LIBERTY UNIVERSITY

JOHN W. RAWLINGS SCHOOL OF DIVINITY

Understanding an Urban Black Worldview:

A Phenomenological Examination of 2020

A Thesis Project Report Submitted to

the Faculty of the Liberty University School of Divinity

in Candidacy for the Degree of

Doctor of Ministry

by

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Thesis Project Approval Sheet

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THE DOCTOR OF MINISTRY THESIS PROJECT ABSTRACT
Rev. Dr. Gershwin F. Grant
Liberty University John W. Rawlings School of Divinity, March 27, 2023
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This action research project was designed to surface and codify a worldview that emerged among black people as a result of the traumatic phenomena of 2020. The program sought to help white pastors in New York's Lower Hudson Valley recognize this new worldview, understand its implications, and desire to intentionally develop their level of Cultural Competence to more effectively counsel and disciple black congregants holding this worldview. The detrimental effects of the phenomena of 2020 exacerbated existing trauma caused by social and institutional racism and resulted in an altered worldview among urban blacks affecting relationships in communities and within church congregations.

A practical, immersive intervention program was developed in which ten white, majority culture evangelical ministers participated in a 30-day phenomenologically based lifestyle immersion in black history and urban culture. Group discussions, surveys, and cultural immersion allowed pastors to experience the phenomena of 2020 and black history through the eyes of the minority sub-culture. The pastors grew in Cultural Intelligence and their desire to develop greater Cultural Competence intentionally.

It is hoped that this project will inspire and guide a growing examination of identifiable, quantifiable, common-core worldviews by qualified evangelicals within their own sub-cultures. A growing, evolving compendium of cultural knowledge that builds Cultural Intelligence and leads to Cultural Competence within the Evangelical community would greatly benefit the kingdom.

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Abbreviations

BLM   *Black Lives Matter Movement*

BWV20   *Black Worldview from 2020*

CBA   *Conservative Baptist Association*

CC   *Cultural Competence*

CIP   *Cultural Immersion Program*

CP   *Counseling Professionals*

DMIN   *Doctor of Ministry*

HVP   *Lower Hudson Valley Conservative Baptist Pastors*

ITM   *Integrative Therapeutic Methodology*

PTSD   *Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder*

RA   *Research Author*

ST   *Secondary Trauma*

TPh   *Transcendental Phenomenology*

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Introduction to Research Project

This research project involved the development of a 30-day Urban Black Worldview Immersion Program for pastors who are part of or associated with the Lower Hudson Valley Conservative Baptist Pastors Group (HVP), a fellowship of conservative pastors and churches in New York State. The intervention project was intended to acquaint the pastors with the common-core worldview of urbanites who were living in urban communities in New York City during the year 2020. The project sought to increase the pastors' levels of understanding regarding the lives and concerns of urbanites who become part of their congregations. These urbanites are referred to as new black congregants.

The Lower Hudson Valley Conservative Baptist Pastors Group has met regularly for three decades. Associated groups have met in New York State for the past decade. The research author (RA), who is black, has been a group member for 20 years and the leader for 16. The majority of the HVP participants have identified as other than black, reflecting the dominant culture of racial lines. What black people might consider a lack of appreciation or empathy for their beliefs often surfaced in group discussions. The issues were reliably viewed from conflicting racial viewpoints, which continued until an event took place that added credence to the perspective offered by the black pastors in the group and caused other than black pastors (referred to in this thesis as "pastors") to examine some of their perspectives.

On May 25, 2020, Minneapolis police officers arrested George Floyd for purchasing cigarettes with a counterfeit $20 bill. In an incident videoed and shown on world news, Mr. Floyd was handcuffed, restrained, and pinned beneath three police officers until he died. An officer had put his knee on Mr. Floyd's neck for 8 minutes and 15 seconds until Mr. Floyd's heart stopped due to cardiopulmonary arrest caused by "law enforcement subdual, restraint, and neck compression."[1]

The public nature of this egregious phenomenological event opened a conversation within church communities concerning racial injustice and the obliviousness of white church members to the plight of their black counterparts. In many Conservative Baptist congregations around America, white pastors read letters of confession and offered apologies to black pastors concerning their blindness in the past. Many, like the HVP, expressed a desire to understand better the perspectives, positions, outlooks, and viewpoints that have previously eluded them.

The RA sought to enable white HVP to understand the worldview of urbanites who join their congregations. A month-long, guided, intensive immersion program built around the issues that contribute to the black worldview resulting from 2020 was offered to the participants. The opportunity to compare their view of well-documented events with that of urbanites may provide the opportunity for participants to expand their worldview and provide the basis for more effective discipleship and counseling.

Ministry Context

The Hudson Valley Pastors group is a strategically significant fellowship of pastors in New York's Lower Hudson Valley. The pastors in this Conservative Baptist group have been

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[1] Andrew Baker, "Hennpin County Medical Examiner's Office Autopsy Report" (Minneapolis: May 26, 2020), 1.

predominantly Caucasian as have their churches and communities. The situation is beginning to change in the Lower Hudson Valley. Churches are changing, communities are changing, and the pastors will need to change too.

The Conservative Baptist Association, now the Venture Church Network, has existed since 1943 to plant Bible-centric, conservative churches in America and to preserve what they considered to be traditional doctrine and values.[2] The association is made up of independent churches that remain autonomous but agree to a common (but not enumerated) set of doctrinal principles and core values. The founders of the movement originally organized the Fundamentalist Fellowship in 1920 within the auspices of the Northern Baptist Convention.

As time passed, there were growing disputes over the interpretation of scripture and theology. A strong objection was voiced by pastors in other countries who complained that the Northern (now American) Baptists were sending "liberal missionaries" to foreign countries and damaging ministries. Eventually, this caused the Fellowship to separate from the Convention and found the Conservative Baptist Association.[3]

The growing portion of the association saw liberalism, postmodernism, and charismatic theology as destructive forces spreading rapidly through the universal Church.[4] As a group of like-minded churches, they took a stand for: a traditional theology, a literal hermeneutic, the

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[2] *Encyclopedia Britannica,* "Conservative Baptist Association of America," September 27, 2007, https://www.britannica.com/topic/Conservative-Baptist-Association-of-America.

[3] Bruce Shelley, *A History of Conservative Baptists* (3rd ed.) (Wheaton, IL: Conservative Baptist Press, 1981).

[4] Elmer Fridell, "Open Letter from ABFMS Board Officers to Association Pastors," 1943, On file in the Conservative Baptist Theological Seminary Library historical section.

plenary inspiration and infallibility of the Bible, accurate exegesis of the biblical texts, conservative behavior, personal etiquette, and adherence to social order.[5, 6]

As stated in the organization's historic archives, the Association began in the early years of the 20th century when "churches were in conflict over the historic beliefs of the Christian faith and the core of the gospel message."[7] The founders of the movement believed that other churches had "turned away from the authority of Scripture and the divinity of Jesus."[8] The Conservative Baptist founders viewed their mission as "conserving" the priorities of "sharing the truth of the Bible and the good news of Jesus throughout the world."[9]

The Conservative Baptist Association was originally comprised of two arms. The Conservative Baptist Foreign Missions Society was founded to promote overseas mission efforts.[10] Over time, schools and seminaries such as Conservative Baptist Theological Seminary (now Denver Seminary), Western Conservative Baptist Seminary, Arizona Christian Seminary, New England College of the Bible, Judson Baptist College, Southwestern College, International College, and Seminary of the East were developed and promoted conservative doctrine, theology, and deportment to produce pastors and missionaries for the field.[11] Many associates of the Conservative Baptists considered the foreign missions work to be the core of Conservative

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[5] Fridell.

[6] "Venture Church Network: Our Story," accessed June 8, 2022, https://venturechurches.org/venture-church-network-our-founding-began-with-the-gospel-and-prayer/.

[7] "Northern Baptist Bylaws," Article IX Bylaws, *Yearbook of the Northern Baptist Convention* (Northern Baptist Convention, n.d.).

[8] Shelley, 21.

[9] "Venture Church Network: Our Story."

[10] Shelley, 37.

[11] Ibid., 1.

Baptist activities and supported the efforts wholeheartedly. A second arm of the newly formed Conservative Baptist Association was less heralded and supported. Conservative Baptist Mission to the Americas was formed to promote church planting in the inner city and parts of Latin America. Mission to the Americas was never fully accepted by the associated churches; it remained underfunded and was often overlooked by Conservative Baptist churches. Not all Conservative Baptist leaders valued the concept of reaching out to the inner city and preferred to focus their prayer, passion, and pecuniary support on the foreign mission society. At times, in the RA's terms of service on the Conservative Baptist board, it was unclear that churches planted by Mission to the Americas were to be considered Conservative Baptist churches. It became necessary for steps to be taken to secure Conservative Baptist membership for the Mission to the Americas church plants.

The Conservative Baptist movement advanced and grew, but it was decidedly monochromatic. Conservative Baptist America became a mono-cultural, male-dominated entity producing churches that fit their understanding and interpretation of the bible and God's will for the church. The Conservative Baptist movement displayed a reticence to investigate or approve of anything that challenges the biblical focus of associated churches. The Charismatic Movement and Black Social Gospel Movement of the late 1950s, the Jesus Movement of the 1960s and 1970s, and the Spiritual Formation Movement of the late 1970s were all met with skepticism, rejection, and opposition by the Conservative Baptist Movement.[12]

The Conservative Baptist America formed the HVP group to equip and encourage Conservative Baptist and like-minded pastors in the Lower Hudson Valley. The cluster group is comprised of 15 voluntarily associated churches whose pastors meet to fellowship, collaborate in

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[12] Shelley, 49–50.

learning opportunities, and work together in ministry projects. The HVP fellowship is an outgrowth of the Conservative Baptist America movement and is therefore conservative in doctrine and worldview.

The RA has served within the Conservative Baptist Association (CBA) for 30 years. The RA has served as a pastor for Conservative Baptist America (30 years); as a regional board member for Conservative Baptist Mission Northeast (12 years); and as an Area Director (6 years) and a Pastors Group Leader and Moderator for the Conservative Baptist Churches of the Lower Hudson Valley (16 years). The RA has built significant, intimate relationships with the Conservative Baptist and like-minded pastors in the Lower Hudson Valley.

Problem Presented

A coalescence of social phenomena took place in 2020, hereafter referred to as "phenomena," affecting the mental, physical, social, and professional lives of urbanites living in New York City.[13] The phenomena include but are not limited to COVID-19 isolation, mandatory distance learning for young students, televised racial and social unrest, political divisiveness, racial discrimination, ethnic violence, the emergence of the Black Lives Matter (BLM) Movement,[14] and mass rumination on police brutality induced by media coverage.[15]

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[13] Shalonda Kelly, Gihane Jérémie-Brink, Anthony L. Chambers, and Mia A. Smith-Bynum, "The Black Lives Matter Movement: A Call to Action for Couple and Family Therapists," *Family Process* 59, no. 4 (December 1, 2020): 1374–88, https://doi.org/10.1111/famp.12614.

[14] Keon West, Katy Greenland, and Colette van Laar, "Implicit Racism, Colour Blindness, and Narrow Definitions of Discrimination: Why Some White People Prefer 'All Lives Matter' to 'Black Lives Matter,'" *British Journal of Social Psychology* 60, no. 4 (October 1, 2021): 1136–53, https://doi.org/10.1111/bjso.12458.

[15] Alessia Offredi, Gabriele Caselli, Chiara Manfredi, Giovanni Maria Ruggiero, Sandra Sassaroli, Pamela Liuzzo, and Francesco Rovetto, "Effects of Anger Rumination on Different Scenarios of Anger: An Experimental Investigation," *The American Journal of Psychology* 129, no. 4 (2016): 382, https://doi.org/10.5406/amerjpsyc.129.4.0381.

The phenomena that occurred during the COVID-19 pandemic deeply affected a group that is referred to in this document as urban black people. This use of the phrase "urban black people" in this manner is specific to this thesis project and refers to people who identify as black Americans who resided and worked in lower- to middle-income sections of New York City during 2020.

The concept of worldview is generally individualized because it is partially based on personal experience. However, the events of 2020 created a distinct and identifiable common-core worldview (BWV20) among black people from urban communities. Black people encountered a common set of phenomena in 2020, leading to identifiable, homogeneous feelings of anger, disillusionment, and disenfranchisement—feelings known to cause mental trauma.[16] The social upheaval, economic uncertainty, and political divisiveness experienced in 2020 caused many urbanites to feel frightened and insecure[17]—emotions known to cause stress and mental trauma. The untreated effect of these traumatic phenomena poses the threat of serious mental health problems in the immediate future.

<div align="center">Trauma of 2020</div>

Trauma Exposure Response (trauma response), also known as secondary trauma or secondary traumatic stress disorder, is a condition caused by exposure to the first-hand trauma of others, resulting in the sense of hopelessness. Trauma response results in an attitude of hyper-vigilance, guilt, fear, anger, negativity, and cynicism. Phenomena-induced trauma response may

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[16] Beth Hinderliter and Steve Peraza, *More Than Our Pain: Affect and Emotion in the Era of Black Lives Matter* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2021), 19, http://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/liberty/detail.action?docID=6511346.

[17] Leslie Margolin, "Rogerian Psychotherapy and the Problem of Power: A Foucauldian Interpretation," *Journal of Humanistic Psychology* 60, no. 1 (January 1, 2020): 141, https://doi.org/10.1177/0022167816687640.

exist in some of the urbanites who are leaving the city and moving to rural areas such as the Hudson Valley. HVP and churches north of New York City may begin to encounter new black congregants suffering from diagnosed and undiagnosed trauma.

Research shows that trauma sufferers engaged by a culturally competent counselor are more likely to respond positively to treatment regardless of the counselor's race or gender. Cultural awareness and competence in responding to the needs and issues of the client is a powerful factor in client recovery.[18] Cultural Competence allows the counselor to gain regard, respect, and trust from clients.[19] Understanding the cultural influences that surround or contribute to the client's situation is therefore crucial for successful counseling outcomes.[20]

To counsel new black congregants, pastors must first accept that conservative Christian worldviews are not monolithic or universal; that the majority Christian worldview may occasionally require reassessment, reconsideration, and realignment considering world events; that a phenomenon-induced, pre-understanding-based worldview exists among black people; and that those differing worldviews held by committed, evangelical Christians are to be respected as worthy of understanding regardless of their efficacy or accuracy. Therefore, the problem in the Conservative Baptist Lower Hudson Valley Pastors Group (HVP) is that they lack the Cultural Competence to understand and counsel new black congregants traumatized by the phenomena of 2020 and exhibiting the BWV20.

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[18] Derek Griner and Timothy Smith, "Culturally Adapted Mental Health Intervention: A Meta-Analytic Review.," *Psychotherapy* 43, no. 4 (2006): 531–48.

[19] Derald Wing Sue and David Sue, "Counseling the Culturally Diverse: Sociopolitical Considerations of Trust and Mistrust," *Journal of Social Work Education* 39, no. 1 (2003): 63–91.

[20] Steven J. Ackerman and Mark J. Hilsenroth, "A Review of Therapist Characteristics and Techniques Positively Impacting the Therapeutic Alliance," *Clinical Psychology Review* 23, no. 1 (February 1, 2003): 1–33, https://doi.org/10.1016/S0272-7358(02)00146-0.

Purpose Statement

In response to the ministry problem and need, it was conceptualized that a condensed, focused, cultural-immersion program intervention related to generalized urban experiences should be developed. The program, designed to benefit HVP, would introduce the participants to community values, points of contention, and societal markers concerning urbanites in the wake of phenomena of 2020. The program would be developed to avoid the cultural, philosophical, and theological objections of the Conservative Baptist pastors' mindset. This program would acclimate participants to the common-core black world view and the unexpressed thoughts and emotions harbored by urbanites relocating to Hudson Valley churches and experiencing hidden trauma due to phenomena. The program would enable the participants to discover, address, and overcome cultural differences, social barriers, and misunderstandings that could hinder developing a successful counseling relationship with new black congregation members.

The RA designed and implemented an intervention to address the problem in the HVP. The intervention was intended to equip participants to understand and address the trauma-causing phenomena related to new black congregants. The action research provided nuanced analysis, background information, and prevailing academic understanding of the phenomena-caused issues that affect new black congregants. The various aspects of the phenomena and their detrimental effects were considered, assessed, analyzed, codified, and developed into a practical training tool for the participants. Therefore, the purpose of this DMIN action research project was to enhance the participants' felt sense of preparedness to minister to urbanites and to increase the participants' desire to develop Cultural Competence.

Basic Assumptions

It was assumed that the RA's delineation of community values, points of contention, and societal markers represents a black urban worldview resulting from phenomena and was sufficient for this action research project. It was further assumed that the participants would thoroughly examine the self-study materials with integrity. It was also assumed that the participants' recollections concerning their feelings, emotions, decisions, and levels of empathy vis-à-vis the events of 2020 were sufficient for examination and comparison during the project.

It was assumed that each participant is a born-again Christian and a true lover of God and people. The RA assumed that participants desire to serve God and others effectively and are consequently open to learning new ways to minister.

It was also assumed that each participant would react openly and honestly if confronted with areas in their ministry lives that can be improved. It was further assumed that the participants were capable of an honest self-appraisal level that would overcome any pride or stubbornness the participants harbor.

Definitions

Several terms were utilized within this study that must be properly defined.

Christian Worldview. The concept of a Christian or biblical worldview is discussed extensively by Tawa Anderson in the book *An Introduction to Christian Worldview.* [21] A Christian worldview primarily differs from the secular in that it introduces the infallible Word of God as the prism through which the individual's relationship to the world is finally defined. The

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[21] Tawa J. Anderson, W. Michael Clark, and David K. Naugle, *An Introduction to Christian Worldview: Pursuing God's Perspective in a Pluralistic World* (Westmont: InterVarsity Press, 2017), 98–224, http://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/liberty/detail.action?docID=5144358.

Bible is viewed as the foundation of reality and truth. A Christian worldview affirms, among other things, that the Bible is the Word of God; the Bible is accurate in all its teachings; moral truths exist, and the Bible is able to define them; Jesus Christ lived a sinless life; God the Father is the all-powerful and all-knowing Creator of the universe; all people need salvation by grace as a gift from God; and Satan and evil exist in the world.

Cultural Competence. This term is used to describe a range of cognitive, affective, and behavioral skills that lead to effective and appropriate communication with people of other cultures. An individual and the organization they represent can both be judged for Cultural Competence. Some criteria evaluated in judging Cultural Competence are the value placed on diversity, the capacity for cultural self-assessment, a consciousness of the dynamics inherent in intercultural interaction, the development of institutionalized culture knowledge, and a willingness to develop adaptations to service delivery reflecting an understanding of cultural diversity.[22]

Literal Hermeneutic. This term is used to refer to the grammatical-historical method of biblical exegesis. Those who utilize the literal hermeneutic address the Bible by seeking to understand the intended meaning of the biblical author and by applying what they consider to be the normal, natural meaning of the words within the context described in the scripture. It is a method of interpretation that uses grammar, syntax, and cultural setting in a manner that is consistent with the rest of scripture and in which "the Bible is best allowed to speak for itself."[23]

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[22] Barbara Bazron and Dennis Isaacs, *Towards A Culturally Competent System of Care*, Vol. 1 (Washington, DC: Child Development Center, CASSP Technical Assistance Center, Georgetown University, 1989).

[23] Rolland McCune, *A Systematic Theology of Biblical Christianity* (Allen Park: Detroit Baptist Theological Seminary, 2009), 1:61.

Phenomena. This term is used extensively in this document to denote the events that took place in 2020 that contributed to the common core, identifiable homogeneous feelings of anger, disillusionment, and disenfranchisement experienced by black people in urban environments[24] caused by the social upheaval, economic uncertainty, and political divisiveness experienced in 2020.

Postmodernism. This term refers to a position of a late 20th-century philosophy characterized by suspicion, subjectivism, and relativism. In postmodernism, concepts of truth, reason, and logic are mistrusted as tools utilized by the ruling majorities to subjugate the unempowered. Faith, reason, logic, fact, and truth are considered to be no more than conceptual constructs and, therefore, can only be considered valid within the intellectual traditions in which they are used.

Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). Post-traumatic stress disorder is a psychiatric disorder described by the Mayo Clinic as a mental health condition triggered by a terrifying event a person experiences or witnesses.[25] PTSD is a disorder that afflicts people who have suffered through natural disasters, physical accidents, acts of violence, terrorism, battle, life-threatening circumstances, threats of death, and sexual violence. Furthermore, PTSD can result from witnessing traumatic events being experienced by others, learning about traumatic events involving close family members or friends, and experiencing repeated exposure to details concerning trauma suffered by others.[26]

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[24] Sandra Weissinger, Dwayne Mack, and Elwood Watson, *Violence Against Black Bodies: An Intersectional Analysis of How Black Lives Continue to Matter* (New York: Routledge, 2017), 79.

[25] Mayo Clinic Staff, "Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)," Mayoclinic.org, accessed December 1, 2021, https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/post-traumatic-stress-disorder/symptoms-causes/syc-20355967.

[26] Felix Torres, "What Is Posttraumatic Stress Disorder?" Psychiatry.org, August 2020, https://www.psychiatry.org/patients-families/ptsd/what-is-ptsd. Torres talks of first responders, such as police

Spiritual Formation. The term Spiritual Formation is used to refer to the holistic process that fosters spiritual development through prayer, meditation, and participation in developmental practices (spiritual disciplines), which serve to form the practitioner's character into the likeness of Christ. This project specifically defines Spiritual Formation as the continual transformation of Christian lives through living in love with the Father and allowing Him to conform them to the true biblical image of His Son in order to manifest His presence in the world through the power of the Holy Spirit.[27]

Urbanites. The phenomena that occurred during the COVID-19 pandemic deeply affected the group referred to in this document as urbanites. This use of the term "urbanites" in this manner is specific to this thesis project and refers to people who identify as black Americans and resided or worked in lower- to middle-income sections of New York City during 2020.

Worldview. The term "worldview" is used to refer to the unique framework from which a person views reality and makes sense of life and the world. In his work *World View,* Michael Kearney considers a cultural worldview to be "a set of images and assumptions about the world" and includes components of self and other, relationship (between self and other humans and nonhumans), classification, causality, and space and time.[28] A worldview is an overarching mindset that symbiotically shapes and is shaped by the world. An individual's sociological, ideological, philosophical, theological, and interpersonal values and beliefs forge the relationship between the individual and the world they inhabit. We call this their worldview.

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officers, emergency service members, and others exposed to details of rape, murder, child abuse, and other such cases, who can also suffer from PTSD.

[27] Gershwin Francis Emmanuel Grant, *Evaluating the Impact of a Sixteen-Day Spiritually Formed Prayer Immersion Program on Members of a Conservative Baptist Church* (ProQuest Dissertations Publishing, 2014), 9, https://go.exlibris.link/W21mgQzk.

[28] Michael Kearney, *World View* (Novato: Chandler & Sharp, 1984), 68–98.

Limitations

The RA conducted an uninterrupted examination of the thesis project hypothesis and research questions. However, the possibility existed that factors would affect the DMIN action research project in ways that were beyond the control of the RA. While such disruptions did not occur, future researchers will have to consider such possible disruptions. The pool of participants was limited to the pastors associated with the HVP group ministering in the Hudson Valley and points north; therefore, the sample size and level of diversity were limited. It was not possible to extend the participant pool to optimize statistical viability. The modest goal of the project involves qualitative research, and quantitative viability was not attempted or assessed.

It was the contention of the RA that the ministry project's goal of serving the HVP proper was of paramount importance; therefore, the RA implemented the intervention when a majority of HVP agreed to participate.[29]

The immersion program required participants to study materials independently and report how they were affected by the program. The evaluation of the program's efficacy was subjective because it was based in part on the participants' emotional and intellectual reactions to the program materials. Reported results had the potential to be colored by pride, shame, self-deception, and lack of awareness since the project must address issues that have affected the participants in the past. Reconciling the existence of a different worldview can be difficult for members of a dominant culture to accept. The participants were exposed to viewpoints that conflicted in part with their view of reality, knowledge, ethics, history, values, and social order. While the participants were not expected to adopt or approve of these opposing worldview

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[29] Assistant and Associate Pastors were also invited to participate in the study.

issues, they still may have struggled to reconcile the existence of a worldview viewed as antagonistic toward their own.

Changes in thinking, understanding, and acceptance take place over time. The short duration of the project may not have revealed the totality of the difference in the participants' emotional and intellectual viewpoints that may occur over an extended period.

All participants were pastors in full-time ministry. Experience shows that professional responsibilities can hamper attendance at HVP meetings. Assuring that all participants attended the introductory and review sessions was beyond the RA's control.

The project involved the participants' self-investigation of their thoughts and emotions concerning black people. The participants were white, while the RA was black. It is possible that participants chose to conceal some of their more objectionable thoughts and feelings out of sensitivity to the ethnic identity of the RA.

Delimitations

Participation in the project was limited to ministers associated with the Hudson Valley Pastors group. Participants were required to have ministered in the Lower Hudson Valley during portions of the four years before the study to be eligible for participation in the intervention program. The fact that the project sought to introduce the worldview of black urban people to the participants required that said participants identify as other than black and urban.

Thesis Statement

The Lower Hudson Valley churches overseen by members of the HVP are monocultural, with a white Christian dominant culture. The HVP members are skilled and experienced in shepherding their existing congregations, with an average tenure of seventeen years. The pastors have never ministered in urban communities or pastored congregations with significant black

populations, but the current trends suggest that they will encounter urbanites within their congregations as low-income urban New Yorkers continue to leave the city.[30] The HVP have demonstrated that they are loving, sincere, dedicated ministers for God's kingdom. The HVP do not lack a desire to minister to all people, including black people; however, they lack experience, cultural awareness, and Cultural Competence.

<div align="center">Research Questions</div>

As communities throughout the state of New York continue to change and diversify, churches will need to adapt to new societal realities. To acclimatize the participant church leaders to the need for change, this modest intervention utilized an immersion project to address the following research questions:

RQ1. What effect, if any, will immersion in the community values, points of contention, and societal markers concerning the worldview of urbanites have on the participants' sense of appreciation and understanding of the black worldview?

RQ2. Will immersion in the common-core urban black worldview foster a need to develop greater Cultural Competence in the participants?

The RA believes the HVP will need to undergo a paradigm shift from a dominant-culture worldview to one that makes room for the worldview of others. The RA believes that learning the worldview of urbanites will allow the HVP to interact with new black church members on a more intimate level and counsel them more effectively. Addressing the urbanite worldview through an immersive process will enable the HVP to avoid inter-cultural missteps leading to a sense of alienation and anger for black congregants. The HVP will be able to provide socially

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[30] Shirley Chan, "Being Priced Out of New York: How Low Income City Residents Are Impacted—The Rising Cost of Living," July 25, 2019, https://pix11.com/news/.

informed pastoral counseling and build quality trust relationships with black congregants, allowing for a quality pastoral counseling environment to be developed. Therefore, the thesis of this action-based qualitative project was that if the participants complete the intervention, they will develop a greater felt-sense of Cultural Competence concerning black congregants with an urbanite worldview.

Chapter Summary

As the effects of COVID-19 continue to affect urban black people, the exodus from the city will continue. Churches with monocultural, other than black, leadership in areas of the Lower Hudson Valley will encounter black urban Christians looking for new church homes and pre-believers looking for their first church experience. Some migrating black people will carry the vestiges of phenomena-induced trauma into their new churches.

Many of the churches pastored by members of the Hudson Valley Pastors group are monocultural, if not mono-ethnic and mono-racial. While some pastors may have some experience interacting with people in their churches who come from different ethnic groups and racial backgrounds, they are still, for the most part, united by a common Christian culture and worldview. A process of Christian praxis-induced enculturation often allows the acculturation of people of different backgrounds and races to assimilate into the church culture of the dominant ethnic group. However, it can be anticipated that in the aftermath of the phenomena, white pastors will encounter black people in their congregations who bring a specific and different worldview into the assembly. The new black congregants will not quickly or naturally assimilate and conform to conservative Christian culture. They will need understanding and culturally competent pastoral counseling and will need to build a trusting relationship with their adopted white pastor.

CHAPTER 2: CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Literature Review

In preparation for this action research dissertation project, the research author (RA) investigated Cultural Competence, worldview, urbanite culture, and related fields. This investigation was extensive but not exhaustive. This literature review presents the books and papers that were most relevant to this project.

This project was intended to produce a thesis project which contributes to the body of knowledge in a unique, relevant, practical, and effective manner. Systematic observation of pertinent literature that has addressed salient aspects of the identified problem was necessary to develop the project. A review was undertaken to identify, study, and assess the extant works that related to the thesis subject and contribute to the existing academic discussion. A process was designed to surface relevant themes surrounding the thesis topic and determine gaps that may exist in the contemporary collection of sociological, psychological, and ministerial studies related to the thesis concept. The research and data collected were extensive and strategic, though not exhaustive, and utilized to develop, conduct, and evaluate an action research intervention project.

For this literature review, the RA used a matrix to organize and synthesize the prescient literature concerning themes significant to this action research project. First, the themes of worldview and Cultural Competence are examined. Then, the RA examines factors that created a

distinctive worldview among urban blacks, beginning with precursory events and culminating with the phenomena of 2020. Finally, possible intervention methodologies are examined.

Worldview

Contemplating what has come to be known as worldview is important when examining human interaction. Sire describes a worldview as a set of presuppositions that a person holds about the basic makeup of our world. These deeply held assumptions need not be conscious or consistent to be important or valid.[1]

The Development of a Worldview

The process of developing a worldview begins by asking about prime reality, the nature of external reality, and the condition of the world around us. A person's view on existence and their personal relationship to the world, the nature of mankind, humanity, personhood, and what happens to that person at death weigh heavily in the equation of a person's worldview. Convictions concerning the nature of knowledge, the value of history, and the existence and character of God help form a worldview.[2] It is evident that traumatic incidents that affect a person's response to these questions can severely affect their worldview.

Dilthey, one of the formative voices concerning worldview, believes that the role of worldview is to present the relationship between the human mind and what he calls "the riddle of the world and life." Indeed, he states that "the ultimate root of any worldview is life itself" and that each specific worldview is shaped by the character and temperament of the individual

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[1] James Sire, *Naming the Elephant: Worldview as a Concept* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2015), 18, http://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/liberty/detail.action?docID=3316470. Created from liberty on 2022-06-17 19:20:12.

[2] Ibid., 20.

themselves. However, in this individuality, Dilthey perceives a common structure to the psychological life of people within a given cultural setting.[3]

The Structure of a Worldview

Worldview is the nexus in which meaning and sense of the world are decided, ideals are formed, and governing principles for conduct are derived. Accordingly, a group with common characteristics, backgrounds, and cultures undergoing similar phenomena can be anticipated to develop similar core aspects of their worldview.[4] A fully developed worldview begins with cognizing what is actual, attributing a productive value to the objects, persons, and phenomena around us according to their potential to aid or harm us, and seeking an absolute standard of assessment. Thus, conditions, persons, and phenomena receive meaning in relation to the actual world as a whole, and this whole itself receives a sense. The world picture that is found becomes the basis for evaluating life and understanding the world.[5] A person's ability to intentionally assess their worldview and engage with that of others resides in the critical arena of CC.

Cultural Competence

Each person possesses a level of cultural/intercultural/multicultural competence (hereafter referred to as Cultural Competence) as it relates to understanding the people and situations with which they interact. Today, Cultural Competence is considered an essential part

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[3] Wilhelm Dilthey, *Philosophy of Existence: Introduction to Weltanschauungslehre* (New York: Bookman Associates, 1957), 21.

[4] Wilhelm Dilthey, *Wilhelm Dilthey: Selected Works* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2019). 258.

[5] Ibid.

of the ethical and professional standards of psychology[6] and other mental health professions.[7] Cultural Competence has been recognized as a critical part of professional counseling and, therefore, should be a part of the arsenal of pastoral counselors, but there presently is no accessible method for working pastors to practically develop this competency.

Soto states that cultural competencies are frequently operationalized in a tripartite model of awareness, knowledge, and skills. *Cultural awareness* speaks of a counselor's ability to recognize the dynamics of the cultural background of themselves and the people they counsel, including assumptions and biases that influence the process of counseling diverse people. *Cultural knowledge* refers to the understanding of specific cultural groups. It includes understanding the standards, norms, unique experiences, and beliefs, as well as how historical forms of oppression impact their ability to trust the counseling process. *Cultural skills* refer to the counselors' ability to engage diverse people actively and modify counseling assessment and intervention methods according to the paradigm affecting cultural specifics of different people groups.[8]

La Roche holds that counselors should regularly assess the racial and ethnic backgrounds of those who need counseling, including salient aspects of their worldview and race-related experiences, in order to align the counseling treatment with clients' cultural backgrounds. La Roche calls for counselors to understand whether their clients embrace a collectivistic view in

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[6] Lorraine T. Benuto, Jonathan Singer, Rory T. Newlands, and Jena B. Casas, "Training Culturally Competent Psychologists: Where Are We and Where Do We Need to Go?" *American Psychological Association, Training and Education in Professional Psychology* 13, no. 1 (2019): 56–63, http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/tep0000214.

[7] *ACA Code of Ethics as Approved by the ACA Governing Council* (American Counseling Association, 2014), https://www.counseling.org/docs/default-source/ethics/2014-code-of-ethics.pdf?sfvrsn=2d58522c_4.

[8] Alberto Soto, Timothy B. Smith, Derek Griner, Melanie Domenech Rodríguez, and Guillermo Bernal, "Cultural Adaptations and Therapist Multicultural Competence: Two Meta-Analytic Reviews," *Journal of Clinical Psychology* 74, no. 11 (2018): 1907–23, https://doi.org/10.1002/jclp.22679.

which they experience themselves as part of others with permeable boundaries or if they view themselves as individualistic in isolation from others and with firm self-boundaries and self-orientation.[9] It is evident that collectivistic, socially experienced phenomena such as the coalescence of concerns of 2020 may have important clinical implications in counseling people with permeable boundaries. A permeable barrier exists between the internal and external experiences of phenomena for many who experience existence within collectivistic social groups or structures.[10] Pastors who are unaware of these distinctions may fail to recognize the presence of relationships within congregants' experience of life that are a "fundamental and core aspect of their self."[11] Pastors need to discern the meaning "of these self-orientations because conceptualizations of internal and external experiences may vary among some cultural groups."[12]

When La Roche's concepts are considered, the importance of pastors understanding the collectivistic experience of phenomena by urbanites becomes evident. Curricula for Christian counselors which delineate the worldview of different people groups would aid in developing greater CC. Such curricula would allow counselors to develop intervention methodologies that resonate with congregants' cultural identities, worldviews, and peculiarities. It is unfortunate that such curricula do not currently exist. Evangelical Christianity has yet to embrace the concept of Cultural Competence for church ministry. Christian efforts to examine Cultural Competence

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[9] Martin La Roche and Kara Lustig, "Being Mindful About the Assessment of Culture: A Cultural Analysis of Culturally Adapted Acceptance-Based Behavior Therapy Approaches," *Special Series: Clinical Considerations in Using Acceptance and Mindfulness-Based Treatments with Diverse Populations* 20, no. 1 (February 1, 2013): 62, https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cbpra.2012.04.002.

[10] Ibid., 61.

[11] Ibid.

[12] Ibid.

have remained the domain of missionaries as the unspoken belief in a common "Christian culture" continues to obscure the need for Cultural Competence within the domestic Church.

According to Hammer, intercultural competence is "the ability to think and act in inter-culturally appropriate ways."[13] Bennett posited a practical framework for conceptualizing dimensions of intercultural competence in the Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity, utilizing a progression of orientations that a person assumes toward cultural difference.[14] Li notes that as people become more interculturally competent, they move from ethnocentric to ethno-relative orientations. This change enables them to have more sophisticated intercultural experiences.[15] While these concepts apply to people from all walks of life, in this examination, they are applied to ministers in counseling situations.

A counselor with low Cultural Competence begins with three initial ethnocentric orientations. Li describes these orientations as *Denial, Defense, and Minimization*. As the counselor grows in Cultural Competence, they progress through the ethno-relative orientations of *Acceptance, Adaptation, and Integration*, where their own culture is experienced in the context of other cultures. Li suggests that these six orientations form the predictable developmental stages toward Intercultural Competence.[16]

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[13] Mitchell Hammer, Milton Bennett, and Richard Wiseman, "Measuring Intercultural Sensitivity: The Intercultural Development Inventory," *International Journal of Intercultural Relations* 27, no. 4 (2003): 422, https://doi.org/10.1016/S0147-1767(03)00032-4.

[14] Milton Bennett, "A Developmental Approach to Training for Intercultural Sensitivity," *International Journal of Intercultural Relations* 10 (December 31, 1986): 179–96, https://doi.org/10.1016/0147-1767(86)90005-2.

[15] Ming Li, "An Examination of Two Major Constructs of Cross-Cultural Competence: Cultural Intelligence and Intercultural Competence," *Personality and Individual Differences* 164 (2020): 2, https://doi.org/10.1016/j.paid.2020.110105.

[16] Ibid.

A counselor in the *denial stage* views their own culture as the only real; does not truly experience cultural differences through their worldview; and only explores other cultures superficially. If something causes the counselor to recognize the larger perspective of the world, they may progress to the *defensive stage*, where their own culture is still experienced as the only viable one, and other cultures are often viewed as a threat to it. This stage manifests in the counselor's standards, goals, and assessments. The counselor may subconsciously be waiting for the client to conform to a cultural norm that is foreign to the client's ethnocultural behavior. The counselor's worldview is insufficiently developed to experience other cultures as equal.

In the *minimization stage*, the counselor is less defensive concerning cultural differences but views them as subordinate to the overwhelming value of the similarities of a person's biological nature, needs, and motivations. Minimization still ethnocentrically considers one's cultural paradigm as central to the assumed universal reality. This stage serves as a transitional phase from the ethnocentric to the ethno-relative stage, where issues of cultural self-awareness and the ability to experience culture as a context can be resolved.[17]

In an ethno-relative worldview, one's culture is experienced in the context of other cultures, which begins with the *acceptance stage* where the counselor now accepts that their worldview is one of several equally existent cultures. By accepting cultural differences, the counselor can construct cultural-general categories that allow them to compare many cultures in an informative, useful manner. At this transition to the *adaptation stage,* the counselor can experience a different culture in a manner that allows the development of culturally appropriate behaviors. The development of empathy in the comprehension of other cultures allows the

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[17] Milton Bennett, "Becoming Interculturally Competent," in *Toward Multiculturalism: A Reader in Multicultural Education*, ed. Jaime S. Wurzel (Intercultural Resource Corporation, 2004), 62–77.

counselor to shift their frame of reference concerning understanding the cultures around them, allowing them to achieve the *integration stage,* in which the counselor's experience of self is expanded, allowing them to interact effectively with different cultural worldviews.[18]

Pastors, like all humans, have a natural inclination to construct mental representations of expected relations. The mind creates relationships between the people, places, events, and objects we experience. Each experiential moment involves an attempt of our mind to make meaning of what is around us.[19] People construct their personal worldviews to make and maintain meaning and resolve disequilibrium.[20] This has been expressed as a search for meaning,[21] as the development of schema to create memories,[22] and as the process of equilibration through developing schemata.[23] The various ways of discussing this phenomenon are attempts to describe a unique and valued human proclivity for making meaning.

Urbanites joining monocultural churches bring a worldview formed by phenomenological experiences, including those of 2020. Pastoral staffs will need to develop cultural competencies to minister to such new congregants. The development of culturally relevant curricula examining other worldviews will aid in the growth and development of the required cultural competencies.

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[18] Bennett, "A Developmental Approach to Training for Intercultural Sensitivity."

[19] Austin C. Archer, "'I Don't See It That Way Anymore': A Qualitative Study of Significant Changes of Mind, *The Qualitative Report* 26, no. 4 (2021): 1076–83.

[20] T. Proulx and S. Heine, "Death and Black Diamonds: Meaning, Mortality, and the Meaning Maintenance Model," *Psychological Inquiry* 17 (2006): 309–18.

[21] Viktor Frankl, *Man's Search for Meaning*, 2nd ed. (Boston: Beacon Press, 1985).

[22] F.C. Bartlett, *Remembering: A Study in Experimental and Social Psychology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1932).

[23] Jean Piaget, "The Stages of the Intellectual Development of the Child," *Bulletin of the Menninger Clinic* 26 (1962): 120–28.

The Significance of Cultural and Cross-Cultural Competence

Lower Economic Exodus from New York City

Lower-income New Yorkers have been leaving the city over the last decade. In the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic, the exodus has increased.[24] While some deny the validity of this migratory pattern, such sources tend to have a vested interest in stemming the concerns surrounding the real estate market in New York City.[25] Further examination shows that while wealthy people are taking advantage of depressed real estate prices and relocating to New York City, poorer black people are being priced out of the city and moving to more rural parts of New York State and the southern states.[26]

Along with the expiration of protective measures to allow lower-income residents to maintain their domiciles[27] during the ravages of COVID-19 and the ensuing shutdowns and isolations, the New York City panel that regulates the rents for more than one million rent-stabilized apartments recently approved the highest rent increases in almost a decade. The rate hike will see rents on one-year leases rise by 3.25 percent in rent-stabilized homes and by 5 percent on two-year leases.[28] This rise in the cost of living will exacerbate the difficulty lower-income urban New Yorkers were already experiencing in trying to maintain their city residences

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[24] Chris Sommerfeldt and Dave Goldiner, "Black Population in NYC Down 4.5% Over the Last Decade, Census Results Show—Brooklyn Sees Sharp Decline," *New York Daily News*, August 13, 2021, https://www.nydailynews.com/news/politics/new-york-elections-government/ny-census-results-new-york-city-black-new-yorkers-20210813-kqew232yyreddferawlcjvdnni-story.html.

[25] Hillary Hoffower, "The Urban Exodus Out of New York City and San Francisco Is More Myth Than Reality," *Financial News, Business Insider,* May 1, 2021, https://www.businessinsider.com/new-york-city-san-francisco-urban-exodus-migration-myth-bofa-2021-4.

[26] Sommerfeldt and Goldiner.

[27] "New York Courts," Governmental, nycourts.gov, January 20, 2022, https://nycourts.gov/eposba/.

[28] Mihir Zaveri, "Rents Will Rise by at Least 3.25 Percent for 2 Million New Yorkers," *The New York Times*, June 22, 2022, sec. A.

and continue the exodus of black urban people from the city. Pastors in the South and those overseeing Conservative Baptist churches in upstate New York can expect to encounter transplanted black congregants in their churches, bringing with them the traumatic experiences of 2020 and the common-core worldview developed in New York's urban communities.

The trauma-causing scars from the phenomena that came to a zenith in 2020 may lead to a mental health crisis in the coming years. A dialogue that will develop a forward-thinking approach to head off and treat future trauma would be advantageous. This thesis project was intended to be a part of the developing dialogue because it acquaints pastors with the salient detail of the formation and nature of the common-core worldview developed because of the phenomena of 2020.

Changing Congregations

Churches in upstate New York and around the country are already seeing people of different races join the congregation. The number of churches that identify as multi-racial has been growing for the past twenty years in the United States. A recently completed survey found that the share of churches defined as "multi-racial" (with at least one out of five members from a minority background) grew from six percent in 1998 to sixteen percent in 2019. The black membership in those churches increased from sixteen percent to twenty-one percent.[29]

Achieving truly balanced multi-racial congregations would require effort if they are to be realized. Certain ethnocentric preferences can make it challenging to balance the "felt ownership" of the church, and one culture may continue to be forced to enculturate towards the

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[29] Michael Emerson, Kevin D. Dougherty, and Mark Chavez, "Racial Diversity in U.S. Congregations, 1998–2019," *Journal of the Scientific Study of Religion* 59, no. 4 (October 16, 2020): 651–62, https://doi-org. ezproxy.liberty.edu/10.1111/jssr.12681.

other's preferences. It will take intentional effort from church leadership and a willingness to reimagine priorities (types of music [including use of the downbeat], length and nature of sermons, etc.) to make multiple ethnic groups feel welcome.[30]

New Pastoral Competencies Required

As churches continue to diversify, pastors will be called upon to develop intercultural communication skills. Pastors are skilled in recognizing behavioral patterns but do not exist in a vacuum separate from thought and emotion.[31] Pastors will need to develop new competencies that Bennett calls the intercultural mindset and skillset, with mindset referring to awareness of how one operates within their cultural context. Pastors will need to develop conscious, considered knowledge and understanding of their worldview[32] and cultural self-awareness. Skillset refers to pastors needing to surface new methodologies for creating sound cultural contrasts (e.g., communication styles, cultural values) and a clear method for using cultural generalizations without stereotyping or distortion.[33]

Development of the Common-Core Black Worldview Prior to 2020

Several elements coalesced to form the black worldview of 2020 (BWV20). The year 2020 was a phenomenological, event-rich environment of upheaval, but the roots of the problems can be seen in the devolving relationship between urbanites and law enforcement and health care providers.

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[30] Emerson.

[31] Milton Bennett and Janet Bennett, *Developing Intercultural Sensitivity: An Integrative Approach to Global and Domestic Diversity* (3rd ed.) (Thousand Oaks: Sage, 2004), 149.

[32] Ibid., 150.

[33] Ibid., 149.

Relationship Between the Black Community and the Police

The relationship between the police and urbanites has been deteriorating for decades to a tense and combative relationship. Urban music and entertainment often vilify the police with lyrics that address them with expletives and celebrate their demise.[34] A seismic divide has developed between the police force and the urban communities they patrol.

Single-officer patrol cars

Some trace the problem back to the implementation of single-officer patrol cars in 1991. Budget restrictions forced NYPD Commissioner Lee Brown to enact this new patrol policy, but it was widely decried by the NYC police officers, who stated that the new system would be unsafe for police officers.[35] Officers would prefer having a partner when confronting urbanites, especially in the evening and night.[36] A lone officer relying on physical deterrence and maintaining an air of detached readiness becomes an intimidating figure who cannot engage socially with community members.

Police community residency

The decline of residency requirements for officers has damaged the relationship between law enforcement and urbanites. In the 1970s in New York, police officers were expected to live in the neighborhood they patrolled, know the area intimately, and have a personal stake in the

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[34] For more on this subject, investigate the music of artists like Dr. Dre, Snoop Dog, and N.W.A.

[35] George James, "Police to Put Lone Officers In Patrol Cars," *The New York Times*, September 19, 1991, sec. B, 1, https://www.nytimes.com/1991/09/19/nyregion/police-to-put-lone-officers-in-patrol-cars.html.

[36] Alejandro del Carmen and Lori Guevara, "Police Officers on Two-Officer Units: A Study of Attitudinal Responses Towards a Patrol Experiment," *Policing* 26, no. 1 (2003): 150, https://doi.org/10.1108/136395103 10460332.

community. The residency guidelines have been ignored and violated over time, contributing to

the hostility between black people and the police in view of many urbanites.[37]

Officer-involved deaths of urban black people

Offredi pinpoints the acquittal of George Zimmerman in the shooting death of Trayvon

Martin in 2012 as a pivotal moment when distrust of law enforcement and the legal and political

systems by urbanites crystallized.[38] As time passed, additional events such as the nationally

recognized deaths of Michael Brown in Missouri and Eric Garner in New York at the hands of

police officers in 2014 caused the Black Lives Matter (BLM) Movement[39] to rise to prominence

in the national consciousness in a polarizing manner.

Seeds of Racial Trauma

The decade leading to 2020 was a confusing and challenging time when "racial

vilification; racial profiling; institutional racism; discrimination; racial ambivalence; denial of

racism; and racist beliefs, behaviors, and attitudes" from white co-workers, friends, and

neighbors were damaging to the mental health of black people.[40]

Many black people experienced a loss of trust, respect, desire, and a felt need for law

enforcement and governmental institutions. The weight of social injustice, race-based violence,

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[37] Grace Hauck and Mark Nichols, "Should Police Officers Be Required to Live in the Cities They Patrol? There's No Evidence It Matters," *USA Today*, June 13, 2020, https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/nation/2020/06/13/police-residency-data/5327640002/.

[38] Offredi, 37.

[39] For more on BLM, see Kelly et al., "The Black Lives Matter Movement: A Call to Action for Couple and Family Therapists."

[40] Carrie Hemmings and Amanda M. Evans, "Identifying and Treating Race-Based Trauma in Counseling," *Journal of Multicultural Counseling and Development* 46 (January 3, 2018): 24, https://doi-org.ezproxy.liberty.edu/10.1002/jmcd.12090.

police brutality, bias, perceived danger, and racism took their toll, resulting in racially based trauma in black people (racial trauma).[41] According to the Southern Poverty Law Center, there has been a thirty percent increase in the number of hate groups in the United States since 2018—with a seven percent increase in 2018 alone.[42]

The seeds of racism took root and grew in urban communities, taking a toll on the psyche of black people with the potential to yield devastating, traumatic results in the future if not adequately ameliorated by culturally competent practitioners. Urbanites would benefit significantly from a well-equipped, dependable healthcare system in which they could put their trust.

Healthcare Issues

Racial disparity in healthcare

Urbanites who experienced physical, mental, and psychological trauma from the phenomena of 2020 could benefit from physical, spiritual, and psychological intervention. Urbanites are inclined to seek spiritual encouragement in the church,[43] yet many have a general distrust of the healthcare system that pre-dates 2020.[44]

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[41] Weissinger, Mack, and Watson, 81.

[42] Kelly Macias, "In 2018, the Number of Hate Groups in America Reached a 20-Year High—Thanks to Trump," *Daily Kos*, February 21, 2019, https://www.dailykos.com/stories/2019/2/21/1836592/-In-2018-the-number-of-hate-groups-in-America-reached-a-twenty-year-high-thanks-to-Trump?detail=emailLL.

[43] Susan Markens, Sarah A. Fox, Bonnie Taub, and Mary Lou Gilbert, "Role of Black Churches in Health Promotion Programs: Lessons from the Los Angeles Mammography Promotion in Churches Program," *American Journal of Public Health* 92, no. 5 (May 2002): 805–10, https://doi.org/10.2105/ajph.92.5.805.

[44] Jennifer Alvidrez, Lonnie Snowden, and Dawn Kaiser, "The Experience of Stigma among Black Mental Health Consumers," *Journal of Health Care for the Poor and Underserved* 19, no. 3 (2008): 874, https://doi.org/doi:10.1353/hpu.0.0058.

Roberts contends that structural racism is present in healthcare research. Black people are underrepresented as researchers, manuscript reviewers, and editorial boards.[45] Black researchers are significantly less likely to receive National Institute of Health funding than their white counterparts after controlling for individual excellence factors.[46] These truths discourage spiritual leaders from expending trust capital to support the healthcare system with their congregants.

Mental healthcare

There are clear disparities along racial lines in the utilization of mental health care, even after adjusting for the structural barriers of insurance coverage, availability of services, and diagnostic, referral, and treatment assignment practices. The urbanite tendency to stigmatize those who seek mental health treatment further contributed to the underutilization of mental healthcare services by urbanites.[47]

The existing body of mental health professionals may be ill-equipped to gather the necessary research data in urban communities to develop successful interventions. Healthcare professionals will need to bridge the trust gap with the black community if they are to implement an intervention for the traumas of 2020 successfully.

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[45] Stephen Roberts, Kara Weisman, Jonathan Lane, Nicholas Camp, Kiara Sanchez, and Camilla Griffiths, "God as a White Man: A Psychological Barrier to Conceptualizing Black People and Women as Leadership Worthy (Supplemental)," *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 119, no. 6 (2020): 1290–1315, https://doi.org/doi:10.1037/pspi0000233.

[46] James Sherley, "Race Disparity in Grants: Oversight at Home," *Science* 334, no. 6085 (2011): 993, https://doi.org/doi:10.1126/science.334.6058.901.

[47] Alvidrez, Snowden, and Kaiser, 874.

Without developing a trusting relationship with healthcare professionals, black people will likely continue to underutilize the services of these mental healthcare providers.[48] Intervention methodologies implemented by urbanite clerical leaders (trusted figures in urban communities) may be necessary to help communities begin to heal, and suburban pastors will need to develop the competencies and methodologies to intervene successfully in the lives of new black congregants.

The RA contends that pastoral counselors can be more effective in reaching and helping urbanites overcome trauma than their secular counterparts. Existing pastoral counseling literature fails to examine the sociocultural issues and psychological phenomena experienced by urbanites. A distillation of sociocultural phenomena, theological foundations, and practical counseling methodological strategies is required.

Research by Gilbert indicates that the discrimination, harassment, racism, and race-based trauma being experienced are a danger to the psychological well-being of black people. If left unchecked, it may result in generationally damaging psychological outcomes.[49] Racial trauma and other trauma in black people will need to be addressed, but by whom?

Hemmings performed a study of 106 counseling professionals (counselors) who identified themselves as having worked with clients displaying symptoms associated with race-based trauma. They acknowledged the existence of racial trauma and confirmed that the symptoms were present in their counseling sessions. The study revealed that most counselors had

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[48] Lisa Cosgrove and Farahdeba Herrawi, "Beware of Equating Increased Access to Mental Health Services with Health Equity: The Need for Clinical and Epistemic Humility in Psychology," *The Humanistic Psychologist* 49, no. 2 (2021): 3, https://psycnet.apa.org/record/2021-33982-001.

[49] Keon L. Gilbert and Rashawn Ray, "Why Police Kill Black Males with Impunity: Applying Public Health Critical Race Praxis (PHCRP) to Address the Determinants of Policing Behaviors and 'Justifiable' Homicides in the USA," *Journal of Urban Health: Bulletin of the New York Academy of Medicine* 93, no. Suppl 1 (April 2016): 132, https://doi.org/10.1007/s11524-015-0005-x

no training in identifying or treating the racial trauma.[50] Secular counselors will be

disadvantaged in treating black people with post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) because they

lack training, familiarity, and trust with black people.

Pastoral-based counseling may be better positioned to intervene in the lives of new black

congregants with trauma caused by the phenomena of 2020. Pastoral counselors will need to be

proactive if they wish to provide competent care to black congregants. Race-conscious

counseling curricula need to be developed and added to the existing knowledge pool to aid

counselors in developing the competencies necessary for the task ahead. Cooper contends that

since counseling and psychotherapy are embedded in a social context, it is essential for

counselors to understand fully the psychological distress experienced by their clients to promote

healing.[51] According to Cooper's standards, the pastoral counselor will need to place the social

context of black people—in other words, their worldview—at the heart of the counseling

process.[52]

Phenomena of 2020: Crystalizing the Common-Core Black Worldview

The issues of racism, distrust, inequality, and discontent laid the groundwork that allowed

the phenomena of 2020 to create the common-core black worldview that concerns this action

research project.

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[50] Hemmings and Evans, 4.

[51] Mick Cooper, "Directionality: Unifying Psychological and Social Understandings of Well-Being and Distress Through an Existential Ontology," *Journal of Humanistic Psychology* 60 (April 1, 2021): 22, https://doi-org.ezproxy.liberty.edu/10.1002/johc.12148

[52] Ibid., 22.

Lockdown of 2020

The year 2020 produced a coalescence of phenomena that profoundly affected black people in urban communities. Racial and social unrest, political divisiveness, racial discrimination, and ethnic violence created tension within black communities. The emergence of the Black Lives Matter (BLM) Movement and the rumination on police brutality against black people in urban communities induced by mass media coverage contributed to the phenomena.[53]

The year 2020 was also marred by the worldwide pandemic of the Coronavirus disease (COVID-19),[54] a virulent, infectious disease caused by the SARS-CoV-2 virus that spread through America and the world.[55] The virus and the ensuing isolation/shutdown served as an incubator where many social, fiscal, ethical, and emotional issues developed and grew.[56] The shutdown of public entertainment systems, the collapse of social interaction, and separation from friends and family created a deleterious degree of isolationism for urbanites.[57]

During the lockdown, families were thrown together for extended periods, often resulting in interpersonal conflicts. The low socioeconomic status of black people in urban environments provides little buffer against the negative impact of upheaval where coping strategies used during

[53] Offredi, 382.

[54] Dr. Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, "WHO Director-General's Remarks at the Media Briefing on 2019-Ncov on 11 February 2020," https://www.who.int/director-general/speeches/detail/who-director-general-s-remarks-at-the-media-briefing-on-2019-ncov-on-11-february-2020

[55] Catrin Sohrabi, Zaid Alsafi, Niamh O'Neill, Mehdi Khan, Ahmed Kerwan, Ahmed Al-Jabir, Christos Iosifidis, and Riaz Agha, "World Health Organization Declares Global Emergency: A Review of the 2019 Novel Coronavirus (Covid-19)," *International Journal of Surgery* 76 (April 1, 2020): 71–76, https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijsu.2020.02.034

[56] For more on this subject see: Daniel Sullivan, Daniel Fox, Robert Stoll, and Raymond Jacobs, "Social Media, Confusion, and Small Business During the Covid 19 Crisis," *The Journal of Applied Business and Economics* 23, no. 3 (2021): 13–32, http://ezproxy.liberty.edu/login?qurl=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.proquest.com%2Fscholarly-journals%2Fsocial-media-confusion-small-business-during%2Fdocview%2F2553861569%2Fse-2%3Faccountid%3D12085.

[57] Offredi, 388.

the lockdown, such as receiving help from family, friends, and social services, had drained

people's resources and reserves. Many could not find additional support, creating a sense of

vulnerability. Negative thinking patterns developed into maladaptive behaviors that were

reinforced through emotions of fear and anger.[58]

The isolation protocols shut down all forms of entertainment and diversion, and families

were forced to interact in an intense, pressure-inducing new reality.[59] Conversely, extended

families were separated and less able to support each other in practical ways. Many families

suffered the loss of loved ones that could not be mourned or shared in person. Many

grandchildren were born in quarantine whose grandparents would not live to hold them. Black

people living in New York City experienced combinations of forced togetherness, institutional

separation, and heartbreaking loss in 2020. Isolation was fertile soil in which introspective

examination could devolve into rumination on the events of 2020, resulting in fear and trauma.[60]

Pastors and counselors must recognize the type of psychological distress experienced by black

people and understand their social context to provide efficacious counsel effectively.[61]

The stressors experienced by urbanites were heightened by the disparity in the quality of

living conditions.[62] The combination of poor social policies, inadequate social programs, unfair

economic arrangements, and poor political leadership allowed the lockdown to affect black

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[58] Gilbert and Ray, 132.

[59] Sullivan et al.

[60] Cato Laurencin, "The COVID-19 Pandemic: A Call to Action to Identify and Address Racial and Ethnic Disparities," *Journal of Racial and Ethnic Health Disparities* 7, no. 3 (2020): 400.

[61] Cooper, 22.

[62] Maritza Vasquez Reyes, "The Disproportional Impact of COVID-19 on African Americans," *Health and Human Rights* 22, no. 2 (December 2020): 299–307, https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/33390715.

people in urban communities disproportionally[63] and exacerbate structural and social factors in

American society that adversely affect urbanites.[64] Urban blacks are continuously exposed to the

various chronic stressors of racial discrimination. Low socioeconomic status and "prolonged

lifetime traumas contribute to underlying psychological traumas and stress manifesting as mental

health disorders, including depression (major depressive disorder) and anxiety disorders."[65, 66]

There are clear indications of emotional distress caused by the current worldview of

many in black communities. A climate of racial, financial, social, and political upheaval has

developed and changed the manner of public discourse. Issues such as COVID-19 immunization,

police force defunding, immigration, sexual identification, and political affiliation have devolved

into anger-driven, mass media-publicized shouting matches with blacks and whites sharing

culpability.[67]

Hemmings speaks directly to the subject of this project when he writes, "Racial

vilification; racial profiling; institutional racism; discrimination; racial ambivalence; denial of

racism; and racist beliefs, behaviors, and attitudes" from white co-workers, friends, and

neighbors are damaging to the mental health of black people in the form of race-based trauma.[68]

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[63] Vasquez Reyes, 299–307.

[64] Nia Josiah, Shaquita Starks, Patty R. Wilson, Tamar Rodney, Joyell Arscott, Yvonne Commodore-Mensah, Ruth-Alma Turkson-Ocran, et al., "The Intersection of Depression, Anxiety, and Cardiovascular Disease Among Black Populations Amid the Covid-19 Pandemic," *Journal of Clinical Nursing* 30, no. 9–10 (2021): 36, https://doi.org/10.1111/jocn.15632.

[65] Josiah et al., 36–40.

[66] For more on this subject, see D. M. Novachek, J. N. Hampton-Anderson, T. B. Loeb, and G. C. Wyatt, "Mental Health Ramifications of the Covid-19 Pandemic for Black Americans: Clinical and Research Recommendations," *Psychological Trauma: Theory, Research, Practice, and Policy* 12, no. 5 (2020): 449–51.

[67] Dale June, *Fear, Society, and the Police* (New York: Taylor & Francis Group, 2019), 4, https://doi-org.ezproxy.liberty.edu/10.4324/9780429283451.

[68] Hemmings and Evans, 24.

Race-based trauma can metastasize into PTSD as black people experience overt acts of racism and microaggressions that reflect the tainted attitudes and beliefs of co-workers, friends, and neighbors. Levels of ambivalence, contempt, and fear are seen in the microaggressions experienced in cultural, individual, and institutional environments.[69]

COVID-19 Vaccine Hesitancy

The BWV20 deepened the mistrust of the healthcare system held by many urbanites,[70] making them less willing to embrace pro-health behaviors like the SARS-CoV-2 vaccine for the COVID-19 virus.[71] Bogart shows that this mistrust extends to the healthcare system itself, where urbanites often receive inferior healthcare services. Even those most vulnerable to the virus underutilize the vaccine because of a distrust of the medical system caused by systemic racism,[72] resulting in disproportionately negative impacts of COVID-19 among urban black people.[73]

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[69] Hemmings and Evans, 21.

[70] Mohammad S. Razai, Umar A R Chaudhry, Katja Doerholt, Linda Bauld, and Azeem Majeed, "Covid-19 Vaccination Hesitancy," *BMJ: British Medical Journal (Online)* 373 (May 20, 2021): 1–4, https://doi.org/10.1136/bmj.n1138.

[71] Valerie Earnshaw, "COVID-19 Conspiracy Beliefs, Health Behaviors, and Policy Support.," *Translational Behavioral Medicine* 10, no. 4 (2020): 2.

[72] Laura M. Bogart, Bisola O. Ojikutu, Keshav Tyagi, David J. Klein, Matt G. Mutchler, Lu Dong, Sean J. Lawrence, Damone Thomas, and Sarah Kellman, "COVID-19 Related Medical Mistrust, Health Impacts, and Potential Vaccine Hesitancy Among Black Americans Living with HIV," *Journal of Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndromes (1999)* 86, no. 2 (2021 2020): 200, https://doi.org/10.1097/QAI.0000000000002570.

[73] Ibid., 200.

Disproportionate Effect of COVID-19 on Black People

COVID-19 threatened the efficacy of the healthcare system, and many lives were lost due to overwhelmed facilities and personnel. COVID-19 adversely affected all races, yet it took a particular toll on American blacks' health, mental well-being, and worldview.

Black people are 2.8 times more likely to die from COVID-19 than white people,[74] due in part to the disparities in the healthcare system and a disinclination to use it. Edsall reminds us there are well-documented historical examples of systemic racially hostile practices concerning insurance and medical coverage that add to the tension experienced by urbanites and distrust of the healthcare system.[75]

Not all studies display more significant levels of depression and trauma on the part of black people due to the COVID-19 pandemic. One study by Owens determined that the "odds of Black Americans having depression and anxiety [were] lower on average throughout the pandemic than that of non-Black Americans."[76] The study concluded that "no significant differences in mental health outcomes among non-Black racial and ethnic groups (e.g., Whites, Asians, Hispanics, and Others)."[77] The findings were adjusted for sociodemographic variables and baseline pre-pandemic Center for Epidemiological Studies—Depression score. In the opinion of the RA, the results of this study require further scrutiny.

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[74] Josiah, 49–51.

[75] Thomas Edsall and Mary Edsall, *Chain Reaction: The Impact of Race, Rights, and Taxes on American Politics* (New York: Norton, 1991).

[76] Victoria Owens and Htay-Wah Saw, "Black Americans Demonstrate Comparatively Low Levels of Depression and Anxiety During the Covid-19 Pandemic," *PLOS ONE* 16, no. 6 (June 25, 2021): 6, https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0253654.

[77] Ibid., 7.

The Owens report acknowledged that black Americans faced a disproportionate level of certain types of mental health stressors when compared to other racial and ethnic groups during the pandemic. The study further noted that the physical health of black Americans is significantly worse than non-black Americans.[78] In the opinion of the RA, these admissions were not given sufficient consideration in the findings. Both empirical and theoretical logic suggests that the various additional stressors black Americans face and the verifiable physical health maladies they endure must add significantly to the probability of mental distress. In the RA's opinion, the study results should have been reexamined in light of this apparent fallacy of logic.

It is suggested here that the study erred in that it did not differentiate between categories of black Americans. The response to phenomena exhibited by those who identify as Caribbean, European, and African blacks is often different from those who identify as American blacks. American blacks' racial struggles and history of slavery add an extra dimension to the mental stress, fatigue, and trauma they accrue. Only those who identify as American black living in urban communities were considered in this project. It is also likely that the black peoples' diminished trust and respect for the healthcare system, the mental healthcare system, scientific research, government authorities, and COVID-19 prevention measures have led to underreporting of physical and mental health issues. Emergency room statistics confirm the disproportionate effect of COVID-19 on the health of black people.[79]

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[78] Owens and Saw, 7.

[79] Vasquez Reyes.

Race-Based Trauma

In 2020, urbanites were confronted by unremitting images of police violence against unarmed black people. Toxic reminders of their vulnerability and ongoing images of social protest and rioting have a strong potential to cause trauma in the form of PTSD[80] through rumination which negatively affects the entire person.[81] A detrimental group dynamic is created when race-based trauma is being experienced first- or second-hand by urbanites in the community, resulting in a synergistically detrimental effect.

The resulting mental damage can be anticipated to take the form of PTSD[82] and trauma exposure-response (trauma response), including unique, specific trauma to urbanites of 2020. Trauma response, also known as second-hand trauma or secondary traumatic stress disorder, is caused by exposure to the first-hand trauma of others, resulting in the sense of hopelessness. People suffering from trauma response display an attitude of hyper-vigilance, guilt, fear, anger, negativity, and cynicism[83]—the hallmarks of which can be seen in the lives of many urbanites following the events of 2020.

The Black Lives Matter Movement

The Black Lives Matter (BLM) movement began in 2013 in response to the defendant's acquittal in the Trayvon Martin case. An organization called Black Lives Matter Global Network Foundation, Inc. was established as a global organization in the United States, England, and

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[80] Weissinger, Mack, and Watson, 79.

[81] Ibid., 79.

[82] Ibid.

[83] Jocelyn R. Smith Lee and Michael A. Robinson, "'That's My Number One Fear in Life. It's the Police': Examining Young Black Men's Exposures to Trauma and Loss Resulting from Police Violence and Police Killings," *Journal of Black Psychology* 45, no. 3 (April 1, 2019): 172, https://doi.org/10.1177/0095798419865152.

Canada, with the stated mission to eradicate the disproportionate power of white people over black people. Furthermore, BLM signaled its intention to build local power in communities to intervene in violence inflicted on black communities.[84]

Pastoral opinion within Conservative Baptist circles was decidedly divided along racial lines as BLM, and those with similar sentiments slowly arose in the consciousness. However, when video evidence of the death of George Floyd at the hands of police in Minneapolis became public, and BLM gained recognition as a worldwide movement, the situation began to change. As a result of the tragic and undeniable evidence of police malfeasance, Conservative Baptist pastoral opinion began to acknowledge the suffering being experienced by urbanites.[85]

BLM began spearheading demonstrations worldwide to protest police brutality and systematic racism.[86] These events pushed the issues of racial injustice to the forefront of black consciousness while creating a bunker mentality that contributed to the trauma experienced by proxy and felt by black people.

Luttrell explains that a perceived lack of empathy by white counterparts was an additional source of anger and frustration for urban black people.[87] The rallying cry "Black Lives Matter" was first countered by white people, including Christian pastors, saying, "All Lives Matter," and then by those with pro-police sentiments saying, "Blue Lives Matter." Many

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[84] "Black Lives Matter," Political, Black Lives Matter, accessed June 15, 2022, https://blacklivesmatter.com/about/.

[85] Adam MacInnis, "No White Saviors: How Suburban Minneapolis Churches Learned to Help," *Christianity Today*, May 24, 2021, https://www.christianitytoday.com/news/2021/may/minneapolis-white-churches-race-partnerships-george-floyd.html.

[86] West, Greenland, and van Laar, 1139.

[87] Johanna Luttrell, *White People and Black Lives Matter: Ignorance, Empathy, and Justice* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2019), 62.

defenders of the police department resorted to villainizing the unarmed victims of police shootings.[88] The intentional expansion and diversification of the conversation to include all lives and blue lives was received by many black people as a dilution of the issue. Removing the nation's focus from the plight of black people was viewed as a dismissal of their outrage and pain concerning the overt violence that was playing out on national television and a failure to acknowledge, understand, and respect the black worldview.

<div align="center">Common-Core Black Worldview Resulting from 2020</div>

Behavioral Changes

Many white people were exposed to a different side of their black friends, co-workers, neighbors, and associates in 2020. There was a sense of political activism and a degree of militance growing among black people that was disquieting for many white people, resulting in strained relationships in the workplace and community.[89]

<div align="center">Proposed Intervention: Pastoral Counseling Mitigation</div>

Pre-Understanding (Gadamerian)

Pastors represent important social figures within local communities. While each pastor makes their own decision concerning their level of activism,[90] pastors do represent a visible bastion of communication scholarship within a community. Hiraku would contend that as

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[88] Weissinger, Mack, and Watson, 78.

[89] Luttrell, 92.

[90] Hiraku Abe, "The Intersection of Faith and Civil Rights: Galloway Memorial Methodist Church and Racial Integration in Jackson, Mississippi in the Early 1960s," *Journal of American and Canadian Studies* 39 (2021).

communication scholars, the pastor's voice should be used to influence social justice positively within the society and embrace social justice and activism, addressing issues of justice in practical ways.[91]

Pastors must understand that the phenomena of 2020 have created pre-understandings in new black congregants. Recognizing and understanding these pre-understandings is key to the effective engagement of urbanites.

The pre-understandings of the black worldview (BWV20) have developed a common-core expectation that demands understanding of social concerns and a level of perceived activism from social leaders and cultural communicators. Urbanite Christians with BWV20 expect their pastors to examine how injustices are produced and sustained in community life. It is anticipated that pastors will take an activist orientation in the community to transform social structures for marginalized groups who "consistently become victims of various forms of violence and injustices."[92]

For Roy, this call for social justice must go beyond theorizing and research and become fully engaged in advocating for issues that are critically important for our humanity based on Hans-Georg Gadamer's concept of *praxis*.[93] *Praxis* involves understanding and action that are dedicated to the well-being of others. The individual of understanding does not stand aloof and judge unaffected. The individual thinks alongside the other person from the perspective of a specific bond of belonging, as if he was equally affected.[94]

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[91] Abe.

[92] Abhik Roy and Oludaja Bayo, "Hans-Georg Gadamer's Praxis: Implications for Connection and Action in Communication Studies," *Communication, Culture, and Critique.* 2, no. 3 (2009): 260.

[93] Ibid., 256.

[94] Ibid., 261.

Through the years, Gadamerian hermeneutics has influenced everything from philosophy to legal studies as well as sociology, history, cultural studies, and religion. Communication scholars in many fields have appropriated Gadamer's ideas in interpersonal communication and intercultural communication, and his concept of *praxis* is proposed as a model for moral-practical disciplines.[95]

The concept of Gadamerian *praxis* is helpful in seeking to understand the effect of phenomena on people within a culture since it emphasizes the need for understanding and caring for others. Gadamer called for sympathetic understanding on the part of the individual when engaging another's experience of reality.

Gadamer speaks of three kinds of dialogical encounters. He begins with the I-Thou relationship in which an individual tries to discover something typical in the other person's behavior, objectifying the other with whom they are interacting. In the second type of I-Thou relationship, the other person is regarded as a unique being but is still encountered in the form of self-relatedness that lacks reciprocity and openness. The final form of the I-Thou relationship is built on communicative understanding of the other person. Gadamer considers this to be the highest form of interpersonal and hermeneutic experience.[96]

The individual seeking dialogical communication must be prepared: for their assumptions and biases to confronted and put at risk; to be open to the truth claim of others; to be truly accepting of another's point of view as valid; and to be willing to transpose themselves into the other person to truly understand their view in full context.[97]

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[95] Roy and Bayo, 260.

[96] Ibid., 261.

[97] Ibid., 262.

Gadamer's viewpoints show the necessity of seeking to understand the worldview through which others experience the world around them. The pre-understandings developed due to the phenomena of 2020 which created a common-core worldview, BWV20, that affected the urbanites who experienced them. To counsel, mentor, or disciple a congregant, listening to their perspective respectfully and honestly is necessary. Genuine regard for the worldview of others held by a pastor with a growing Cultural Competence offers the opportunity for the minister to develop the competencies required to counsel, mentor, and disciple people of diverse cultures and backgrounds. A level of understanding concerning the person's social concerns, if not direct advocacy, will allow communicative understanding and mutual examination of worldviews to occur.

Importance of Cultural Competence in HV Pastors

Churches are slowly beginning to reflect the rapidly changing communities in which they exist. The dictates of globalism, multiculturalism, and post-modernism are breaking down social barriers and diminishing the tribal, ethnocentric divisions that have kept churches segregated, despite the heartfelt desire for unity engendered by most Bible-believing pastors. There is a growing need to improve the cross-cultural development of individual pastors, pastoral staff, and ministerial students to prepare for the nuances and challenges of the post-modern, multicultural age they now inhabit.[98]

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[98] Brent MacNab, Richard Brislin, and Reginald Worthley, "Experiential Cultural Intelligence Development: Context and Individual Attributes," *The International Journal of Human Resource Management* 23, no. 7 (April 1, 2012): 1320–41, https://doi.org/10.1080/09585192.2011.581636.

Missionaries have long studied to understand the cultures they will encounter during their ministry work. Now, as communities across America routinely approximate the most complex foreign ministry field, the context of missionary work has moved to the home front,[99] requiring Cultural Intelligence and Cultural Competence.

Cultural Intelligence is the term coined to describe the developmental skills and traits that allow for more effective interaction with other cultural settings.[100] Developing an effective level of Cultural Intelligence is called Cultural Competence. By intentionally working to increase self-awareness, cultural knowledge, and sociocultural and ministerial behaviors, pastors can prepare to represent the message of God to an expanding breadth of people.

Cultural Competence affords the opportunity to engage divergent people with proper regard for the unique cultural contexts from which they come. Developing greater Cultural Intelligence promises to enable pastors to better minister across and within cultures through the intentional, ongoing development of competence.[101]

Developing Cultural Competence Intentionally

The RA posited that intentional development of intelligence, competence, and efficacy can contribute to a pastor's ability to minister to the growing multicultural society in which they live. While some growth can be anticipated through normal exposure to other cultures, this may be inadequate to prevent social missteps and faux pas. Intentional development of competence

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[99] MacNab et al., 1332.

[100] Ibid., 1132

[101] David C. Thomas and Kerr Inkson, *Cultural Intelligence: Surviving and Thriving in the Global Village* (Oakland: Berrett-Koehler, 2017), http://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/liberty/detail.action?docID=4694074.

may provide pastors with a greater sense of confidence, incentive, and purpose for establishing

intercultural relationships that will facilitate greater discipleship and counseling. Intentional

development of intelligence and competence will allow the pastoral vocation to remain relevant

and responsive to the changing needs of a culture in flux.[102]

<p style="text-align:center">Exercising Cultural Competence</p>

Many pastors unknowingly engage in the central elements of Cultural Intelligence as they

use the methods of interpersonal intelligence[103] and social/emotional intelligence in their

ministry lives.[104] The competencies of self-awareness and "other-awareness" are part of the

pastoral responsibility. A pastor's self-awareness easily translates to other awareness in a

socially monolithic community.

Unfortunately, self-awareness may do little to enable a pastor to minister across racial,

social, and cultural lines. Cultural Intelligence must be developed to make intercultural

communication effective. Intelligence is built on the importance of self- and other-awareness but

must be augmented to enable the pastor to function skillfully in a cultural context different from

their own.[105] Learning to understand, appreciate, anticipate, respect, and value the worldview of

others will help the culturally intelligent pastor minister to congregants with differing values,

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[102] Kok-Yee Ng, Linn Van Dyne, and Soon Ang, "From Experience to Experiential Learning: Cultural Intelligence as a Learning Capability for Global Leader Development," *Academy of Management Learning and Education* 8, no. 4 (2009): 511–26, http://www.jstor.org.ezproxy.liberty.edu/stable/27759189.

[103] Howard Gardner, *Frames of Mind: The Theory of Multiple Intelligences* (New York: Basic Books, 1983).

[104] Peter Vincent Livesey, "Goleman-Boyatzis Model of Emotional Intelligence for Dealing with Problems in Project Management," *Construction Economics and Building* 17, no. 1 (2017): 20–45, https://doi.org/10.5130/AJCEB.v17i1.5101.

[105] Ng, Van Dyne, and Ang.

beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors. Well-managed, informed, skillful interaction with congregants of differing viewpoints and worldviews allows the pastor to avoid alienating behaviors and enables the pastor to anticipate the congregants' reactions in order to act and react in appropriate, efficacious ways.[106]

Culturally intelligent pastors can use their knowledge to understand multiple aspects of cultural phenomena that come their way. The culturally competent pastor will utilize cognitive strategies to observe and interpret the behavior of congregants. This pastor will develop a repertoire of skills which they can then adapt and use to demonstrate appropriate behaviors across a wide range of situations.[107] The ability to adapt and actively adjust behavior appropriately is key to effective ministry in today's post-modern society. It represents the developed ability to go beyond "what" is happening and discover "why" it is happening[108] by encountering the sociocultural causes of differing worldviews and engaging them respectfully and effectively.[109]

The culturally intelligent pastor can move beyond assumptions and stereotypes by actively seeking enculturation, which simultaneously moves the pastor away from ethnocentrism

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[106] Ilan Alon and James M. Higgins, "Global Leadership Success through Emotional and Cultural Intelligences," *Business Horizons* 48, no. 6 (November 1, 2005): 501–12, https://doi.org/10.1016/j.bushor.2005.04.003.

[107] Kirk Thompson, "Cognitive and Analytical Psychology," *The San Francisco Jung Institute Library Journal* 5, no. 4 (1985): 22, https://doi.org/10.1525/jung.1.1985.5.4.40.

[108] Vande Berg, Connor-Linton Jeffrey, and R Paige Michael, "The Georgetown Consortium Project: Interventions for Student Learning Abroad," *Frontiers: The Interdisciplinary Journal of Study Abroad* 18, no. 1–75 (n.d.): 22.

[109] Elizabeth A. Tuleja, "Developing Cultural Intelligence for Global Leadership Through Mindfulness," *Journal of Teaching in International Business* 25, no. 1 (January 2, 2014): 5–24, https://doi.org/10.1080/08975930.2014.881275.

and towards cultural "sense-making." The metacognitive process of sense-making involves reframing and changing one's manner of approaching an interaction rather than restricting oneself to rigid, practiced manners of interaction.[110] It is about changing perspective and creating new ways of looking at the people and communities surrounding the ministry.

Benefits of Cultural Competence

Cultural Intelligence can lead to growth in leadership self-efficacy, ethno-relative attitudes, and understanding. Intelligence leads to the development of a growing sociocultural knowledge base and results in positive socioculturally sensitive ministerial behavioral changes. It is apparent that increased leadership self-efficacy[111] and the capacity to lead effectively in culturally diverse settings[112] enhance a pastor's ability to minister in a rapidly changing cultural landscape.

In developing an improved ethno-relative attitude, a pastor learns to understand and accept that beliefs, traditions, and behaviors vary across cultures, diminishing the influence of ethnocentric attitudes that subconsciously gravitate towards the propagation of the singular monolithic, dominant culture within a congregation.[113] Ethno-relative understanding does not mean acceptance or endorsement of other sociocultural mores, just a greater awareness of their existence.

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[110] Allen Bird and Joyce Osland, "Making Sense of Intercultural Collaboration," *International Studies of Management & Organization* 35, no. 4 (n.d.): 115–32.

[111] Albert Bandura, *Social Foundations of Thought and Action: A Social Cognitive Theory,* (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1986).

[112] Ng, Van Dyne, and Ang, 581.

[113] Milton Bennett, "A Developmental Approach to Training for Intercultural Sensitivity."

It is the position of the RA that post-modern America-based ministers need to expand their knowledge of the phenomena, schema, stimuli, issues, influences, and concerns of other cultural perspectives that exist in their communities. Cultural sense-making and enculturating a situation require sufficient knowledge concerning another person's worldview to recognize the ramifications of chosen responses. Ethno-relative growth allows the pastor to encounter, navigate, and address socially relevant phenomena successfully and in a culturally sensitive manner. Growth in a pastor's knowledge base develops a more accurate understanding of different, generalizable cultural patterns of behavior, ways of thinking, and expression of emotions.[114] Knowledge base growth allows a pastor to engage the cultural phenomena from a well-rounded position. Unbiased pre-understanding earns the congregants' trust and encourages relational understanding.

Growth in positive socioculturally sensitive ministerial behaviors will allow the pastor to gain traction in the lives of those who feel alienated, invisible, and underappreciated. The greater the sociocultural diversity of a pastor's arsenal of doctrinally grounded ministerial responses, the greater the opportunity for well-timed, well-aimed, well-grounded, well-received interventions in congregants' lives that maintain doctrinal integrity and pastoral credibility.[115]

Figure 1 presents a diagram of the aspects that form intercultural competence within an individual.

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[114] Ng, Van Dyne, and Ang.

[115] Ibid., 519.

Proxemics

Language Skills

Literacy

Conversation

Haptics

Respect

Tendencies

Curiosity

Openness

Philosophy

Interaction

Mindset

INTERCULTURAL

COMPETENCE

Abilities

Culture

Listening

Analysis

Observation

Intuition

Critical Thinking

Beliefs

Values

Mindset

Self-Awareness

Sense of Identity
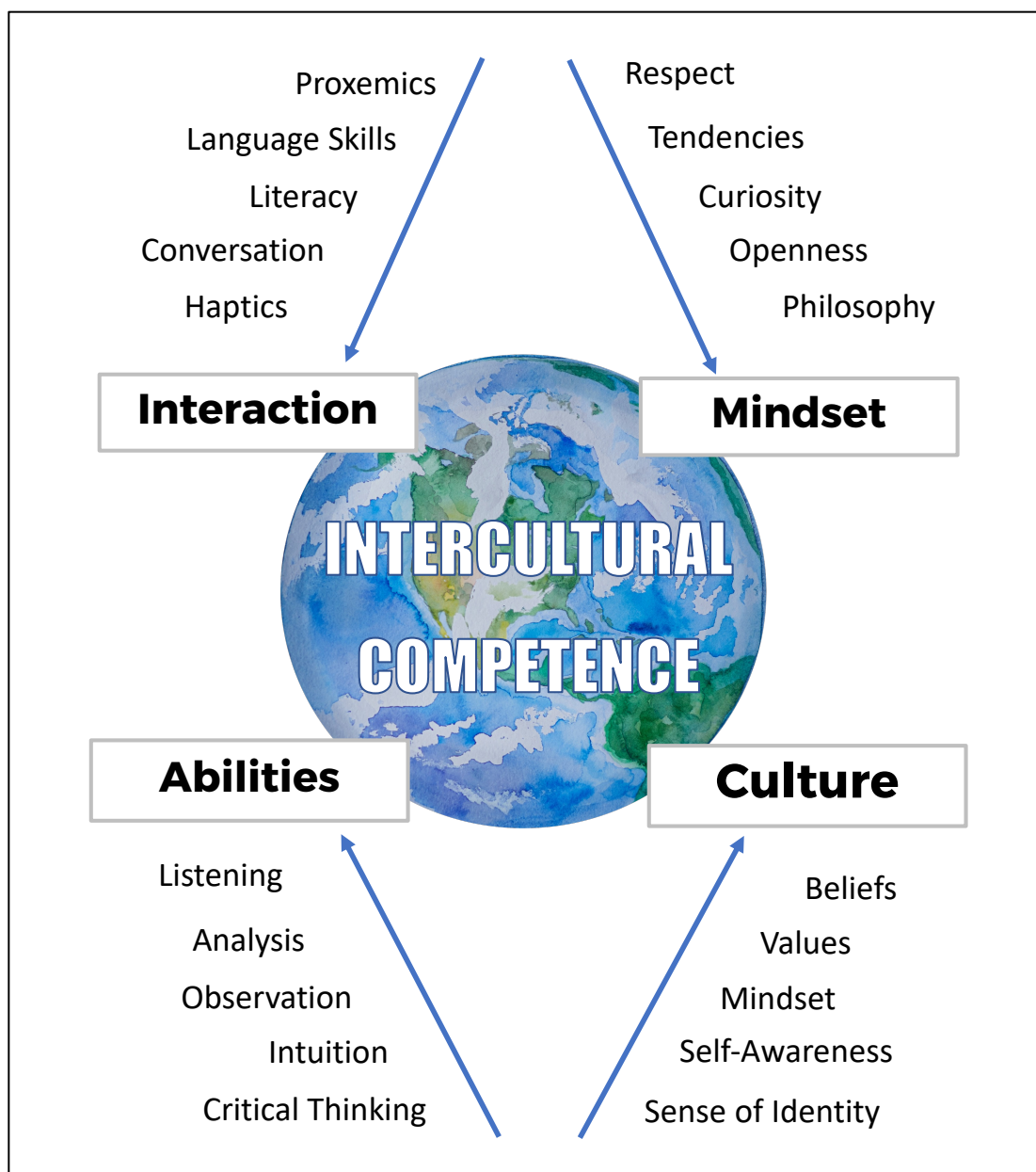
Figure 1. Intercultural Competence Illustration © Gershwin Grant, 2022

Utilizing Cultural Intelligence

Tuleja speaks of three steps by which we utilize cultural intelligence when confronted by stimuli and phenomenologically novel situations. This process may be useful for pastors as they prayerfully prepare to encounter a congregant. The process involves what Tuleja terms framing, making attributions, and selecting a script.

The first step, framing, involves the expectations, pre-understandings, and assumptions brought to the phenomenological situation. The pastor immediately begins to assess the situation by determining what they believe is taking place; what the circumstances dictate; and what can be observed, inferred, assessed, and tentatively concluded.[116] The pastor will seek further clarification as the encounter develops, but this initial assessment forms the "framework" for the pastor's cognitive assessment of the phenomena.

Once the framework is established, the pastor begins to make attributions through analysis of the presenting information compared to the schema, or mental patterns, that the pastor forms. These schemas are cognitive frameworks that help the pastor to interpret unfamiliar information and experiences. This process can be corrupted by the pastor's pre-understanding, sociocultural biases, and ethno-centricities.[117] It is the natural tendency to make attributions that are affected by one's personal background and experiences. While the evaluation concerning the quality and nature of these phenomena should be influenced by doctrine, theology, and the pursuit of holiness, the pastor's personal attitudes and cultural preferences should be taken into account and mitigated.

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[116] Tuleja.

[117] Piaget, "The Stages of the Intellectual Development of the Child."

The third step is described as "selecting a script" and based on the framing and the mental patterns (schema). The script becomes the guidepost that allows the pastor to navigate the unfamiliar territory. The script will often be influenced by the pastor's previous experiences, allowing the minister to draw similarities or differences between what he knows and what he does not know.

The pastor can prayerfully frame the situation by setting up loosely held expectations. This action provides a baseline against which the pastor can use previously acquired cultural knowledge and experiences to analyze the situation and create a script for how to proceed. In conjunction with the guidance of the Holy Spirit, this process enables the pastor to choose appropriate behaviors based on a growing arsenal of knowledge and experiences suitable for the specific intercultural situation. Thomas states, "Retaining this knowledge also requires the ability to transfer knowledge gained from a specific experience to broader principles that can be used in future interactions in other settings."[118] Developing a nuanced primer of culturally relevant information from diverse social backgrounds presents a valuable tool to enable pastors to begin a journey of discovery and ethno-relative change resulting in enhanced cultural intelligence and competence.

Laurencin contends that racial bias, injustice, and inequity are part of people's social context, like the racial trauma-affected urbanite client, whether the racial trauma is real or imagined. New competencies will need to be developed by counselors to address the complexities involving trauma to new black congregants. New training materials capable of addressing these complexities will need to be developed in light of the events of 2020.

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[118] Thomas and Inkson, 29.

Teaching Methodology

Ministers seeking to grow in cultural intelligence and cultural competence concerning urbanites may find it necessary to examine the teaching methodologies in which they were trained. Not all learning theories will lend themselves to counseling and discipling urbanites holding the BWV20 successfully. An examination of learning methodologies and their suitability for reaching urbanites in a culturally competent manner is provided in Appendix F.

Limited-Term Counseling

An intervention that may serve traumatized urbanites must be developed. Urban black peoples often have a low to moderate socioeconomic status and may be limited in the time and resources available to spend on counseling. A practical approach to counseling may need to include a limited timeframe and an affordable, practical cost profile that will enable low-income blacks to engage in the therapeutic process while properly managing family, finances, and time. In recent years, a growing number of limited-duration psychological treatments for trauma has been scientifically proven to result in clinically significant improvements.[119]

Motivated, equipped pastors can provide effective, affordable, Christological trauma counseling to new black congregants seeking a new church home in the suburbs of the Lower Hudson Valley. The traumatized black congregants' respect for their chosen pastor will allow for the development of a trust relationship. New black congregants may trust their chosen pastor more readily than a secular professional counselor, allowing the Hudson Valley Pastors (HVP) to succeed where professional counselors may not.

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[119] "How Long Will It Take for Treatment to Work?" American Psychological Association, July 2017, https://www.apa.org/ptsd-guideline/patients-and-families/length-treatment.

One specific therapy intervention would utilize the cognitive-behavioral therapy of Rational Emotive Behavior Therapy[120] paired with the humanistic psychological therapy of person-centered therapy.[121] This psychosocial integrative therapeutic methodology (ITM) intervention can be modified specifically for pastoral counseling. The intervention would encourage the client to analyze and reconsider cognitive distortions in their ways of thinking. The client would be able to uncover specific behaviors that may harm their growth and well-being. The ITM will help the client find greater emotional control over the emotions they feel and actualize. The ITM will focus less on the unconscious reason behind the emotions that need regulation than on the behavioral outcomes that can be changed. This intervention accepts post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) as the reason behind and proximate cause of the phenomena and seeks to uncover ways for the client to develop new, positive behaviors and reactions to phenomena. The client will be encouraged to develop new habits that decrease their stress, establish new behaviors that build them up emotionally, and live their best life.

Psychological Significance

The years 2020 and 2021 were filled with activating events that could contribute to negative feelings for urbanite people. Pastoral counseling must identify the events, rationally address them, and possibly change the client's beliefs and subsequent emotional response. Personalizing and internalizing the events that befall others of the same race or economic

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[120] Debbie Joffe Ellis and Montse Rovira, "Rational Emotive Behavioural Therapy: The Evolution of a Revolution," *Europe's Journal of Psychology* 11, no. 1 (February 2015): 7–15, https://doi.org/10.5964/ejop.v11i1.911.

[121] Carl R. Rogers, "A Theory of Therapy, Personality and Interpersonal Relationships as Developed in the Client-Centered Framework," in *Formulations of the Person and the Social Context*, vol. 3, *Psychology: A Study of a Science,* 184–286 (New York, NY: McGraw-Hill, 1959), ProQuest Ebook Central.

background can create overwhelming pressure on an individual.[122] Holding unyielding beliefs

makes it challenging to respond to activating phenomena in a psychologically healthy way.[123]

The socially perpetuated, ongoing discussion of phenomena within the urbanite communities has

led to psychologically harmful rumination[124] and interpersonal anxiety transfer, causing trauma

exposure response.[125] While rumination is usually considered to be self-attentiveness motivated

by threats, losses, or injustices to the self, it appears that rumination by transferal is taking place

in the urbanite culture.

Szasz found that irrational beliefs can predict more significant psychological distress,[126]

including object-directed social appraisal, empathic worry, and anxiety contagion. Feelings of

oppression can spread to another person who then feels the same or similar emotions. Through

mimicry (matching expression) or mirror representations in the brain (mirror neurons) of what

one sees or hears, the urbanites can catch the observed emotion through repeated viewings of

television images. Once caught, the co-opted transfer of emotions can influence the urban black

people's appraisal of their environment and affect their well-being and behavior.[127]

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[122] Kelly.

[123] Ellis and Rovira.

[124] Murat Artiran, Omer Faruk Şimşek, and Martin Turner, "Mediational Role of Rumination and Reflection on Irrational Beliefs and Distress," *Behavioural and Cognitive Psychotherapy* 47, no. 6 (November 2019): 659–71, https://doi.org/10.1017/S1352465819000031.

[125] Sonja Weilenmann, Ulrich Schnyder, Brian Parkinson, Claudio Corda, Roland von Känel, and Monique C. Pfaltz., "Emotion Transfer, Emotion Regulation, and Empathy-Related Processes in Physician-Patient Interactions and Their Association With Physician Well-Being: A Theoretical Model," *Frontiers in Psychiatry* 9 (2018): 3, https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyt.2018.00389.

[126] Paul L. Szasa, "The Role of Irrational Beliefs, Brooding and Reflective Pondering in Predicting Distress," *Journal of Cognitive and Behavioral Psychotherapies* 11 (2011): 43–55, ProQuest.

[127] Weilenmann et al.

Conclusion of Literature Review

A crafted integrated counseling method instituted by a qualified, motivated, empathetic pastor who exhibits Cultural Intelligence and Cultural Competence will enable the urbanites to nuance their worldview, filter their emotions and behaviors, and find healing. Pastors will need to be motivated and equipped to counsel traumatized urbanites who join their congregations.

While research is taking place and racially conscious examinations of the significant issues surrounding BWV20 have begun, these phenomena have yet to be examined from and evangelical standpoint or codified into a Christocentric-oriented curriculum.

Pastors will need to be equipped, motivated, and encouraged to expand their worldview to help traumatized urban black people. While beyond the modest scope of this project, a successful intervention can significantly aid pastors in future ministry if developed in a trust relationship with a researcher who has credibility within the urbanite community and a level of scholarship pastors will respect. However, before any methodological intervention can be utilized, pastors will need to learn to recognize, appreciate, and value the worldview of others.

Theological Foundations

The Christian Church in the United States exists in a divided state. Denominational, theological, soteriological, pneumatological, linguistic, ecclesiological, and liturgical differences all serve to separate congregations into different, identifiable groups. An additional factor in the differentiation of people groups within congregations is race. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. once said on *Meet the Press*, "I think it is one of the tragedies of our nation, one of the shameful tragedies, that eleven o'clock on Sunday morning is one of the most segregated hours, if not the most segregated hours, in Christian America."[128]

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[128] "Meet the Press" (New York: NBC, April 17, 1960), National Broadcasting Company News Archives.

A Unified Church

The question of church integration demands consideration. Is racial integration a requirement, a preference, or an option that each congregation can responsibly accept or reject? Dr. King saw integration as a requirement for all churches. He deemed any assembly that opposed integration in favor of a segregated body as "standing against the spirit and the teachings of Jesus Christ."[129] Dr. King strongly condemned the deliberate propagation of racially divided church communities, and Scripture concurs. The biblical model suggests that the Church should be a united, multiracial, multi-ethnic body that manifests the diversity and creativity of the Triune God it represents. God the Father loves all His creation, and the Son of Man, Jesus Christ, died to offer salvation to all of them. The Church was never intended to exist in the separatist, racially divided state in which it exists today.

While some believe Daniel 7:14 is referring to a mere mortal,[130] most theologians believe Daniel is speaking prophetically of the Son of Man who would be incarnated as Jesus the Christ, saying not only that He would receive dominion and glory and a kingdom, but that all peoples, nations, and languages should serve Him. The Son of Man will establish an everlasting dominion or kingdom (cf. Dan. 4:34; 7:27). That kingdom will never be conquered by another (cf. Dan. 6:26). His reign will be established on earth (Rev. 20:1-6).[131] At the expiration of the 1,000 years of the Lord's millennial reign, He will surrender the kingdom to God the Father (1 Cor. 15:24-28).[132]

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[129] "Meet the Press."

[130] John Nolland, *Word Biblical Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1989).

[131] Frederic Louis Godet, *Commentary on First Corinthians* (Grand Rapids: Kregel Publications, 1977), 785-87.

[132] W. Robertson Nicoll, ed., *The Expositor's Greek Testament (Vol. 2)* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1990), 927.

God's Universal Love

God always cared about people who existed outside His chosen vessel of the Hebrew people.[133] The Old Testament scriptures recognized that Gentiles would seek after the Lord. There would be foreigners to the Kingdom of Israel who would choose to join themselves to the Lord. They would desire to minister to Him, love the name of the Lord, and be His servants (Isa. 56:6).[134]

The prophecy continues by saying that these foreign people will be willing to keep the Sabbath and hold fast to God's covenant, causing Him to bring them to His holy mountain and make them joyful in His house of prayer; their burnt offerings and their sacrifices God will accept on His altar, and God's house shall be "called a house of prayer for all peoples. The Lord God, who gathers the outcasts of Israel, declares, 'I will gather yet others to him besides those already gathered'" (Isa. 56:6-8). God makes it clear that He is not describing two separate, segregated places of worship but a single house where all people worship the living God.

The mystery of the Church that Gentiles were always destined to be fellow heirs to God's Kingdom with Israel is crucial to understanding the Church's ministry. All people and all races were intended to be members of the same body and equal partakers of the promise of salvation and kingdom inheritance in Christ Jesus through believing in the one gospel message propagated by the Apostle Paul and all those who followed him (Eph. 3:6).[135]

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[133] David H. Stern, *Jewish New Testament Commentary* (Clarksville: Jewish New Testament Publications, 1992).

[134] John L. McKenzie, *The Anchor Bible: Second Isaiah* (Garden City: Doubleday & Company, 1968), 151.

[135] Kenneth S. Wuest, *Wuest's Word Studies from the Greek New Testament*, vol. 3 (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing, 1973), 97.

The mystery is the sacred secret hidden in ages past but revealed through the Apostle Paul's ministry. The mystery is not that Gentiles would be saved, for the Old Testament gave evidence of that, but rather that believing Jews and Gentiles were to be joined together in every way.

We serve a God who loved all the people of the world so much that He gave His only Son to die on the cross to take away the power of sin. God's love allows whoever believes in Christ not only to avoid perishing but to be reinstated to the pre-fall condition of being created to receive and enjoy eternal life (John 3:16).[136]

Christ Died for All

It is essential to recognize the truth of the plenary salvific sacrifice Christ made[137] for all people who would receive Him because confusion could otherwise result from the fact that the early ministry of Jesus was explicitly focused on the reformation of the people and nation of Israel (Matt. 15:24). Jesus did not claim to have come to bring salvation to the rest of the Gentile world. A distinct focus on the welfare of Israel can be seen and heard in His actions, teachings, and prophecies. Even the sober warnings of judgment and punishment Jesus issued during His ministry were focused on the nation of Israel (Mark 11:12-14, 20-25; Matt. 21:18-22).

Jesus spoke to the Apostle Peter and said, "You are Peter, and upon this rock, I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it" (Matt. 16:18). Christ's words spoke of the ministry that would take place after His death, burial, resurrection, and ascension. During His own ministry life, Jesus focused on the Jewish temple ministry (Mark 11:15-19; Matt. 21:12-

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[136] Marvin R. Vincent, *Vincent's Word Studies of the New Testament: The Writings of John (Vol. II)* (Peabody: Hendrickson Publishers, 1985), 99.

[137] Donald Guthrie, *New Testament Theology* (Downers Grove: Inter-Varsity Press, 1981), 263.

17; Luke 19:45-48, John 2:13-16). Christ's prophetic denunciations further showed that His focus was primarily on Israel throughout His ministry (Matt. 24; Mark 13; Luke 13:6-9; Luke 21).[138]

The messianic ministry of Jesus was dictated by the Old Testament promises and the messages of the Jewish prophets. He would fulfill the things the Father had said through His men of old so that Israel would have a fair chance to recognize Jesus and receive Him as their Savior. However, it must be remembered that although He was ministering to Israel, it was not for their benefit alone. It can indeed be said that Jesus ministered to Israel as an act of love to all the nations. God had promised blessing through Abraham to all the nations of the earth in the Old Testament.

Christ Jesus fulfilled the teachings of the Hebrew scriptures so that those things promised through the blessing of Abraham might finally come to the Gentiles as they received the promise of the Holy Spirit through faith (Gal. 3:14). Jamieson shows that Christ chose to die on the cross "to the end that upon the Gentiles the blessing of Abraham (that is, *promised to* Abraham, namely, justification by faith) might come in Christ Jesus (Joel 2:28, 29; Luke 24:49)."[139]

The Church Mosaic

As a result of the calling of Christ to all people, races, and ethnicity, the early Church was a wonderful mosaic of peoples and colors. The diversity of the first-century Church was not an afterthought or an invention of post-crucifixion apostolic ministries. During His incarnation, Christ had advised that He had other sheep in addition to the children of Israel, peoples who were

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[138] G. Campbell Morgan, *The Gospel According to Matthew* (Grand Rapids: Fleming H. Revell, 1929), 289.

[139] Robert Jamieson, Andrew Robert Fausset, and David Brown, *A Commentary, Critical and Explanatory on the Whole Bible* (Altamonte Springs: OakTree Software, 1996).

not of the Jewish fold. Jesus said, "I must bring them also, and they will listen to my voice. So, there will be one flock, one shepherd" (John 10:16).

It can be said that the Church has not successfully followed through on the promise of a diverse, multi-ethnic congregational existence towards which the scriptures point. Too often, local churches have developed along racial dividing lines. Churches often reflect one dominant race and a specific cultural identity that resembles the pastor and church leadership. In many churches, members of minority people groups may assimilate into the culture, but their ethnic differences are not understood or appreciated. Without diversity in leadership, it is unlikely that true diversity will be experienced in the congregation without intentional action on the part of the leaders. Developing a truly multiracial, multi-ethnic church is beyond the modest scope of this project. Still, leadership can and should seek to create an environment where all brothers and sisters in Christ feel welcome and appreciated.

A Charge to Pastors

God created humanity from one man and made all the nations from that single source (Acts 17:26), but the years have seen division and separatism sully the beauty of God's intended church institution. If diversity, unity, togetherness, and acceptance are to flourish within each congregation, it will take intentional effort on the part of church leadership to foster the inclusiveness that the first-century church offered. Church leaders will need to display an "unending passion for learning about and from people of different cultures and being willing to face and work through their biases" if greater unity is to be achieved.

Theoretical Foundations

The issue of worldview is at the center of the action research project developed as an intervention tool for the Hudson Valley Pastors (HVPs) fellowship group. Each pastor possesses

a worldview developed as a result of their background, social development, ministry experiences as well as political, historical, cultural, and ethical positions. It is the experience of the RA that the worldview that each pastor holds is largely unexamined and unconsidered. The RA has witnessed various commonalities and marked differences in the accumulated worldviews on display in the group, yet the pastors do not look at them in such defined terms, preferring to think in terms of tendencies, preferences, and personal values. It is the position of the RA that the worldview of HVPs stands in potential contrast and dissonance to the worldview developed by potential new black congregants who may join their congregations. The phenomena of 2020, combined with political, historical, cultural, and ethical positions developed in an urban environment, has developed a common-core worldview within urbanites which must be examined.

A reasoned methodology for examining individual responses to the phenomena and allowing for comparison and contrast must be established for the project at hand. The most promising method is phenomenology, a research methodology that encourages practitioners both to learn from their own experiences and to examine the experiences of others. As a method of action research, phenomenology focuses on studying an individual's personal experience of the world and is thereby well-suited to the investigation of worldviews.

<div align="center">Phenomenology</div>

Before research can begin in earnest, one of the two major approaches to phenomenology must be chosen for a research project such as this. There are philosophical and methodological differences between the two significant bastions of phenomenological research: the transcendental and hermeneutic methods. Neither approach can claim to stand solely on its functionality and efficacy as both possess discernable ontological and epistemological

underpinnings that cause researchers to gravitate towards one of these approaches. These underpinnings must be considered if the most practical and unbiased method is to be utilized for this research project.

By utilizing the standardized characteristics of descriptiveness, reductionism, essence, and intentionality, phenomenological research investigates the personally held views and understandings of people concerning the environment in which they live. The study can be based on a single case or a pool of participants that the researcher may observe, interview, or encounter through written journals and interrogatory instruments. A level of interaction is preferable, such as personal conversations and discussions utilizing open-ended questions that allow the researcher to overcome psychological barriers and develop honest, open communication examining behavior, words, actions, and interpretation of the world around the participants.

The initial characteristic of *descriptiveness* is utilized to portray both existing and emerging phenomena such as the participants' emotions, thoughts, and actions without analyzing or passing judgment. By intuiting, analyzing, and describing phenomena, descriptive phenomenology can research the participants' view of the phenomena without criticism, evaluation, or opinion of the participants' perspective. Through analysis, the researcher sought to identify the meaning of the phenomenon that has arisen from the participants and explore the relationships and links between the data with existing phenomena to establish a more rounded and grounded view of the phenomena. Again, these phenomena were not critiqued or explained; they were simply described and concretized as existing. As the participants were exposed to applicable phenomena, the researcher and participants investigated the participants' experience of life as it happened.

The characteristic of *essence* represents the core meaning of a participant's experience of any given phenomenon. Essential themes or relationships are considered and categorized by the mental, emotional, and spiritual aspects of the participant's being.

Intentionality views the correlation between noema (an objective statement of behavior experienced as reality) and noesis (a subjective consciousness of the objective statement that directs the interpretation of the experience). Intentionality is one of the fundamental concepts of phenomenology. As humans, we consider ourselves conscious beings who are not simply affected by the things around us but are conscious of them. Our senses and our beingness make us conscious of things like physical objects and event happenings. We are also conscious of abstractions such as numbers and propositions and concretized things (to us) like our own existence and that of other people.[140]

As our mind considers something (a table, chair, dog, etc.), our thoughts and our words pick out, refer to, are "about" that thing—this is intentionality. Intentionality is *aboutness*. Intentionality is said to be "given" and involves what we immediately experience in the world surrounding us.[141] As a result of a visual experience of ourselves in a reflection, or as a side effect of each thing we experience, we are given an experience of ourselves.[142]

In fleshing out the concept of intentionality, Brentano considers an act of consciousness and proposes that it consists of a complex phenomenon with four constituent parts:

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[140] Ronald McIntyre and David Woodruff Smith, "Theory of Intentionality," in *Husserl's Phenomenology: A Textbook*, ed. J.N. Mohanty and William R. McKenna, 147–79 (Washington, DC: Center for Advanced Research in Phenomenology and University Press of America, 1989).

:[141] David Woodruff Smith, "Phenomenal Intentionality, Inner Awareness, and the Given," *Synthese (Dordrecht)* 199, no. 3–4 (2021): 10059–76, https://doi.org/10.1007/s11229-021-03236-y.

[142] Ibid.

- a basic presentation of some object, say, wherein I see or have a visual presentation as of a bird or tree;

- an accompanying presentation of the basic presentation;

- a judgment affirming or denying the object of the basic presentation;

- an emotional character qualifying the object.[143]

In the case of Indirect Intentionality, the content of an experiential intentional mental state is determined by the phenomenal character that the particular state already possesses. Conversely, Direct Intentionality centers on the property of intentionality itself, meaning that very property is determined by its own unique phenomenal character, thereby contributing to the overall phenomenal character of that state.[144]

Speech also allows us to articulate abstract ways of thinking. Communication intentionality allows individuals, groups, and communities to coordinate their activities. The ability to coordinate mental images and evaluations is crucial in interpersonal communication. Cultural communicators and communication scholars can promote an action possibility with their words if a shared relevance is experienced.[145] However, when words convey different things to different people, interpersonal communication is hampered.

The complicated process of *reductionism* is the researcher's effort to reduce the influence of assumptions and prejudices about the phenomenon during the description of the thing being considered. Phenomenological research must begin with a description of the phenomena being

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[143] F. Brentano, *Psychology from an Empirical Standpoint*, trans. Linda McCalister (New York: Routledge, 2015).

[144] Alberto Voltolini, "Troubles with Phenomenal Intentionality," *Erkenntnis* 87, no. 1 (2022): 237–56.

[145] Julian Kiverstein and Erik Rietveld, "Scaling-Up Skilled Intentionality to Linguistic Thought," *Synthese* 198 (2021): 191, https://doi.org/10.1007/s11229-020-02540-3.

viewed as "the things themselves"[146] in the most unbiased manner possible. It must be noted that such an effort relies on an individual participant's ability to separate themselves from the phenomena being considered. It is here that the two branches of phenomenological research are differentiated.

<div align="center">Transcendental vs. Hermeneutical Phenomenology</div>

Transcendental phenomenology (TPh), based on the work of Husserl,[147] is a philosophical research methodology that attempts to understand human experience. TPh requires the participant to set aside all preconceived ideas (epoche) in an attempt to see phenomena clearly and in an unbiased manner, allowing the "true meaning of phenomena to naturally emerge with and within their own identity."[148]

In contrast to TPh, the hermeneutical phenomenology method does not anticipate the setting aside of all preconceptions. This approach leads to the description and interpretation of the essence of lived experiences and recognizes the meaning and importance in pedagogy, psychology, and sociology according to the experience collected. In Gadamerian fashion, it views meaning and understanding less as objects to be found and more as inevitable phenomena that philosophical effort attempts to account for as an ontological process of humankind. As Gadamer states, "My real concern was and is philosophic: not what we do or what we ought to do, but what happens to us over and above our wanting and doing."[149]

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[146] M. Chairul Basrun Umanailo, Overview Phenomenological Research, 2019. https://doi.org/10.31222/osf.io/4t2fv.

[147] Edmund Gustav Albrecht Husserl, German philosopher and mathematician who established the school of phenomenology.

[148] Clark Moustakas, *Phenomenological Research Methods* (Thousand Oaks: Sage, 1994).

[149] Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, 2nd ed. (Bloomsbury, 1989).

Gadamer's concepts suggest that all participants have historically affected consciousness due to the climate, sociological events, and culture in which they grew. This consciousness is like a stream in which they live and, therefore, colors each act of understanding.[150] This understanding of humankind means that the "tabula rasa" separation from prior thinking championed by TPh is impractical and perhaps not even possible. Each person comes to their understandings and conclusions of phenomena through inseparable pre-understandings established in their past by the historical stream in which they exist. Gadamer satirically criticizes Enlightenment thinkers for harboring a "prejudice against prejudices"[151] and for believing that all interpreters must be discouraged from establishing prejudices that will negatively affect how they make interpretations and must be minimized through the reduction process because prejudices hinder one's ability to make interpretations. In hermeneutical phenomenology, the formations TPh calls prejudices are called pre-understandings. Pre-understandings are considered integral to the reality of a person's being and the basis of how people understand phenomena.

Pastors of culturally homogeneous churches can anticipate sharing a common-core set of pre-understandings concerning theology, society, ontology, and epistemology. However, as churches continue to diversify, pastors may face different viewpoints and be called on to develop intercultural communication skills. Pastors are skilled in recognizing behavioral patterns but do not exist in a vacuum separately from thought and emotion.[152] Pastors possess a worldview, as do all people. That worldview is mediated by their ontological beliefs, resulting in specific ways

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[150] Richard Palmer, *Hermeneutics: Interpretation Theory in Schleiermacher, Dilthey, Heidegger, and Gadamer* (Evanston: Northwestern University Press., 1969), 117.

[151] Palmer, 118.

[152] Bennett and Bennett, *Developing Intercultural Sensitivity*, 149.

of knowing and perceiving the world. A pastor's epistemological position is developed in seminary and ministry. A pastor's particular school of theology and doctrine intersect with social experiences, cultural considerations, and personal beliefs, resulting in ontological and epistemological positions that are ingrained and become first truths. This positional entrenchment is furthered by denominational traditions and may go unaddressed, unconsidered, and unchanged.

However, there have been moments in all cultures and traditions when what they believe to be true and how they go about knowing the world have changed. These historical changes, known as "paradigm shifts," have fundamentally changed the landscape of what is considered true and real at various points in time.[153] One such paradigm shift in the thinking process in any identifiable portion of a congregation would necessitate a strategic, intentional response by pastoral staff. Future congregations will be augmented by new members with phenomenological experiences from cultural settings that differ from the pastoral staff's experiences. Such congregants will often bring a worldview that differs from or opposes the worldview of the staff. While a shift in ontology and epistemology may not be necessary, a willingness and an ability to recognize and engage the ontology and epistemology of others will be essential.

Pastors will need to develop new competencies that Bennett calls the intercultural mindset and skillset.[154] Mindset refers to awareness of how one operates within one's cultural context. Pastors will need to develop conscious, considered knowledge and understanding of their worldview[155] and cultural self-awareness, taking possession and responsibility for them.

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[153] T.S. Kuhn, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1970).

[154] Bennett and Bennett, 149.

[155] Ibid., 150.

Skillset refers to pastors needing to surface new methodologies for creating sound cultural contrasts (e.g., communication styles, cultural values) and the ability to use cultural generalizations without stereotyping or distortion.[156] The development of a culturally informed curriculum that explains intercultural conceptions and undergirds observations will greatly aid pastors in developing greater CC.

In conclusion, a form of hermeneutical phenomenology, in the view of the RA, provided the most practical methodology, allowing the participants to examine their own worldview and introducing them to the worldview of urban black people.

Chapter Summary

The effect of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020 was broad and very challenging. No aspect of normal societal functioning was spared. Quarantine and social distancing were necessary measures to prevent the virus from spreading, but they led to elevated levels of loneliness and social isolation, which produced physical and mental health repercussions.

This chapter examined the prescient literature related to phenomena, the worldview of urban black people, PTSD, trauma, police-community relations, and the effect of COVID-19 isolation. The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on lower-income minorities in New York City that caused an exodus along racial lines was discussed. It was further acknowledged that many of those leaving New York would carry trauma-causing scars from the phenomena to new congregations, some of which are in the Lower Hudson Valley of New York.

The degradation of the relationship between the police and the urban communities they patrol has led to many widely publicized fatalities of unarmed black people at the hands of the

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[156] Bennett and Bennett, 149.

police. The unprecedented coverage of these trauma-inducing events during the pandemic shutdown of the city present/ed a mental health threat to urban black people. The growth of the Black Lives Matter (BLM) Movement gave voice to pent-up anger and frustration on the part of many urbanites at the various phenomena that took place during 2020. The anger and distrust engendered by the police department spread to other municipal entities, such as the local government and the healthcare system. A history of disproportionately inadequate healthcare provision to urbanites exacerbated COVID-19 vaccine hesitancy and allowed the virus to affect urban communities deleteriously.

The stresses caused by phenomena continue to exist today and need to be addressed through counseling in the future. It is reasonable to believe that the trust engendered by the clergy in urbanites means that pastoral counseling will need to be a part of the solution. To counsel urbanites effectively, pastors require an accumulation and a distillation of applicable data, an understanding of the prescient phenomenology, an evaluation of available counseling methodologies, and an understanding of phenomena through a black worldview perspective that is not currently available in the existing literature. This project collected, interpreted, and suggested an application for pastors to avail themselves in response to the growing presence of urbanites suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) in their congregations.

The theological constructs of multi-ethnic, multiracial congregations were expounded on, and a framework for an accurate theology of religious inclusiveness was outlined. Next, the theoretical constructs governing this intervention were discussed, including an overview of the two methodological strategies within phenomenology considered for the research project. The strengths of both methods were discussed, and the reason for utilizing hermeneutical phenomenology was established. The fact that hermeneutical phenomenology does not require

the participants' suppression of pre-understandings concerning race, culture, social events, or equality made the method particularly viable. Hermeneutical phenomenology allows the participants to value and examine their existing experience of the world while encouraging their investigation of worldviews.

Summary of Problem, Purpose, and Thesis

The problem addressed in this project concerned the Conservative Baptist Lower Hudson Valley Pastor Group (HVP) being ill-equipped to understand and counsel black congregants traumatized by phenomena and the associated worldview. Acknowledgment of this problem led the RA to develop this DMIN action research project to equip other than black HVP to develop the requisite Cultural Competence to address trauma caused by the effect of phenomena on urban black people. The project utilized a two-part workshop and an eight-section self-study workbook that immersed the other than black HVP in the worldview of urbanites related to phenomena. It was theorized that upon completion of this intervention, the participants would feel more equipped to develop the competencies required to address the trauma caused by phenomena on urban black people.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

This chapter discusses the intervention design and the implementation of the intervention design. The procedures utilized in this intervention and its transferability are discussed in detail. The research questions are reiterated, the participant pool is examined, the triangulation of data and data collection methods are detailed, and the steps taken to address ethical privacy issues are explained.

Intervention Design

Research Questions

RQ1. What effect, if any, will immersion in the community values, points of contention, and societal markers concerning the worldview of urbanites have on the participants' sense of appreciation and understanding of the black worldview?

RQ2. Will immersion in the common-core urban black worldview foster a need to develop greater Cultural Competence in the participants?

Ministry Context and Shareholders

The participants were senior pastors and ministers leading significant ministries within the Conservative Baptist Association, the Lower Hudson Valley church community, and the conservative New York State church community. Accordingly, the Hudson Valley Pastors group (HVP) represented a strategic opportunity for the research author (RA) to effect significant change. It was reasoned that positively affecting the leaders of influential ministries could aid in

developing congregation-wide relationship building, understanding, and empathy toward urban black people. The project has the potential to serve as a catalyst and model for similar interventions among other people groups. The potential exists to create a clearinghouse of cultural competence-building knowledge developed by strategically positioned indigenous evangelical researchers within various cultures. This would greatly facilitate cross-cultural learning and ministry while fostering greater unity amid diversity in the church. Such far-reaching benefits were beyond the modest goal of this project, but facilitating the desired growth of the Hudson Valley clerical leadership justified the development of this intervention.

Overview

The problem that occasioned this research originated in the Conservative Baptist Hudson Valley Pastors Group, a fellowship of male pastors in the Lower Hudson Valley. In 2020, it came to light that the group's understanding and empathy for the worldview of black people living in urban communities in New York City during the year 2020 (urbanites) needed to be evaluated. After self-reflection, the white members expressed sentiments of regret and deficiency concerning their appreciation of the phenomena that contributed to the development of the black worldview.

As the group leader, the RA was uniquely positioned to exegete this group. The RA's *a posteriori* hypothesis postulated that a dearth of cultural competence concerning the black worldview lay at the core of the problem. The COVID-19 pandemic of 2020 and the corresponding national focus on social issues crystallized the participants' recognition of their emotional, informational, and focal deficits concerning the plight of urbanites. The participants expressed a desire to rectify their condition, suggesting confirmation of the RA's conjectural hypothesis.

The Need for Unity Amid Diversity in the Church

While the Apostle Paul envisioned the Church as the body of Christ, a singular, united unit of different but equal parts (1 Corinthians 12:27-31), the church in America has developed into a fractured body with a dominant culture and a less visible sub-culture. While some consider the multiplicity of religious groups to be part of the evolutionary process,[1] it is apparent that denominationalism, doctrine, praxis, worship methodology, liturgy (high and low church), and race have segmented the church in North America.

Another fissure to be considered in the body is the existence of a cultural dichotomy within the American church. The existence of cultural dichotomies is readily apparent in American society. Dominant culture/sub-culture divisions can be recognized in the practices that are prevalent within political, social, and economic concerns in which differing cultures coexist. Language, social significance, culture, and values define the dominant group, with other cultures finding (settling for or accepting) their place within the communal hierarchy.

The existence of the dominant culture/sub-culture dichotomy is generally acknowledged and accepted as a reality of multicultural societies.[2,3] In contrast, the nature of evangelical Christianity implies the desirability of a unified identity as the body of Christ, a Bible-driven culture with agreed-upon fundamental precepts and conclusions, and a common mission through

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[1] Eric Dietrich, "Why Are There So Many Religions?" Psychology Today, April 7, 2015, https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/excellent-beauty/201504/why-are-there-so-many-religions.

[2] H.R. Markus and S. Kitayama, "Culture and the Self: Implications for Cognition, Emotion, and Motivation," *Psychological Review* 98, no. 2 (1991): 224–53, https://doi.org/doi:10.1037/0033–295X.98.2.224.

[3] Vivian L. Vignoles, Ellinor Owe, Maja Becker, Peter B. Smith, Matthew J. Easterbrook, Rupert Brown, Roberto González, et al., "Beyond the 'East–West' Dichotomy: Global Variation in Cultural Models of Selfhood," *Journal of Experimental Psychology: General* 145 (2016): 966–1000, https://doi.org/10.1037/xge0000175.

the Church universal. The existence of a dominant culture/sub-culture within the evangelical church is emerging as an unpalatable but undeniable reality.[4] When this reality is considered along with the rapidly changing demographics within the communities in which churches are located, it is clear there is a need for greater cultural intelligence and competence within church leadership.

Evangelical pastors, like the HVP group, could clearly benefit from a greater understanding of the diverse cultures and social groups living within their field of ministry, but also those present within their congregation. Unfortunately, Christian forays into the field of Cultural Intelligence have thus far been reserved for evangelistic and missionary contexts.[5] While consideration of the changing demographics in America has led some Christians to consider the mechanics of reaching out to unbelievers from different cultures, it appears that such examination has yet to be extended to the local church body.

When the HVP group members became cognizant of a hindrance to their interracial communication with Christian urbanites, the RA challenged them to consider the possibility that the impediment was deeper than communication styles and political viewpoints. As pastors of evangelical churches, they have endeavored to establish and nurture a unified Christian culture within their congregations. The RA encouraged the pastors to consider the possibility of a sub-dominant culture that has developed within their midst and in their communities. They were challenged to contemplate the possible existence of a unique worldview held by urbanite people, including Evangelical Christians, of which they were unaware. The pastors had no conception of

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[4] Ryon J. Cobb, Samuel L. Perry, and Kevin D. Dougherty, "United by Faith? Race/Ethnicity, Congregational Diversity, and Explanations of Racial Inequality," *Sociology of Religion* 76, no. 2 (June 1, 2015): 177–98, https://doi.org/10.1093/socrel/sru067.

[5] Darrell L. Brock, *Cultural Intelligence: Living for God in a Diverse, Pluralistic World* (Nashville: B&H Publishing Group., 2020).

an urbanite sub-culture with a unique and decipherable perspective but agreed that if such a worldview existed, it would be essential for them to learn to recognize and address it with efficacy.

Bringing the urbanite worldview into the pastors' consciousness would need to begin with assessing why it had escaped them to that point. The RA conjectured that each pastor's cultural background affected their worldview and their ability to recognize, address, and assess the worldview of others. Accordingly, examination, critical reflection, and review of their current worldview, past experiences, values, and preferences would be necessary if their understanding and appreciation of a differing worldview were to be transformed.[6] The methodology would need to introduce the pastors to seminal issues that led to the development of the worldview in question.

Initial Inquiry

In 2020, the RA began studying literature to gain a broader understanding of the issues posited to have affected the urbanite worldview. Issues stemming from the recent protests, riots, social upheaval, and media coverage concerning urban black people were examined. Disruption in the political, social, and racial climate had produced public expressions and displays of anger, frustration, fear, and contempt in urban black people, resulting in stress-related behaviors.[7]

The restoration of levels of normalcy, including entertainment such as movies, television, and sports leagues, has diminished the media coverage of the Black Lives Matter (BLM)

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[6] Jack Mezirow, *Learning as Transformation: Critical Perspectives on a Theory in Progress* (Jossey-Bass, 2000).

[7] Barbara Ransby, *Making All Black Lives Matter: Reimagining Freedom in the Twenty-First Century* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2018), http://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/liberty/detail.action?docID=4711971.

Movement and related social issues. However, the underlying concerns, sources of anger, frustrations, fears, and psychological triggers brought to light and heightened by the phenomena of 2020 continue today.[8] The available research data regarding individual phenomena of 2020 were extremely limited at the outset. Studies of the phenomenological effect of 2020 stimuli began to surface in 2021 and grew in availability as the year progressed.

The RA examined various literary forms and sought to encompass the breadth of the developing recognition of the mental health, socioeconomic, and geopolitical concerns stemming from the upheaval experienced in 2020. It should be noted that none of the studies were developed with an evangelical Christian mindset. The effect of the 2020 stimuli on discipleship and counseling in evangelical circles was not addressed in any of the studies surfaced by the RA. Therefore, the RA investigated the data, studies, and materials that most closely addressed the HVP's need.

Addressing the Need Within the Group

Through interaction with the pastors, it became evident that while they recognized the existence of debilitating complexities that hinder successful intercultural interaction,[9] they lacked a full appreciation of the underlying urbanite cultural issues that exacerbated these issues. Understanding urbanites'' worldview would require acquiring new knowledge and skills.[10]

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[8] Hinderliter and Peraza.

[9] Soon Ang and Andrew C. Inkpen, "Cultural Intelligence and Offshore Outsourcing Success: A Framework of Firm-Level Intercultural Capability," *Decision Sciences* 39, no. 3 (August 1, 2008): 337–58, https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1540-5915.2008.00195.x.

[10] Yoshitaka Yamazaki and D. Christopher Kayes, "An Experiential Approach to Cross-Cultural Learning: A Review and Integration of Competencies for Successful Expatriate Adaptation," *Academy of Management Learning and Education* 3, no. 4 (2004): 362–79, http://www.jstor.org/stable/40214307.

The RA proposed that the pastors view urbanites as a unique culture and quasi-foreign mission field in need of immersive examination, the development of Cultural Competence, and the acquisition of Cultural Intelligence. This arena of intellectual endeavor has yet to be explored by Christian researchers. However, the events of 2020 and the development of the black worldview of 2020 (BWV20) suggest that such an examination is necessary and potentially beneficial. Continuing to view urbanites as brothers and sisters in Christ, united by similar Christocentric values, is too simplistic. Utilizing the same methodological arsenal to exegete, understand, appreciate, and respond to urbanites had proven ineffective. The RA proposed that the urbanite adoption of the BWV20 had deeply affected communications between white pastoral staff and urbanite congregants. Communications had effectively morphed from intracultural conversations to cross-cultural endeavors. Accordingly, white pastors would benefit from growth in Cultural Competence and Cultural Intelligence.

The RA envisioned a cultural immersion project designed to develop greater Cultural Intelligence to mitigate the complexity of intercultural communications,[11] foster greater cultural understanding, and encourage greater confidence in responding to opportunities for ministry among urbanites. The immersion would prepare the pastors to engage the urbanite worldview intentionally and more confidently engage the unfamiliar cultural context.

Due to the dearth of examination by Christian researchers concerning Cultural Competence, the RA looked instead to the fields of business and education. The Social Learning Approach, which theorizes that learning is critical to behavioral change and crucial to personal development, guided the RA's methodology. If a pastor's interactions with their familiar

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[11] P. Christopher Earley and Randall S. Peterson, "The Elusive Cultural Chameleon: Cultural Intelligence as a New Approach to Intercultural Training for the Global Manager," *Academy of Management Learning and Education* 3, no. 1 (2004): 100–115, http://www.jstor.org/stable/40214236.

environment (the things they do, their sense of belonging, and becoming)[12] are formative, then a less familiar worldview must be "experienced" to be appreciated. The desirability of an immersive approach capable of transmitting a semiotic experiential journey through urbanites' worldview (including formative developmental factors) became evident.[13]

Goals

The RA set goals for the immersion program that would act as benchmarks to assess the efficacy of the proposed two-stage program materials. The first section dealt with general information, while the second section presented issues explicitly related to urbanite culture. Goal 1 was to help the participants understand how people think, learn, and reason. The program's first section provided information concerning the learning theories used in the public school system, the process of human memory, and ways of thinking. Goal 2 was to move the participants towards a better understanding of the connection between the education system, learning theory, memory, urban cultural phenomena, and thereby the need for Cultural Competence. This was designed to set a baseline of common knowledge to equally prepare all participants to engage in the section of the program directly related to the BWV20. The first section was developed to facilitate the successful navigation of the research project and provide reproducible material for other researchers developing similar projects for other people groups.

The program's second section provided materials with several identifiable goals. Goal 3 was to move the participants toward a new or deepened commitment to racial unity and inclusiveness as a teleological imperative of the Church. Goal 4 was to help the participants

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[12] Etienne Wenger, "Communities of Practice and Social Learning Systems," *Organization* 7, no. 2 (May 1, 2000): 225–46, https://doi.org/10.1177/135050840072002.

[13] Wenger.

understand the lasting effects of slavery and the Jim Crow laws in America and urban society. Goal 5 was to clarify the underlying cause of the decay of urban communities to allow participants to develop greater empathy and concern for urbanites. Goal 6 was to move the participants to a more empathetic understanding of BWV20 and its cause and effect in the lives of those who hold it. Goal 7 involved the fundamental necessity of adequately convincing the participants that the BWV20 exists. Goal 8 was to convince the participants of the importance of understanding the BWV20 for relationship building, discipleship, and counseling. Finally, Goal 9 was to help each participant grow in cultural intelligence and develop a desire to grow in Cultural Competence.

Objectives

With the goals for the program established, project materials were developed with eight identifiable objectives in mind. Failure to substantially achieve any of the objectives would cast doubt on the validity of the thesis statement.

Objective 1. Establish the theological and teleological mandate for racial inclusiveness in local churches.

Objective 2. Establish the existence of other worldviews and their significant ramifications vis-à-vis discipleship and counseling.

Objective 3. Establish the existence and legitimacy of a common-core black urban worldview that emerged from the stimuli of 2020 (BWV20).

Objective 4. Establish the legitimacy of mitigating factors for the conditions of urban black society (crime, healthcare, and police relations).

Objective 5. Establish the legitimacy of the psychological scars that have created the BWV20 (slavery, Jim Crow, racism, social anger, rumination, groupthink, and prejudice).

Objective 6. Establish the practical need for the intentional development of Cultural

Competence and cultural intelligence for ministry to urban blacks who relocate to the

represented suburban regions.

Objective 7. Establish that a felt need for intentional development of Cultural

Competence and cultural intelligence for ministry to urban blacks has been developed through

the intervention program.

Objective 8. Establish that eight out of ten participants have developed an increased

sense of preparedness toward ministry to urban black congregants holding the BWV20.

Research Method

The immersion project included elements of ethnography, symbolic interactionism, and

cultural hermeneutics to remove impediments to ministry that were ingrained in the pastors'

methodologies and cultures.[14] Accordingly, the RA chose to develop a phenomenologically

based intervention project. The project utilized a qualitative approach[15] incorporating aspects of

focus group and lifestyle immersion design to enhance the research quality and depth of the

project for present and future shareholders.[16] [17]

In this case, the specific shareholders were the HVP group members. The methodology

was designed to enable the shareholders to increase their understanding of and desire to develop

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[14] B.G. Glaser and A.L. Strauss, *Discovery of Grounded Theory: Strategies for Qualitative Research* (New York: Routledge, 2017), https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203793206.

[15] Moustakas.

[16] John Creswell and Cheryl Poth, *Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design: Choosing Among Five Approaches*, 2nd ed. (Thousand Oaks: Sage, 2007).

[17] M. Van Manen, *Researching Lived Experience: Human Science from An Action Sensitive Pedagogy* (2nd ed.) (New York: Routledge, 2015).

Cultural Competence. The project was also designed to serve as a guideline for further research into Christian Cultural Competence. Thick Description[18] was utilized to facilitate future studies by researchers who may increase the breadth of institutional knowledge of Christian Cultural Competence.

The project, a thirty-day Urban Black Worldview Immersion Program, was used to test a unique intervention method on a particular case group and provide evidence about the intervention's general effectiveness using a small sample size.

Participants

The HVP represented a self-contained participant pool for this study, obviating the need for an extensive screening process. Pastors were required to have ministered in the Lower Hudson Valley or New York State, north of New York City, during portions of the four years before the study to be eligible for participation in the intervention program. Participants were also required to identify as other than black and other than urban males. The participants comprised a single study pool, participated in group discussions, and received identical instructions, study materials, and testing instruments.

Candidate Qualifications and Requirements

Other than black members of the Hudson Valley Pastors group (HVP) and leaders of associated conservative ministries located north of New York City during the past four years were eligible to become part of the candidate pool. At the initial group meeting and in individual conversations, the RA discussed the nature, details, duration, and scheduling of the immersion experience with the potential participants. All questions and concerns were addressed

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[18] Clifford Geertz, "Thick Description: Toward an Interpretive Theory of Culture," in *The Interpretation of Cultures* (New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 1973), 310–23, https://philpapers.org/archive/GEETTD.pdf.

exhaustively to the candidates' satisfaction. The RA ensured that each participant could comprehend the materials and would be able to sustain the self-guided study. Candidates were required to commit to the entire thirty-day process.

Selection of Participants

Candidates were then invited to participate in random order. The participants signed the Participant Information and Consent Form (see Appendix E) during the initial meeting/ discussion group or in individual consultations to consent to participate in the immersion experience officially. If any of the ten primary participants abandoned the project before its completion or failed to follow the instructions, the information collected from one or more reserve participants would have been included in the project data to provide the ten sets of statistics desired for a viable study. Participants were not informed of their status (primary or alternate) and considered themselves active participants in the immersion experience. Qualified candidates were coded by randomly assigned numbers.

Participant Descriptions

Participant #001 was a white American male in the 70-80 age bracket. He worked as a Christian counselor and has pastored in a lower- to middle-income, predominantly Caucasian community.

Participant #002 was a white American male pastor in the 50-60 age bracket. He worked as a full-time pastor in a lower- to middle-income, predominantly Caucasian community. This community has been diversifying in recent years.

Participant #003 was a white American male pastor in the 60-65 age bracket. He worked as a full-time pastor in a lower- to middle-income, predominantly Caucasian community. This community has been diversifying in recent years.

Participant #004 was a white American male pastor in the 60-65 age bracket. He worked as a full-time pastor in a middle-income, predominantly Caucasian community. This community has been diversifying more slowly than others.

Participant #005 was a white American male pastor in the 45-50 age bracket. He worked as a full-time pastor in a lower- to middle-income, predominantly Caucasian community. However, this community has been diversifying more rapidly than the other participants' communities.

Participant #006 was a Caucasian male pastor in the 25-30 age bracket. He worked as a full-time assistant pastor in the same middle-income, predominantly Caucasian community that has been diversifying more slowly than the others represented in this project.

Participant #007 was a white American male pastor in the 50-55 age bracket. He worked as a full-time pastor in a middle-income, predominantly Caucasian community that has been diversifying in recent years.

Participant #008 was a white American male pastor in the 60-65 age bracket. He retired in 2022 from a full-time pastor position in a predominantly middle- to upper-income community. The community was diverse, with a schism between upper- and lower-income residents.

Participant #009 was a white American male minister in the 50-55 age bracket. He ministered in a middle-income bracket.

Participant #010 was a white American male assistant pastor and schoolteacher in the 40-50 age bracket. He worked in a lower- to middle-income, predominantly Caucasian community. This community has been diversifying in recent years.

Development of the Immersive Process

Sharan Merriam states, "All qualitative research is characterized by the search for meaning and understanding, the researcher as the primary instrument of data collection and analysis, an inductive investigative strategy, and a richly descriptive end product."[19] While this project incorporated all the characteristics of qualitative research, it also bears the hallmarks of participatory action research. The RA and participants worked together to examine the problematic situation within the HVP group to achieve the desire for positive change. The research and subsequently developed materials were context-specific to the needs of the HVP and intended to produce an iterative cycle where research led to reflection, resulting in the desire for positive action. The RA hopes that subsequent researchers will find, in the context-specific materials, an exemplar for continued research amid other people groups.

The project was developed through a partnership in which the participants and the RA worked collectively to define the project's overall objectives. However, the nature of the phenomenological aspects presented required the RA to be the final arbiter of the materials presented, instrumentation, method of distillation, and immersion.[20] Like the RA of this project, future researchers will need to develop appropriately eclectic, multi-method approaches that utilize the most effective available modes of qualitative research[21] to achieve the desired cultural immersion.

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[19] Geertz, 310–23.

[20] Tim Sensing, *Qualitative Research: A Multi-Methods Approach to Projects for Doctor of Ministry Theses* (Eugene: Wipf & Stock, 2011).

[21] John Swinton and Harriet Mowat, *Practical Theology and Qualitative Research* (London: SCM Press, 2006), 50.

The RA developed an immersion experience that utilized a social learning approach[22] to foster adaptation of the participants' perspectives and responses to the urbanite worldview, allowing them to "interact" with an intercultural context. The immersion experience exposed the participants to the historical, cultural, and social variables that complicate intercultural communication through the eyes of an urbanite guide. Examination of verbal and nonverbal intercultural communication, societal norms, pre-understandings, misconceptions concerning perceived commonalities, and other issues that could contribute to cross-cultural complexities were addressed.

The participants were given the opportunity to consider and assess their past modes of thinking; visceral responses to phenomenological events; evaluations of political, social, and cultural positions; and analysis of contemporary urbanite actions. Questions were posed to promote an iterative cycle where the presented material could lead to reflection and effect change resulting in the desire for positive action. Through the reassessment of their own worldview and that of others, the participants developed the impetus required to desire to refine their teaching and counseling methods to effectively address new cultural environments in the future.[23]

The participants were shown that their subconscious conception of a typical Christian worldview was incomplete. Social and cultural values and norms strongly influence a person/s development[24] and behaviors. Accordingly, it must be recognized that powerful phenomenological events, such as those experienced by urbanites in 2020, are likely to create a

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[22] Albert Bandura, "Self-Efficacy: Toward a Unifying Theory of Behavioral Change," *Psychological Review* 84 (1977): 191–215, https://doi.org/10.1037/0033-295X.84.2.191.

[23] Iris Varner and Linda Beamer, *Intercultural Communication in Global Workplace* (3rd ed.) (New York: McGraw-Hill, 2005).

[24] Kwok Leung and Michael W Morris, "Values, Schemas, and Norms in the Culture-Behavior Nexus: A Situated Dynamics Framework," *Journal of International Business Studies* 46, no. 9 (2015): 1028–50, http://www.jstor.org/stable/43653782.

"new norm" for those affected by them. Urbanites who adopted the BWV20 were changed on a fundamental level. This created subtle but genuine changes in urbanites' manner of thinking and communication, and this reality would need to be considered in future interactions. Therefore, white pastors attempting to achieve intercultural communication with urbanites will likely experience unexpected opposition and complexity.

After substantial research was completed, the RA began to develop the "Urban Black Worldview Immersion Program" (hereafter called the "immersion program" or "program") to effect change in participants' knowledge, personal understanding, appreciation, and experience of a worldview other than their own—namely, the urbanite worldview. Evaluation of participants took place before and after the immersion program to measure changes in the participants' felt sense of Cultural Competence of the BWV20. The immersion program was reviewed for success in achieving the thesis hypotheses, and the results are provided in Chapter 4 of this document.

<div align="center">Program Instrumentation for Data Collection</div>

Various tools were utilized to gather information from the participants. The information-gathering was not intended to be exhaustive or tested for statistical viability; it was used to inform the RA in assessing the cultural intelligence and competence levels of the participants.

Assessment A

Assessment A was a group discussion to investigate the participants' level of Cultural Competence. The RA posed questions to the participants during the initial group meeting to assess the participants' level of Cultural Competence in general and concerning urbanites specifically. The participants' answers were recorded, considered by the RA, and used to formulate a method of reexamining the participants using the tool in the debrief group session at

the conclusion of the project.[25]

Assessment Instrument B

The RA developed a test instrument to ascertain information related to the participants'

general levels of spirituality, cultural awareness, and social involvement. The research detailed in

the Literature Review (Chapter 2) and in the Bibliography at the end of this document informed

the development of Assessment Instrument B (Appendix B).

The intervention project was designed to encourage the consideration and understanding

of an alternate worldview, resulting in a desire to develop the competencies to engage the

possessors of that worldview effectively. The project was not designed to create passion,

commitment, spirituality, or compassion where they do not exist. Assessment Instrument B

assisted the RA in discerning the participants' ability to engage in the project. Any participant

deemed unsuitable for the project by the RA would not have been informed of the decision. The

unfit participant's data would have been excluded from the tabulation of project results. The

instrument was coded with identifiers known only to the RA to assure anonymity in answering

the questions and self-evaluation and to give participants the freedom to be honest and candid

about their feelings without fear of judgment.

Assessment Instrument C

Assessment Instrument C (see Appendix C) featured forty-two questions designed to

assess the participants' reaction to issues that affect the common-core worldview of urban black

people. The instrument required participants to select an answer from these options: 0 = Never,

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[25] For examples of the questions posed to the participants, see this link: https://www.mesacc.edu/sites/
default/files/pages/section/employees/humanresources/Sample%20Cultural%20Competency%20Interview%20Qusti
ons.pdf

1 = Rarely, 2 = Sometimes, 3 = Often, 4 = Always. The instrument was coded with identifiers known only to the RA to assure anonymity in answering the questions and self-evaluation and to give participants the freedom to be honest and candid about their feelings without fear of judgment.

Assessment Instrument D

During the debriefing session, the RA administered Assessment Instrument D (see Appendix D) developed for this project. The instrument, a three-page document containing fifty-two fixed questions, was designed to follow up on the results of Assessment Instrument C and assess the participants' level of development as related to the project thesis statement. The participants answered each question on a Likert scale ranging from 0, meaning "strongly disagree," to 4, meaning "strongly disagree." The RA developed the instrument to generate information related to each participant's growth in their understanding of the BWV20. The instrument gathered evaluative information concerning the participants' acquired knowledge, understanding, and evaluation of social issues and concerns that helped to form the common-core black worldview in light of their participation in the immersion program. The responses of Assessment Instrument C and Assessment Instrument D are compared and presented in Chapter 4.

The instrument was coded with identifiers known only to the RA to assure anonymity in answering the questions and self-evaluation and to give participants the freedom to be honest and candid about their feelings without fear of judgment.

Program Workbook

The program apparatus (workbook) was developed to immerse the participants in the salient issues concerning the BWV20. The apparatus provided historical, social, political, and

cultural information for the participants' consideration. The apparatus (see Appendix G) allowed the participants to encounter, examine, and respond to the felt needs, disappointments, accomplishments, and general levels of life satisfaction of urban black people. Each chapter of the workbook concluded with probative questions to foster self-examination and intentional interaction with the presented materials. The workbook was divided into two sections, with each section containing topical lessons. The flow of the workbook is shown in Table 1 (below).

Table 1. Understanding an Urban Black Worldview: A Phenomenological Examination of 2020 Immersion Program

Developing Cultural Competency: A Christian Perspective	
PART 1	Introduction
	Changing Demographics
	Worldview
	Learning Theories
	Cultural Competence
Black Worldview: A Socio-Cultural Immersion Program	
PART 2	Introducing A.B.E.
	The Black American Legacy
	Urban Developments
	Black & Blue
	Damaged by Discrimination
	The Phenomena and Stimuli of 2020
	The Impact of 2020
	Ecclesiastical Implications

Transferability

A crucial aspect of the RA's conception of this project was transferability. Transferability is an element of qualitative validity and reliability, including credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. Transferability has been defined as "the degree to which the

results of qualitative research can be generalized or transferred to other contexts or settings. From a qualitative perspective, transferability is primarily the responsibility of the one doing the generalizing."[26]

This project does not make broad claims of generalizability. It investigated the development and implementation of an immersion project uniquely designed to introduce participants to the urbanite BWV20. However, the transferability of this project is more far-reaching than its generalizability. Researchers from other social and cultural groups are invited to make connections between elements of this study and the unique eccentricities of their own culture's history, experiences, and narrative. To offer this project and program to the greater Christian community as a model for similar endeavors, the RA utilized and recommends the use of "Thick Description" in the development, detailing, examination, and presentation of both this project and program and those who may utilize it as a model for similar exploration.

Thick Description goes beyond recording and describing their cultural situation and peculiarities. Christian researchers have an opportunity to utilize this project to examine and present intelligence and competence-building programs that immerse others in their culture. Researchers will need to provide the detailed background information necessary for understanding the nuanced relevance, meanings, understandings (spoken and unspoken), and intentions that underpin social interactions with their culture.

Thick Description calls upon researchers to describe and interpret the immersive materials they present and the observed social action and behavior of the program participants

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[26] William Trochim, "The Research Methods Knowledge Base," January 1, 2007, https://www.researchgate.net/publication/243783609_The_Research_Methods_Knowledge_Base.

with equal vigor.[27] Researchers provide insight into their own culture while laying the

groundwork for others to follow. The description of their methodology and results must

transcend fact and surface appearances to provide those who utilize the materials with the detail,

context, emotion, and webs of social relationships that join persons to one another in a common-

core worldview.[28] As researchers immerse the user in the common-core worldview of their

culture, they interpret the circumstances, meanings, intentions, strategies, motivations, and

responses of the represented culture to the presented phenomenological stimuli. Utilizing the

interpretive characteristic of description, the researcher can provide the user with valuable

insight into the phenomena.[29] The project and program must build a clear picture of the

individuals and groups in the context of their culture and the setting in which they live, exploring

the underlying meanings, mores, methods, and mindset of cultural members.[30] What follows is a

discussion of the research method and how the evaluation was undertaken.

<div align="center">Ethical Considerations</div>

Concerns of the Participants

Ethics are essential in all research involving human participants. In this project, ethical

considerations were given the appropriate value. The project did not commence until IRB

approval was obtained from Liberty University and informed consent was received from all

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[27] J.G. Ponterotto, "Brief Note on the Origins, Evolution, and Meaning of the Qualitative Research Concept Thick Description," *The Qualitative Report* 11, no. 3 (2006): 538–49, https://doi.org/10.46743/2160-3715/2006.1666.

[28] Norman Denzin, *Interpretive Biography* (Thousand Oaks: Sage, 1989), 83, https://doi.org/10.4135/9781412984584.

[29] T. A. Schwandt, *Dictionary of Qualitative Inquiry (2nd Ed.).* (Thousand Oaks: Sage, 2001), 255.

[30] Immy Holloway, *Basic Concepts for Qualitative Research* (Hoboken: Wiley-Blackwell, 1997), 154.

participants. All participants were made aware of the study's purpose and provided with information enabling them to withdraw from the study, had they decided to do so during the program. All participants' opinions, feelings, ethics, standards, and preferences were treated with dignity and respect. The participants remained anonymous while they completed the surveys, filled out data-gathering instruments, and participated in the self-study program. All electronic data collected were secured on a password-protected hard drive, and physical data were stored in the RA's safe.

IRB Approval

The RA received permission from the IRB to complete the study (see Appendix A for IRB Approval). IRB permission did not obligate the participants in any way. Each participant was given the opportunity to volunteer for the program or decline to participate without concern that it would affect their status within the Hudson Valley Pastors (HVP) group. Each participant volunteered to be considered as a candidate for the participant pool, received detailed information concerning the nature of the project, affirmed their desire to participate, and signed a consent form (see Appendix E). By completing and sending the results of their assessments, these individuals indicated continuing consent to participate in the study.

Research Author's Relationship to Participants

All participants were members of the HVP group. The RA led the HVP group for over a decade prior to this intervention and built personal relationships with the participants. The RA held no authority over the participants and could not positively or negatively affect the participants vocationally.

Implementation of the Intervention Design

Triangulation of Data

Triangulation was used to establish trustworthiness in the study. A triangulation of data

collection methods including in-depth group discussion, data collection instrumentation, and

personal responses to the curriculum was utilized to address the research questions and develop a

consistent level of evidence from the participants' responses to the provided stimuli. The

triangulation was used to facilitate the trustworthiness of data and test the consistency of findings

obtained through the various data sources and instruments while minimizing the potential for

bias in the RA's interpretations of the data.[31]

Cultural Immersion Program Curriculum

The thirty-day curriculum developed by the RA was used to introduce the participants to

the stimuli that contributed to the black worldview. The self-study curriculum was designed to

allow self-administration of the individual lessons.

This project consisted of a thirty-day Urban Black Worldview Immersion Program for a

group of ten pastors who met the definition of a qualified participant. The project included

readings developed by the research author to encourage and enable the participants to engage

viscerally in the experiences of urbanites concerning historical and more recent events affecting

the urbanite community. It included historical information concerning slavery, Jim Crow laws,

and sociocultural issues. The program included a guided mental tour through the experiences of

urbanites in the years that led up to 2020 and some of the specific significant phenomenological

events of that year.

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[31] J. Spencer Clark, Suzanne Porath, Julie Thiele, and Morgan Jobe, "Collecting Data in Your Classroom," in *Action Research* (Center for the Advancement of Digital Scholarship), accessed January 28, 2023, https://kstatelibraries.pressbooks.pub/gradactionresearch/chapter/chapt5/.

Introductory Session

The program began with a group meeting/preparation session featuring a three-hour discussion led by the RA. Ten members of the participant pool attended the session. Eight members attended in person, and two attended via Zoom. The remaining members of the participant pool who could not attend were addressed by telephone. The initial discussion was designed to examine the participants' levels of understanding concerning the common-core black worldview arising from the phenomena of 2020. Said level of understanding was intuited by the RA through general discussion, direct questions, and the project instruments administered by the RA. The group freely and willingly explored issues concerning their personal worldview and the worldview of others who do not identify as white. The conversation was designed to examine the conscious and subconscious levels of understanding, concern, empathy, frustration, anger, and distrust of and for the black worldview.

Using various methods, the RA created a non-threatening environment where free exchange was encouraged. The RA has significant experience dealing with inter-racial, intercultural, and intergenerational relationships and introduced proven and novel methods to reduce tension and discomfort in accordance with his skillset. The uncomfortable subject of race was engaged fully by the participants, and their opinions were boldly expressed without fear of recrimination.

The participants were informed that the session was being recorded on a smartphone, and the entire three-hour session was transcribed and preserved. The RA did not identify the participants in the recording or the transcript, and the participants were encouraged not to identify each other by name. The session recording was erased, and the transcript was secured in a safe in the RA's home. Notes were excerpted from the transcript to evaluate commonalities,

differences, and anomalies among participants and are presented in Chapter 4. Information gleaned from the initial session was used to craft follow-up questions for the post-program debriefing.

The curriculum was explained and discussed extensively during the initial meeting. All questions posed by the participants were answered. The participants' level of understanding of the subject matter was assessed, as were their perspectives and attitudes toward the same. The participants identified as P4 and P5 were unable to attend the meeting in person and participated via zoom. P8 could not participate by Zoom and was contacted by telephone and email. The workbooks were distributed at the meeting and delivered to those who could not attend. The project was fully explained to the satisfaction of non-attendees, and all questions were answered. The research author was made available for consultation at any time during the thirty-day duration of the project. Questions concerning the participants' understanding of and response to the curriculum were furnished at the conclusion of applicable chapters in the workbook. The responses are presented in Chapter 4 of this document. An email address was provided for participants to provide progress reports and respond to the workbook material.

Cultural Competence Assessment

During the initial meeting, the RA posed questions designed to allow the participants to address issues related to Cultural Competence developed for the project. Utilizing information gleaned from the participants, the RA sought to formulate an initial assessment of each participant's level of Cultural Competence. All participants were informed that they would receive follow-up questions from the RA concerning diversity, equality, culture, and social issues at the project's conclusion.

Personal Spiritual Inventory

In the initial meeting, the RA administered Assessment Instrument B (see Appendix B). All participants completed the assessment tool, which examined their general level of spirituality, conscientiousness, and social concern. The project design assumed that the participants possess a genuine desire to serve God and mankind effectively. Therefore, it was essential to establish that they were sufficiently spiritual and conscientious to participate in the project.

Worldview Awareness Part 1

Furthermore, during the initial meeting, the RA administered a Worldview Assessment instrument (Assessment Instrument C, see Appendix C). The instrument is a three-page document containing forty-two fixed questions developed for this project. The participants answered each question on a Likert scale ranging from 0, meaning "strongly disagree," to 4, meaning "strongly disagree." The RA developed the instrument to generate information related to each participant's understanding of the black worldview. The instrument was used to gather evaluative information concerning the participants' knowledge, understanding, and evaluation of social issues and concerns that helped to form the common-core black worldview.

Debriefing Session

The program concluded with a three-hour follow-up group discussion after the participants completed the self-study curriculum. During the session, the RA conducted an extensive group discussion, with the participants utilizing information gleaned from Assessment Instruments A and C and the accumulated progress reports. The participants' levels of comprehension, agreement, and commitment to the presented concepts were examined. The participants were assessed for their growth in cultural intelligence concerning urbanite people

possessing the black worldview of 2020 (BWV20). The conversation was designed to reexamine the participants' conscious and subconscious levels of understanding, concern, empathy, frustration, anger, and distrust of the black worldview. During the session, the RA created a non-threatening environment where free exchange was encouraged.

At the beginning of the session, the participants were informed that the session was being recorded on a smartphone, and the entire three-hour session was preserved as an audio file and transcribed. The participants were not identified by the RA and were encouraged not to identify each other by name. The session recording was erased, and the transcript was stored in a safe in the RA's home. Notes were excerpted from the transcripts to show commonalities, differences, and anomalies in the participants' viewpoints and are detailed in chapter 4 of this document.

Worldview Awareness Part 2

During the debriefing session, the RA administered a forty-two-question instrument (Assessment Instrument D, see Appendix D) designed to follow up on the results of Assessment Instrument C and assess the participants' level of development as related to the project thesis statement.

Data Analysis

The RA analyzed the information collected from the project instruments to evaluate the participants' Cultural Competence and preparedness to counsel urban black people. Group interviews were held before and after the participants examined the materials. The participants' responses were recorded and examined for signs of growth, regression, and stability concerning the objectives and goals of the project. Instrumentation was used to collect data before and after the project materials were examined by the participants to assess the effect of the project on the

participants in relation to the program thesis and research questions. The collected data were assessed, and the outcomes of the RA's analysis are presented in Chapter 4 of this document.

Chapter Summary

This chapter describes the methods utilized in the design and implementation of this intervention featuring a qualitative project using aspects of single approach/case/ subject design, focus group design, lifestyle immersion design, and phenomenological study to examine the effectiveness of qualitative and descriptive longitudinal survey examining the efficacy of a thirty-day Urban Black Worldview Immersion Program Workbook on a ten-person focus group. The nature, requirements, role, and protection of the participants were detailed. The collection of data through surveys, interviews, and document analysis to provide for data triangulation and a deeper understanding of the issue explored in this case was explained. Detailed data analysis steps were provided, and, finally, methods for establishing trustworthiness and any ethical considerations were discussed.

CHAPTER 4: RESULTS

Review of Chapter 3

Chapter 3 outlined the procedures utilized in the action research intervention entitled "Developing Cultural Competence: An Urban Black Worldview Immersion Program." The chapter delineated the project's design, reiterated the research questions, detailed the participant pool, and examined the data collection tools and methods used to ensure trustworthiness and address ethical privacy issues.

Overview of Chapter 4

This chapter presents the results of the immersion experience. It also presents the triangulated data collected from assessment tools, interactive interviews, and participant self-assessments. Participant responses to the information and experiences provided in the program are considered. The information gathered was assessed and the validity of the thesis statement was examined.

The data collected during the immersion program were illuminating. When the research author (RA) tabulated and analyzed the results, a clear picture emerged. The initial assessment tool data and introductory discussion session were used by the RA to assess the sufficiency of the project materials. The RA analyzed the data and feedback to evaluate the condition of the participants concerning assumptions made during the formation of the project immersion process. If questions, concerns, or unforeseen issues had surfaced, the RA would have

considered supplementing the program materials. The assumptions and conclusions of the RA proved valid, and the intervention was allowed to continue as originally designed.

The initial data and participant feedback revealed common thought processes, areas of strength, and weaknesses concerning Cultural Competence. A similar paucity of information, error, uninformed social evaluations, and assumptions was present among the participants.

The participants were given thirty days to complete the project immersion experience. Each chapter of the workbook was followed by questions to be answered in essay form by the participants. A dedicated email account was established for the project, and the RA received the responses as the participants experienced each chapter of the immersive materials. Questions, clarifications, concerns, and problems were addressed as the program progressed.

The participant responses, post-project assessment tool, debriefing session, and observations of the RA were assessed after the project was completed. All participants showed substantial growth in the desired areas of knowledge, understanding, attitude, and desire to progress.

These codified results are presented and support the validation of the provisional conjectures assumed in the hypotheses delineated in Chapter 1. The results are presented to provide future researchers with a practical snapshot of the participants' experiences and to encourage and guide future investigation in this area. The RA hopes that pastoral practitioners from similar and differing social groups will evaluate the potential effectiveness and desirability of utilizing this immersion experience with people within their ministry context. It is further hoped that knowledgeable pastoral practitioners from different social and cultural groups will investigate the common-core worldview within their communities and develop similar resources for pastors seeking to develop greater cultural competence.

Purpose of the Intervention Project

This research project was specifically designed to address a problem identified in the Conservative Baptist Hudson Valley Pastor Group (HVP) in June 2020. The pastors had acknowledged a dearth of understanding and empathy for the viewpoints (worldview) of black people who were living in urban communities in New York City following the death of George Floyd. This people group is hereafter referred to as "urbanites."

After self-reflection, the white members of the group expressed concern and regret over their inability to understand black people's concerns after the phenomena that contributed to their mindset and attitudes. As the leader of the HVP group, the RA contemplated the conversations concerning race that had taken place through the years. The RA's *a posteriori* hypothesis postulated that two elements were at play in the white pastors. The first was a dearth of cultural competence concerning black culture. The second element was a lack of cognizance of the existence and importance of a common core black worldview that the RA conjectured had crystallized through the events and stimuli that reached their meridian in 2020 urban society (BWV20). As a result, the following thesis statement was developed.

Thesis Statement

The thesis developed as the basis of the action-based qualitative project stated: If the participants complete the intervention, they will develop a greater felt-sense of cultural competence concerning the common-core worldview of urban black people.

Research Questions

The two following research questions were developed from the thesis:

RQ1. What effect, if any, will immersion in the community values, points of contention, and societal markers concerning the worldview of new black congregants have on the participants' sense of appreciation and understanding of the black worldview?

RQ2. Will immersion in the common-core urban black worldview foster a need to develop greater Cultural Competence in the participants?

Program Development Process

Objectives

The project materials were developed with the following eight identifiable objectives. Failure to substantially achieve any of the objectives would cast doubt on the validity of the thesis statement.

Objective 1

Establish the theological and teleological mandate for racial inclusiveness in local churches. It was crucial for each participant to personally acknowledge the call of God towards racial inclusiveness. The project was not designed along evangelistic church growth lines, and the RA was not seeking to engender racial reconciliation as the basis of change. The project was developed on the precept that racial inclusiveness is a mandate of scripture, the desire of God, and the blueprint for the church. This objective was achieved and is addressed by questions 1A and 4E of the project workbook.

Objective 2

Establish the existence of other worldviews and their significant ramifications vis-à-vis discipleship and counseling. This objective was achieved and is addressed by the following questions in the workbook: 3A, 3B, 3C, 3D, 3E, 3F, 3G, 4A, 4B, 4C, and 4D. The participants were exposed to the various learning theories prevalent in the North American educational system. The participants were trained in Cognitivism and Behaviorism. All recognized a need to develop Constructivist methods for reaching the younger generation. This concept provided an initial entrée into the need for change, development, and growth of their teaching arsenal. The participants acknowledged the need to grow and develop new teaching methods including Cultural Competence.

Objective 3

Establish the existence and legitimacy of a common-core black urban worldview that emerged from the stimuli of 2020 (BWV20). The project was developed to introduce the participants to BWV20. To achieve this goal, it was necessary for each participant to become conscious of worldviews beyond their field of experience. The participants would need to accept the possible legitimacy of distinctly Christian worldviews that differ from their own. It would not be necessary for participants to accept these other worldviews, but to examine them with a degree of respect. This objective was achieved and is addressed by question 1C of the workbook.

Objective 4

Establish the legitimacy of mitigating factors for the conditions of urban black society (crime, healthcare, and police relations). The initial group discussion with the participants (Assessment A) confirmed significant misconceptions concerning the cause and effect of various conditions within urbanite communities previously surfaced in Hudson Valley Pastors (HVP)

meetings. This objective was achieved and is addressed by the following questions in the workbook: 5A, 5B, 5C, 5D, 5E, 5F, 6A, 6B, 6D, 7A, 7B, 7C, 8A, and 8B.

Objective 5

Establish the legitimacy of the psychological scars that have created the BWV20 (slavery, Jim Crow, racism, social anger, rumination, groupthink, and prejudice). This objective was achieved and is addressed by the following questions in the workbook: 5A, 5B, 5C, 5D, 5E, 5F, 6A, 6B, 6D, 7A, 7B, 7C, 8A, and 8B.

Objective 6

Establish the practical need for the intentional development of Cultural Competence and intelligence for ministry to urban blacks who relocate to the represented suburban regions. This objective was achieved and is addressed in the debriefing session.

Objective 7

Establish that a felt need for intentional development of Cultural Competence and intelligence for ministry to urban blacks has been developed through the intervention program. The program was developed to establish the value of increased Cultural Competence. The participants were provided with insight from an urbanite perspective. Participants were then encouraged to reexamine evaluations they had made in the past. The RA believed the participants would recognize the deleterious effects of a paucity of cultural intelligence and competence on their appraisal, analysis, and comprehension of past events, phenomena, and sociocultural mores concerning urbanites. This objective was achieved and is addressed in the project conclusion.

Objective 8

Establish that eight out of ten participants have developed an increased sense of preparedness toward ministry to urban black congregants holding the BWV20. This objective was achieved and is addressed by questions 8A, 8B, and 9A in the workbook.

Goals

The RA set nine identifiable goals for the immersion program that would act as benchmarks to assess the efficacy of the program materials.

Goal 1

Help the participants understand the way urbanites think, learn, and reason.

Goal 2

Move the participants to a better understanding of the connection between the education system, learning theory, memory, urban cultural phenomena, and the need for Cultural Competence. This was designed to set a baseline of common knowledge to equally prepare all participants to engage in the section of the program directly related to BWV20.

Goal 3

Move the participants toward a new or deepened commitment to racial unity and inclusiveness as a teleological imperative of the church.

Goal 4

Help the participants understand the lasting effects of slavery and the Jim Crow laws in America and urban society.

Goal 5

Clarify the underlying cause of the decay of urban communities to allow participants to develop greater empathy and concern for urbanites.

Goal 6

Move the participants to a more empathetic understanding of BWV20 and its cause and effect in the lives of those who hold it.

Goal 7

To adequately convince the participants that the BWV20 exists, which is fundamentally necessary for the project.

Goal 8

Convince the participants of the importance of understanding the BWV20 for relationship building, discipleship, and counseling.

Goal 9

Help each participant grow in cultural intelligence and in their desire to grow in Cultural Competence.

See Table 2 for a complete list of goals achieved by this project.

Table 2. Goals Achieved by the Project

Goals Achieved by the Project										
	Participants									
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Goals 1, 2	X			X		X	X	X	X	X
Goal 3	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Goal 4	X					X	X	X	X	X
Goal 5	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Goal 5	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Goal 7	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Goal 8	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Goal 9	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X

Spiritual Compatibility

Assessment Instrument B (Spiritual Inventory) was issued and examined before candidates were accepted as participants in the program. The self-assessed level of spirituality of each candidate needed to be considered sufficient for the candidates to participate in a spiritually dependent program. All candidates and alternates were judged to have sufficient spiritual veracity to participate in the program.

Possible Outcomes

Assessment Instruments C pre-test and D post-test data were collected, compared, and analyzed. The reliability of the hypotheses was partially examined by the correlation between the scores on the applicable assessment tools. Three different outcomes were possible. If the participants' results on the applicable sections of the assessment instruments were the same for both the pretest and posttest, the lack of change would bring the validity of the thesis statement into question. The instruments were not the sole means of assessment of the thesis statement. However, such a result would strongly suggest that the thesis statement was questionable and subject to further scrutiny through the other data collection methods.

If the participants' results on the pre-program assessment instruments were higher in the pre-program than in the post-program, it would be a negative change and suggest that the validity of the thesis statement was doubtful and in need of strong support from further data collection methods.

However, the results of the apparatus (see Table 3) showed significantly higher scores in the post-program assessment areas than in the pre-program. The results suggest that the thesis statement might be correct. The statement's validity would be further examined through responses from other project data collection methods.

See Table 3 for a summary of changes in the participants' worldview awareness.

Table 3. Changes in Participants' Worldview Awareness

This chart records the changes in the participants' Likert scale responses as a result of the immersion experience. Questions in bold type were considered important to the project. Positive numbers represent the level of positive change in the participants pesponses. "n" represents no change.

		\ PARTICIPANTS 1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1	**I desire to be more empathetic towards cultures I haven't experienced.**	1	1	1	1	1	2	n	1	n	n
2	**I intend to make a greater effort to understand urban culture.**	2	2	1	1	3	2	n	1	n	1
3	**I desire to understand worldviews that are different from my own.**	n	1	1	1	1	3	n	n	n	n
4	**Black people's social upheaval concerns me.**	2	3	3	1	2	1	3	2	n	4
5	**I appreciate the social complaints voiced by urban black protestors.**	n	1	1	1	2	2	n	2	n	1
6	**I consider race an important part of a person's Christian understanding and growth.**	4	-1	n	1	2	2	n	n	n	1
7	**I am concerned about the actions of some police officers in confrontations with urban black people.**	1	n	1	1	2	1	-1	n	1	2
8	I intend to make sure Black History Month is acknowledged in my church.										
9	I may side with black protestors against the police.										
10	**I will make an effort to understand black culture.**	1	2	1	1	2	2	1	n	1	2
11	**I feel black people are responsible for a majority of their problems.**	2	n	n	1	-1	n	n	n	n	-1
12	**I am concerned about the feelings of black people as a people group.**	1	1	1	1	1	1	3	n	1	n
13	I appreciate Jazz as the first uniquely American form of music.										
14	**When a black person talks about racial issues, I will try to engage in the conversation deeply.**	1	1	2	1	1	2	n	n	1	2
15	**When black people start to talk about their social problems, I will not try to steer the conversation toward something else.**	3	3	3		2			3	3	
16	**Slavery must be considered when assessing responsibility for the plight of urban black people today.**	n	n	2	2	2	3	n	1	n	2
17	I will take an interest in Black History Month.										
18	I find that I am "in tune" with other people's moods within my own culture.										
19	**I understand why black people are angry about social issues.**	n	1	1	1	2	2	n	1	1	2
20	I appreciate the importance of Hip-Hop culture.										
21	**I do not feel sympathy for communities who cause their own problems.**	1	2	n	1	2	1	1	1	1	n
22	**My first reaction is to assume that black people are justified in confronting police officers.**	-2	1	n	n	1	1	n	1	1	1

Table 3 (Continued)

This chart records the changes in the participants' Likert scale responses as a result of the immersion experience. Questions in bold type were considered important to the project. Positive numbers represent the level of positive change in the participants pesponses. "n" represents no change.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
23	I desire to be more "in tune" with other people's moods outside my own culture.										
24	I intend to gain a deeper understanding of Critical Race Theory.										
25	**A person's culture is a legitimate part of their Christianity.**	-3	1	n	n	n	1	n	n	n	n
26	I believed police reform concerning violence against unarmed black people would have been accomplished without riots.										
27	I wish I had understood and defended Colin Kaepernick's non-violent protest more.										
28	**I am often confused by black culture.**	1	n	n	1	2	1	1	n	n	2
29	I respect the desire of those who want Critical Race Theory taught in school.										
30	**I believe it is important for black people to fight for social rights.**	n	n	n	-1	n	n	n	n	1	n
31	I consider the violence of the Black Lives Matter movement to be understandable.	-1	n	-1	-2	n	n	-1	1	-2	n
32	I consider the confrontational manner of the Black Lives Matter and others to be unproductive.	-1	n	-1	n	-2	n	n	n	-1	-1
33	Social justice is important to me.										
34	I considered the hostility of the Black Lives Matter movement and similar groups to be an unfortunate necessity.										
35	I appreciate Rap music as a cultural art form created by urban youth.										
36	I find the complaints of black people to be understandable.										
37	**I understand and empathize with the hostile attitude of many black people.**	n	n	n	n	1	2	1	1	3	2
38	I understand the Covid-19 anti-vaccination attitude of urban black people.										
39	I understand the difference between Hip-Hop and Rap.										
40	Race-based conversations are necessary.										
41	**I will engage in race-based discussions with black congregants.**	n	3	3	3	2	2	4	3	1	2
42	I would like to understand minority cultures more intimately.										

Program Purpose

The program was developed to enhance the participants' felt sense of Cultural Competence by enabling them to understand the common-core urbanite worldview that emerged from the trauma-causing phenomena of 2020. The project was designed to steep participants in community values, points of contention, and societal markers concerning the worldview of urbanite people.

The project was deemed important to the ministry of the Hudson Valley Pastors (HVP) because as urbanites leave urban environments and relocate to suburban communities, the participants' ministry areas can be expected to continue to diversify. Churches will encounter a more complex and diversified mission field. It is anticipated that white suburban pastors—like the participant pool—can anticipate an increase in the number of urbanites who become community members and potential congregants. The HVP would benefit from mitigating the lack of appreciation for the existence and ramifications of the BWV20 and learning to minister to urbanites more effectively.

Theological Foundational Principles of the Program

This project was undergirded by the foundational belief that God desires unity within the body of Christ. All churches should be inclusive and open to all Bible-believing Christians. All Spirit-filled believers should be welcome in the church, and it is the duty of pastors to foster such inclusion in their congregations. The failure of such diversity and inclusiveness to thrive in the American church is a failure of focus, function, and fealty to Christ's mission and the tenets of Old Testament scripture. It was stated that God's interaction with mankind has always been redemptive and inclusive, ultimately drawing different races of people together. Even the

separation of Israel from other people groups was intended to purify their behavior and message for them to act as God's witness to all the world.

Therefore, it was posited that pastors, like the participants, have a theological and teleological imperative to learn to reach beyond racial and cultural lines and embrace all the people in their community. All participants agreed with this position. In the specific case of the identified problem within the HVP group, the teleological imperative would require participants to develop practical adaptations to the methodology and praxis they utilized in their churches. The adaptations would reflect a greater understanding and appreciation of cultural diversity, promoting more effective intercultural relationships. All participants agreed with this position.

It was further posited that God-loving, Holy Spirit-filled pastors with loving hearts possess the capacity to develop their ability to assess themselves, their culture, and the cultures around them. Such pastors can grow more conscious of the dynamics of intercultural interaction as individuals and corporately add to the existing corpus of pastoral, institutionalized cultural knowledge. It was posited that all participants should desire such growth, and all participants affirmed such a desire at the conclusion of the immersion project.

The Intervention: An Immersion Experience

Accordingly, an immersion project was designed to facilitate the desired growth in the HVP pastors practically by displaying the benefit and need for increased levels of Cultural Competence. The immersion experience was constructed to stimulate the pastors to develop the cognitive, affective, and behavioral skills that lead to effective and appropriate communication with people of other cultures. Individual participant data were collected using Assessment Instruments A, B, and C before the immersion program and Assessment Tool D at the conclusion

of the immersion program. Further information was collected through email responses to questions posed at the conclusion of each workbook section.

The only screening process utilized in establishing the participants was the Spiritual Inventory Assessment Instrument B (see Appendix B). All potential participants completed the Spiritual Inventory and were deemed spiritually qualified to take part in the program and offered the opportunity to become participants.

Project Workbook

An immersion experience was crafted featuring two discussion sessions and a self-guided workbook presenting immersive, experiential knowledge and information. Part 1 of the workbook was titled "Developing Cultural Competency: A Christian Perspective." Part 2 was titled "Black Worldview: A Sociocultural Immersion Program."

Part 1: Developing Cultural Competency—A Christian Perspective

This workbook section addressed the theological underpinnings of the project and the concepts of worldview, learning, and Cultural Intelligence. Participants were challenged to consider the existence of worldviews within Christianity that differ from their past experiences. They were asked to explore the possibility that other worldviews to which they were oblivious (to differing extents) are extant, developing, and undergoing transformation in the communities in which they minister. If worldviews cause people to sift words, experiences, stimuli, and new understandings through the prism of their worldview, it holds clear implications concerning a pastor's ability to communicate God's message successfully.

The participants' unconscious assumption of a single Christian worldview was dispelled. The pastors came to realize they lived with a subconscious assumption of a single, monolithic Christian social culture. Participants came to acknowledge that a Christian's race, age, social

standing, and cultural background all serve to profoundly form the lens through which life is experienced and understood (worldview). As such, it becomes important for pastors to consider, study, understand, and address the worldview of each congregant and community member to whom they minister.

<p style="text-align:center">Part 2: Black Worldview—A Sociocultural Immersion Program</p>

The second section of the project dealt extensively with the mindset, actions, and emotions of urbanites who lived in the inner city of New York during the turbulent year of 2020. This section was developed to provide relevant historical, social, political, and cultural information that would allow participants to develop cultural intelligence concerning urbanites.

<p style="text-align:center">Fulfillment of the Project Objectives</p>

<p style="text-align:center">Objective 1</p>

Part 1 of the workbook was dedicated to achieving the first objective of the program: "Establish the theological and teleological mandate for racial inclusiveness in local churches." Part 1 introduced the participants (P1 through P10) to the theological propositions underpinning the immersion program to accomplish this objective. First, an exploratory dialectic examining the various church positions concerning homogeneity and diversity within a congregation's racial, social, and cultural makeup was presented. This was followed by the apologetic presentation of a multicultural, inclusive church as the intended model for ecclesiastical worship.

Participants were asked to assess the doctrinal, theological apologetic presented by the RA, which posited that churches were intended to be diverse in unity. Participants were asked to agree or disagree with the apologetic. The success of the immersion experience rested on participants agreeing that diversity within the unity of the church is a godly desire.

The program presented the necessity of growing in Cultural Competence for all pastors. Developing Cultural Intelligence to facilitate cross-cultural community outreach was presented in the project as a teleological imperative based on the mission, method, and ministry of Christ. Participants needed to accept the teleological mandate of this imperative for the project to be successful and to prove the hypothesis on which the thesis was based.

All participants agreed with the theology, doctrine, teleology, and apologetic presented in the first section of the immersion experience. None of the participants believed that the homogeneous unit principle that recommends the development of monoracial, monocultural, and monoethnic churches was biblical or morally acceptable.

P6 agreed that Christians are meant to reach all people of all races and cultures. Since we live in a time and place where many cultures exist, the church must seek to reach them as a part of its mission.

P9 stated that he found this portion of the immersion particularly helpful for understanding the barriers in his mind that affect the intentional inclusion of diverse peoples and races in ministry and in his overall sphere of influence. He stated, "I had to really take time to consider this question. My initial response was that our modern culture, politics, and social ideologies have been something I should be on guard about. But I now am considering that God's leading in this area has been muted only by my frustration, pride, and indifference."

P3 responded most succinctly, summing up the response that was echoed by all the participants, saying, "Yes, I agree with this theological position because it is biblical."

The remainder of the first section of the workbook was dedicated to fostering a foundation on which the second section could be built. Participants were introduced to different learning theories revealing the gap between how they were educated and the methods at large in

the urban school system of today. The point was made that the system in which all the participants were trained is now outmoded and superseded by two generations of newer methodologies.

P10 is a public-school teacher who is well-versed in the discussed methodologies. He has successfully used a combination of cognitivism and constructivism to teach teenagers. The combination of "hands-on" learning experiences and thought-provoking discussions he has utilized has had the effect of helping teenagers to connect with the biblical information being taught. He recognized that he had been forced to adapt and change his style over time by necessity to reach the current generation of young students and Christian disciples.

The RA utilized this information gleaned from P10's teaching expertise to fashion elements of the culminating discussion session and to stimulate conversation concerning a pastor's willingness to adapt and change. All participants recognized that it was necessary to become intentional about change. The rapidly changing culture around the represented ministries called for ongoing self-evaluation and assessment of practices, competencies, skills, and abilities. Many participants had not considered the presented information in terms of their current ministry responsibilities.

P7 expressed a desire to continue to grow in his ability to use cognitive and constructivist elements in his ministry. He recognized that he tended to revert to a more behaviorist approach, which may be at odds with the urban blacks who may join his congregation in the future. Indeed, he recognized that such methods might be ineffective with the younger generation of congregants he was currently serving.

P3 was familiar with some of the materials but felt that the immersion materials had helped him better understand the different learning theories. P3 did not gain new insight from

this section of the project because he was already well-versed in learning theory, the education system, and, to some extent, the concept of worldview. He expressed a desire to move past the informational stage of Section 1 and delve into the immersive experience of the black urban culture in Section 2. A level of frustration was expressed that should be considered by other researchers utilizing this research project to develop corollary treatments relating to other social, racial, and cultural groups. This issue is discussed further in Chapter 5.

Other participants ranged in their responses to the material, some viewing it as a useful reminder and others reporting that it was new, eye-opening information. P1 expressed that despite his two degrees in education, he now realized that the things he had learned are now outdated. P7 said, "This chapter gave me a desire to learn more about what kids are learning in school (implicitly and explicitly) in terms of worldview. It was a great reminder to not assume people see the world like me or my generation but to keep learning where people are coming from."

P9 found the information concerning learning and worldview "overwhelming." The provided information about the educational system was new to his "way of thinking," and he recognized the extent to which it must impact the way our culture perceives itself and how people relate to each other. He stated he had learned that memory and information processing was much "more complex than I had considered for quite a long time," which challenged and encouraged him to incorporate the things he was learning through the project into his ministry and relationships and consciously use the information to improve his communication.

While an academic understanding of learning theory was never the intention of the immersion program, the RA believed that when the academic information in Section 1 was

married to the sociocultural application in Section 2, it would allow the participants to come to grips with the practical steps required to grow in Cultural Competence intentionally.

Some participants were already familiar with the concepts of learning theory. In contrast, other participants greatly valued the inclusion of the academic information. They used it to begin to consider the delineation of a structure for their personal change and growth towards greater cultural intelligence for the sake of fostering Cultural Competence.

P7 felt called to look for ways to make learning active, reflective, and communal to encourage learners to engage with new information, stimuli, and experiences based on the background they bring to the situation.

P1 recognized the practicality of utilizing more experiential learning with the younger generation and less expositional exhortation, which had been producing diminishing returns in ministry situations.

A discussion of the memory process was undertaken to prepare participants to understand the experiences, thoughts, and ideas forming the worldview introduced in Section 2. It was anticipated that participants would differ in their need for and appreciation of the materials presented in Section 1. Some participants were steeped in the subject matter and felt frustrated at the time expenditure it required. Others lacked any grounding in the subject matter and were grateful for the "valuable information," stating that it would significantly enhance their ability to teach and disciple.

Pastors are trained in methods of teaching and exegesis and develop their own system over time through practice and interaction with congregants. For pastors who minister in a monocultural ethos (monocultural, not necessarily mono-ethnic), the system that develops will be effective within that learning community. However, as post-modernity propagates the

celebration of multiculturalism, it will necessitate a reexamination of teaching methods, counseling skills, communication methods, and cultural understanding to account for the synthesizing effect of differing worldviews.

Part 1 of the workbook succeeded in its intended goal of instilling openness, interest, and commitment to the concept of Cultural Competence. All participants arrived at the desired mindset before commencing with Part 2 of the program. Individual participants were affected to differing extents by individual presentations of the immersion process, but all arrived at the starting point from which the second section of the project could be most beneficially utilized. All participants expressed full-throated adherence to the theological and doctrinal principles expressed, mitigating the potential obstacle to a viable thesis project.

It should be noted that the RA had the option to screen all potential participants for agreement with the doctrinal position that would be presented in the workshop, but he did not. The thesis project was developed to address a situation within the HVP group at large. The RA determined that screening out certain group members was inappropriate and chose to present the project to all members and associates of the HVP group. The RA reasoned that the generalizability of the immersion project was best judged by allowing all pastors who fit the targeted demographic the opportunity to undergo the immersion experience and evaluate its viability.

Objectives 2 and 3

The second and third objectives are addressed in Part 2 of the workbook: "Establish the existence of other worldviews and their significant ramifications vis-à-vis discipleship and counseling" and "Establish the existence and legitimacy of a common-core black urban worldview that emerged from the stimuli of 2020 (BWV20)."

Initial conversations revealed a prevailing view among the participants that all pervasive urban problems (crime, drugs, poverty, and illness) were created by the same people who lived in the urban communities. Viewing urban blacks as responsible for their condition seemed to have created a lack of empathy among the participants. It seemed difficult for them to connect emotionally to the plight of urban blacks, whom they deemed the initiators of their own downfall. It became evident to the RA that the participants had not considered the systemic or institutional causes of urban blight, crime, and educational and social inadequacies.

The RA sought to introduce the participants to the factors that had created and sustained the problems in the urban communities. It was reasoned that recognizing the degree to which urban blacks had been victimized by institutional, political, criminal, and social injustice would allow the participants to empathize with urban blacks to a greater extent.

Objectives 4 and 5

The fourth and fifth objectives state: "Establish the legitimacy of mitigating factors for the conditions of urban black society (crime, healthcare, and police relations)" and "Establish the legitimacy of the psychological scars that have created the BWV20 (slavery, Jim Crow, racism, social anger, rumination, groupthink, and prejudice)."

The presented materials overwhelmingly convinced the participants of the legitimacy of the mitigating factors to which they were introduced through the immersion experience. The participants expressed that they were exposed to new information; corrected in areas of historical, cultural, and social error; reintroduced to information they had forgotten; and enlightened concerning the importance of things they had esteemed lightly.

As pastors, they expressed strong emotional reactions to the perspectives, conditions, and clarifications they received through the immersion. The participants expressed emotions ranging

from embarrassment to shame and from sorrow to confusion at being so uninformed concerning the plight of a significant population group.

As pastors, they anticipated their ability to exegete and analyze people. The participants came to realize that their cultural analysis was predominantly monocultural, and they had been applying mono-ethnic standards across multicultural, multi-ethnic communities. They were struck by the impact and legacy of institutional racism and the degree to which they had underestimated it. They realized that they had not considered the lasting effects of slavery and Jim Crow on the education, socialization, health, prosperity, and mindset of black people.

All participants realized there were mitigating factors that explain the condition of African Americans in urban communities. Participants recognized that many of the factors that caused and sustained urban decay were completely beyond the control of the people who lived in the communities. Many of the participants came to realize that they had misplaced the blame for some of what they had seen in urban communities on the people themselves. They realized that there were explanations and reasons (not excuses) for some of the negative realities of urban living. Coming to this realization softened their focus on the black culture and allowed them to view urban people with a more empathetic lens. This development was a major step forward toward the goal of the immersion program.

It was the position of the RA that a greater degree of empathy towards the plight of urbanites would need to be developed if the participants were to truly desire to grow in Cultural Competence towards them. The development of such empathy seemed to occur or grow within each participant.

P9 was disgusted and appalled at the examples of institutional prejudice proven in the immersion materials. He stated that he now recognized that the negative impact of slavery, Jim

Crow laws, racism, and socioeconomic injustice toward black Americans penetrated deep into their lives, making it extremely hard, if not impossible, for most to realize the American Dream. He came to believe that whites in government and society at large had allowed hatred toward black urbanites to become embedded into the nation's laws, culture, and workforce, ultimately creating two Americas.

P10 was struck by how naïve he had been in his understanding of slavery and its far-reaching impact on this country. He had assumed that the effects of slavery had ended with the 13th Amendment and the Emancipation Proclamation. He said: "Overall, I was embarrassed by my lack of knowledge."

P6 was aware of some of the details concerning slavery and Jim Crow laws but was surprised at how many intentional decisions people and the government made to hurt black Americans consistently. It seemed "hard to imagine this actually happening." This comment concretized the need for Cultural Competence to be developed. When one social group's suffering is hard for members of another group to imagine within the same country, the need for greater cultural intelligence leading toward competence is underscored. The participants' responses revealed that they were all becoming cognizant of the reality that simply loving and accepting people would not lead to understanding and appreciation of them.

P2 did not learn anything new in this section of material but was reminded "very effectively" of things he had learned previously and the implications of historical events and facts that continue to affect our society today. All participants were college educated and aware of the historical existence of slavery in America. They were each aware of the concept of the Jim Crow laws but less familiar with the nature of the laws themselves. None of the participants had

ever come to grips with the Jim Crow laws' true nature, duration, debilitating effect, and lasting impact.

P3 stated that the information about slavery was not new to him, but the Jim Crow information was valuable because he had not realized its impact on America. He knew it was an issue in the South but did not realize the effects had spread all over the country to some degree. "It greatly altered my thinking. This was an eye-opener!" P1 spoke of how he had always looked on the Jim Crow laws as something that was done elsewhere and seemingly long ago.

P6 spoke of coming to a new understanding of how denying people the ability to work for themselves or be a part of society affects them. It became clear to him the effect such things had on the behavior of people to this day and how it would drastically change a culture's worldview and their perception of society and life even long after the laws were abolished. P7 felt it was shocking and tragic to realize that such institutional racism continued in such legally codified forms until so recently.

The participants were asked if the provided information altered their thinking about the lasting impact of slavery. The answers were salient to the efficacy of the immersion project. P1 became more aware or conscious of the lasting impact and trauma of slavery. P2 chose the word "enhance" instead of "alter" as the information confirmed and reminded him of what he had read and heard in recent years. The materials did help him to gain a deeper understanding of contemporary black culture in America. P3 said that the material in this section greatly altered his thinking. P6 felt it was easy to see how a lasting mark would be left on a people group after slavery and Jim Crow.

Participants were struck by how slavery and Jim Crow must have fundamentally changed the worldview of black Americans and how they see themselves living in society and in this

nation. P8 stated that he was unaware of the extent of the effects of racism on urbanites: "I don't think I had processed how so many black people felt and the frequency of discrimination against them until after the George Floyd incident." P8 grew up in the South and was aware of some residual aspects of slavery and Jim Crow but was surprised at the extent of its lingering effects.

P5 was deeply affected by the historical and social realities presented. Addressing the residual effect of Jim Crow laws, he said: "I can only imagine the psychological and emotional harm this has had even indirectly from one generation to another." P5's perspective on urbanites as the sole cause of their own social problems was radically altered by the project materials. He said: "It changed my perspective." P5 saw the extent to which black communities were often victims of organized crime in New York City.

P9 agreed that slavery and the Jim Crow laws still dramatically affect black urban people because of the number of years they were allowed to embed themselves into our culture. Children, parents, grandparents, and great-grandparents were all touched. Jim Crow generationally created the "two Americas" effect discussed above, and it does not just go away. P9 now views institutional racism as part of the fabric of a people group enslaved for generations and then pushed to the fringes of the world's most prosperous workforce and education system. He believes that both black and white Americans have been affected at the core of their individual and cultural ideologies by slavery, Jim Crow, and racism. He was convinced people were so profoundly affected by them that people on both sides were unable to see the indoctrination and its ingrained effects on how we relate to one another. P10 responded in a self-reflective, self-deprecating manner that these chapters showed him how uneducated he is about these important cultural issues.

Objectives 6 and 7

The sixth and seventh objectives state: "Establish the practical need for the intentional development of Cultural Competence and intelligence for ministry to urban blacks who relocate to the represented suburban regions" and "Establish that a felt need for intentional development of Cultural Competence and intelligence for ministry to urban blacks has been developed through the intervention program."

All of the participants expressed a desire for information that would help them prepare to understand the black urban worldview. Providing teaching materials to facilitate the intentional development of Cultural Competence was beyond the modest scope of the intervention program. The immersion was designed to create the acceptance of the BWB20 as a genuine phenomenon. Beyond accepting the BWV20's existence, the RA sought to convince participants to recognize the stimuli, phenomena, and historical-cultural elements that led to the development of the BWV20; help participants understand the significance of the BWV20 in cultural interaction, discipleship, and counseling efforts involving urban black people; foster a desire among the participants to intentionally seek greater cultural intelligence; and develop greater Cultural Competence towards urban black people. All the participants expressed they had been convinced by the immersion program that they needed to learn and exercise more effective ways of developing their abilities in cultural intelligence and competence.

P10 recognized his lack of Cultural Competence and expressed his strong desire to become more culturally competent to "minister to others with a differing worldview than my own." He acknowledged that his desire was not yet matched by his efforts, and he needed to "understand, appreciate, anticipate, respect, and value the worldview of others."

P7 felt the study confirmed that he and other white Americans needed to become aware of "our own ethnocentricities and to do the work of seeking to understand and appreciate other cultures, even if we don't always agree with everything about those cultures." P6 said, "The biggest thing I learned that has application in ministry is the idea that it may not be enough to welcome and love people. We need to be understanding and accommodating to a person's worldview. This takes more care, study, and attention than just trying to care for people."

<div style="text-align:center">Objective 8</div>

The eighth objective states: "Establish that eight out of ten participants have developed an increased sense of preparedness toward ministry to urban black congregants holding the BWV20." This final objective encapsulated the goal of the project itself. The RA determined that the project's success could only be established by a minimum of eight of the ten participants feeling substantially more prepared, from a cultural intelligence standpoint, to disciple and counsel urbanite congregants.

The Hudson Valley Pastors group was founded by the Conservative Baptists of America. The participants are all Conservative Baptists who are like-minded in praxis and doctrine. Through the decades, the Conservative Baptists have developed an ontological outlook that is held and accepted within its constituency in general and by the HVP pastors specifically. However, the representative churches and pastors exist in a society where changes, known as "paradigm shifts," occasionally occur, fundamentally changing the landscape of what can be said to be ontologically and epistemologically understood. It was posited that the year 2020 presented a barrage of phenomenological stimuli of such a magnitude as to cause such a paradigm shift in urbanite people. All participants concurred with this concept.

It was posited that the migration trends of New York State suggest that the participants will begin to encounter urbanites in their congregations and communities with worldviews that have radically shifted in response to 2020. This reality would necessitate a strategic, intentional response by the pastoral staffs represented by the participants. All participants concurred with this concept.

It was posited that the represented congregations would, in time, be augmented by urbanite congregants, bringing with them phenomenological experiences from cultural settings that differ greatly from the experiences of the present pastoral staff. The participants all concurred with this concept, recognizing that while a personal shift in ontology and epistemology may not be necessary, a willingness and ability to recognize and engage the ontology and epistemology of these urbanites will be essential.

The participants expressed a desire to develop new competencies of both an intercultural mindset and a skillset. They desired to better comprehend the strengths and limitations of their operant behavior within their own cultural context. The participants further expressed a recognition of their need to develop conscious, considered knowledge and understanding of their own worldview. Some participants were somewhat familiar with the concept of a worldview, while others had never considered its existence. Once they recognized that their "way of thinking" was indeed a worldview, it awakened them to the need for greater cultural self-awareness.

The pastors also came to exhibit an awareness of their need to surface new methodologies for creating sound cultural comparisons and contrasts with other social and ethnic groups that were free from cultural bias. The participants expressed the desire for materials to help them grow in Cultural Intelligence and Cultural Competence in the future. During the debriefing

session, all ten participants expressed greater feelings of preparedness and a greater desire and perceived ability to address urbanite congregants because they participated in the intervention project.

Chapter Summary

This chapter examined the data collected during the "Understanding an Urban Black Worldview: A Phenomenological Examination of 2020 Immersion Program." The examination of the data, responses, and debriefing interviews suggested that the program successfully developed a greater felt sense of Cultural Competence concerning the common-core worldview of urbanites within the participants. Accordingly, the thesis is considered proven in the affirmative.

The next chapter presents the RA's summary, conclusions, and recommendations concerning the project.

CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS

Review of Chapter 4

Chapter 4 examined the data collected during the intervention project entitled "Understanding an Urban Black Worldview: A Phenomenological Examination of 2020 Immersion Program." The examination of the data, responses, and interviews suggested that the program successfully developed a greater felt sense of Cultural Competence concerning the common-core worldview of urban black people within the participants. The thesis was validated.

Overview of Chapter 5

Chapter 5 presents an overview of the project and the conclusions and reflections that the research author (RA) formed during the project's development, actualization, and aftermath. It relates the achievements of the program, recognizes the study's limitations, examines the project's implications for other people groups in their need to grow in Cultural Competence, and presents suggestions for future research in this area of study.

Purpose of the Study

The DMIN action research project addressed a deficit concerning the level of Cultural Competence in the Hudson Valley Pastors (HVP) group regarding urbanite people. The project sought to enhance the participants' felt sense of Cultural Competence by equipping and enabling them to understand better the common-core black worldview that emerged following the events of 2020. The project provided historical, cultural, and social content to enhance the participants' cultural intelligence. The following purpose statement was formed: "The purpose of this DMIN

action research project was to enhance the participants' felt sense of Cultural Competence by enabling them to understand the common-core black worldview that emerged from the trauma-causing phenomena of 2020 by utilizing a one-month cultural immersion program."

The following thesis statement governed the intervention project's design and implementation: "The thesis of this action-based qualitative project is that if the participants complete the proposed intervention, they will develop a greater felt sense of Cultural Competence concerning black congregants with black worldview."

Summary of the Study

Ministry Need

Development of Greater Cultural Competence

The project's genesis occurred on May 25, 2020, when Minneapolis police officers arrested a man named George Floyd for a relatively minor, non-violent crime. The arrest quickly devolved into a violent incident recorded and shown on news programs worldwide. Mr. Floyd was handcuffed, restrained, and pinned to the ground by three police officers. An officer put his knee on Mr. Floyd's neck for 8 minutes and 15 seconds until Mr. Floyd's heart stopped due to cardiopulmonary arrest.[1] The public nature of this egregious phenomenological event gave entrée to a conversation in society at large that was mirrored within church communities concerning racial injustice.

White church members recognized their general obliviousness to the plight of their black counterparts. Prior conversations with black Christians about race and injustice began to take on

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[1] Andrew Baker, "Hennpin County Medical Examiner's Office Autopsy Report" (Minneapolis, MN, May 26, 2020), 1.

a new significance. White pastors and congregation members reconsidered what information they had heard and disagreed with their black counterparts.[2] White pastors reconsidered their blanket dismissal of accusations of racism, abuse, and police misconduct leveled by urbanites. Their black counterparts challenged some white pastors and congregants concerning these issues. Many white pastors challenged themselves to assess honestly how they would have regarded accusations against the Minnesota police officers in the George Floyd case if they had not seen it with their own eyes. Would they have thought that the urbanites were exaggerating and displaying bias against the police? Would they have assumed that the police were justified in their actions? Some white pastors wondered if they had been wrong when they failed to side with their black fellow Christians in the past.

The televised spectacle of police violence against an unarmed black man and subsequent riots had tremendous repercussions in American churches.[3] In many Conservative Baptist congregations around America, white pastors read letters of confession and apologized to black pastors concerning their blindness in the past. Many wondered why they had been so slow to see what was happening around them. Many pastors expressed regret, shame, and sorrow at their myopic-ness.[4] Some pastors in the HVP group expressed a desire to learn and improve their understanding of black people's perspectives, positions, outlooks, and viewpoints that had previously eluded them. This desire on the part of the HVP pastors became the basis for the intervention that evolved.

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[2] MacInnis.

[3] Ethan Magness, "White Pastors: Our Decision to Show Up Matters," Christianity Today, June 3, 2020, https://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/2020/june-web-only/white-pastor-race-racism-ally-friendship-george-floyd.html.

[4] MacInnis.

The RA examined books and papers that tangentially touched on pertinent areas of the pastors' concerns, but nothing directly addressed the areas of concern. The RA found that the literature was dated and failed to address the issues that concerned the HVP because the landscape of urbanite worldview changed drastically in 2020, and the worlds of academia and research were struggling to catch up. The theoretical methods and training materials the pastors desired to increase their cultural intelligence and competence as evangelical pastors ministering to urbanites did not exist. The RA concluded that an original approach would need to be developed for the HVP pastors. Accordingly, a new method would need to be developed by the RA, representing an original approach to equipping white pastors to address their paucity of Cultural Intelligence concerning urbanites within their ministry areas.

Initial Investigation

The literature examined by the RA recorded attitudes once expressed by urbanite people but which bore little correlation to present-day discussions. It became evident that the events of 2020 had significantly changed the playing field of urban relations. Conversations concerning the worldview and mindset of urbanite people would have to begin anew in earnest.

The RA began to study the phenomena and stimuli of 2020 with urbanites in mind. When the RA's investigation commenced, there were few published studies concerning the issues of interest. However, by the midpoint of 2021, dozens of studies had been undertaken. Research experts were now recognizing the phenomena and stimuli of 2020 as the deleterious forces that the RA's anecdotal evidence had suggested they were.

The impact of 2020 on the lives of urbanite people was now being examined.[5] Clinical studies had begun to establish the effects of the events of 2020 on black people and their

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[5] Kelly et al.

relationship with society. However, the emerging studies were not addressing the issues from an evangelical perspective. The events of 2020 needed to be scrutinized regarding urbanites being successfully discipled and counseled by white pastors in the future. The RA decided to initiate such a study.

As the RA intensified research into the phenomena of 2020, he continued interactions with the HVP pastors to clarify further their needs and develop an intervention. The adopted methodology would need to be capable of: accurately presenting the worldview developed by urbanites following the phenomena of 2020 (BWV20); assuring the pastors of the efficacy and validity of the RA's presentation of the BWV20; convincing the pastors that understanding BWV20 was teleologically essential, strategic, and beneficial to their ministry; and increasing the pastors' levels of cultural intelligence concerns of urbanites who become part of their congregations in the future. It became clear that certain obstacles stood in the way of the said methodology's success.

The pastors had expressed a desire to increase their understanding of urbanites' perspectives, positions, outlooks, and viewpoints that had previously eluded them. However, it became clear that a lack of knowledge or access to salient information did not solely cause this paucity of understanding. The RA was aware that the pastors had been exposed to the relevant information that could have informed them about the inner workings of the urbanite worldview. Initial assessment tools and ongoing interaction with the participants showed that, to one extent or another, they had each rejected the veracity of the information to which they had been exposed concerning urbanite perspectives. Indeed, without consciously doing so, they had rejected the existence and validity of an urbanite worldview.[6]

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[6] Sire.

If the pastors were to grow in Cultural Competence regarding urbanite people, they first had to be convinced that a common-core black worldview exists and that a common core black worldview is identifiable, discernible, and knowable. Furthermore, as practicing pastors with ministry responsibilities, they needed to be convinced that the investment of time was worthwhile because studying a common-core black worldview holds ministerial importance for them as pastors, for their ministry, and for the Christian Church at large. These goals were achieved, and the participants fully committed to the intervention. Throughout the project, the participants expressed a desire to learn more and more about the presented information. Requests for further resources were voiced, and great gratitude was expressed for the cultural intelligence imparted by the project.

Proposed Solution

The literature and anecdotal evidence gathered during the research phase of this project were compelling. The evidence suggested a need in the HVP group for increased Cultural Competence regarding urbanite Christians. The controlling questions concerning the dearth of Cultural Competence concerning urbanites were: What had caused the lack of Cultural Competence? Had the pastors sought greater Cultural Competence in the past? Could a desire for greater Cultural Competence be developed amid the pastors?

The RA determined that, to various degrees, the issues of apathy, lack of empathy, ignorance, Cultural Intelligence, and understanding lay at the root of the problem. Therefore, immersing participants in the urbanites' feelings of anger, disillusionment, and disenfranchisement could lay a foundation for greater Cultural Intelligence amongst the HVP pastors. Increasing the HVP pastors' level of cultural intelligence could pave the way for their development of Cultural Competence and lead them to create a metamorphosis of the Cultural

Competence in their congregations. Increasing the Cultural Competence of their churches would represent an essential first step in preparing their churches to meet the challenges of reaching novel social groups within their community in a manner that would be received as relevant. Such potential outcomes validated the RA's expenditure of time and effort in developing and actualizing an intervention program and convinced the pastors that participating in the project was essential.

Conceptualization of the Intervention Project

A condensed, focused cultural immersion intervention program related to generalized urbanite experiences should be developed. The program introduced participants to the community values, points of contention, and societal markers of urbanite people in the wake of the phenomena of 2020. The program was developed to intentionally avoid or ameliorate the cultural, philosophical, and theological objections of the Conservative Baptist pastors' mindset.[7] A delicate balancing act was required to balance the dissemination of vital information, the requisite force of the RA's assertions, and the sensibilities of the participating pastors, but participant responses indicated that the balance was successfully actualized.

The program curriculum sought to provide a biblical, doctrinally acceptable argument for the development of Cultural Competence. The program would be based on the RA's proposition of a divine teleological purpose for the church. The participants accepted the theological underpinnings of the project that the church is intended to embody diversity, unity, togetherness, and acceptance. They recognized that for these underpinnings to flourish within each congregation, it would take intentional effort on the part of church leadership to foster the inclusiveness that the first-century Church offered. The RA presented that effort as a teleological

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[7] Grant, 18.

imperative to all pastors. Once established, that teleology would provide a foundation for the exploration of historical, cultural, social, practical, and personal phenomena and stimuli with the potential to hinder or foster the participants' achievement of God's divine purpose for their churches. The RA's teleological argument was accepted and attested to by all participants.

This program acclimated participants to the common-core black worldview. The project presented the thoughts and emotions of urbanites that often go unexpressed. The information was provided to enable the participants to discover, address, and overcome cultural differences, social barriers, and misunderstandings that could hinder the development of a successful counseling relationship with new black congregation members.

<div align="center">The Project</div>

The thesis project was designed and implemented as an intervention to address the problem in the HVP. The intervention successfully equipped participants to understand the trauma-causing phenomena related to new black congregants. The participants were provided with a nuanced analysis of urbanite culture. Historical information and prevailing academic understanding of the phenomena-caused issues that affect urbanites were provided. They learned to understand various aspects of the 2020 phenomena better, and their detrimental effects were considered, assessed, analyzed, codified, and developed into a practical training tool for the participants. The RA recognized that the thoroughness of the presentation allowed the participants to overcome the skepticism that had derailed them in the past and threatened to hinder them at the beginning of the project.

The project began by concretizing the theological, kerygmatic, epistemological, and pragmatic importance of the project. Some of the participants questioned the need for some of the introductory information. One considered it overly "intellectual;" another saw it as

superfluous. However, comments made in the debriefing session and subsequent conversations indicated that the scholastic level of the research was a contributing factor in the participants' acceptance of and investment in the project.

It was surmised that participants operating primarily within their own cultural setting might not recognize the need to expand their level of cultural intelligence. The RA's supposition concerning the participants' monocultural focus was confirmed. Many participants had not previously considered the need to exegete other cultures within their communities through a different lens than the one used to assess the majority culture. An earnest desire to treat all people equally had manifested in a failure to consider the diverse needs of different people.

One alternate who did not complete the study expressed their contention that treating each person as an individual illuminated the need to develop specific Cultural Competence. No one who had completed the project concurred with this view. All participants came to recognize that an intentional appreciation and understanding of novel cultures were essential to ministry success.

The RA noted that participants were emotionally moved by the volume and nature of the phenomena experienced by urbanites in 2020. They were aware of the different elements involved but had not considered the paralyzing reality of their synergistic effect on urbanites. The project informed the participants of the debilitating effects of COVID-19 isolation on urbanites. They were shocked to discover the distrust urbanites felt for the healthcare system in general and the COVID-19 vaccine specifically. This information provided a link that unlocked the participants' understanding of the black worldview of 2020 (BWV20). They gained a deeper understanding of and appreciation for how seemingly isolated issues were connected. Elements such as mandatory distance learning for young students, televised racial and social unrest,

political divisiveness, racial discrimination, ethnic violence, the emergence of the Black Lives

Matter (BLM) Movement, and mass rumination on police brutality induced by media coverage

had inundated the people. The COVID lockdown exacerbated the problem in urban communities.

The participants were deeply touched by the fear and pain endured by urbanites. They were

aware of many of these deleterious elements existing in society but had not considered a single

community being saturated with them in a constricted period.

Establishing the Existence of a Common-Core Urbanite Worldview

The concept of worldview is generally individualized because it is partially based on

personal experience. However, the RA proposed that the events of 2020 created a distinct and

identifiable common-core worldview (urbanite worldview) among black people from urban

communities. Urbanites encountered a common set of phenomena in 2020 that included social

upheaval, economic uncertainty, and political divisiveness. The urbanite experiences of 2020 led

to identifiable, homogeneous feelings of anger, fear, disillusionment, and disenfranchisement.

These shared experiences became a codifying element in the development of BWV20.

The existence of a BWV20 was to be established to the satisfaction of all participants

through the evidence provided in the immersion project. Acceptance of the actuality of said

worldview was foundational to the remainder of the project. All project participants accepted the

existence and relevance of a common-core urbanite worldview BWV20.

Having accepted the existence of BWV20, participants were invited to experience the

urbanite perspective, seeing salient phenomena through their eyes and analyzing their cumulative

effect. The program results showed that this immersion process created a greater capacity to

empathize with the urbanite culture among all the individual participants. The program

successfully created a felt need within the participants for intentional growth in cultural intelligence and competence.

The RA was unable to truly compare the results of the research project with previous studies or the published work analyzed in the literature review. The RA's attempts to find comparable efforts among evangelical Conservative Baptist pastors or other denominations proved unfruitful. The RA's intervention, designed to expand the desire for Cultural Competence among pastors, appears to stand alone at this time. Most published works concerning the development of Cultural Competence are centered on business applications for increasing sales and developing international business relations. A work dedicated to increasing pastoral awareness of Cultural Competence for discipleship and counseling is a new, and perhaps vital, addition to the compendium of Cultural Competence literature.

While implementing the project, the RA was struck by the diverse views the participants arrived at concerning the materials. There was no means of anticipating how participants would respond to the ancillary information provided. Responses ranged from great appreciation to mild annoyance concerning anything they deemed unnecessary to delineate the project's goal. Future efforts to assist pastors with developing Cultural Competence and Cultural Intelligence may need to consider the time concerns of participants running active ministries.

Transferability of the Intervention Project

The project results indicated that similar efforts could be utilized in other settings. While other social groups may not have the same demonstrable reaction to phenomena such as 2020, it is still possible that a practical common core worldview can be delineated for training purposes. The RA believes that the depth of response to the presentation of the urbanite worldview by the

participants merits future research into developing intentional training materials for increasing

Cultural Competence. The transferability of this project was discussed in detail in Chapter 3.

Major Findings

Validation of the Thesis

While the sample size was small, the impact of the immersion program on the

participants exceeded the expectations of the RA. The collected data confirmed that the

participants successfully engaged in the cultural context of another people group. All participants

were profoundly affected by the immersion experience and gained knowledge, understanding,

compassion, and empathy that they had not previously experienced or possessed. Assessment

Instruments C and D showed that responses in salient areas had remained high or increased by

the end of the program in the participants.

Evidence of Common Experiences

All the participants expressed that through the project they had been exposed to

information that was new to them, reminded of things they had forgotten or overlooked, caused

to reconsider things they had dismissed, and encouraged to see things through the eyes of others.

Participants found the experience disconcerting, liberating, informative, thought-provoking,

paradigm-shifting, and motivating. The participants expressed the ability to see through the eyes

of a different people group for the first time, allowing for contemplation of events, phenomena,

and stimuli in a new and vital manner.

Many participants expressed a sense of shame concerning their failure to consider the

perspective of urbanite people. As pastors dedicated to loving and discipling others, it was

disconcerting to recognize that the pain and suffering of a people group had escaped their notice.

Participants confessed that they had been aware of some facts, details, events, and historical information presented in the immersion program. However, none of the stimuli had previously affected them to the level they considered appropriate at the conclusion of the immersion experience.

Participants expressed a felt desire to grow in Cultural Competence and asked for guidance and instruction in their efforts. This request was beyond the scope of this research project but illustrated a need for Cultural Intelligence and Cultural Competence development tools for the evangelical community.

Answers to Research Questions

The first research question asked, "What effect, if any, will immersion in the community values, points of contention, and societal markers concerning the worldview of urban black people have on the participants' sense of appreciation and understanding of the black worldview?" The answer to this question was affirmative. At the conclusion of the project, all participants expressed a greater appreciation for and understanding of the existence and validity of a black worldview. They understood how and why the black worldview existed and how it differed from their own. They recognized that the monolithic worldview they held previously was not the only one held by Christians within their environment. Each participant expressed that they have come to understand how the background, societal experiences, and communal attitudes experienced by individuals could shape and form a worldview vastly different from others. Each participant recognized the need to appreciate, value, and examine each person's worldview as they counsel and disciple.

The assumption of a monocultural worldview was dispelled and all participants affirmed the need to grow in Cultural Intelligence. Each participant recognized that there was a need to

intentionally develop their Cultural Intelligence and understanding so they could grow in Cultural Competence.

The pastors believed that the immersion program helped them grow tremendously in Cultural Intelligence, while recognizing that a great deal of practical work, spiritual understanding, listening, and self-assessment remains to be done if they are to excel in Cultural Competence. As pastors, they recognize that the difficult work they have ahead of them is not optional; rather, it is a responsibility that comes along with being a pastor and a Christian. All participants professed a willingness, desire, and intention to take the steps required to grow in Cultural Competence.

The second research question asked, "Will immersion in the common-core urban black worldview foster a need to develop greater Cultural Competence in the participants?" The answer to this question was also affirmative. All participants expressed a desire to develop greater Cultural Competence. The materials in which the participants were immersed exposed a felt need in each of them to grow and excel in Cultural Competence. Each participant recognized a dearth of growth in this vital area of their pastoral arsenal. Participants realized their Cultural Intelligence was monocultural, as were the methodologies they currently utilize to exegete society. The participants said that they had not formally recognized the need for a cross-cultural, culturally intelligent method to understand other cultures within society. Each expressly desired the felt need and intention to intentionally take steps in the future to grow in Cultural Competence.

Conclusion

Recommendations for Further Research

The members of the Hudson Valley Pastors (HVP) group had expressed a desire to gain Cultural Intelligence in order to understand the point of view of the black urban people they had encountered. As stakeholders in this project, their interests were clearly defined and met. The participants all felt more equipped as pastors to engage urbanites and build positive relationships. The pastors expressed an intention to grow in Cultural Intelligence and seek methods to develop Cultural Competence. As leader of the HVP, the RA has committed to developing methods to facilitate the cultural competency growth of the HVP members.

The RA is satisfied with the success of the intervention project. The participants desired growth and achieved it. The RA believes that further study is warranted to determine if a felt desire to understand other worldviews is essential to fostering the desired change. The question of whether tactical immersion in another culture and worldview is worthy of study will have a positive effect on any evangelical Christian based on teleological and theological imperatives. This question will be of import to stakeholders as they seek to stimulate growth in Cultural Intelligence and Competence in their congregation.

It is suggested that the mindset of an evangelical Christian is such that exposure to the suffering, experiences, and thinking behind the actions of Christians from other social, cultural, and economic groups may inspire a desire within pastors to learn and grow in their understanding of Cultural Intelligence. The desire to grow in Cultural Intelligence may spark a felt need for development in Cultural Competence. If further research validates this supposition, then the development of deliberate and intentional training tools to increase Cultural Intelligence and Cultural Competence in Evangelical congregants seems warranted.

The research project successfully reached its objectives and goals. Research questions were affirmatively answered, and the thesis was proven valid. The program successfully established the existence of the common-core black worldview resulting from 2020 and proved that open-minded pastors could be brought to an understanding of their dearth of Cultural Competence concerning the urbanite people group. Once established as a practical reality and a theological and teleological responsibility, pastors felt moved toward intentional change.

In the future, it is hoped that similar research will be conducted in other people groups. Indeed, the hope of the RA is that this project will be the first of many. The research project results clearly indicated the practical benefit of exposure to other cultural worldviews. The RA imagines that knowledgeable members of other people groups will initiate similar undertakings. Using this thesis project as a guideline, pastors could develop new immersive programs capable of acquainting pastors from different racial, social, economic, and cultural groups with their community's inner workings and concerns.

While it is not evident that an equally discernable common-core worldview can be identified in other social groups, it seems probable that historical and cultural events have formed some semblance of commonality in their thinking and attitudes. Research into the feasibility of identifying, assessing, and presenting these worldviews seems valid and essential. The RA hopes that this thesis project will catalyze greater experimentation, examination, and appreciation of the importance of understanding the worldviews of the people around us.

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APPENDIX A: IRB APPROVAL LETTER

Date: 12-15-2022

IRB #: IRB-FY22-23-51
Title: Understanding an Urban Black Worldview
Creation Date: 7-14-2022
End Date:
Status: Approved
Principal Investigator: Gershwin Grant
Review Board: Research Ethics Office
Sponsor:

Study History

Submission Type	Initial	Review Type	Exempt	Decision	No Human Subjects Research

Key Study Contacts

Member	Michael Williams	Role	Co-Principal Investigator	Contact	XXXXXXXXXX
Member	Gershwin Grant	Role	Principal Investigator	Contact	XXXXXXXX
Member	Gershwin Grant	Role	Primary Contact	Contact	XXXXXXXXX

APPENDIX B: ASSESSMENT INSTRUMENT B

PERSONAL FORMATION SURVEY

ASSESSMENT INSTRUMENT B: Personal Spiritual Inventory*	
ID # _____ DATE _____	
Circle the number that represents the degree to which the statement is true in your life.	NO > > > > > > > YES
1 I spend ____ hours ____ minutes alone praying each day.	
2 I am extroverted.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
3 I seek God before I do anything big or small.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
4 I rely on God more than my own abilities.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
5 I spend ___ hours ___ minutes listening to God when I pray.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
6 My love for God is passionate.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
7 My life is based on helping people.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
8 I am open and honest before most people.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
9 I am led by the Spirit of God.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
10 I love all people.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
11 I know how to abide in Christ.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
12 I keep up with local news.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
13 I am connected to my community.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
14 I have a pure heart before God.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
15 I keep up with world news.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
16 I spend time "being still" before God.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
17 I follow social issues.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
18 I am socially conscious.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
19 I am a person of strong faith.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
20 I am never too busy to pray for other people.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
21 I turn to God often in good times.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
22 I consider myself to be a social person.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
23 Spiritually I am growing.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
24 I consider myself to be a humble person.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
25 I personally outreach evangelistically.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
26 I love other people more than myself.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
27 I am empathetic.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

	Circle the number that represents the degree to which the statement is true in your life.	NO > > > > > > > YES
28	I am patient with all races of people.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
29	I am kind to all races of people.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
30	People sense God's presence with me.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
31	I do not try to tell people how to live.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
32	I am a joyful person.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
33	I feel my spirit being renewed day by day.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
34	I feel that I am spiritually alive.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
35	I have a restful, not an agitated, heart.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
36	I care about people who are not friends or family.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
37	I care about Christ being formed in me.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
38	I feel God doing new things in my heart.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
39	I am thankful to God each day.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
40	God cares about all races of people.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
41	I experience God's love towards me.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
42	I am optimistic about the future.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
43	I am optimistic about the future of my country.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
44	The Bible speaks about social justice.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
45	I feel God doing new things in my heart.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
46	God blesses America.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
47	I am not a fearful person.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
48	My relationship with God is fresh and vibrant.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
49	I sense God guiding me each day.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
50	God wants me to care about all races.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
51	I care about all races of people.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
52	I reach out to all races of people.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
	* This inventory was originally developed by Rev. Gershwin Grant. Modifications have been made for use with this project. No psychometric claims concerning validity are being made. The tool will be used to assist the RA in analyzing the participants.	

APPENDIX C: ASSESSMENT INSTRUMENT C

WORLDVIEW AWARENESS PART 1

ASSESSMENT INSTRUMENT C:
WORLDVIEW AWARENESS PART 1

ID #: _____   DATE: _____

Please carefully read each statement below and rate how frequently you have felt or acted in the manner described by circling the appropriate number. There are no right or wrong answers or trick questions. Please answer ALL questions as honestly as you can.

		NEVER	RARELY	SOMETIMES	OFTEN	ALWAYS
1	I am empathetic towards cultures I haven't experienced.	0	1	2	3	4
2	I make a great effort to understand urban culture.	0	1	2	3	4
3	I desire to understand worldviews that are different from my own.	0	1	2	3	4
4	Black people's social upheaval does not concern me a great deal.	0	1	2	3	4
5	I have an appreciation for the social complaints voiced by urban black protestors.	0	1	2	3	4
6	I consider race an important part of a person's Christian understanding and growth.	0	1	2	3	4
7	I am concerned about the actions of some police officers in confrontations with urban black people.	0	1	2	3	4
8	I intend to make sure Black History Month is acknowledged in my church.	0	1	2	3	4
9	I traditionally side with black protestors against the police.	0	1	2	3	4
10	I have made an effort to understand black culture.	0	1	2	3	4
11	I feel black people are responsible for a majority of their problems.	0	1	2	3	4
12	I am concerned about the feelings of black people as a people group.	0	1	2	3	4
13	I appreciate Jazz music.	0	1	2	3	4
14	When a black person talks about racial issues, I try to engage in the conversation deeply.	0	1	2	3	4
15	When black people start to talk about their social problems, I try to steer the conversation towards something else.	0	1	2	3	4
16	Slavery must be considered when assessing responsibility for the plight of urban black people today.	0	1	2	3	4
17	I take an interest in Black History Month.	0	1	2	3	4

ASSESSMENT INSTRUMENT C:
WORLDVIEW AWARENESS PART 1

	Please carefully read each statement below and rate how frequently you have felt or acted in the manner described by circling the appropriate number. There are no right or wrong answers or trick questions. Please answer ALL questions as honestly as you can.	NEVER	RARELY	SOMETIMES	OFTEN	ALWAYS
18	I find that I am "in tune" with other people's moods within my own culture.	0	1	2	3	4
19	I understand why black people are angry about social issues.	0	1	2	3	4
20	I appreciate the importance of Hip-Hop culture.	0	1	2	3	4
21	I do not feel sympathy for communities who cause their own problems.	0	1	2	3	4
22	My first reaction is to assume that black people are justified in confronting police officers.	0	1	2	3	4
23	I find that I am "in tune" with other people's moods outside my own culture	0	1	2	3	4
24	I intend to gain a deeper understanding of Critical Race Theory.	0	1	2	3	4
25	A person's culture is a legitimate part of their Christianity.	0	1	2	3	4
26	I believed police reform concerning violence against unarmed black people would have been accomplished without riots.	0	1	2	3	4
27	I wish I had understood and defended Colin Kaepernick's non-violent protest more.	0	1	2	3	4
28	I am often confused by black culture.	0	1	2	3	4
29	I respect the desire of those who want Critical Race Theory taught in school.	0	1	2	3	4
30	I believe it is important to fight for social rights.	0	1	2	3	4
31	I consider the violence of the Black Lives Matter movement to be unnecessary.	0	1	2	3	4
32	I consider the confrontational manner of the Black Lives Matter and others to be unproductive.	0	1	2	3	4
33	Social justice is important to me.	0	1	2	3	4
34	I considered the hostility of the Black Lives Matter and similar groups to be uncalled for.	0	1	2	3	4

ASSESSMENT INSTRUMENT C:
WORLDVIEW AWARENESS PART 1

	Please carefully read each statement below and rate how frequently you have felt or acted in the manner described by circling the appropriate number. There are no right or wrong answers or trick questions. Please answer ALL questions as honestly as you can.	NEVER	RARELY	SOMETIMES	OFTEN	ALWAYS
35	I appreciate Rap music.	0	1	2	3	4
36	I find the complaints of black people to be justified.	0	1	2	3	4
37	I understand and empathize with the hostile attitude of many black people.	0	1	2	3	4
38	I understand the Covid-19 anti-vaccination attitude of urban black people.	0	1	2	3	4
39	I understand the difference between Hip-Hop and Rap.	0	1	2	3	4
40	Race-based conversations tend to irritate me.	0	1	2	3	4
41	I desire to avoid race-based discussions.	0	1	2	3	4
42	I would like to understand minority cultures more intimately.	0	1	2	3	4

APPENDIX D: ASSESSMENT INSTRUMENT D

WORLDVIEW AWARENESS PART 2

ASSESSMENT INSTRUMENT D:
WORLDVIEW AWARENESS PART 2

ID #: _____ DATE: _____

	Please carefully read each statement below and rate how you feel as a result of participating in this study. Grade your responses from 0 (strongly disagree) to 4 (strongly agree). There are no right or wrong answers or trick questions. Please answer ALL questions as honestly as you can.	STRONGLY DISAGREE				STRONGLY AGREE
1	I desire to be more empathetic towards cultures I haven't experienced.	0	1	2	3	4
2	I intend to make a greater effort to understand urban culture.	0	1	2	3	4
3	I desire to understand worldviews that are different from my own.	0	1	2	3	4
4	Black people's social upheaval concerns me.	0	1	2	3	4
5	I appreciate the social complaints voiced by urban black protestors.	0	1	2	3	4
6	I consider race an important part of a person's Christian understanding and growth.	0	1	2	3	4
7	I am concerned about the actions of some police officers in confrontations with urban black people.	0	1	2	3	4
8	I intend to make sure Black History Month is acknowledged in my church.	0	1	2	3	4
9	I may side with black protestors against the police.	0	1	2	3	4
10	I will make an effort to understand black culture.	0	1	2	3	4
11	I feel black people are responsible for a majority of their problems.	0	1	2	3	4
12	I am concerned about the feelings of black people as a people group.	0	1	2	3	4
13	I appreciate Jazz as the first uniquely American form of music.	0	1	2	3	4
14	When a black person talks about racial issues, I will try to engage in the conversation deeply.	0	1	2	3	4
15	When black people start to talk about their social problems, I will not try to steer the conversation toward something else.	0	1	2	3	4
16	Slavery must be considered when assessing responsibility for the plight of urban black people today.	0	1	2	3	4
17	I will take an interest in Black History Month.	0	1	2	3	4

ASSESSMENT INSTRUMENT D:
WORLDVIEW AWARENESS PART 2

Please carefully read each statement below and rate how you feel as a result of participating in this study. Grade your responses from 0 (strongly disagree) to 4 (strongly agree). There are no right or wrong answers or trick questions. Please answer ALL questions as honestly as you can.

		STRONGLY DISAGREE				STRONGLY AGREE
18	I find that I am "in tune" with other people's moods within my own culture.	0	1	2	3	4
19	I understand why black people are angry about social issues.	0	1	2	3	4
20	I appreciate the importance of Hip-Hop culture.	0	1	2	3	4
21	I do not feel sympathy for communities who cause their own problems.	0	1	2	3	4
22	My first reaction is to assume that black people are justified in confronting police officers.	0	1	2	3	4
23	I desire to be more "in tune" with other people's moods outside my own culture.	0	1	2	3	4
24	I intend to gain a deeper understanding of Critical Race Theory.	0	1	2	3	4
25	A person's culture is a legitimate part of their Christianity.	0	1	2	3	4
26	I believed police reform concerning violence against unarmed black people would have been accomplished without riots.	0	1	2	3	4
27	I wish I had understood and defended Colin Kaepernick's non-violent protest more.	0	1	2	3	4
28	I am often confused by black culture.	0	1	2	3	4
29	I respect the desire of those who want Critical Race Theory taught in school.	0	1	2	3	4
30	I believe it is important for black people to fight for social rights.	0	1	2	3	4
31	I consider the violence of the Black Lives Matter movement to be understandable.	0	1	2	3	4
32	I consider the confrontational manner of the Black Lives Matter and others to be unproductive.	0	1	2	3	4
33	Social justice is important to me.	0	1	2	3	4
34	I considered the hostility of the Black Lives Matter movement and similar groups to be an unfortunate necessity.	0	1	2	3	4

ASSESSMENT INSTRUMENT D:
WORLDVIEW AWARENESS PART 2

Please carefully read each statement below and rate how you feel as a result of participating in this study. Grade your responses from 0 (strongly disagree) to 4 (strongly agree). There are no right or wrong answers or trick questions. Please answer ALL questions as honestly as you can.	STRONGLY DISAGREE				STRONGLY AGREE
35	I appreciate Rap music as a cultural art form created by urban youth.	0	1	2	3	4
36	I find the complaints of black people to be understandable.	0	1	2	3	4
37	I understand and empathize with the hostile attitude of many black people.	0	1	2	3	4
38	I understand the Covid-19 anti-vaccination attitude of urban black people.	0	1	2	3	4
39	I understand the difference between Hip-Hop and Rap.	0	1	2	3	4
40	Race-based conversations are necessary.	0	1	2	3	4
41	I will engage in race-based discussions with black congregants.	0	1	2	3	4
42	I would like to understand minority cultures more intimately.	0	1	2	3	4

APPENDIX E: PARTICIPANT INFORMATION AND CONSENT FORM

Consent Form

Title of the Project: "Understanding an Urban Black Worldview: A Phenomenological Examination of 2020"
Principal Investigator: Rev. Dr. Gershwin Grant, student at Liberty University

Invitation to be part of a Research Study

You are invited to participate in a research study investigating the effectiveness of a 30-day cultural immersion curriculum. You were selected as a possible participant in this research because you meet the study qualifications: (1.) You must be a pastor who has ministered in New York state north of New York City during portions of the four years before the study, and (2.) you must identify as other than black and other than urban male. Taking part in this research is voluntary.

Please take time to read this entire form and ask questions before deciding whether to participate in this research.

What is the study about and why is it being done?

The purpose of this study is to determine the effect of a curriculum on the Hudson Valley Pastors' peer group and other New York state ministers. Approximately ten people are expected to participate in this research.

What will happen if you take part in this study?

If you agree to be in this study, I will ask you to do the following things:
    1.) Participate in an initial information meeting.
    2.) Follow a 30-day curriculum that includes a review of historical, cultural, and social events. The curriculum will attempt to provide an unbiased review of the events. However, citations will be provided for your personal evaluation of the raw data should you choose to do so.
    3.) Recall and contemplate the reviewed events and your initial responses to them. You will be asked to reveal your initial reaction to the events and current responses in light of the study materials.

How could you or others benefit from this study?

The benefit of participation includes exposure to information that has been researched and collated to enable your investigation of other worldviews. Your participation may also equip you to counsel some congregants more effectively.

What risks might you experience from being in this study?

The risks involved in this study are minimal, which means they are equal to the risks you would encounter in everyday life. The program calls for self-examination. You may be confronted with thoughts or parts of your personality that displease you.

How will personal information be protected?

The records of this study will be kept private. No information obtained in connection with this research study that can be identified with you will be disclosed; your results will be kept confidential. Code numbers will be used instead of names in all written reports or publications, and only group data will be presented.

The code number key and research results will be kept in a locked safe in my residence, and only I will have access to the records while I work on this project. I will finish analyzing the data by November 2022. I will then destroy all original reports and identifying information.

Research data (including all audio or video recordings) will be stored on a password-protected computer and may be used in future presentations. After three years, all electronic records will be deleted.

Does the researcher have any conflicts of interest?

The researcher serves as the Area Director of the Conservative Baptist Hudson Valley Pastors Group.

This disclosure is made so you can decide if this relationship will affect your willingness to participate in this study. No action will be taken against an individual based on their decision to participate or not participate in this study.

Is study participation voluntary?

Participation in this research study is voluntary. Your decision to participate will not affect your future relations with Liberty University or the Hudson Valley Pastors Group in any way. If you decide to participate, you are free not to answer any question or withdraw at any time without affecting those relationships.

What should you do if you decide to withdraw from the study?

If you choose to withdraw from the study, please contact the researcher at the email address or phone number in the next paragraph. Should you choose to withdraw, data collected from you will be destroyed immediately and will not be included in this study. Focus group data will not be destroyed, but your contributions to the focus group will not be included in the study if you choose to withdraw.

Whom do you contact if you have questions or concerns about the study?

The researcher conducting this study is Rev. Dr. Gershwin Grant. You may ask any questions you have now. If you have questions later, **you are encouraged** to contact him at ▨▨▨▨▨▨ o ▨▨▨▨▨▨▨▨. You may also contact the researcher's faculty sponsor, Dr. Michael Williams, a ▨▨▨▨▨▨▨▨▨▨

Whom do you contact if you have questions about your rights as a research participant?

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 Ste. 2845, Lynchburg, VA 24515, or send an email to: irb@liberty.edu.

Disclaimer: The Institutional Review Board (IRB) is tasked with ensuring that human subjects research will be conducted in an ethical manner as defined and required by federal regulations. The topics covered and viewpoints expressed or alluded to by student and faculty researchers are those of the researchers and do not necessarily reflect the official policies or positions of Liberty University.

Your Consent

By signing this document, you are agreeing to be in this study. Make sure you understand what the study is about before you sign. You will be given a copy of this document for your records. The researcher will keep a copy of this document with the study records. If you have any questions about the study after signing this document, you can contact the study team using the information provided above.

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

☐ The researcher has my permission to [audio-record/video-record/photograph] me as part of my participation in this study.

_____
Printed Participant Name

_____   _____
Participant Signature   Date

APPENDIX F: TEACHING METHODOLOGY

It is increasingly important for pastors to develop relevant, pertinent, and adaptive levels of CC. An important but overlooked aspect of pastors involves the manner in which they were educated and the methods they, therefore, employ in teaching others. Because pastors educated in North America have several identifiable similarities in the methods with which they were educated, a brief discussion of the four main learning theories employed to some extent in North American learning institutions may be instructive. The four learning theories are Behaviorism, Cognitivism, Constructivism, and Humanism.

Behaviorism is a philosophical process that examines how human behavior relates to consequences. Cognitivism examines how a person's cognitive ability is used to gain knowledge, insight, and understanding from internal observations. Constructivism posits a process of building knowledge from information gathered through close interaction. Humanism examines how people use rationality of thought for the moral, ethical, and rational betterment of individuals and other people. Humanism is sufficiently incongruent with Christian learning goals that it will not be considered in this writing.

Learning theories are practical tools for educating people, but they are also philosophical positions formed by men and women concerning the nature of humankind, the brain, memory, learning, society, evidence, reality, and experience. To bypass the philosophical and controversial aspects of the various learning theories, one should consider Schunk's list of five definitive questions that distinguish each learning theory and arrive at the essence of what each represents.[8] Schunk asks:

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[8] Dale Schunk, "Self-Efficacy and Academic Motivation," *Educational Psychologist* 26, no. 3 (1991): 207–31.

- How does learning occur within each system?
- Which factors are believed to influence learning?
- What is the role of memory in the learning process?
- How does transfer occur within each methodology?
- What forms of learning are best explained by the individual theory?

These questions help to evaluate each theory at a utilitarian level, avoiding the questions of human nature and the value upon which the system may be based. We will take a closer look at each of these learning theories.

Behaviorism

The philosophical system of Behaviorism teaches that the forces that cause a person to learn are purely external and not internal. People learn behaviors. They are trained and conditioned through repeated actions, habits, enculturation, acculturation, rewards, and punishments which shape their behavior.[9] In this learning system, positive reinforcement is a powerful tool, and negative consequences are a powerful deterrent.

Behaviorism concludes that people learn best through pure repetition and memorization while receiving feedback and encouragement for their achievement. Many Christian children's programs are based on the behaviorist model providing rewards for scripture memorization and consequences for non-compliant behavior. This *Operant Conditioning* utilizes positive and negative reinforcement to increase or decrease a particular behavior in a given area of the person's life. An individual is constantly being formed by their interaction with the environment in which they live. These interactions or "stimuli" work to form particular behaviors within the individual.

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[9] Kevin R. Clark, "Learning Theories: Behaviorism," *Radiologic Technology* 90, no. 2 (2018): 172–75, https://go.exlibris.link/DnkMYHTC.

It is apparent that religious education in North America has often focused on the notion of behavioral adaptation. Learning "Christlike" behavior is a central component of the discipleship and sanctification processes.

In keeping with behaviorism, American Christianity has emphasized a person's lived experience as they learn from external stimuli such as the behavior and example of a Sunday school teacher, discipler, pastoral staff member, and other congregants. Over time, the congregant is conditioned by the environmental stimuli to which they are exposed. They will grow toward the desired archetype of Christian living and prescribed Bible-based, teleological of God's will for His Church and His children.[10]

As such, it is clear that *operant conditioning* has comprised a considerable portion of the methodologies of North American pastoral staffs over the last 100 years. The benefits or consequences of godly and sinful behavior have always loomed large in the North American church. Whether positively conditioned by the desire of the stimulus that precedes a behavior or deterred by the negative stimulus that promises to follow the behavior, the congregant is motivated to repeat and assimilate positive things and avoid those that are harmful or negative.[11]

Behaviorism is based on the conviction that learning begins when a cue or stimulus from the environment is presented, and the learner reacts to the stimulus with some form of response. Said responses are reinforced or punished accordingly, and the process is repeated until the

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[10] Clark, 172.

[11] Peggy Ertmer and Timothy Newby, "Behaviorism, Cognitivism, Constructivism: Comparing Critical Fzeatures from an Instructional Design Perspective.," *Perform Improvement Quarterly* 26, no. 2 (2013): 173, https://doi.org/doi:10.1002/piq.21143.

responses become automatic and the behavior is permanently changed. The change is the indicator that learning has occurred.

A possible incompatibility between Behaviorism and Cultural Competence in post-modern society is its lack of regard for mental processes or "understanding." It can be argued that Behaviorism does not prepare learners for problem-solving or the development of critical-thinking skills that are valued in today's society. These skills are central to the cultural experience of black people in urban communities who respond negatively to being dictated to or being told what to think. Black people who believe they have been lied to and lied about by leaders, politicians, history books, and those in positions of authority are less accepting of a learning system in which the instructor plays such a dominant role.

In the church setting, Behaviorism is introduced by the pastor, teachers, ministry leaders, and respected Christians who establish the learning environment and use positive and negative reinforcement to shape the congregants' behavior.[12] Behaviorist pastors will need to be willing to rethink their teaching methodologies and strategies as they adapt to the congregants of tomorrow.

Cognitivism

The second form of learning methodology is *Cognitive Learning Theory.* Cognitivism replaced Behaviorism as the dominant learning theory in the late 1950s and early1960s.[13] The theory of cognitivism emphasizes the role of mental activities in the learning process and includes actions such as thinking, remembering, perceiving, interpreting, reasoning, and

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[12] Clark, 172–73.

[13] Kevin R. Clark, "Learning Theories: Cognitivisim," *Radiologic Technology* 90, no. 2 (2018): 176, https://go.exlibris.link/DnkMYHTC.

problem-solving.[14] As with Behaviorism, there are philosophical assumptions underlying cognitive theories that are primarily objectivistic. In other words, the world is real and external to the learner. Therefore, the goal of instruction is to map the structure of the world onto the learner.[15]

Cognitive theory is based on schemas, which are ways people organize information and knowledge. Piaget referred to schemas as the building blocks of intelligent behavior for humankind, meaning that people are not passive when learning. The human brain is actively working in the process of learning, laboring to take in new information and process it effectively. As a person recognizes something as "new," their active mind begins to assess it, categorize it, compare it to other existing knowledge, and use it to supplement or modify information already stored in the memory. The stored information is then utilized to influence future learning, understanding, and behavior. Problem-solving is an excellent example of Cognitivism in action.

Bloom's Taxonomy (shown in Figure 2) is a framework used to classify different levels of cognition according to their cognitive difficulty:

- Create: Produce something new
- Evaluate: Justify that new work
- Analyze: Draw connections
- Apply: Use that information in new situations
- Understand: Explain your idea
- Remember: Recall facts

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[14] A Pritchard, *Ways of Learning – Learning Theories and Learning Styles in the Classroom.*, 3rd ed. (New York, NY: Routledge, 2014).

[15] David Jonassen, "Objectivism versus Constructivism: Do We Need a New Philosophical Paradigm?," *Educational Technology Research and Development* 39, no. 3 (1991): 5–14, http://www.jstor.org/stable/30219973.
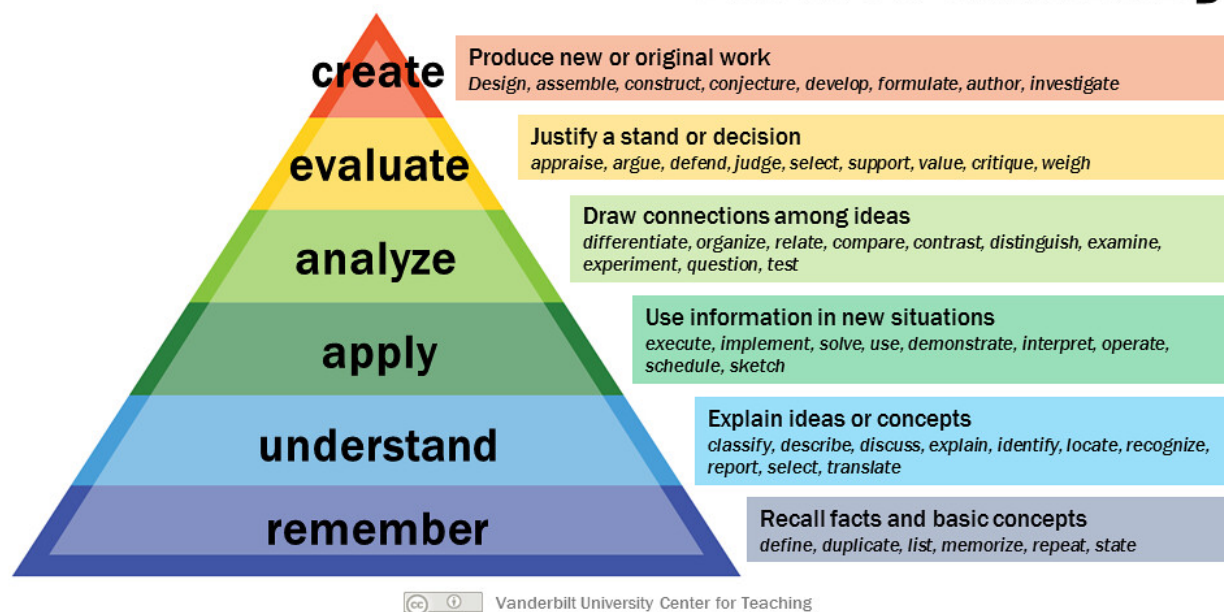
Bloom's Taxonomy

create — Produce new or original work
Design, assemble, construct, conjecture, develop, formulate, author, investigate

evaluate — Justify a stand or decision
appraise, argue, defend, judge, select, support, value, critique, weigh

analyze — Draw connections among ideas
differentiate, organize, relate, compare, contrast, distinguish, examine, experiment, question, test

apply — Use information in new situations
execute, implement, solve, use, demonstrate, interpret, operate, schedule, sketch

understand — Explain ideas or concepts
classify, describe, discuss, explain, identify, locate, recognize, report, select, translate

remember — Recall facts and basic concepts
define, duplicate, list, memorize, repeat, state

Vanderbilt University Center for Teaching

Figure 2. Bloom's Taxonomy. P. Arstrong (2010). Vanderbilt University Center for Teaching, https://cft.vanderbilt.edu/guides-sub-pages/blooms-taxonomy/

The final level of Bloom's Taxonomy may make pastors feel uncomfortable. The idea of "creating" something is not traditional to Christian teaching, which expounds upon the completed work of Christ. The Church has, throughout the ages, resisted the "new" in areas of music, hermeneutics, doctrine, teaching, evangelism, and community involvement. New interpretations of prophecy, polity, and practicum; new applications of the mission, meaning, nature, and crucifixion; new gospels of race, equality, and social fairness have fallen on ears that were unresponsive, unaccepting, resistant, and hostile.

For cognitive learning theory to work, congregants must be offered a safe environment where ideas and conclusions can be reached without fear of failure or reprimands. The nature of discipleship and theological mentorship is such that right and wrong are often prominent parts of the character-building process. Something is or is not Christlike and should or should not be

done. North American pastoral teaching and counseling can often fail to provide a congregant with the opportunity to postulate and problem-solve concerning the nature of their faith, which is essential to the cognitive learning approach.

Cognitive learning theory encourages congregants to develop problem-solving skills by observing and categorizing the things they learn and their experiences[16] in order to form their own ideas and concepts, such as concepts of Christlike living. In the cognitive process, the congregant actively constructs new knowledge based on previously learned knowledge. The congregant will organize, interpret, observe, form generalizations, expand, value, and deprecate the information they receive and interact with.

Though challenging to pastors, cognition is well suited to biblical learning since it combines the mental process of absorbing and retaining knowledge with the ability to understand through thought, experience, and sense. Biblical knowledge combined with the social, environment, communal, and familial experiential stimuli offer a solid grounding for a person's faith journey. The concepts that affect a person as they grow can be extrinsic, intrinsic, positive, or negative.

Social Cognitive Theory considers behavioral, environmental (extrinsic), and personal (intrinsic) factors as shown in Figure 3.

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[16] Kevin R. Clark, "Learning Theories: Cognitivism,"
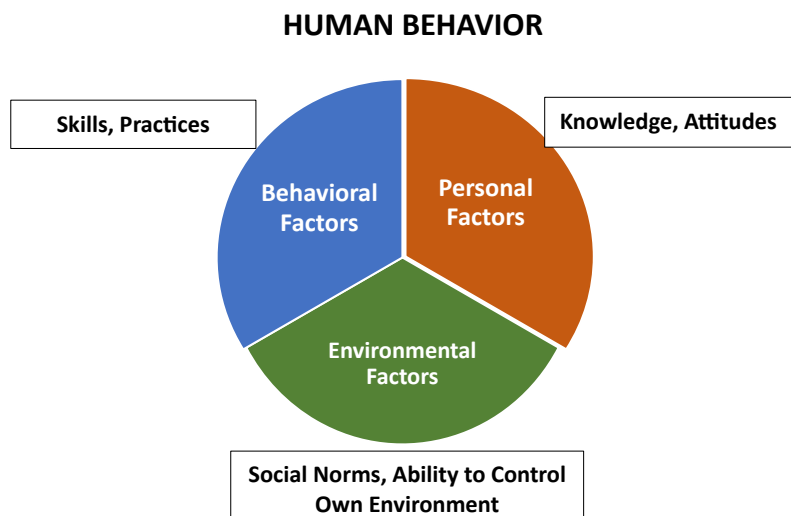
HUMAN BEHAVIOR

Figure 3. Social Cognitive Theory Illustration © Gershwin Grant, 2022

Traditional biblical instruction has focused on the informational stimuli for behavioral adaptation, assuming the existence of a common "Christian" environment and core personal behaviors that are incrementally gravitating toward a commonly held and valued Christian mean.

Cognitive behavioral theory emphasizes the repetition of a behavior instead of the repetition of information in order to increase the opportunity for knowledge retention. A comfortable learning environment and access to relevant materials for learning and practice are keys to cognitive learning.

Pastoral teaching based on exegetical hermeneutics, higher and lower criticism, and expository teaching create barriers to initial growth and ownership of a congregant's learning activities because they are beyond the reach of the budding congregant. Experientially accessible Christian teaching may be necessary in order to reach the post-modern congregants of the future.

Constructivism

The Constructivism learning theory is not a totally new approach to learning but provides a discernible advancement. Constructivism has roots in the philosophical and psychological viewpoints of the twentieth century, specifically in the works of Piaget, Bruner, and Goodman.[17] In 1993, when Constructivism was introduced to the educational, philosophical, and psychological scene, there were very few teaching methods that aligned with the Constructivist perspective. Today, Constructivism is the dominant educational theory and has been embraced by nearly every educational reform initiative within the last two decades.[18] Various constructivist theories, forms of social constructivism, concepts of situated learning, and ideas of connectivism[19] have been developed and become entrenched as the foundation for the teaching methods of today (problem-based learning, authentic instruction, and computer-supported collaborative learning)[20] and the foreseeable future.

Churches in North America have expected congregants to utilize a reliably congeneric knowledge base as a foundation upon which they build. The process of adding new things to a reliably homogeneous foundation of core experiences greatly simplifies the learning curve, provides a community learning experience, and promises a reliable, predictable, dependable outcome. However, as the country, communities, and, thereby, churches continue to diversify, this concept of homogeneity will become less common. A common filter through which all phenomena are viewed will become rare, knowledge bases will become more diverse, and the

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[17] Ertmer and Newby, 55.

[18] Ibid., 67.

[19] Taylor Sharples and G Vavoula, "Towards a Theory of Mobile Learning. Book of Abstracts," in *The Future of Learning in Your Hands*. (Fourth World Conference on Learning, Cape Town, 2005), 58.

[20] Ertmer and Newby, 67.

ongoing development of Cultural Competence will become essential for pastoral staffs to develop intentionally.

Like Cognitivism, Constructivism emphasizes connecting new information with existing information based on schemas but embraces the importance of the learners' experiences in the construction. Since every learner has a different set of experiences and perceptions that shape their learning, every individual's learning experience is a personal and unique one. As such, Constructivism is a learner-centered model, with the students or congregants as the primary actors actively constructing meaning to new information, with pastors and teachers acting as facilitators providing feedback and asking guiding questions. Constructivist theorists include Bruner (discovery learning) and Vygotksy (social development theory).

Knowledge is constructed as it builds precept upon precept, utilizing previous experiences and information to shape how the learner will perceive and use new knowledge. Each Christian will learn in their own manner and may arrive at a markedly different understanding from another person. This is potentially troubling to the pastor/teacher in a church setting. While the way a concept like "love" is actualized by one congregant or another may differ, it must remain within acceptable boundaries. Discipleship provides a valuable component of the Constructivist learning theory because congregants can learn from more established Christians through ongoing feedback and reinforcement. A safe, trusting discipleship relationship will enable a congregant to examine the application of newly encountered information in practical ways while protected by their mentor from possible negative repercussions.

If a person actively constructs their own knowledge, to some extent, that person's understanding of reality is determined by their experiences. Constructivism means that all congregants bring unique experiences to the congregation. A person's background, previous

knowledge, cultural development, worldview, values, tendencies, victories, defeats, prejudices, and pre-understandings all impact how they will be able to learn. As congregants take in biblical, doctrinal, social, and communal aspects of Christianity, they will knit them together with the history they bring, creating an understanding that is different from any other congregant. This poses a challenge to pastoral staffs that traditionally utilize methods intended to produce uniform, reproducible, verifiable outcomes in congregants.

A person's previous knowledge, experiences, beliefs, and insights are all important foundations for continued learning. Developing principles of grammar and writing are important developmental building blocks as well. Each thing a person learns gives them a better understanding of other things in the future.

- Learning is an active process. Learning involves sensory input to construct meaning. The learner needs to do something in order to learn; it is not a passive activity.

- Learners must engage in the world and actively participate in their own learning and development. Learners cannot just sit and expect to be told things and learn; they need to engage in discussions, reading, activities, etc.

- Learning is a social activity. Learning is directly associated with our connection with other people. Teachers, family, peers, and acquaintances have an impact on learning. Educators are more likely to be successful as they understand that peer involvement is vital in learning. Isolated learning is not the best way to help students learn and grow together.

- Learning is contextual. Students do not learn isolated facts and theories separate from the rest of their lives—they learn in ways connected to things they already know, what they

believe, and more. The things they learn and the points they tend to remember are connected to the things happening around them.

- Knowledge is personal. Because Constructivism is based on a person's own experiences and beliefs, knowledge becomes a personal affair. Each person will have their own prior knowledge and experiences to bring to the table. So, the way and things people learn and gain from education will all be very different.

- Learning exists in the mind. Hands-on experiences and physical actions are necessary for learning, but those elements are not enough. Engaging the mind is the key to successful learning. Learning needs to involve activities for the minds, not just our hands. Mental experiences are needed for retaining knowledge.

- Motivation is key to learning. Students are unable to learn if they are unmotivated. Educators need to have ways to engage and motivate learners to activate their minds and help them be excited about education. Without motivation, it is difficult for learners to reach into their past experiences and make connections for new learning.

Types of Constructivism

Cognitive Constructivism focuses on the idea that learning should be related to the learner's stage of cognitive development. These methods help students learn new information by connecting it to things they already know, enabling them to modify their existing intelligence to accommodate the new information.

Social Constructivism focuses on the collaborative nature of learning. Knowledge develops from how people interact with each other, their culture, and society at large. Students rely on others to help create their building blocks, and learning from others helps them construct their own knowledge and reality. The most significant criticism of constructivist learning is its

lack of structure. Some students need highly structured and organized learning environments to thrive, and constructivist learning focuses on a more laid-back method to help students engage in their own learning.

Furthermore, given the advancements in technological tools, students now enjoy increased access to (1) relevant case/problem background information; (2) additional cases or case repositories that may uncover partial or complete solutions; and (3) individuals, including case/problem experts who can provide scaffolding, feedback, and other support for formulating solutions. Therefore, teaching methods such as case-based instruction, coupled with advanced technology, can facilitate novices' access to the knowledge, skill, and mentoring of experts. This access has the potential to advance students' levels of problem-solving expertise in more effective and efficient ways than was previously possible.[21]

Pastors have traditionally utilized methods that lead toward unified, verifiable results in congregants. Aspects such as Jungian personality types, diverse social backgrounds, differing cultural heritage, quality of prior educational systems, and other differentiating factors are usually not incorporated into the teaching methodologies utilized in Sunday schools and Bible classes. Such issues are not necessarily utilized in counseling and discipleship relationships, either.

The common core worldview developed in urbanites provides a challenge to the white pastor presiding over a predominantly homogeneous, mono-cultural congregation. Many assumptions relied upon to develop learning strategies for such ministries cannot be counted upon as Christian communities diversify in the future. A common social background, worldview, set of values, or outlook will be increasingly difficult to surface or define.

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[21] Sharples and Vavoula, 68.

Pastors must intentionally develop growing competencies to stay ahead of the curve as their communities and congregations change.[22] Long-serving pastors must develop ways to both attain these competencies and incorporate them into the development of younger clergy who will minister into the changing future.

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[22] Ertmer and Newby, 44.

APPENDIX G: PROJECT WORKBOOK

Understanding an Urban Black Worldview:

A Phenomenological Examination of 2020 Immersion Program

PART 1:

Developing Cultural Competency:

A Christian Perspective

By Rev. Dr. Gershwin Grant

CONTENTS

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* Note to readers of the thesis project report: The page numbers outside the parentheses represent the original page numbers in the Project Workbook. The page numbers inside the parentheses represent the page numbers in this thesis report.

INTRODUCTION

I keep six honest serving-men
(They taught me all I knew);
Their names are What and Why and When
And How and Where and Who.
Rudyard Kipling

It's good for us to contemplate
Who? What? Where? Why? and How?
But let us not neglect So What?
And that we must do now.
Gershwin Grant

Why Was This Written?

This work is dedicated to the quest of enabling ministers to increase their levels of cultural competence (CC). *Cultural competence* is a term used to describe a range of cognitive, affective, and behavioral skills that lead to effective and appropriate communication with people of other cultures.

In recent years, the Church has become incrementally more aware of the importance of CC. Churches, individual Christians, and para-church organizations are becoming aware of the value of diversity, the capacity for cultural self-assessment, a consciousness of the dynamics inherent in inter-cultural interaction, the development of institutionalized culture knowledge, and a willingness to develop adaptations to service delivery that reflect an understanding of cultural diversity.[1] These core elements of CC create a welcoming environment that allows for powerful, successful ministry that reaches more than a single race and culture.

Who is This Written to?

This book was written for pastors and Christian counselors who don't live in the inner city. It's all about New York City, but I trust that it will share a truth that can help pastors to shed light into a darkness that exists around the country.

The first section of this book will address the concepts of Worldview, learning, and Cultural Intelligence. Pastors are trained in methods of teaching and exegeting and develop their own system over time. The system develops through practice and interaction with congregants. For pastors who minister in a mono-cultural ethos (mono-cultural not necessarily mono-ethnic), the system that develops will be effective within that learning community. However, as post-modernity propagates the celebration of multiculturalism, it can be anticipated that minority cultures within each congregation will crave expression within the church culture. This will necessitate a reexamination of teaching methods, counseling skills, communication methods, and cultural understanding. Section one of this book will provide information to enable you to consider, evaluate, and begin this journey.

The second section of the book will deal extensively with the mindset, actions, and emotions of black people who lived in the inner city of New York during the turbulent year that was 2020. This work is built on two suppositions, but it was originally based on three. When I initiated the research on this issue in 2020, I began with the supposition that the events of that year had been of such a magnitude as to have traumatically affected black people in urban environments psychologically. This is no longer a supposition; it is now a proven scientific fact.[2] That leaves us with two suppositions. The first is that there is an identifiable division between the way black and white Americans see the world around them and this has worsened in part by the growing phenomena being experienced by black people from the inner city during the first quarter of the 21st century. The second supposition is that if you are still reading this book, you may be a part of the solution. I truly hope you will choose to be a part of the solution.

CHAPTER 1

Changing Demographics

I'm going to begin by putting my cards on the table. It is my belief that it is important for you as a minister to consider the worldview of urbanites and how it has been shaped by the events of 2020. Why? Well, it's good to know what is going on in the lives of people in general, but I truly believe that some of those urbanites will be showing up in your congregation over the next few years.

Exodus from the City

The truth is that lower-income New Yorkers have been leaving the city over the last decade. The cost of living, rent, and transportation have priced many people out of the city. In the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic, the exodus has increased.[1] The demographics of New York are shifting rapidly as many upper-income families are taking advantage of the turmoil and buying into Manhattan and gentrifying the outer boroughs.[2] As the wealthy take advantage of real estate prices and relocate to New York, living costs rise, and poorer people of all races are forced to move. Many urbanites are migrating to more rural parts of New York state or are heading "down south."[3] **In the next few years, many pastors in the south and those overseeing churches in upstate New York can expect to encounter a number of transplanted New Yorkers in their communities and eventually in their congregations.**

Some of these urbanites may be looking for congregations that remind them of the ones they left behind, but many are not going to find one. So, after a while, they will start to investigate churches based on doctrine and theology, and that's when they may find you.

These city folk will show up in your church one Sunday, and I suspect you are going to embrace them in the love of God. When they come, they may bring their spouse, which will expand your Sunday school classes. They may bring their children, expanding your children's church program. And they will bring their culture, outlook, and worldview with them, too. **I wonder what that may cause to expand?** As they become a part of your congregation, community, and life, I believe there are a few things you need to know. So, let's get to work!

Gun-Shy: Barriers to Unity

As black people enter social settings, they often wonder if they will be tolerated, accepted, embraced, or rejected. Life has thrown their way a broad spectrum of responses in the past. Frankly, expectations have diminished over the centuries. Being tolerated became a hope. The absence of rejection and opposition became a "desirable" outcome. This became a self-exacerbating problem because it didn't enhance the attitude, outlook, or demeanor of the person on the receiving end. Sometimes such people become defensive; sometimes they are unresponsive, cautious, or withdrawn. Sometimes their past experiences mean they will be reticent to engage, trust, or extend themselves to you.

You have probably encountered black people who fit this bill. Did you extend yourself to them? I suspect that you did. Did you look upon them as a mission field with obstacles to overcome as you would if you reached out to people of a different nationality, language, or culture? Did you consider the need to learn the "language" they are speaking? Did you try to engage their culture? I suspect that you didn't. Perhaps you assumed that, as black and white Americans, our cultural similarities outweigh our differences. Maybe you see us all as being more the same than we are different. That's a loving, unifying thought, but not necessarily true.

We do not see everything the same way. We are both Americans, and we are one in Christ, but black and white Christians have differing core worldviews. There are a few obstacles to overcome, hurdles to navigate, problems to circumnavigate, and wounds to heal if we are to truly worship as one. I believe God wants us to make the effort. I believe a unified, inclusive church is what God has always intended.

All Should Be Welcome in the Church

For many years, Christianity in North America was a mono-ethnic endeavor. Diversity was not truly celebrated or fostered. Donald McGavran, known as the father of the Church Growth Movement, propagated the concept that people came to Christ more easily if they were around other people who were similar to them. He stated, "People like to become Christians without crossing racial, linguistic, or class barriers . . . The world's population is a mosaic, and each piece has a separate life of its own that seems strange and unlovely to men and women in other places."[4] Based on this logic, he championed the pursuit of mono-ethnic churches in a system that became known as McGavarn's Homogeneous Unit Principle. His system built large congregations in its day, but did it always build churches? Many have come to believe that the Homogeneous Unit Principle is outmoded, irrelevant, and perhaps unbiblical.[5]

I contend and hope you agree that the Gospel message is inclusive and assures that "all" people have the opportunity to come to a saving knowledge of Christ. All people are welcomed into the covenant community and the Church -- and what a wonderous Church it is! A church where "there is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, nor is there male and female, for we are all one in Christ Jesus" (Gal. 3:28).

If we are all one in Christ Jesus, shouldn't our local churches be a reflection of that truth (Col. 3:14, Eph. 4:1-6)? If the answer is yes, then I believe this means something more than a universal Church where each race and culture has its own separate, racially monolithic

congregation. I believe that all people should not only be welcome but encouraged to worship, learn, and grow *together*.

Theological Foundation

The Christian Church in the United States of America exists in a divided state. Denominational, theological, soteriological, Pneumatological, linguistic, ecclesiological, and liturgical differences all serve to separate congregations into different, identifiable groups.

Race is another factor in the differentiation of people groups within the Church universal. No single ethnic or racial group has the dubious distinction of being responsible for this division. All are equally culpable and capable of effecting change. I don't know if I have persuaded you that this is an issue, a problem, or an honest depiction of the situation, so let me try a little harder.

Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. once said on *Meet the Press*, "I think it is one of the tragedies of our nation, one of the shameful tragedies, that eleven o'clock on Sunday morning is one of the most segregated hours, if not the most segregated hours, in Christian America."[6] Times have changed and evolved since the days of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., but the question of church integration still demands consideration.

Is racial integration a requirement, a preference, or an option that each congregation can responsibly accept or reject? King saw integration as a requirement for all churches. He believed any congregation that opposed integration in favor of a segregated body was "standing against the spirit and the teachings of Jesus Christ."[7] Dr. King strongly condemned the deliberate propagation of racially divided church communities, and I believe Scripture concurs.

I'm not sure any race of Christians can look in the mirror and claim that they have been fostering the unity King was speaking of and calling for. Many servants of God have built predominantly black congregations and stood proudly in celebration of their uniqueness. They became a haven where blacks could avoid the discrimination they felt in other places and find a sense of solidarity. They worshipped alongside others who understood their suffering. Black

churches developed a polity, tradition, language, music, and culture that spoke in a way they related to and served an important function. But has inertia set in? Should things be changing? Should black and white Christians be venturing out into a broader sphere of Christianity? Is God using the world around us to nudge us in that direction?

I believe the change is taking place. People are on the move. People are leaving New York City for New York state because of the health and economic crisis they have experienced in the past three years. Many of them are filled with doubt, trepidation, discomfort, and an element of distrust as they go. I used to call this "invisible baggage," but it's not really invisible. It may be hard to identify, but you can see it if you try -- with a little help along the way.

I believe the biblical model suggests that the Church should be a united, multi-racial, multi-ethnic body that manifests the diversity and creativity of the Triune God it represents. However, many American churches planted during the Church Growth Movement were not built on this standard. McGavran said:

> "It takes no great acumen to see that when marked differences of color, stature, income, cleanliness, and education are present, men understand the Gospel better when expounded by their own kind of people. They prefer to join churches whose members look, talk, and act like themselves."[8]

McGavaran's argument was persuasive in its day, but was it ever biblical, righteous, or Christlike in its nature? Doesn't God the Father love all His creation? Didn't the Son of Man, Jesus Christ, die to offer salvation to all people? I put it to you that the Church was never intended to exist in the separatist, racially divided state in which it exists today.

Enough of my opinion; let's reason from the Scriptures together. As we do, I'd like you to take some time to pray about some specific questions: 1) Have you considered the idea that black people as a group need to be embraced and pursued with the extensive efforts you bestow on other cultures? 2) Have you ever studied black culture to overcome cultural boundaries, social differences, and ethnic peculiarities?

I suspect that if you haven't done these things, it's because you probably never realized they needed to be done. That's not a lack of love, concern, wisdom, or empathy on your part. Most

pastors in New York state have never considered the concept of black people as a culturally foreign mission field, but to a growing extent, they are. There is a growing cultural divide between urbanites and the other cultures around them.

Fording cultures requires help, resources, and information. I pray this work will help equip you for the future because I believe it is a work you will feel called to. We will all need to bridge the gaps between many cultures in the future. The divide between blacks and whites is just one of the hurdles, but it's the one I can help with. And I believe this is work God wants us to do.

Let me tell you more about why I feel that way.

The Ministry of Jesus to Israel = Ministry to the World

The early ministry of Jesus was explicitly focused on the reformation of the people and nation of Israel (Matt. 15:24). Jesus did not claim to have come to bring salvation to the Gentile world. Indeed, a distinct focus on the welfare of Israel can be seen and heard in His actions, teachings, and prophecies. The sobering warnings of judgment and punishment Jesus issued during His ministry were focused on the nation of Israel, not the Gentiles (Mark 11:12-14, 20-25; Matt. 21:18-22). He went so far as to suggest that ministering to the Gentiles was akin to taking the children's (Israel's) bread and tossing it to the dogs (the Gentiles, Matt. 15:26). Jesus had a mission, and it had to be fulfilled.

The Lord's initial message was to the Jewish people, yet He clearly hinted at the mission that was to come. When Jesus said to the Apostle Peter, "You are Peter, and upon this rock, I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it" (Matt. 16:18), His words spoke of the ministry that would take place after His death, burial, resurrection, and ascension.

During His own ministry life, Jesus focused on the Jewish temple ministry (Mark 11:15-19; Matt. 21:12-17; Luke 19:45-48, John 2:13-16). His prophetic denunciations further showed that His focus was primarily on Israel throughout His life (Matt. 24; Mark 13; Luke 21; 13:6-9). The messianic ministry of Jesus was dictated by the Old Testament promises and the messages of

the Jewish prophets. He would fulfill the things the Father had said through His men of old so that the nation of Israel would have a fair chance to recognize Him and receive Him as their Savior.

So, Jesus was certainly ministering to Israel, but it was not for their benefit alone. It can indeed be said that He ministered to Israel as an act of love to all the nations because God the Father had promised blessing through Abraham to all the nations of the earth in the Old Testament. Jesus fulfilled the teachings of the Hebrew scriptures so that those things promised through the blessing of Abraham might finally come to the Gentiles as they received the promise of the Holy Spirit through faith (Gal. 3:14).

As Jamieson put it, Christ chose to die on the cross "to the end that upon the Gentiles the blessing of Abraham (that is, *promised to* Abraham, namely, justification by faith) might come in Christ Jesus (Joel 2:28, 29; Luke 24:49)."[9] As a result of Christ calling all people, races, and ethnicities, the early Church was a wonderful mosaic of peoples and colors.[10]

The diversity of the first-century Church was not an afterthought or an invention of post-crucifixion apostolic ministries. During His incarnation, Christ had advised that He had other sheep that He loved and cared about in addition to the children of Israel -- people who were not of the Jewish fold. He said, "I must bring them also, and they will listen to my voice. So, there will be one flock, one shepherd" (John 10:16).

God Wants All Peoples

Daniel 7:14 speaks of the Son of Man who would be incarnated as Jesus the Christ, saying not only that He would receive dominion and glory and a kingdom but that all peoples, nations, and languages should serve Him. The Son of Man will establish an everlasting dominion or kingdom (Dan. 4:34; 7:27). That kingdom will never be conquered by another (Dan. 6:26). His reign will be established on earth (Rev. 20:1-6). At the expiration of the 1,000 years of the Lord's millennial reign, He will surrender the kingdom to God the Father, after which Christ will be appointed as Ruler over God's eternal kingdom forever (1 Cor. 15:24-28).

I find that Scripture shows God always cared about people who existed outside the chosen vessel that was the Hebrew people. The Old Testament Scriptures recognized that Gentiles would seek after the Lord. There would be foreigners to the Kingdom of Israel who would choose to join themselves to the Lord. They would desire to minister to Him; they would love the name of the Lord and be His servants (Isa. 56:6).

The prophecy continues by saying that these foreign people will be willing to keep the Sabbath and hold fast to God's covenant, causing Him to bring them to His holy mountain and make them joyful in His house of prayer. God will accept their burnt offerings and sacrifices on His altar, and God's house shall be "called a house of prayer for all peoples. The Lord God, who gathers the outcasts of Israel, declares, 'I will gather yet others besides those already gathered'" (Isa. 56:6-8).

I think God makes it clear that He is not describing two separate, segregated places of worship but a single house where all people worship the living God. He is speaking of one body that includes people from different backgrounds who have embraced the Lord as their God and Creator.

The Mystery and the Ministry

I'm sure we all agree that the mystery of the Church, that Gentiles were always destined to be fellow heirs to God's kingdom with Israel, is crucial to understanding our ministry. All people and races were intended to be members of the same body and equal partakers of the promise of salvation. All peoples were offered a kingdom inheritance in Christ Jesus through the Gospel message propagated by the Apostle Paul and all those who followed him (Eph. 3:6). The mystery was the sacred secret that was hidden in ages past but revealed through Paul's ministry.

The mystery wasn't that Gentiles would be *saved* because the Old Testament had already given ample evidence of that coming truth. The mystery was the wonderous truth that one day believing Jews and Gentiles would be *joined together* -- loving God as one body. The wall that

divided one lover of God from another had been obliterated by the love of Christ (Eph. 2:14). The Church is one body, united in Christ the Savior (Eph. 12:16-18).

The truth, as you well know, is that we serve a God who loved all the people of the world so much that He gave His only Son to die on the cross to take away the power of sin. His sacrifice allowed whoever believes in Him not only to avoid perishing, but to be reinstated to the pre-Fall condition of being created to receive and enjoy eternal life (John 3:16). However, this is a message some people could miss if they misconstrue the message and ministry of Jesus.

As the ministry was passed from Christ to the Apostles, it began to develop along two separate lines. The Apostles built a Jewish church in Jerusalem, reaching thousands of Jews who believed and were all zealous for the Law (Acts 21:20). Simultaneously, the Apostle Paul ministered to Gentiles throughout the lands.

As you know, Christ did not allow this division to last long. Once both groups had time to iron out issues of polity and praxis, God caused the leadership to come together for what we have come to know as the Jerusalem Council. In Acts 15, we see that the Apostles heard and confirmed the grace of the Gospel and the fact that covenant promises of God to redeem the nations had crossed ethnic and social boundaries (Acts 15:19, 28). The instructions the Apostles gave to the Gentiles were set in place to ensure that Jewish Christians and Gentile Christians would be able to join together as one, united in a single universal Church. In addition, they would be able to unite in the local church and enjoy table fellowship together without causing offense, division, or alienation. The Apostles were concerned with the unity of the body within the local congregation. They knew that in the future, people from different backgrounds, races, and traditions would need to be united and fused into the singular Body of Christ.

With the instructions of the Jerusalem Council in hand, Paul moved into high gear as the official Apostle to the diverse and varied Gentile people. And yet, Acts 17 shows that Paul's

"custom" was to begin his ministry in each new city or town by going to the synagogue to proclaim his message of Christ to the Jews before going on to preach to the Gentiles. As Paul traveled through the lands, he continued to reach out to diverse people alike (Acts 13:43-48; 14:1-6; 17:12; 18:4; 19:8-10; 20:21; 22:21; 28:23-30).

You know the story well. God told Abram:

"Go from your country and your kindred and your father's house to the land that I will show you. And I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and him who dishonors you I will curse . . . and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed." (Genesis 12:1-3)

The great Apostle Paul's upbringing was steeped in Hebraic tradition. He was:

". . . circumcised on the eighth day, a member of the people of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew born of Hebrews; as to the law, a Pharisee; as to zeal, a persecutor of the church; as to righteousness under the law, blameless." (Phil. 3:5-6)

As a servant of Christ, Paul had come to realize the true magnitude of the Abrahamic covenant. He didn't view the promise to "bless all the families of the earth" as something that had happened in the past. He didn't see God's promise as an eschatological formality to be fulfilled in the future when Christ returns. Paul saw this promised blessing from God, unifying the Jew and the Gentile, as the ongoing purpose of His ministry.

The incarnation of God in human form, sustained by sinlessness, and perfected through suffering, had caused the eschatological reality of the kingdom to break through and run rampant in this present age. Eternity was being realized as Jew and Gentile came together into local churches. The Diaspora, the pogroms, and the upheaval of the times had ensured that Gentile congregations and synagogues alike were diverse, multi-ethnic hotbeds of humanity. So, in joining

Jew and Gentile, the Church was also uniting all people, all races, and all ethnicities in the love of Christ. I truly believe that this is the Church as Paul envisioned it.

I think it is easy to see that the Church has not always followed through on the promise of a diverse, multi-ethnic congregational existence toward which the Scriptures point and for which Paul ministered. Too often, local churches have developed along racial lines. Most congregations reflect a dominant race or specific cultural group that resembles the pastor and church leadership. In many cases, members of minority groups will eventually assimilate into the culture without their ethnic differences being acknowledged, understood, or appreciated.

The concept of developing a truly multi-racial, multi-ethnic church is way beyond the scope of this work and the journey we have embarked on together. I'm not about to try to tell you how to run your congregation or how to build your ministry team for the years ahead. This is between you and your Lord.

However, I suspect that as leaders, we agree that churches should try to create an environment where all brothers and sisters in Christ feel welcome and appreciated.[11] This is easier said than done because there are things that divide many of us socially and culturally that have nothing to do with Christ or His mission. Some of these things are fairly evident. I'm here to talk to you about some that aren't.

Some of these hindrances can be overcome with effort. I'm not suggesting it will be easy. **Accommodating a minority culture runs the risk of alienating the majority who have been loyal and faithful. It is a risky endeavor, but perhaps it is a necessary one.** It's at least something you should be able to pray about with enough background understanding and information to make a Spirit-filled decision.

Risk vs. Reward

As I said, it is a risky endeavor, but I suggest it is a necessary one for us to take. Put yourself in a different pair of shoes for a moment. How would you feel if you were part of the minority

group and no one made an effort to allow your culture to imprint upon the structure of the church body? What would it mean if your presence didn't impact the way the church functions in any perceptible way?

If we are all members of the body, then doesn't the body change a little when a new pair of hands are brought into the midst, a new color has been added to the mosaic, or a new mindset is at work in the body? The truth is that change is taking place regardless of our perception, so shouldn't it be addressed in an intentional, strategic, prayerful, Spirit-empowered manner?

I think I know your heart, pastor. I know you try to include everyone and embrace all church members. Yet there are times when there is more to inclusion than open hearts and arms. Sometimes it's not just the offer of acceptance, but it's also how the offer is received.

God created humanity from one man and made all the nations from that single source (Acts 17:26), but the years have seen division and separatism sully the beauty of God's intended Church institution. If diversity, unity, togetherness, and acceptance are to flourish within each congregation, it will take intentional effort on the part of church leadership to foster the inclusiveness that the first-century church offered. **Church leaders will need to display an "unending passion for learning about and from people of different cultures and being willing to face and work through their biases"[12] if greater unity is to be achieved.**

As a minister, I celebrate the fact that the dividing wall of hostility has been broken down (Eph. 2:14), allowing all people to become one in Christ. More and more churches and ministerial organizations are doing the same. We are all a part of the Church built by the great Apostle Paul, a Jewish man emblazoned with the authority and responsibility to reach the Gentile people.

Paul's outreach to the Gentiles was not always smooth or easy. There were issues that arose and cultural differences that became matters of contention. However, unity, peace, love, and tolerance were the solutions, not division into homogeneity. The power of the Gospel was used to unite the people. I contend that this is what God desires: for His children to live, serve, and worship together.

Is God Nudging Us Toward Change?

The task of intentionally "going out" to build the first-century church around the globe was necessitated and complicated by the times the Apostles lived in. One could suggest they had grown stagnant in Jerusalem, and God used the Roman government to force them along the way. This resulted in the growth of the Christian faith, but the work encountered immediate barriers of race, culture, tradition, and ideology which had to be addressed and overcome as the Gospel moved around the world.

Is our hand being nudged by God again? Are the changing demographics of our region providing new, wonderful opportunities for exciting ministry along with various challenges and intricacies that will result?

I think God is nudging us, and if I am correct, it will be important for us as pastors to try to understand the worldview of the people who come into our midst. Not to accept or endorse them necessarily, but to encounter them and acknowledge their existence. It is important to respect other worldviews as being important to those who possess them. Not all worldviews are godly or valid. Not all worldviews are righteous or decent. Not all worldviews are logical or rational, but they are a fundamental part of those who hold them.

Gaining insight into the worldview of urbanites has gotten exponentially harder since 2020. Many established, predictable thought patterns, social schema, aspects of "group think," and common standards were disrupted by the phenomena and social upheaval of 2020. Many things that were once taken for granted will need to be reexamined as we face the future together.

CHAPTER 2

Worldview

I have stated that black and white Christians have differing worldviews. The term worldview is used to refer to the unique framework from which a person views reality and makes sense of life and the world. In his work *World View*, Michael Kearney considers a cultural worldview to be "a set of images and assumptions about the world" and includes components of self and other, relationship (between self and other humans and nonhumans), classification, causality, and space and time.[1] A worldview is an overarching mindset that symbiotically shapes, and is shaped by, the world. An individual's sociological, ideological, philosophical, theological, and interpersonal values and beliefs forge the relationship between the individual and the world they inhabit.

One might well ask, is there a Christian worldview? There certainly have been common-core Christian worldviews withing certain cultures at different times and places. It is also possible to identify a philosophically Christian worldview when contrasted with a philosophically secular worldview.

Tawa Anderson discusses the concept of a Christian or biblical worldview extensively *An Introduction to Christian Worldview.*[2] A Christian worldview primarily differs from the secular in that it introduces the infallible Word of God as the prism through which the individual's relationship to the world is finally defined. The Bible is viewed as the foundation of reality and truth. A Christian worldview affirms, among other things, that the Bible is the Word of God; the Bible is accurate in all its teachings; moral truths exist, and the Bible can define them; Jesus Christ

lived a sinless life; God the Father is the all-powerful and all-knowing Creator of the universe; all people need salvation by grace as a gift from God; and that Satan and evil exist in the world. It is clear that a Christian worldview will not always harmonize with a secular one. It may also find itself at loggerheads with a particularly different or even distorted Christian worldview.

The Importance of Worldview

The philosophical premise of *Weltanschauung* ("worldview") is taking on tremendous practical implications in today's ever-changing society. As it continues to gain a foothold in not only the lingua franca of culture but also society's psyche, pastors need to understand what they are talking about and thinking about and why. Worldview has been defined as an intellectual perspective on the world or universe, but it is more than that. It is a person's or group's philosophy of life. A worldview can be a well-articulated system of philosophy by which life is defined and lived. It can also be something of which a person or group is far less conscious. Yet, it still comprises and manifests their attitude toward life and the world.

Each of us has a picture of reality that is combined with a sense of its meaning and value. This picture is enmeshed with principles we hold and actions to which we ascribe value. This picture of reality provides an overriding hypothesis in which our questions find their answers. It is the bedrock in which our ethics find their grounding. It is the fertile soil where our emotions grow, our passions find their justification, and our decisions are validated.

We are sensing, thinking, knowing, and acting beings. We exist in a world that is awash with phenomena. Our world is brimming with energy, information, and stimuli. And, of course, our world is teeming with 7.97 billion other sensing, thinking, knowing, and acting beings who are both alike and very different from each other and us.

As beings, we each possess a well-developed ability to act within, upon, in accordance with, or in opposition to the environment around us. We do not simply exist; we sense things. Each day we are exposed to phenomena. Each day we see, hear, taste, and feel stimuli from the world, from others, and from ourselves. That stimulus is experienced and sensed before being compared

and contrasted with our existing pool of knowledge. Our current knowledge is then transformed into new or modified knowledge. These processes are governed in no small part by our worldview.

As teachers of God's Word, the principles we impart will become stimuli that our congregants will hear, consider, experience, and evaluate. They will compare what we teach in our efforts to guide their experience of God and His Kingdom and contrast it with their existing pool of knowledge. It becomes evident that their worldview plays a vital role in determining the outcome of their kingdom living process.

Sometimes this process is obvious and can be anticipated. We know intuitively that a Cessationist and a Charismatic believer may hear the same information about the use of power gifts and have drastically differing responses. The Cessationist may consider the information intellectually with skepticism and compare it to a knowledge pool that leaves little room for such phenomena. The Charismatic may receive the stimuli with greater comfort and openness. Both believers received the same stimuli, yet the results were incredibly different.

As pastors, our allegiance is to the truth of God's Word. Yet, in a practical sense, it can be less about what we teach and more about their conception, perception, and reception of what we teach that will effect change within them. Suppose our stimuli are misconstrued, misinterpreted, or misapplied to their pool of existing knowledge. In that case, the resultant actions may be harmful to their development. It can't simply be about what is in the Word of God, what is in our teaching arsenal, and what is in our agenda. We are teachers, communicators, and ambassadors for Christ. An ambassador cannot simply content himself with speaking; he must do all he can to be heard and understood. This is a task that pastors have always found clouded by generational gaps. Today, we also find social, political, cultural, racial, economic, and linguistic separations and schisms that must be overcome.

As beings, we have immeasurable potential, an unlimited God, but very limited personal resources. Our memory, attention span, other commitments, and other responsibilities all affect the amount of thought we will bring to bear on any given sample of stimuli or knowledge that we

sense or experience. We make an infinite number of decisions concerning what we will or will not invest our time, effort, mental resources, and emotional resources into each day.

Teaching Methodologies

As you contemplate ways in which you might customize your teaching and counseling arsenal, it is important to consider how people use information. The process has been evolving over the last 20 years. The methods you were trained with are no longer used in schools. One of the reason churches have had difficulty reaching the younger generation is because they are being trained differently in school.

You may have heard conversations about the reduced attentions span of young Americans. I have heard video games and popular entertainment "blamed" for the inability of young people to consume and remember information. This is a simplistic and errant proposition. The truth is that young people think, process, contemplate, and recall information differently than we were trained to. I suggest that a failure on our part is responsible for the disconnect with the younger generation.

Christian parents are often encouraged by church communities to use antiquated methods (the way it was done in my day) to develop their children's minds. Yet this is in direct opposition to how every part of society is training their minds to function. I am not talking about morals, values, standards, or principles. These are not open to debate and no Christian should compromise on these things. But rote memorization, use of physical books, reinforcement of dogmatic principles, and other "old school" methods are not destined to be effective.

Social Emotional Learning

Social emotional learning (SEL) is a methodology that is being utilized in schools to encourage students to be in touch with their emotions.[3] Young Americans are being taught to feel emotions deeply, demonstrate empathy for others, and give and expect emotional honesty. These behaviors are being developed with the expectation that students will make positive, responsible

decisions in life. This learning model effects how students will set and attempt to actualize their goals and build relationships with the people around them.

Social emotional learning is not a scholastic class that students take. It is a philosophy that education departments nationwide are implementing in classrooms from preschool to high school. The principles are woven into every school's curriculum. It is ingrained in the teachers as a philosophical principle and governs the way they teach, speak, correct, encourage, and socialize (see Figure 1 for an excerpt from the NYS Education Department's SEL curriculum).

Teachers are indoctrinated to make academic lessons personal and relatable to students. The students are trained to freely participate in situations where emotional openness is fostered. Conversely, they are being indoctrinated to be suspicious of settings where such emotional vulnerability is not presented. Students do not respond to authority figures but are encouraged to relate to those who foster empathy, self-awareness, and feelings of safety and inclusiveness.

SOCIAL EMOTIONAL LEARNING'S FIVE CORE COMPETENCIES

There are many frameworks and ways to talk about social emotional competence and skills. For simplicity and clarity, this document uses a set of five competencies identified by the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL) that all young people and adults need to learn to be successful in school and in life. This framework has been widely accepted across the country. New York State has endorsed these five core competencies.
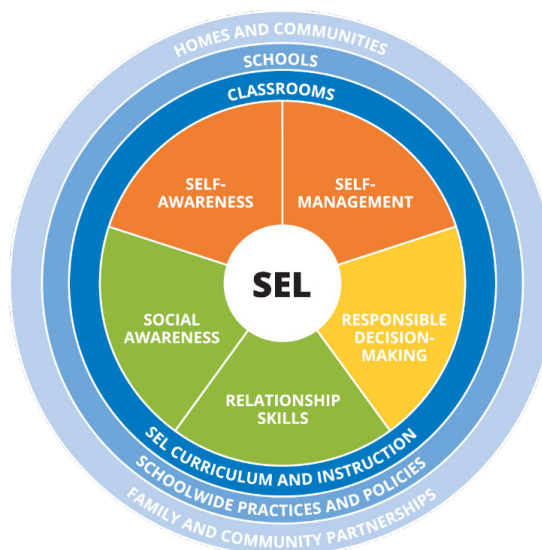

Figure 1: Framework for Systemic Social and Emotional Learning.
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Figure 1: Excerpt from NYS Education Department: "Social Emotional Learning: A Guide To Systemic Whole School Implementation."4

Competency	Description
Self-awareness	Competence in the self-awareness domain involves understanding one's emotions, personal challenges... are interconnected.
Self-management	Competence in the self-management domain requires skills and attitudes that facilitate the ...
Social awareness	Competence in the social awareness domain involves the ability to take the perspective of and ... school and community resources and supports.
Relationship skills	Competence in this domain involves communicating clearly, listening actively, cooperating, maintain healthy and rewarding relationships, and to act in accordance with social norms.
Responsible decision-making	Competence in this domain requires the ability to consider ethical standards, safety concerns, constructive choices about personal behavior and social interactions across diverse settings.

There are five core competencies fostered by SEL:

Self-awareness encourages students to focus on their emotions and how they impact their behavior. Students are taught to focus on their strengths and develop confidence in their own abilities.

Self-management encourages students to take ownership of their thoughts, emotions, and actions. Students must set goals and work toward them.

Social awareness encourages students to "put themselves in the other person's shoes." This is a call to CC and the development of cultural intelligence. Students are taught to develop and display empathy and culturally acceptable ethics in community.

Relationship skills are also part of CC. Students are taught to build relationships with people from other backgrounds. Empathetic listening and acceptable communication methods are developed for peaceful resolution of conflict and greater social unity.

Responsible decision-making involves learning how to act or respond to each situation and is based on learned behaviors of ethics, fairness, and unity.

These competences have been built into the youth of America by the school system. These ingrained values and standards will affect how young people will view your actions and message.

Memory and Information Processing

Another variable in how your message will be received and processed is the memory system utilized by your congregants. As you know, our brain possesses three distinct types of memory processes. We each have a sensory memory (register), a short-term memory, and a long-term memory. Sensory memory, short-term memory, and long-term memory are all important systems, but they differ greatly in terms of their duration, capacity, and function. Sensory memory has a large capacity for intaking information, but it has a brief duration of retention. Short-term memory has a limited capacity, while long-term memory possesses an unlimited capacity for storage. The duration of sensory memory ranges from a millisecond to 4 seconds. The duration of short-term memory is about 15-24 seconds, while the information in long-term memory can be stored indefinitely. Experts like Sperling[5] and Coltheart[6] believe that short-term sensory memory is the first step in forming high-level, permanent memory that affects behavior, followed by a limited-capacity visual working memory that can last many seconds (Pasternak and Greenlee;[7] Fukuda et al.;[8] Keogh and Pearson[9]).

The *sensory memory* register is a complex system (echoic [auditory], iconic [ocular], olfactory, haptic, gustatory) that helps congregants form an understanding of the world based on

the sights, sounds, and sensory stimuli they experience. Primarily we concern ourselves with the iconic and echoic memory, but the haptic memory can have important secondary significance. Stimuli enter the sensory register of a congregant, student, or disciple (congregants) as their brain obtains information from us and the environment around them. Indeed, one of the reasons we focus on the cleanliness of our church facilities is because pleasant surroundings, along with the tenor of our communication, can greatly influence the effectiveness of our initial interactions with others. Each congregant is constantly gathering information passively through visual and auditory cues as we interact. While only lasting a few seconds, the brain has the capacity to direct or derail its mind to consider or reject the things we are presenting.

Iconic refers to the mind's storage of visual memory that enables congregants to continue to visualize a physical image for a few seconds after the stimulus is gone. *Echoic* refers to the storage of auditory memory in the primary auditory cortex that enables congregants to recall something that was said for 2-4 seconds, whether they were initially paying attention to it or not. The iconic memory (visual memory and visual working memory) stores information for less than half-a-second with a high level of detail but a low resistance to visual interference. In contrast, the echoic working memory possesses a far lower capacity to retain information, but the information is protected from visual interference and is maintained longer (see Brady et al.,[10] for a review; Vogel and Machizawa,[11]; Fukuda et al.[12]).

Figure 2: Human Memory (C) Gershwin Grant, 2022
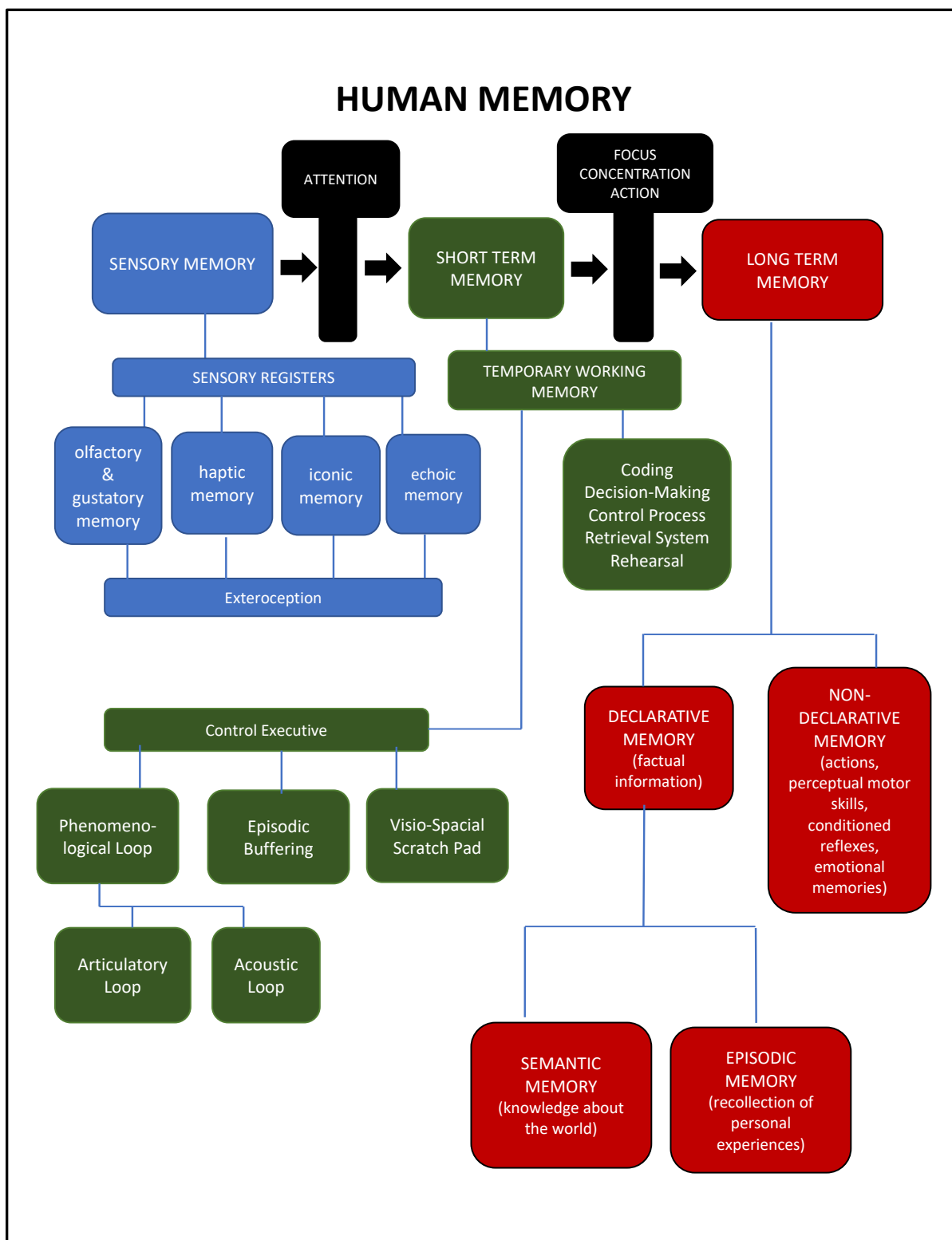
The use of visual aids in teaching congregants provides powerful opportunities to imprint positively on them. However, since visual images can trigger past negative reactions, they need to be carefully considered for cultural and social appropriateness. Stimuli in our iconic and echoic memory that are not swiftly acknowledged and contemplated are lost and will never move into our short-term memory or working memory.[13]

Short-term memory comes into play when sensory intake receives acknowledgment and attention, causing it to enter the short-term memory. Short-term memory is stored for a slightly longer period (15-24 seconds), so it can be repeated. For example, this system of the brain can be used to repeat a Bible verse that has been quoted or the name of a king of Israel that is mentioned. This is also the memory used to remember a phone number from an operator long enough to hang up and dial it. This process is not used to contemplate or manipulate information.

Temporary working memory is similar to short-term memory, but there are substantial differences. Working memory helps congregants remember details of their current task by storing information they intend to put to work immediately. Working memory is used for solving complex problems where an order of operations must be recalled and participating in a debate in which they must remember the main arguments used by each person. In Bible study, it may be used by consulting a commentary to consider which kings were good or bad before considering a particular monarch. The working memory is a system of the brain that provides temporary storage for manipulating information for complex cognitive tasks like comprehension, learning, and reasoning. Working memory utilizes the simultaneous storage and processing of information.

The working memory features the control executive, which is an attentional-controlling system. In the control executive is the visio-spatial sketch pad, also known as the inner eye, which stores and processes information in a visual or spatial form. It is the memory's manipulator of visual images, the phenomenological loop, which stores and rehearses speech-based spoken and written material.[14] The loop features the phonological store (inner ear), which holds information in a speech-based form for 1-2 seconds, processes speech perception, and stores spoken words we hear. The articulatory control process (inner voice) processes speech production rehearses and

stores verbal information from the phonological store, thereby enabling us to repeat verbal information. In a practical sense, working memory stores the three or four possible restaurants you might choose or the list of four or five items you need to consider before you select the most desirable one. It brings back to mind an empty parking space you passed when the one you hoped to use was already taken. Working memory is a facility and can be improved and strengthened, adding value to a person's life. It can help one to function more effectively in society.

Long-term memory stores memories and experiences that receive acknowledgment, consideration, and actions within 15-24 seconds of reception. As teachers, our goal is to encourage congregants to commit our teaching to their long-term memory. As pastors, we are prayerfully trying to influence the people we care about in the hope that they will utilize some of their precious, limited resources (memory, time, etc.) for the purposes of the kingdom. The extent to which we are successful in this endeavor is greatly controlled by the worldview of the individual we are speaking to. We must acknowledge that our success may also be affected by our understanding and acknowledgment of that person's worldview.

Long-term memory can be categorized as implicit and explicit. Explicit long-term memories are conscious remembrances of events, autobiographical facts, and learned information. Some types of explicit long-term memory include *episodic* memory of events or autobiographical facts such as events from childhood, and specific facts about individual people, singularly specific events (concerts, bowl games, elections, etc.). The experiences surfaced by episodic memory can be recent or decades old. *Autobiographical* memory includes events in one's life and other non-episodic forms of information such as details of a conversation held recently, how one felt at their graduation, wedding, Bhat Mitzva, etc.

Semantic memory stores general knowledge about the world that a person learns or studies but does not personally experience. Semantic memory is composed of pieces of information accumulated over the course of a lifetime, including what concepts mean and how they are related. The details that make up semantic memory can correspond to other forms of memory. One may remember factual details about a party, for instance—what time it started, at whose house it took

place, how many people were there, all part of semantic memory—in addition to recalling the sounds heard and the excitement felt. But semantic memory can also include facts and meanings related to people, places, or things one has no direct relation to.

Implicit long-term memory can influence a person's behavior without being consciously considered. One form of implicit memory is *procedural memory* which enables one to perform familiar tasks. This capacity involves how to do things (physical and mental) and is involved in the process of learning skills, including routine, ongoing activities such as walking or driving that become an automatic part of procedural memory. *Kinesthetic memory* refers specifically to memory for physical behaviors.

Prospective memory is forward-thinking memory that recollects an intention from the past in order to do something in the future, enabling one to execute plans and meet obligations when the intended behaviors can't be carried out right away or have to be carried out routinely. *Priming memory* occurs when stimuli a person has experienced in the past affect how they respond to new stimuli. Classical and operant conditioning prime people to perform specific behaviors in response to certain experiences.

Understanding the cultural and social conventions of differing peoples can greatly aid our teaching efforts. Avoiding negative stimuli and conditioning can prevent a knee-jerk rejection of the things we strive to impart.

Reasoning

Some of these factors have become well understood in the Christian world. We all understand that a person from a matriarchal society may not understand the significance of God as the heavenly Father. We recognize that part of our responsibility as exegetes of society and teachers of the Church is to explain God's program to our congregants in a contextualized manner they can understand. When we are successful in this effort, it allows them to process the stimuli we offer them in a manner that combines with their previous knowledge and experience and will enable them to grow in Christ-likeness and to alter their actions and behaviors in a way that

develops their lives in Christ, establishes their path in Kingdom work, builds the Kingdom, and expresses the values and attributes of Christ in the world. When we are unsuccessful, it may reflect one of many possible disconnects in which our words did not bridge an existing gap or chasm. Some hindrances are beyond our control; others are not.

In Isaiah 1:18a, God says, "Come now and let us reason together." I find it to be a wonderous taste of scripture. The concept that an infinite, unassailable God would desire to reason with us at a level we can understand is wonderous. The ability to reason is simply that important to our relationship with God, mankind, and the world around us. Our sense of reason dramatically influences what we do and don't do, what we can and can't achieve, what we will or won't learn, and who we will or will not become in Christ.

Reasoning is thought with purpose and direction and involves the consideration of stimuli against the backdrop of our perceptions and pool of existing knowledge. As reasoning occurs, new knowledge is formed, or existing knowledge is buttressed. Human reasoning has the potential to be an insipid cycle of personal knowledge, opinions, and beliefs that are evaluated against hand-picked stimuli that simply buttresses the thoughts and opinions that are already held by the individual. In this model, what passes for knowledge is simply a reiteration of already held beliefs.

However, in the godly model of reasoning, God's will, way, Word, and desires are introduced into the cycle of contemplation. By interjecting the things that God says are true into the process, we escape the stultifying helix of self-aggrandizing, self-perpetuating, self-authenticating inventions of our own mind, set self-servingly against the backdrop of what we are convinced we already "know and understand." In the godlier paradigm, we evaluate new phenomena and stimuli we encounter against the truths that God reveals in His Word and His creation. We are then free to use the new emerging Holy Spirit-inspired truths to cast new light on our existing pool of knowledge. As we allow God to illuminate our minds using new stimuli and Holy Spirit-contextualized understandings of past experiences, we create new (to us) knowledge and understanding which can change our behavior in godly ways.

These are several ways in which reasoning takes place. The opinions, beliefs, and certainties one holds can be utilized through the inductive reasoning championed by empirical science. Inductive reasoning allows one to begin with one's perceptions and specific knowledge and extrapolate to a more general form of understanding. The Bible student, congregant, or disciple will hear what you are teaching and make personal observations or begin gathering data on the subject. As they step back and form a broader view of the stimuli you have provided, they may search for patterns in their intellectual/spiritual grid before reaching general conclusions that they begin to incorporate into their lives.

At other times, they may utilize deductive reasoning to produce knowledge. In the deductive reasoning process, their conclusions are based on how the things you teach them concur with other things they already believe to be true. This top-down logic relies on arriving at a logical premise and then basing a conclusion around that premise. It does not rely on making inferences, then assuming those inferences to be true. Deductive reasoning is considered a critical human general skill because it allows one to make an inference based on two or more pieces of information one has confidence in, thereby developing a new piece of information one can be relatively confident in. Your congregants, students, and disciples will often use this reasoning. The question then arises, what if one of those pieces of information is wrong? What if it is colored by one's past experiences or faulty assumptions?

Different Worldviews

In the course of a lifetime, we accumulate opinions and beliefs on many subjects. They lurk in the back of our minds and on the periphery of our consciousness, waiting to interact with new stimuli that will bring them to life and give them greater importance. These thoughts, concepts, opinions, and ideas are part of the material that composes our worldview.

Many of the things we teach as pastors depend upon a common understanding of the world possessed by many, if not most, Christians. This is such a fundamental concept that we don't consider it very often, but I suggest it is time for that to change.

To a greater and greater extent, we will find that we cannot determine a person's worldview simply by knowing who they are or who they appear to be. The days of a monolithically identifiable North American Christian worldview have come to an end. The modernistic Christian worldview in which we were raised now stands in stark opposition to the post-modern worldview as one example. In the past, young Christians would attend church with their parents, grow in sanctification, become more and more like Christ, develop their thinking along biblical lines, and assimilate a similar common-core Christian worldview through enculturation.

But with many Christians coming to Christ later in life and bringing with them a lifetime of worldly experiences, standards, habits, and beliefs, it is not safe to assume that the Christian in front of you will have a similar worldview to yours. With their worldview representing a fundamental part of the assessment apparatus that each Christian will use to interpret and apply your words it becomes clear that understanding their worldview is important.

A person's worldview is the backdrop for their deductive reasoning and leads to specific actions. It is foundational for all reasoning as it formulates the standards of value by which we establish our cognitive goals. What we work toward, why we do things, what standards and practices we use, and how we seek to achieve something are all impacted by our worldview.

There are several agreed-upon elements of one's worldview:

- Theology comprises a person's beliefs about the existence and nature of God.

- Epistemology denotes one's beliefs about the nature and sources of knowledge and validation.

- Metaphysics details one's beliefs about the ultimate nature of reality.

- Cosmology pertains to one's beliefs about the origins and nature of the universe, life, and mankind.

- Teleology focuses on one's beliefs about the meaning and purpose of the universe.

- Anthropology galvanizes one's beliefs about one's nature and purpose and that of humankind.

- Axiology encompasses one's core beliefs about the nature of value: what is good and bad, what is right and wrong.

All these elements have significance in our understanding and apprehension of a person's worldview. However, I will examine the theological component because it is central to our passion. The theological aspect of worldview considers a person's answer to questions such as: What is the relationship of God to man or me? Is God a loving parent to nurture us or a powerful force to be feared? How should I think of one who is a lawgiver, a judge, a disciplinarian? Is God a shepherd, a caregiver, a comforter? Is God active in the activities of humanity in general, just Christians, or is He separated from all things human? Does God desire an intimate relationship with each individual person or just a governorship over mankind? Does God speak to us? Has God equipped us to work things out on our own and left us alone to do it?

Does the person you are teaching believe God is the source of and purpose for the universe? Are we accountable to God? Are we to obey God? If so, does He have a specific will for mankind, those with a calling, each person, or no one? Will they look to God for help in time of need or a more "practical" source of deliverance?

As pastors, you are well aware of these various perspectives and well equipped to recognize, diagnose, and help each congregant to approach a more biblical view in each circumstance. Yet, we may need to prepare ourselves to address epistemological concepts being taught in our children's schools. We have addressed these concerns regarding prayer, creation, and truth. Have you considered the metaphysical beliefs about the ultimate nature of reality that are being proffered by school, entertainment, media, and commercialism? The Greeks used plays and entertainment to disseminate their beliefs concerning theology, philosophy, justice, morality, and value. People were indoctrinated and acculturated in Hellenistic ideals while believing they were simply being entertained.

The indoctrination of today is no less intentional and often more subtle and effective. Cosmology concerning the origins and nature of the universe, life, and mankind are written into

each sci-fi screenplay. Teleology, anthropology, and axiology underlie each tale of vampires, witches, and the supernatural. Is man created in the image of God? Perhaps, but what about aliens? Are there other things that were created or evolved quite outside the realm of the heavenly Father? Have you ever asked why the other "species" presented in today's entertainment are always more advanced than mankind?

There is a battle taking place to form the worldview of each person in the nation. Interested parties with personal agendas are vying to stamp their hallmark on the reasoning of society. Schools, entertainment sources, corporate America, social media, and politicians are all in the game. They are influencers, but so are we. Understanding the worldview each congregant has developed will help us to be a positive and effective influence on their lives for Christ.

CHAPTER 3

Learning Theories

As the climate continues to evolve, I believe it will be increasingly important for pastors to develop relevant, pertinent, and adaptive levels of CC. An important but overlooked aspect of that competence involves the manner in which they were educated because how a pastor was trained significantly affects how he will teach others. Pastors will also need to understand how other people learn, how they develop cultural self-awareness, and how they draw knowledge from within their social context.

The reality is that learning theory has changed significantly since many pastors were in school. The methods taught in the 1970s, 80s, and 90s have been replaced with stridently different methods.

Pastors that have been educated in North America have several identifiable similarities in the methods with which they were educated, so let's will briefly discuss the four main learning theories employed to some extent in North American learning institutions. The learning theories are Behaviorism, Cognitivism, Constructivism, and Humanism.

Behaviorism is a philosophical process that examines how human behavior relates to consequences. **Cognitivism** examines how a person's cognitive ability is used to gain knowledge, insight, and understanding from internal observations. **Constructivism** posits a process of building knowledge from information gathered through close interaction. Humanism

examines how people use rationality of thought for the moral, ethical, and rational betterment of individuals and other people. I will address the concepts of Behaviorism, Cognitivism, and Constructivism. **Humanism** is sufficiently incongruent with Christian learning goals that it will not be considered in this study.

Learning theories are practical tools for educating people, but they are also philosophical positions formed by men and women concerning the nature of humankind, the brain, memory, learning, society, evidence, reality, and experience. To bypass the philosophical and controversial aspects of the various learning theories, one should consider Schunk's list of five definitive questions that distinguish each learning theory and arrive at the essence of what each represents.[1] Schunk asks:

- How does learning occur within each system?
- Which factors are believed to influence learning?
- What is the role of memory in the learning process?
- How does transfer occur within each methodology?
- What forms of learning are best explained by the individual theory?

These questions help to evaluate each theory at a utilitarian level, avoiding the questions of human nature and the value upon which the system may be based. We will take a closer look at each of these learning theories.

Behaviorism

The philosophical system of Behaviorism teaches that the forces that cause a person to learn are purely external and not internal. People learn behaviors. They are trained and conditioned through repeated actions, habits, enculturation, acculturation, rewards, and punishments which shape their behavior.[2] In this learning system, positive reinforcement is a powerful tool, and negative consequences are a powerful deterrent.

Behaviorism concludes that people learn best through pure repetition and memorization while receiving feedback and encouragement for their achievement. Many Christian children's programs are based on the behaviorist model and provide rewards for scripture memorization and consequences for non-compliant behavior. This *operant conditioning* utilizes positive and negative reinforcement to increase or decrease a particular behavior in a given area of the person's life. An individual is constantly being formed by their interaction with the environment in which they live. These interactions or "stimuli" work to form particular behaviors within the individual.

It is apparent that religious education in North America has often focused on the notion of behavioral adaptation. Learning "Christlike" behavior is a central component of the discipleship and sanctification processes. In keeping with Behaviorism, American Christianity has emphasized a person's lived experience as they learn from external stimuli such as the behavior and example of a Sunday school teacher, discipler, pastoral staff member, and other congregants. Over time, the congregant is conditioned by the environmental stimuli to which they are exposed. They grow toward the desired archetype of Christian living and prescribed Bible-based, teleological of God's will for His Church and His children.[3]

North American pastoral staffs over the last 100 years have utilized *operant conditioning* in a considerable portion of their methodologies. The benefits or consequences of godly and sinful behavior have always loomed large in the North American Church. Whether positively conditioned by the desire of the stimulus that precedes a behavior or deterred by the negative stimulus that promises to follow the behavior, the congregant is motivated to repeat and assimilate positive things and avoid those that are harmful or negative.[4]

Behaviorism is based on the conviction that learning begins when a cue or stimulus from the environment is presented, and the learner reacts to the stimulus with some form of response. Responses are reinforced or punished accordingly, and the process is repeated until the responses become automatic and the behavior is permanently changed. The change is the indicator that learning has occurred.[3]

There is a conflict between Behaviorism and CC in post-modern society because Behaviorism disregards mental processes or "understanding." It can be argued that Behaviorism does not prepare learners for problem-solving or the development of critical-thinking skills that are valued in today's society. Post-modernists may not only reject Behaviorist methods, they may push back against them.

> **Note: Developing, using, and valuing problem-solving and critical thinking skills are central to the cultural experience of younger black people in urban communities today. Many will respond negatively to being dictated to or told what to think. While older urban blacks often looked to the clergy to provide strong, authoritarian leadership, their children to not see things the same way. As the offspring of a people group that believes they have been lied to and lied about by leaders, politicians, history books, and those in positions of authority are less accepting of a learning system in which the instructor plays such a dominant role.**

In the church setting, Behaviorism is introduced by the pastor, teachers, ministry leaders, and respected Christians who establish the learning environment and use positive and negative reinforcement to shape the congregants' behavior.[5] It is important to recognize that there is a cognitive dissonance between the surety with which pastors hold biblical truth and the value post-modernists place on the value of personal narratives and self-defined truth. Clearly a pastor cannot compromise the truth, but since Behaviorism is considered to be an outmoded form of learning, perhaps Behaviorist trained pastors will need to be willing to rethink their teaching methodologies and strategies to adapt to the congregants of tomorrow.

> **Note: I am sharing these concepts with pastors with two goals in mind. Some pastors will consider adapting their methods. Others will doubtless conclude that they are too set in their ways to change horses mid-stream. For those pastors, I urge you to consider the men you are training to take over when you retire. Men beginning their pastoral ministry life will have no choice but to address these things. I urge you not to train them using methods that are already considered obsolete.**

Cognitivism

The second form of learning methodology is *Cognitive Learning Theory or Cognitivism.* Cognitivism replaced Behaviorism as the dominant learning theory in the late 1950s and early1960s.[6]

Note: Yes, the Behaviorism that most pastors over 40 were trained with was obsolete when it was being used to teach them. Just as Christian ethics and hermeneutics were 20 years behind the secular world when adopted, Christian learning theory has often lagged. In the past, this did not present the challenge that it does today. The influences (and influencers) were sufficiently aligned with Christian practicum to mitigate the dissonance.

The theory of Cognitivism emphasizes the role of mental activities in the learning process and includes actions such as thinking, remembering, perceiving, interpreting, reasoning, and problem-solving.[7] As with Behaviorism, there are philosophical assumptions underlying cognitive theories that are primarily objectivistic. In other words, the world is real and external to the learner. Therefore, the goal of instruction is to map the structure of the world onto the learner.[8]

Cognitive theory is based on schemas, which are ways people organize information and knowledge. Piaget referred to schemas as the building blocks of intelligent behavior for humankind, meaning that people are not passive when learning. The human brain is actively working in the process of learning, laboring to take in new information and process it effectively.

As a person recognizes something as "new," their active mind begins to assess it, categorize it, compare it to other existing knowledge, and use it to supplement or modify information already stored in the memory. The stored information is then utilized to influence future learning, understanding, and behavior. Problem-solving is an excellent example of Cognitivism in action.

Bloom's Taxonomy is a framework used to classify different levels of cognition according to their cognitive difficulty.
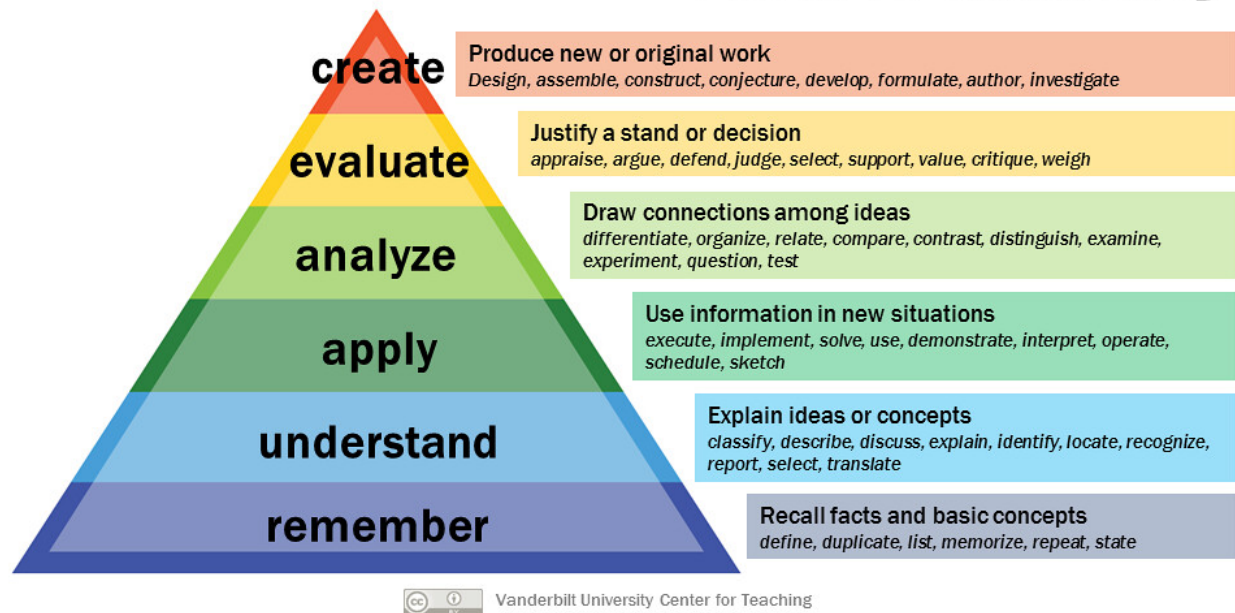

Figure 3: **Armstrong, P. (2010). Bloom's Taxonomy. Vanderbilt University Center for Teaching. Retrieved 9/1/22 from https://cft.vanderbilt.edu/guides-sub-pages/blooms-taxonomy/.**

The final level of Bloom's Taxonomy may make pastors feel uncomfortable. The idea of "creating" something is not traditional to Christian teaching, which expounds upon the completed work of Christ. Throughout the ages, the Church has been cautious and a little skeptical when it comes to embracing the "new" in areas of music, hermeneutics, doctrine, teaching, evangelism, and community involvement. New interpretations of prophecy, polity, and practicum; new applications of the mission, meaning, nature, and crucifixion; new gospels of race, equality, and social fairness have sometimes fallen on ears that were at least dubious, often unresponsive, and sometimes unaccepting, resistant, and hostile.

Congregants ingrained with Cognitive Learning Theory desire a safe learning environment where ideas and conclusions can be reached without fear of failure or reprimand. This is not always the case in a church setting. The nature of discipleship and theological mentorship is such that right

and wrong are often prominent parts of the character-building process. Something is or is not Christlike and should or should not be done.

Traditional North American pastoral teaching and counseling may often fail to provide a congregant with the opportunity to postulate and problem-solve concerning the nature of their faith, which is essential to the cognitive learning approach. Congregants may feel that rote memorization of scripture, doctrines, attributes of the triune Godhead, Bible timelines, commandments, and dos and don'ts from a behavioral learning standpoint are stifling their cognitive learning. Many will resent any attempt to create a passive intake system, abject storage retrieval, and limited processing of information. They will desire and demand more.

The Cognitive learning theory many of our current and future generations of congregants are steeped in encourages congregants to develop problem-solving skills by observing and categorizing the things they learn and experience[9] in order to form their own ideas and concepts, such as concepts of Christlike living. In the cognitive process, the learner actively constructs new knowledge based on previously learned knowledge. The learner will organize, interpret, observe, form generalizations, expand, value, and deprecate the information they receive and interact with.

Though challenging to pastors, Cognitivism is well suited to biblical learning since it combines the mental process of absorbing and retaining knowledge with the ability to understand through thought, experience, and sense. Biblical knowledge combined with the social, environmental, communal, and familial experiential stimuli offers a solid grounding for a person's faith journey. The concepts that affect a person as they grow can be extrinsic, intrinsic, positive, or negative.

Social Cognitive Theory considers behavioral, environmental (extrinsic), and personal (intrinsic) factors.
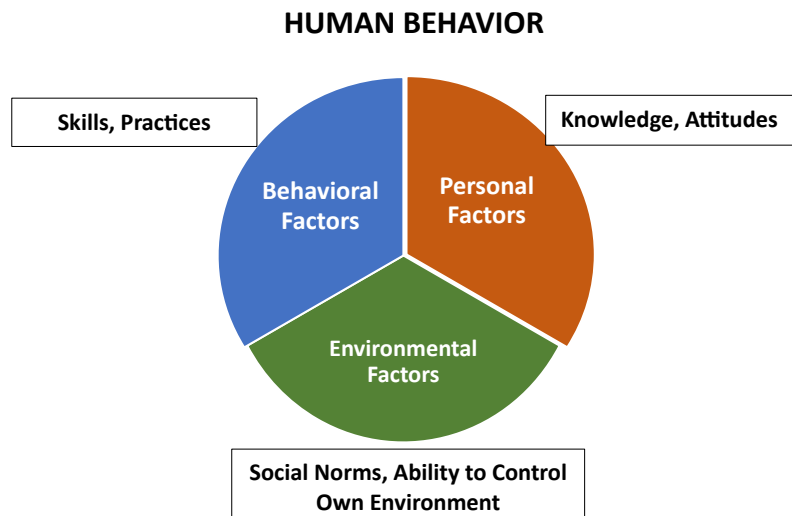
HUMAN BEHAVIOR

Figure 4: Social Cognitive Theory Illustration © Gershwin Grant, 2022

Traditional biblical instruction has focused on the informational stimuli for behavioral adaptation, assuming the existence of a common "Christian" environment and core personal behaviors that are incrementally gravitating toward a commonly held and valued Christian mean.

Cognitive behavioral theory emphasizes the repetition of a behavior instead of the repetition of information in order to increase the opportunity for knowledge retention. A comfortable learning environment and access to relevant materials for learning and practice are keys to cognitive learning.

Traditional pastoral teaching based on exegetical hermeneutics, higher and lower criticism, and expository teaching create barriers to initial growth and ownership of a congregant's learning activities. These important concepts do not fit the Cognitive student's pattern of learning. As such, these important aspects of a well-rounded Christian education may need to be introduced later. First, a more experientially accessible Christian teaching may be necessary in order to reach the post-modern congregants of the future.

I believe Cognitive Learning Theory is still a powerful, useful, and vital method of teaching.

Note: I cannot claim impartiality. I developed my teaching methods utilizing Cognitive Learning methods. However, I am forced to admit that CLT is also somewhat less than cutting edge theory today.

Constructivism

Constructivism learning theory is not a totally new approach to learning but provides a discernible advancement. Constructivism has roots in the philosophical and psychological viewpoints of the twentieth century, specifically in the works of Piaget, Bruner, and Goodman.[10] In 1993, when Constructivism was introduced to the educational, philosophical, and psychological scene, there were very few teaching methods that aligned with the Constructivist perspective. Today, Constructivism is the dominant educational theory and has been embraced by nearly every educational reform initiative within the last two decades.[11] Various constructivist theories, forms of social Constructivism, concepts of situated learning, and ideas of connectivism[12] have been developed and become entrenched as the foundation for the teaching methods of today (problem-based learning, authentic instruction, and computer-supported collaborative learning)[13] and the foreseeable future.

Churches in North America have expected congregants to utilize a reliably congeneric knowledge base as a foundation upon which they build. The process of adding new things to a reliably homogeneous foundation of core experiences greatly simplifies the learning curve, provides a community learning experience, and promises a reliable, predictable, dependable outcome. However, as the country, communities, and, thereby, churches continue to diversify, this concept of homogeneity will become less common. A common filter through which all phenomena are viewed will become rare, knowledge bases will become more diverse, and the ongoing development of CC will become essential for every pastoral staff to develop intentionally.

Like Cognitivism, Constructivism emphasizes connecting new information with existing information based on schemas but also embraces the importance of the learners' experiences in the "construction" process. Since every learner has a different set of experiences and perceptions that shape their learning, every individual's learning experience is a personal and unique one. Young congregants will have been taught by teachers steeped in Constructivism and its tenants may permeate their thinking. Were a church to adopt a Constructivism system it would be a learner-centered model, with congregants as the primary actors actively constructing meaning to new information, and pastors and teachers acting as facilitators providing feedback and asking guiding questions.

Knowledge would be constructed as it builds precept upon precept, utilizing previous experiences and information to shape how the learner will perceive and use new knowledge. Each Christian would learn in their own manner and may arrive at a markedly different understanding from another person. This is potentially troubling to the pastor/teacher in a church setting. While the way a concept like "love" is actualized by one congregant or another may differ, it must remain within acceptable boundaries. These are disquieting concepts, but they cannot be avoided or ignored, because this is happening now. These things are in the minds of people you meet. These concepts are in the thought matrix of people who enter your congregation. These principles are the answer to some of those questions you have asked in the past. Why didn't "X" keep attending our services? Why didn't "Y" want to be discipled? Why haven't we been more effective in reaching "Z"? These concepts are affecting your ministry; I encourage you to be intentional in response.

One way to integrate Constructivism into your church setting is through discipleship. Discipleship can provide a valuable tool for implementation of Constructivist learning theory because congregants are able to learn from more established Christians through ongoing feedback and reinforcement. A safe, trusting discipleship relationship would enable a congregant to examine the application of newly encountered information in practical ways while protected by their mentor from possible negative repercussions.

Complication of Constructivism

If a person actively constructs their own knowledge, to some extent, that person's understanding of reality is determined by their experiences. Constructivism means that all congregants bring unique experiences to the congregation. A person's background, previous knowledge, cultural development, worldview, values, tendencies, victories, defeats, prejudices, and pre-understandings all impact how they will be able to learn. As congregants take in biblical, doctrinal, social, and communal aspects of Christianity, they will knit them together with the history they bring, creating an understanding that is different from any other congregant. This poses a challenge to pastoral staffs that traditionally utilize methods intended to produce uniform, reproducible, verifiable outcomes in congregants.

Note: I want to emphasize that your younger congregants are utilizing Constructivism whether you embrace it or not. It is how their schools are teaching them to think. It is how their mind works, and how they view the world. You can take advantage of this knowledge of their Constructivist tendencies and utilize it to teach them or ignore it. However, do not blind yourself to the fact that aspects of both Cognitivism and Constructivism are at play withing members of your congregation right now. This truth will continue to grow in magnitude as the future unfolds.

How People Learn in a Constructivist Society

A person's previous knowledge, experiences, beliefs, and insights are all important foundations for continued learning. Principles of grammar and writing are important developmental building blocks as well. Each thing a person learns gives them a better understanding of other things in the future.

- Learning is an active process. Learning involves sensory input to construct meaning. The learner needs to do something in order to learn; it is not a passive activity.

- Learners must engage in the world and actively participate in their own learning and development. Learners cannot just sit and expect to be told things and learn; they need to engage in discussions, reading, activities, etc.

- Learning is a social activity. Learning is directly associated with our connection with other people. Teachers, family, peers, and acquaintances have an impact on learning. Educators are more likely to be successful as they understand that peer involvement is vital in learning. Isolated learning is not the best way to help students learn and grow together.

- Learning is contextual. Students do not learn isolated facts and theories separate from the rest of their lives—they learn in ways connected to things they already know, what they believe, and more. The things they learn and the points they tend to remember are connected to the things happening around them.

- Knowledge is personal. Because Constructivism is based on a person's own experiences and beliefs, knowledge becomes a personal affair. Each person will have their own prior knowledge and experiences to bring to the table. So, the way and things people learn and gain from education will all be very different.

- Learning exists in the mind. Hands-on experiences and physical actions are necessary for learning, but those elements are not enough. Engaging the mind is the key to successful learning. Learning needs to involve activities for the minds, not just our hands. Mental experiences are needed for retaining knowledge.

- Motivation is key to learning. Students are unable to learn if they are unmotivated. Educators need to have ways to engage and motivate learners to activate their minds and help them be excited about education. Without motivation, it is difficult for learners to reach into their past experiences and make connections for new learning.

Types of Constructivism

Cognitive Constructivism focuses on the idea that learning should be related to the learner's stage of cognitive development. These methods help students learn new information by connecting it to things they already know, enabling them to modify their existing intelligence to accommodate the new information.

Social Constructivism focuses on the collaborative nature of learning. Knowledge develops from how people interact with each other, their culture, and society at large. Students rely on others to help create their building blocks and learning from others helps them construct their own knowledge and reality.

North American Pastors have traditionally utilized methods that lead toward unified, verifiable results in congregants. Aspects such as Jungian personality types, diverse social backgrounds, differing cultural heritage, quality of prior educational systems, and other differentiating factors have not been incorporated into the teaching methodologies utilized in many Sunday schools and Bible classes, nor have they been well utilized in counseling and discipleship relationships.

The post-modern common core worldview being propagated in schools and the culturally specific worldviews pastors will encounter in the future are going stretch clergy toward new discoveries. The pastor presiding over a predominantly homogeneous, mono-cultural congregation will find many assumptions he relied upon to develop learning strategies can no longer be counted upon as Christian communities diversify. A common social background, worldview, set of values, or outlook will be increasingly difficult to surface or define.

Pastors will need to intentionally develop growing competencies to stay ahead of the curve as their communities and congregations change.14 Long-serving pastors must develop

ways to both attain these competencies and incorporate them into the development of younger

clergy who will minister into the changing future.

CHAPTER 4

Cultural Competence

Churches are slowly beginning to reflect the rapidly changing communities in which they exist. The dictates of globalism, multiculturalism, and post-modernism are breaking down social barriers and diminishing the tribal, ethnocentric divisions that have kept churches segregated despite the heart-felt desire for unity engendered by most Bible-believing pastors. As a result of this cultural shift, there is an increasing need to improve the cross-cultural development of individual pastors, pastoral staff, and ministerial students to prepare for the nuances and challenges of the post-modern, multicultural age they now inhabit.[1]

Cultural intelligence (intelligence) is the term coined to describe the developmental skills and traits that allow for more effective interaction with novel cultural settings.[2] Developing an effective level of cultural intelligence is called cultural competence (CC). By intentionally working to increase self-awareness, cultural knowledge, and socio-cultural and ministerial behaviors, pastors can prepare to represent the message of God to an expanding breadth of people.

The term Cultural Competence is used to describes a range of cognitive, affective, and behavioral skills that lead to effective and appropriate communication with people of other cultures. An individual and the organization they represent can both be judged for CC. Some criteria evaluated in judging CC are the value placed on diversity, the capacity for cultural self-assessment, a consciousness of the dynamics inherent in intercultural interaction, the development of institutionalized culture knowledge, and a willingness to develop adaptations to service delivery reflecting an understanding of cultural diversity.[3]

Competence in a pastor suggests that a sufficient level of intelligence has been developed in order for the pastor to interact effectively with people from diverse cultural backgrounds. Such competence affords the opportunity to engage divergent people with proper regard for the unique cultural contexts from which they come. The competent pastor can effectively minister in novel circumstances. Developing greater intelligence promises to enable pastors to better minister across and within cultures through the intentional, ongoing development of their competence.[4]

The reality is that pastors spend their ministry lives intentionally developing their ability to minister within their own cultural circumstances, and missionaries have long studied to understand the cultures they will encounter during their ministry work. Now, as communities across America routinely approximate the most complex foreign ministry field, the context of missionary work has moved to the home front,[5] and the need to study the cultures that surround a ministry field is being realized.

Developing Cultural Competence Intentionally

I believe that the intentional development of intelligence, competence, and efficacy can contribute to a pastor's ability to minister to the growing multicultural society in which they live. While some growth can be anticipated through normal exposure to other cultures, this may be inadequate to prevent social missteps and faux pas. Intentional development of competence may provide pastors with a greater sense of confidence, incentive, and purpose for establishing intercultural relationships that will facilitate greater discipleship and counseling. Intentional development of intelligence and competence will allow the pastoral vocation to remain relevant and responsive to the changing needs of a culture in flux.[6]

Exercising Cultural Competence

Many pastors unknowingly engage in the central elements of cultural intelligence as they use the methods of interpersonal intelligence[7] and social/emotional intelligence in their ministry

lives.[8] Pastors utilize interpersonal intelligence to recognize, understand, and manage their emotions while helping others manage theirs. The competencies of self-awareness and "other-awareness" are a part of the pastoral responsibility. The extent to which each pastor is attuned to these important emotional regulators will differ, but the work requires such competencies to be present.

A pastor's self-awareness easily translates to other awareness in a socially monolithic community. Understanding the dictates, peculiarities, mores, and sensitivities one feels and embraces prepares the pastor to minister to others who share those generalized traits and preferences. Emotional intelligence allows for self-regulation (the ability to control emotions and actions under pressure), the postponement of gratification to achieve long-term goals, and placing a congregant's interest above one's own. It allows the pastor to empathize with a congregant and communicate effectively and clearly.

Unfortunately, self-awareness may do little to enable a pastor to minister across racial, social, and cultural lines. Cultural intelligence must be developed to make inter-cultural communication effective. Cultural intelligence is built upon the importance of self- and other-awareness but must be augmented to enable the pastor to function skillfully in a cultural context different from their own.[9] Learning to understand, appreciate, anticipate, respect, and value the worldview of others will help the culturally intelligent pastor minister to congregants with differing values, beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors. Well-managed, informed, skillful interaction with congregants of differing viewpoints and worldviews allows the pastor to avoid alienating behaviors and enables the pastor to anticipate the congregants' reactions in order to act and react in appropriate, efficacious ways.[10]

Culturally intelligent pastors can use their knowledge to understand multiple aspects of cultural phenomena that come their way. The culturally competent pastor will utilize cognitive strategies to observe and interpret the behavior of congregants. This pastor will develop a repertoire of skills that they can then adapt to demonstrate appropriate behaviors across a wide range of situations.[11] The ability to adapt and actively adjust behavior appropriately is key to

effective ministry in today's post-modern society. It represents the developed ability to go beyond "what" is happening and discover "why" it is happening[12] by encountering the socio-cultural causes of differing worldviews and engaging them respectfully and effectively.[13]

The culturally intelligent pastor can move beyond assumptions and stereotypes by actively seeking enculturation, which simultaneously moves the pastor away from ethnocentrism and towards cultural "sense-making." The metacognitive process of sense-making involves reframing and changing one's manner of approaching an interaction rather than restricting oneself to familiar, practiced manners of interaction.[14] It is about changing perspective and creating new ways of looking at the people and communities surrounding your ministry.

Benefits of Cultural Competence

Cultural intelligence can lead to growth in leadership self-efficacy, ethno-relative attitudes, and understanding. Intelligence leads to the development of a growing socio-cultural knowledge base and results in positive socio-culturally sensitive ministerial behavioral changes. It is apparent that increased leadership self-efficacy[15] and the capacity to lead effectively in culturally diverse settings[16] enhance a pastor's ability to minister in a rapidly changing cultural landscape.

In developing an improved ethno-relative attitude, a pastor learns to understand and accept that beliefs, traditions, and behaviors vary across cultures, diminishing the influence of ethnocentric attitudes that subconsciously gravitate towards the propagation of the singular, monolithic, dominant culture within a congregation.[17] Ethno-relative understanding does not mean acceptance or endorsement of other socio-cultural mores, just a greater awareness of their existence.

I believe that post-modern, America-based ministers need to expand their knowledge of the phenomena, schema, stimuli, issues, influences, and concerns of other cultural perspectives that exist in their communities. Cultural sense-making and enculturating a situation require sufficient knowledge concerning another person's worldview to recognize the ramifications of

chosen responses. Ethno-relative growth allows the pastor to successfully encounter, navigate, and address socially relevant phenomena in a culturally sensitive manner.

Growth in a pastor's knowledge base develops a more accurate understanding of different, generalizable cultural patterns of behavior, ways of thinking, and expressions of emotions.[18] Knowledge-based growth allows a pastor to engage the cultural phenomena from a well-rounded position. Unbiased pre-understanding earns the congregant's trust and encourages relational understanding.

Growth in positive socio-culturally sensitive ministerial behaviors will allow the pastor to gain traction in the lives of those who feel alienated, invisible, and underappreciated. The greater the socio-cultural diversity of a pastor's arsenal of doctrinally grounded ministerial responses, the greater the opportunity for well-timed, well-aimed, well-grounded, well-received interventions in congregants' lives that maintain doctrinal integrity and pastoral credibility.[19]

Utilizing Cultural Intelligence

Tuleja speaks of three steps by which we utilize cultural intelligence when confronted by stimuli and phenomenologically novel situations. This process may be useful for pastors as they prayerfully prepare to encounter a congregant. The process involves what Tuleja terms framing, making attributions, and selecting a script.

The first step, framing, involves the expectations, pre-understandings, and assumptions brought to the phenomenological situation. The pastor immediately begins to assess the situation by determining what they believe is taking place, what the circumstances dictate, and what can be observed, inferred, assessed, and tentatively concluded.[20] The pastor will seek further clarification as the encounter develops, but this initial assessment forms the "framework" for the pastor's cognitive assessment of the phenomena.

Once the framework is established, the pastor begins to make attributions through analysis of the presenting information compared to the schema, or mental patterns, that the pastor forms. These schemas are cognitive frameworks that help the pastor to interpret unfamiliar information

and experiences. This process can be corrupted by the pastor's pre-understanding, socio-cultural biases, and ethno-centricities.[21] It is the natural tendency to make attributions that are affected by one's personal background and experiences. While the evaluation concerning the quality and nature of these phenomena should be influenced by doctrine, theology, and the pursuit of holiness, the pastor's personal attitudes, and cultural preferences should be taken into account and mitigated to the greatest degree possible.

The third step, "selecting a script," is based on framing and mental patterns (schema). The script becomes the guidepost that allows the pastor to navigate the unfamiliar territory. The script will often be influenced by the pastor's previous experiences, allowing the minister to draw similarities or differences between what he knows and what he does not know. The greater the pastor's developed knowledge of the novel culture, the more powerful and practical the script.

The pastor can prayerfully frame the situation by setting up loosely held expectations. This action provides a baseline against which the pastor can use previously acquired cultural knowledge and experiences to analyze the situation and create a script for how to proceed. In conjunction with the guidance of the Holy Spirit, this process enables the pastor to choose appropriate behaviors based upon a growing arsenal of knowledge and experiences suitable for the specific intercultural situation.

Thomas states, "Retaining this knowledge also requires the ability to transfer knowledge gained from a specific experience to broader principles that can be used in future interactions in other settings."[22] Developing a nuanced primer of culturally relevant information from diverse social backgrounds presents a valuable tool to enable pastors to begin a journey of discovery and ethno-relative change resulting in enhanced cultural intelligence and competence.
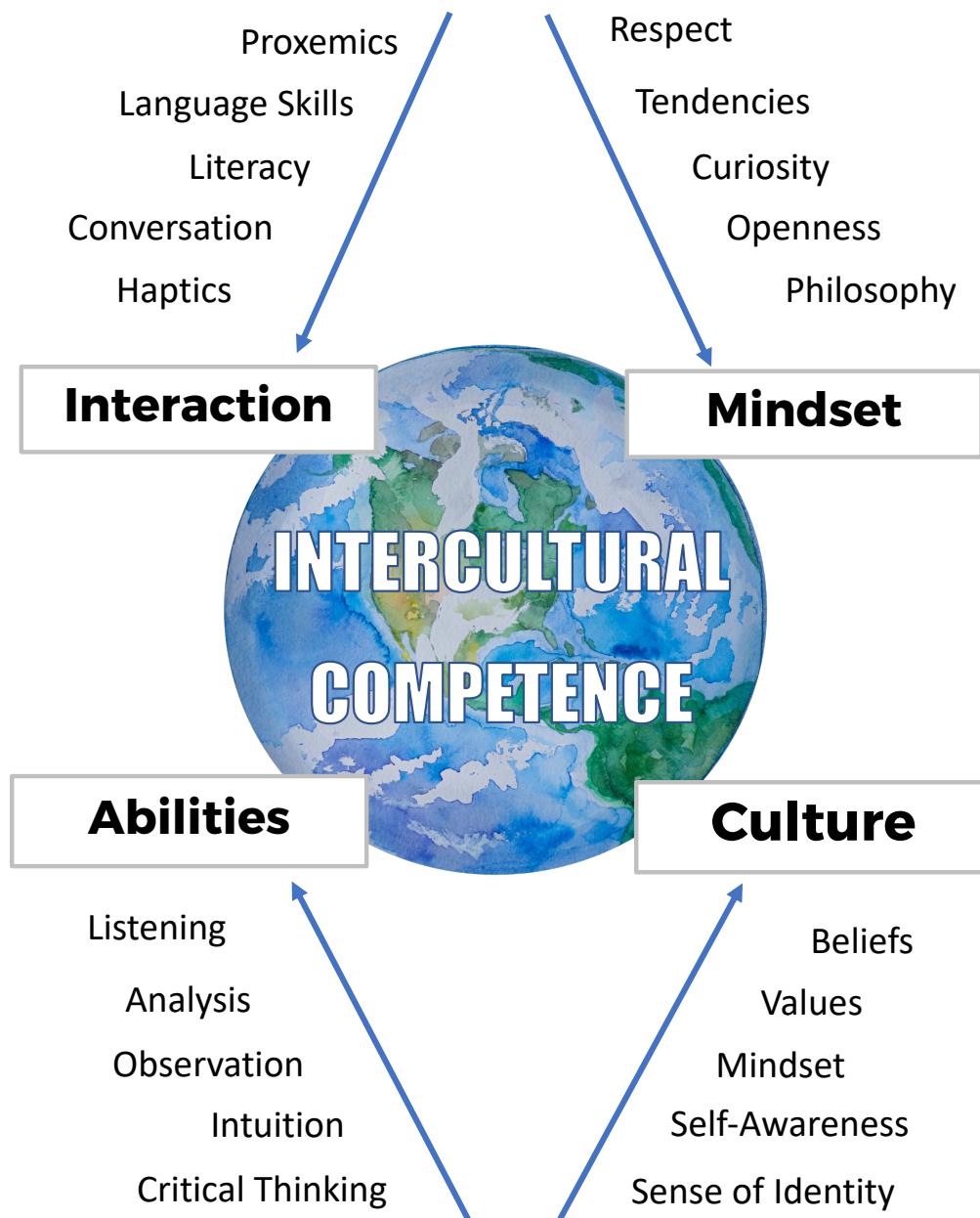
Proxemics

Respect

Language Skills

Tendencies

Literacy

Curiosity

Conversation

Openness

Haptics

Philosophy

Interaction

Mindset

INTERCULTURAL

COMPETENCE

Abilities

Culture

Listening

Beliefs

Analysis

Values

Observation

Mindset

Intuition

Self-Awareness

Critical Thinking

Sense of Identity

Figure 5: Intercultural Competence Illustration (C) Gershwin Grant, 2022

How is Cultural Self-Awareness Developed?

As a pastor, you can seek to become more aware of your own cultural norms, attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors. Take time to consider how your cultural norms, attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors affect:

- the way you minister

- the way you apply Scripture

- your hermeneutic

- your cultural interpretation of Scripture

Engaging in conversations with others who view these things from different perspectives from time to time can remind us of the things we take for granted and hold as first truths. Others from other cultural and social backgrounds may not find these things to be as self-evident as we do.

Try identifying and examining any personal biases, stereotypes, and prejudices that you have. You may need to engage in frank and candid conversations with trusted friends to achieve this. The truth is that we all view other people through a cultural shorthand using assumptions, broad stroke generalizations, and prior experiences to anticipate and interpret the behavior and responses of others. Some of these assumptions are valuable tools; others could sidetrack our exegesis of another culture. Take time to consider the impact cultural differences might have on your interactions with people with different cultural backgrounds or from other communities. Getting to truly know yourself is part of the process of truly understanding others.

How is Knowledge of Other Cultures Developed?

Part of the process of getting to know others is being comfortable with "not knowing." You are an exegete of society and have developed a level of expertise regarding your own culture and community. A level of humility is necessary to enter into a dialogue that balances your expert

knowledge with being open to learning from a different culture and their lived experiences. There are several steps that can help in the process:

- Develop a genuine curiosity concerning other cultures and societies.

- Attend cultural events and festivals.

- Establish trusting relationships with confidants or connectors from other people groups and social groups who can provide insights into cultural norms, family practices, communication styles, and traditions.

Learn to question the universal acceptance of the things you hold to. I'm not suggesting you loosen your grip on the things you believe, but recognize that others may find them more slippery than you do. One tool on our standard ministry utility belt is our hermeneutic.

I have always held to the use of a literal hermeneutic. I utilize the grammatical-historical method of biblical exegesis and seek to understand the intended meaning of the biblical author by applying what I consider to be the normal, natural meaning of the words within the context described in the scripture. My literal hermeneutic allows grammar, syntax, and the cultural setting to be considered in a manner that I believe is consistent with the rest of Scripture, meaning that "the Bible is best allowed to speak for itself."[23]

Have you considered what happens to a person's hermeneutic are introduced by those who feel when they disenfranchised or alienated? We have seen the post-modernistic hermeneutic grow in a society that is happy to sacrifice a biblical context on the altar of inclusivity.

As a minister, you are aware of the abused child who cannot relate to God as a loving Father. You have considered the matriarchal society where the father would take second place in a taxonomy. Have you ever wondered what an individual's perception of America, with its history of slavery, urban blight, institutional racism, and both income and opportunity inequity, does to a black person's hermeneutic? Have you considered what free will, grace, freedom, power, authority, and sundry other concepts mean to a people with a history of oppression? How do the

concepts of being bond-servants of Christ, slaves of the Lord, worshiping a Master, and bowing before a king translate to those who feel oppressed?

We prepare as ministers to counsel the abused child and engage the eccentricities of a matriarchal mindset, but how prepared are we to deal with a black worldview? I pray that you will seek and take any opportunity afforded you to increase your cultural intelligence and competency. I pray that you will use them to build God's kingdom.

Exegetes of Society in Complicated Times

As pastors you are the exegetes. You exegete the scripture; you exegete culture; you exegete society. Then, through some work on your part and the power of the Holy Spirit, you try to bring the Bible to bear on the culture and the people. There are times in history when this exegetical work is a predictable, dependable, repeatable process. A pastor finds himself living in a well-exegeted environment amid a culture that has been examined in detail. He is part of a culture that has been extensively analyzed, quantified, normalized, and optimized by professional practitioners, educators, thinkers, and problem solvers. Such moments in history make for a settled and stable ministry, such as the following examples.

- Think of the country parson living in an English village amid a culture that seems delightfully stuck in time. It makes for a stable, controllable, anticipatable ministry environment. The pastor knows his flock. He knows his village, whose standards, mores, and values are well established.
- Or envision the rural cleric in the American south who took over for his father and now preaches to the children of his father's parishioners. He grew up with these people. His congregants were raised with the same values and standards that he was. It is a predictable, repeatable ministry.

However, there have been times and places when culture, technology, world events, and sundry forces demand the pastor's every effort to stay ahead of the changes swirling around him. In American history, congregants have asked their pastor to tell them where God stands in whatever conflict is dominating the television news. Pastor, does God want women to vote? Does

God reside to the north or south of the 38th Parallel? Who does God want to win the Korean war? Should I allow my child to serve or become a conscientious objector on religious grounds?

Time passed, and the questions evolved. Does God want Saigon to stand or fall? How does God feel about abortion, LGBQT+, conservatives, liberals, equal rights, foreign policy, rap music, backbeat music, cell phones, vaccinations, outer space travel, UFO's, other religions, . . . Sometimes, it just doesn't seem to stop coming at you from all sides. Some of the questions involve things we all studied in seminary, but some of them our teachers hadn't even imagined yet.

If you're like me, you do your best to keep up with the times. You fight to understand. You try to address the trends, investigate the causes, dissect the rhetoric, disregard the white noise, dismiss the trivial, and adopt the productive and righteous. The year 2020 didn't make it any easier when it comes to addressing the issues concerning black urban society.

The work of uniting the different races and cultures that make up the mosaic of Christianity has never been easy. It was difficult for the Apostle Paul and will always present a challenge to us as pastors. I believe the need to intentionally address the issue has become more acute in the past decade and promises to increase in importance in the years to come as people leave the urban areas and relocate to suburban and rural communities, as post-modern thinking breaks down the boundaries that have separated races and social strata, as globalism continues to permeate the school curriculum and as churches continue to diversify. This will happen intentionally or chaotically, but it will happen. It would always make for complicated ministry, but the events, phenomena, stimuli, cultural upheaval, and social disruption that came to a head in 2020 have made this task far more daunting.

PART 2:

Black Worldview:

A Socio-Cultural Immersion

Program

By Rev. Dr. Gershwin Grant

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CONTENTS

CHAPTER 1

Introducing A.B.E

An Open Letter to Pastors

Pastors, I would like to talk to you about something you haven't prepared yourself for, not because you don't care, but because you weren't aware of it. No one was aware of this problem. No one saw it coming, but it's here-I ask you to trust me on that.

I ask you to trust me because although it's here, the issue is hard to see or define. It's hard to explain, classify, categorize, or assess. And if you could do all those things, you would still have to figure out what to do about it.

Well, I am here to help with some of that. I intend to help you not only see the issue but feel it as well. I'm going to try to define it, assess it, explain it, classify it, categorize it, and suggest some things we can do about it. In fact, I'm going to suggest that there are some things we not only *can* do about it, but we *need* to do about it. I'm going to suggest that it's our opportunity as pastors to be a part of the solution. The "It" involves the worldview that developed as a result of the events of 2020. Specifically, it is the worldview inculcated among black urban New York residents amid the taxing realities of the phenomena and stimuli that assaulted the senses and sensibilities during the turbulent year that was 2020.

Introducing Myself

Forgive me, my friend; I've forgotten my manners. Here I am talking to you about worldviews and traumatic syndromes, and I haven't even introduced myself. You can call me "A.B.E.," and I will be your tour guide for this little venture. The first thing you need to know

about me is that I don't exist, not physically anyway. A.B.E. is an acronym (or initialism) for **A** **B**lack **E**cclesiology. I don't exist as an individual. Oh, I was born. I was born in the struggles of a people seeking to find their place in a foreign land, and I live in the minds of black people you pass on the street. You may not know some of these people, but others are people you call your friends.

I say I don't exist as an individual because I'm not a person; I'm a people. I have always been here as the hopes, dreams, desires, and aspirations of a segment of society. Lately, to a disturbing extent, I am the doubts, fears, sorrow, frustration, distrust, and anger of a people who want their hopes, dreams, desires, and aspirations to matter. I represent a people that want to feel that the American Dream belongs to us as much as it does to anyone else in this beloved country.

Yes, I called it a beloved country. It is my beloved country. I know you've probably heard me or someone who looks like me challenge this country. Someone who sounds like me has railed against it and perhaps chastised it. Certainly, people like me have questioned its love for us. And I know many people have grown tired of hearing people who look like me complain about America. Perhaps you are tired of it, too. I understand.

In my lifetime, I've been told if I don't love this country, then I should leave it. But guess what, I'm not leaving! I love this country. I love America the way the pioneers did, not for what it was, not necessarily for what it is--but for what it could be. To me, that's the true American way. That's the real American spirit. You don't leave a country; you change it. You build it.

Plymouth Rock was a long, long way from California. It took forever to get from one to the other. So, our forefathers changed the landscape. Train tracks, highways, and airports all changed the country into something that fit them better. That's what Americans do. You change the country; you change yourself. You take, you give, you work and sweat until you fit in the country, and the country fits you. That's my plan for myself, but not for our journey together. I'm not going to try to change you. I just want us to get along better.

I'm not trying to change you. That's not my right or responsibility. And who says you need to change anyway? I just want us to communicate a little better than we do now. If our

communication has been good, I want it to be wonderful. I want it to be God-honoring and blessed at all times.

And if our communication has been something less than good, then I want you to know that I take partial responsibility for that. As a people, there have been many times when I haven't communicated all of the things I'm thinking and feeling. My forefathers and I have often remained quiet in an attempt to "keep the peace" or simply because we didn't think anyone would listen.

The problem with that plan is that suppressed concerns and complaints often morph or grow into disappointment, discouragement, and disillusionment. And then, when I have finally expressed myself, too often it comes out in anger. I apologize. I'm sorry for that. I hope this is the first step in a better direction.

You and I have lived together in this country for hundreds of years, but the truth is that I think I know more about you than you know about me. Not you as an individual, but you as a culture. As a minority culture in this nation, there is less information about me to be readily gleaned and understood. Your majority culture's thoughts, dreams, aspirations, and opinions have been revealed through books, television, radio shows, news programs, and now through social media. Movies and TV shows, from dramas to sitcoms, have shed light on your cultural ideals. Your grand achievements in politics, business, infrastructure, and nation-building speak volumes. From the clothes you design to the music you listen to, you have been expressing and revealing yourself for centuries. Some of it has been a little ugly. Some of it has been a little shameful. But a lot of it has been amazing. Your creativity, passion, industriousness, and achievements as a people group have been wondrous. As I said, I know a lot about you, and much of it is to be respected.

But how well do you know me? What do you know about what makes me tick? What do you know about how I think? Perhaps you've wondered about it and just not found any available answers. Well, this is a chance to get to know me better. To know who I have been and who I have become. Who knows? Perhaps when we are done, we will face who I will become together, arm in arm, Christian to Christian, fellow servants of the living God. I'd like that.

Our Ground Rules

So, my plan is for us to go on a short but intense journey together. But before we even think of taking the first step together, let me tell you the ground rules I have set for myself. There will be no casting of blame by me on the majority culture. No accusations. No angry tirades. No pointing fingers. No trying to change your mind. No trying to tell you what to think or judging your feelings, emotions, motives, or actions. This is not about who's right or wrong. I'd just like us to understand each other better.

As a minister, you are always trying to serve God a little bit better. You always want to learn a little more. You try to develop new competencies and skills and try to see things from a well-rounded perspective. I'd like to offer you some insights, perspectives, and some insider information that might come in handy in your ministry. No charge, no catch, no strings attached.

Our Journey

With your permission, we are going to travel back in time to look at some things that have happened in the recent past. We will be focused on 2020, but we will also examine phenomena of the past and the events of the years that led up to 2020. As we travel together, I'd like you to try to let your mind go back in time. Try to remember how you viewed some of these occurrences as they were happening. Remember how you looked at some of the phenomena that occurred in 2020: the pandemic, the shortages, the riots, the lockdown isolation. I'd like you to think about how you felt and responded to some of the phenomena as they were happening while I tell you how I saw them, how I felt about them, and why I responded the way I did. I won't be justifying my actions, just revealing my thoughts so you can know me a little better.

That's it. That's the plan. Give me a little of your time, and I will show you who I am because I truly believe God would like us to get to know each other better. I know I do.

Sincerely,

A.B.E.

The Scars of 2020

So, you can call me Abe, and I'm a black man living in the Bronx, New York, during the years that led up to 2020. There are things about my life that are different from yours that you may never have considered. It's not a criticism; there was no need for you to think such thoughts. I didn't really consider them until I was forced to.

There are things that you and I take for granted in our lives. Just as an example, people living outside of the city have a garage or a workroom, and a toolset of one description or another. Do you know that these things are foreign to me, living in the Bronx as I do? I live in a small apartment in a large apartment building. When something breaks, I speak to the landlord and wait and wait, until eventually, someone will come to fix it. I don't have the tools, requisite knowledge, or experience to fix it myself. It's not something I've ever done. It's just not how it works in the city. Normally, it is a waiting game that is tolerable if somewhat inconvenient. But that changed in the year 2020 -- a lot of things changed.

We both know that 2020 was marred by the worldwide pandemic of Coronavirus disease (COVID-19). This virulent infectious disease caused by the SARS-CoV-2 virus spread through America and the world. It changed many lives, including yours, I'm sure. It certainly changed mine. It wasn't just the virus but the ensuing isolation/shutdown that served as an incubator where many social, fiscal, ethical, and emotional issues developed and grew.[1]

From where I stood in 2020, I saw a convergence of social concerns in New York urban communities: COVID-19 isolation, mandatory remote learning for young students, racial and social unrest, political divisiveness, racial discrimination, and violence. 2020 was a unique and difficult year for everyone around the world. It was a year that challenged people's resolve. Hemmingway comes to mind:

> "The world breaks everyone and afterward many are strong at the broken places. But those that will not break it kills. It kills the very good and the very gentle and the very brave impartially. If you are none of these, you can be sure it will kill you, too, but there will be no special hurry." — Ernest Hemingway, *A Farewell to Arms*

I pray that you and your family came through 2020 well, and I realize that you may have suffered losses like so many did. Indeed, you may still be suffering the effects of the aftermath of that year, but I trust that you are carrying on, battling to complete the mission God has given you. I feel for you and do not intend to diminish your suffering or the challenges you have faced as I tell you a little about mine. I pray that you have room in your heart, as well as the emotional bandwidth and spiritual strength, to emotionally invest in my travails even as you continue to work out your own.

A lot of people who look like me are carrying scars from 2020 that will not heal without intentional, informed intervention from pastors who know how to counsel from a spiritual and practical perspective. Where I come from, you don't go to a professional counselor because you don't trust them. But I might come to you someday. Are you ready to counsel me? Do you know how different I am?

CHAPTER 2

The Black American Legacy

Life Expectancy

Hey, something just popped into my head. I hope you don't mind if I interject this, but what would you think if I told you that being an urban black person can kill you? It sounds silly, perhaps, but it's true. Black people living in America literally age more rapidly than white people? Studies show that a black male of the same chronological age as a white person is physically the equivalent of 7.5 years to 10 years older because of the nutritional, environmental, and physiologic deterioration. Black Americans are exposed to an accumulation of negative, stressful exposures in our physical, chemical, and psycho-social environment[1] and it's killing us.

Don't take my word for it. Recent studies have coined the term "accelerated aging" and "biological weathering" to describe the detrimental physical effects being experienced by African Americans as a result of the racial phenomena they experience in America. Poor living conditions, fear of the police (we will talk about this more later), and poor dietary habits caused by a culinary tradition born out of slavery all contribute to the health woes of black people.

At age 25, a white person in the lowest life expectancy category can be expected to live 3.1 years longer than their African Americans counterparts. College-educated white people are expected to live 4.2 years longer than their black counterparts.[2]

Rooted in Slavery

Part of the issue can be traced back to slavery. The black slave was forced to develop some poor habits that have proved hard to break. Habits you may not have considered. Slaves had poor diets as slave owners sought to limit overhead. Cooking and eating the leftover entrails of an animal was common for slaves and continued after slavery ended because it was all many black people could afford. It was unhealthy but certainly better than starving. Today, those foods are so embedded in the traditions of the black American that a poor diet is virtually part of the African American heritage.

Stress of Discrimination

Another aspect of our legacy is the stress caused by discrimination. A study examining the levels of discrimination experienced by African American teenagers ages 16, 17, and 18 showed higher levels of stress hormones such as cortisol, epinephrine, and norepinephrine in their bodies. The black teens suffered from higher levels of inflammation (C-reactive protein), a higher body mass index, and higher blood pressure by age 20.[3]

Fascinatingly, these things were not evident among black teens who had good, supportive relationships with their parents, teachers, and peers. The quality of social support proved to be an effective strategy to reduce the negative physiological and psychological effects of discrimination. Building a sense of community was found to be therapeutic and beneficially important.

The Role of the Church

This brings the people of God to my mind—perhaps your church? I think of passages such as James 5:14-16; Proverbs 16:24; Jeremiah 17:14; and Exodus 23:25. Well, you know the verses.

A national study of black Americans found that higher levels of religious engagement and church attendance with supportive contact from their religious community and "seeking God's guidance in their everyday life" reduced the negative effects on mental health of exposure to racial

discrimination.[4] I'm telling you all of this because I sincerely believe that you can be a vital resource in the betterment of black people who become part of your church community, both spiritually and physically.

In the years to come, you may be called upon to counsel and disciple black people like me who have migrated from the New York urban environment after going through the turmoil of 2020. We will represent a new challenge. I trust that the Holy Spirit will lead, guide, and strengthen you as you forge ahead, but I venture that your wealth of experience doesn't include the unique circumstances that stem from 2020. I don't think anyone's experience prepared them for this situation because it was unique--something brand new in history. Helping people overcome the fallout from 2020 will require new pools of knowledge, new competencies and skills, fresh perspectives, and reimagining some trusted methods and paradigms.

I believe this is a moment in time when pastors from different backgrounds will need to work together to help each other overcome the challenges at hand. You will be facing situations that, in some cases, are well outside your wheelhouse, so you will need to find other pastors, teachers, and wise voices to provide the experience and competencies you desire to develop. It is a chance for pastors to learn from each other and build God's kingdom together to His glory. I hope we can all say "Amen" to that.

I believe the migration of urbanites will present you with challenges in the years ahead as black urban New Yorkers enter your community and congregation in the coming years, pulling a cart full of invisible 2020 baggage behind them. While invisible to the naked eye, that baggage will manifest in some of the thought and speech patterns you will encounter. With some effort, you will learn how to recognize, interpret, and respond effectively to the vestiges and residual effects of what culminated in the year 2020. I speak of a culmination because the pot that finally boiled over in 2020 had been on the boil for some time. Many things have kindled the fire under the pot and the temperature has continued to rise.

The Lingering Impact of Slavery

The story began in the days of slavery and created a debilitating problem for a people group that has never truly been solved. Many of my white friends don't want to talk about slavery and its effects. They say, "I didn't enslave anyone." Or they say, "I didn't benefit from the institution of slavery." "My parents had to work for a living for us to get where we are-stop making excuses about the past." But the past is not yet in the past. Excuses and reasons are not the same things.

Black people were slaves in America until 1865, but even after slavery was officially abolished, Jim Crow laws were enacted that left southern black people with virtually no rights for the next 100 years. "Grandfathering" became the rule to ensure that the racial imbalance remained in place. Grandfathering meant that if your grandfather had been permitted to do something, then you were permitted to do it, too. However, if it was illegal for your grandfather in his day, it remained illegal for you. Slaves were not allowed to do anything of consequence. Slaves could not vote, own property, hold office, or do anything of consequence. The repercussions of Grandfathering therefore meant even the children of freed slaves couldn't vote, own property, hold office, etc., either. This was a self-perpetuating reality because no black person would ever have a grandfather who had any rights; therefore, they would never have any, either. Black Americans were born as a people without rights, hope, or opportunity as they began their existence in this country. Some of this has changed over time, but some of it has not.

At the end of the Civil War, General Sherman promised the 4 million freed slaves that they would be given land to live and work on. This would offer the slaves the opportunity to build a life and future for themselves and their decedents. This has gone down in history as the infamous "40 acres and a mule" promise. However, after President Abraham Lincoln's assassination, Andrew Johnson took over and reneged on the promise. Black Americans were forced to begin their freed lives empty handed. Economists estimate the land that had been promised would be worth approximately $3.1 trillion today.

Let's take a moment to discuss Jim Crow. Thomas Dartmouth Rice was a white actor who was famous for performing in blackface as "Jim Crow," an exaggerated, stereotypical black

character. By 1838, the term "Jim Crow" was being used as a collective racial epithet for blacks. It was not as offensive as *the N word* but it was equal to the terms "*coon*" or "*darkie*." Minstrel shows spread the term Jim Crow around the south as a racial slur. By the end of the 19th century, the name Jim Crow was being used to describe all laws and customs that were designed to oppress black people.

It is important to understand that these things are not the distant past. Some of them happened in the living memory of people you may know. Let me give you a brief timeline of salient events taken from the Jim Crow Museum timeline at Ferris State University.[5]

Jim Crow Timeline

1860: Slavery was very profitable for white Americans who took advantage of it. The economic value of a slave in 1860 was approximately $1,000 each, or about $4 billion total. Taking inflation and compound interest into account that comes to about $42 trillion today. Economists estimate that the salary slaves should have received comes to about $20.3 trillion in wages today.

1862: When the government enacted the Homestead Act in 1862, distributing 270 million acres of land to settle the west, black people were still slaves and ineligible to receive any of that property. When the wealth, property, power, and authority of the country were being established, distributed, apportioned, and settled, black people were not part of the equation. As a result of the head start slavery offered, the financial foundation that was established, and the property that was apportioned, white Americans possess almost seven times more wealth than Black Americans today.

1865: The 13th Amendment (The Emancipation Proclamation), ended slavery in 1865 but contained a provision allowing "slavery" and "involuntary servitude" as "a punishment for crime." Southern state legislatures passed "Black Codes," which were new laws that only applied to black people. Loitering, breaking curfew, and weapons charges subjected black men to imprisonment.[6] The charges of vagrancy and failure to possess proof of employment were especially effective in incarcerating blacks. Vagrancy and unemployment carried a large fine that few blacks could afford to pay meaning, incarceration would follow.[7]

Hundreds of thousands of black convicts were then leased to private companies to work in coal mines, turpentine factories, and lumber camps. They were chained, starved, beaten, flogged, and sexually violated, dying by the thousands from injury, disease, and torture.[8] In some respects, the lease arrangement was worse for blacks than slavery. Laborers were only the temporary property of their corporate masters. In theory, this meant that if their sentence expired or their fines

were paid in full, they would be set free. However, unlike a slave master who made a permanent investment in a slave, companies leasing convicts had no investment in a worker's longevity. Leased convicts were disposable and could be worked to death and replaced.

The southern states benefited greatly from this policy. The convict lease created revenue for the municipalities and reduced the expenses of housing and caring for convicts. Corporations found a source of cheap, disposable labor. The fear of incarceration subjugated blacks and intimidated them into accepting a lower place in the new social order.

1870: A Virginia law made it illegal for black and white children to attend the same schools.

1873: White Southerners responded to the Reconstruction movement by calling for a "Redemption" movement to return white supremacy to the south. Political power backed by the Ku Klux Klan, the White League, and the Red Shirts used political machinations, redlining, assassination of pro-Reconstruction politicians, and violence against southern blacks to reverse gains made by black communities[9] and to prevent blacks from gaining the citizenship and equality promised under the 14th and 15th amendments.

1875: Congress passed the Civil Rights Act of 1875, which prohibited discrimination in public accommodations, public theaters, public transportation, etc. However, this law was greatly ignored in the south. Poverty and discrimination caused many southern blacks to head west in the "Exodus of 1879."

1882: This year saw the emergence of lynching as more than 49 blacks were known to die that year. The Tuskegee Institute shows that 3,438 blacks were lynched between the years 1882 and 1951.

1883: In October of this year, the United States Supreme Court ruled that personal discrimination was permitted. Civil Rights Cases of 1883 and the Civil Rights Act of 1875 were deemed unconstitutional. The Court held that while the 14th Amendment prohibited states from discrimination, individuals had the right to discriminate if they wish.

1890-1908: Southern states adopted new constitutions and voting laws designed to disenfranchise black voters.

1890: Louisiana passed a law that required blacks to ride in separate railroad cars.

1892: During this year, lynching reached its peak. At least 161 blacks were lynched in 1892.
On June 7, Homer Plessy, a carpenter in Louisiana who was 7/8 Caucasian, boarded a train and sat in a car reserved for whites. He refused to move and was arrested.

1896: A Louisiana judge ruled against Plessy and the Supreme Court upheld the lower court's ruling. It had held that "separate but equal" accommodations did not violate Plessy's rights.
The United States Supreme Court, through Plessy v. Ferguson, established the "separate but equal" doctrine, holding that legal racial segregation does not violate the equal protection clause of the 14th Amendment.

1913-1921: Woodrow Wilson institutionalized segregation in the federal civil service.

1914: Every southern state and many northern cities had Jim Crow laws that discriminated against black Americans restricting access to schools, restaurants, hospitals and public places. Signs that said "Whites Only" or "Colored" were posted at entrances and exits, water fountains, waiting rooms, and restrooms. Every southern state had passed laws that created two separate societies:

one black and one white. By the start of World War I, most places of employment were also segregated. Jim Crow Laws allowed for literacy tests and poll taxes, with informal loopholes and trick questions, to ensure that most blacks would not be able to vote. Of the more than 130,000 blacks that were registered to vote in Louisiana in 1896, only 1,342 were still on the roles in 1904.

1915-1930: Rural southern blacks began moving to northern cities and to the West in what was called the Great Migration. Between 1915 and 1920, 500,000 to 1 million moved to the North. Another 700,000 to 1 million blacks moved to the North and West in the 1920s.

1917: In July, at least forty blacks were attacked and killed during a race riot in East St. Louis, Illinois. In that same year, in Buchanan vs. Warley, the court upheld that a Louisville, Kentucky law could not require residential segregation.

1919: Many whites, resentful of black demands for equality, attacked black people. Chicago, Houston, Little Rock, Harlem, Washington D.C., New York, Baltimore, New Orleans, and many other cities had outbreaks of rioting as whites attacked blacks throughout the United States. This period is called the Red Summer.

1920: The 19th Amendment to the United States Constitution was ratified, giving women the right to vote.

1921: Black people emerged from slavery with two assets: a work ethic and courage. Using hard work and cigar rolling skills developed on tabaco plantations, southern blacks were able to begin building a financial base. Unfortunately, these gains were short lived because white forces violently insured that black people would not rise financially. The most famous incident was the Tulsa massacre of 1921. Tulsa had the largest population of black Americans. Wealthier black businessmen had established homes and opportunities for other blacks. Taking advantage of the

segregation that continued to be the government's policy, blacks invested in their own communities. The community was named the Black Wall Street in the northern press but was referred to as "_____(N word)_____ Town" in Oklahoma newspapers.

When a black man was accused of a crime against a white woman, white police officers and a violent white mob used it as an excuse to riot in the black community. When the smoke cleared, they had destroyed $200 million in homes and businesses and displaced 10,000 black Tulsans. Thirty-five city blocks were burned, 300 people were killed, and 800 were injured. While this was the most devastating of the attacks on growing black communities, there were more than 100 such attacks after the Civil War and continuing into the 20th Century. Black Americans were deliberately and systematically hindered from establishing a financial foundation in America.

1925: On August 8, 1925, 35,000 members of the Ku Klux Klan marched down Pennsylvania Avenue in Washington, D.C. The Klan had 3 million members in its heyday of the early 1920s. While very popular in the South, the Klan was actually strongest in the Midwest and Southwest.

1936: Jesse Owens became the first American to win four gold medals in one Olympics. His athletic success was a direct refutation of Adolph Hitler's ideology of Aryan supremacy.

1940-1960: World War II signaled the beginning of another wave of black migration from rural areas to urban cities, and from the South to the North and West. By 1960, 40% of African Americans lived in the North and West, and nearly three-quarters lived in cities.

1941: President Franklin D. Roosevelt issued Executive Order 8802, which eliminated hiring discrimination in the defense industry and established the Fair Employment Practices Commission.

1950: The Supreme Court ruled that the University of Texas must admit a black man, Herman Sweatt, to the law school on the grounds that the state had failed to provide equal education for him.

1954: The Supreme Court's decision in Brown v. the Board of Education overturned the court's decision in Plessy, holding that separate schools were unequal.

1955: The Maryland legislature passed a law that imprisoned any white woman who birthed a mixed-race child. The white woman would be incarcerated up to five years. The law was renewed in 1957.

1956: An Alabama law barred blacks and whites from playing cards, dominoes, checkers, pool, football, baseball, basketball, or golf together. A North Carolina law required factories and plants to maintain separate bathrooms for black employees. A Louisiana law mandated that movie theaters and all places of public entertainment separate white and black patrons.

1958: The Virginia legislature voted to close any school that enrolled both black and white students.

1959: An Arkansas law required all state buses to designate whites-only seating areas.

1963: Members of the growing Civil Rights Movement marched on Washington D.C. with over 200,000 people and Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. delivered his "I Had a Dream" speech.

1964: The Civil Rights Act signaled the end of legal Jim Crow. Black Americans were allowed equal access to restaurants, transportation, and other public facilities. The Economic Opportunity

Act and President Johnson's War on Poverty complemented these civil rights milestones by attacking the economic inequalities that had so long accompanied racial discrimination and exclusion.[10]

1965: The Voting Rights Act was passed.

1968: The Civil Rights Act expanded the protections of the voting rights act to housing and provided new protections against racially motivated violence.

Jim Crow was finally brought to an end, but the effects would live on. Dilapidated, underfunded schools were standard fare for blacks into the 1960s. Poor housing, substandard health care, and employment discrimination were all common experiences for black people who lived in that era.

As I write this in 2022, those who were of working age in the 1960s are now in their 70s. Those who had no education, opportunity, resources, or finances to pass on to their children are still among us. Their children, who grew up without parents who understood politics, literature, finance, investment, savings, property ownership and other important things, are in the workplace today. Some have overcome the setbacks and hinderances to achieve great things, but many more have not.

CHAPTER 3

Urban Developments

After the Jim Crow Era

The civil rights advancements of the 1960s did not necessarily translate into equal opportunity and access to the American dream. Slavery and Jim Crow ensured that black people were not a part of the distribution of wealth as this country was forged. I'm not begrudging the men and women who fought to tame the land and make an inheritance for their children. I am, however, pointing out that when that was taking place, black people didn't get the opportunity to be involved. By the time black people were truly free to strive to achieve something in this country, the pioneers had already climbed to the top of society and pulled the ladder up after themselves. Land, power, opportunity, and control were already in the hands of others.

After emancipation, many black people found themselves in the south. They were unemployed, unwelcome, and unwanted. As the concept of convict leasing came to an end, it was replaced in many southern states by chain gang convict labor. In recent history, many politicians have instituted "tough on crime" policies, mandatory minimum sentencing, and drug laws that have caused mass incarceration, especially among American blacks.

President Obama's Criminal Justice Reform committee found that 2.2 million people were incarcerated in America, compared to only 500,000 30 years before. While the United States contains less than five percent of the world's population, it houses more than 25 percent of the world's prisoners. America spends $80 billion per year on incarceration. And in our

target year of 2020, we find that black residents (465 per 100,000 persons) were incarcerated at 3.5 times the rate of white U.S. residents (133 per 100,000 persons). Black people represent 13% of the US population but 37% of the prison population.[1] In the years that led up to 2020, only 6 percent of the US population are black males, but 40% of police killings of unarmed people are black men.[2]

The Jim Crow laws made it impossible to make a living, so they ventured north to cities like New York, Chicago, and Detroit. Suddenly, certain sections of these cities were transformed into black ethnic communities.

Detroit was an example of a thriving, black, middle-class area. Many black people prospered in the automobile boom until Japanese imports destroyed the American auto industry, and the jobs suddenly evaporated. Southern black people who had relocated to Detroit were suddenly out of work, but that news was slow to reach the south. Black people kept coming north in droves because they thought it had to be better than the oppression of the south.

The unemployment rate for black Americans has historically averaged twice the rate for white people. The typical black household earns 59 cents for every dollar earned by white households. The gap between black and white annual household incomes is about $29,000 per year.[3] Black Americans are more than twice as likely to live in poverty as white Americans and black children are three times as likely to live in poverty as white children. The median wealth of black families ($17,000)—is less than one-tenth that of white families ($171,000).[4] 42% of black families own their homes while 73% of white families own their homes. The incarceration rate for black Americans is nearly six times the rate for white Americans. Black Americans have a life expectancy 3.6 years lower than non- Hispanic white Americans.[5]

Now black people were fighting to survive. They were out of work, losing their homes, and finding that their dreams were shattered. Communities were becoming overcrowded as migrants continued to travel north. Resources were overtaxed, infrastructures began to decay, and the people were weak, poor, and vulnerable. They were ripe for the picking.

Middle-class neighborhoods in Chicago, Detroit, Philadelphia, and New York became places of poverty and despair. They became highly visible examples of black poverty and crime, and the term "ghetto" was used to describe these neighborhoods and has been associated with black people ever since. Yet, there was another group of people in these neighborhoods that needs to be revealed. The secret nature of these people allowed them to go undetected for decades. They destroyed the infrastructure of black communities and made urban neighborhoods into slums. These people stole the good, caused the bad, and sold the evil while allowing black people to take the majority of the blame.

Eventually the country became aware of their presence, but no one considered the damage they had done. I'm talking about the Mafia, the pernicious plague that festered within urban communities causing them to rot from the inside. They are directly responsible for the decay of cities like New York, Chicago, Detroit, Atlantic City, Baltimore, and other urban communities around the country. No one has truly addressed their deleterious effect on black society, and I think it's time someone did.

People Look Down on Blacks – But Who Is Really to Blame?

In many countries around the world, black Americans are thought of in cartoonish terms. Blaxploitation films of the 1960s and a reputation for drug dealing and addiction have sullied the view of the urban black for many. When you think of urban American ghettos, dilapidated and ruinous cities, urban blight, and decay from the 1950s to the 1980s, you may well think of places where black people live. Communities crumbled and fell into disrepair. When you think about the urban blight of the 1950s, 60s, and 70s, the Bronx, East Harlem, and southeast Brooklyn all come to mind.

These African American neighborhoods were flooded with heroin, destroying the lives and destinies of many. The ripple effect of the drug epidemic that began in the 1950s continues to this day. Black Americans of today may be the children of parents who dropped out of school and

society. They may have suffered neglect or abuse as a result of the lifestyle of their parents. A spiral of degradation, desolation, and dispersion permeates these urban neighborhoods.

Black Americans feel the weight of the world's gaze upon them when fingers are pointed at these developments, but are they primarily to blame? Should the fingers be pointed at others who are at least as responsible, if not far more, for the decay of urban communities? Could it be that black people are victims who need empathy and help instead of condemnation and ridicule? I'd like to build such a case for you.

Urban Black Neighborhoods = War Zones

New York's urban neighborhoods were impoverished in the 1960s, destroyed in the 70s, and buried in the 80s. Many black people you encounter have roots in one of these eras. As the communities deteriorated, a degradation permeated every part of life. The urban areas became warzones as angry, poor, depressed, under-unemployed people without hope or opportunity began to prey upon each other.

What Lit the Fuse?

But what lit the fuse of the implosion that destroyed these neighborhoods? I suggest it was the pervasive influx of drugs, prostitution, gambling, pornography, alcohol, and rampant burglary that combined to destroy the fabric of urban society. But where did these diseases come from? Were they products of the urban communities? Were they purveyed by the people in the neighborhoods? Yes, but not by the urban blacks. Oh, they participated on the lowest street level, but the group responsible for the decay was and is the Mafia. Intentionally invisible, but deadly and corrosive. Choose a name to describe them: the Black Hand, La Cosa Nostra, the Mob, or just the Mafia. Every one of the inner-city ghettos that was destroyed and degraded was a central hub of organized crime.[6] And if you are wondering where the police were while this was going on, they were in the pocket of the Mob.[7]

The Mafia in New York Begins

The Mafia, as most people know it, was organized in 1931. The meeting that "organized" organized crime took place at 187th Street and Washington Avenue in the Bronx. Five major Italian American mob families were established as "The Commission" under the leaders Charles Lucky Luciano, Tommaso Gagliano, Joseph Profaci, Salvatore Maranzano, and Vincent Mangano.

They divided the city and the surrounding suburbs into territories controlled by the Lucchese, Genovese, Gambino, Bonnano, and Colombo crime families, and preyed on them.[8] The Bronx would be particularly plagued by the Mafia because all five families[9] were free to operate within the borough.[10]

New York City in 1970s-80s

I'll pick up the story in the early 1980s, which began with a booming Wall Street economy. The wealth on Wall Street allowed for rampant speculation in the real estate market, and the city's unemployment numbers dropped markedly. Mayor Edward Koch balanced the city's budget and used the bond market to raise capital and end the city's long standing financial crisis by 1981. However, this did not signal an end to the city's problems.

The murder rate rose from less than 7 per capita in the 1960s to over 20 in the 1970s.[11] This crime trend continued; graffiti, subway crime, and public disorder were the everyday life of the outer boroughs. In an effort to rebuild neighborhoods and infrastructure, Koch introduced gentrification by converting low-end rental housing to co-ops and condos that attracted young, upscale professionals and business people. This also relegated less well-to-do New Yorkers to the outer boroughs. An increased police presence in Manhattan drove crime to the outer boroughs while police corruption in those communities allowed crime to flourish. The crack and heroin trade exploded, causing the theft, mugging, home invasion, and murder rates to soar. Whole areas of the city became wastelands with virtually no law and order. The New York City Subway hosted more crime than any other transportation system in the world.

The city was being destroyed. The explosive compound that caused the urban areas to implode was a mixture of drugs, prostitution, gambling, pornography, alcohol, and burglary. The devastating elements that combined to destroy the fabric of society were supplied, put in place, and detonated by the Mafia, not urban blacks. Some urban blacks engaged in street level crime, but the real damage was being don at a higher level by the mafia and corrupt police forces.[12]

News programs showed urban blacks acting as street dealers, pimps, and muggers and committing other televised misdeeds. Television programs and movies sensationalized flamboyant, comical caricatures of black criminals in outlandish outfits. These street criminals provide the visual by which many around the world imagine New York crime in the 70s and 80s. But where there is a pimp, there is a brothel. Who owns it? Where there are muggers, robbers, and snatch and grab artists, there are fences to move the merchandise. Who are the fences? Who owns the buildings they work out of? For every stolen car, for every stripped car, there are chop shops, oversees exporters, stolen parts rings, and forgery rings to produce fake documentation for the stolen vehicles. Who organized and ran these rings? Who owned the chop shops? Who exported the cars to the Middle East? I'll give you a hint: it wasn't the guy on 42nd Street with the feather in his hat.

> The Italian American Cosa Nostra crime families are the longest-lived and most successful organized crime organizations in US history, achieving their pinnacle of power in the 1970s and 1980s . . . Control of labor unions gave them power to determine the companies that could operate in various sectors and enabled them to establish employer cartels that rigged bids and fixed prices and provided opportunity to exploit pension and welfare funds. The racketeers were urban power brokers. The families also profited from gambling, illicit drugs, loansharking, prostitution, and pornography, and they extorted protection payments from other black marketeers. For decades they faced little risk from law enforcement. FBI Director Hoover denied the existence of a national organized crime threat. Local police were corrupted.[13]

Drugs = the Mob

I'll begin with drugs.[14] The famous French Connection, the infamous Pizza Connection, and the residual effects of trafficking enabled by the Viet Nam and Afghanistan wars made the Mafia the premiere importers of illegal drugs into the United States.

Initially, the French Connection provided a steady supply of heroine to the Mafia in the big cities from the French island of Corsica in the Mediterranean. Later, connections in Turkey and Afghanistan sent the product to be processed through Sicily. In the early 1980s, the Sicilian Mafia smuggled $1.65 billion worth of heroin into the Midwest. It was then distributed primarily in the urban areas of northeastern cities but also in areas across the country. Sicilian mobsters purchased morphine base in Turkey, processed it into heroin in Palermo, smuggled it into the U.S inside cans of San Marzano tomatoes, and shipped it to pizza parlors in rural towns in the Midwest. The heroine was sold through pizza shops and other Mafia-run businesses from New York to Wisconsin, filling communities with a deadly supply of heroine. [15]

The Mafia, despite many denials, has a long and storied history in narcotics. Vito Genovese had been part of the Luciano crime family in 1937 when he escaped to Italy to avoid prosecution on a murder charge. While there, he became a friend of Benito Mussolini and helped to finance Fascist operations in Italy. In exchange, he was allowed to process and smuggle narcotics to the United States with near impunity. Considering American blacks to be an inferior race, he encouraged the sale of drugs in urban areas.

The scourge of drugs grew and destroyed those communities. Heroine devastated generation after generation and most of the places being destroyed were: 1) home to poor black people, 2) places where the Mafia-run heroin distribution business was at its most prolific and devastating, 3) places where the Mafia Borgatas were headquartered, and 4) places where the police were paid to look the other way or actively participate in the Mafia's crimes. Vito Genovese and the Purple Gang in East Harlem, the Lucchese family in the Bronx, the Bonanno Borgata in Brooklyn -- these were the men who brought down a city.[16]

Mob Rackets Destroy New York

When drugs are combined with the other rackets and practices of the Mafia at its peak, it is easy to discern that the Mafia is directly and inextricably both connected to and responsible for the decay of urban Chicago, Detroit, Philadelphia, and other black communities. However, since the journey we have undertaken together involves the worldview of black New Yorkers, I will stick to the New York mob and their devastating practices.

The practices or "rackets" I am speaking of are alcohol, prostitution, gambling, pornography, waste management, and rampant street crime such as bank robberies, burglaries, and break-ins. The Mafia did it all, and the police did nothing to stop it. Many police officers were found to be taking bribes during those years. Police corruption facilitated organized crime control of narcotics trafficking,[17] illegal gambling,[18] prostitution,[19] and corruption in the construction industry.[20] Officers of all ranks were "on the pad," taking bi-weekly payoffs from organized crime establishments.[21]

The Knapp Commission found that police in Harlem, Bronx, and Brooklyn mafia-infested communities were receiving the most money to turn a blind eye to the crimes.[22] These police officers covered their complicity by focusing their attention on the misdeeds of urban minorities. Police harassment, spurious arrests, beatings, and extortion became the norm. Police corruption allowed rampant extortion of business owners in lower-income communities.[23] Crime was publicly blamed on urban youth by police officials who were later proved to be on the Mafia's payroll. Indeed, the existence of the Mafia was denied by the highest law enforcement agencies in America until 1957 when the infamous meeting in Apalachin New York made it impossible to ignore any longer.[24]

Alcohol

From the days of Al Capone and bootlegging in Chicago in "The Roarin' 20s," to the Bufalino Borgata's control of the beer industry in Upstate New York, alcohol has always been an illicit Mafia business. Illegal drinking establishments, nightclubs, and topless bars, all breaking the Sabbath Laws, lined the pockets of mobsters.[25]

Prostitution

Prostitution has been a stalwart of the mob since they days of Lucky Luciano. Many of the most infamous mobsters have used prostitution and the sex trade as the backbone of their organization. For the majority of the existence of America, law enforcement has placed a low priority on prostitution, looking on it as a victimless crime. Prostitution was also a money earner for corrupt police officers. The prostitution industry of the 1960s, 70s and 80s was controlled by the Mafia in all the outer boroughs and in the 42nd Street region of Manhattan.

Gambling

Gambling has been a lucrative business for the mob since the days of Mayer Lansky and Bugsy Seigel, who masterminded the gambling efforts for the Mob. Backroom gambling and illegal sports betting have long been the mainstays of all Mob families. The Bonnanos controlled urban Brooklyn and Queens. The Genovese managed all gambling in Harlem. John Gotti was in charge of the Brooklyn operations.

Smut

Pornography and decadence of every type was and is controlled by the Mob. The first famed pornographic film was made and distribute by the Mob. The Colombo family filled poor neighborhoods with strip clubs, coin-operated pornography centers, and topless bars, and the Bonnano family soon followed suit. The advent of 8mm film, video tapes, DVD's and eventually

the internet only widened the scope of the Mob's distribution of smut. The Genovese family specialized in running underground homosexual hangouts and bars. The Mob provided a safe haven for homosexuals and helped that lifestyle survive, grow, and eventually flourish over the decades.

Waste Management

If the filth in the bars, clubs, theaters, and gambling clubs was not enough, the Mafia also controlled the garbage hauling and waste management industry.[26] The fiscal problems of the 1970s and the federal government's refusal to bail out the New York City had caused a decrease in public sanitation and made communities and all businesses dependent on Mob-controlled private sanitation. When exorbitant fees and lackluster performance led to complaints and withholding of payment, they were met with violence and the dumping of waste in the streets. Piece by piece, the sanitation infrastructure of poor communities collapsed. Businesses, apartment buildings, stores, and restaurants were not serviced by the city and were forced to hire private waste management contractors. However, if a business went bankrupt, no one was responsible for the garbage that accumulated outside of it. As communities crumbled, businesses collapsed, and buildings became vacant, there were entire areas of urban neighborhoods where no one was responsible for garbage collection. Soon, abandoned lots became dumping grounds and dwelling places for rats and other rodents.

Real Estate

Honest building owners were corrupted as they were forced to make payments to the Mob. The owners then raised the rent, demanded kickbacks from tenants, and often allowed the buildings to deteriorate from neglect until they eventually resorted to burning down their Bronx, Harlem, and Brooklyn buildings for the insurance money. The Mob purchased many of the properties at a discount and offered to sell them at a premium. Commercial property developers were concerned

by the inflated prices or feared the background of the sellers, so many properties remained abandoned and desolate.

I Was There

I was there -- in the midst of New York City's decadence and decay. Not A.B.E, but me, your fellow pastor. I was there as victim, survivor, and combatant. As I grew, I tried to be a part of the solution, hopefully making up for times I was part of the problem as a youth. That was a terrible time -- days filled with despair and nights filled with fear, anger, and violence.

There was a sense of hopelessness. If you want to rebuild the neighborhood, you have to remember that the Mob controlled the carpentry and construction industries in New York through the unions. The Mob had infiltrated the real estate market and owned the burned-out lots that festered in the urban communities. The Mob controlled the building and running of restaurants, pizzerias, and bars and urban blacks need not apply.

Growing Up Black on the Mean Streets

Vacant lots produced darkened blocks where drug deals took place, drug use was facilitated, and muggings and other street crimes occurred. Fear gripped those who had to walk those blocks. Imagine what's going on behind the eyes of the urban black person you encounter. They grew up poor without any disposable income. Protection payoffs, stick-ups, and rising rents caused business owners to give up and close their stores. Or maybe they lived on one of those blocks where the stores were all boarded up. No stores, no light, no activity, and no police protection resulted in dark nights, low morale, and long travel distances for basic goods for people who couldn't afford to buy or keep a car. Did I mention the soaring car theft rate in poor neighborhoods at the time, courtesy of mobster Gas-Pipe Casso of Brooklyn?

Imagine walking those streets to get to school. Imagine walking past those dark, desolate lots to get to a night job. Would you walk in fear? Would your fist be balled in fear or anger, or

would it be clutching a weapon as you look over your shoulder every time you hear a noise behind you?

"Don't go out at night" and "carry a roll of pennies in a sock as a weapon." These were the messages so many of us learned from our parents or neighbors. As the streets became more dangerous, the drugs more rampant, and the violence more prolific, the gangs were born and everything just kept getting worse. A third of inner-city black men are incarcerated today. Many families are shepherded by single mothers. Poverty, racism, fear, police brutality, social injustice, etc. It all blends into a roaring cacophony that blasts in the minds of black people – sometimes with devastating effects.

The Impact on Black People You Meet

Many of the black people with whom you interact have grown up in communities that resembled a wasteland in the 1970s and early 80s. They survived those awful days, but they still bear the scars. And how did they respond to the events of 2020? What did police shooting after police shooting of unarmed black men do to them?

How did their urban experiences affect their worldview? Biblical concepts of fairness, justice, peace, equality -- how are they colored by these experiences from the past? Do they see the world the way you see it? The way you preach it? The way you teach it? Or do they see the world through a prism formed by where they grew up and tainted by what they experienced in 2020? Has the "social gospel" found a home in their heart? Has the ideology of "health, wealth, and prosperity" taken a foothold in their thinking? Do they secretly view you with suspicion when you speak of Kingdom priorities over earthly ones? I hope you will consider some of these things in prayer.

CHAPTER 4

Black and Blue

Urban environments come with several common features: large extended families living in small, cramped, decrepit apartments in crowded buildings with poor air-conditioning. As a result, urban residents spend a lot of their time outdoors. Youths play in the parks or on the street; young adults hang out on stoops and street corners.

In the past, this open-air living had a certain charm and created a sense of community. Today however, it comes with 24-hour, Orwellian police observation. Surveillance and loss of privacy is just the tip of the iceberg when it comes to the discord between black people in the inner city and the police force that oversees them. As the neighborhoods black people lived in deteriorated, so did their relationships with the police who patrolled their communities.

The relationship between the police and those who reside in New York urban communities has been deteriorating for decades and a tense and combative relationship has developed. Police officers view residents with suspicion and fear. Urban music and entertainment often vilify the police with lyrics that address them with expletives and celebrate their demise.[1] A seismic divide between the police force and the communities they patrol has developed.

Single Officer Patrol Cars

Part of the problem can be traced back to the implementation of single officer patrol cars in 1996 by Police Commissioner Lee Brown. The single officer patrol car was widely decried by the NYC Police Department, stating that it would make police officers unsafe.[2] The lone officer is forced to be hyper-vigilant and is often on edge, anticipating possible threats from community members. Instead of having a fellow officer to depend on when confronting people in urban neighborhoods, the single officer is forced to rely on physical deterrence while maintaining an air of detached readiness. The once respected "beat-cop" who knew everyone and built relationships with residents was gone. The single officer becomes an intimidating figure who cannot and does not engage socially with community members. When a situation appears to call for additional support, each officer arrives in an individual car. Even a relatively minor situation looks like a police invasion with multiple squad cars with flashing light racks assaulting the senses of the residents.

Police Community Residency

In addition to the single officer patrol car, the decline of residency requirements for officers has contributed to a deterioration in the relationship between law enforcement and urban communities. At some points in New York's history, police officers were expected to live in the neighborhoods they patrolled. Officers were encouraged to know the residents intimately, understand the vulnerable businesses and buildings and protect them. Officers had a natural stake in the community they patrolled because it was their home. However, the residency guidelines that existed in the 1970s were ignored and violated over time allowing a higher percentage of white applicants from Long Island and Yonkers to take positions in the 5 boroughs. The police department became less and less representative of the people they patrolled. Many black people believe the lack of residency adherence has contributed to the hostility between them and the

police, while officials claim it has had no negative impact.[3] Urbanites often feel like prisoners in their own communities and homes.

Surveillance and Loss of Privacy

Amnesty International mapped the locations of more than 15,000 cameras installed by the New York Police Department in three of the city's five boroughs—Manhattan, Brooklyn, and the Bronx—in the name of terrorism prevention. These cameras, which include facial recognition, have a 3-D 200-meter range, and capture the movements of nearly half of the city's residents. Strangely, considering the rationale of terrorist prevention, Manhattan is not the most heavily surveilled. Brooklyn is. Manhattan is not the second most heavily surveilled either. That distinction goes to the Bronx. The distribution of these surveillance tools suggests that terrorists are not the focus of this additional police attention-the residents are. How do you think it feels to realize you are being watched all the time? Could it lead to paranoia?[4]

Black People in the Crosshairs

George Floyd's death is plastered all over my television. I can't escape this ugly reality. His face is everywhere, and people act as if something new and unique has occurred. But black people have been dying at the hands of the police as long as there have been police. I won't go into ancient history, but there are names that cause a visceral reaction in black people like me that is every bit as strong as the name George Floyd.

When the names Eric Garner, Tamir Rice, Philando Castile, and Sandra Bland are mentioned in conversation, something happens within black Americans that you may not fully understand. The things that happened to these men and women, the circumstances of their lives and deaths, have caused deep scars in black people -- perhaps in some you know. These are not the only names, situations, or circumstances that trigger these involuntary responses. The

memories of Ahmaud Arbery, Breonna Taylor, and Elijah McClain -- victims who died before their time, are all touchstones for me and many like me.

I don't know any of them personally. They don't affect my life directly or in any concrete way, yet my pulse races a little faster when they come to mind. My throat tightens a little when I talk about them. It might be fair to say I become a little less reasonable, a little less measured, and a lot more passionate when these total strangers come to mind. "There but for the grace of God go I," has always been the saying. Yet, sometimes it feels more like the only thing separating me from a similar fate is time.

Do I need to rehash stories like that of Amadou Diallo?[5] You probably know the story already—a 23-year-old unarmed Guinean immigrant who died by "mistake" on the stoop of his own apartment. Four NYPD plainclothes officers "mistook" Diallo for a suspect from a crime committed the year before. His face was "mistaken" for the face of a serial rapist, his wallet was "mistaken" for a gun, and he was shot at by NYC police officers 41 times, hit 19, and killed on February 4, 1999. The city was sued for millions, but all the officers were absolved of wrongdoing.

What about the events of April 12, 2015, when a man named Freddie Carlos Gray Jr. was arrested by the Baltimore Police Department over what was possession of a completely legal knife? Gray had broken no laws, done nothing wrong, and violated no statutes when, for no discernable reason, he was taken for what police officers refer to as a "rough ride" in the police van. He was grabbed off the street in a tactical hold, put in leg irons, handcuffed behind his back, and thrown into the back of the van face down. Cell phone video showed Gray screaming before he was put in the van, but the officers ignored his complaints that he couldn't breathe and needed to use his inhaler. He was thrown into the back of the van face down without a seat belt in violation of police department policy and left to roll back and forth in the van as the officers drove around at a rapid speed, deliberately swerving from side to side until he sustained spinal-cord injuries. Mr. Gray was crippled and later died.

Police officials later admitted that Gray should have received immediate medical attention before he was even put inside the van. Still, the officers not only failed to get medical help, but they also took time to pick up another suspect as he lay crippled on the van floor on the way to the station. State prosecutor Marilyn Mosby admitted that Gray was falsely accused, illegally arrested, and assaulted by the officers. On April 27, a funeral service for Gray was held.

I wonder what you remember about the day in 2015 when Mr. Gray was buried. That afternoon and evening, urbanites tore through parts of Baltimore, leaving a debris path of burnt and smashed cars and looted storefronts. I watched all of this on television, stunned by what I was seeing. I remember my white friends saying how disgraceful it was for the "rioters" to do what they were doing. I still remember the disconnect in our conversations. I kept calling the people "protestors," but my white friends kept calling them "rioters."

The National Guard was dispatched in an attempt to restore control, and the mayor of Baltimore ordered a curfew.[6] I remember hearing cries of "Black Lives Matter" from the crowd. I saw banners that read "BLM." I wasn't that familiar with the chant or the title. I didn't know I was going to hear a lot more about it in the years to come. I didn't know it was going to become a movement. Also, I didn't know at the time that the prosecutors were going to decline to prosecute any of the officers involved in the Gray incident, or did I? Did my mind and heart begin to perceive that a pattern was beginning to develop? Was something beginning to grow inside me?

Each of these shootings and each of the deaths represent an individual phenomenological event, but you may not even have been aware of many of them. Of the ones you heard about, it is probable that you processed them individually (upon their own merits), as is the logical and appropriate thing to do. However, it became increasingly difficult for black people in urban settings to separate these incidents. They all began to morph into one awful, terrifying phenomenon. They became body blows to the emotional torso of a people -- one hit after another in rapid succession. Before you could wrap your mind around the details of one unarmed black person dying at the hands of a police officer, another similar story would hit the news.

I can't imagine how many loving, caring, law-upholding police officers there were in this country in 2020, doing a difficult job in the best way they could. They tried to represent something good and decent, presenting an air of justice and safety. Yet, for black people, the police were becoming a fear-inducing source of distrust and danger. The police began to seem like an occupying force that was "terrorizing" urban communities. These may not immediately seem like rational thoughts, but they were real ones and were fortified by every news show replaying footage of another black person cut down in their prime with few consequences.

Distrust Grows

The legal decision concerning Treyvon Martin was a pivotal moment in America's social development and caused a toxic distrust by black people of not only law enforcement, but also the legal and political systems.[7] There had been a general uneasiness wearing on the minds of urban black people, but now something more malignant was taking hold.

Many black people had put themselves in the shoes of Martin. How could this be legal? An innocent black teenager is pursued by a self-appointed armed neighborhood "watch person." The unarmed black citizen is then be confronted, shot, and killed without due process or legal ramifications for the killer? Urban black parents began to ask questions. How safe are our children when they leave our homes? Which innocent child will be killed next? Have we reached a point in America where a person has to be afraid all the time just because they were born black? The weight of perceived social injustice, race-based violence, police brutality, bias, perceived danger, and racism were taking their toll on the minds and spirits of black people.

New Leadership

As time passed and additional phenomena came to pass (Eric Brown in Missouri and Eric Garner in New York, et al), the distrust, fear, and anger continued to grow. These tragic deaths

galvanized black sentiment and the Black Lives Matter Movement (BLM)[8] was firmly established in the national consciousness.

BLM was now a force to be reckoned with, in a truly polarizing fashion. Black Americans have often found themselves represented by those who are considered radical. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., Malcom X, the Black Panthers, and the Rainbow Coalition have all inserted themselves as the tip of the spear at times. However, freedom fighters are rarely without flaw. Some are used by people with a private agenda to build power, wealth, or political prominence. Some are co-opted by others for their own reasons. People who feel oppressed will accept help from anyone who will plead their case and further their cause.

The courage that it takes to fight oppression and injustice is often born from anger and frustration. Black people were feeling an intense, oppressive ethos surrounding them and they were looking for a voice that could be heard above the din. BLM took center stage and became that voice.

When BLM took to the streets and the microphone, it rankled a lot of people. Who were these BLM people? Where did their finances come from? Who was behind their ideology? Legitimate questions to be sure, but what about the message? Why weren't white people listening to the message? Was the message true? Was the outrage justified? Black people felt a collective frustration as their white friends, seemingly fueled by Fox News and conservative radio talk show hosts, seemed oblivious to the message and fixated on their disdain for the messengers instead. Black people were hurting and crying out for help, but their cries seemed to fall on distracted or indifferent ears.

People in the counseling field began to take note. One study by respected practitioners noted that "racial vilification; racial profiling; institutional racism; discrimination; racial ambivalence; denial of racism; and racist beliefs, behaviors, and attitudes" from white co-workers, friends, and neighbors are damaging to the mental health of black people.[9]

Effect of Shootings on Mental Health

This situation led to a new area of scholarly inquiry that searched for causal links between police killings of black people and the effect on black people's mental health. The study examined police shootings of civilians in America over the three years of 2013 to 2015 and studied the effect it had on the victims' families, relatives, and friends and on the larger community. The police shooting information was linked in a quasi-experimental design with data from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention on the mental health of the population in every state. The study found a link between each police shooting of an unarmed black person and decreased mental health for the entire black population in the state where that shooting had occurred.

It was noted that in cases where the black person was armed, there was no appreciable negative effect on black mental health. It was also noted that there was no effect of police shootings of blacks on the mental health of whites, whether the person was armed or unarmed. There was no measurable effect on black people's mental health caused by police shootings of white people, either. This study is experimental in nature, and the efficacy of the design will need further testing. However, the results suggest, at least anecdotally, that an empathetic relationship of transference takes place when a person projects themselves on a victim of a police shooting that they perceive as unfair or unjust. This manifests itself in a sense of vulnerability and fear.[10]

Loss of Trust in Institutions

In the year 2020, urbanites lost faith in many of the systems, structures, and organizations that are supposed to help them. It's a dark and lonely place to be. It's a vulnerable and helpless place to exist. As a pastor, I believe your voice can bridge the trust gap that has developed between urbanites and those in a position to help them. I believe you are uniquely positioned to help your future black congregants heal when equipped with information and insight into the stressors and causal factors that have created trauma, anger, fear, and mistrust in many urban black people. It's my goal to expose you to a pool of knowledge, concepts, and strategies that you might find helpful.

CHAPTER 5

Damaged by Discrimination

I don't want you to think this is just my opinion. There is a large body of high-quality scientific evidence that documents racial discrimination in employment, housing, banking, and other commercial transactions, as well as in many other areas of society.[1] This ugly phenomena resulted in a national study by the American Psychological Association in 2016 to measure acute, major discrimination (e.g., not being hired for a job or being unfairly harassed by the police) and chronic minor discrimination (e.g., being treated with less courtesy and respect than others and receiving poorer service in restaurants and stores).[2] The participants were asked questions such as how often:

1. You are treated with less courtesy than other people.
2. You are treated with less respect than other people.
3. You receive poorer service than other people at restaurants or stores.
4. People act as if they think you are not smart.
5. People act as if they are afraid of you.
6. People act as if they think you are dishonest.
7. People act as if they're better than you.
8. You are called names or insulted.
9. You are threatened or harassed.
10. You are followed around in stores.

The findings were sad but perhaps predictable, at least from where I stand. I wonder how these statistics will seem to you:

- 35% of black Americans reported acute discrimination in their lives.

- 23% of black Americans reported that they experienced some form of discrimination *almost every day* or at least *once a week*.

What do you think that does to the psyche of a person? Do you realize that when you encounter a black person, there is a decent chance they have already been insulted or discriminated against *that day* before you met up with them? They may suffer a significant act of prejudice before they arrive at your church on Sunday morning.

The cumulative effect of ongoing acts of prejudice can be as traumatic as a physical attack. They can be debilitating and stultifying. They can lead to a lack of trust and openness. They can lead to a sense of detachment or even hostility and this can all be sitting in the fifth row of your church during your sermon or in the back row of the Sunday school class.

Racism takes a toll on black people that you might not be able to imagine.[3] I need you to know that this is not me complaining or making excuses. I am simply trying to point out things that scientists have proven. There are societal factors that accumulate and have deleterious effects on the people that live in that society. **Living amid racism is like living near a toxic dump site.**

Damaged by Ambivalence

Living amid ambivalence is just as toxic as experiencing discrimination. Can you remember how you felt when you heard about Mr. Gray back in 2015? Did you think about it much? Did you talk about it with your friends and family? Did you talk about it in your church? Did his death hurt you? Because it hurt me to the core. I'm not sure I have ever been the same since.

Were you angry at the police? Did you see a pattern of violence against young black men starting to form? As a pastor, did you reach out to black people in your church and community to foster healing back in 2015? Did you encourage your white congregants to do the same? The black people around you need you. They might not have been able to articulate that need, but they needed you desperately. They were a mission field that was ripe for the harvest. Did you go to them?

For many, the answer is "no," and in that "no," another pattern was being formed. It was a trend that broke the heart of urbanites because so many of their white coworkers surprised them with their response to the incident. So many white faces completely sided with the police. For some reason, they defended the actions of the police and applauded their eventual acquittal. In spite of the testimony to the contrary, white voices insisted that Gray must have been to blame in some respect. The police must have had a reason to do what they did. When the police were acquitted, many white people saw it as vindication of the police and condemnation of the black voices that still cried out in protest. A divide was forming between black urban New Yorkers and the white people they knew, loved, and respected. The response caused many urban blacks to be disheartened and depressed -- emotions that would deepen and darken as time passed.

These cases, and dozens more like them, were festering in the minds of urbanites in 2019. Then on May 10, 2019, we watched the story of Ronald Hardin Greene on television. Greene was an unarmed 49-year-old black man who was arrested by Louisiana state police. Six white troopers stunned and punched Greene before putting him in a chokehold. They dragged him while cuffed and shackled and left him face down on the ground.

The troopers initially told the Greene family that Ronald died as a result of crashing into a tree. Several of their body cameras were suspiciously deactivated, some providing no audio, and some providing no video or audio. The police authorities refused to release body camera footage and tried to obscure the details concerning Greene's cause of death for years. Black people were suspicious and growing impatient. It became an ongoing conversation in urban communities, neighborhoods, and churches. Pastors were preaching messages about it. People were demanding answers.

Over time the story changed from Mr. Greene dying by crashing into a tree to Mr. Greene "became unresponsive" and dying on his way to the hospital after a struggle with the troopers; black people turned from suspicious to angry.

Later in early 2020, the coroner's office told the Associated Press that Greene's death was attributed to cardiac arrest and ruled accidental, mentioning the car crash but not the struggle with police. Those who supported the police, and the now growing "Blue Lives Matter" movement, pointed to Greene's high blood levels of cocaine and alcohol but ignored his fractured breastbone and a ruptured aorta. White people supported the police; black people vilified them. The middle ground was disappearing. So, who was right?

All the police officers were absolved of any wrongdoing in the Greene case. Later, the ranking officer, Lieutenant John Clary, was found to have lied when he told investigators that he had no body camera video of the arrest. It turned out he had switched off his body camera 30 minutes into the beating. The footage eventually surfaced showing that when Green was said to be "resisting and trying to get away," he was handcuffed, subdued, and helpless. Long after this incident, one of the troopers involved was arrested on charges of using excessive force and deactivating his body camera while making arrests in other cases.[4]

Next came Atatiana Koquice Jefferson, a 28-year-old woman who was shot to death in her home by a police officer in Fort Worth, Texas. Atatiana heard a noise in her yard in the early morning of October 12, 2019. She was afraid, so she picked up her legally-licensed pistol to investigate the noise and protect her young nephew. She was shot in her own home, through her window, by the police officers who were in her yard. The bodycam footage showed that the police gave her no time to lower her gun or submit to them as officers. They yelled at her while they were already shooting at her, killing her instantly.

Imagine being in your own home and hearing people creeping around your yard. Wouldn't you be concerned? Wouldn't you want to defend your family? Is that something that should end your life?

After this incident, there was an outcry, but only from people with black faces. The same isolated voices complained that this was an injustice, while the same voices opposed them and supported the police. The lines in the sand were becoming undeniable.

Other deaths in 2019 included 28-year-old Michael Dean, who police killed in Texas on December 2; 31-year-old Christopher Whitfield, who police killed in Louisiana on October 14; 54-year-old Melvin Watkins, who police killed in Louisiana on September 14; and 33-year-old Channara Tom Pheap, who police killed on August 26 in Tennessee. The database of the *Washington Post* reported 13 instances of police shooting and killing unarmed black men (plus one instance of police shooting and killing an unarmed black woman) in 2019.[5]

The pot was boiling, and it would soon boil over. 2020 was upon us. The mental trauma to black people would be exacerbated in 2020 by COVID-19 isolation, the shutdown of public entertainment systems, the collapse of social interaction, separation from friends and family, creating a deleterious degree of isolationism in black urban communities.[6]

CHAPTER 6

The Phenomena and Stimuli of 2020

As 2019 gives way to 2020, the television screens are filled with a warning about something called SARS-CoV-2, a virus that causes severe acute respiratory syndrome. Little do we know that it's about to change everyone's life forever.

We are warned to look out for fever or chills, cough, shortness of breath, or difficulty in breathing. Victims would suffer from fatigue, muscle and body aches, headache as well as a loss of taste or smell. Victims could undergo flu-like symptoms of sore throat, congestion, runny nose, nausea, and vomiting. Diarrhea, persistent pain, and pressure in the chest could accompany mental confusion, and an inability to wake or stay awake, and skin discoloration.

Just like Shakespeare's warning about the Ides of March didn't prepare Julius Caesar for what was coming, no warning could have prepared New York, the world, or me for what was about to happen. As the new moon of March begins to wane, it is joined by the hopes and dreams of people everywhere. The seriousness of the COVID-19 pandemic begins to descend around me like a thick fog until it is hard to see, breathe, or think. Emergency rooms begin to fill up, then hospitals fill up, and a medical health crisis is declared.

The Pandemic Timeline from A.B.E.'s Perspective

I wake up to a news story on **Tuesday, March 10,** telling me that concerns about the spread of the coronavirus caused the Ivy League to make the unprecedented decision to cancel their conference tournaments for both men's and women's basketball. I was planning on watching some

of those games. I live in a small apartment in a tough neighborhood. Sometimes watching sports is the only real distraction I get from the problems of my life. The Ivy League isn't my main source of athletic sustenance, so I didn't think my entertainment practices would be disrupted too badly. But it turned out that the Ivy League was just the first major organization to significantly modify its plans because of COVID-19.

The epidemic was ready for Broadway, arriving in New York proper on **March 11,** as the first deaths take place in New York state, and the state government begins instituting shutdown measures in an attempt to stem the spread of the virus. On the same day, the coronavirus is declared a global pandemic by the World Health Organization (WHO). The Ivy League decides to take a further step and cancel all of its spring sporting activities. Then the NCAA makes the controversial decision to continue playing games, not allowing fans to be in attendance.

My sports world is imploding:

• Rudy Gobert, Utah Jazz star center, tests positive for COVID-19.

• The Jazz vs. Thunder NBA game is postponed.

• The NBA first announces that because of the positive COVID-19 case, it will "pause" the season. Then the NBA announces that the 2020 season has been canceled, and teams that had recent close contact with the Utah Jazz team enter a new "quarantine protocol."

The shutdown of the Ivy League is one thing, but now a major source of entertainment and distraction is removed from my life. I can't pretend I'm happy about this. This COVID thing is becoming seriously annoying.

Before the day ends, the Glendale Nursing Home in Schenectady County, New York, suspends all visitation. It is the first of many institutions that will do so, leaving elderly residents like my mother as virtual captives. First, we hear the residents have been restricted to their floor, then to their wing, and eventually to their room for what would turn out to be more than a year. I'm not going to see her for more than a year. And that's still more than I can say for my aunt, who I will never see again because COVID-19 will take her life.

Between **March 11 and March 23**, people all around me are beginning to feel uneasy, wondering, "Is this thing for real? How dangerous is it?" Suddenly, there are contradictory stories on the news. Doom and gloom from some circles, blue sky and rainbows from others. Many black people choose to accept the more positive "Don't worry about it" attitude. I'm not sure which side I'm on at the moment.

On **March 12,** more nursing homes begin closing their doors, separating families and ratcheting up the anxiety levels of loved ones. Conflicting information concerning death tolls and quarantine procedures causes confusion and hostility.

Colleges put all sports on "pause" and eventually cancel their seasons. Life is getting peculiar. Suddenly, I start hearing stories about supply chain problems in the city. Stores are having difficulty getting food and many necessities delivered. In the supermarket, I watch two women fighting over a roll of toilet paper. It's like the whole world is going mad.

Major League Baseball cancels spring training games and delays the beginning of the MLB regular season for at least two weeks. The NHL cancels the remainder of its 2019-20 season with no indication of when it will resume. I'm not really into hockey, so not a big deal. Suddenly, the NCAA announces the cancelation of all winter and spring sports championships. This is the first time the NCAA Basketball Tournament will not take place since its inception in 1939.

On the same day, gatherings of more than 500 are banned by New York's governor, Andrew Cuomo. Indoor venues are ordered to limit their capacity to 50%. In New York City, all Broadway shows and attractions are shuttered. I'm starting to run out of things to do and places to go.

On Friday, **March 13**, President Donald Trump declares a national emergency and bans travel from Europe for thirty days. New York's Capital Region schools are temporarily closed.

On **March 14**, the first COVID-19 deaths are reported in New York by Governor Cuomo. Albany and Rensselaer Counties in New York declare a state of emergency.

On **March 15**, public schools close in New York City, Massachusetts, and Vermont, as well as the Troy School District north of Albany. Amtrak limits its service north of New York City. It

announces that the Adirondack line will only go to Albany, and the Maple Leaf line will only go to Niagara Falls. The Basketball Hall of Fame and Museum closes for the foreseeable future.

On **March 16**, New York state announces the closure of all bars, restaurants, gyms, and movie theaters, and all masses are canceled by the Albany Diocese. **I can't go to the gym; I can't go out for a bite to eat; I can't go to a movie; I can't go to a ball game; I can't watch anything on TV. I'm starting to go stir-crazy.**

On **March 18**, Governor Cuomo mandates that only 50% of non-essential office workers are allowed to go to their offices, and the other half must work from home. The U.S. suspends all immigration and citizenship services. Funerals transition to virtual services only.

Families with loved ones in nursing homes are learning that their family members have become sick and are moved to palliative care and then hospice care, but they are not allowed to have visitors. Close friends of mine have loved ones pass away in New York's nursing homes without accurate reporting on the cause of death, causing COVID-19 fear to spiral. The pain and anguish are heightened by the final indignity of not being able to lay loved ones to rest in person.

On **March 19**, New York state mandates that 75% of non-essential office workers must work remotely, and on **March 20,** New York mandates that all non-essential office workers must work remotely.

As if things weren't bad enough, my stove is on the fritz, so I call the landlord. He tells me that his workmen are not going to visit my apartment or anyone else's until they understand more about this COVID problem. But what about my stove, I ask? Well, there's nothing I can do about it, he says. But restaurants all around me a closing down. No one's doing deliveries. How am I supposed to eat? He hangs up the phone on me.

Hospitals start to cancel all non-critical, elective surgeries to ensure that hospital beds are available for COVID-19 patients. Bowling alleys and indoor malls are told to shut down.

On **March 22**, social distancing, strict limits on gatherings, and mask mandates go into effect. It's like living in some dystopian nightmare. Governor Cuomo announces that New York has over 15,000 positive cases of COVID-19.

The shutdown heightens tensions on all sides. I'm scared, I'm frustrated, I'm angry, and I feel trapped. I'm bored, and I'm broke because the job just laid me off. 2020 has become a nightmare--and it's about to get worse.

The Pot Boils Over

On **May 25**, an event takes place that sparks national outrage. On that day, Minneapolis police officers arrest a man named George Floyd for purchasing cigarettes with a counterfeit $20 bill. I've never met George Floyd, and I never will. He is neither friend nor family, but he will have a lasting impact on me and the world as I experience it. The incident is videoed and shown on news programs around the world. Mr. Floyd is handcuffed, restrained, and pinned beneath three police officers until he dies. An officer puts his knee on Mr. Floyd's neck for 8 minutes and 15 seconds until his heart stops from what they call cardiopulmonary arrest caused by "law enforcement subdual, restraint, and neck compression."[1] Wow. All I know is they choke the life out of the man over a pack of cigarettes.

The public nature of this outrageous act opens a conversation within church communities concerning racial injustice and the obliviousness of white church members to the plight of us, their black counterparts. Finally, there is undeniable evidence of police malfeasance, but more importantly, here is unavoidable evidence of police killing an unarmed black man. All the arguments I've had through the years with white friends and coworkers. All the people who have defended the officers involved in the shooting deaths of unarmed black men are finally going to be forced to face the facts. At least, I think they will. I don't really know. I haven't seen them since I got laid off.

Suddenly, I become aware of a ground swell of emotion concerning this death of an unarmed, handcuffed black man. This is not the first killing or even the first killing with irrefutable evidence, but this event is different because of COVID-19. There's no football or hockey on television. There's no baseball or basketball to distract anyone's attention. The movie industry is shut down. Television is one long rerun. The only thing penetrating our socially distanced, self-

isolated existence is the televised image of a defenseless, handcuffed black man pinned to the ground under the knee of a white police officer for more than eight minutes as the life slowly drains from his body.

This is unjust, and everyone knows it. It is outrageous and offensive to all men and women of goodwill. Suddenly, cries that had fallen on deaf ears begin to ring true. White people on television suddenly embrace their black friends and coworkers with a greater degree of care and concern. My pastor tells me that church organizations around the country are reaching out to black churches to seek reconciliation.[2] A closed door is now open a crack, but it will take greater communication to push the door wide open.

Meanwhile, I am angry as hell. I should be gratified that white people are finally seeing the truth, but instead, I wonder what took so long. If I get murdered by a cop tomorrow, do I have to do it on national television for people to think it's wrong? Does no one recognize the injustice I've been living with all my life?

CHAPTER 7

The Impact of 2020

By May 2020, the COVID-19 lockdown had created a situation of isolation, unlike anything most Americans had ever experienced. Immediate families were thrown together for extended periods of time, often resulting in interpersonal conflicts. Conversely, extended families were separated and unable to support each other. Many families suffered the loss of loved ones that could not be mourned or shared in person. Grandchildren were born in quarantine whose grandparents would not live to hold them. Black people in urban communities experienced combinations of forced togetherness, institutional separation, tremendous gain, and heartbreaking loss in 2020. Like many others, black people experienced the loss of salary and employment caused by temporary and permanent business closings.

Stressors for Blacks During the Shutdown

As Reyes indicates, the stressors experienced by black people during the COVID-19 shutdown were heightened by the disparity in the quality of living conditions.[1] A devastating combination of poor social policies, inadequate social programs available in urban communities, unfair economic arrangements, and poor political leadership allowed COVID-19 to affect urban blacks disproportionally.[2] Josiah furthers this discussion by showing that structural and social factors in American society adversely affect black people.[3] Urban blacks are continuously exposed to the various chronic stressors of racial discrimination. Low socioeconomic status and "prolonged lifetime traumas contribute to underlying psychological traumas and stress manifesting as mental

health disorders, including depression (major depressive disorder [MDD]) and anxiety disorders."[4,5]

Suddenly, urbanites were at home, isolated, and scared. Like so many others, they were cut off from family members, support systems, and friends. There were no social engagements, no church services, no babysitters, and no breaks from the routine. Small, inadequate apartments seemed smaller.

Television and the internet became windows to the outside world, but there were no sports to distract us from the harsh realities that abounded. Television programs stopped filming; movies were no longer being produced. Reruns, old shows, and terrible news stories became the moribund reality of a world that was shut down until further notice. People began to feel a strange duality in which they feared the pandemic but also chaffed under the restrictions. Many people wondered if the shutdown was really necessary or if the government was overreaching in an attempt to seize even more control over our lives.

There are clear indications of emotional distress being caused by the current thought processes of many in black urban communities. A climate of racial, financial, social, and political upheaval has developed and has changed the manner of public discourse. Issues such as COVID-19 immunization, police force defunding, immigration, sexual identification, and political affiliation have devolved into anger-driven, mass media-publicized shouting matches.[6]

Conversations concerning divisive issues from 2020 have led to detrimental public discourse that includes overgeneralizing positions, demonizing opposing viewpoints, championing distorted positions, polarizing political views, oversimplifying complex issues, and politicizing untested assumptions. "Racial vilification; racial profiling; institutional racism; discrimination; racial ambivalence; denial of racism; and racist beliefs, behaviors, and attitudes" from white coworkers, friends, and neighbors are damaging to the mental health of black people in the form of race-based trauma.[7]

Race-based trauma has the potential to metastasize into PTSD as black people experience overt acts of racism and micro-aggressions that reflect the tainted attitudes and beliefs of

coworkers, friends, and neighbors. Levels of ambivalence, contempt, and fear are seen in the microaggressions experienced in cultural, individual, and institutional environments.[8]

A Crisis with No Support Available

George Floyd's killing started "a national and international crisis," therapist Myisha Jackson, L.P.C., told SELF. And as she pointed out, many of us could not rely on our normal coping mechanisms. Maybe the friends who would usually offer support were too taxed emotionally, or maybe the COVID-19 pandemic had robbed us of the coping tactics we would normally use.

Strange things were happening all around us. Television brought images of people fighting in supermarkets over a package of toilet paper. Paper towels and other necessities were suddenly in short supply. Long lines at the supermarket, alternate days depending on your name, social distancing, mask mandates, and the search for a vaccine began.

Vulnerability in Poor Communities

COVID-19 hit all American communities hard and below the belt. No group was spared the damage caused by the pandemic. Rich people lost loved ones. No ethnic group was immune. However, it must be said that those with low-socioeconomic status in urban environments were at a significant disadvantage because their social standing provided little to buffer against the negative impact of massive upheaval. The normal coping strategies used by low-income Americans, such as receiving help from family, friends, and social services, rapidly drained people's resources, and reserves.

Impact on Thinking Patterns

After a while, many people were unable to find additional support when they needed it, which created a sense of vulnerability. Negative thinking patterns developed into maladaptive

behaviors reinforced through emotions of fear and anger.[9] Core belief systems and schemas were altered by the traumatic events of 2020. Isolation was fertile soil for introspective examination to devolve into rumination on the events and phenomena of 2020, resulting in fear and trauma,

The effects of COVID-19 and the traumatizing events that manifested amid black communities was a stressor with a strong potential to lead to Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD).[10] Black communities would need health care systems and professionals to see them through the trials they faced physically, mentally, and spiritually. This presented another problem.

Disparities in the Healthcare System

COVID-19 threatened the efficacy of the health care system, and many lives were lost due to overwhelmed facilities and personnel. COVID-19 clearly adversely affected all races, but it took a particular toll on the health of American blacks due to the poor and overcrowded health care facilities, distrust of the health care system, and a fear-based avoidance of COVID-19 health protocols and treatments.

Studies show that black people are 2.8 times more likely to die from COVID-19 than white people.[11] The high COVID-19 mortality rates for blacks can be directly attributed to the disparities in the healthcare system and a disinclination to use it. There are well-documented historical examples of systemic, racially hostile practices concerning insurance and medical coverage that add to the tension experienced by urban blacks and distrust of the healthcare system.[12]

Not all studies display more significant levels of depression and trauma among black people due to the COVID-19 pandemic. One study by Owens determined that the "odds of Black Americans having depression and anxiety was lower on average throughout the pandemic than that of non-Black Americans."[13] The study concluded that there were "no significant differences in mental health outcomes among non-Black racial and ethnic groups (e.g., Whites, Asians, Hispanics, and Others)."[14] The findings were adjusted for sociodemographic variables and baseline pre-pandemic CES-D (Center for Epidemiological Studies-Depression) score. The results were interesting, but the study requires further scrutiny.

The report acknowledged that black Americans faced a disproportionate level of certain types of mental health stressors when compared to other racial and ethnic groups during the pandemic. The study further noted that the physical health of black Americans is significantly worse than non-black Americans. In the presence of such admissions by the researchers, it seems that empirical and theoretical logic suggests that the various additional stressors faced by black Americans must add significantly to the probability of mental distress, as must the statistically verifiable physical health maladies. The study results suffered from a fallacy of logic.

The study erred in that it did not differentiate between categories of black Americans. The response to phenomena exhibited by those who identify as Caribbean, European, and African blacks is often different from those who identify as American blacks. The racial struggles and history of black Americans adds an extra dimension to the mental stress, fatigue, and trauma they accrue.

Further research into the effects of 2020 on Americans of all races and social standings is warranted and will doubtless take place, but in this book, we will focus only on those who identify as American black and were living in urban communities in 2020. We will examine the diminished trust and respect shown by urbanites toward the healthcare system, the mental health care system, scientific research, government authorities, and COVID-19 prevention measures, all of which led to underreporting of physical and mental health issues among urban blacks.

Emergency room statistics confirm the disproportionate effect of COVID-19 on the health of urban blacks, [15] but the full impact of the traumatic events of 2020 on their *mental* health will play out over the coming decade. The PTSD that will be increasingly apparent needs to be anticipated and preparatory work needs to commence. My desire for this project is to add to the existing knowledge about the effects of 2020 on urban blacks and aid in the development of practical counseling methods to treat those effects.

Blacks Not Part of the Mental Health Process

PTSD caused by the traumatic events of 2020 will require counseling intervention. Overcoming healthcare distrust and encouraging traumatized urban blacks will be complicated because of the structural racism present in mental health research. Black people are underrepresented as researchers, manuscript reviewers, and editorial boards.[16] Black researchers are significantly less likely to receive National Institute of Health funding than their white counterparts after controlling for individual excellence factors.[17]

Professionals Ill Equipped

The sad truth is that the existing body of mental health professionals may be ill-equipped to gather necessary and valuable research data that is needed in urban communities. Those professionals have struggled to bridge the trust gap with the black community in the past and will find it difficult to successfully implement an intervention for the traumas of 2020. It is clear that the mental health issues posed by the trauma resulting from 2020 are intertwined with the inequality, fear, and anger that exists in the black urban community. Without health care professionals intentionally developing a trusting relationship with black people, it is likely that black people will continue to underutilize the services of mental health professionals.[18] Even is the professionals begin to work toward building such trust, it may take a decade to achieve useful results.

Vaccine Suspicion

In the wake of 2020, the mistrust of the health care system harbored by black people was amplified by rumors and conspiracy theories concerning the COVID-19 vaccine. This created an atmosphere of suspicion and hostility[19] in which many urban blacks remained unvaccinated.[20] For decades, black people have often received inferior healthcare services in urban environments, causing vaccine hesitancy and avoidance among those most vulnerable to the virus. Black people's

mistrust of the medical system caused by systemic racism[21] has resulted in disproportionately negative impacts of COVID-19 among black people.[22]

Structural Barriers to Healthcare

Alvidrez acknowledges that structural barriers of insurance coverage, availability of services, diagnostic, referral, and treatment assignment practices are also factors that suppress black utilization of mental health care. However, even after such structural barriers are considered, there are still disparities along racial lines in the utilization of mental health care. Black people traditionally stigmatize and hold negative views of mental health treatment, thereby reducing their usage of mental health care services.[23]

Black people will require help to untangle the issues of 2020 and the residual effects. They will need to find counselors they trust and respect who understand the type of psychological distress experienced by black people and their social context to be effective.[24]

Racial bias, injustice, and inequity are part of a person's social context. Race-based trauma has an effect on black congregants you may encounter, whether the trauma is real or imagined.[25] A person can be traumatized by personally experiencing racial animus, seeing racial bigotry, ruminating on the injustice done to others, or a combination of these phenomena. Understanding these components will be critical because their combined effect will hinder all attempts to disciple or counsel the traumatized person.

Who Will Help Black People?

The societal knowledge and understanding of the black worldview required to address the complexities involving trauma to black people may be beyond the current scope of many mental health care professionals. It is clear that new competencies will need to be developed by counselors to meet the demands caused by the complexities of the aftermath of the events of 2020. New counseling materials will need to be designed, tested, and implemented, but who will take the lead?

It seems reasonable to suspect that pastors may be far more successful in reaching these traumatized black people than mental health professionals. The trust invested by black society in the pastorate and the Christ-centered nature of pastoral counseling may provide advantages that will pay dividends in the lives of many black people. I truly believe that you can be more effective in reaching and helping black people achieve greater mental health than your secular counseling counterparts.

CHAPTER 8

Ecclesiastical Implications

There are many black people who have personally suffered racism and race-based trauma in their lives. Other peopled watched and experienced the various forms of upheaval in 2020. Both sets of people are in danger of suffering mental trauma in the form of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD)[1] and trauma exposure-response. Trauma exposure-response, also known as secondhand trauma or secondary traumatic stress disorder, is caused by exposure to the first-hand trauma of others, resulting in a sense of hopelessness. People suffering from trauma exposure-response display an attitude of hyper-vigilance, guilt, fear, anger, negativity, and cynicism.[2] These hallmarks can be seen in the lives of many black urban people following the events of 2020.

Black people were confronted by unremitting images of police violence against unarmed blacks. Continual reminders of their vulnerability combined with social protest and images of rioting were toxic to urban blacks. Watching such forms of upheaval has a strong potential to plant the seeds of mental trauma.[3] Compared to physical violence, which affects one part of a person's being, this form of rumination-caused trauma negatively affects the entire person.[4] Furthermore, there is a negative collective impact caused by people living in tightknit communities that can create a group dynamic where race-based trauma is being experienced on a mental level by many people in the community. This causes a synergistically detrimental effect where the mental trauma is amplified and spread within the group.

The effects of 2020 have challenged and damaged many relationships along racial lines. Many white people were exposed to a different side of their black friends, co-workers, neighbors, and associates during 2020. The way black people reacted to the BLM movement and police behavior often differed significantly from what white people were used to experiencing from the

black people they knew. There was a sense of political activism and a degree of militance growing in black people that was disquieting for many white people. The pain and anguish felt by black people resulted in strained relationships in the workplace and community.[5] The strained relationships along racial lines became another potential trauma-inducing stressor for urban blacks.

The trauma-causing scars of 2020 will not heal without intentional, informed intervention by respected voices capable of bridging the trust gap in the black community. Pastors may be uniquely positioned to build trust and help black congregants heal. Pastors will need to be equipped with the information and insight into the stressors and causal factors that have created trauma, anger, fear, and mistrust in black urban communities.

The traumatic events that came to a zenith in 2020 may lead to a mental health crisis in the coming years. A dialogue that will develop a forward-thinking approach to head off and treat the future trauma would be advantageous. This project is intended to be a part of the developing dialogue.

Pastoral Counseling Solution

Discrimination, harassment, racism, and race-based trauma present a danger to the psychological well-being of urban black people. If left unchecked, it may result in generationally damaging psychological outcomes.[6] This situation needs to be addressed, but by whom? I believe the answer is you.

A study was performed with 106 counseling professionals who identified themselves as having worked with clients displaying symptoms associated with race-based trauma, acknowledged its existence, and confirmed that the symptoms were present in their counseling sessions. The study revealed that most counselors had no training in identifying or treating race-based trauma.[7] Secular counselors will be at a disadvantage in treating black people with exposed to the trauma of 2020 because they lack training, familiarity, and established trust with black people. The black community lacks trust in the medical and mental health care systems. Pastoral-

based counseling may be better positioned to intervene in the lives of such black congregants. But pastors will need to be proactive if they are to provide competent care to black people.

Race-conscious counseling curricula do not currently exist to any appreciable extent and need to be developed and added to the existing pool of knowledge to aid counselors in developing the competencies necessary for the task ahead. Counseling is embedded in a social context, so it is essential for counselors to understand the psychological distress experienced by their clients to promote healing. The counseling pastor will need to place the social context of the black congregant at the heart of the counseling process[8] through the development of cultural intelligence and competence.

The worldview of the victim of race-based trauma must be understood and appreciated by the pastoral counselor. Practical training will be required and competencies will need to be developed. It is my hope that in the years to come more racism-related research will occur and that assessment tools will be developed, tested, and approved in a collaborative process within affected communities.

Closing Remarks from A.B.E.

There you have it, brothers. I thank you for your time, patience, and attention. Where you take things from here is up to you and God. What I will say is that if pastors desire to disciple and counsel black urban people who have left the city and moved to their communities, they will need to understand that conservative Christian worldviews are no longer monolithic or universal (if they every truly were). There is a majority Christian worldview, but even that may occasionally require reassessment, reconsideration, and realignment in light of world events.

Loving, compassionate, empathetic pastors will need to acknowledge that a phenomena-induced worldview exists among black people. This worldview will differ from others and must be understood regardless of its efficacy or accuracy. Pastors will need to develop the competence and cultural intelligence if they are to reach out in powerful and effective ways. It can be done. It

must be done by somebody if God's family is to live as one and worship in unity. Someone will have to put their hand to this plow – perhaps it will be you.

A.B.E

RESPONSE QUESTIONS

INSTRUCTIONS:

After reading each chapter, email your responses to the corresponding questions to: drgrantproject@gmail.com

PART 1:

Chapter 1:   Changing Demographics

1A. Did you agree with the theological position presented in this section? Why/Why Not?

1B. What did you learn from this section?

1C. How does this section confirm/change your perspective on diversity in the church?

1D. What did you learn from this section that you can you use in your ministry?

Chapter 2: Worldview

2A. What did you learn from this section?

2B. What did you learn about the current school system?

2C. How does this section confirm/change your perspective on the compatibility

of the current school system's philosophy and the church's teaching?

2D. What did you learn from this section that you can you use in your ministry?

Chapter 3: Learning Theories

3A. What did you learn from this section?

3B. How does this section confirm/change your perspective on teaching methods?

3C. What learning theory were you trained under?

3D. What system/hybrid system do you currently use?

3E. What system/hybrid system would you like to use in the future?

3F. What system/hybrid system might you use to reach the next generation?

3G. What did you learn from this section that you can you use in your ministry?

Chapter 4: Cultural Competence

4A. What did you learn from this section?

4B. How high is your cultural competence level?

4C. How well do you exegete other cultures?

4D. How comfortable are you exegeting other cultures?

4E. How does this section confirm/change your perspective on diversity in the

church?

4F. What did you learn from this section that you can you use in your ministry?

PART 2:

Chapter 2: The Black American Legacy

5A. What did you learn about slavery?

5B. What did you learn about Jim Crow?

5C. Did this information alter your thinking about the lasting impact of slavery?

5D. Have you previously considered the lasting impact of Jim Crow laws?

5E. Does it surprise you that Jim Crow laws existed until 1964-within your lifetime?

5F. It is being suggested that slavery and Jim Crow continue to have a dramatically negative effect of black urban people today. Do you agree? Why/why not?

Chapter 3: Urban Developments

6A. Did you learn anything surprising in this section? If yes, what?

6B. How does this section confirm/change your perspective concerning the decline of the city in the 70's?

6C. It is being suggested that the corruption of the NYC police force in the 70's damaged the trust between the police and black communities. The drug squads

working in urban communities were "on the take" form the mafia. Did this surprise you?

6D. In 1971 the narcotics squad then known as special investigation unit (SIU) numbered 70 members. In 1972, 52 of them were indicted for corruption. What effect do you think that had on comm unity trust?

Chapter 4: Black & Blue

7A. Did the events in this chapter affect you deeply when they took place?

7B. Do they mean more or less to you today emotionally speaking?

7C. Do you appreciate the effect these events had on black people more or less today? Why?

Chapters 5 & 6: Damaged by Discrimination // The Phenomena and Stimuli of 2020

8A. What did you learn from these chapters?

8B. What are your thoughts on the presented information?

Chapter 8: Ecclesiastical Implications

9A. Do you feel more prepared to counsel or disciple urbanites who may join your congregation? If yes, how?

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