love is not merely an emotion that arises because of the character of the one loved and is not a product of the loving characteristics of qualified lovers. It is a relationship of self-giving that results from God the Father's activities in Christ. The source of Christian love is God,¹⁰¹ and the believer's response to faith makes love a human possibility.

Paul's understanding and discussion of *agape* love make it almost a technical issue surrounding a central theme of love. Paul's definition of love is echoed to the Romans regarding the fulfillment of the law through love.¹⁰² Even though love does not begin in the heart of humans, the believer must actualize love, walk in the characteristics of love, and increase and abound in love.

When discussing the theory of Jesus Christ with some Low Country pastors and laypeople, a secular worldview was noted; namely, a belief that Jesus Christ is Savior but not necessarily Lord of their lives. Unwilling to change their present lifestyle, their arrogance made them believe that God loves them and will bless them materially and spiritually without cost. Those who live in a predominantly secular world have little or no understanding of God as their creator, the fall of humanity, and the subsequent judgment. In their minds, they are only accepting an offer of a free pass to Heaven. Preaching salvation alone without truthful

¹⁰⁰1 Corinthians 13:8-13.

¹⁰¹Romans 5:5, 8.

¹⁰²Romans 13:10.

instructions is the worst thing to tell people of this prosperity generation, who already believe that they deserve every good thing without cost; it is very destructive. Everyone must consider that people must realize they are lost before they can be saved.

People often discuss God's love, forgiveness, and benevolence, bypassing the less popular discussion of our rebellion against God. When one speaks only of the sacrifice of Jesus Christ in the prosperity mode but eradicates the rebellious cause created within society as unsolvable problems, they are confirming what some people already believe: There is no absolute right and wrong—only different views. To know the absolute right and the wrong, one must discuss candidly and openly sin. Right and wrong can be explained by God's definition, with His creation in the background. At times, this can become very difficult given the world's operating manual is stuck on aggressive, argumentative, and arrogant behaviors.

With the entrance of sin into the world, humans have become haters and enemies of God, but when God re-enacts His love by sending His only son Jesus the Christ, those who believe become Christians based on God's love. The passages of love are described as being unselfish and sacrificial, with no condition of expecting the same in return. It is love that is given and not deserved. The main characteristic of God's love is for the believer to experience it in these ways:

First, the believer must have love toward God because it shows God is approachable and desires to have a personal relationship with Him.

Second, love toward humanity is displayed in four ways:

- A. Love for your neighbor to relieve selfishness because they should have that same degree of concern for others.
- B. Love for others was a dominant theme of the early church and is evidence that the disciples of Jesus Christ were authentic.

- C. Love for the family because love between a husband and wife and their children is required by God, because man who does not take care of his family is a denier of the faith and worse than the unbeliever.
- D. Love for enemies shows that one blesses those who curse them, prays for those who mistreat them, and give generously to all. These actions show that love is more than friendship based on mutual admiration and is also an act of charity toward a person who is hostile and shows no respect.

God's love for us may seem unnecessary, but it is a continuously extended arm to the underserving and unloving. There is a deep loyalty in God's love toward the undeserving, and this marks the main characteristic of God's command for humankind's desire. Additionally, God also loves and expects His people to be sanctified by demonstrating loving-kindness to their God and others. Because God is love, the following is implied: every action He takes or does not consider is a development in love. That is, when He creates, rules, and judges, He does it in love.

Love is vitally connected with faith in that the believer's faithful response is one of love. Love is connected with hope. In any prayer for love to increase and abound, one must have faith that the heart of Christians can be established as free from sin in holiness before God when Jesus returns with all his saints.

Chapter 5: Conclusion

Some within the White community were amazed to hear the family members of the Emanuel Nine offer forgiveness to the gunman who murdered their family members during Bible Study on June 17, 2015. Some in the White world seemed eager to acknowledge this forgiveness as though it were for their crimes and sins against the Black world—and perhaps it was. What some White Americans do not seem to understand is that to accept forgiveness is to take responsibility for personal change—such as what was not observed in the Zimmerman case.

Not understanding the mass shooting of innocent African American citizens across the United States lead some to conclude that many do not know what it means to be labeled a second-class citizen. Some White Americans must realize that those without power continuously attempt to read the signs, gestures, thoughts, and attitudes of those who make the laws, control the economy, and dominate the culture. If you do not recognize these characteristics of the United States, then what ethnic background are you?

Living, traveling, and existence in the United States in any skin color shape the way one looks at the world, and this is something some of the more Influential-American citizens will never understand—and most are not concerned about it. They will never understand it because they do not need to understand what it is to live in an evil and hateful society. They do not understand that soon all lives and livelihoods, and safety and freedom, will someday depend on it.

In the year 2008 of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, many had hoped that the election of the first African American president would launch the United States' post-racial nirvana. And maybe some Americans after the June 17, 2015, Mother Emanuel Nine Assassination still hold on to some dramatic happening in America that would launch a tremendous paradigm that would strengthen the racial unity within the United States.

Thus, the following question is asked: Has Charleston, has South Carolina, has Carolina Low Country had a change of heart? The confederate flag at the statehouse was lowered after Republican leaders were called out and convicted in the court of public opinion by the online photos of the gunman (Dylann Roof) with his confederate flag. Some African American residents of Carolina Low Country wake up every morning feeling the effects of South Carolina politics and rhetoric, which lead to distrust because it is political agenda filled with simmering anger toward them. African Americans from Carolina Low Country have not seen decrease in the effects of discrimination in the employment, school systems, law enforcement, or everyday life. African American Citizens from Carolina Low Country always knew that the most significant strides in America's social justice have originated not from changes of the heart and changes in attitudes but from the federal government. Black Carolina Citizens understand the following history: Union armies ended slavery, the US Congress and the federal courts eradicated Jim Crow laws to ensure equal voting rights and fair housing to African Americans, and a Black preacher educated and convicted the hearts of America about its cruelty toward its Black citizens. Some hearts and attitudes across America, especially in the South, continue to resist those changes.

The arc of history is indeed long, and to bend that arc, Christian communities must continue, start, and carry out what they genuinely believe, read, and trust to be the answer—the Gospel of Jesus Christ. The book of Revelation provides a clear insight into solving satanic problems and feelings. Similar to everything else, this insight is clearly stated by the Apostle John. Spiritual warfare in the scriptures and those that work in our daily lives are the same. First, all must remember that the victory was won when Jesus shed his blood for humanity on the cross at Calvary. Second, all must never forget our responsibilities as children of God. Third, all must

proclaim the whole person of Jesus Christ, even when they have considered the cost. Those three things will help all people love to degrees that they have never known. If some Christians would reach out to the world as the Apostles did, I hypothesize that they would get the same results, and their resolve to proclaim God's word would grow stronger. Mark outlines God's scripture for maximum performance and endurance when he writes, "So then after the Lord had spoken unto them, he was received up into heaven, and sat on the right hand of God. And they went forth, and preached everywhere, the Lord working with them, and confirming the word with signs following. Amen."¹⁰³ During this time, the Apostles upend their world by a total commitment to fervent prayer, public proclamation, and demonstrations of the truth.

Today, some people are looking for answers that can change the minds of the unbelievers, racist individuals and groups, oppressors and oppressed, degraded people, and those with inferiority complexes, but the answer is staring them in the face. Clearly, evil abounds in the world, and love is bound to a corner. When someone sees a seed sown in a person who has committed themselves to Jesus, they also see Satan snatch it away. The quickness of his attack is very alarming and leaves the listener little response time. Paul recognizes this in Colossians 4:4 by writing that the Gospel must be made clear and relevant to the listener if it is to take effect. Jesus, he said, said that the evil one comes to snatch the Word away from us: "The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: I come that they might have life and that they might have it more abundantly."¹⁰⁴ No Christian should expect the enemy to sit passively as they attempt to pull people from Hell to Heaven. His primary job is to blind people's minds so that they cannot see or understand the Word. Second, he commissions himself to harden people's

¹⁰³Mark 16:19-20.

¹⁰⁴John 10:10.

hearts so that their necks become stiffer. Third, he laughs at us when we blame our local churches for our calamities, and the local churches condemn the proclaimer of the Word. We should always remember that when proclaiming the word of God there is another player on the field. When we share the Gospel with someone who seems genuinely interested but unable to understand, we should be aware that the evil one is actively pursuing his cause.

All Christian leaders must understand the racial effect on the communities of Carolina Low Country. These leaders must realize that race plays a more significant part in the leadership hi arc of Carolina Low Country. When dysfunction is recognized in Charleston County Schools, the ongoing gentrification of the Charleston peninsula, and the indifference of the Republican General Assembly toward the state's poor, rural (i.e., black) schools will recognize that ancient racial anxieties play a significant part in the settings of Carolina Low Country. If you do not accept these old characteristics; then once again, what racial ethnicity are you?

True love is within Jesus the Christ, and all others are futile. He never makes Mistakes or releases those to whom were given to Him. He put you where you are for a reason, and when you realize this and grasp the opportunities that Jesus set before you, prosperity will come. Remember that with God, you never have to prove yourself, compete for the job, or have the most talent, as is often required for secular employment. Your anointing by God is your essential qualification and not a job skill.

Fifteen Characteristics of a Successful Christian Program—A Biblical Model

What you may consider a casual acquaintance with the sinful world may be seen as blatant hypocrisy by your children. Children are susceptible to what you say and do and will judge you accordingly. As leaders of the ministerial commission, we must resist the desire for entertainment that glorifies sex and violence. Every time you compromise your Christian walk in

front of your children and others, you cause the word “hypocrite” to enter their tender minds. There is an appropriate time for the conversion of each child, teenager, young adult, and adult, and the timing is in God’s hands. They won’t come to Christ before the time because they can’t: “No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day.”¹⁰⁵ Thus, do not run ahead of the Lord and lead others into a false conversion. God has the right timing for all things, and it is a mistake to run the head of him even if what you are doing is sincere. God is not willing that no one should perish. He wants them all to come to repentance.

1. What Drives You?

Faith binds together hope, belief, prayer, substance, evidence, and all the other characteristics of Jesus Christ. Faith lets us know that we have an opportunity to be great at what we do if only we believe with patience: “The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is long-suffering toward us, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.”¹⁰⁶ The truth is that for any child or adult to be saved they must understand the nature of sin. They must turn from sin and trust in Jesus to save them. Eternal life comes not from saying a prayer or making a decision, but from “repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ.”¹⁰⁷

We live as though the messages of contemporary Christianity are often about the self. Some pastors preach how to obtain what is rightfully ours in Christ but do not speak of the dreadful fate of the lost. Some pastors rarely call for Christians to pray for the salvation of the

¹⁰⁵John 6:44.

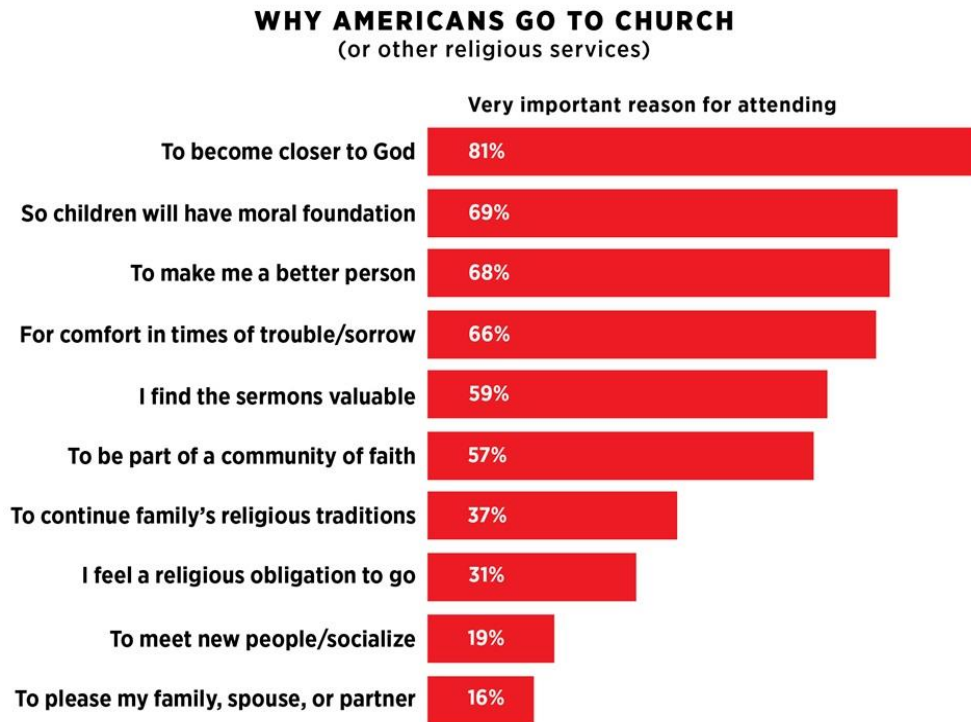
¹⁰⁶2 Peter 3:9.

¹⁰⁷Acts 20:21.

people around them, let alone talk to them about the issue. The eternal salvation of the world should devour our thoughts, and if it does not, something is radically wrong. Do you realize the wealth of knowledge God has given us in his word? Do you ever take the time to draw from the fountain of wisdom? The Bible contains knowledge that will save you, your children, and religious converts a great deal of pain.

If Christians do not know where the dark streets of life are, they will walk in the same paradigm that many before them have walked. God's word gives them light; in turn, Christians reflect that light to the world. Christians must continuously pray for God-given leadership, and always remember that the thief steals at any cost. For Christians Carolina Low Country to understand the problems in their everyday lives, they must conduct research. Gun violence and discrimination against people of color are an evidentiary responses to the evident and repugnant strain of racism that has taken so much from so many people.

Why do American Christians go to church, and why is Evil prevalent when God is the foremost reason people attend church?



* Based on US adults who attend religious services monthly or more.

Source: Pew Research Center

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When love is generated into a call for action, people become nervous, defensive, and upset when they realize the reality of the community life in Carolina Low Country. Some ignore the fact that racism closes schools in minority areas, forces people out of their home communities, cannot wait for a trial to convict a suspect, and questions the motives and methods of those who dare to demand a better life from their elected officials. Some White Americans discussed the heritage of the South as good or bad while refusing to hear the voices of descendants of the enslaved. Thus, I again ask the following question: Why do Americans go to church?

2. Forge Now, With Your Eyes Open

Our power to walk with Jesus is sometimes limited by our inability or unwillingness to

forgive offenses, which often festers and metastasizes within us. If we continue on that path, this unforgiveness will quietly grow into a blockage that impedes every aspect of our lives. This obstruction can silently lurk within our hearts and the hearts of our loved ones and remain undetected until it reveals itself dramatically in a crisis or emotional breakdown. When past expressions of hate, racism, and sinful wounds appear, everyone involved is shocked because none of them dreamed that such pain, rage, and hatred could exist in a person of such good moral character.

It is virtually impossible to know all about someone, to see into their hearts, and understand what is going on below the surface. Emotional wounds that have developed, over years, because of injustice, oppression, and second-class citizenship do not always have outward signs. Humans take for granted that if they do not feel or see anything of substance, everything must be okay. But some of the most deadly killers of natural and spiritual health are silent. Racism does not show itself all at once, but when it does, it appears in the form of the Walter Scott shooting or the Emanuel Nine massacre. People too often fail to see racism coming, even though some know that it exists every day and everywhere. At times, people ignore or dismiss racism as unworthy of a more thorough examination. People often so honor others that they smother their discontent to appear friendly, not realizing that this type of well-meaning deception can rob others of a chance to better their workplaces, homes, communities, families, or places of worship.

Another insidious danger of not practicing forgiveness is that people who refuse to forgive can become contagious carriers of the offenses they have suffered. Not everyone reaches that level, but inevitably, some will live and die without shedding tears. The goal is not only to protect African Americans residents of Carolina Low Country from being influenced by past

woes but to create a paradigm that serves as a model for all American behavior. That model involves unconditional love. In one of Martin Luther King's sermons, a response to man's ambition to serve the devil, he said:

The trouble isn't so much that we don't know enough, but it's as if we aren't good enough. The pain isn't so much that our scientific genius lags, but our moral genius lags behind. The great problem facing modern man is that the means by which we live have outdistanced the spiritual ends for which we live. So we find ourselves caught in a messed-up world. The problem is with man himself and man's soul. We haven't learned how to be just and honest and kind and true and loving.¹⁰⁸

3. Living Beyond the Emotions

One of the first lessons we may be forced to learn involves the meaning of acceptance and tolerance. Just because someone is different from us in appearance, lifestyle, religion, political affiliation, or personal beliefs does not mean that we should dismiss them or think of them as inferior. You do not want to be judged and rejected for your color, culture, or countenance, so you should not prejudge others in a similar fashion. It is easy to say love the sinner and hate the sin, but living this out requires practice and reliance on God's guidance. When we learn to focus on the beauty of the various types of people in our workplaces, churches, and all other areas of life, particularly in the cases where we find this task challenging, God the Father awards double the benefits of blessings.

First, God's word is clear about avoiding sinful practices; thus, we are often tempted to think we are better than others. The truth lies in remaining respectful and accepting of other people in the same way that Jesus was respectful and accepting of those with whom He interacted. Despite racial differences, lifestyle differences, or class differences, Jesus loves people while inspiring them to reach a higher standard in life. You can become a conduit of

¹⁰⁸Clayborne Carson and Peter Holloran, *A Knock at Midnight: Inspiration from the Great Sermons of Reverend Martin Luther King* (New York, NY: Warner Books, 1998), 6.

communication and compassion only by asking the appropriate questions. Too often we are afraid to ask someone about their problems, or when we do ask, we do it in such a manner that their fear and hostility increase. If we ask with kindness, in a pleasant tone, or in an objective manner, we free the other party from their negative experiences and allow them to tell the truth. We must endeavor to love others by trusting that God will shine through us and enable us to interact with people we find the most challenging. Notably, every godly relationship we have, every path we cross, and every conversation we have can and will be used by God to further his ultimate purposes. African Americans of Carolina Low Country, who have survived many perils, must overcome obstacles with optimism and forge ahead while singing, teaching, preaching, marching, worshiping, and soldiering their way into God's destiny. As they travel, they must redefine barriers with strength and commitment, moving the split-rail fences of racism and pain that humans have erected, and destroying the threatening mindset that keeps people living in the prison of preconceived ideas.

Jesus's approach differs from that of modern evangelism. In a story, a young man runs up to Jesus, kneels, calls him "good,"¹⁰⁹ and asks how he can obtain eternal life. Jesus does not preach the cross, speak of God's love, or lead this potential convert in a sinner prayer. Instead, He corrects the man's understanding of the word "good." Jesus takes him through the Ten Commandments to show him God's standard for goodness, exposing the man's hidden sin. Christians reflect God's love in their children, loved ones, and everyone who wants to join and practice the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Another quality of some Christians is unselfishness. Jesus was wholly unselfish and gave himself; by contrast, some Christians are self-centered and self-indulgent, even when they are praying for a revival or reading books on revival. A revival is a

¹⁰⁹Luke 18:18-20.

sudden manifestation, such as the sun breaking through dark clouds, with the remembrance that the sun has not arrived but merely breaking through the clouds.

Another quality is to know God as Holy, Jesus as Holy, and the Spirit as the Holy Spirit by contrasting how stained, spotted, and carnal some ordinary Christians are. People allow these stains to strengthen without repentance and the years to pass without asking to be cleansed from their evil ways.

4. Beyond a Reasonable Doubt

Beyond reasonable doubt extends to the hateful, evil, racist who hates without reason and loves no cause: The meek and humble Jesus, the great pattern of humanity, and every virtue men can have commanded us to love our enemies and to do good to those who hate and use us. Christians should recognize their obligation to impress upon the minds of all Americans, not only those from Carolina Low Country, the idea of forgiving their oppressors and the oppressed, and the need for forgiveness will lift them beyond the common bondage of sin. Some African Americans believe that God's mercy releases all anger and bitterness from their daily thoughts, and their oppressors appeal to their feelings by asking whether it is disquieting to find oneself under the dominion of a wrathful disposition.

Anyone who loves their children, their spouse, their country, and God should, therefore, clear their minds of oppressive, repressive, racist, fascist, primitive, and evil thoughts. Anyone who appreciates God's love will shed tears and feel heartbroken for the oppressed and the oppressor. This part of love drives men crazy because of the amount of control sin has over them. Jesus pleaded their causes from time to time by raising instruments for that purpose; sometimes those instruments are mean and contemptible, but God uses them as he pleases, because people recognize it is not below their dignity to contend. Through love, many people

have been convinced of their errors, condemned their former conduct, and become advocates for others. Difficult as it is, African Americans should not let their hearts vanish out of fear or discouragement but should put their trust in God. God sees people's condition and is a merciful father who pities those who love him. As people's hearts are inclined to serve God, their affection for their oppressors grows. African Americans must use this affection to correct the wrongs of society by standing up for truth and justice, because until they learn to help themselves with the power of God, they will not learn to free themselves from the oppressors of the world. They must also remember that love contains the teachings of Jesus, and confrontational Christian freedom must act on those words. African Americans from Carolina Low Country and beyond can use love to inject the future into the present and obtain justice and equality for all Americans.

5. Understanding the Battle

To win a war, one must understand the opponent. Racism has to do mostly with the immediate subjugation of African American men by some White men. African American men must not abdicate their position as the head of their families, providers for their children, and protectors of their wives and daughters. Racism is a blight that divides and conquers African American families to exploit the racial system for their labor and profits. Because of the African American males' migration away from Jesus, African American women are often left to shoulder the responsibility of being a mother and breadwinner. Because of racism's characteristics such as evil, jealousy, hatred, and societal injustice, African American women have had the difficult task of building African American males' self-esteem while finding themselves the target of the same systemic injustice, even at home. Although prejudice initially influenced the Black community, it rests today with the fault of people who have turned their backs on Jesus and His mercy.

African Americans do not need to read far into the Bible to recognize that the divine-human fellowship is to be understood exclusively in terms of what God does for humankind, not what humans do for themselves or for God, such as making Jesus the only impetus in their lives to sustain them through evil days. When God's objectivity is reduced to what have you done for me lately, the process of overcoming racism and evil in society becomes simply an act of imagination. Sin is a condition of human existence in which people deny the essence of God's liberating activities as revealed in Jesus. For some, it is a way of life in which they cease to be fully human and make choices according to their private interests, ultimately identifying with an unidentifiable power. When humans accept injustice as a condition of their existence by denying everyone freedom grounded in the activities of Jesus Christ, sin creates an unidentifiable source of alienation from the world, resulting in oppression and misery.

To understand sin from a racist point of view, and what it means to the African Americans from Carolina Low Country, it is necessary to be an African American who participate in African American causes and struggles. Because sin is a condition of estrangement from the source of one's being; for some African Americans, it involves the desire to be another color. Sin leads some African Americans to refuse to announce what is sinful and what is not, creating a loss of identity within their community.

Sin is saying yes to others' absurdity while accepting the world as it is by letting others define African Americans' existence. To be in sin is to be content with White solutions to African American problems while not rebelling against infringements on the African-Americans identity. Today's African Americans know what sin means because they have let others determine their future and their limits for a long time.

6. Love

In Romans, Paul writes,

Owe no man anything, but to love one another: for he that loveth another hath fulfilled the law. For this, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not kill, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness, Thou shalt not covet; and if there be any other commandments, it is briefly comprehended in this saying; namely, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. Love worketh no ill to his neighbour: therefore love is the fulfilling of the law. And that, knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep: for now, is our salvation nearer than when we believed. The night is far spent, the day is at hand: let us, therefore, cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light. Let us walk honestly, as in the day; not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envying. But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfill the lusts thereof.¹¹⁰

Love teaches us to be what Jesus wants us to become. Love shows us that being passive, dismissive, frightened, uncommitted, or ignorant to its meaning not only separates us from the love of God but leads us to an inescapable devil's paradise. Love teaches everyone essential characteristics that lead to a more productive and transparent life with Jesus, such as how to cope with the hate, racism, evil, envy, and injustices. Love reveals the timetable for things that will come to pass.

Jesus Christ is not hurried because he is God and is humanity's savior and redeemer. Anything that is of value from God matures when its time comes. Human beings should never perceive that they control the things of God, nor can their timetable be more efficient and precise than His. This warped thought leads people to become entranced with the ideas of the devil instead of waiting on the things of God. Waiting requires work, commitment, and patience if we want to improve our situations.

7. The Objectivity of Love

Some of today's churches need a robust understanding of the Gospel and how it demands the

¹¹⁰Romans 13:8-14.

pursuit of racial harmony; need to keep themselves informed on race relations, racism, White supremacy, and intentional and unintentional means in which evil works in their structures and societies; and need to create specific goals and plans for pursuing racial harmony among themselves and their communities. Christians and churches should encourage others to lead the pursuit of racial unity and racial healing in these racially divided times and in the future.

Churches must work to understand how the American social construct of race, racism, and White supremacy work against the gospel, both personally and systemically. Ethnic identity, in the American experience, is a social and ideological construct. White supremacists have used this concept to establish a racial hierarchy that prioritizes whiteness and dehumanizes and exploits people of color. The impact of this continues to impact many parts of Americans' lives, including churches.

Christians and churches must think carefully about how the gospel of Jesus applies to the supremacy of racism and evil within America's communities. Everyone must listen and learn from the people most affected by racism and consider practical ways in which everyone can love and increase the diversification of their neighborhoods, such as pursuing racial unity through the gospel of Jesus.

8. Development of Close Relationships

All churches want to see faith in Jesus passed from parents to children. To achieve this goal, churches must encourage and equip parents to build warm, affirming, close relationships with their children and others from their congregations. The thought of God's love and patience for us should secure our faith that His love will endure forever. Unsurprisingly, some Christians have not shown the same love and concern for all children:

Jesus said unto them, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the

second is like, unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.¹¹¹

As these commandments are performed, Christians must pray regularly and fervently for God to unify all things and all people in Christ and to convert and transform racists through the Gospel. They must pray for themselves and their churches to repent for their complicity in individual and systemic racism and engage in means to be agents of racial unity in churches and communities. Although counterintuitive, faith is the most significant factor in whether a parent or congregation impart their faith to children, and another factor is the quality of their relationships with those others. Young adults are most likely to share their religious beliefs and participate if they feel that they have a close relationship with their congregation and pastor.

9. Laying the Ground Rules

In 2017, the United States knew that something had gone awry because of the documented increase in hate-filled protests and racism, including anti-Semitism that evoked memories of Nazism. A new approach to heal the racial divide is necessary. Thus, the question remains of whether there are severe flaws in the reconciliation being championed by many? For instance, the idea of reconciliation, when applied to the United States race relations, would imply that there was a time when blacks and whites were “conciliated,” or indeed in a state of agreement.

The tragedy in Charlottesville stirred the rawest of wounds from racism. Judging people by the color of skin is an ancient sin embedded in evil. No one is a god except in his or her delusion. Created *Imago Dei*, humanity carries specific innate attributes of God, namely, wisdom, love, grace, and kindness. These attributes long for eternity because they were made in God’s image. Sin has distorted that image but not destroyed it; thus, people’s moral purity is tainted and their intellect polluted by foolish ideas. They have thus chosen self-promotion rather

¹¹¹Matthew 22:37-40.

than God-promotion. The image of God is sometimes difficult to discern, but God has not rescinded his promise or altered his plan. He continues to create people in His image to reflect His glory.

10. Finding Steps to Accomplish the Task of Diversification

A best practice approach to promoting diversity applies the data gleaned from the demographics of the target population to, for example, promotional strategies. If they are young or have no relationship with Jesus Christ, this is facile and simplistic. If they mature and grow in Christ, however, they can handle more complex teachings, discussions, and practices. A young child, for instance, might ask about differences in people's skin color, and this question is an opportunity to discuss diversity.

11. Be Upfront About Your Feelings as You Guide Others Through Your Process of Diversification.

As a teacher and advisor, project a super personality and never reveal vulnerability.

12. Provide Strategies and Specific Tactics for Handling Problems.

Review situations with the group to develop confidence in and commitment to the task. Strategies can be applied, such as asking the following questions: "If somebody called you this name, what would you do? How would you respond to it?" Next, help the group discuss the support apparatus that must be in place before any task; for instance, pastors, teachers, laity, leaders, officers, and congregants.

13. Encourage All to Have an Open Mind.

Give people the benefit of the doubt. Assume they are good unless they show themselves otherwise. Explain to children and young adults the positive and negative aspects of police officers and other authoritarian figures. Use present-day examples of police brutality along with

examples of police bravery to teach that the police are usually there to help you and not to cause harm. Remember that speaking out against racial problems in law enforcement is the right of every American. If people feel they are being treated fairly and respectfully, they do not need to defend their rights. However, if they are mistreated, they can ask questions such as “Is there a reason you’re asking me to do this?” “Is there a reason you’re speaking to me like that?” or “Is there a reason you want to physical abuse me?” Racial matters should be able to be resolved peacefully, and people who are in love with Jesus and committed to that love can find times and places to demonstrate that love.

In the United States, Sunday morning is the time when many people worship Jesus Christ. Exposing your group to various cultures through art, music, and biblical content will, in time, ease the stress of cultural clashes. This integration should be the main activity in your group of interest. The leader of the activity should emphasize that every culture has positive aspects worth learning about; objective while presenting materials; and combine various cultures in the group as much as possible (e.g., neighbors, food, and music). In any organization, from corporations to countries, leaders should set the tone for the success of the mission. In the church of Jesus Christ, leaders should be the source from which the gospel of Jesus grows. People in the United States have friends and acquaintances of all cultures, ethnicities, and religious backgrounds; thus, when your group observes that their leaders fully committed to the success of their task, they will replicate this behavior and begin to consider it the norm.

14. Looking for Real Love

Your group may think that as Christians, they do not have to hear this truth:

I will arise and go to my father and will say unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and before thee, and am no more worthy to be called thy son: make me as one of thy hired servants. And he arose and came to his father. But when he was yet a great way off, his father saw him, and had compassion, and ran, and fell on his neck,

and kissed him. And the son said unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and in thy sight, and am no more worthy to be called thy son. But the father said to his servants, Bring forth the best robe, and put it on him; and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet: And bring hither the fatted calf, and kill it; and let us eat, and be merry: For this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found. And they began to be merry.¹¹²

To ensure that everyone in your group understands its policies, procedures, safety rules, and essential information, group leaders must continually emphasize those things. There must be an ongoing effort to overcome language and cultural barriers. View each individual with the same expectations from all sides of the prism, and throw away all positive and negative stereotypes. Do not make assumptions about people from different cultures; instead, evaluate all successes and failures individually and personally. Respond promptly and firmly when a member of your group does not fully understand the harmful nature of prejudices or the unkindness of stereotypes. Remind them of your group's antidiscrimination policies. Encourage them to view each other as individuals within the congregation and evaluate their performances within the group and the congregation.

Follow these daily guidelines:

1. Encourage everyone to work in diversified groups. Diversifying your group helps all members to get to know and value one another as individuals. It also expands their experiences and views by assisting them to recognize the strength of their combined talents and perspectives.
2. Expect everyone in the group to meet all background standards and perform to the best of their ability. Do not set different criteria for different groups or make excuses for shortcomings. Always focus on the task and not on personal or private issues.

¹¹²Luke 15:18-24.

3. Encourage everyone in the group to recognize and identify all the experiences and backgrounds of each culture and to prize them as valuable to the church, group, organization, foundation, institution, or governmental entity.
4. Set examples that encourage diversity and develop relationships among group members whose backgrounds differ. Develop ways to incorporate diverse perspectives and talents into efforts to achieve the established goals.

Close relationships become even more reverent when a child walks away from God. The best parenting does not guarantee that children will remain near Jesus Christ, but what happens next can be the determining factor in whether they eventually return to it: “Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it.”¹¹³

Our thoughts, both good and bad, are mirrored in what is happening in our life. Thus, if we can connect with our inner being, if we can find truth, love, peace, temperament, happiness, and strength on the inside, it will radiate and inspire us throughout our lives.

The real damage from skepticism is the erosion of trust. Deep distrust is corrosive to all relationships, and bad experiences, rejection, disapproval, and misunderstanding will initiate distrust. The lack of confidence will prevent one from being heard and received, and it prevents one from sounding the alarm that will keep one in isolation with the few gifts they have retrieved. Because no matter how justified in the beginning, sustained lack of trust starts to erode the clarity of one first-hand experience, coloring his or her perception with doubt, not love.

Petersen’s prescription for distrust is as follows: Spacing means opening our minds to possibilities beyond what we have already thought. This goes deeper than techniques. It is an attitude change. It means appreciating someone who is different from us, even someone we do

¹¹³Proverbs 22:6.

not like and/or disagree with.¹¹⁴

Petersen continues that listening is dangerous for pre-formed opinions. He also asserts that real listening requires getting inside other people's processes and may even cause people to discard a few old thoughts and replace them with new thoughts.¹¹⁵

The violent speed of our age is harmful because the world is so mobile and transient and hurting others at any cost seems to be the norm. In a world where sophistication means showing nothing, the mind becomes as cold as a camera shutter, opening and closing rapidly to let too much in, and the fortress of objectivity helps one to avoid the frontier that returns them to first-hand experience, which is the ability to care.

Petersen added to the definition of spacing by stating that when you allow spacing for talkers' thoughts to emerge and be valued, the talkers' could quote the following: *I'm having trouble hearing since our views are so different. But I'm going to set mine aside so. I can understand yours. How does what you think about this issue feel to you on the inside..? or Let me catch my breath while I set my thoughts aside, I want to understand yours. You've apparently been struggling with this for some time. Tell me what you've been thinking, what you've considered, and what you've tried..?*¹¹⁶

When you suspend your views to make space for other people's concerns, it is as if you were temporarily locking yours in a safe. This method frees you to engage in their thinking processes with them. Good listening can produce growth in listeners as well as it does in talkers. Spacing makes room for that to occur.¹¹⁷

¹¹⁴Petersen, *Why Don't We Listen Better*, 151.

¹¹⁵Ibid.

¹¹⁶Ibid.

¹¹⁷N. T. Wright, *Evil and the Justice of God* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2006), 142.

No matter how strongly bonded, it will have its bitter moments. Suddenly, all of the intimacy that one enjoyed through the years seems to have gone, all hopes and plans and shattered, and all the task one wants to do for God dissolves. “Do we betray the Son of Man with a kiss?”¹¹⁸ However, with love and companionship, we can go on. The sweetness found in sharing our feeling with The Son of Man will sustain us, carry us, and give us hope. The Apostle said, “For those who love God, all things work together unto good.”¹¹⁹ We will not succeed in shunning evil if we do not have a passion for doing good and sincerely seek peace by pursuing it positively with genuine commitment. Peace is the tranquility that enters our hearts and orders our lives. When we strive for peace, the eyes of the Lord will be upon us, and His ears will be open to our cry because peace comes to all when justice prevails.

However, since the garden of Eden, since God’s grief over Noah’s generation, since the tower of Babel and the Abrahamic experiences, the story has been about the messy way in which God has had to work to bring the world out of its messy situation.¹²⁰

Somehow, in a way we are inclined to find offensive, God has to get his boots muddy and, it seems, to get his hand bloody, to put the world back to rights. If we declare, as many have done, that we would rather it were not so, we face a counterquestion: Which but of dry, clean ground are we standing on that we should pronounce on the matter with such certainty?¹²¹

Dietrich Bonhoeffer declared that the primal sin of humanity consisted in putting the knowledge of good and evil before the knowledge of God. That is one of the further dark mysteries of Genesis 3: there must be some substantial continuity between what we mean by good and evil and what God means; otherwise, we are in moral darkness

¹¹⁸Luke 22:48.

¹¹⁹Romans 8:28.

¹²⁰Wright, *Evil and the Justice of God*, 58-59.

¹²¹*Ibid.*, 59.

indeed. But it serves as a warning to us not to pontificate with too much certainty about what God should and shouldn't have done.¹²²

So long as injustice prevails, there cannot be peace among nations, communities, societies, cultures, and races. Justice must begin with the recognition that God the Father is God, Lord, and Creator of all. We are all stewards responsible for His creation and sharing this creation in a manner that every man, woman, and child can enjoy.

God delivers us from all our troubles. God will be near to us in all situations and all circumstances, and when we are broken-hearted and crushed in spirit, He is there to bring us through. We may have to suffer much, but God will save us from all the hate mongers, evildoers, racists, and with Him, we will never loose.

The accuser of the brethren was brought down by these things:

And I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of his Christ: for the accuser of our brethren is cast down, which accused them before our God day and night. And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony, and they loved not their lives unto the death. Therefore rejoice, ye heavens, and ye that dwell in them. Woe to the inhibitors of the earth and the sea! for the devil is come down unto you, having great wrath, because he knoweth that he hath but a short time.¹²³

“A large leap of the imagination for most of us even in our own relatively uninsured lives; when we imagine some of the morally, physically, and emotionally outrageous sufferings of people around the world over the last century, it may seem an impossible dream. Yet it is precisely the outworking of the ‘promise of resurrection itself’¹²⁴—which of course appears incredible to those who simply study the world of decay and death and forget the ‘Lord of life’¹²⁵

¹²²Ibid.

¹²³Revelation 12:10-12.

¹²⁴Acts 24:15.

¹²⁵Proverbs 14:27.

who lived among us and died and rose again. Just as physical decay and death will have no power over ‘our resurrection bodies,’¹²⁶ so the moral decay and dissolution threatened by the ‘persistent presence of evil’¹²⁷—the gnawing resentment, the un-scratching itches of jealousy or anger, which are the moral and spiritual equivalents of ‘physical decay and disease’¹²⁸—will have no power over our emotional or moral lives in the world to come.”¹²⁹

“We are in fact called to be ‘people of forgiveness’¹³⁰ in the present because that is the life we shall be living in the future (more about that in what follows). But the point—and this is really the Center always point of this book, the ultimate answer to this aspect at least of the problem of evil—is not only that in the new world God Himself will be beyond the reach of the moral blackmail of unresolved evil, but that we shall be as well. ‘Sin will not have dominion over you’;¹³¹ this can function as a promise about not only our present moral life but our ultimate future bliss. This is how we shall be delivered from evil, how the Lord’s Prayer will finally be answered.”¹³²

¹²⁶1 Corinthians 15:55-58.

¹²⁷Ibid., 50.

¹²⁸Ibid., 54.

¹²⁹Wright, *Evil and the Justice of God*, 142-143.

¹³⁰Colossians 3:13.

¹³¹Romans 6:14.

¹³²Wright, *Evil and the Justice of God*, 143.

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October 31, 2016

James Mack

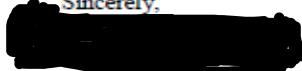
IRB Approval 2581.103116: *An Aggressive, Arrogant, and Argumentative Society: A Unique Perspective from the African-American Pastors of the Carolina Low Country*

Dear James Mack,

We are pleased to inform you that your study has been approved by the Liberty University IRB. This approval is extended to you for one year from the date provided above with your protocol number. If data collection proceeds past one year, or if you make changes in the methodology as it pertains to human subjects, you must submit an appropriate update form to the IRB. The forms for these cases were attached to your approval email.

Thank you for your cooperation with the IRB, and we wish you well with your research project.

Sincerely,



G. Michele Baker, MA, CIP
Administrative Chair of Institutional Research
The Graduate School

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CONSENT FORM

An Aggressive, Arrogant, and Argumentative Society: A Unique Perspective from the
African-American Pastors of the Carolina Low Country.

James Mack
Liberty University
School of Divinity

You are invited to be in a research study of how to conquer the negative challenges of racism from a biblical perspective. You were selected as a possible participant because you are a leader within the Christian church and your local community. James Mack, Jr., doctoral candidate in the School of Divinity at Liberty University, is conducting this study.

Background Information: The purpose of this study is to find solutions on how to resolve the challenges of racism and hatred ever present within American society.

Procedures: If you agree to be in this study you are asked to do the following:

1.) Take part in a 20-question, recorded interview that should take 30-45 minutes.

Risks and Benefits of being in the Study: This study is considered minimal risk, which is equal to the risk participants would encounter when going about everyday activities.

Participants should not expect to receive a direct benefit from taking part in this study. The benefit to society from this study is the insight it will provide future Christian leaders as they proactively engage the sin of racism.

Compensation: You will not receive compensation for taking part in this study, but if our interview takes place over a meal, I will pay for your food.

Confidentiality: The records of this study will be kept private. Should the researcher choose to publish a paper associated with this study, he will not include any information that would identify your participation. Participants' identities will be replaced by pseudonyms in the thesis.

Voluntary Nature of the Study: Participation in this study is voluntary. Your decision whether or not to participate will not affect your current or future relations with Liberty University. If you decide to participate, you are free to leave any question unanswered or withdraw at any time without affecting those relationships.

Contacts and Questions: The researcher conducting this study is James Mack, Jr. You may ask any questions you have now. If you have questions later, you are encouraged to contact him at [REDACTED]. You may also contact the research's faculty advisor, Dr. Michael Whittington, [REDACTED].

The Liberty University Institutional
Review Board has approved
this document for use from
10/31/2016 to 10/30/2017
Protocol # 2581.103116

If you have any questions or concerns regarding this study and would like to talk to someone other than the researcher, you are encouraged to contact the Institutional Review Board, 1971 University Blvd, Green Hall Suite 1887, Lynchburg, VA 24515

Please notify the researcher if you would like a copy of this information to keep for your records.

Statement of Consent: I have read and understood the above information. I have asked questions and have received answers. I consent to participate in the study.

(NOTE: DO NOT AGREE TO PARTICIPATE UNLESS IRB APPROVAL INFORMATION WITH CURRENT DATES HAS BEEN ADDED TO THIS DOCUMENT.)

Signature

Date

Signature of Investigator

Date